

A Plague of Darkness

Episode One of the Heart of Evil Trilogy
A One-Round LIVING FORCE Tournament

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A terrifying plague is sweeping the sacred ch'hala trees on Cularin. Can the heroes stop this last attempt to bring the Tarasin and Cularin itself to the Dark Side? Perhaps, but an ultimate sacrifice will be necessary. An adventure for LIVING FORCE heroes of levels 4+. This scenario should be played before "*Destruction*" (Episode II of the "*Heart of Evil*" trilogy). This scenario is appropriate for all types of LIVING FORCE heroes.

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A Plague of Darkness is a standard RPGA Network tournament. A four-hour time block has been set aside for this event but the actual playing time should be about three and a half hours.

This is an adventure for all levels of LIVING FORCE heroes, and therefore characters levels 4 and higher are appropriate. If your players bring characters level 1-3 ask them to level them to level 4 (as if they now had 6000xp). If your players do not have heroes, help them create new ones (see your event coordinator for hero creation instructions).

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a nametag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom and the hero's name, species and gender at the top. This makes it easier for players to keep track of who is playing which character.

Campaign Notes to the GM

When running this adventure, or any *Star Wars* adventure, keep in mind the *Star Wars* adventures should seem like the *Star Wars* movies. The action should flow quickly and the players should not get caught up in too many mechanical details of what they are doing. Describe things in sweeping statements, and recall scenes from the movies when necessary to help players visualize what is going on. More than anything else, have fun.

LIVING FORCE adventures are not designed purely to kill characters. If you believe a combat is genuinely too tough for a group you are running, scale it down. If you believe it will be far too simple, scale it up—within reason. Do your best to keep fights cinematic and interesting, and if someone dies because they made a glorious sacrifice, that's fine. What we want to avoid are the "dumb" deaths that result from a string of bad dice rolls. That's not cinematic, and it's not what *Star Wars*, or LIVING FORCE, are about.

Reporting the game for RPGA: The RPGA tracks adventures for the Player Rewards program. The Senior GM or Event Coordinator should provide a form to the GM for this purpose. Both the GM and the players need to list their name and RPGA number on the form.

GMs of RPGA tournaments are expected to be familiar with the RPGA Rules and Penalty documents. These are available as downloads from the RPGA web site at www.rpga.com.

A note about the text: Some of the text in the module is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text intended for the players is in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

House Rules

There are a large number of players throughout the world playing LIVING FORCE, and it's impossible to supervise them the way one might in a home campaign. As a result, we have a few house rules. These are outlined here for you.

Atoning for Dark Side Points

Heroes may, at the discretion of the GM, atone for Dark Side Points acquired during play by spending one Force Point to atone for one Dark Side Point.

The hero DOES NOT have to earn a Force Point in the scenario in question in order to atone. Heroes may only atone for one DSP per scenario played, and only if, in the judgment of the GM, the hero shows proper remorse and understanding of the dangers of the dark side. Players are required to keep a running total on their log sheets of all Dark Side Points ever acquired, even if the hero has atoned for them.

Dissipate Energy

Dissipate energy only works against energy damage to Wounds. It has no effect against vitality damage or stun weapon attacks. Also, the DC for the Fortitude saving throw should be "10 + damage dealt," not just "damage dealt".

Illusion

Use of the Illusion skill allows a save when the hero views or otherwise interacts with the illusion. If the player succeeds at the save, the illusion is seen as an outline only, and anything that might have otherwise been hidden inside or behind the illusion is visible. Illusion cannot be utilized to create "an illusion of nothing"; it cannot make something invisible.

Stun

If a hero hit by a stun attack makes his or her Fortitude save, the hero is unaffected by the stun attack and takes no damage. A hero who fails the Fortitude saving throw is unconscious for 1d4+1 rounds. This ruling includes heroes in the area of effect of a stun grenade. This house rule supersedes the rules in the *SWRPG-RCR*.

Hero Earnings

At the beginning of the round, if the heroes are employed, they receive their pay. No matter how much time has passed since the previous round, they receive pay for one week. Heroes may not have more than one employer. Heroes who are not employed but who have Entertain, Gamble, or Profession skills may roll against those skills to see how much they have earned in the last week. Rather than using the method in the core rules for Entertain or Gamble, however, use the method described for the Profession skill on page 96; that is, roll the check, and then multiply the result by 100 credits to determine the amount you made that week. Note that heroes may use only one of the above methods each round and

must choose which before rolling (Employment, Entertain, Gamble, or Profession). Per the rules, you may take 10 on Entertain or Profession checks, but not on Gamble. There is no pay for unskilled labor in the LIVING FORCE campaign.

Issuing Force Points

When heroes perform cinematically heroic actions, you may issue a Force Point. Because this is a heroic campaign, we expect heroism and encourage judges to reward it. In the course of a standard LIVING FORCE event, there are many opportunities for heroism. If a LIVING FORCE hero performs in a way that is heroic, dramatic, and cinematic, then a Force Point is definitely in order. Our favorite story involved the hero at the premiere, who leapt from a moving speeder, grabbed a vine, and swung on that vine to attack someone in another moving speeder. THAT is dramatic, cinematic heroism!

Not everything is that extreme, and you don't have to jump from a moving speeder to earn a Force Point, but if a hero does something that makes you, the judge, say, 'Wow,' then they should probably get a FP.

The core rules (pg 178) define "Dramatic Heroism" as follows:

To qualify as an act of dramatic heroism, an action must fulfill three criteria:

- ∞ It must accomplish a significant task in the defense of good or the defeat of evil;
- ∞ It must occur at a dramatically appropriate time (usually the climax of the adventure); and
- ∞ It should require significant risk on the part of the hero.

Issuing Dark Side Points

Unfortunately, it is impossible to produce an exhaustive list of all the possible ways people can get Dark Side Points. There are just too many ways that the beginnings of "evil" can manifest themselves.

To quote the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game Dark Side Sourcebook*... "Evil is not always easy to recognize. An innocent act may ultimately result in great suffering. An act of revenge may save the lives of millions of people. The pure at heart can lash out in anger. Evil may lurk beneath a mask of virtue. Whether an act is evil or not often boils down to a question of motivation, and motivation can be hard to identify.

"When a Gamemaster is in doubt about whether to award a Dark Side Point to a character, he or she should consider the character's motives: Did the character act out of anger? Hatred? Cruelty? Vengeance? Pride? Did the character choose an option simply because it would allow her to spill an enemy's blood? Was greed or envy involved? Jealousy?" (Great section, beginning on page 41, which illustrates the problem fairly precisely.) The GM must assess the motivations of the character, and if those motivations derive from the base emotions that are the path to the dark side, then a DSP is

appropriate.

Wookiees, Rage and Dark Side Points

Per the sidebar on page 182 of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game Revised Core Rule Book*, Wookiee Force users do not gain Dark Side Points for following their natural tendencies and using the Wookiee rage species ability. They do receive a Dark Side Point, however, if they incorporate Wookiee rage with any of their Force skills.

In addition, while in a Wookiee rage, a Wookiee Force user can't call upon the Force (except for calling upon the Dark Side when using a Force point). All other uses of the Force require more calm and peace than the Wookiee can manage while in the natural frenzy.

GM Overview

The end of the Wyrd is nigh. They have suffered fairly constant setbacks and depredations, many of them caused by the heroes of Cularin. They have become sundered from their faith and their people. Their original intent, to preserve Cularin for itself and for the Tarasin, has become perverted into a consuming hatred for all those not Wyrd and a desire to subjugate their fellow Tarasin. They would rather see Cularin destroyed, by now, than see it "infested and infected with outworlders".

In other words, the Dark Side has consumed them.

This is no accident. In their desperate need for greater power and for allies against the invaders, they chose very unwisely, allying themselves occasionally with Separatists and, fatally, with elements of the Believers. This brought them to the attention of the being known as Len Markus, who has, over the years, become the avatar for a dark power which even he does not fully understand, but for which he yearns with an insane passion.

Len has recently imparted a small portion of that power, and that insanity, to the Wyrd, and the doom of Cularin is at hand.

Using information obtained from Markus, which, unknown to the Wyrd, originated in Sith mutational practices of thousands of years ago, the Wyrd have developed a plague tailored to one specific plant: the sacred ch'hala trees. Only the Wyrd Mother knows the secret of the ch'hala: they are no ch'hala "trees", there is only one, the World Tree Ch'hala, one vast, living organism, interconnected through its root structure, that encompasses the entire planet of Cularin. It is one of the largest living creatures in the galaxy. And it is self-aware, though not in the same way that animal life forms think of awareness and intelligence. And, finally: it is strong with the Force.

By subjecting the World Tree to the plague, making it fear for its existence for the first time in ages, the Wyrd hope to do one of two things: to drive it to the Dark Side, under their control, or to destroy it and with it, the entire ecology of Cularin, as well as the spirit of the Tarasin people. This unimaginably horrible fate will

be their legacy. If they cannot rule, they will destroy all around them as they fall.

Hiironi Irstat Mother Dariana has felt the oncoming onslaught of darkness in a different way than Jedi Master Lanius Qel'Bertok, but they have shared their visions, nonetheless. Two different storms are meeting, here on Cularin. Dariana hopes to stem the first one now, with the aid of the heroes of Cularin, before the combined might of the two catastrophes plunges Cularin, and perhaps the entire galaxy, into eternal darkness.

Encounter 1: Plague The heroes are called upon by Dariana, who fears that the Wyrd have been consumed by the Dark Side and are going to take Cularin with them in their death throes. Something is wrong with the sacred ch'hala. The heroes head for the Tarasin enclave of Hiironi, and are attacked by flora and fauna of the jungle on the way there. They also notice something that they have never seen before: ch'hala in a state of decay and mutation.

Encounter 2: The Heart of the Matter Dariana asks the heroes to voyage into the Deep Jungle, to the Heart tree. There, she reveals a great secret of the Tarasin and of Cularin itself: there are no "ch'hala trees"; there is only The Ch'hala, the World Tree. It is a single, living organism on a planetary scale and it is strong with the Force. The Wyrd, driven to despair and madness by the Dark Side, seem intent upon destroying the ch'hala and Cularin with it. While Dariana and the heroes deliberate, they are attacked by a group of Wyrd. After the attack, or perhaps near the end of it, Master Lanius makes an appearance.

Encounter 3: Enclave of Evil While Lanius and Mother Dariana try to delay the death or turning of the Heart Tree, the heroes head for the Wyrd coven responsible for the plague. Once there, they must try to find out how it can be stopped. This encounter need not involve battle, but may be resolved with stealth or even Diplomacy.

Encounter 4: Final Solution After they discover the nature of the Plague, the heroes race back to stop the Wyrd's final gambit. When they return, they find the final assault and the final ritual underway.

Encounter 5: Sacrifice At the climax of the pitched battle, the despairing Wyrd attempt to destroy the Heart Tree. Master Lanius does what he must, to ensure the survival of the ch'hala, the Tarasin—and, potentially, the Jedi. He becomes one with the Force of the ch'hala, to enable it to discern the Light from the Dark, good from evil. In so doing, he is able to use the tremendous life force of the ch'hala to destroy the plague from within, at the cost of leaving this plane of existence forever.

Encounter 6: Legacy Steeped in both triumph, grief and regret for what might have been, Mother Dariana reveals the legacy of the sacrifice that was made. The immensity of the ch'hala's life force can mask the existence of many, many others, in cavern systems nestled among its deep-delving roots. If the foreseen storm should come, then Almas' Jedi, and others who oppose evil in Cularin, will now have a place of refuge. Even then, there will be a price.

Conclusion: The heroes are asked to go after the source of the turmoil: Len Markus' Believers.

Clarification regarding tiering notation: when you see something like "DC 15/20/25", use the lowest DC for the middle tier, the middle for high tier and the third for upper tier. In this scenario, tiers are for character levels: 4-6, 7-9 and 10+. In some cases the DC not follow the usual progression from tier to tier to reflect that higher level character stop being challenged by some things or that they actually find something easier than they did when they were lower level.

Important Notes for Judges: This scenario has the potential; to be one action scene after another, which is not every group's cup of blue milk. Please be aware of the potential for non-combat resolution of Encounter 3, and for potential RP opportunities and contributions in Encounters 4 and 5. As well, the staging of Encounters 4 and 5 is discussed at the beginning of Encounter 4. There are cinematic and main plot elements that "have" to happen, but there are also plenty of choices for the heroes and plenty of opportunities to be heroic, earn Force points and so forth.

