

Tilnes Rising

**Episode III of the Broken Orbits Trilogy
A One-Round Living Force Adventure**

by Morrie Mullins

Meteor storms, worms, collapsed tunnels, and surges of energy big enough to power glow rods from here to Coruscant – another typical day in the mines of Tilnes? Hardly. An adventure for Living Force heroes levels 1-6.

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

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.

Scoring the game for RPGA points: The RPGA has three ways to score this game. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use: *No-vote scoring*: The players write their names and numbers on the scoring packet grid, you fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.

1. *Partial scoring*: The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player-voting sheet, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the convention coordinator wants information as to how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
2. *Voting*: Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the best amongst them, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes. Multi-round adventures usually require advancing a smaller number of players than played the first round, so voting is required for multi-round adventures.

When using Voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities.

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 for the players will be 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.

Character Earnings

At the beginning of the round, if the characters are employed, they receive their pay. No matter how much time has passed since the previous round, they receive pay for one week. Characters who are not employed but who have profession or craft skills may roll against those skills to see how much they have earned from their profession or craft in the last week. Use the method in the core rules (Craft: pg. 72 *Check result times 20 credits*; Profession: pg. 80 *Check result times 50 credits*). Note that characters may use only one of the above methods and must choose which before rolling (Employment, Craft or Profession).

Post-Scenario Paperwork

In addition to filling out a scoring packet, the Judge needs to do the following after a Living Force game:

1. Sign and date each player's log sheet or passport. Players are responsible for keeping track of their own experience points. If the convention coordinator has provided passport stickers, put one in the box for the scenario.
2. Ask each player for their credit total (original total, minus anything spent, plus anything earned/won/otherwise gained in the scenario). Write the new total on a fresh Republic Credit Chip and tear up the old one. You don't need to be concerned with every single credit -- this is just a way to keep track of general amounts of money. If the series has a log sheet, put the numbers on that instead.
3. Sign and date any additional certificates. Be sure to put the character name in the space available.
4. Sign/date/notate any metagaming certificates that require your attention. These should be evident from the metagaming certificates.

Issuing Force and Dark Side Points

Issuing Force Points: When heroes perform cinematically heroic actions, don't forget that you may issue a Force point for such activities. 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 will be 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 157) 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 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.

General 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 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.

This is an adventure for low- to mid-level Living Force characters, and therefore characters levels 1 through 6 are appropriate. If a player brings a higher-level character to your table, explain that he or she must use a lower-level hero to play in this event. If your players do not have heroes, help them create new ones (see your event coordinator for hero creation instructions).

DM Overview

A social visit – or the answering of a dare – has brought the heroes of Cularin to the mining moon of Tilnes, far above the lush jungle world. The scenario opens with the heroes forced to dig out from a very unfortunate cave-in, which demolished nearly half of “The Underground,” one of the primary watering holes beneath the surface of Tilnes.

Some of the trouble on the moon is due to the acts of the miners, who have recently been instructed to hunt down the yri worms, the meter-long blind worms that inhabit the deep recesses Tilnes, but there are other forces at work here.

After its ejection from Cularin, the Metatheran Cartel set up its public operation in a ship orbiting above the jungle planet, but established a secret base on Tilnes, and the construction of this base is what initially caused the worms to move into the mining areas more heavily than they had in the past. That the management on Tilnes overreacted to the worms only made matters worse, and now, with tunnels collapsing all over the place, sections of the mine have begun to reveal secrets the moon has kept for many years. Perhaps the most shocking revelation comes when a debris storm opens the way to a ship that crashed on Tilnes years ago, breaking through the upper two levels of the mine system and coming to rest in a long-forgotten cavern – if anyone ever knew about it to begin with...

Encounter 1: The (Way) Underground

In the wake of a massive collapse beneath the surface of Tilnes, the heroes must help the locals dig out and care for the injured – including an understandably upset droid. Learning that the collapse was the result of a combination of factors – including several fairly large impacts on the surface of the moon – the heroes are encouraged by another group of “adventurers” to help comb the mines and find anyone who might be injured, trapped, or otherwise in need of assistance.

Encounter 2: The Pit and the Parasites

As they begin their search, the heroes find themselves faced with a daunting obstacle. A large section of tunnel has collapsed, leaving a sizable pit. At the bottom of the pit, they can just make out the aura of a glow-rod, but no one answers their call. There is, in fact, a miner trapped at the bottom of the pit, but she is unconscious and cannot answer them. She is also in danger from a small horde of ravenous beetle-like parasites, which are moving cautiously toward her.

Encounter 3: The Dark Beyond

Past the pit the heroes find that the tunnel walls have given way, with barely enough stone left to keep the cavern ceiling from collapsing. There are life forms nearby (utilizing See Force or mechanical means), but they are nothing more than yri worms, eating their way through the rock. The large cavern created by the collapse of the walls contains several weak spots in its floor, which lead to lower levels of the mine complex when searched.

Encounter 4: The Descent

Moving downward, into the “guts” of Tilnes, is a tricky proposition. The difficulties are not lessened any when the heroes stir up a nest of mynock-like creatures, who pummel them as they attempt to descend further into the mine complex in search of survivors. Reaching the bottom, the heroes discover the remains of a decrepit ship.

Encounter 5: The Gentle Ascent

Another great rumbling shakes Tilnes as the heroes investigate the ship, and learn that it has been beneath Tilnes for some time. However, it is only with the recent debris storm that the interior of the ship has been sufficiently shaken to trigger its tracking device, which will soon bring representatives of the Cartel and the Thareian Military to investigate. Perhaps fortunately, the Cartel will be here sooner.

Encounter 6: The Rest of the Party

The heroes are not the only ones sent to investigate the newly-crashed ship, though. As they are investigating the Cannibalizer, a troop of Caarite guards appear from a far passage. The heroes may either parlay, or fight; ultimately, it doesn't matter which route they choose, because they will be summoned to conference with Thurm Loogg (the Cartel envoy) regardless, and he will be no less polite if they have killed his troops than if they were willing to talk first. Of course, it's easy to be polite, when you're being holo-projected from a distant, orbiting ship.

Encounter 7: The Crux of the Problem

A military base deep beneath the surface of Tilnes hides a very real threat to the citizens of Cularin – and represents a very real trap to the heroes. They are, in a word, walking into a meat grinder. If they follow the directions given them by Loogg, they will wander into the line of fire of a pair of e-web blaster cannons, and get utterly annihilated. However, there is a defector among the Thareian military, someone who was born on Cularin and doesn't want the Navy to proceed with its plans. If the heroes do not notice they are walking

into a trap, he will catch them and offer to lead them out and supply information about the military. Escape is not so easy, though, leading to a running fight through the mines of Tilnes, with the military in pursuit.

Important Note to Judges: Mood is very important in this event. It's not a “dungeon crawl,” but there are points that should be very tense, with lots of darkness and uncertainty. It is also information-heavy, as it is driving several core story elements into year two of the campaign. The return of the Cartel to the forefront, the suggestion that the military may be responsible for many of the recent problems in the system, and the existence of hidden caverns, bases, and ships so close to Cularin should all be things the heroes end up worried about when the event concludes.

At several points, I will reference earlier Living Force events. While some spoilage is inevitable, do your best not to ruin the plots of other events for players who haven't had a chance to play them yet.

Opening Crawl

Companionship has many origins, but one of the quickest, surest bonds is the bond of adversity. Facing and overcoming danger strengthens not only the individual, but the community. It was the common bond of adversity that brought the heroes of Cularin together once more, beneath the rocky mining moon of Tilnes.

And then there was the explosion, and everything went dark...

Encounter 1: The (Way) Underground

Key ideas of this encounter: get the players into the event, introduce the core problem and the secondary problems

Strange, how it can get dark so quickly. Stranger still, how hard it can be to breathe in a stifling darkness. But strangest of all, why you hurt – all over your body.

The last thing the heroes remember, they were sitting in The Underground, a cantina somewhere around 200 meters beneath the surface of Tilnes. Then, without warning, the roof caved in. You may give wisdom checks (DC 10) to see if they recall hearing a low rumbling just before everything went dark.

Everyone is down a number of vitality points equal to their character level. It hurt – but not a huge amount. Everyone is also underneath a pile of stone and dirt,

from which they can extricate themselves with only a little work.

From somewhere in the distance, you hear a moaning, and then a cry for help!

These are the folks who ended up trapped beneath the debris, but lacked the benefit of heroic classes to give them vitality points. They are wounded, some of them severely, and someone needs to act fast to get to them.

