

Bloodhawk Down

A Free *Star Wars* Mini-Adventure For Any Era

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"Bloodhawk Down" is a *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* mini-adventure for 9th- to 11th-level player characters and is usable in any era. The scenario uses some new information found in the *Arms & Equipment Guide*, the newest *Star Wars* accessory.

If you plan to play a character in this adventure, don't read any further. The information below is meant for the Gamemaster's eyes only.

Background

Min Erthen is a brilliant weapon and droid engineer working for Arakyd Industries as a battle-droid designer. For years she's been kept safely tucked away on the starship *Bhishana Bhaga*, a guardian corvette that has been converted to use as a mobile design lab. The *Bhishana Bhaga* travels about the Mid Rim region of the galaxy, picking up supplies when needed and delivering Erthen's work via the HoloNet.

The reason Erthen is kept in this armored and constantly moving base of operations is that numerous other companies would love to get their hands on her. Erthen has designed everything from illegal assassin droids to new forms of disruptors, and any company that manages to capture her would see an immediate increase in profits. Numerous other groups would like to have access to her genius as well, ranging from terrorists to pirates, freedom fighters, and even military units. To prevent this, and protect its own investment, Arakyd Industries has gone to great lengths. It doesn't even refer to the *Bhishana Bhaga* by name, instead giving it a new code name every few months. Currently, the ship is called the "Bloodhawk" in all Arakyd transmissions.

Unfortunately, disaster has struck the *Bhishana Bhaga*. A short in the ship's hyperdrive caused it to drop into real space in the middle of an asteroid field, and the ship was battered badly. In a desperate attempt to save it, the captain made an emergency landing on the only available planet, a harsh world named Krykas V. Krykas V is a totally uncivilized planet with no indigenous sentient life and is blanketed by a field of electromagnetic energy strong enough to knock out most ship's sensors. Flying blind with no landing port, the crew crashed the *Bhishana Bhaga*, killing everyone on board except Erthen, who was locked safely into her *sanctum sanctorum*.

The ship will never fly again, but many of its systems are still functional, including the distress beacon. An automated signal has been playing through the HoloNet ever since the ship crashed: "Automated distress call, Bloodhawk down! Automated distress call, Bloodhawk down! Please initiate emergency rescue. Automated distress call . . ."

The race to rescue Min Erthen is on!

Getting the Characters Involved

There are numerous possible ways for a group of characters to get involved in this adventure. If they own their own ship and spend time cruising through the Mid Rim, they could pick up the distress beacon and decide to investigate on their own. Any effort to search the HoloNet for information on a ship called the Bloodhawk reveals that Arakyd Industries is offering a huge reward for its crew, though there is no record of the ship's size, class, or planet of origin.

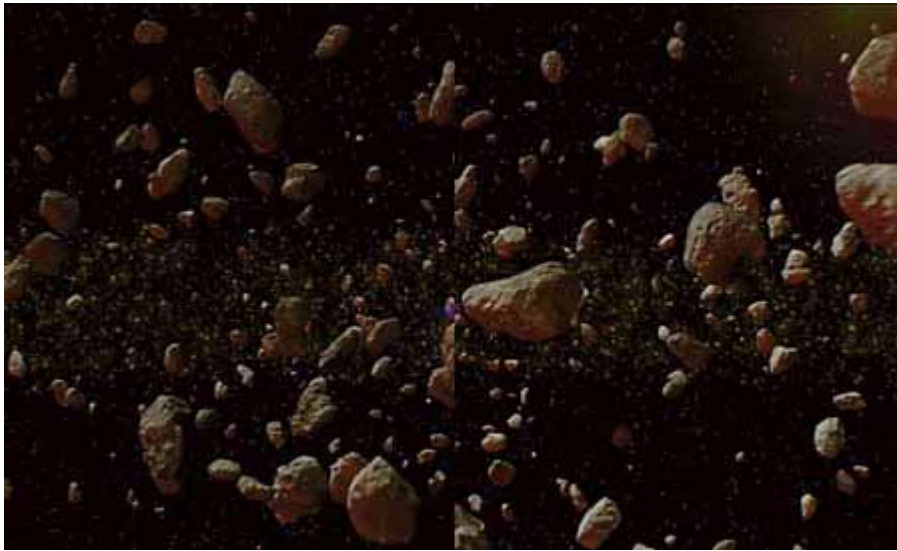
If the characters are mercenaries, Arakyd could hire them to rescue everyone on the ship -- or, at least, all the computer records from the ship. Arakyd won't admit that Min Erthen is anyone special, but the company does mention that every survivor should be brought back. Alternately, another company (such as Baktoid Armor Workshop, BlasTech Industries, Cybot Galactica, Drearian Defense Conglomerate, and Golan Arms) could hire the heroes to get to Erthen first. Of these, only Golan Arms is likely to be forthcoming about who Min Erthen is and why her recovery is so important.

