

STAR WARS®

ROLEPLAYING GAME



DEMONS IN THE DARK

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Demons in the Dark

A Star Wars Roleplaying Game Adventure

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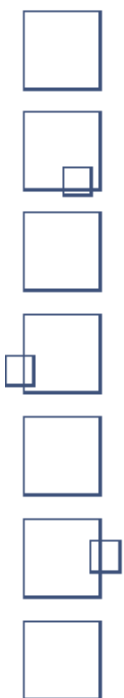
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This is an adventure for West End Games' *Star Wars Roleplaying Game, 2nd Edition, Revised and Expanded Rules* designed for 4-6 low level characters. It is not set in any particular time period, or any particular sector of space. On a remote planet, hidden between small junctions on the multitude of hyperspace lanes, a mining colony was lost. Unknown to the heroes, the colonists could not compete with the natural predators of the planet's ecosystem. Traveling around, trying to find a new method to departing the planet, the characters encounter the dangerous wildlife, and must constantly defend themselves against the highly evolved hunters and try to get all the shipwreck survivors safely off the planet.

Adventure Background

Several years ago a colony was established on the planet Kekre. Kekre had been discovered years before, but it is located in a solar system that was heavily shrouded behind a series of thick asteroid belts from any passing space lanes. The asteroids made it very difficult to travel to and from the planet, and so it was decided by most mining companies not to be worth the costs to exploit the planet.

The group of colonists came from a people who had grown tired of working for the mega-corporations and wanted to try to make a go of it on their own. They located the original scouting reports of Kekre and chose it for a place where they could establish their own mining colony and remain free from future competition with mega-corporations.

Kekre is a small planet in a simple star system. Several other planets exist, but they are not capable of supporting life. While Kekre did not have the best potential for financial return in the possibilities of the ore that could be mined, it was the most hospitable and therefore it would be easiest to get established there.

The colony was founded eighteen standard years before the adventure. For six years they exported minerals. As long as they hauled a lode of ore to the space lanes, another company would buy the cargo for redistribution. However, when the Kekre Mining Cooperative – as the colony's business end was called – stopped showing up, the traders didn't bother to ask what happened. Since KMC was an independent company, no one bothered to go looking when they stopped communicating with the rest of the galaxy. That was twelve years ago.

The colony was forgotten about and ships simply sped through the space lanes, completely ignoring the silent colony. If anyone knew what had really happened, they likely would have declared the planet off-limits anyway, since there was no resource worth the dangers on its surface.

For the Gamemaster

The mining colony met local wildlife after establishing themselves on the planet for some time. The wild life they encountered were natural predators, and began hunting the colonists. Resolved to defend their claim and their homes, the colonists unsuccessfully tried to fight back.

The characters will have to battle wits with the monsters of the world. They may be interested in trying to figure out what happened, and time will help them realize the truth. This adventure is designed to keep the heroes pressed and not be allowed to pause and think decisions over carefully. They are the prey here.

The Non-Player Characters are not expected to live. Use them to help the characters feel the dangers they are facing, as well as build a deep tension in the game. If the characters have their own shuttle, it can be substituted for the *Akibet*; however, the shuttle that crashes should be a total loss to help the storyline along.

Kekre has a roughly standard rotation pattern. It only takes eighteen hours to make a full rotation. It is also the winter season in the hemisphere where the shuttle crashes, so there are even shorter than standard daylight hours. As it stands, there are only about seven hours of light per day for the heroes. It also is a very heavy season for weather, so very thick storm

clouds can completely obscure the sky, and plunge the ground into nearly complete darkness. At night this situation is even more pronounced, especially since it is a new moon period.

Despite the fact that it is winter, the planet is so temperate that the temperatures remain moderate through the nights. Snow is not a factor in the plains where the shuttle crashes, although rain is a common phenomenon. Since the native predators are nocturnal, the winter months and the weather make them very active, and all the more dangerous. Even though they tend to move only at night, the Kekre Demons are prone to moving about any time that the planet is bathed in darkness.

Getting the Heroes Involved

Taking a transport shuttle from any planet might get the heroes to crash on Kekre. This adventure can be placed anywhere from the Deep Core to the Outer Rim with ease. Alternatively, they could be sent to investigate what has happened at Kekre, by any number of potentially interested parties.

When the shuttle crashes down, make sure to have all communications systems destroyed. While the asteroid belt might help disrupt communications away from the planet, the lack of radios onboard the shuttle adds to the tension of the situation. It is also recommended that they characters do not have comlinks, to keep them running around trying to talk to each other, and possibly risking running into more of the natural predators.

Episode One: Shipwrecked!

In this first episode, the heroes ride a doomed shuttle down in a crash to the planet's surface. They must regroup and begin to lead the survivors to the nearest settlement (actually, the only settlement on the planet) where they might find some manner of getting off the planet. On their way they have their first encounter with the dangerous predators that will plague them for the rest of the adventure.

Scene One: Mayday! Mayday! Mayday!

The party has secured passage aboard the *Akibet*. It is a small shuttle, designed to ferry passengers on trips that should only take a day or two. Her crew has a variety of experience, and makes this run often. There are four crewmembers and several other passengers onboard the *Akibet* along with the heroes.

Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

The *Akibet's* journey continues for the next eight hours or so without incident. The passengers mix and mingle, often carrying on conversations while watching the hyperspace tunnel as it zips past the portals. They share simple meals cooked in the ship's small galley, and the older patrons sip mixed drinks from the bar.

What none of them know is how an event that occurred tens of thousands of years ago could affect their lives tragically on this day. Several thousands of years ago a star went supernova and the resulting shockwave knocked what was a regularly visiting comet off course and it became a rogue comet. The rogue comet coasted about, but was never charted, nor did it pick up a regular pattern with any star system. The comet had gathered great amounts of debris and speed when its parent star exploded, making the comet even more dangerous than before. Uncharted, it would prove to be a dangerous element along the hyperspace routes, as the tiny little *Akibet* would discover today.