When the heroes pull themselves up out of the rubble, they see that the cantina in which they sat has been all but destroyed. Tables lie broken on the floor, chairs are crushed, and various limbs – some moving, some not – stick out from beneath other piles of debris. A few other individuals are moving around, trying to dig out the unfortunate trapped folks, and among those who are helping are San and Nia, a pair of young, idealistic human Force Adepts whom the heroes have encountered if they played either “The Resistance Within” or “Something Uffel.”

Once everyone has dug themselves out of the rubble, have them describe themselves and do whatever introductions are necessary. It is fine for them to have come to Tilnes as a group, if they like, in which case the descriptions will be of more benefit to you than to them.

San and Nia are both frantically trying to dig people out, and welcome any help they can get. They had just entered The Underground when the ceiling gave way, and managed to duck back into the doorway to keep from getting the ceiling dropped on their heads. If the heroes have had friendly interactions with them in the past (that is, didn’t try really hard to kill them at the end of “Something Uffel”) San and Nia are extremely friendly. They fancy themselves to be two of the heroes of Cularin, and enjoy working with other heroes.

There are several challenges amidst the rubble that the heroes must help to deal with.

- A young Trandoshan male cowers against one wall, shaking in terror. He could be very useful – he’s obviously quite strong – if convinced to help out, but right now he wants to cower and whimper. He responds to either cajoling (diplomacy) or intimidation (particularly from another Trandoshan). Don’t worry about DCs, go for roleplaying.
- A very angry Rodian is barking orders, and not having much luck getting people to pay attention to him. This is Maris Gen, owner of The Underground. He is freely bleeding from a wound to his head, and eventually listens to reason and sits down to let someone tend his wounds, grumbling

all the while about “Fools who don’t know how rescues work.”

- Several individuals are trapped beneath sections of rock and metal from the support beams. Let the Wookiees and Trandoshans work on this, or let the Jedi use Move Object to pick up the materials that are crushing the hapless victims. Treat Injury checks as appropriate. Maris has a small stock of five medpacs behind the bar, which he provides for the most serious injuries other than his own.
- A rather resigned-looking protocol droid, who is unhappily trying to fit his left arm back into its socket. He keeps murmuring, “Not again. Not the left arm. Why is it always the left arm?” This S-4QD, the only droid who stays on Tilnes throughout the year. The energy pulses shut him down regularly (and he is very curious why any heroes who own droids would bring them along to Tilnes), and working around heavy mining equipment, he sometimes loses an arm or a leg. The nice thing about being a droid is, that can be fixed fairly easily. It’s just awkward to do himself. Re-attaching his arm requires a DC 17 repair check. If they do not make a 17, he is very thankful, and hold his arm in place until they turn their backs, at which point he removes it himself and starts the work over again. (You may give spot checks, DC 14, to notice this).

There are a total of 25 individuals in The Underground. Of these, about fifteen need to rest for quite a while before going anywhere. Of the rest, there are the heroes, San and Nia, a healthy-sized Wookiee with patchy brown-and-tan fur named Ulucca, and a fairly meek Sullustan female named Tebari with a blaster rifle strapped to her back.

So that things don’t get off to too slow of a start, after a maximum of ten minutes real-time roleplaying with the bulletized individuals above, proceed to the following. Give listen checks (DC 20) hear footsteps running down one of the corridors toward The Underground.

An attractive young woman rushes into the cantina, gasping for breath. At least, you’re pretty sure she’d be attractive, if her hair weren’t messier than a mynock’s nest, and her face weren’t caked with dirt and dust. She looks around and spots San and Nia, then rushes toward them and trips over a piece of ceiling.

The heroes are welcome to help her back to her feet. San and Nia come to speak to her as well. This is Philinda, one of San and Nia’s companions from “Something Uffel,” a young noble who is trying very

hard to do what's right. At the moment, she's scared out of her mind.

"S-s-something hit th-th-the surface. I was th-th-there, saw it come down. Big rocks, and then, ev-ev-ev-everything was falling, and the ceiling was falling, and, and I ran, and there were lots of holes, and I knew you'd be here, and it's really bad out there!"

Philinda passed several deep pits, that probably led down deeper into the mines, but which weren't part of the standard mine shafts. She saw several walls collapse, the ceiling behind her kept caving in, and worst of all, she could hear people, trapped in the deeper sections of the crystal mines (because that is, after all, what Tilnes is famous for), calling for help.

Upon hearing that there are individuals trapped in the mines, Nia helps Philinda to her feet, then turns to the heroes.

"Sounds like there are people who need help. You feel up to the task?"

The individuals in The Underground will be fine without the heroes to tend them. Maris is feeling better, and has started breaking out "necessary fluids" for his guests. He knows what the response time should be from the mining companies; the folks in the cantina will be just fine for the ten or so hours it will take surface parties to get here. "It's not," he says in somewhat awkward Basic, "like this isn't something they plan for. It's a mining complex, after all."

There is only one main tunnel leading out; many of the others collapsed near the entrance to The Underground.

Many groups may choose to go with San and Nia, and ultimately separate from them. If a group decides to dig through one of the collapsed tunnels to find folks who might be trapped there, that's fine. Just keep the group together; San and Nia will make sure everyone understands the necessity of numbers in situations like this. They will be working with Philinda, the Wookiee, and the Sullustan, and recommend that the heroes work as a unit.

Encounter 2:

The Pit and the Parasites

Key ideas of this encounter: locate an individual trapped at the bottom of a pit, unconscious, about to be swarmed by subterranean parasites; rescue the individual, and proceed deeper into the mines

If the heroes went a different direction than San and Nia's group, you should skip the first paragraph of box text below. However, you should make certain that if this happens, San and Nia have exchanged comlink codes with the heroes so that contact can be maintained.

Note that every fifty meters or so is an emergency medical station. These provide sufficient medpaks that all the needs of the injured can be met, along with loads of bandages, but they do NOT provide loot for the heroes to keep. In other words, no. They cannot load up on medpaks and keep them all.

If the Heroes Go with San and Nia's Group

The tunnel winds slowly upward, and as you walk, the dust grows thick in the air. After a hundred meters, you reach a fork. One path leads off to the right, and one to the left.

Nia turns to you. "Looks like this is where we split up. Which way do you want to go?"

It doesn't matter which way the heroes choose; there's really only one path for them, at this point in the event, or all the way through. There are apparent choices, but in the end, each encounter builds on the next, and will need to happen in the order written.

In other words, whichever way the heroes choose leads them to the encounter, while San and Nia's group will be doing rescue work of their own.

You head off, down the winding tunnel, glow rods lighting your way. The tunnel seems to be aimed toward the surface, but then it takes a downward turn, and you're headed back into the depths of Tilnes once more.

Make sure you have a marching order at this point. The tunnel is wide enough for three to walk abreast. The individuals in the front of the group need to make spot checks (DC 15/10 in lower tier), while everyone needs to make listen checks (DC 20/15). The spot checks are to notice the large hole in the floor of the tunnel ahead of them, before they walk into it. If all of the front rank fails, there's no reason to drop them down the pit unless the whole second rank doesn't notice that someone is about to fall. Use whatever checks and DCs you find necessary in order to give everyone a heroic chance of survival.

The listen checks are to hear a chittering noise from the pit. It is vaguely insect-like, and it sounds like there are lots of whatever it is down there. There are no skills that help with identifying the noise more specifically, unless someone has bothered to take ranks in Knowledge (Subterranean Parasites), in which case they really ought to be rewarded for picking up ranks in such a useless skill! No roll is necessary for them to

identify the distinctive sound of arask beetles stalking their prey.

On the far side of the pit, the tunnel has collapsed, sealing off this exit route. However, as you examine the pit, escape seems less important. At the bottom of the pit is a shiny stick – a glow rod. A dark shape lies with its back to the glow rod, curled up in a fetal ball, not moving. It looks vaguely humanoid, and the shadows seem to be moving towards it.

Arask Beetles (hundreds) Parasite 1; Init +0; Defense 15 (+4 size, +1 natural); Spd 15m, climb 5m; VP/WP -/9; Atk +1 melee (1d3, bite); SQ blindsight, scent; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will -2; SZ M; Rep 0; FP 5; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 4, Wis 6, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +10.

The arask beetles have found a choice morsel – barely alive, unable to defend itself, and still nice and warm. It also happens to be a Caarite, though this cannot be determined from above, since the heroes are 28 meters up from the bottom of the pit, and the Caarite is wearing dark clothing, with an all-weather cloak pulled up around its head obscuring all of its features. It does twitch, every once in a while, and determined heroes can find that much out before planning how to get down there.