If the characters work for any organization from any era, ranging from the Senate of the old Republic to the Empire, Corporate Sector Authority, Rebellion, or New Republic, they could be sent by their superiors to recover a valuable war resource.

Scene 1: We're Going In

Krykas V is located in the middle of an asteroid field and suffers regular asteroid hits on its surface. Because of this, it's impossible to reach the planet without making a very hazardous fight through the vast ocean of spinning and crashing rocks. So thick is the field that every square occupies at least one hazard. In order to reach the planet, it's necessary to fly through no fewer than ten squares with asteroids in them, requiring ten pilot checks. Roll randomly for the size, speed, and direction of each hazard using the rules in Chapter 11 of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*.





If the characters don't have access to a starship or don't include anyone skilled enough to have a chance of making it through the asteroid field, assume the same group that sends them to rescue Erethen provides them with a transport and a droid pilot good enough to make it to the surface -- but just barely.

A Look at Krykas V

Once the characters are through the asteroid field, read or paraphrase the following.

The last ding of a tiny asteroid bouncing off your ship's hull indicates that you're through the asteroids at last, and you finally have an unobstructed view of Krykas V. It's an ugly dirtball of a world, with no sign of oceans, ice caps, mountains, or deserts. Everything is a swirling mass of light and dark brown, partially hidden by vast clouds of thick, tan fog. If there are any redeeming qualities to this world, they can't be seen from orbit.

Any attempt to get detailed sensor readings of the world fail. It's possible to check the atmosphere and see that it's breathable (if stale) for Humans, but scans of the surface are blocked. The dense fog actually seems to be clouds of particulate matter with strong electromagnetic charges that block all sensors. Only the *Bhishana Bhaga's* HoloNet beacon, which operates independently of any electromagnetic spectrum, can be pinpointed.

To make matters worse, the planet's thick, souplike atmosphere will play havoc with any ship's engines. It's safe enough to land and take off again, but it's not a good idea to spend time flying around in Krykas V's air. If the heroes need to search for survivors after they land near the beacon, they'll have to do it on the ground.

Scene 2: The *Bhishana Bhaga*

Although no other sensors or communications gear can operate through the electromagnetic field of Krykas V, holotranscievers can still find the HoloNet distress beacon of the *Bhishana Bhaga*, allowing the heroes to land near the beacon. Once they do so, read or paraphrase the following text.

As you look out of your ship at the crash site, several things become clear. First, Krykas V is a mud ball of a world. Thick, brown sludge covers everything, and the only vegetation is an equally brown mass of tangled briars and thorns. There's no sign of animal life, water, or different kinds of soil. Everything on Krykas V is the same dull color.

Second, while the atmosphere is safe to breathe, it's not going to be pleasant. A thick, tan fog fills the air, cutting visibility in half. Sensors are useless and even macrobinoculars can't penetrate the dense fog to any useful degree. If you hope to find survivors, you're going to have to get close to them first.

Third, the distress signal is coming from a chunk of rubble rather than an intact section of hull. The ground at your landing site is littered with broken bits of deck plating, landing struts, broken cargo containers, and loose piles of wiring. The wreckage continues for more than 300 meters, and then disappears over the ridge of a valley.

Not only are sensors and comlinks useless on Krykas V, the half-meter thick mud that covers everything slows movement by half. If the heroes want to use vehicles of some kind, tracked and wheeled transports also are slowed by half. Repulsorlift vehicles can move normally, but the harsh conditions of the planet give them a 25% chance of breaking down each hour.