The comet has hit the shuttle and sent it careening out of control. The crew tries to make desperate mayday calls, and the passengers are jostled as the shuttle tumbles end over end through space. The interior lights extinguish as unseen forces jostle the starship. The passengers and crew find themselves bathed in yellow sunlight, strange since their course should not have taken them so close to a yellow star.

Instead of slowing down as everyone might expect, the shuttle begins to speed up. The shuttle begins to be buffeted by a series of fast shakes and the windows glow a fiery red as they heat up. Atmosphere is seen through the windows and the passengers realize they are going to impact on a planet very soon. The shuttle's descent angle is steep, but even flying on a dead stick, Captain Rolyat manages the dive with expert hands.

Before anyone expects it, the shuttle slams into the ground. The torque on the shuttle's body wrenches the outer hull plating loose; light streams into the passenger bay through a growing fissure in the hull. The interior is a mess with small personal belongings strewn about, intermixed with cooking and eating utensils from the galley. Food and drinks mark the area near the galley and bar; broken bits of glass and plastic litter the area and create a hazard to those around them.

Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

A quick inspection of the interior shows several portals cracked or completely smashed beyond repair. A five-meter long crack in the ceiling allows fresh air and sunshine to flow onto the faces of the passengers. The air did not seem harmful in any way, although scents of burning electronics and metals float through it. Hissing noises are heard as gases escape from unseen conduits - where they are or what they contain can only be guessed. Several seats have been loosened in their fittings, but are still held in place by a few thin cables.

As the passengers begin to feel their aches and pains and groan as they move, the Chief Engineer bolts from the cockpit to the rear of the shuttle. As the cockpit's occupants begin to make noise, it is obvious that they too are alive, although they fared no better than the rest of those onboard. From the rear of the shuttle, near the engines, banging, swearing and grunting is heard as Chief Mannox furiously attempts to fix or shut down something.

After several minutes, he emerges with dirt and grime wiped across his face. The passengers begin to rise from their seats as Wes, the first mate, steps out of the cockpit to check on everyone. Without a word, Chief Mannox passes by the young man, leaving Wes alone in the passenger area with the passengers. "Is everyone alive?" the first mate asks.

The passengers and crew have survived a crash landing on an unknown planet. The *Akibet's* systems are mostly destroyed, with the onboard computer barely operational, and with only a small handful of survival gear intact. The communication devices are completely wiped out, without a chance for repair. The only other remaining commodities worth saving are three power cells from the main reactor. They are each 250kg cylinders, a meter in length, and a half-meter in diameter.

Judging by the position of the sun, it is late afternoon. The shuttle crashed in the middle of grassy and hilly plains. They extend indefinitely in all directions except the west. To the west, about three to five kilometers away, there is a forest of some sort. The forest extends out of sight to the south, and to the north of the trees there are more grassy plains.

If asked where they are, Captain Rolyat has a slight idea. Before crashing, the crew got a glance at the sensors. They appeared to be about three light years off their intended course and crashed on the planet Kekre. It's habitable and relatively standard for a planet, but that's all they could gleam from the sensors.

While the shuttle is totaled and will never fly again, the onboard computer can be used to bring up a touch of

information on the planet. There's not much listed, but apparently there was a small settlement of colonists that landed on the planet nearly eighteen years ago. Records indicate that they haven't been heard from in nearly twelve of those years.

The shuttles sensors indicated plenty of life on the planet, but they didn't have a chance to get very specific. A basic analysis of the shuttle's sensor and computer data indicates that the settlement should be to the west of the crash, by about twenty-two kilometers both over the plains and through the woods. If they try to go around the woods to the north, it's thirty-five kilometers.

If the heroes don't take the initiative to find the survival gear, the first mate will distribute it. Everyone receives a breathmask and a one-liter, self-purifying canteen - the canteens are already filled with water as well. There are two blaster carbines, as well as two twelve-man rafts. There is a supply pack with one-a-day ration bars, and whatever rations that can be recovered from the galley. The galley has small food items, mostly perishable, and an assortment of bottles of liquor. There are four general utility knives, and a package of four fire starters and the four fifteen-meter ropes. There may be some useful items in the passengers' luggage as well.

Any time spent traveling in directions other than west is wasted, and just means that the group is left out in the open even more when night falls. They could stay with the shuttle, although that just means a longer walk the next day, and arriving to town definitely in the dark. If they travel to the west, they should reach the edge of the woods just around dusk.

As they move, they see little signs of wildlife; the exceptions include a variety of songbirds, which flutter about in the meadow sky. With a Difficult *search* or *sense* check - the heroes know they are being watched, but can not tell what is following their progression. If the heroes stop to investigate, they find nothing.

It takes nearly two hours to reach the forest, and since the planet is on a standard rotation pattern the sun has settled behind the trees as they reach the forest edge. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

They can all catch the barest glint of the sun off the shuttle, perched atop a knoll about five kilometers away as the mynock could fly. Captain Rolyat stops the group on the edge of the woods, "We should have the best combination of cover from the woods and open air as well. We'll put together a fire for light and warmth. I'm not sure what the weather will be like, but hopefully like this afternoon - nice and temperate."

Wes and Milfor set about quickly and soon have a fire going. Rennis Ja does nothing to help, and keeps Lyn extremely close to him, watching over her like a hawkbat. Sol and Clegg converse lightly, as if they were merely on a casual camping trip on their home planets.

A light layer of clouds roll in, and with the combination of the lack of a moon makes for an extremely dark night. No one seems to think that it will rain, and all agree that the clouds should help provide a thermal insulation to keep it warm as they sleep. The crew, with Aurelio's and Tynaz's help, set up a watch for the night hours. Rolyat's best guess is that they will have roughly twelve hours to rest, and that everyone should grab one of their meal bars, some water, and a nap during that time.

Have the heroes again make a Very Difficult *search* check. If any of the characters have the *sense* skill, or if they make a successful check, they get an uneasy feeling they are being watched, despite the fact that nightlife other than a few night birds, bats or owls of some sort



Everyone tries to get a bit of sleep in the remaining hours before the dawn. It is restless, however, as fear of another attack is upon the party. For any character that tries to sleep, have them make a Moderate *willpower* check. Success means they sleep easily. There are no further attacks, that night, and dawn comes peacefully.