Now, 28 meters is a long way. About 7d6 worth of long way, DC 17 reflex save to apply the damage to vitality points rather than wound points, standard rules for tumbling apply. In other words, it's a bad idea to just jump down the hole. They need to be creative.

There is a good amount of broken machinery in this part of the mine, and if there's something they're looking for, they can probably find it. There are a couple of broken mining sleds that can provide parts, and if the heroes are just woefully unprepared, one of the broken sleds can contain 2 heavy-duty liquid cable dispensers which only work until the end of the event, at which point they run out of cable. Finding these does require a DC 20/15 search check, but again, only do this if they really can't proceed any other way.

As you begin to descend into the pit, the chittering from below grows louder!

The beetles see other potential food sources coming, and are getting excited. However, they're not very brave, and run for cover if anyone fires a blaster at them, or does anything else you think would reasonably scare several hundred parasites away. Have a couple around at the bottom when the first individuals reach the bottom, regardless, if for no other reason than because 10 cm long beetles with silvery-black eyestalks are just kind of scary looking. All of them run away

once someone is down there, conscious, and shooting at them or otherwise convincing them to leave.

Once the heroes are down, they can see that the arask beetles have gone into hiding beneath the cracks in the walls, and that another tunnel leads off in the direction they'd been going, but deeper still into the mines.

The unconscious body huddled against the wall is actually partly pinned. It requires either a DC 20/15 strength check, or a DC 25/20 move object check to clear the rubble off the hapless individual, who turns out to be a Caarite. He wears a Cartel uniform, and is unarmed. He is severely injured, and will die without treatment. A DC 5 Treat Injury check reveals this to be the case (translation: he is at zero wound points, and has thus far made his fortitude saves, but that won't last). Armed with this knowledge, any heroes who willingly leave him to die should be warned that this is an evil act, and if they persist, should be given dark side points. Hopefully, the groups will either call San and Nia to come take the Caarite back to The Underground, or take him themselves (though it's very difficult to get back out of this pit if the entire party is already down at the bottom, and it's probably easier to just call for San and Nia at that point). No one knows why a Cartel representative would be in the mines, but no one is all that surprised, either. Verga Mer Mining Company, the individuals who own most of Tilnes, have a reputation for dealing with anyone to make a quick credit. The Caarite, if healed, does not awaken. His body needs time to recover. (It is also possible, though not recommended, to carry the dead weight of the Caarite throughout the rest of the event, and turn him over to the Cartel when the time comes.)

The heroes may want to explore the tunnel that leads away from the area where they found the Caarite, or they may want to go back to The Underground and try a different tunnel. It matters not which way they go, because either way takes them to encounter 3 and the other way, if they go back and check later, would have led them to a dead end.

Encounter 3: The Dark Beyond

Key idea of this encounter: more exploration of the lower sections of the mines, searching for trapped individuals; uncovering clues that there may be more than miners down here; finding an even deeper section of the mines

Once the heroes have dealt with the Caarite – either by calling San and Nia, or taking him back to The

Underground themselves – they hear something coming from the tunnel leading away from where the Caarite had fallen. The sound is a high-pitched wailing, which is actually almost painful to Wookiee ears. It's probably not human, but it sounds like someone – or something – that is hurt and afraid. It's fairly distant, but there's really only one way to go from this cavern.

If players choose to ignore this clue, and want to go somewhere else – fine. They eventually wander into this encounter regardless. But make sure you dock them experience (100 xp) for not going to investigate something that sounds like it needs help in the wake of such a major accident.

The tunnel begins at a gradual downward slope, which grows steadily steeper. The rock of the tunnel walls seems to have been loosened by the impacts on the moon's surface, and small chunks of dirt and stone fall to the floor as you walk past.

From somewhere ahead of you, a low moaning – something in pain – reaches your ears.

If they start to turn around and go back at this point, the ceiling caves in about thirty meters behind them. This is the work of the yri worms, a half-dozen of which have been trailing the heroes, following beneath them through the rock, and whose presence has finally brought another section of tunnel crashing down. Going back through the cave-in would take hours to clear everything away (big hunks of rock have an awful lot of wound points, even for a lightsaber to get through; we won't bother providing stats for them, just make it clear that there's no good way to do it, and it sounds like whatever's down the tunnel is in a great deal of pain and may be dying), and San and Nia are busy rescuing a work crew and can't come to help them out.

If they decide to check and see if there are life forms ahead, once they are in range for See Force (10 meters) there are life forms – several. Of course, the yri worms are staying pretty close to underneath the party, but only because they're curious. They only attack if attacked first.

Yri worm: Subterranean scavenger 2; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 16 (+5 natural, +1 dex); Spd 5m (burrow through rock 15m); VP/WP 12/14; Atk +3 melee (2d4+2, bite), +2 ranged; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; SZ M; Rep 1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 4. Challenge Code: B.

Skills: Hide +4, Move Silently +4.

After a short while, the tunnel opens out into a large natural cavern. The moaning seems to be coming from everywhere at once; it's hard to isolate because of the cavern's acoustics. One wall of the cavern has obviously been stripped of all its crystals, mined quite

heavily, but the far wall still (on a DC 20 spot check) shows trace amounts of several colorful crystals present in its strata.

Note: These crystals, because they are in the mines, are the property of VMMC. Any hero who states that they are going to take some for themselves should be reminded that this is stealing, that stealing is a result of greed, that greed is the path to the dark side, and that if they insist on trying to steal the crystals, they will get a dark side point. The fact is, they lack the proper tools to remove useable crystals from the cave wall, so while they may be able to extract chunks of crystal, they won't get anything useful. They'll just get souvenirs, and a dark side point to boot.

The more important element of this location is the wall that has already been cleared of its crystals.

As you stand, looking about the cavern, you notice several splashes of color on the right-hand wall. Looking more closely, you see that someone has painted the wall – some time ago, and very carefully.

In the center of the wall is a huge yellow star, with red and blue lines leading away from it, first to two slightly smaller blue-white stars, and from those, to a trio of white stars near the edges of the wall. An enormous eye stares from the center of the yellow star.

This is, in fact, a near-duplicate of the mural that decorated Jax Warehouse in "The Resistance Within," and any hero who played that event should recognize it if they made it to that encounter (and not all groups did).

The key fact, that anyone with any form of Cularin lore should recognize (or anyone who's lived in the system more than two years): The large yellow sun clearly represents Morasil, the larger of the two suns of the Cularin system. Termadus, the smaller of the suns, is absent on this mural – just as it was on the mural in "The Resistance Within."

There is one important difference between this mural and the one in the earlier event. This one includes a small amount of text, carved into the rock on the floor before the mural. It requires a DC 20/15 spot check (or, if no one makes that, someone randomly tripping over it) for the party to find this text. It is written in Twi'lek – so here's hoping you have a linguist or a translator droid in the group!

If not, there is a residual Force effect here. Anyone who studies the carvings of the words long enough begins to understand them. The first round the writing is studied by someone who cannot speak Twi'lek, they must make a Will save (DC 50). Making the save means they can understand the text. Failing it, they feel like they almost had a flash of insight, and then lost it. For every round they study the text, the DC goes down by ten – so in round 2, it's a DC 40 will save, round 3,

DC 30, round 4, DC 20, and rounds 5 and beyond, DC 10. Eventually, someone should be able to read it. It says: “A day will come when darkness threatens Cularin. The darkness will begin within the confines of this moon, and will rise to encompass all of the system, and the stars and moons and planets will know fear. Seek out the darkness. Where the focus is found, look to the stone beneath for the missing piece of the picture. Through stone and star, find the darkness, and bring it to the light. Only through the forces of goodness and hope can the darkness be kept from destroying all that we love. This is the future as I have foreseen it. – NZ” The text is included as player handout 1.

“NZ” is a reference any hero with Knowledge (Jedi Lore) should recognize on a DC 12 check. They are the initials of Nerra Ziveri, founder of the Jedi Academy and lost Jedi Master.

The “focus” referred to in the text is actually the crystals on the far wall – since crystals serve as foci in lightsabers. On the floor, beneath the largest concentration of crystals remaining, is a very dim outline of a star. In the center of that star is a hole, and listening at the hole, the moaning seems to be coming from there. The hole is small, but can be widened in any of a number of ways, including explosives, lightsabers, blasters – or just jumping up and down on it. Whatever they do, in a matter of a few minutes, the heroes can have a large enough hole opened that they can go down, into the darkness below – in search of the even greater darkness.