Regarding combat in Encounters 4 and 5, there are some very tough opponents there, but many of them are hampered by the situation and are only there to give the heroes some good opposition and maybe a scare for about two rounds. Those encounters must not be run as a simple free-for-all battle. Check the description.

Having said all of the above: heroes *can* die in this scenario. This is a dark time for the galaxy, and especially heroes who like to have an "in your face" approach to evil may very well bite off something that can chew *them*.

Opening Crawl

Recently, there have been strange rumors of crazed animal attacks and multiple, inexplicable accidents to vehicular traffic in the Cularin jungle. Even the Tarasin, at home in the byways and recesses of the jungle shadows, have been affected by the new, eerie, unnatural menace of the green depths. It is as though a weird plague has driven Cularin itself insane.

Mother Dariana of the Hiironi Irstat has asked some of the heroes of Cularin to come to the

Irstat, to confer in this time of shadow and danger...

Encounter 1: Plague

The heroes speed to a summons by Hiironi Mother Dariana. On the way, animals and plants, in the grip of a pervasive madness caused by the Wyrd, assault them.

GM: If your group includes Tarasin PCs, you could take them aside for a few moments and give them some of the details mentioned in the following description. In that case, it would make a great deal of sense for Dariana to have contacted the Tarasin hero and asked for him or her to bring some reliable or noteworthy friends to help. Obviously, the decline in the ch'hala would be one of the things that would most concern a Tarasin. For them, it is not simply an ecological red flag; it is something bordering on a religious crisis. Note that only the Irstat Mothers and inner circle "priestesses" know of the true nature of the World-Tree ch'hala. Most Tarasin simply believe that the trees are sacred and that the health of the world and of the Tarasin are linked to it. How heavily linked, they are about to discover.

Paraphrase the following to suit.

As your transportation speeds into the jungles of Cularin, you reflect on the strange stories of the preceding few weeks: trade vessels attacked by maddened animals, uncanny accidents in the jungle, even reports of seemingly inimical plant life—tree branches interposed in front of airspeeders and the like.

GM, take a moment to decide what vehicle or vehicles the heroes are using. Many will have their own transport. If not, **Player Handout #1** and **GM Aid #1** detail landspeeders that the heroes may rent or borrow from likely sources. Rental is 50 credits per day, per vehicle, with a deposit of 1000 credits against damage, if going into the jungle. If your heroes have a reputation and are long-time heroes of Cularin, the deposit will simply be waived on trust. Note that, even if they have access to an airspeeder, which would let them avoid much of the jungle journey, the interwoven, extraordinarily dense canopy of the jungle means that they would have to descend into it at least a kilometer from the Irstat and slow down. The Tarasin do not like airspeeders simply dropping down from the sky into their Irstats, and the netting hung to impede flying predators would also cause problems. So, you can toss at least one incident at the heroes, to spice up the journey.

To those of you familiar with them, stories of, or perhaps even experiences with, the Wyrd jump to mind. But they have never been able to do anything on this scale.

Over the last five or so years, the jungle routes to the major Irstats that deal with outworlders have become relatively safe and well-known. Lately though, there is evidence of something sinister happening.

Mother Dariana has asked you to come and investigate—but now, the very jungle seems to be trying to stop you—look out!

After this initial incident (Look Out, below), pick one of the others described. These are intentionally low-threat; they serve mainly to underscore the perturbed, even perverted state of the jungle. All of these effects are either directly caused by Wyrd manipulation or are the result of animals sensing the impending crisis and becoming extremely aggressive and territorial as a result.

The incident with the moving plants might very well remind heroes of the events of the scenario *From The Trees*, if they experienced it.

Look Out: A huge tree branch suddenly swipes down towards the heroes' vehicles. While some of them may recall something like this happening before, this time it is a branch from a large, sacred ch'hala tree—unheard of! Sacrilegious!

This event can be run very simply. The stand of trees will get three swipes at the characters' vehicle(s). If there is more than one vehicle, have each pilot make a check and the three lowest get attacked. If there are two vehicles, roll off and the lower pilot check gets two attacks.

The branches get an attack bonus of (+6/+9/+12) and do 6d6 hull damage to a vehicle, or vitality damage if a character gets in the way.

Staying and "fighting with" the trees is rather foolish and pointless. Also, most disturbingly, these *are* ch'hala trees and the heroes should know better than to try to destroy them. Spot 15 or better notes that there are signs of lesions and rot on these trees. They seem somehow diseased. If anyone has relevant Botany or similar scientific skills, a success at DC 21 reveals that this is a totally unknown disease. Appropriate scanning equipment can give up to a +4 to this check. Simply eyeballing the violently thrashing trees is not very informative. The trees stop moving about thirty seconds after taking their swipe at the heroes.

If anyone Force Sensitive deliberately tries to detect signs of the Force at work, they can receive a definite impression of the Dark Side with a See Force success against DC 20. If someone has Force Light and wants to try it against the disease, surprise! It *does* work, no roll needed. One use per lesion shows almost immediate signs of helping and the tree in question, if it was thrashing, ceases immediately. The lesion will heal itself in about a day. Unfortunately, it will turn out that this will be ineffective as a short-term "cure". If they tell Dariana, it will cheer her greatly to know that something helpful was done. Alas, her next question: "But— can you do this about thirty to one

hundred thousand times in the next few days?" will bring home the scale of the problem.

The next two "attack events" are completely optional. If you have a group that just loves to shoot things, or the types who would love a chance to heroically save some people in distress, you can throw one in. Don't use both; that would take too much time.

The creatures have stats listed by tier in **GM Aid #2**.

Optional event 1: Flying Snake Swarm. Flying snake swarms are very rare outside the Deep Jungle of Cularin, so rare, indeed, that the heroes may never have encountered them before. Again, zoologists or those with appropriate skills might be able to make a check against DC 20 to identify them when they get close.

As you cruise towards the Hiironi Irstat, something that looks like a cloud of—ribbons?—drops from the trees into your path and falls or swoops towards you. Whatever they are, they're about three meters long and half a meter wide and it looks like the near end has teeth...

Presuming that the heroes stated that they were keeping any kind of lookout at all, their pilot has a chance to avoid the main part of the swarm of thirty Giant Flying Snakes. Pilot DC check 14/20/23 success will mean that only one snake per hero will be flown through. Otherwise, the full swarm of thirty is divided between the available heroes as their transport goes right through the swarm. Note that heroes who happen to have a completely enclosed vehicle would be immune to attack, so this would be the wrong event to choose for such heroes. If the heroes get the whole swarm, it will flee when more than half of its number have been killed or seriously injured.

When the snakes have been defeated or driven off, proceed to Encounter 2. Mother Dariana can provide an antitoxin to revive anyone who is sleeping due to the effect of the venom.

Optional event 2: Dino dilemma. ***As you cruise towards the Hiironi Irstat, you hear a titanic bellow of anger, from some gigantic denizen of the deep jungle. Strangeness, again, nothing that sounds that big is usually found so near the fringes. Best to swing around it and avoid it. But wait—was that the sound of a blaster and rending metal?***

Well, yes, it was. One of Renna's transports has run afoul of a huge, maddened, predatory kilassin, during a standard run to the Hiironi Irstat. By now, this trade route had become so safe that they were not prepared for so vicious and unprovoked an attack. One of the repulsors has been knocked out of alignment and, while it would be an easy task to repair it, going outside the transport is not on the driver's and loader's minds right now. They are trying to drive the beast away with hand blasters and they are very unlikely to succeed.

The heroes can try to lure the creature away or take it out. If they manage to inflict any wounds, or reduce its vitality by 25%, it will become enraged at them and try to pursue and eat them. If they can get it far enough away that the transport can have five undisturbed minutes, they'll be on their way and out of danger. Of course, the heroes may decide that the beast cannot be left to endanger others.

Any skills or Force Skills that would be used to pacify the creature have a higher difficulty due to its enraged and somewhat deranged state (+8 to it's save to resist) and cannot be used in any event if the heroes are actively attacking the creature.

When the creature has been defeated or driven off, proceed to Encounter 2. If the crew of Renna's transport is still around, they will be suitably grateful here. If not, feel free to have them thank the heroes as a quick aside in the next scene.

Encounter 2: The Heart of the Matter

Mother Dariana takes the heroes to the Deep Jungle, there to reveal a great secret of Cularin itself: the existence of the World-Tree, Ch'hala. However, a terrible crisis is upon the world: Cularin itself may be dying.

To punctuate the emergency, a strike team of Wyrd attacks as the heroes and Mother Dariana leave the area. Master Lanius arrives near the end of the altercation and a desperate plan is put into action.

As you arrive at the Hiironi Irstat, a disturbing sight greets your eyes. The towering, massive ch'hala trees around the town are showing signs of illness, of senescence perhaps, or of—disease? There has never been a recorded case of a ch'hala with any sort of disease. Sometimes, a tree becomes damaged and is ritually pruned, and another soon springs from its place. But the ch'hala, among which the Tarasin live, are sick.

You can see that there won't be any ceremony involved with getting to see elderly Mother Dariana: she and a pair of Tarasin warriors are heading right for you. The guards stand a respectful distance back, as she addresses you

"Thank you for answering the call. I must ask you to travel yet again, if you are willing."

Let the heroes converse with her briefly, if they wish. However, Dariana will then continue.

"You have proven yourselves, time and again, to have the good of Cularin at heart. The next thing I do, I do not do lightly, for it involves breaking millennia of tradition and revealing the great secret of my people and of this very world. Yet, now, when all is in the balance, someone must be trusted. I can think of no one more trustworthy,

outside my own people and council, than you. Will you once more risk much for us, and keep faith with us?"

Unless the heroes say or do something really stupid, she is willing to accept almost any reasonable assurance. She is desperate, but, more than that, she does trust the heroes of Cularin. If they agree to help and be discreet:

"Then we must go as quickly as we can, to a hidden place in the Deep Jungle. I will come with you. Though I do not like mechanical conveyances, there is not a moment to be lost. Cularin is dying."

Four Irstat guards will accompany Mother Dariana and the heroes. If necessary, another vehicle can be obtained here in the Irstat. Many Tarasin, of course, have embraced modern technology.

You have traveled at high speed for over two hours, straight into the densest parts of the jungle, into completely unknown territory. Not a thing, neither creature nor plant, has interfered with your passage. Indeed, occasionally Dariana gestured and obstacles seemed to thin out or move aside.

"The Heart of our people is still strong, and guards us," explains Dariana. "But, for how much longer?"

The deep jungle is dark, the canopy above so thick and unbroken that it produces an eternal twilight.

At a signal from Dariana, the vehicles are brought to a halt. The guards remain behind and you proceed on foot through a veritable wall of thorny plants, by a narrow path that Dariana has to point out. As you pass into a huge, bowl-shaped depression, you find your way blocked by a hill.

No. Not a hill. In shock, as you crane your heads back, back, and look up, you realize that it is "a ch'hala tree", though that phrase is inadequate by magnitudes. It is fully two hundred meters in diameter and extends upwards literally out of sight, its titanic main branches wide enough for villages to be built upon them, its infinite smaller branches weaving off among the other jungle plants.

Dariana turns to you.

"Hear, now, the heart of my people. There are no 'ch'hala trees'. There is only this, the Heart Tree, the World-Tree, Ch'hala. Over all of Cularin it grows, this one being. What you think of as groves, forests, jungles are all but the offshoots of its infinite roots. It is One. It is Ch'hala. It is The Heart. It is Cularin.

"And—it is dying.

"The Wyrd have done something obscene. Somehow, they have infected The Heart with a darkness. For the first time since the dawn of the

world, Ch'hala is afraid, sick and afraid."

No, not even Tarasin heroes knew of this. The nature of the World Tree is only revealed to those in the innermost councils of the matriarchies.

Any heroes who have some way of detecting life and intelligence will be overwhelmed by a life force beyond anything they could have experienced, one that creates a glowing fractal pattern of infinite complexity fading off in all directions. If they have some way of detecting intelligence or thought or emotion, and use it, they can also detect that this is, by some standard at least, a sentient being of immense antiquity. While there is a huge feeling of peace and wisdom, that is now overlaid by a very recent layer of uncomprehending fear.