Episode II: Ghost Town

In this part of the adventure, the characters travel through the woods to the town. The town is very empty, although it has a primary source of good fortune, the remaining shuttle left from the colony. The shuttle is broken down, however, and needs new power cells. The town might also yield clues as to what happened to the colonists.

Scene One: Arrival to Kekre Town

The trip to the town takes the majority of the day. There are no further attacks as they travel through the woods, although everyone feels as if they are being watched and followed. The sensation is impossible to shake, but no amount of searching yields any hint of the predators that track the group.

They arrive at the town about thirty minutes before sunset, and as they emerge from the woods, the sensations of being followed begin to diminish.

Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

The town is well worn, and laid out in a very utilitarian manner. Most, if not all of the buildings appear to be prefabricated, likely from whatever colony ship brought the colonists to the planet. The group enters from the east side of the town, and first finds what appears to be the residential area, with the majority of the buildings in the background. There is no sign of life in the town, and it seems eerily quiet.
Captain Rolyat sets the first order of business as choosing a camp for the evening. The group finds what seems to be a well-protected building in the center of the residential area and takes half an hour to set up their camp for the night.

Kekre Town

The town is completely abandoned. It shows signs of neglect, although the buildings were made to stand for years, and for the most part they are still in decent shape. A few of them appear to have been rummaged through, and others have their windows shattered from severe storms. Unless stated otherwise in the building descriptions, the doors open easily and the buildings are accessible without hassle. Further details are listed below.

- 1. Landing Pad:** The town's landing pad has fared well over the years. The elements couldn't harm the duracrete much. There are some power cables around the edges, although the batteries they run to have long since been drained. Resting in the center of the pad is an old, battered ore hauler. It has no power left in it but it is still spaceworthy. The majority of the ship's space is dedicated to cargo space. There is a single crew ramp in the bottom of the hull that needs power to open. It leads to a single passage with a few seats and a few small shelves for personal belongings. The cockpit has a trio of seats for the crew to ferry the ore to space. There is an access panel in the bottom of the ship that allows for power to be supplied to the landing ramp.
- 2. Landing Control Office:** This building has not fared as well as the rest of the town. Weather has blown out the windows to the building and tossed debris around the control room. The computers in the control room primarily served to monitor the

ship systems when the hauler had landed. The computers in the room are ruined, and the building serves little purpose anymore.

3. Solar Power Station Control Center: Just to the south of the field of solar power arrays, this building is also nearly wiped out on the inside. Getting inside the power station proves slightly difficult where the doors had gotten jammed shut. When they door is finally broken in it seems obvious that it was not blocked intentionally, but rather by some swelling of the building material over time. There are two large battery units against the west wall. One is obviously no longer operational, as a large durasteel beam is embedded into it. The other still has a power readout that is accessible, and shows that it has a minimal charge left in it. Curiously enough, there is enough power in the remaining battery to open the shuttle's ramp. Power cables just need to be jury-rigged from the battery to the shuttle. Out of all the solar panel arrays in the solar field to the north of the building, there is only one panel remaining that is intact. It could be used as well to provide power if properly jury-rigged to open the shuttle ramp.

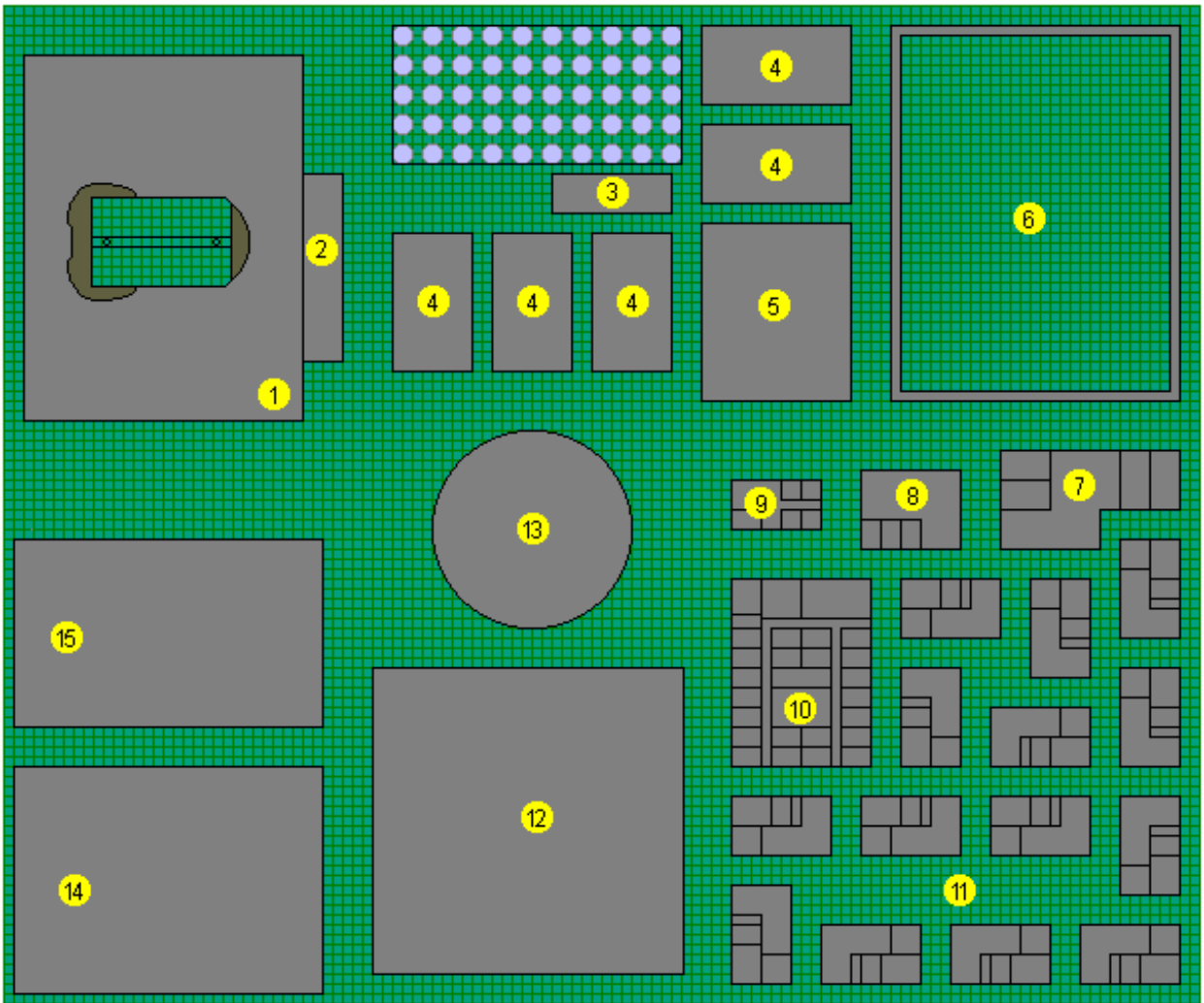
4. Storage Units: These buildings were used to store the ore until it was ready to be hauled to orbit. They also served to hold any other items the town members needed to leave out of the weather.