Encounter 4: The Descent

Key ideas of this encounter: through the hole in the floor, the heroes find a vertical shaft that was clearly cut, many years ago, from the rock of Tilnes; it looks to be an easy descent, until the inhabitants of the shaft take offense at the visitors and begin doing fly-by attacks; at the bottom of the shaft is a damaged starfighter

The hole leads down into a little-used section of the mines, which VMMC elected not to exploit because of the abundance of Yri worms in the area, which made all of the rock unstable. The walls, ceiling, and floor of the caverns down here are a mass of small tunnels formed by the worms, and it is these tunnels that allowed the ship at the bottom to crash through so many layers while remaining relatively intact (that, and a set of pretty decent shields that didn’t give out until the last layer).

The moans of pain continue to echo up through the hole in the floor once the heroes have it open enough

that they can fit through. There are no “words” to the moaning, so translation of the message is impossible. There is something down there that needs help.

The dark vertical shaft is definitely not natural; if the smooth walls weren’t enough to make this clear, the metal rungs set into the wall certainly are. The rungs were originally set here by mining company representatives who were checking out the lower levels, and who sealed it over when they found it untenable for exploitation.

The bottom of the shaft is beyond the range of anyone’s vision, and light sources don’t help much. If someone decides to drop a glow rod into the hole, describe the rod going down into the darkness, bouncing against the walls, and eventually striking the bottom – after about ten seconds. In other words, it’s a long way to the bottom.

The shaft begins less than a meter wide, but gets broader as the heroes descend, with the far wall getting gradually further away from the one with the rungs. Refer to DM Aid 1 for a diagram of the descent.

After about fifty meters, the heroes stir up a nest of neonocks, mynock-like creatures that came in attached to the hull of the ship below when it originally crash-landed, and have since chewed a home for themselves in the far wall of the shaft. They have lived quite happily on the crystals within the rock of Tilnes, and fear outsiders – as none of the neonocks currently living here have ever seen anything but one another. They don’t, as a rule, get out much.

All heroes get listen checks (DC 20) to hear the flapping of wings coming toward them and prevent being surprised; Force-Sensitive individuals may make the standard DC 20 wisdom check to prevent being surprised as well.

Suddenly, something swoops out of the darkness and attacks you!

Neonock (12): Subterranean parasite 2; Init +1; Defense 13 (+2 natural, +1 dex); Spd 8m fly; VP/WP 14/12; Atk +3 melee (1d4+2, bite) or +2/+2 melee (d6+2/d6+2 wing slam), +2 ranged; SQ blindsight, takedown; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will –3; SZ M; Rep 0; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 4, Wis 4, Cha 4.

Skills: Hide +5, Move Silently +8.

Feats: Flyby attack, Multiattack.

There are only 6 neonocks for lower tier groups. Neonocks look like mynocks, only with powerful grasping appendages.

The neonocks attack the lowest and highest individuals on the rungs first – the lowest because they’re easy prey, and the highest because if they fall, they will likely take some of the others with them. Make sure you know the order in which the heroes

descended into the hole. The neonocks utilize their flyby attack and slam the top and bottom individuals with their wings, attempting to knock them off the rungs. The takedown ability of the neonocks works as follows: Any time a single neonock hits a hero with both of its wing slams, or scores a successful critical hit with one of its wings, it may elect not to do damage, but to attempt to knock the hero from the rungs. The hero must make a reflex save with DC equal to the amount of damage that would have been dealt (or twice that amount, for a critical hit) to avoid being knocked off the rung. So, for example, a neonock hits with both of its wing slams, and would have done 11 points of damage with its hits (2d6+4). The affected hero must make a DC 11 reflex save to keep from losing his or her grip and falling. If the neonock had instead scored a critical with one wing, and missed with the other, the reflex save would have been based off 1d6+2, doubled. And yes – when you get two crits, or a crit and a regular hit, the DCs can start getting scary!

Because the heroes are so close to their nest, the neonocks are not going to run away. They fight to the death. If they succeed in knocking any of the heroes from the ladder, all is not lost. One of the neonocks swoops down and catches the falling hero, then carries that individual back up to the nest on its next action. If they really want to shoot the thing that's holding them aloft, they can – but boy, is that dumb! Because the entrance to the neonock nest is only 5 meters away from the rungs, it is possible to find a way to get across – liquid cable, some sort of heroic leap, or whatever cinematic fun the players come up with – in order to rescue anyone who has been taken by the neonocks. There is nothing of interest in the neonock nest.

The fight should be scary, and tense, especially since the heroes are hanging onto rungs over a long drop, and therefore will be DENIED THEIR DEX BONUSES to defense. They still get their dex modifier to their reflex saves, because at that point, all they're doing is trying not to fall, and dexterity comes in handy, then – but fighting while holding onto a rung in the dark in a deep mine shaft is a situation where they do not have their dex bonus to defense, barring some sort of insane creativity. If there's something they do that makes it reasonable for them to still have their dex bonus, then by all means – they have it. I just can't think what that would possibly be!

The purpose of the fight, though, is not to kill anyone. It would take some pretty bad dice rolls for that to happen. It's a 50 meter fall, give or take. For lower tier groups, make it into a 24 meter fall. The falling rules in the SWRPG core book apply.

After the fight is over, read the following:

The last of the creatures plummets to the bottom of the shaft, and you hear the low moaning, still coming

from below. When you reach the bottom of the shaft, a strange sight greets your eyes. A ship – it looks like an early version of a G-59 Cannibalizer – lies amidst a pile of rubble. Dust and debris cover most of it, obscuring its markings, and the moaning seems to be coming from the ship's cockpit.

The ship has been here for years. Players may ask how it is that no one noticed it crashing, or noticed all the layers it had to go through; the angle that it must have come in doesn't correspond to any known portion of the mining operation, and really, enough things hit the surface of Tilnes that a ship the size of this one hitting well away from the epicenter of activity and then crashing through a series of unused caverns wouldn't necessarily get anyone's attention.

That there's still moaning coming from it after this long should probably make the heroes a little nervous. They should get more nervous still when they see what's inside the ship...

Encounter 5: The Gentle Ascent

Key idea of this encounter: exploring the crashed ship, and potentially learning about its cargo; finding out that it is now transmitting; dealing with the Caarite guards that show up

A crashed G-59 Cannibalizer, this deep in the mines, should be something the heroes wonder about. Looking at the tunnel that leads away behind the ship, it appears that it crashed through several layers of rock some time ago, and came to rest here. Please refer to DM Aid #2 for a basic layout of one way you can imagine the journey the heroes are on.

When they're ready to explore the ship, proceed to the following.

You clear away some of the dirt and dust that has settled on the cockpit of the craft, and inside you can see an individual in a full flight suit, wearing a blast helmet. His head is down, and the moaning is as loud as ever.

Now, here's the deal. This guy is dead. He has been, for over a decade. The moaning they're hearing, from this distance, definitely sounds human, but he's not making it. It's being made by the holo-recording he was working on when he died, and never managed to send. Within the last couple of hours, all of the activity from the meteors hitting the surface of the moon has shaken loose portions of the ceiling, and his corpse fell forward, his hand finally pressing the "transmit" button.

Only part of his transmitter is working, though – the part that sends out the location beacon for the ship itself. A small portion of his message is being replayed, over and over, just as Artoo replayed a small portion of Leia’s message over and over for Luke in *Star Wars: A New Hope*. The repeating section consists of a series of pained moans, followed by a long pause, such that it only cycles about once a minute and thus isn’t noticeable as cyclic from a distance.

There are a lot of elements to this encounter. For your convenience, I’ve separated them out by sub-headings.

Passenger One: The Dead Pilot

It takes a little work to get the cockpit open, but anyone with some technical savvy can do it pretty easily. The pilot, slumped over his control panel, is not responsive. Because he’s wearing full flight gear, including gloves and helmet, only his lack of breathing or other movement gives away that he’s dead. There is no residual odor; the death-smell dissipated through cracks in the cockpit glass years ago.

He is wearing the flight uniform of a member of the Thareian Navy, pale blue with gold trim, and anyone with knowledge of military ranks can recognize the Captain’s insignia on his collar.

If anyone wants to examine the body in more detail, there’s not much left but bones and hair. A Treat Injury check can reveal any or all of the following information. As ever, a higher-level check reveals all of the information below it.

DC	Information Gained
10	Definitely male. Definitely human. Definitely deceased.
15	He didn’t die on impact. He died because his legs were pinned, and he couldn’t get out. Bad way to go.
20	He’s been dead around ten years.
25	He had some sort of ocular enhancement technology. There are strange implants around the back of his eye sockets. (Lower DCs may notice these, but have no idea what they mean.)
30	There’s evidence of extensive brain surgery. It looks like there were several organic modules implanted in his skull, that probably fed into his brain in some way, but they’ve all decayed just like his flesh did.