It is not possible to communicate, or to help, beyond the most rudimentary contact. The heroes simply have no experience with life on this scale.

Suddenly, back in the direction of the vehicles, the guards cry out and there is the sound of blaster fire.

Dariana will be heading back. Presumably the heroes will go to help.

Two guards are already wounded and down and, as you arrive, the remaining two join them, grunting in pain as they fall. Doubtless their Tarasin attackers would have finished them off, but as you arrive, they are forced to turn to you, instead.

Stats for these Wyrd attackers are found in **GM Aid # 1**. They will not flee, though they might go down fighting without dying.

If the heroes are winning handily, let them complete the combat before Lanius arrives. If they are getting too hurt, then Lanius can arrive and help out. Best not to let this battle run more than five rounds or so. Choose your description:

Heroes win: ***As the last opponent falls, a speeder bike hurtles into the clearing. It is none other than Master Lanius Qel'Bertok, just in the nick of time.***

"I see that you folk have things well in hand," he says as he dismounts.

He looks at Dariana.

"I got your call. I am here to help, as we agreed. It seems that the time is upon us."

Heroes need help: ***It could be going better—and suddenly, it is! A speeder bike hurtles into the clearing and a man in the robes of a Jedi Master leaps from it. Master Lanius Qel'Bertok's lightsaber flashes into life and, as fanatic Wyrd throw themselves at him, he grimly does what he must. Between your own renewed assault and his, the remaining opposition goes down in moments. Some are unconscious or badly***

injured; some will not rise again.

Lanius looks at Dariana.

"I got your call. I am here to help, as we agreed. It seems that the time is upon us."

GM, you can improvise it from here. If the heroes have captured prisoners, they may be able to extract the location of the Wyrd camp, though it should not be easy. If they cannot, Mother Dariana can, though she will have to use an invasive Force skill that she possesses—her ways are not those of the Jedi. If there are no prisoners, presume that Mother Dariana has the coordinates of the last known base camp of the shattered Wyrd, gleaned from her recent communion with The Heart. It moves around, but the latest position is only about an hour from here by vehicle—ominously close to the World Tree.

Lanius indicates that he will stay here, heal the guards as best he can, and aid Dariana to commune with Ch'hala and try to calm the great being and slow the gradually rising panic in its consciousness. He gives the heroes a comm channel (and a comlink, if none of them have one), which can contact him, but indicates that this is for emergency use only—he will be wrapped in mental communion with The Heart.

Mother Dariana will stress that the heroes' mission is to go to the camp and to try to determine the nature of this plague and what, if anything, can be done to reverse it. She will strongly advise against turning it into a fight and will also caution the heroes against "the First Witch of the Wyrd". This dark-scaled, aged female, with a twisting purple pattern of markings, is strong in the Force and terrible in combat, not to mention totally insane. She can kill a deep jungle lizard with a wave of her hand. She has no name; destroying her name was one of the first rituals she undertook.

"Her days will end, and soon," predicts Dariana, "but your goal must be to save Ch'hala. Please hurry."

Encounter 3: Enclave of Evil

The heroes travel to the last remaining large enclave of Wyrd on Cularin. Their goal is not to attack, but to find out what they can of the plans of the Wyrd.

The Scene: GM, this is not a "village" or "base" of the Wyrd. They are too fragmented and too much on the run for that, by now. This is more of an interim camp for the last of the fanatics, while their leaders and remaining powerful members make their last play to snatch a victory, rather than fall into ruin.

Have a look at the map in **GM Aid #3**. There is a scattering of huts and about forty individuals here. They are mostly of "movie extra" quality and are shown as such in **GM Aid #2**. There are only a number of competent Wyrd equal to the number of heroes. Mind you, this encounter need never come to

combat. It is more intended to let the thinkers and planners strut their stuff. At one end of the encampment, in the side of an escarpment, there is a tunnel and small system of two caves. The leaders were holed up in there. The heroes may think that they still are, but in fact all of the tough Wyrd, including the First Witch, are off to enact their final "Ritual of the Power of the Dark", to try to turn Ch'hala to the Dark Side.

There are two "extra quality" Wyrd on lackadaisical guard duty at the mouth of the tunnel. Just about everyone in the camp are listless and depressed. They expect to die, if their Mistresses last bid for domination fails. Nonetheless, if they sight the heroes or are attacked, they will rise to the occasion and try to kill the heroes. Being fanatics and in some cases complete nihilists by now, they will go down fighting rather than surrender.

Unless the heroes are very incautious, they will be able to reconnoiter the camp. The Wyrd do not know that their hiding place was found out. Mother Dariana determined its location through communion with Ch'hala, before the plague took strong root. They post only an intermittent guard and the guards are fairly widely spaced. There are two pairs, composed of "extra" quality Wyrd, up in trees. The positions are marked on the map on **GM Aid #3**, but not on **Player Handout #2**. They have done their best to blend in, but the Wyrd's natural scale color is often marred by tattoo-like patterns which somewhat lessen their hiding ability. A Spot 16/21/24 will note any guard group to which the heroes happen to come near. Skills and equipment could modify this. The arrow on the map indicates the heroes' approach vector. They may certainly decide to change course.

If the heroes can use stealth or a distraction or Force Skills or simply a clever plan to sneak into the tunnel system (the obvious place of interest), then once they get into the first cave, noise will not carry to the outside unless it is very loud. Once they proceed into the inner, second cave, it would require a Listen DC 20 success for anyone on the outside to hear even a blaster shot, due to the nonlinear path of the tunnels.

Final roleplaying note: You may have some heroes who are Investigators or really, really good negotiators. If they wish to try to use these skills, please do not veto it or presume automatic failure. Investigators might be able to profile the caves and come up with an easy way to find useful information (drastically lower Search/Spot DCs). A truly heroic-level negotiator might even be able to swing fanatics (especially demoralized fanatics) into a new way of thinking. Fanatics tend to be at one end of the spectrum or the other. These will fight to the death if attacked, more because they feel that they have no other option and are full of hate because they look to be losing. If the heroes end up bringing a howling mob of Tarasin ex-Wyrd, who are screaming "you *lied* to us" at their former masters, then the final fight can simply allow more of the really tough Wyrd to combat some of their former followers. That kind of tactic

should have appropriately heroic requirements, though because it is an extreme (though very cinematically appropriate) one. Likely something on the order of DC 30/35/45 Diplomacy or the like, with assistance (and maybe even Force powers) possible for aid.

If the heroes can think of clever and dramatic plans and execute them with good roleplay, they may easily be worth Force Points, too. As long as the main premise of the scenario is intact, please adapt to your players. On the other hand, you need not suggest “fringe” ideas to them.

As well, the episode with Cheelru in the inner cave can be handled with roleplay and the heroes may be able to get a lot of useful information from the mad Wyrd. She, alas, cannot be recruited or helped in the short term—the Dark Side has destroyed her mind.

The outer cave is the spot in which the remaining powerful Wyrd and the First Witch made their temporary quarters. There are curtained-off sleeping places for 6, and a larger area for the First Witch. Foodstuffs, serviceable traveling furniture, clothing, pallets and bedrolls, some personal effects such as jewelry and the like (yes, if there are thieves present, the lot would fetch about 1500 credits if fenced—Appraise DC 15 will reveal that).

It has only one thing of real interest: a Search DC 21/24/27 or a Spot DC 24/27/30 success will reveal, among the effects in the First Witch's section, a rather modern-looking datapad with encryption. Taking 20 for the Search is possible, if they fail their first try, but the heroes will have two caves to search and you should make them feel like they would not have enough time to take 20 in both (though they could take 10 in one). Cracking the protection should not be impossible, but it will take at least an hour to do so carefully enough not to spoil the data. In other words, there is not enough time now. It should be saved for later. GM, this datapad actually will provide the segue to the next scenario, but contains nothing of immediate use to the heroes. Don't let them fixate on it. If necessary, have Cheelru, in the next cave, have a wracking coughing fit, which comes dimly up the tunnel.

The inner cave is obviously a work area and some sort of religious shrine. There are scrolls of the sort that the Tarasin used for their ancient, traditional writings. Some now have more recent texts, containing the ravings of the Wyrd, full of hate and xenophobia. And there are two very out-of-place items on one table. Descriptions follow, for when the heroes get around to examining them.

One is a receptacle for what must have been a rod-shaped object, and the other is a very odd item that resembles an old, clunky holoprojector. The receptacle is about a meter long, of some old ceramic-metallic substance that, if touched, feels cold and almost slimy. It radiates an almost palpable, ancient evil to anyone who is Force Sensitive, and to others it just gives a “bad feeling”, the kind that makes your nape hairs stand on end.

The other device will either require a Tech Specialist's Repair DC 19/23/26 to get going, or a Repair DC 22/25/28 from anyone else. (Tech Specialists are simply better at manipulating unknown tech.) The record in it is now fragmentary (the Wyrd destroyed most of it after learning what they needed to cause the plague, and after learning the ritual). The dry, menacing voice speaks across the ages, as a shadowy, black-robed and hooded figure materializes over the projecting crystal. The first few syllables are unintelligible, but then the translator circuits kick in and it changes to an archaic form of Basic.

“—the Ritual of the Power of the Dark—channel through the shard—hatred and fear will accomplish what force cannot—turn from within—nothing can withstand the power of the Dark Side.”

Another missing section, then:

“—in the ultimate extremity, there is always the path of blood. What cannot be turned can always be destroyed, no matter how powerful, if the blood price is paid. Strike at the heart, and the body dies.”

The remaining sections are unplayable and the apparition flickers out.

A Search DC 21/24/27 or a Spot DC 24/27/30 will also reveal a modern map-flimsy. The coordinates on it match those of the Heart Tree. There is another position marked, only about 400meters away from The Heart, though in that dense jungle it would be invisible from the ground around Ch'hala. If the heroes miss this, you can have Lanius, armed with the knowledge that the Wyrd are in the near area, locate the ritual team via his communion with The Heart.

The heroes may not actually get to search or examine the artifacts right away, because there is someone in the cave. Chained to one wall at position “T” on the map is a Tarasin. Her name is Cheelru, and she is quite insane. She is one of the Wyrd's witches, but she disagreed with the First Witch regarding what should be done if the plague failed. Cheelru argued that if the ultimate obscenity were committed, and The Heart was actually destroyed, it would be the end of everything the Wyrd believed in and there would be nothing left to rule. She has been left here for future sacrifice. She would like to be released, but that would not stop her from trying to kill the heroes if they did so.

If any hero has experienced the events of *From The Trees*, that hero will recognize this Tarasin as one of the ones in the Hand, a foul, evil, ancient artifact that was used to rip the spirits from victims, for the Wyrd's purposes. Cheelru is evil, twisted and a sociopath murderess many times over.

If the heroes question her, she is quite willing to talk. As far as she is concerned, the world is due to end in a couple of hours, so it really does not matter.

Who are you? ***“I am Cheelru, of the Inner Circle. You should abase yourself.”***

Maybe some other time. Why are you chained to the wall? ***“Because otherwise I would escape. Stupid.”***

Let me put this another way: why are you chained to the wall? ***“I disagreed with the First Witch. I am right, but she is more powerful. So much for Truth.”***

Right? What about? ***“The Ritual of the Power of the Dark.”***

What’s that? ***“That which will make The Heart our ally and give us Cularin to rule. Then we will destroy or drive off all you filthy outworlders. I vote for destroy.”***

What did you disagree about? ***“The Ritual is not absolutely certain. It may be that the Heart can resist it. If so, we have lost. The First Witch is too unwilling to lose again. If that happens, she will destroy all, and us with it. She will kill the Heart with blood.”***

What does that mean? ***“I don’t feel like telling you.”*** No Force Skill or coercion could make her think of the others as friends, or make her confide in them.

Why have you told us what you have? ***“You can do nothing about it.”***

How about if we offer to release you? ***“That would be nice.”***

What would you do for us in exchange? ***“I would kill you. It would be a mercy and an honor for you.”***

Uh, no thanks. Maybe you’d like to tell us where the First Witch is doing this ritual? ***“Certainly. But that death would be less pleasant. On one of those tables there should be a map. She and the others will be near The Heart.”***

The others? ***“The ritual team and guards. In total, about twice as many as you.”***

When is this all supposed to happen? ***“When will the world end? I am not sure—I can’t see the sun from here. What time is it?”***

She cannot be more specific than ***“Soon”***, but the heroes should get the idea that it’s today, and that they’d better get moving.