5. Farming Control Center and Food Processing Center: Primarily used to process the crops farmed for the town, this building is nearly two stories tall and very open inside. Large, complex machinery units fill the inside, taking the crops and turning them into edible food items. The machines have since broken down, and also lack power since the solar power station is no longer operational. A small den of Kekre Demons has dug a nest in the ground in the northwest corner of the building. The inside of the building is dark, as there are no windows. The den of Demons still usually only come out at night, but don't mind rising if they hear movement inside the building.

6. Livestock Corral and Farming Paddies: A large, open area to the east side of the town was used for grazing and corralling livestock as well as growing crops. It has long since been overgrown with weeds. Kekre Demons tend to congregate here, as they are benefited cover from the meter to meter-and-a-half tall weeds.

7. Community Center: This building has several rooms, shown in the map of the town. The Community Center has survived intact, although there is little left inside of value. Flimsy calendars on several of the walls show a date from twelve years ago. Obviously the Kekre Miners didn't just choose to stop hauling ore off-planet.

8. Health Clinic: The insides of the clinic are well worn with dust, as are the rest of the buildings in the town. The shelves appear to be haphazardly stocked, and it seems that the building might have been raided for supplies on several occasions. However, the dust is not disturbed on the floor, so it must have been some time since the clinic last saw visitors. A joint waiting room, office and research area forms the main room. Down a small hallway there are three smaller rooms, where a patient might recover from an encounter in the mines. There appear to be small amounts of supplies in the cabinets and on the shelves. Many, however, appear to have been cracked open or otherwise contaminated. The main open room had been used as a triage center, but the lack of skeletons dismisses the idea that people took their last breaths in the clinic.



9. Jail and Armory: The armory is heavily barricaded at the entrance. All the windows are barred and impossible to get through. None of the walls seem to have been breached, and the only way into the building is to take apart the barricade, which does not appear to be an easy task. The obstacle appears to be scratched and scored in several places by deep claw marks. Made of a combination of metal and wood, it seems to have withstood an assault, or possibly even several assaults. The barricade appears to have been secured from the inside, likely indicating that it is designed to keep things out, not lock them inside the building. There are half a dozen skeletons sitting or lying down around the room on the floor. It seems to have been a place of refuge, but that the colonists never made it out of their fortress.

Empty food containers litter a corner. Close examination one of the skeletons show that a now-depleted blaster pistol was used to kill five of the people, and the last one was likely a suicide. The room's furnishings appear to have been what was scavenged to erect the hasty, but effective, blockade at the front door. The vault to the south was obviously the storage area for weapons, although the weapons racks were stripped and then used for the barricade. All of the arms seem to have been distributed and used, probably lost some time ago in whatever conflict forced the settlers to take refuge in this building. To the rear of the jail, there are four cells on the north and south sides of the small hall with their doors standing ajar. The cell beds each have a similarly cleaned skeleton on them, but lacking the telltale carbon scores of a blaster shot. Some of them show obviously broken bones that never mended properly or that never had time to mend at all.

10. Mining Dormitory: A single story building designed to house the majority of the workers for the Cooperative, it is still in relatively good shape. The door to the building is on the north side of the northeast room. The door sticks, and must be forced in, which also tears the door off its track and it will fall to the

ground. The entry way leads to a lounge, although the room is thoroughly trashed. This does not appear to have come from neglect, but rather intense fighting and moving about – or possibly an earthquake, although the outer walls do not show signs of damage consistent with a geological event.

The lounge has three obvious exits. The first is the door into the building. The second is a large opening that led into what must have been the dining room, evident by long tables with benches on either side. Again, it is as disheveled and overturned as the lounge. The third leads into a hallway that runs the length of the building; likely this leads to a series of personal rooms. There are no discernable personal items or usable supplies in the lounge area. The light is very dim in here, barely getting past the grimy windows.

Through the dining room to the west is the kitchen in much the same situation as the other rooms. Only it also shows signs of local fire and explosion, likely from the gas stove, which is now torn away from the wall. Appliances are tipped over, strewn about carelessly on the floor. Utensils and cooking dishes lay scattered about as well. Nothing seems ordered, and there are no visible rations or personal belongings beyond the cooking gear that seems to be useable.

Down the southern hall from the lounge are a variety of rooms. Some rooms have their doors open, while others do not. All seem to be in the same order as the rest of the building, damaged through what must have been violent outbursts. Many have stains on the walls and floor - some stains are also in the hall - but time has erased the causes of the stains. On the west side of the hall are two large, communal refreshers. Likely one is for males, the other for females.



The southern of the two lavatories emits a strange smell that is musty, dank and strangely foreign. This room is darker than the rest of the rooms, and many pieces of fallen debris cast eerie shadows from any light source. Several Demons have made themselves a home in this room, and loathe letting any trespassers roam about the room, or the dorm building as a whole. The Demons use the large drain system as an entryway from underground passages from their den into the bathroom.