Passenger Two: The Droid Co-Pilot

Seated behind, and facing away from, the pilot (as in a snowspeeder), is a droid. It was damaged on impact, but what shut it down for good were the energy pulses from the core of Tilnes. It’s had its circuits fried so many times, most of them have started to melt together.

What’s interesting about the droid is that it is the EXACT SAME MODEL as LN-73, the droid that attempted to take control in “Something Uffel.” Anyone with knowledge of droids, local knowledge, or electronic or droid-related craft skills recognizes that this is a very popular model protocol droid in Thare, one that the droids of Uffel are particularly proud of.

There is nothing useful that this droid can do. It’s really nothing more than a shell, since all of its circuits have been destroyed, and its memory is wiped beyond repair.

The Ship Itself

Anyone making an examination of the outside of the ship sees that it is virtually devoid of identifying markings, unless one inspects its underside very carefully. Along the midline of the ship’s undersection, in very small script, are a series of numbers:

501400272204364191972

The numbers are the ship’s identification code, and probably contain more information than that, but the heroes at this point have no way to decode their meaning.

It is also worth noting that the style of ship looks familiar to heroes who played “TopWorld.” Unmarked Cannibalizers were the ships that attacked Nirama’s freighter, with the heroes on board. This obviously wasn’t one of those ships (since it’s been down here for a decade), but a quick Spacer Lore check (DC 20/15) reveals that Cannibalizers have never been something the Thareian Navy was **reported** to use. This might mean they’ve been using them for over a decade, though, since the inside of the ship is decked out with a full military sensor array.

The Moaning

Anyone investigating the moaning can find a personal combination holo-recorder/holo-projector attached to the ship’s console. It has only barely survived its time in Tilnes better than the droid did, and is going to take some serious repair work to get in good order.

If (and only if) the heroes succeed in a DC 25/20 repair check, they can get the full message the pilot recorded just before he died. The recorder/projector can be repaired later for 1000 credits, but if it is put into working order this way, the message will be lost.

The contents of the message are included as Player Handout 2. Again, if they don’t make the repair check, all they get out of it is moaning, and failing this repair check by more than five results in the message being lost, and the moaning stopping. It can still be repaired later, though the message is irrecoverable.

The Transmitter

There is a red light flashing on the console. This would be a good thing to mention to the players, and a DC 5 Computer Use roll allows them to discern that this is a homing beacon, which alerts others to the ship's location.

They can figure out, with a DC 10 spot check, that one of the hands of the corpse must have shifted just enough to flick the switch and activate the beacon recently, since otherwise, the power cells for the ship would have long since run down. This is probably what started the holoprojector going again as well.

If they want to shut down the transmitter, it requires a DC 15 Disable Device check. If they want to wait around to see who the transmitter brings, they won't have to wait long.

The Impact

Oh. Did I forget to mention that there's another huge bunch of debris about to get knocked out of orbit and pummel the surface of Tilnes? Silly me.

If they run out of ideas for what to do here, don't prompt them. The amount of information they look for and find determines what I assume people know, going into next year. Make SURE you fill out the critical events summary, particularly during the first month, but these will be relevant to me after the first month as well.

Anyway, once they've (a) done everything there is to do here, (b) run out of ideas, or (c) start annoying you, drop the roof on them.

Literally.

From somewhere far above, you hear the sounds of impacts. One... two... three... and the tunnel around you begins to shake. Rocks fall from the ceiling, and a rumbling begins at the top of the shaft from which you emerged.

Now would be a good time for them to move away from that shaft. There's a huge crashing, as the cavern above collapses, sending a cloud of dust billowing out the shaft as rocks come tumbling down.

Just as the dust begins to settle, they hear a voice from the dark tunnel beyond the ship.

"We know you are there. Come out with your hands up!"

Encounter 6: The Rest of the Party

Key ideas of this encounter: deal with the Cartel guard party that just showed up, and if a fight does break out,

stopping when the Caarites surrender, on the orders of Thurm Loogg, who wants to talk to the heroes about the "true problem" on Tilnes

The words are spoken in Basic, but anyone who played the "Eye of the Sun" trilogy has heard more than enough Caarite speech to recognize the slight lilting quality of the words. There are more Caarites down here, and these are conscious!

Now, the heroes have a couple of choices. They can fight, or they can parlay. The Caarites are NOT in "shoot first, ask questions later" mode. They were sent to find the source of the signal, and are fairly surprised to have come across anyone down here, since they carefully monitor mining activity and know that none of the miners were working this area.

One of the members of this detachment is actually Corporal Dregz, the Caarite soldier who escorted the heroes into the Cartel compound in "A Cularin Presence." (Coincidence? Is there such a thing as "coincidence" in the universe?) If the heroes do not immediately start shooting, when they see the Caarite patrol, they get a DC 15 spot check to notice him as familiar, and if they make a DC 12 Intelligence check (or if the player has a frighteningly good memory), they even recall his name and rank.

The Caarites will NOT shoot first, and if they are fired upon, the first round they shoot back, they shoot to stun. They were not, after all, sent down here to kill miners, and they have no reason to suspect that what they've found is anything but. Please remind the heroes that it may be an evil act to attack with lethal force when their opposition is only attacking to stun. If they persist in attacking with lethal force after getting a warning, DSPs may be in order. (And don't let any Jedi "hero" tell you, "There's no way to attack non-lethally with a lightsaber!") There are plenty of rules in the SWRPG for doing exactly that – disarming and attacking weapons being two of my favorites.)

After two rounds of shooting to stun, though, if the opposition is attacking using lethal force, the Caarites are going to start shooting to kill. This only lasts for a round, though, at which point they receive an order to surrender from Thurm Loogg, and the Caarites lay down their weapons.

Continuing to attack at this point is certainly grounds for awarding dark side points.

Cartel Search Squad (8): Caarite Soldiers 6; IM +2; Def 17 (+2 dex, +1 size); Spd 6 m; Sz S; VP/WP 57/14; Atk +7/+2 melee (1d6+1, baton), +9/+3 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ none; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +3; SZ S; FP 2; Rep 1; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +7, Demolitions +5, Intimidate +7, Listen +2, Repair +2, Spot +5, Survival +7, Treat Injury +7.

Feats: Armor (light, medium, & heavy), Weapon Proficiency (simple, blaster pistols, blaster rifles, vibroweapons, heavy weapons), Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Mobility, Weapon Focus (blaster pistol), Heroic Surge.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, uniform, 2 medpaks, baton.

For lower-tier groups, use fewer members of the search squad (4-6, depending on party size).

If the heroes somehow manage to kill all of the Caarites, then skip down to the activation of the holoprojector one of them is carrying.

If the heroes are all knocked unconscious, they are taken back to the Cartel base, where they have their remote interview with Loogg.

At the end of round 3 of the fight, whether combat is lethal or non-lethal, the Caarites drop their weapons and call out to the party.

“We have been ordered to surrender! Our weapons are on the ground. Please come out to speak with us!”

A little bit of caution is probably a reasonable thing, given the circumstances. However, the Caarites are not bluffing, so any sense motive check higher than DC 10 should make the heroes pretty sure that the Caarites are surrendering.

There is a message, coming through on the modified holoprojector one of the Caarites carries at his belt. Once at least one of the heroes has approached to accept the Caarite surrender, the holoprojector activates, revealing the porcine, smiling visage of Cartel envoy Thurm Loogg.

Remember, when playing Loogg, to smile a lot. Until your face HURTS. He is as slimy as they come, and laughs and jokes with the heroes to try to set them at ease. He always has his own agenda, though.

If all the Cartel guards are dead, begin with the holoprojector activating as the heroes approach the bodies, and modify the text below appropriately.

“Greetings, brave citizens of Cularin! I am Thurm Loogg, your friend in the Cartel. And who might you be?”

Yes, this actually is a two-way connection. As the heroes introduce themselves to Loogg, he has someone beside him pulling up files on each of them, and if they have ever had interactions with the Cartel in the past – especially if they played the “Eye of the Sun” trilogy – he recognizes them. If no one in the group played that

trilogy (and I find that unlikely, but hey, it’s possible), then modify the following text appropriately.

“You have stumbled across what is probably a very surprising, but nonetheless legitimate, operation. We, your friends in the Cartel, are strictly abiding by the prescripts of the people of Cularin, and are no longer operating on your lovely green planet. Our base of operations is here, beneath Tilnes, and I oversee operations from our ship in orbit above Cularin. All perfectly legitimate, and well within the bounds of our franchise.