If they let her go, she will not make an alarm, but she will try to kill them; otherwise she just sits there and awaits the end of the world. If needed, use stats identical to one of the Ritual Team members from Encounter 4, in **GM Aid #2**.

Once the heroes have the information, they should race back to The Heart. If they think to use a comlink to contact Lanius, he will listen to their report, say, ***“Help is on the way from the Hiironi Irstat, but get back here yourselves, with all you found, as fast as you can”***—and about that time, a static burst will jam communications. Time to zoom, heroes.

Proceed to Encounter 4.

Encounter 4: Final Solution

Returning with their data, the heroes find the final

assault underway. They know, however, that the physical danger is just the tip of the iceberg: the Ritual of the Power of the Dark must be disrupted to prevent the turning of Ch’hala to the Dark Side.

Paraphrase the following to suit, if the heroes do some planning with Lanius on the way back via comlink. The cinematic intent is that the heroes will get to disrupt the ritual, but will be geographically about 400 meters distant from Lanius. Initially, jungle cover will prevent a sight line, but this is dealt with in the next encounter.

With the fate of the world in the balance, you sped back with a fine disregard for personal safety, but the Force was with you. What you found has been dropped off, and Lanius has asked you to find the Wyrld coven and stop the ritual.

“If things get desperate, call for me—but right now, Mother Dariana and I are all that are stopping Ch’hala from succumbing to fear and anger.”

Judge roleplaying note: If you have a hero who is totally unsuited for combat, you could have that person help Mother Dariana coordinate her different Force path with Lanius’ efforts. If Force Sensitive and possessed of empathic powers, the hero could directly assist in calming Ch’hala. If not Force Sensitive, the hero could communicate through Mother Dariana. However, that person will miss the next scene (and should not be standing beside Lanius, but beside Dariana. You would have to paraphrase some description for that hero, allowing them to feel the ebb and surge of forces and emotions in the sick Heart. When the climax of the next section comes, the shock of the final blood ritual would require the hero to make a Fort DC 30 save not to pass out, if this is a Force Sensitive hero in direct contact. Have the hero wake up for the “Legacy” encounter, of course.

Important Judge note regarding flow of this encounter and Encounter 5: Essentially, these two encounters are really one long one, with a split to emphasize a dramatic point. Also, by the end of this encounter, the heroes can achieve as much as they need to for full adventure XP, by disrupting the ritual.

Please understand that, although there are set things to happen, there is a lot of room for flexibility in the specifics of how the heroes end up fighting some of the Wyrld, and how the battle goes. The simplest sequence is as follows: the heroes arrive and find the Wyrld. They fight for a few rounds with the outer circle guards and manage to down one of the inner circle ritual team, or to hurt (or maybe even kill) the First Witch. At that point, Encounter 4 has technically ended, as reading below will show. Then, to start Encounter 5, the First Witch (or her replacement) enacts the back-up, dark ritual of blood (this must happen). There may be another round or two of combat at this point. Lanius then makes his sacrifice and things come to a conclusion.

Again please note that not all of the Wyrd are available to combat the heroes for the entirety of the two encounters. Please be familiar with the situation before running it, as the number and quality of Wyrd allows you to easily fine tune and balance the combat to your heroes. Start with the outer guards (or even one or two less of them if the heroes are badly chewed up) and if the heroes are winning too easily, then as soon as they disrupt the first ritual, add some inner Witches to up the ante and give them a bit of a scare. As stated below in Encounter 5, though, the scare won't last for more than two rounds of combat, maximum.

You will note that the heroes, effectively, “must” end up “winning”, in that the main campaign storyline requires the sanctuary (see Legacy) to be established. However, it is the *quality* of the win that they can determine. If things go badly, it is entirely possible that one or more heroes could perish, or some Wyrd get away, etc. In *Star Wars*, these heroes are operating against a sweeping backdrop of events, some of which are game “history” and some of which, in this LF campaign, have been planned in order to make the campaign “fit well” with the movies. However, the heroes are still the stars of their portion of the universe.

The heroes can either find the Wyrd with their map, or Lanius, informed of their presence, can break through the obscuring veil of the Dark Side and pinpoint them.

As the heroes arrive, they will see a young ch'hala sapling, with a meter-long, carved, black metallic rod driven into the wood, splitting the trunk. A sickly, malevolent, purple glow comes from the wound. Holding the rod is the First Witch of the Wyrd, a Tarasin crone who nonetheless exudes an aura of power. Beside her is a younger Witch: her destined replacement and second-in-command.

There are two circles of Tarasin around the sapling. The first consists of five female Wyrd Witches, the remnants of the Inner Circle, all focusing their Force powers on the First Witch, all incanting in an archaic and loathsomely-perverted form of Tarasin speech, to help them channel.

The second circle, facing outwards and now drawing together to interpose themselves between the heroes and the witches, are Wyrd elite guards, also the last remaining ones. Unlike many opponents in *Star Wars*, these are utter fanatics and will do anything they can to prevent interference with the ritual, even throwing themselves in the path of a speeder to deflect it, or otherwise taking crazy risks to intercept the heroes. See the descriptions in GM Aid #2. They have a mix of archaic and modern weapons.

There is a portable force shield bubble around the two circles. It would stop fast-moving projectiles (including vehicles) and blaster fire, from either side, but will not impede a normally-moving body from walking through—much like the large, Gungan energy domes, in *Star Wars Episode One*. To get through, the heroes will have to close. The shield extends

about five meters beyond the outer circle of guards. Force powers do work through the shield. The heroes are lucky that, for the moment, the Inner Circle witches are absolutely concentrating on the ritual.

To disrupt the ritual, the heroes have to either do a significant amount of damage to the First Witch (at least 75% vitality, or at least 4 wounds—she makes her Fort save, period, dramatic license), or have to take down any one of the ritual circle members. Defeating any of the outer guards does not stop the ritual. The ritual will continue until the heroes are either defeated or have succeeded, but don't tell the players this—let them think that the ritual is about to conclude. This is technically true, since it has been going on for about eleven hours, since before they even came to The Heart.

This combat is very unlikely to be long, unless the heroes let themselves get faked into wasting all of their efforts on the outer guards. Give them an opening to attack at least one ritual witch after five rounds or so, latest, or if they are getting too badly chewed up. On the other hand, if they are simply overpowering the opposition and manage to take one down on round two, or something, that is fine.

When the heroes inflict severe damage on any one of the ritual members, or completely wipe out the guards and attack the ritual:

“No! Mistress!” cries the First Witch’s assistant, “they have broken the ritual! We cannot turn The Heart, now!”

A kaleidoscope of colors race over the scales of the First Witch: rage, fear, despair, hatred.

Everyone suddenly experiences a very bad feeling about this.

Proceed to Encounter 5. It's likely to be a fairly seamless transition.

Encounter 5: Sacrifice

As the Wyrd see that they are going to lose, they perform a terrible ritual of blood to try and take Ch'hala and Cularin with them. Master Lanius uses the only method known to him to reinforce the World-Tree's spirit and life-force: he allies his own with it, becoming one with the Force, as a titanic decaying branch crashes down onto him.

GM: Melodrama alert. There is a fine line between drama and melodrama. *Star Wars* is space opera. Larger than life heroes and villains engage in actions of galactic significance and make deadpan speeches that would be totally out of place anywhere else. The descriptions that follow are meant to convey intensity and the large scale of *Star Wars* scenes. Paraphrase them to your comfort level, but please try to get the gist across, especially where Lanius' sacrifice is concerned. He's been with us since the start, but everything has an ending.

Note: if the heroes managed to kill or take down the First Witch, despite all of your efforts, don't use a

Plot Hammer to stop it. Have the Assistant, reveling in her promotion, take over the following lines, and she can callously kill one of the ritual team.

The First Witch screams with rage and calls out, "You have not won, fools! You have simply caused the end of days!"

In her hand, the dark rod suddenly sprouts a wicked-looking spike at the near end.

The remaining Wyrd now throw themselves towards you, all except for the First Witch and her assistant.

GM: run one or two rounds of battle. Note that the ritual team witches are extremely powerful, but that all of them have lost a lot of vitality to the ritual, as their stats indicate. Still, if they get to cut loose, they should be able to scare a few heroes with a massive Force attack or the like. The ritual team members and any remaining guards, will get in the way, attack, take shots and otherwise render it impossible for any hero to do more than wing the First Witch, if that.

This is your chance to cut loose with a lot of flashy Dark Side Force skills like Force Lightning and so on. So what if they're not particularly effective; they're fun and look good.

Then, after a bit of furious carnage, have the climactic event interrupt the fighting.

"Thus we triumph!" screams the First Witch, holding the spike of the rod towards herself, as her assistant watches with adoring eyes. "I invoke the Path of Blood!"

"I will remember you Mistress!" shrieks her second-in-command.

"No. You won't," replies the First Witch, as she plunges the spike into her assistant's breast.

The Wyrd's dying shriek is drowned out by a cacophony of roiling wind and crackling power, as a red torrent of energy erupts from the rod and the First Witch, streaking out and away towards The Heart.

At the fringes of the titanic wave of dark force, guards, witches and heroes alike are frozen in place by the unimaginable power, as if caught in some gargantuan electrical discharge.

Around the path of the beam, the jungle foliage literally withers away in an instant. A clear path is cut towards The Heart, and all can now see the tormented World Tree, it's huge branches flailing and rotting, while at its base, Mother Dariana and Master Lanius stand motionless, arms raised as if in comfort or supplication.

"It all ends now!" cries the First Witch, "Ch'hala, you would not join us—now, die!"

The stream of energy suddenly vanishes into The Heart. Around it, a sickly glow forms, and the diseased, rotting appearance begins to spread like an oil slick.

Feeling begins to return to your limbs. After the roaring rush, the silence feels like you have been deafened. But the calm, commanding voice

of Master Lanius carries to you somehow—or perhaps, it is not really his voice at all.

"No, friend Ch'hala, there is another way. Despair is a lie. Embrace hope."

In a terrible, twisted answer, one of the massive, limbs of the terrified Heart slices down through the air, straight for Lanius.

"No," he says calmly, "I will not desert you."

With a ponderous explosion of sound, the branch smashes into the ground. Master Lanius Qel'Bertok is gone.

The First Witch's triumphant yell is cut off, as The Heart goes completely still. Then, red energy sprays away in all directions and dissipates, while a return bolt of it arcs back into your glade—and blows the First Witch into a thin red mist. The rod explodes into a thousand fragments.

Some of the Wyrd begin to scatter into the jungle. A few, desperation in their eyes, turn back to you.

GM, if you think it would give the heroes some satisfaction or catharsis to flatten a few more Wyrd, and if you have the time, go ahead. Give the remaining Wyrd a circumstantial -4 to attack and damage for despair and the firm knowledge that they have lost. You need about 10 or 15 minutes for the last encounters' descriptions, plus sign-off time. If you are pressed for time, or the heroes are glutted with combat, then have the Wyrd surrender or try to beat a retreat, paraphrasing the above description as needed. The Hiironi Irstat Tarasin will arrive shortly and take them into custody, and they will not be seen again.

At the base of the World-Tree Ch'hala can be found the empty robes of a Jedi Master.

Just in case it is not clear, Master Lanius voluntarily became a Force Spirit, but in an atypical manner—he merged his essence with that of Ch'hala, lending it his strength and knowledge of the Light Side and, perhaps even more importantly, helping it to realize that it had an ally and a friend from the outside world. Together, the wisdom of Lanius and the immense connection with the Force that Ch'hala shared, was easily enough to rebuff the dark ritual. Over the next few days, all of the damage of the Dark Plague will cease and Ch'hala will renew itself. However, Lanius is gone.

Encounter 6: Legacy

The battle is over; the World Tree Ch'hala is saved; the Wyrd have been shattered as a force for evil. And Master Lanius Qel'Bertok is no more. The heroes of Cularin are steeped in a mixture of triumph and tragedy. Yet, amidst the sadness and in the shadow of the future, the heroes are given a new hope.