11. Family Housing Units: A series of small buildings built identically to each other, these buildings were for the few families that were part of the Kekre Mining Cooperative. They are mostly run down, and most of them have been ransacked, apparently as people tried to flee them. Captain Rolyat has chosen one of them to act as a shelter for the first night of staying in the town. The buildings have both front and back doors as well as many windows, which allows the Kekre Demons to try to infiltrate and attack if so provoked.

12. Engineering Waste Treatment/Water Treatment/Maintenance: A generic services building, large machinery fills the interior of this two-story square structure. All of it is in disrepair, and offers no clues to the fate of the mining colony. There are a few maintenance tools in the maintenance room inside the building, although they are also in disrepair and need a bit of servicing before they are very effective.

13. Administration: The circular building in the center of town has many interior rooms. It is two stories tall in the center, but domed shaped so the rest of the building just has high ceilings. The eastern outer door swings open easily to a hallway leading to the west. It appears to end in a circular room, and a hall leads opposite it to what is a western, outer door. The hall is around ten meters long and has three doors on both sides of the passage. The doors are staggered and most are closed. The closed doors lead to a variety of offices or storage closets. Near the center atrium, there is a stairway leading to the second floor, which housed the communication center for the town. Unfortunately it was destroyed early on, and none of the equipment is useful any more. The offices give little clues as to the attacks on the town; there is a journal in the largest office that details what happened to some account. For more information, see the side bar on that discusses the miners' fate.

14. Motor Pool and Mining Equipment: A large shed to house the large mobile mining machinery as well as a few general purpose transports. All of them have dead power supplies except for a small utility truck. The truck has just a bit of power left in its power cell. It is a flatbed, open cab vehicle with two seats. It does not move quickly (max speed of 5/8's kilometer per hour – ten meters per round of game play) due to age and lack of maintenance over the years. The power cell needs to be recharged before the truck can move very far or very long, but it is operational for short distances from the start. However, it is likely the best option to carry heavy loads on around the planet if the heroes need to move something that is too heavy for them to carry in their arms.

15. Ore Processing Plant: Another large, two-story building that has gigantic sets of stationary machinery. This machinery is also broken down and no longer usable, although there is little use for it any more. A small den of Demons has taken residence in the center of the building, nestled among the lower bowels of some of the larger equipment.

Scene Two: A Way Off Planet

The first night in town, the group will likely stay in the camp in the family housing unit area. Wherever they choose to spend the night, they will be the targets of another attack by the Kekre Demons. Another pack of eight Demons attack in the dead of night, as the majority of the group rests. As before, they will retreat when they suffer seventy-five percent casualties.

If any members of the survivors of the crash choose to move about at night, they will become the target of an ambush. One or two Demons per person moving about will attack, trying to get an easy meal. The Demons understand they are taking great losses, but these humanoids make far easier prey than their usual meals.

The Miners' Fate

The miners left a few journals. From some flimsy paperwork left in the administration building, their fate can be sketchily put together.

It appears that the miners first found the creatures when they broke through a cave wall. The miners seemed to have found a dying ground for all that was in the cave was bones. By the teeth in the skeletal remains, the animals appeared vicious. It was later that night that the miners first encountered live beasts.

There was a late shift working shallow in the mines. They broke through another wall into what could only be a nest. It was empty at the time, luckily for their sake. The miners backed off and tried to patch up the wall. They must have been nearly twenty kilometers from town at this point. Somehow between these two events, the Demons must have been alerted. The surface equipment for the miners was attacked, evident through the scores in the machines. The six-man surface crew disappeared and was never heard from again.

The men who had crashed into the nest rushed home and reported back their finds. Mining was called off as search parties were put together. The six men were never found. But as the search parties worked into the evening, they too found themselves under attack. Casualties were high at first, as the colonist miners did not know how to react.

It did not take long for the Demons to find the town. The colonists had not evacuated because they wanted to defend their homes. They had carved out a living on this world and were very reluctant to leave it. While they usually used the shuttle on the outskirts of town to carry ore to space for shipping in a large, routinely scheduled transport, it had been down for maintenance. The journal is too messy in the next section to determine what the maintenance was being performed on.

The colonists fought bravely, but they suffered much causality. The weakest and slowest members were killed first, and the Demons hunted in packs. The author must have been a communications officer, for he writes how he kept trying to send out distress calls but the beacon didn't seem to be working.

The last entry talks how he would have to go out the next day to service the communications tower on the southwest of town.

If the group spends any amount of time in town, they will likely eventually choose the armory as a better choice of fortifications. If the barricade is taken apart properly, the group should be able to reconstruct it at the front of the armory building, keeping them protected inside. This is how the last of the miners died, however, since they never had a chance to escape.

The Demons will prowl around the outside of the armory if the characters are holed up inside, but have no way of getting to the group. When morning comes, the sun breaks through the cloud cover and the Demons disappear to their hiding spaces.

During the night, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

Soon after dark you can hear the howls of the Demons again, and it seems to come from all around you. It is an ever-present reminder that they are not alone, and still much at risk.

The sun has risen, and a few birds can be heard chirping in the distance. The building has awoken, and people are moving about. It is time to rise and face another day, hopefully to escape the planet. Some sounds come from the front of the building where Captain Rolyat and Wes, the Mate, are moving about, trying to remove the braces from the inside of the door.

The group is continually plagued and haunted by the eerie howls, barks and yelps of the predators of the planet each night. Sooner or later, they will have to figure out a way to get off the planet. Many combat encounters can be part of this piece of the story. Several of the passengers or crew might die, emphasizing the need for the heroes to act.

After a night or two, if the characters do not suggest it or have not tried it, Captain Rolyat recommends that the Chief go to see if he can't get into the shuttle. The Chief can easily tell, once he jury-rigs his way in, that the shuttle needs new power supplies, and that he can use the ones from the crash to power up the ore hauler. All that remains is getting to the crash, retrieving the cells, returning to the town, installing them and flying away. Of course, staying alive will be the difficult part.