“I would offer to have my guards escort you back to our facility here, if I believed you would accept the offer. You are welcome to view it, if you would like to make a report to – well, whomever you report to.” He grins broadly.

“For now, there is a more pressing issue at hand. Our facility, and all of the mines of Tilnes, are in jeopardy because a certain other group has also chosen to establish a base of operations within Tilnes. Unlike ourselves, however, they did not first enter into a legitimate business arrangement with the kind folk of Verga Mer Mining Company. These dolts insist on flying capital ships through the lower portions of the atmosphere, and have even constructed a concealed base where such ships can be docked beneath the surface of the moon! They are the true problem, and if you really want something to report on, I would recommend you investigate them.”

A few questions Loogg can answer...

- Who are you talking about? ***Why, the Thaereian Navy, of course.***
- The Thaereian Navy has been flying capital ships through the atmosphere? ***Yes, and dislodging all sorts of materials from orbit.***
- Is this the only place? ***It’s the only place I’ve seen them. Why? Do you know of others? [He leans forward, looking very interested.]***
- Why are you setting up a base in secret? ***We recognize that not everyone loves the Cartel as much as we love you. It takes time for debacles like Wir’s cutting of the noble ch’hala trees to be forgotten.***
- What are you shipping? ***Dry goods. Medical supplies. Some indigenous woods, but only those our charter permits, I assure you.*** [Sense motive, DC 26, lets the heroes know that Loogg is withholding something, but he will not elaborate, no matter how he is pushed; and yeah, the DC is high, but Loogg has Bluff at +16...]]
- Why don’t you just leave the system? ***We don’t WANT you here! There is good business here,***

and many of your fellow citizens do not agree with you. If only you understood how much the Cartel loves you, you might not be so angry!

- So, what's up with the Thaereian Navy? *Their presence disrupts our business.*
- So why don't you do something about them? *Because if we took action publicly, we would bring unwanted attention on ourselves. It is better for the Cartel to pick and choose our publicity. Challenging the military establishment is generally bad business.*
- You just want to send us in? *You have shown yourselves to be concerned for the good of the system. Surely, that extends to exploring military bases capable of hiding capital ships just above Cularin itself?*
- Can you give us any good reason to trust you? *Given the actions of Velin Wir, I cannot. I encourage you to see for yourselves the military presence beneath Tilnes, and have someone deal with it.*

The conversation could go on for hours. However, it won't, because there's about to be another impact. When the meteor strikes the surface of Tilnes, the image of Loogg flickers and disappears. Have the players roll spot checks as the image goes. Anyone who was watching the image, and makes a DC 30 check, notice that dust fell around Loogg's face exactly when the impact came. Which likely means, he's actually beneath Tilnes, just like they are. Finding him is impossible, but the knowledge that he was on Tilnes, rather than in the ship, may be important later.

If the heroes want to see the facility, there's not much to it. It's a series of steel-walled caves, where various goods are stored for shipping. A lift leads to a hangar closer to the surface. There are Caarites all around, who seem unnerved by the presence of the outsiders, but who maintain a respectful distance and do not answer questions.

If the heroes were all taken unconscious, this conversation has been occurring in a large, comfortable room, with beds on which each of them were lain, and the holoprojection is full and life-size of Loogg sitting in a comfy chair, feet dangling.

Once the conversation ends, Corporal Dregz gives the heroes directions to a shaft leading deeper into the moon, where they can gather information about the Thaereian military presence. He also provides them with a map of the tunnels that will get them back to the surface, once they go down further. If they choose, they can try to use the map to navigate back to the surface without ever going down to check on the presence of the military base themselves. Unfortunately, the map is

not completely accurate, and leads them into an ambush whichever way they go.

Encounter 7: The Crux of the Problem

Key ideas of this encounter: if they elect to follow up on the Cartel's lead, they proceed deeper into Tilnes, and begin to see signs of habitation; as they come close to the base, they are found by Osten dal'Nay, who tells them they are walking into a trap; he offers to lead them out, past a bunker with an e-web, and ultimately, a running fight out of Tilnes

The tunnel slopes down at a fairly sharp ten-degree grade, twisting and turning as you head deeper into the bowels of Tilnes. For some time, the stone walls of the tunnels are unremarkable – roughly cut, barely high enough for a Wookiee to stand erect.

If we've trained them properly, the heroes should be good and paranoid. They should be looking for signs of life, or security cameras, or anything. Encourage them to look. Let the players roll dice to their hearts' content.

They won't find anything.

There actually are a couple of cameras, well-concealed, hidden 20 meters down various side tunnels. But there are none in the main tunnels through which they travel.

Here, mood is very important. The tunnels are dark, and musky. There's clearly some sort of moving water deep within Tilnes, which is odd. They can't hear it, but the air is wet, and heavy. It's also getting colder.

Soon, they begin seeing signs of life. Discarded food wrappers, a spent glow rod, and scuff-marks on the floor of the tunnel show that they're heading into somewhere with more people.

At this point, heroes who wanted to get out of the moon may be thinking they're nearing the exit. WRONG ANSWER. Heroes who wanted to gather information about the Thaereian military will probably be thinking they're getting close. Unfortunately, they're right.

And now... listen checks. DC 12.

As you make your way through the passages, you hear a soft, "Psst!" from a tunnel to your right.

Shooting first and asking questions later is grounds for a dark side point.

A young human male, with a shaven head and dark eyes, steps from the shadows, his hands raised. He wears a uniform of pale blue and gold, and his collar

sports a trio of Corporal's stars. "Don't shoot," he whispers. "I need to talk to you."

He tries to get the heroes to step into the shadows with him, but if they aren't feeling too trusting (and who can blame them?), he talks to them in the main tunnel, while looking exceedingly nervous.

"I'm Osten dal'Nay. I was born on Cularin, but I always wanted to be a soldier, so I joined the Thaereian Navy. Thought it would be good, since I could get posted near home."

"Except there's a problem. 'Cause there's something going on with them, something bad. And it's going to hurt Cularin, and I want out. When I found out there were some folks about to walk into an ambush down here, I thought maybe you could help me get out."

Questions Osten can answer:

- Ambush? Huh? *Yeah! You guys are walking into an ambush.*
- D'oh! I hate the Cartel! They always do this! *The Cartel? I figured we knew you were coming because of the surveillance cams.*
- Surveillance cams? We didn't see any surveillance cams. *That's kind of the point.*
- But we followed this map. Isn't it going to take us to the surface? *Not a chance. I don't know who drew this map, but it's pretty bad.*
- I'm part of the Thaereian military. They aren't really going to ambush me – are they? *All I know is what I heard. They said some of "those annoying do-gooder types" were heading this way, and we should set up the e-web batteries to take them out. I'm guessing that was you. There's the right number of you.*
- I really hate the Cartel! *You keep saying that. I guess they could have something to do with it.*
- So why should we trust you? *Because I want out. I want to protect my home, and I don't think that's what Thae wants. Get me out of here, and I can give the government of Cularin LOTS of dirt on Thae.*
- And the Cartel? *If I knew anything, I'd tell you.*
- So how do we get out of here? *Just stick with me. It's not going to be easy. We have to get past several guard stations, and I couldn't do it by myself. But since you've got a little more firepower than me, if anything goes wrong.* [He's wearing a hold-out blaster, standard dress uniform issue.]

Everything he tells them is the truth. He can name the street he lived on in Gadrin (Tarasin Way), answer

questions about the local economy, and can provide whatever information they need to verify that he's who he says he is, and sincere. He's obviously very scared, and wants out, but is too afraid to try to get away on his own.

If the heroes accuse him of being a deserter (which he is), and threaten to turn him over to the Thaereian command, he begs, quite sincerely, for his life. He asks that they at least accompany him to the location of the first e-web battery, which they have to sneak past regardless, and if they see the battery and still want to turn him over, they can do what they have to do.

He leads them down a side tunnel, which angles slightly upward.

After a few dozen meters, you notice an opening to the right. Osten turns to you, points to his eyes, then points to the hole. He wants you to take a look.

Peering through, you see an e-web blaster on a tripod, with a trio of soldiers in pale blue uniforms seated behind it. They have their feet up, and are watching a monitor screen.

"So?" One of them turns to the other. "Where they at?"

"Reports said they're coming. [# of party members] of 'em."

"How many Jedi?"

"Blast, I almost forgot that!" He reaches into a pocket and pulls out what looks like a small, clear tablet. He pops it into his mouth, grimaces, and swallows. "I hate that stuff, but it's better than being Jedi mind-tricked!"

If there is a hero in the party whose backstory includes being a member of the Thaereian military, include the following as well.