Well, GM, there's a long descriptive section, here, but

as it explains some of the secrets of the LF campaign, and how LIVING FORCE can avoid interfering with movie “canon”, we’ll hope that your table is interested. If not, just abstract the info to something like: **“There’s a big hole. You can hide in it later, if you like.”** Then move on to the loot section. Sigh.

Feel free to break it up, shorten it and/or paraphrase it. If you understand the content thoroughly, you can even turn it into a question and answer session with your heroes. That would, in fact, be a good way to avoid simply having to read the thing through.

Still, since we cannot do the gorgeous visuals of Mr. Lucas, we use descriptive narrative.

Note that as Mother Dariana explains the Great Plan, her voice will take on an almost otherworldly, chanting, prophesying quality. She already has one foot in the next world, and is remaining only long enough to conclude her long labor.

There are sounds of weeping and the moans of the injured as they are being tended to. There are sounds of contained triumph among the Hiironi Tarasin, who have seen the end of the Wyrđ as a force for evil. The “ch’hala trees” have been saved. But at what price?

Mother Dariana beckons to you.

“You have been here at the end and at the beginning. Though Master Lanius has gone before, it will not be long before I, too, go to my long sleep, my rest. I do not fear it. I welcome it, but I must first finish my work.

“If not for you, all Cularin would have died; the world would have become a wasted husk and a festering pile of evil and decay. So: you have earned the sight of that which has occupied Master Lanius and myself for two years—that which is the culmination of untold millennia of our Tarasin culture.

“Come with me.”

Dariana leads you to the very base of The Heart, between two roots that are larger than some starships. There is a dark cleft where they meet. Dariana waves her hand and the undergrowth parts to show a cramped, shadowy hole. Without hesitation she crawls headfirst into it and vanishes.

It seems unlikely that the heroes will balk at going in, but they do not have to. Any who do go in will find out what follows.

Because of the gloom and the cramped conditions, the journey on hands and knees seems long, but in reality it cannot have been more than two or three minutes. After a dogleg, the dim, phosphorescent glow of the tunnel begins to brighten and you emerge into what seems to be, as you enter, a small, earthen alcove.

Then, you turn to your right, and look on the beginnings of immensity.

The earth and rock under the Heart are festooned with chambers and tunnels and cysts, all running off in a myriad of directions. Smaller roots and rootlets of the Heart hang freely in these vaulted caverns, and filigrees of rootlets form basketlike nodules in which light gleams: gold, green, blue, white.

There are streamlets of clear water running along rocky depressions and tumbling down, down, into unseen, further chambers.

And whether you are sensitive to the Force or not, the very air that you breathe seems charged with Life. It is like a fairyland out of old tales, and many beings of various species move within.

It is clear that the root system of a creature the size of a planet is intertwined with all this. If the roots had died, who knows how unstable this would have become?

Mother Dariana begins to speak, her voice transcendent, her face and color expressing exultation.

“You are come within the Great Plan. These are but the Outer Precincts. There are several cubic kilometers of connected caves and tunnels, the Caverns of Forever. The roots of The Heart extend throughout them all and surround them. Once, knowing that it existed, and with knowledge of exactly whom he sought, Master Lanius stood above, at the very entranceway to this section. Despite all of his power with the Force, he could not even tell that there were other living things below. The life force of a whole planet, of the World-Tree Ch’hala, masks what lies within, and makes it seem only that Cularin is a world of dense jungle with many plants and animals. Only if someone here below uses the Force actively, would there be a chance of detection, by someone looking for it. Not even the Jedi Council of Coruscant knows of this place. Lanius disagreed on this point, but respected my demands. Originally, the Caverns were to be for Tarasin only, and revealed even to our own people only at the last extremity.

“For his sacrifice, and for your aid, this place will be made available, should the dark storm, which Lanius and I have foreseen, truly descend upon the galaxy. The Jedi of Almas, and other foes of evil and the Dark, will, if they wish, find refuge here.

“There will still be a price. Lanius was not the most powerful in the Force, as you call it. There may be those far more powerful and far more evil.

Once the time comes, if come it does, those who enter here will not be allowed to depart again until the storm is past—and that will likely be years. Moreover, they will not be allowed to use their abilities of the Force, or train with them, lest they betray and doom all. It will be as if they had ceased to exist. But they will be able to learn, and teach, and carry on a new hope for the future. Some may decide to remain outside, and fight evil as best they can.

"It is the nature of this place, and of the ritual of preparation that Lanius and we enacted, that those who see it now and leave will forget about it, so that they cannot betray its existence. So will it be with yourselves: yet, in respect for what you have risked and done, you will carry a kernel of hope, a seed, so to speak, with you. At some future time of great darkness, it may give you the will to persevere and, perhaps, to triumph. Should the storm come, and you decide to take refuge here, memory will return."

Her mood seems to pass, and it is simply an aged, tired Mother Dariana who speaks again.

"Now, my friends, rest with us for a day or two while your information is analyzed, and then perhaps we will see what and who has been at work, here."

And, as you try to take it all in, a quiet, calm, familiar voice seems to whisper in your mind: *"The Force will be with you always, my friend."*

Conclusion

Two days of restful healing have passed. The Hiironi Tarasin have dispersed from the Heart Tree. You are on the surface, again, the Caverns of Forever already a dim memory, more a feeling of warmth than anything else.

Any harm that the heroes have taken will have been fully healed by now. The Tarasin have many skilled healers and the Almas Jedi will also have been allowed to use their talents.

Dariana accepts a package of materials from an acolyte and examines a datapad, then looks at you.

"It is as we thought. The preliminary analysis of your information has been completed. We also passed a copy to Osten Dal'Nay, as there seemed to be a connection with the war against the Separatists.

"The Wyrd were in collaboration, at one time, with the Thaereians and the Separatists. This we already knew: they had, ironically, abandoned their policy of complete isolation and xenophobia to get aid as their forces waned. They would use offworlders to destroy offworlders: so they thought, in their 'wisdom'.

"But there was a more tenuous, a much more threadlike link, of which we could not be sure until now. Buried in the notes of the First Witch of the Wyrd is unmistakable evidence. A different source gave the knowledge of the Plague of Darkness to the Wyrd: the Believers, led by the one known as Len Markus. The ritual drew on the power of some sort of ancient, evil artifact, created by extinct users of the Dark Side.

"The Cularin Armed Forces responded to our information. They have the coordinates of a base

that purportedly houses this Markus and a group of his Believer fanatics, and they will be sending a force to capture him. If you are willing, I would like you to accompany them as the Tarasin's—and as Cularin's—representatives, to be there at the end of this matter.

"Apparently, officials very, very high in the Republic think highly of you, as a 'special forces team', they call it—and insisted that you be offered the opportunity. Will you go?"

Of course they will—but that's another story.

Here Ends, "Heart of Evil"

Experience Point Summary

Experience is calculated as follows for LIVING FORCE events.

- 1) Experience awards in the SWRPG are not made for achieving objectives, but instead for successfully completing an adventure of a given length. Thus, if the heroes survived and accomplished the primary goal of the adventure, they receive full Adventure Experience.
- 2) Assign discretionary role-playing experience. These should reward accurate character portrayal throughout the adventure, not just how well the PC interacted socially. Do NOT automatically award max roleplaying XP, consider carefully how well the players stayed in-character. This is your opportunity to reward appropriately cinematic behavior, so use it!

Adventure Experience Award:

Did the heroes prevent the ritual and prevent Ch'hala from going to the Dark Side? If so, each hero who survived receives 1,500 xp.

Adventure Experience:	1,500 xp
Roleplaying Experience:	0-750 xp

Total Possible Experience:	2.250 xp
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If the heroes did not complete the scenario because of time constraints, but were "on the right track," you may award ½ adventure experience. If the heroes succeeded in finding information in the cave and/ or warning Master Lanius of the ritual, award them ¾ adventure experience.

Loot Summary

If it's not on this list, the heroes cannot keep it. This is a house rule that overrides what they may actually encounter in the scenario.

Cert: Seed of a New Hope. Once only, either when

defending the weak or facing great evil of the Dark Side (GM call), the hero named may call on the sure knowledge that there is always a new hope. This has the effect of the expenditure of a Force point with a maximum roll, for one round, though it is not, technically, calling upon the Force, but rather the internal reserves of the hero's spirit. This means that areas or powers that inhibit the Force have no effect on this ability. Thereafter, this certificate must be surrendered to the Judge, or voided. The World-Tree, Ch'hala of Cularin, granted this benefit to the heroes that saved it from destruction, or, worse, falling to the Dark Side.

Cert: A Sure Haven. Should a time come when the hero named above needs to flee from unstoppable, inevitable danger and death, the hero may take refuge within the Great Plan, a secret sanctuary beneath the World Tree Ch'hala, on Cularin. The hero's life force will be completely masked and locating the hero will be well nigh impossible. Jedi and other Force sensitive heroes will have to absolutely refrain from ever using their skills while hiding from the storm outside, until the time comes, perhaps years and years in the future, to try to bring new hope to the galaxy. Game mechanic: the hero is no longer playable in this LIVING FORCE campaign. The player may create a new hero as if the hero who sought sanctuary had died, using HCG rules. The new hero may not be Force Sensitive. This cert may have a possible effect should there be another LIVING FORCE campaign, set in later times. Otherwise, it is simply a souvenir.

Player Handout 1: Loaner Landspeeders

Player Copy

SoroSuub X-34 Landpeeder

Class: Groundspeeder; **Cost:** 10,550 (new), 2,500 (used); **Size:** Large (3.4 meters long); **Crew:** 1; **Passengers:** 1; **Initiative:** -1 (-1 size); **Maneuver:** -1 (-1 size); **Cargo Capacity:** 30 kilograms; **Speed:** 120m; **Max Velocity:** 330 km/h; **Defense:** 11* (-1 size, +2 armor); **Hull Points:** 16 (DR 5).

Weapon: none.

**Provides one-half cover to the pilot and passengers.*

Player Copy

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Weapon: none.