Episode III: Salvage Work

In this next step of the adventure, the heroes must lead the remaining survivors to the crash site, recover the live power cells and return them to Kekre Town. In the process, they encounter heavy cloud cover as storms move across the plains, which brings the Demons out to hunt in the shadows of the day.

Scene One: Return to the Crash

The next morning the Captain wakes everyone early so that they can get an early start and hopefully reach the crash before nightfall. He does not want to spend another night on the open plains, and thinks that the group can likely find plenty of cover at the shuttle crash, especially if they take firewood to build a large fire.

Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

It had taken seven hours to go through the forest to Kekre Town from the campsite on the edge of the plains. The day of the crash it had taken nearly five hours to reach the forest from the crash. Going around the forest to the north is an estimated thirty-five kilometers. With approximately seven hours of daylight, you will only reach the crash by dusk if you press straight on without pause. Even though going around the woods means traveling farther, you should move faster than before, due to fewer people, a pressing need to make it to the crash before dark and because you won't have to avoid dense shrubbery. Five hours later you come parallel with the woods to the south. If you are lucky, you can reach the crash before dusk.

At this point it is up to the characters to decide if they want to make camp for the night, while it is still light out, or if they want to press on to the crash site. If they choose to press on, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

Some time later, from atop a hill, you look out and spy the crash. It is hard to tell if anything has changed, but they still estimate a half an hour to reach it. It is starting to grow darker as the sun sinks into the horizon behind the woods to the west. A cloud formation appears to the north, likely signaling a coming weather front, which could bring a storm.

To the south a different cloud rises off the plains. It appears to be dust and seems to move northward, as if it will cross their path before long as you continue on to the shuttle.

The cloud of dust to the south is actually a stampede. The Demons are hunting their usual prey, a herd of very large quadrupeds with sharp tusks and fierce attitudes. This stampede will go well away from the group, as the Demons hunt. But it is a sign that the group will need to recognize in the future.

Making it to the shuttle is not the difficult aspect of the day. Throughout the day, the heroes should have sensed they were being tracked, but far less than before. Weather is moving in, and darkening the sky. It appears that a weather front is going to cover the sky the next day, perhaps even that night.

The heroes should arrive at the shuttle shortly after dusk, and need to quickly set up camp and a fire or else risk another attack when the Demons have the advantage.

Throughout the night, they continue to sense they are surrounded, but no attacks come forth. They should work out a watch plan with some of the crew, allowing the majority of the party to try and sleep. If possible, have a character with good night or low-light sight on watch halfway through the night.

Have the character on watch make a Difficult *search* check. Upon a successful check, the watchman sees two Demons crawling low to the ground in the distance. They move in a serpentine fashion, almost slithering along the ground, barely visible. On an unsuccessful check, the watchman only sees shadows moving in the distance.

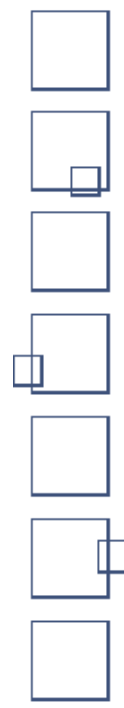
If the character on watch wishes to make another *search* check, decrease the difficulty by 5 and if successful, he sees that there are two Demons in each cardinal direction, unless the wreck blocks one direction. The Demons are advancing slowly, which gives the character time to raise the camp and have everyone prepare for the coming attack.

This attack should be easier on the group. They should have a general idea of how the Demons battle now, and hopefully are not caught completely unaware. They also have cover from the ship that they can retreat into. If necessary, the truck can block the majority of an opening in the side of the ship, effectively isolating the group from the outside.

Have the characters make a Moderate *Perception* check. On a successful check, or if one of the characters is Force-sensitive, they notice that something is amiss. A tickle in the back of the character's mind causes him to look up and out past the firelight. And then he sees something faint in the distance and realizes a new danger. This round of Demons is not the attack; it is a probe. The bulk of the Demons are staying well beyond the firelight, and out of the fight.

At this point, the character should feel the real urge to move quickly. There are many more Demons beyond the glow of the fire, and it also shows that the monsters





can be quite calculating. They are forcing their prey to either move out into the open fields, where they are easier to catch, or into the shuttle. The shuttle means that they are backed against a wall, but also that eventually the characters will have to come out and then they are easy pickings. The heroes must choose to wait it out there until morning, or begin their run immediately.

Scene Two: Back to the Town

At some point now, the heroes have to decide to leave the shuttle. If they choose to wait inside until morning, give them a few hours to recover. Storm clouds begin to cover the sky more and more, likely eliminating any chance of a sunny sky the next day. That means that the Demons will have a better opportunity to remain out and a significant threat. Halfway again until morning, either the character on watch or several of the heroes begin to hear a rumbling in the distance. On an easy *Knowledge* check, they recognize the sound not as thunder, but instead something like the stampede they heard the day before.

Upon investigation, it appears the Demons are running another stampede across the plains. It is closer to the heroes this time than the day before. In fact, it is charging right at the shuttle. If anyone has *farseeing*, *magnify senses* or a pair of macrobinoculars, they can zoom in and see that the Demons are forcing another stampede of the large quadrupeds seen the day before. It appears that the Demons are using the stampede to force the characters out of the shuttle and back to the plains where they will be easier to catch and kill.

As the heroes drive the truck and move alongside it away from the shuttle, they are not attacked immediately. Hopefully the heroes have thought to have some sort of external light source around the truck, helping to scare back any of the aggressive predators. Behind them, the stampede continues to rush towards the shuttle, a large herd of the quadrupeds shaking the plains for kilometers around. Finally, the shuttle crash is destroyed as the stampede crushes it.

The heroes run back to town, being chased by the Demons all the way. At one point the truck dies and the group is left in the dark for the time being. If any passengers remain, they grow frightened and run off into the darkness. If one of the security guards remains, he chases after the passenger. A rush of demons kills both of members separated from the majority of the group.