"Hey, did you hear there's one of ours with them?"

"Yeah. Some guy named [Hero name]. I think the word was 'expendable.'" They all laugh.

At this point, the heroes should be pretty much convinced that they need to get out of here. If they aren't, they're probably too dumb to go on living anyway.

Here's the deal: They are going to have to sneak past four more guard installations. All of those guards have taken their little clear pills, so are fully resistant to the Affect Mind ability and cannot be made to hear phantom sounds or decide they don't notice the heroes. (And no, none of them have any extras of the pills; we have to save something for the heroes to discover in year two!). Thus, they have to actually be sneaky.

This won't work. Why? Because it requires each hero, as they move past each installation on their way out of Tilnes, to make a successful Move Silently check

opposed by the Listen checks for the guards at each station. And I've already rolled the listen checks:

Station one: 18/13

Station two: 20/15

Station three: 12/7

Station four: 15/10

What this means is, in a high tier group, everyone in the party must make a DC 18 Move Silently check at the first station, or one of the guards hears them (DC 13 for lower tier). At station two, everyone needs to make a DC 20 check (15 at lower tier), and so on. I'm not going to do the cheesey-author trick, and define Osten as automatically missing one of the rolls. If everyone makes all their rolls (and boy, are the odds against THAT), then they make it out without a fight. It won't usually happen. Osten has +6 to his Move Silently, and you should roll his checks where everyone can see them. Remember – if he were really good at being sneaky, he would have gotten out of here without help. He's an excellent soldier, and very competent, but sneaking has never been his strong suit.

Clearly, this isn't likely to work. So what we'll end up with is a running fight, as the heroes try to get out of Tilnes.

The fight should last from 2-5 rounds (2 rounds if they don't get heard until the last station, 5 rounds if they botch a roll at the first one).

One thing that would be WONDERFULLY cinematic is a hero who takes point, and goes screaming down the corridor, firing his blaster into the ceiling to get the guards to chase him, so that the rest of the party can catch them from behind. It's that kind of wackiness that deserves a Force point, as does anything else especially heroic that lets the heroes get out of here.

For purposes of the fight, Osten has a ranged attack modifier of +11 using his hold-out blaster, a defense of 19, and an initiative modifier of +3.

Lower Tier

Thaereian Guards, various Human Thug 1/Scout 1; Init +2; Defense 16; Spd 10m; VP/WP 8/15; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, baton) or +4 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ immune to Affect Mind; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +2; SZ M; Rep 1; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +8, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (Military Protocol) +4, Profession (Guard) +2, Pilot +4.

Feats: Weapons (simple, blaster pistols & rifles), Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (blaster pistol), Starship Operations (space transports).

Equipment: Blast helmet and vest, blaster pistol (field issue).

Higher Tier

Thaereian Guards, various Human Thug 4/Scout 1; Init +2; Defense 16; Spd 10m; VP/WP 8/15; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2, baton) or +7 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ immune to Affect Mind; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +3; SZ M; Rep 1; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +8, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (Military Protocol) +7, Profession (Guard) +5, Pilot +4.

Feats: Weapons (simple, blaster pistols & rifles), Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (blaster pistol), Starship Operations (space transports), Great Fortitude.

Equipment: Blast helmet and vest, blaster pistol (field issue).

There are four guards at each station, and if the heroes blow through those, you can toss more at them. They're just thugs with a single level of a heroic class, so they shouldn't be that tough.

The 2-5 rounds estimate on how long the combat lasts assumes it's a running combat. If the heroes stop and fight, they can just keep fighting until they run out of bad guys, or until someone gets hit with a crit and falls down. Osten will be trying to convince them to keep moving, since he knows the extent of the forces here, and doesn't want to deal with them once the alarm starts sounding. If someone falls, he will pick up the body and head for the surface. Getting out is a good idea.

If they manage to sneak past everything, or bluff their way past, or otherwise roleplay their way out of it, then the blaster fire in the conclusion comes from the second unit, who figured out what's been happening and have come to try to stop the deserter and his accomplices.

Conclusion

The tunnel ahead of you seems brighter, and it opens out into a rock outcropping beside one of the landing domes on the surface of the moon. Everything is in a state of disarray, but as you emerge from the tunnel, a pair of figures stride towards you, a human male with dark hair, serious eyes, and a salt-and-pepper goatee, and a thick-chested Wookiee with a pair of braids in his beard.

This is Master Lanius Qel-Bertuk, master of the Academy, and Kirlocca, master of lightsaber training at the Academy. Any Padawan recognizes them IMMEDIATELY, and any non-Jedi hero need only get a 5 or better (15, unskilled; allowing a roll is appropriate here, given how well known these two are) on Knowledge (Cularin).

They push past you, and Kirlocca ignites his lightsaber just as a flurry of blaster bolts come through the mouth of the tunnel. He flicks them aside as if they were nothing, and as he does so, Master Lanius gestures at a rock above the tunnel's mouth. It lifts smoothly from its perch, drifting down to settle in front of the exit.

Lanius and Kirlocca are here because Lanius sensed a disturbance in the Force, emanating from Tilnes. (In other words, he made that Far Seeing check...) They brought a relief team with them, to aid in the rescue effort, but even then, Lanius felt a deeper sense of wrongness. He is very interested in what the heroes have to report, and offers to take Osten somewhere safe, where he can begin to rebuild.

Osten is extremely grateful to the heroes.

"I couldn't have made it without you, friends. Now, I'm going to try to repay your kindness, by sharing what I know with the local governments, and with the Academy. I'll be in touch with you soon. You have my word."

On Lanius's advice, he won't tell them any more of what he knows, in order to protect them. He will, however, extend a special offer to any hero who had been a soldier in the Thaereian military up until ten minutes ago, when they found out they were expendable.

"What Cularin really needs is a militia of her own. I would very much like to start one. Would you be interested in assisting me, in helping me build such a military?"

He asks non-Thaereian soldiers if they are interested in being involved, once it's up and running, but WILL NOT offer them the chance to help build the military. He's something of an elitist, and wants soldiers from an army he knows, first and foremost.

With that, he is whisked away, not to be heard from again... until next year...

Here Ends Tilnes Rising

Experience Point Summary

Experience is calculated as follows for Living Force events.

- 1) Experience awards in the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* 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 (600 xp for core LF plot scenarios, 350 for non-core LF scenarios).

- 2) Assign discretionary role-playing experience (0-400 points). These should reward accurate character portrayal throughout the adventure, not just how well the hero 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 find out about the Cartel and the Thaereians and try to find the Thaereians? If so, each hero who survived receives 600 xp.

Adventure Experience:	600 xp
Roleplaying Experience:	0-400 xp

Total Possible Experience:	1,000 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 learning about both the Cartel and Thaereian bases, but intended to leave without investigating the Thaereian base, 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 acquire in the scenario. Please advise anyone who wants to keep the biotech out of the dead pilot's head that actively attempting such would earn them a DSP, and if they succeed, the biotech will be confiscated by the Academy.

From Maris Gen

- One case (8 bottles) Rodian Ale

From the Crashed Ship

- Combination holorecorder/holoprojector

From the Cartel

- Inaccurate map of the tunnels of Tilnes

From Verga Mer Mining Company

- FOR JEDI ONLY (certed, one per Jedi): Out of gratitude most sincere, for the assistance provided the employees of VMMC during the crisis on Tilnes, the company gratefully acknowledges you

with the following: When the time comes for the Jedi named above to construct his or her own lightsaber, he or she may contact a representative of VMMC to receive a color crystal appropriate to his or her construction. Per longstanding agreements with the Jedi Academy, no Padawan will be supplied with red focus crystals, but other colors available include blue, green, teal, violet, yellow, and pink. Mark the color you wish to receive, when the time comes and VMMC obtains approval from your Master to provide you the crystals, and we will be sure to have them available in inventory. {Any Padawan who attempts to forge one of these, or allows such forgery to take place, or otherwise aids in the dissemination of lightsaber components to non-Jedi, will be immediately expelled from the Academy and brought up on formal charges before the Council on Coruscant. L Q-B}

- FOR NON-JEDI (certed, only one): Out of gratitude most sincere, for the assistance provided the employees of VMMC during the crisis on Tilnes, the company gratefully acknowledges you with the following: a set of crystals, typically utilized in construction of the T-32S light blaster, which will increase the penetration power of any appropriate weapon into which they are installed. In game mechanic terms, if the hero spends 500 credits to have them installed in a hold-out blaster (but NOT any other kind of blaster; they are sized for a hold-out), the threat range of the weapon is increased to 19-20, and it gains a +1 equipment bonus to hit and damage.