**Provides one-half cover to the pilot and passengers.*

GM Aid #1: Loaner Landspeeders

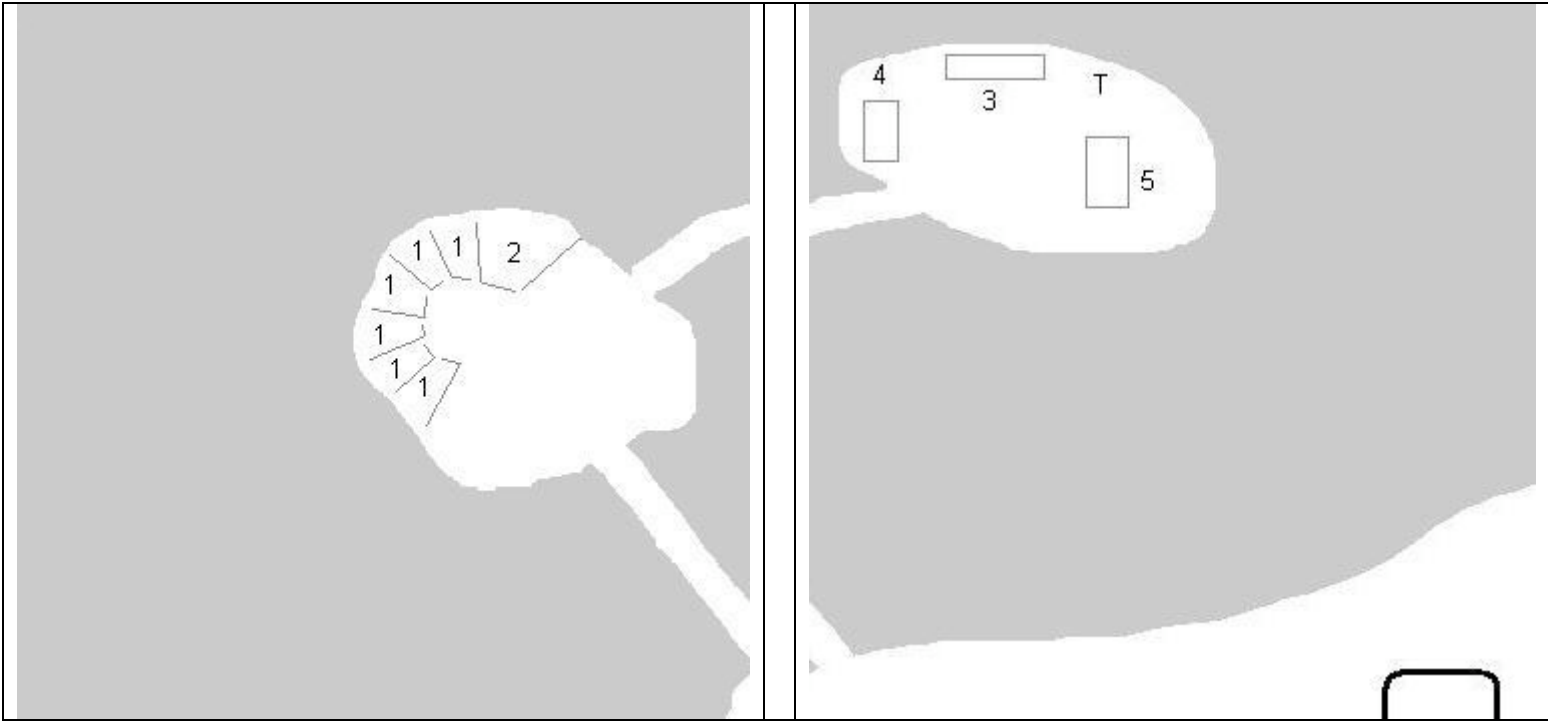
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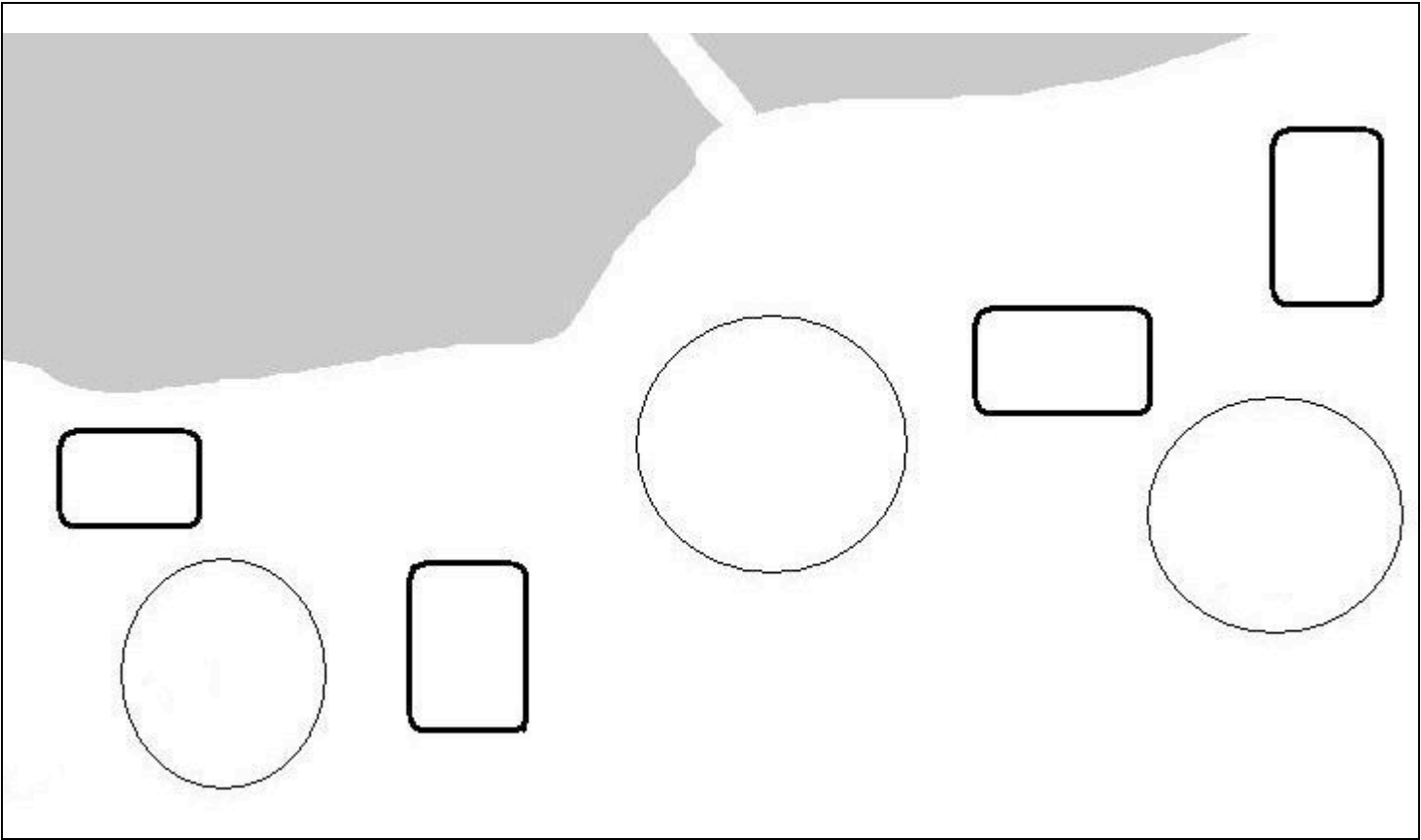
Weapon: none.

**Provides one-half cover to the pilot and passengers.*

Player Handout 2: Map of Wyrd Encampment, top.



Player Handout 2: Map of Wyrd Encampment, bottom.



GM Aid #2: NPC Stats: Encounter 1: Plague

Note to GM: As suggested in the encounter use only the flying snakes or the kilassin. If your group is not geared toward combat the snakes are more appropriate.

Mid-Level (4th-6th level heroes)

Flying Snakes (see encounter detail for numbers); Initiative: +1; Defense: 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural); Speed: Fly 10 m [Average]; VP/WP: 6/11; Attack: +0 melee (1d6, bite); SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -2; Size: M; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 4, Wis 6, Cha 4.

Skills: Hide +5, Listen -1, Move Silently +5, Spot -1

Feats: Run-By (Fly By) Attack

Description: These predators are three meters long, and a meter wide. Think of them as snakes with a manta ray like extension on each side that undulates to move them through the air. They actually glide more than fly. Normally they eat smaller animals but have been enraged by the condition of the jungle.

Tactics: Run-By (Fly By) Attack is useless against fast moving vehicles. The creatures get one pass at the heroes. If they hit they are presumed to land and will continue to try and bite.

Predator Kilassin (1); Initiative: +0; Defense: 14 (-2 size, +6 natural); Speed: 20 m; VP/WP: 32/36; Attack: +8/+8 melee (1d6+7, claws); SQ: Low Light Vision, +4 species bonus on Swim checks; SV: Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +1; Size: H; Str 22, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +4, Survival +2.

Feats: Cleave, Power Attack, Track

Description: Many teeth on rancor sized organic platform.

Tactics: Try to close and snatch a meal. Though the heroes can easily outdistance the creature, they are here to save the haulers. Unfortunately, if they try to lure it away, it will simply get bored and return to the haulers.

Upper-Level (7th-9th level heroes)

Flying Snakes (see encounter detail for numbers); Initiative: +1; Defense: 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural); Speed: Fly 10 m [Average]; VP/WP: 24/11; Attack: +3 melee (1d6, bite); SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -2; Size: M; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 4, Wis 6, Cha 4.

Skills: Hide +5, Listen -1, Move Silently +5, Spot -1

Feats: Run-By (Fly By) Attack

Description and Tactics: See Mid-Level stats.

Predator Kilassin (1); Initiative: +0; Defense: 14 (-2 size, +6 natural); Speed: 20 m; VP/WP: 56/36; Attack: +10/+10 melee (1d6+7, claws); SQ: Low Light Vision, +4 species bonus on Swim checks; SV: Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +1; Size: H; Str 22, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +4, Survival +2.

Feats: Cleave, Power Attack, Track

Description and Tactics: See Mid-Level stats.

High-Level (10th-12th level heroes)

Flying Snakes (see encounter detail for numbers); Initiative: +1; Defense: 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural); Speed: Fly 10 m [Average]; VP/WP: 42/11; Attack: +5 melee (1d6, bite); SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -2; Size: M; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 4, Wis 6, Cha 4.

Skills: Hide +5, Listen -1, Move Silently +5, Spot -1

Feats: Run-By (Fly By) Attack

Description and Tactics: See Mid-Level stats.

Predator Kilassin (1); Initiative: +0; Defense: 14 (-2 size, +6 natural); Speed: 20 m; VP/WP: 80/36; Attack: +13/+13 melee (1d6+7, claws); SQ: Low Light Vision, +4 species bonus on Swim checks; SV: Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +1; Size: H; Str 22, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +4, Survival +2.

Feats: Cleave, Power Attack, Track

Description and Tactics: See Mid-Level stats.

GM Aid #2: NPC Stats: Encounter 2: The Heart of the Matter

Mid-Level (4th-6th level heroes)

Wyrd Members: Female Tarasin Force Adept 2/Force Witch 1; IM +2 (Dex); Def 17 (+5 class, +2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 25/12; Atk +0 melee (1d6-1, staff), +3 ranged (3d6 or stun DC 12, blaster pistol); SQ +4 species bonus against heat hazards, Skin color change (gives +4 species bonus to Hide checks and –2 to Bluff and Sense Motive checks), Force perception (+2 species bonus on See Force checks), Silent communication, Force training, Inspire fear –1; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6; SZ M; FP 1 (+1d6/+2d6); DSP 3, Rep +0; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Equipment: Staff, blaster pistol, robes.

Skills: Hide +4 (+8 with racial bonus), Intimidate +4, Knowledge (*Tarasin culture*) +7, Survival +4; Read/write Tarasin, Speak Basic, Speak Bothan, Speak Rodian, ,Speak Tarasin, Speak Silent Color language.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +6, Drain Energy +6, Fear +4 to +8 (DM discretion), Force Grip +9, Force Lightning +9, Illusion +6, Move Object +9.

Feats: Weapon Proficiency Group (*primitive weapons, simple weapons*).

Force Feats: Alter, Force Sensitive, Hate, Malevolent, Sense.

Upper-Level (7th-9th level heroes)

Wyrd Members: Female Tarasin Force Adept 2/Force Witch 4; IM +2 (Dex); Def 18 (+6 class, +2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 46/12; Atk +3 melee (1d6-1, staff), +5 ranged (3d6 or stun DC 12, blaster pistol); SQ +4 species bonus against heat hazards, Skin color change (gives +4 species bonus to Hide checks and –2 to Bluff and Sense Motive checks), Force perception (+2 species bonus on See Force checks), Silent communication, Force training, Inspire fear –1, Spider walk, Summon storm; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +8; SZ M; FP 2 (+1d6/+2d6); DSP 6, Rep +1; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Equipment: Staff, blaster pistol, robes.

Skills: Hide +8 (+12 with racial bonus), Intimidate +5, Knowledge (*Tarasin culture*) +7, Survival +4; Read/write Tarasin, Speak Basic, Speak Bothan, Speak Rodian, Speak Ryl, Speak Tarasin, Speak Silent Color language.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +7, Drain Energy +10, Enhance Ability +8, Fear +7 to +11 (DM discretion), Force Grip +11, Force Lightning +11, Illusion +9, Move Object +12.

Feats: Weapon Proficiency Group (*primitive weapons, simple weapons*).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Force Sensitive, Force Whirlwind, Hate, Malevolent, Sense.

High-Level (10th-12th level heroes)

Wyrd Members: Female Tarasin Force Adept 2/Force Witch 7; IM +2 (Dex); Def 20 (+8 class, +2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 64/12; Atk +5 melee (1d6-1, staff), +7 ranged (3d6 or stun DC 12, blaster pistol); SQ +4 species bonus against heat hazards, Skin color change (gives +4 species bonus to Hide checks and –2 to Bluff and Sense Motive checks), Force perception (+2 species bonus on See Force checks), Silent communication, Force training, Inspire fear –2, Spider walk, Summon storm, Enshroud, Force flight (10m); SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +1; SZ M; FP 2 (+1d6/+2d6); DSP 6, Rep +1; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Equipment: Staff, blaster pistol, robes.