Several encounters can happen on the way back to town. They should keep the group running all the time, afraid that if they stop to fight superior numbers will overwhelm them. Eventually, at the town's edge, the Demons suddenly back off. All the group has to do is sneak through the town to the shuttle, load the power cells and blast off.

Scene Three: Escape!

Back in the town, they must go between buildings to try to get the truck to the shuttle. Small groups of Demons attack occasionally (about 2-4 demons in a set). Perhaps the party is split up, so that one half can lead the demons away while the other gets to the shuttle. This should be very tense and more NPCs should die, hinting at the high risk of the situation. Ultimately, they will reach the landing pad. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

The town's landing pad has never looked so full of hope and promise. If you can live through installing the power cells into the ore hauler, you should be able to fire up the engines and get off planet.
You drive the truck as close as you can to the shuttle. It will not fit underneath the hull, so you'll have to carry the power cells the remaining distance. Unfortunately, you begin to feel the all too familiar feeling that you are being surrounded. The Demons are back to make their final attack.

The party can find some cover underneath the shuttle. It keeps the Demons from doing fly-by attacks, since the heroes

are covered from above. This is a perfect opportunity for remaining NPCs to be at high risk of not surviving the mission.

Someone needs to open the shuttle ramp and begin to carry the power cells (a two-man operation) on board and to the engineering section. Boarding the shuttle should be a tense situation as well, because it is possible that a demon has snuck on in the mean time. Three successful Moderate *space transport repair* checks (modified as appropriate if the Chief had previously set up a system so that the power cells could be easily jury-rigged in place) are needed to install the power cells.

With the first cell in place, the ship begins to have power. Either the ship can have power to the external lights, the internal lights, or the flight deck control systems. With the second power cell, another system can come on-line. With the third power cell, all systems are operational. It takes thirty seconds for two men to carry a power cell into the ship, and another forty-five seconds to jury-rig it into place.

Finally, with all the power cells in place, the party should quickly board the shuttle. Once inside, they can cycle the ramp closed, and just in time too, as another Demon rushes forward to try to eat the last person up the ramp. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

In the cockpit, the pilot adds power to the engines and the whole ship shudders. More lights come on as the generators begin creating electricity from the engines. The exterior lights come on and Demons scatter.
More power is added and the shuttle begins to take the weight off its gear. The shuttle passes through the atmosphere peacefully. There is a slight buffeting as it passes through the rain clouds, but it is nothing unusual for those accustomed to space travel. The occupants can feel the separation from the gravity pull of the planet as it takes a moment for the artificial gravity to kick in.
After many long, gruesome days, the ordeal is over. The losses were great. but you have survived.

Rewards

The ore hauler has little market value, and is empty of ore. However, the story of the planet might have some value, and the mining rights are open for cheap sale, since the former owners are no longer alive with whom to bargain. In fact, entrepreneurial characters might just figure out a way to take over the planet anyway. Finding someone to mine the remaining ore, however, might prove to be an adventure in and of itself.

Heroes who actively participated in the adventure should receive character points. Give each character seven character points and an additional character point for every NPC that survived, and award additional character points for anyone who role-played especially well.

Nealogée Rolyat, Captain

Captain Nealogée Rolyat served in the Republic Navy for twenty years. There he learned to fly shuttles in and out of combat, and even was in charge of a training wing for some time. When he retired from the Navy, he hired on to an independent transport company, the Independent Transport Alliance. He ferries people on non-standard routes usually, getting them between planets where the larger transports don't visit. He is nearly forty years old and his black hair is beginning to pepper with gray. Usually found in a civilian spacesuit, Captain Rolyat tends to remain near to spaceports where he is the most comfortable.

Type: Human Starship Pilot

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 4D+1

KNOWLEDGE 2D+1

Intimidate 4D, Persuasion 6D, Survival 3D, Tactics 6D+1

MECHANICAL 3D

Astrogation 3D+2, Communications 4D+1, Pilot 6D

PERCEPTION 4D+1

STRENGTH 2D

Brawling 3D

TECHNICAL 1D

Computer Programming/Repair 3D

Move: 10

Equipment: Blaster Pistol

Wes Warner, First Mate

Wes Warner is a young human male of twenty years. He has dark hair and dark eyes match in color and he generally seems to not quite fit into his flight suit. He has always dreamed of flying among the stars and signed with the Independent Transport Alliance as soon as he could. He has been serving under Captain Rolyat for the past two years and learning what it takes to be a shuttle commander. Wes is young and idealistic, but works very hard to please his superior.

Type: Human Starship Pilot

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 3D+2

KNOWLEDGE 2D

Persuasion 3D, Survival 3D+2

MECHANICAL 3D

Astrogation 5D+1, Pilot 5D

PERCEPTION 2D

STRENGTH 2D

Brawling 2D+1, Climb 2D+1, Swim 2D+1

TECHNICAL 2D+2

Move: 10

Equipment: Blaster Pistol

Tyk Mannon, Chief Flight Engineer

Chief Tyk Mannon is the Twi'lek chief engineer for the *Akibet*. He too served in the Navy, but never left his home sector. He retired from the Naval Reserves after nearly twenty-five years in service as a master mechanic aboard a cruiser's repair bay. He can repair nearly anything, given proper time and materials. His skin shows many signs of aging, and is well worn against the weather of life. Since the *Akibet* is well maintained, he has been able to tone down his cursing of late, although he never holds back if he thinks the port's technicians are slack or careless.

Type: Twi'lek Starship Flight Engineer

DEXTERITY 2D+1

Blaster 3D

KNOWLEDGE 2D

MECHANICAL 3D

Astrogation 6D+1, Communications 5D, Pilot 6D

PERCEPTION 1D+2

STRENGTH 2D

Brawling 2D+1

TECHNICAL 3D+2

Computer Programming/Repair 6D+1, Demolitions 5D, Droid Programming 6D, Droid Repair 9D, Security 5D, Space Transport Repair 10D

Move: 10

Equipment: Tool Kit

Milfor, Flight Engineer

Milfor is an up-and-coming Devoronian technician who assists Chief Mannon on the *Akibet's* repairs. Only twenty-two years old and while not as capable at repairs as the Chief, Milfor is quite handy with a toolkit and seems a natural at repairs. He looks to the Chief as a father figure, much to Chief Mannon's outward displeasure. In reality, the Chief has taken a strong liking to Milfor, and would do many heroic things to protect his young friend.