Player Handout 1: The Text on the Floor

A day will come when darkness threatens Cularin. The darkness will begin within the confines of this moon, and will rise to encompass all of the system, and the stars and moons and planets will know fear. Seek out the darkness. Where the focus is found, look to the stone beneath for the missing piece of the picture. Through stone and star, find the darkness, and bring it to the light. Only through the forces of goodness and hope can the darkness be kept from destroying all that we love. This is the future as I have foreseen it.

-NZ

Player Handout 2: The Captain's Holorecording

As you finish tinkering with the projector, the moaning stops, and an image flickers in the air before you. From behind an opaque blast shield, you hear the sound of ragged breathing.

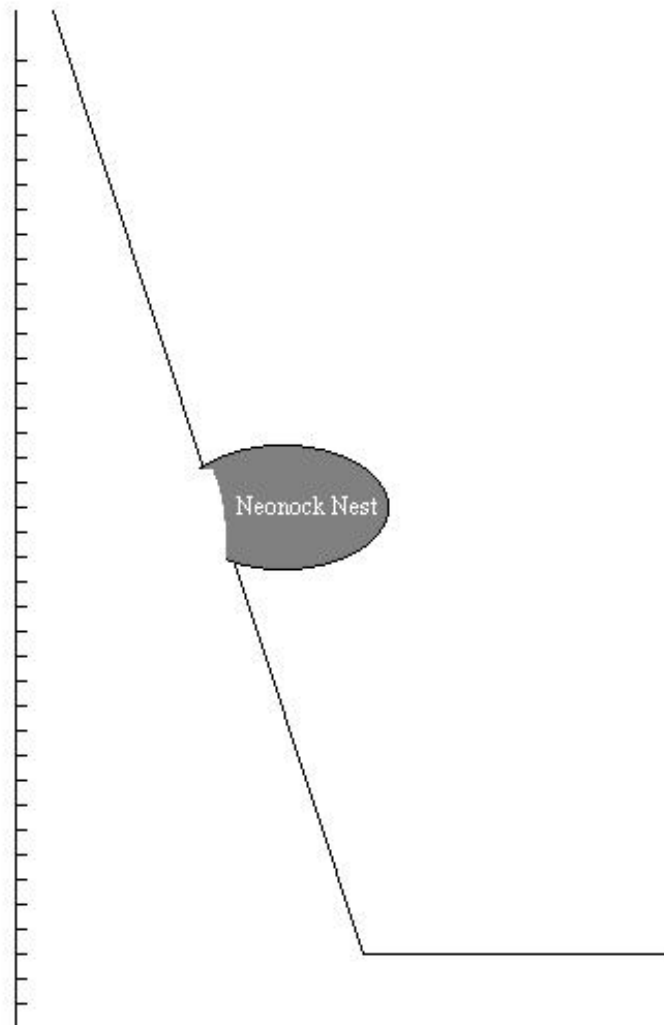
"Captain Delas Fotrin, Special Reserves, Project Wooden Rancor. On a routine circuit of mining moon above target, encountered atmospheric disturbance." He moans, and the moan is very familiar. "Engines gave out. Brought ship in for landing, punctured crust. Crashed through multiple layers. Stuck far below surface, pinned in. Attempts to extricate self have failed.

"Pursuant to Order 1138, have avoided activating homing beacon. No chance of escape. To aid in recovery of ship, will activate beacon soon.

"Believe mining moon... good location... no one looks at it. Atmospheric disturbances... only... problem..."

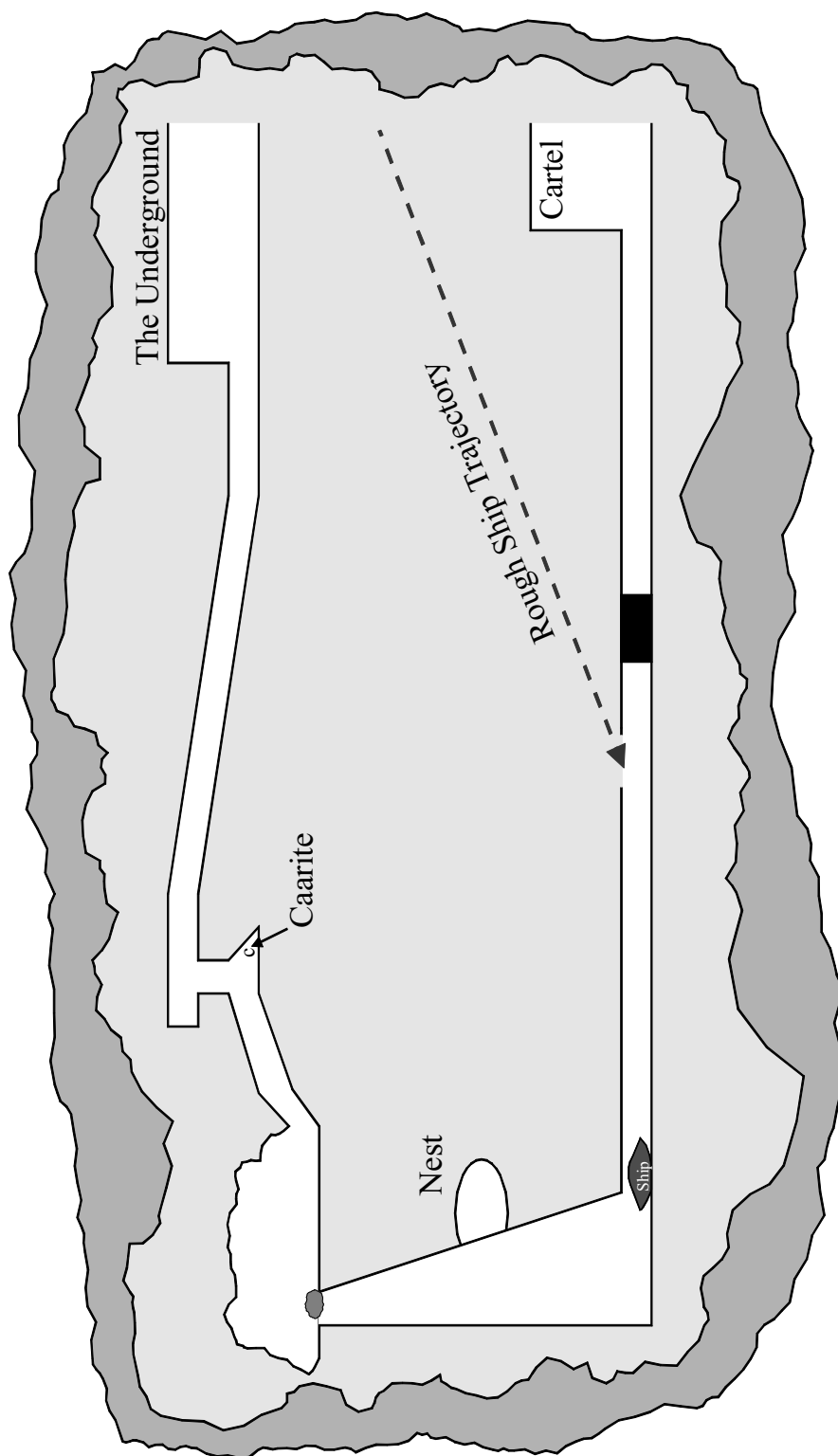
Then there are several painful moans, a long silence, and the recording ends.

DM Aid #1: The Descent



Note: Allow for some distortion of size. The opening of the shaft is about 1 meter wide; by the time the heroes get down to the section where the neonocks attack, it is five meters wide, and is ten meters wide at the bottom of the shaft; the shaft itself is about 100 meters deep, with rungs every half-meter.

DM Aid #2: General Layout of the Mine Complex



Critical Event Summary

Tilnes Rising

1. Did the heroes succeed in retrieving the Captain's message?

Yes

No

2. Did the heroes investigate Loogg's claims of a military presence, or did they head for the surface immediately?

Investigated

Ran

3. Did the heroes take Osten with them?

Yes

No

If so, did he survive?

Yes

No

4. Did the heroes come to the conclusion that Loogg was actually on Tilnes, rather than in his ship?

Yes

No

5. Were any of the heroes enrolled in the Thaereian military when the event started, and accepted the offer to help Osten form the Cularin Militia at the event's conclusion? If so, list player name, hero name, and RPGA # below.

Convention Coordinator:

To report these results (for events during the month of November 2001 only), you may mail them to:

RPGA - Living Force, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707

Or email to: LFPlots@rpga.net

Or fax to: (425) 687-8287 Attention Living Force Critical Events