If the heroes search the wreckage, they discover that someone has already been here. The broken cargo containers are empty, and numerous control panels have been raided for wires, switches, and so on. (Min's been here once since the crash a few days ago.) A hero with the Track feat can find tracks (DC 25) leading over the ridge and down into the valley, which is where the rest of the wreckage seems to be located. If they want to find any survivors, the heroes will need to explore the valley.

War Droids

Although Min Erethen was the only survivor of the *Bhishana Bhaga's* crash, most of her workshop survived in operable condition. This gave her the tools and resources needed to modify her stockpile of droid prototypes to operate in the wet conditions of Krykas V and to equip them with polarizing field insulators to protect them from the planet's strong electromagnetic fields. Since everything that she's encountered has tried to eat her, and since she has no idea that the ship's distress beacon is functioning, she's programmed these

droids to kill everything that moves. (They've done a good job -- while animals exist on Krykas V, the heroes won't encounter any during this adventure.) She figures that eventually she'll set up a safe perimeter to build a larger workshop, and then she can build a HoloNet transmitter to call for help.

Unfortunately, the characters come across some of her modified droids, a pair of old Mark IX Executioner gladiatorial droids. Read or paraphrase the following text.

The thick fog and dense vegetation make it difficult to see for more than a few meters, and your nostrils are assaulted by harsh, acrid odors. There are no paths, and you must push your way through the calf-high mud that covers everything here.

Without warning, two shapes appear out of the gloom. Each appears to be a two-meter tall droid, with many arms and a huge shell bolted onto its back. Each arm ends in a jagged cutting blade or weapon muzzle.

The droids whirl excitedly upon seeing you.

These droids immediately attack, moving into hand-to-hand range as soon as possible. They're not talkative, but they make no attempt at stealth, either. There isn't likely to be a surprise round at the beginning of this fight, as the two droids simply trundle up and begin shooting. They continue to fight until destroyed. The good news for the characters is that the polarizing field generators negate the electromagnetic field's effects, allowing comlinks, blasters, and sensors within 20 meters to function normally. They also give everyone Resistance to Energy (Ion/electricity) 25 in that same radius.

If the characters examine the droids, they can see they've been heavily modified. Each has a large generator that looks like a turtle shell welded onto its back (the polarizing field generators) and a Graph 18 surface locator hard-wired into its droid brain. The surface locators are briefcase-sized sensors that keep track of their motion and can show their current location and a map of the valley. They also show the route the droids took to get here, thus revealing the location of Erethen's new headquarters. The polarizing field generators can be removed and made to function with Disable Device (DC 23) and Repair (DC 26) checks.

Modified Mark IX Executioners (2): Tracked gladiatorial droid, Soldier 5; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Defense 22 (+2 Dex); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 32/11; Atk +10 melee (2d10+5, vibro-ax) or +10 melee (2d6+5, vibroblade) or +10 melee (2d8+5 or 1d6+5/DC 15, force pike) or +10 melee (2d6+5, spiked club) or +7 ranged (3d8, blaster rifle) or +7 ranged (3d6, DC 15, flame thrower); SQ DR 5, resistance to energy (ion/electricity) 25; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0; SZ M; Rep +1; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 12; Challenge Code: D.

Equipment: Armor, locked access, weapon mount (x10).

Skills: Climb 8 ranks (+13), Demolitions 4 ranks (+4), Intimidate 8 ranks (+9), Listen 2 ranks (+2), Read/Write Basic, Spot 2 ranks (+6).

Unspent Skill points: 0.

Feats: Ambidexterity, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Armor Proficiency (heavy), Cleave, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Rapid Shot, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster rifles), Weapon Group Proficiency (heavy weapons), Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons), Weapon Group Proficiency (vibro weapons).