Skills: Hide +11 (+15 with racial bonus), Intimidate +8, Knowledge (*Tarasin culture*) +7, Survival +7; Read/write Tarasin, Speak Basic, Speak Bothan, Speak Rodian, Speak Ryl, Speak Tarasin, Speak Silent Color language.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +10, Drain Energy +10, Enhance Ability +11, Fear +7 to +11 (DM discretion), Force Grip +14, Force Lightning +14, Illusion +9, Move Object +15.

Feats: Heroic Surge (2/day), Weapon Proficiency Group (*primitive weapons, simple weapons*).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Force Sensitive, Force Whirlwind, Hate, Sense.

GM Aid #2: NPC Stats: Encounter 3: Enclave of Evil

Note to GM: The guards in the trees should be deducted from the "Extras".

All Tiers

Wyrd "Extras" (approximately 30-35): Male or Female Tarasin Thugs 1; IM +0; Def 11 (+1 class); Spd 10m; VP/WP -/15; Atk +1 melee, +1 ranged (3d8 or stun DC 15, blaster carbine); SQ +4 species bonus against heat hazards, Skin color change (gives +4 species bonus to Hide checks and -2 to Bluff and Sense Motive checks), Silent communication; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; SZ M; DSP 1; Rep +0; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Equipment: Blaster carbines.

Skills: Hide +2 (+6 with racial bonus), Intimidate +3; Read/write Tarasin, Speak Tarasin, Speak Silent Color language.

Feats: Toughness, Weapon Proficiency Group (*blaster pistols, blaster rifles, simple weapons*).

Mid-Level (4th-6th level heroes)

Wyrd Members (one per hero): Female Tarasin Force Adept 2/Force Witch 1; IM +2 (Dex); Def 17 (+5 class, +2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 25/12; Atk +0 melee (1d6-1, staff), +3 ranged (3d6 or stun DC 12, blaster pistol); SQ +4 species bonus against heat hazards, Skin color change (gives +4 species bonus to Hide checks and -2 to Bluff and Sense Motive checks), Force perception (+2 species bonus on See Force checks), Silent communication, Force training, Inspire fear -1; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6; SZ M; FP 1 (+1d6/+2d6); DSP 3, Rep +0; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Equipment: Staff, blaster pistol, robes.

Skills: Hide +4 (+8 with racial bonus), Intimidate +4, Knowledge (*Tarasin culture*) +7, Survival +4; Read/write Tarasin, Speak Basic, Speak Bothan, Speak Rodian, Speak Tarasin, Speak Silent Color language.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +6, Drain Energy +6, Fear +4 to +8 (DM discretion), Force Grip +9, Force Lightning +9, Illusion +6, Move Object +9.

Feats: Weapon Proficiency Group (*primitive weapons, simple weapons*).

Force Feats: Alter, Force Sensitive, Hate, Malevolent, Sense.

GM Aid #2: NPC Stats: Encounter 3: Enclave of Evil

High-Level (7th-9th level heroes)

Wyrd Members (one per hero): Female Tarasin Force Adept 2/Force Witch 4; IM +2 (Dex); Def 18 (+6 class, +2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 46/12; Atk +3 melee (1d6-1, staff), +5 ranged (3d6 or stun DC 12, blaster pistol); SQ +4 species bonus against heat hazards, Skin color change (gives +4 species bonus to Hide checks and –2 to Bluff and Sense Motive checks), Force perception (+2 species bonus on See Force checks), Silent communication, Force training, Inspire fear –1, Spider walk, Summon storm; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +8; SZ M; FP 2 (+1d6/+2d6); DSP 6, Rep +1; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Equipment: Staff, blaster pistol, robes.

Skills: Hide +8 (+12 with racial bonus), Intimidate +5, Knowledge (*Tarasin culture*) +7, Survival +4; Read/write Tarasin, Speak Basic, Speak Bothan, Speak Rodian, Speak Ryl, Speak Tarasin, Speak Silent Color language.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +7, Drain Energy +10, Enhance Ability +8, Fear +7 to +11 (DM discretion), Force Grip +11, Force Lightning +11, Illusion +9, Move Object +12.

Feats: Weapon Proficiency Group (*primitive weapons, simple weapons*).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Force Sensitive, Force Whirlwind, Hate, Malevolent, Sense.

Upper-Level (10th-12th level heroes)

Wyrd Members: Female Tarasin Force Adept 2/Force Witch 7; IM +2 (Dex); Def 20 (+8 class, +2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 64/12; Atk +5 melee (1d6-1, staff), +7 ranged (3d6 or stun DC 12, blaster pistol); SQ +4 species bonus against heat hazards, Skin color change (gives +4 species bonus to Hide checks and –2 to Bluff and Sense Motive checks), Force perception (+2 species bonus on See Force checks), Silent communication, Force training, Inspire fear –2, Spider walk, Summon storm, Enshroud, Force flight (10m); SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +1; SZ M; FP 2 (+1d6/+2d6); DSP 6, Rep +1; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Equipment: Staff, blaster pistol, robes.

Skills: Hide +11 (+15 with racial bonus), Intimidate +8, Knowledge (*Tarasin culture*) +7, Survival +7; Read/write Tarasin, Speak Basic, Speak Bothan, Speak Rodian, Speak Ryl, Speak Tarasin, Speak Silent Color language.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +10, Drain Energy +10, Enhance Ability +11, Fear +7 to +11 (DM discretion), Force Grip +14, Force Lightning +14, Illusion +9, Move Object +15.

Feats: Heroic Surge (2/day), Weapon Proficiency Group (*primitive weapons, simple weapons*).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Force Sensitive, Force Whirlwind, Hate, Sense.

GM Aid #2: NPC Stats: Encounter 4: Final Solution & Encounter 5: Sacrifice

Mid-Level (4th-6th level heroes)

Tactics: The First Witch will concentrate on the ritual until it fails. She'll then concentrate on killing the Ch'hala. If she's killed, her second in command (one of the ritual team members) will take over. The Ritual Team will concentrate on the ritual until it fails. Once that happens they'll attack the heroes. Please note that they're fond of flashy force skills: the kind that look powerful but do little damage, such as Force Lightning. Please also note that they start combat at half vitality due to the draining nature of the ritual. The Elite Guards will concentrate on protecting the Ritual Team. They know that should just one of the team fall, the ritual will fail. As such they're not out to kill the heroes so much as spread the damage around and interfere with them until the ritual succeeds. As the Judge, you know that they will fail at this.

First Witch of the Wyrd: Female Tarasin Force Adept 3/Dark Side Devotee 2/Force Witch 4; IM +1 (Dex); Def 21 (+10 class, +1 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 41 (out of 82)/16; Atk +4 melee (1d6-2, staff), +7 ranged (3d6 or stun DC 12, blaster pistol); SQ +4 species bonus against heat hazards, Skin color change (gives +4 species bonus to Hide checks and -2 to Bluff and Sense Motive checks), Force perception (+2 species bonus on See Force checks), Silent communication, Force training, Dark Side talisman +2, Inspire fear -1, Spider walk, Summon storm; SV Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +12; SZ M; FP 4 (+3d6/+4d6); DSP 14, Rep +2; Str 6, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Equipment: Staff, robes, Dark Side Talisman.

Skills: Hide +6, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (*Tarasin culture*) +7, Knowledge (*Wyrd*) +6; Read/write Tarasin, Speak Basic, Speak Bothan, Speak Tarasin, Understand Shyriwook, Speak Silent Color language.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +19, Drain Knowledge +12, Fear +10 to +14 (DM discretion), Force Lightning +18, Force Strike +13, Friendship +17, Illusion +16, Move Object +15.

Feats: Great Fortitude, Skill Emphasis (*Affect Mind*), Skill Emphasis (*Force Lightning*), Skill Emphasis (*Friendship*), Weapon Proficiency Group (*blaster pistols, primitive weapons, simple weapons*).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Dissipate Energy, Force Sensitive, Mind Trick, Sense.

Ritual Team Member (5): Female Tarasin Force Adept 2/Force Witch 4; IM +2 (Dex); Def 18 (+6 class, +2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 23 (out of 46)/12; Atk +3 melee (1d6-1, staff), +5 ranged (3d8 (they do not use stun), blaster rifle); SQ +4 species bonus against heat hazards, Skin color change (gives +4 species bonus to Hide checks and -2 to Bluff and Sense Motive checks), Force perception (+2 species bonus on See Force checks), Silent communication, Force training, Inspire fear -1, Spider walk, Summon storm; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +8; SZ M; FP 2 (+1d6/+2d6); DSP 6, Rep +1; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Equipment: Staff, blaster rifle, robes.

Skills: Hide +8 (+12 with racial bonus), Intimidate +5, Knowledge (*Tarasin culture*) +7, Survival +4; Read/write Tarasin, Speak Basic, Speak Bothan, Speak Rodian, Speak Ryl, Speak Tarasin, Speak Silent Color language.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +7, Drain Energy +10, Enhance Ability +8, Fear +7 to +11 (DM discretion), Force Grip +11, Force Lightning +11, Illusion +9, Move Object +12.

Feats: Weapon Proficiency Group (*primitive weapons, simple weapons*).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Force Sensitive, Force Whirlwind, Hate, Malevolent, Sense.

Wyrd Elite Guard (one per hero): Male Tarasin Soldier 4/Bodyguard 1; IM +3 (Dex); Def 18 (+5 class, +3 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 55/14; Atk +7 or +5/+5 melee (2d4+1, vibrodagger), +7 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ +4 species bonus against heat hazards, Skin color change (gives +4 species bonus to Hide checks and -2 to Bluff and Sense Motive checks), Force perception (+2 species bonus on See Force checks), Silent communication, Bonus Soldier feats, Harm's Way; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +1; SZ M; FP 2 (+1d6); Rep 1; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Equipment: Two vibrodaggers, blaster pistol, 2 medpacs.

Skills: Climb +4, Intimidate +7, Jump +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Spot +5, Survival +2, Treat Injury +7, Tumble +6; Read/write Tarasin, Speak Basic, Speak Dosh, Speak Tarasin, Speak Silent Color language.

Feats: Ambidexterity, Armor proficiency (*light*), Combat reflexes, Martial arts, Two-weapon fighting, Weapon finesse (*vibrodagger*), Weapon Proficiency Group (*blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons*).

GM Aid #2: NPC Stats: Encounter 4: Final Solution & Encounter 5: Sacrifice

Tactics: The First Witch will concentrate on the ritual until it fails. She'll then concentrate on killing the Ch'hala. If she's killed, her second in command (one of the ritual team members) will take over. The Ritual Team will concentrate on the ritual until it fails. Once that happens they'll attack the heroes. Please note that they're fond of flashy force skills: the kind that look powerful but do little damage, such as Force Lightning. Please also note that they start combat at half vitality due to the draining nature of the ritual. The Elite Guards will concentrate on protecting the Ritual Team. They know that should just one of the team fall, the ritual will fail. As such they're not out to kill the heroes so much as spread the damage around and interfere with them until the ritual succeeds. As the Judge, you know that they will fail at this.

High-Level (7th-9th level heroes)

First Witch of the Wyrd: Female Tarasin Force Adept 3/Dark Side Devotee 2/Force Witch 7; IM +1 (Dex); Def 23 (+12 class, +1 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 109/16; Atk +6/+1 melee (1d6-2, staff), +9/+4 ranged (3d6 or stun DC 12, blaster pistol); SQ +4 species bonus against heat hazards, Skin color change (gives +4 species bonus to Hide checks and -2 to Bluff and Sense Motive checks), Force perception (+2 species bonus on See Force checks), Silent communication, Force training, Dark Side talisman +2, Inspire fear -2, Spider walk, Summon storm, Enshroud, Force flight (10m); SV Fort +12, Ref +10, Will +13; SZ M; FP 6 (+4d6/+4d6); DSP 19, Rep +3; Str 6, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Equipment: Staff, heavy blaster pistol, robes, Dark Side talisman.

Skills: Hide +6, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (*Tarasin culture*) +7, Knowledge (*Wyrd*) +6; Read/write Tarasin, Speak Basic, Speak Bothan, Speak Tarasin, Understand Shyriwook, Speak Silent Color language.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +22, Drain Energy +12, Drain Knowledge +12, Fear +11 to +15 (DM discretion), Force Lightning +21, Force Strike +14, Friendship +19, Illusion +18, Move Object +18.