Type: Devoronian Starship Flight Engineer

DEXTERITY 2D+1

KNOWLEDGE 2D+2

Value 3D

MECHANICAL 2D+2

Astrogation 3D+1, Pilot 3D+2

PERCEPTION 2D

STRENGTH 2D

TECHNICAL 3D+1

Computer Programming/Repair 6D+1, Demolitions 4D, Security 4D+1, Space Transport Repair 7D

Move: 10

Equipment: Tool Kit

Aurelio Rojas, Port Security

Aurelio Rojas is a male human nearing his thirty-third birthday and his hair is thinning much to his chagrin. He grew up living on the edge of the law. He was in and out of detention centers and is very lucky that he didn't end up dead. Instead, he unsuccessfully tried to hold up an off-duty security guard. Quickly finding the gun turned on him, Aurelio knew that he was finished. Instead, the guard took Aurelio in and changed him from a criminal and into a security officer. Aurelio now has a special place in his heart to help those poor, unfortunate criminals that are too young to know better.

Type: Human Spaceport Guard

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 4D

KNOWLEDGE 2D

MECHANICAL 1D+2

PERCEPTION 2D

Hide 3D, Search 2D+1

STRENGTH 2D+1

TECHNICAL 2D

Demolitions 2D+1, First Aid 2D+1

Move: 10

Tynaz, Port Security

Tynaz also works port security, something that she has done all her life. While never having seen her native homeworld of Duros, Tynaz has spent her nearly forty years in a wide variety of spaceports. Her parents moved about different systems, owning different docking pads. Early on Tynaz found a flair for keeping bullies out, and finally got into the job full time.

Type: Duros Spaceport Guard

DEXTERITY 2D

Blaster 4D

KNOWLEDGE 3D

MECHANICAL 1D+2

PERCEPTION 2D

Search 2D+1

STRENGTH 1D+2

TECHNICAL 2D+1

Computer Programming/Repair 3D, Demolitions 3D, First Aid 2D+2

Move: 10

Clegg Tem, Merchant

Clegg Temm is a Nosaurian male of very pleasant demeanor who makes his living trading various wares. He started out in the business very young, trading scavenged (or sometimes pilfered) starship parts or crew equipment in a rundown port town in the outer rim. He grew up and started his own business out of the backend of a rusted out freighter and kept growing until he could leave the town and get into the spacelanes. Over time he met many different people and worked for a wide variety of trading houses. While often quite aloof, he has the silver tongue to warm the hearts of all kinds of customers.

Type: Nosaurian Merchant

DEXTERITY 1D+2**KNOWLEDGE 2D+2**

Bureaucracy 5D, Value 6D

MECHANICAL 1D+1**PERCEPTION 3D**

Persuasion 5D+1

STRENGTH 1D**TECHNICAL 2D**

Computer Programming/Repair 3D, Demolitions 3D, First Aid 2D+2

Move: 10

Special Abilities: Horns (STR+1D)

Sol Maj-Odo, Archeologist

With their binary brains, Cereans are often found in academic pursuits. Sol Maj-Odo is a middle aged male Cerean who fits the mold. He never left school, going from undergraduate studies to graduate studies and straight into a doctoral program. His archeological quests have lead him to over a hundred planets and he hopes to visit many more. This has not left Sol any time for a family, but he finds peace and joy in his work, which is sufficient for him. He has a well-kept secret tendency to take to drinking when frustrated or scared, although this only rarely gets in the way of his work.

Type: Cerean Archeologist

DEXTERITY 1D**KNOWLEDGE 5D**

Alien Species 8D, Bureaucracy 5D+1, Cultures 8D, Languages 5D, Scholar: archeology 9D, Scholar: history 8D

MECHANICAL 1D**PERCEPTION 3D**

Forgery 7D, Persuasion 5D+1

STRENGTH 1D**TECHNICAL 2D**

Computer Programming/Repair 3D

Move: 10

Rennis Ja, Port Administrator

Rennis Ja, overweight, balding and generally in a foul mood, is an administrator for the Baullinár spaceport. Through no small manner of politicking did he manage to get to his latest position of authority. Although not corrupt, he knows the rules of the proverbial system extremely well and can use them to his advantage. He works for spaceport by monitoring the port for certain ships which often try to haul illicit cargoes. Administrator Ja lives a comfortable life in relative luxury and enjoys his creature comforts. Rarely is his assistant seen far from him, what she owes him is uncertain, but it does not seem like slavery to those that watch them together.

Type: Near-Human Spaceport Administrator

DEXTERITY 1D+2

Pickpocket 2D

KNOWLEDGE 3D+2

Bureaucracy 9D+2, Intimidation 4D, Streetwise 7D, Value 4D

MECHANICAL 1D**PERCEPTION 3D**

Persuasion 4D+2

STRENGTH 1D+1**TECHNICAL 1D**

Computer Programming/Repair 3D

Move: 10

Lyn Rar, Ja's Assistant

Lyn Rar is a beautiful young Twi'lek woman who escaped the bounds of slavery when her freedom was bought by Rennis Ja. Ja wanted her for a beautiful assistant that would grace his arm like an expensive jewel; he also hoped that in time she would come to love him. Lyn works hard for him and appreciates his generosity and compassion very much but does not feel the love for him of which he dreams. Still, she works hard and does what he asks, although her mind often wanders into a wide series of daydreams.

Type: Twi'lek Assistant

DEXTERITY 1D**KNOWLEDGE 1D****MECHANICAL 1D****PERCEPTION 2D**

Con 3D, Persuasion 3D

STRENGTH 1D**TECHNICAL 1D**

Move: 10