Scene 3: The Sanctum Sanctorum

The reason Min Erethen survived the crash of the *Bhishana Bhaga* is that her workshop in the center of the ship, referred to as her sanctum sanctorum, is in fact an old A4 Juggernaut. This ancient tracked vehicle is centuries old and no longer qualifies as top-of-the-line military equipment (even in a game set in the Rise of the Empire era, the A4 has long since been replaced by the A5). Erethen's A4 is modified to act as a mobile design office and survival pod, and it withstood the impact of the crash well enough to keep Min alive and most of her tools intact. It's also far more comfortable than a typical military vehicle, with padded couches, holochess boards, and a gallery.

Without a staff to help her, Min has been forced to operate the vehicle with a skeleton crew of modified droids. She's built a droid brain to drive the A4, which works fine, and she has a crew of six ASP labor droids to operate its weapons, though they are poor gunners. Erethen can't build dedicated gunners until she's finished her new shop, which the ASPs are working on as fast as they can. For now, she sits in her Juggernaut's pilot room and works on designs for a HoloNet transmitter with which she can call for help.

When the characters reach Min's base of operations, read or paraphrase the following text.

You push on through the thick underbrush and heavy fog until suddenly stepping into a clearing. A huge, armored vehicle sits in the center of the clearing, its massive wheels keeping its 20-meter-long body from sinking into the muck. Two large turrets on the vehicle have multiple blaster barrels, all of which look functional from here. An army of patchwork droids is working around the vehicle, clearing shrubs and assembling a crude frame from scraps of metal that were obviously once part of a starship's hull.

Erethen is in the A4's pilot seat at all times. If she spots the characters, she challenges them and demands to know who they're working for. Almost any good story convinces her -- she doesn't much care who rescues her as long as they aren't assassins. (As it happens, her fears are well founded.)

Characters can use their electronic equipment if they're within 50 meters of the Juggernaut because it has its own powerful polarized field generators, allowing all the droids in the clearing to communicate by comlink.

Craft: Sanctum Sanctorum, Heavily Modified Kuat Drive Yards A4 Juggernaut Assault Vehicle; **Class:** Ground (wheeled); **Cost:** 100,000 credits; **Size:** Colossal (20 meters long, 12 meters tall); **Crew:** Skilled +4 (1 pilot droid, built-in); **Passengers:** 20 passengers, 2 speeder bikes; **Cargo Capacity:** 500kg; **Speed:** 30m (max. speed 100 km/h); **Defense:** 12 (-8 size, +10 armor); **Hull Points:** 120; **DR:** 25.

Weapon: Heavy laser cannons (3); **Fire Arc:** Turret; **Attack Bonus:** -4* (-8 size, +0 crew, +4 fire control*)**; **Damage:** 5d10; **Range:** 100m.

Weapon: Medium blasters (2, fire-linked); **Fire Arc:** Turret; **Attack Bonus:** -4* (-8 size, +0 crew, +4 fire control*)**; **Damage:** 4d10; **Range:** 50m.

Equipment: Polarized field generators (resistance to energy [ion/electricity] 24), megaphone (reduce range penalties for others to hear you to -1/20 meters), sensors (+4 to all Listen, Search, and Spot checks made with sensors).

* If there is no sentry in the observation tower, drop all fire control bonuses by 2.

** Weapons use an ASP labor droid's attack bonuses. If a hero mans the guns, replace the ASP's +0 attack bonus with the PC's ranged attack bonus.

Min Erethen: Female Human Tech Specialist 12; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Defense 20 (+1 Dex, +7 class, +2 Defensive Martial Arts); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 54/13; Atk +8/+3 melee (1d4-1, unarmed) or +10/+5 ranged (3d8+3, heavy blaster pistol); SQ Expert (craft [blaster pistols and rifles], craft [droids]), research, tech specialty (mastercrafter [weapons {blaster pistols and rifles}]) x3; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +7; FP 2; Rep +3; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 19, Wis 14, Cha 15. Challenge Code C.

Equipment: Heavy blaster pistol (mastercraft +3).

Skills: Computer Use +14, Craft (armor) +14, Craft (blaster pistols and rifles) +19, Craft (droids) +16, Craft (electronic devices) +16, Demolitions +16, Disable Device +14, Knowledge (engineering) +14, Knowledge (physics) +14, Knowledge (technology) +14, Read/Write Basic, Repair +14, Search +8, Speak Basic, Binary, Huttese, Sullustese.