Feats: Great Fortitude, Skill Emphasis (*Affect Mind*), Skill Emphasis (*Force Lightning*), Skill Emphasis (*Friendship*), Weapon Proficiency Group (*blaster pistols, primitive weapons, simple weapons*).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Dissipate Energy, Force Mastery, Force Sensitive, Mind Trick, Sense.

Ritual Team Member (5): Female Tarasin Force Adept 2/Force Witch 6; IM +2 (Dex); Def 19 (+7 class, +2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 29 (out of 58)/12; Atk +4 melee (1d6-1, staff), +5 ranged (3d8 (they do not use stun), blaster rifle); SQ +4 species bonus against heat hazards, Skin color change (gives +4 species bonus to Hide checks and -2 to Bluff and Sense Motive checks), Force perception (+2 species bonus on See Force checks), Silent communication, Force training, Inspire fear -1, Spider walk, Summon storm, Enshroud; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +9; SZ M; FP 2 (+1d6/+2d6); DSP 6, Rep +1; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Equipment: Staff, blaster rifle, robes.

Skills: Hide +8 (+12 with racial bonus), Intimidate +5, Knowledge (*Tarasin culture*) +7, Survival +4; Read/write Tarasin, Speak Basic, Speak Bothan, Speak Rodian, Speak Ryl, Speak Tarasin, Speak Silent Color language.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +9, Drain Energy +12, Enhance Ability +10, Fear +7 to +11 (DM discretion), Force Grip +13, Force Lightning +13, Illusion +11, Move Object +15.

Feats: Heroic Surge (2/day), Weapon Proficiency Group (*primitive weapons, simple weapons*).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Force Sensitive, Force Whirlwind, Hate, Sense.

Wyrd Elite Guard (one per hero): Male Tarasin Soldier 4/Bodyguard 4; IM +3 (Dex); Def 19 (21) (+6 class, +3 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 88/14; Atk +10/+5 or +8/+8/+3 melee (2d4+1, vibrodagger), +10/+5 ranged (3d8 or stun DC 15, heavy blaster pistol); SQ +4 species bonus against heat hazards, Skin color change (gives +4 species bonus to Hide checks and -2 to Bluff and Sense Motive checks), Force perception (+2 species bonus on See Force checks), Silent communication, Bonus Soldier feats, Harm's Way, Combat sense +1, Surprising vigor; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +2; SZ M; FP 4 (+2d6); Rep +1; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Equipment: Two vibrodaggers, heavy blaster pistol, 2 medpacs.

Skills: Climb +9, Intimidate +10, Jump +7, Listen +6, Move Silently +10, Sense Motive +5, Spot +6, Survival +2, Treat Injury +7, Tumble +6; Read/write Tarasin, Speak Basic, Speak Dosh, Speak Tarasin, Speak Silent Color language.

Feats: Ambidexterity, Armor proficiency (*light*), Combat reflexes, Defensive martial arts, Heroic surge (2/day), Martial arts, Two-weapon fighting, Weapon finesse (*vibrodagger*), Weapon Proficiency Group (*blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons*).

GM Aid #2: NPC Stats: Encounter 4: Final Solution & Encounter 5: Sacrifice

Upper-Level (10th-12th level heroes)

Tactics: The First Witch will concentrate on the ritual until it fails. She'll then concentrate on killing the Ch'hala. If she's killed, her second in command (one of the ritual team members) will take over. The Ritual Team will concentrate on the ritual until it fails. Once that happens they'll attack the heroes. Please note that they're fond of flashy force skills: the kind that look powerful but do little damage, such as Force Lightning. Please also note that they start combat at half vitality due to the draining nature of the ritual. The Elite Guards will concentrate on protecting the Ritual Team. They know that should just one of the team fall, the ritual will fail. As such they're not out to kill the heroes so much as spread the damage around and interfere with them until the ritual succeeds. As the Judge, you know that they will fail at this.

First Witch of the Wyrd: Female Tarasin Force Adept 3/Dark Side Devotee 2/Force Witch 10; IM +1 (Dex); Def 21 (+13 class, +1 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 125/16; Atk +8/+3 melee (1d6-2, staff), +11/+6 ranged (3d6 or stun DC 12, blaster pistol); SQ +4 species bonus against heat hazards, Skin color change (gives +4 species bonus to Hide checks and -2 to Bluff and Sense Motive checks), Force perception (+2 species bonus on See Force checks), Silent communication, Force training, Dark Side talisman +2, Inspire fear -3, Spider walk, Summon storm, Enshroud, Force flight (20m); SV Fort +14, Ref +11, Will +14; SZ M; FP 6 (+4d6/+4d6); DSP 19, Rep +3; Str 6, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Equipment: Staff, heavy blaster pistol, robes, Dark Side talisman.

Skills: Hide +6, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (*Tarasin culture*) +7, Knowledge (*Wyrd*) +6; Read/write Tarasin, Speak Basic, Speak Bothan, Speak Tarasin, Understand Shyriwook, Speak Silent Color language.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +25, Drain Energy +15, Drain Knowledge +15, Fear +11 to +15 (DM discretion), Force Lightning +24, Force Strike +17, Friendship +21, Illusion +21, Move Object +21.

Feats: Great Fortitude, Skill Emphasis (*Affect Mind*), Skill Emphasis (*Force Lightning*), Skill Emphasis (*Friendship*), Weapon Proficiency Group (*blaster pistols, primitive weapons, simple weapons*).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Dissipate Energy, Force Mastery, Force Sensitive, Mind Trick, Sense.

Ritual Team Member (5): Female Tarasin Force Adept 2/Force Witch 9; IM +2 (Dex); Def 20 (+8 class, +2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 35(out of 70)/12; Atk +6 melee (1d6-1, staff), +7 ranged (3d8 (they do not use stun), blaster rifle); SQ +4 species bonus against heat hazards, Skin color change (gives +4 species bonus to Hide checks and -2 to Bluff and Sense Motive checks), Force perception (+2 species bonus on See Force checks), Silent communication, Force training, Inspire fear -13, Spider walk, Summon storm, Enshroud; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +10; SZ M; FP 2 (+1d6/+2d6); DSP 6, Rep +1; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Equipment: Staff, blaster rifle, robes.

Skills: Hide +8 (+12 with racial bonus), Intimidate +5, Knowledge (*Tarasin culture*) +7, Survival +4; Read/write Tarasin, Speak Basic, Speak Bothan, Speak Rodian, Speak Ryl, Speak Tarasin, Speak Silent Color language.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +11, Drain Energy +15, Enhance Ability +13, Fear +7 to +11 (DM discretion), Force Grip +15, Force Lightning +16, Illusion +14, Move Object +18.

Feats: Heroic Surge (2/day), Weapon Proficiency Group (*primitive weapons, simple weapons*).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Force Sensitive, Force Whirlwind, Hate, Sense.

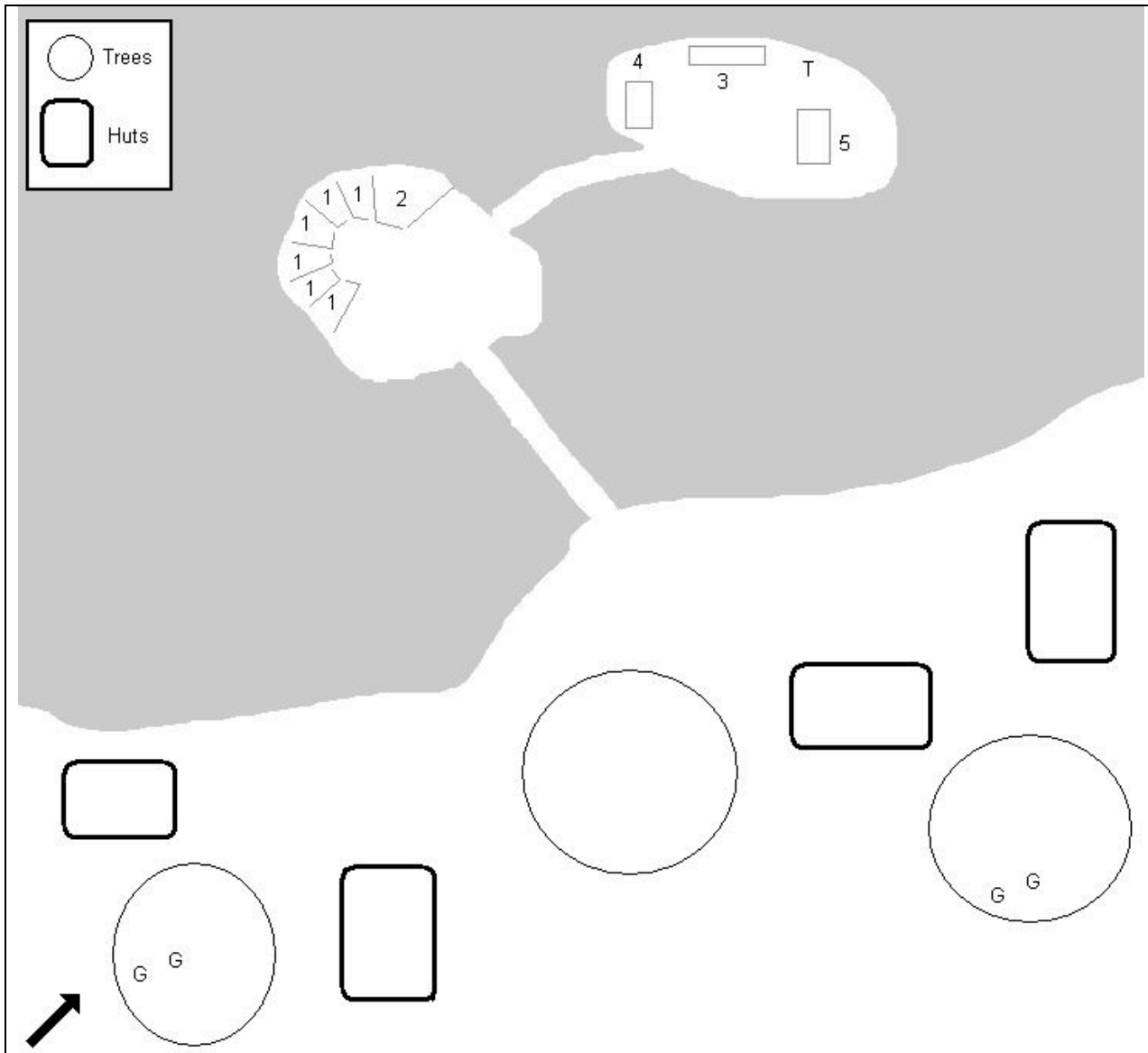
Wyrd Elite Guard (one per hero): Male Tarasin Soldier 4/Bodyguard 7; IM +4 (Dex); Def 22 (24) (+8 class, +4 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 111/14; Atk +14/+9 or +12/+12/+7 melee (2d4+2, masterwork vibrodagger), +13/+8 ranged (3d8 or stun DC 15, blaster pistol); SQ +4 species bonus against heat hazards, Skin color change (gives +4 species bonus to Hide checks and -2 to Bluff and Sense Motive checks), Force perception (+2 species bonus on See Force checks), Silent communication, Bonus Soldier feats, Harm's Way, Combat sense +1, Surprising vigor, Improved charge, Defensive strike; SV Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +3; SZ M; FP 5 (+2d6); Rep +1; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Equipment: Two masterwork (+1) vibrodaggers, heavy blaster pistol, 2 medpacs.

Skills: Climb +12, Intimidate +12, Jump +10, Listen +10, Move Silently +12, Sense Motive +8, Spot +10, Survival +2, Treat Injury +7, Tumble +9; Read/write Tarasin, Speak Basic, Speak Dosh, Speak Tarasin, Speak Silent Color language.

Feats: Ambidexterity, Armor proficiency (*light*), Combat reflexes, Defensive martial arts, Heroic surge (3/day), Martial arts, Two-weapon fighting, Weapon finesse (*vibrodagger*), Weapon Focus (*vibrodagger*), Weapon Proficiency Group (*blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons*). +1

GM Aid #3: Map of Wyrd Encampment



G	Stationary Guards
T	Tarasin Prisoner, Cheelru
1	Small sleeping cubical
2	Large sleeping cubical

3	Shrine
4	Work table, with box
5	Work table, with holo
➔	Arrow indicates direction of approach but the heroes start about 100m away. The guards have not yet noticed them.