Feats: Cautious, Armor Proficiency (light), Defensive Martial Arts, Martial Arts, Skill Emphasis (craft [blaster pistols and rifles]), Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

Scene 4: The Other Guys

The heroes aren't the only people looking for Min Erethen. A competing company has hired a set of bounty hunter assassins, the Faunor Brothers, to hunt down and capture Min if they find her alone, or to kill her if anyone else reaches her first. The Faunor's employers would like to have Erethen if they can be sure of her capture, but they'd rather see her dead than take any risk that she might escape.

The Faunors are experienced killers and do their best to sneak up on the heroes and attack with surprise. Of course, the bounty hunters have brought help in the form of six grunt soldiers they use when subtlety isn't an option. Since the Faunors are quite successful, they and their grunts are all very well equipped.

Most likely, the heroes jump into the Juggernaut and use it to fight. That's fine, but due to the thick mud, the A4 can't move faster than 6 meters per round, allowing the Faunors to keep up on foot easily and continue shooting. It's possible to get 50% cover if shooting out an open door or hatch or if shooting from the turrets, in which case any attack must penetrate the vehicles' DR to hurt a character. The grunts' blaster cannons might penetrate the A4's armor, but, if not, the Faunors rush the vehicle and attempt to get aboard to take out the heroes in hand-to-hand combat (using Combat Expertise to increase their Defense).

The Faunor's grunts are very well paid and fight to the death as long as the Faunors themselves are present. The bounty hunters stay in the fight until they've lost at least half of their wound points, at which point they (and their men) give up and retreat.

Nevo and Irol Faunor (2): Male Human Scout 4/Scoundrel 2/Bounty Hunter 2; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Defense 17 (+2 Dex, +5 class); DR 3; Spd 10 m; VP/WP 47/12; Atk +6/+1 melee (2d6+2, vibrorapier) or +8/+3 ranged (3d8+2, heavy blaster pistol); SQ Trailblazing, heart +1, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to Defense), illicit barter, lucky (1/day), target bonus +1, sneak attack +1d6; SV Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +6; FP 2; DSP 4; Rep +3; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 10. Challenge Code D.

Equipment: Combat jumpsuit, DL-12 heavy blaster pistol, LaserHone Duelist vibrorapier.

Skills: Computer Use +11, Gather Information +10, Hide +12, Intimidate +5, Listen +11, Move Silently +13, Pilot +12, Read/Write Basic, Repair +7, Search +8, Speak Basic, Spot +11.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Combat Reflexes, Expertise, Track, Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

Grunts (6): Male Human Thug 2; Init +0; Defense 10; Spd 10 m; VP/WP 0/15; Atk +2 melee (2d4, vibrodagger) or +4 ranged (4d8, blaster cannon); SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9. Challenge Code A.

Equipment: Blaster cannon.

Skills: Intimidate +3, Spot +1.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Combat Expertise, Toughness, Weapon Focus (blaster pistol), Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, heavy weapons, simple weapons).

Wrapping Up

Once the characters have defeated the mercenary rescue team, they can drive the A4 back to their ship and leave Krykas V. Unless they have a capitol ship with a vast cargo space, they'll have to leave the Juggernaut behind (in which case Min rigs it with explosives to make sure that no one else can get their hands on it).

Oddly, Min Erthen is essentially a pacifist. She's never killed a creature by her own hand, she dislikes violence, and she trained herself in martial arts to increase her defensive abilities. She considers her weapon and war droid designs to be tools that she makes for others; the fact that they're used violently is not her responsibility (though she is perfectly aware that people have been killed as a result). Thus, Min will allow the characters to deliver her to whichever group or company they work for, and she will do her best for them.

If the heroes have extensive resources, they might try to convince Min to work for *them*. Min has no interest in traveling into dangerous situations, so the characters would have to set her up someplace safe and see to her creature comforts. If they have the credits to do that, Min happily works for them, modifying weapons to mastercraft quality, designing personalized weapons, and building or modifying droids.

Of course, she's still an attractive target for other companies, and whoever sent the heroes to retrieve her are likely to be upset, but that's the groundwork for a different adventure . . .