

STAR WARS

ROLEPLAYING GAME

Horning In

A Free *Star Wars* Miniadventure for the Rebellion Era

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Based on the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* by Andy Collins, Bill Slavicsek, and JD Wiker, utilizing mechanics developed for the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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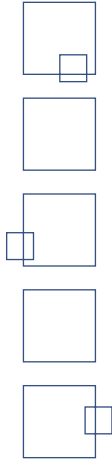


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"Horning In" is a *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* adventure for four 10th-level heroes of any persuasion. As written, the adventure's set in the Rebellion era, but it can be modified easily to work in any other era of play as well. Although the villain of the story flies a ship described in *Starships of the Galaxy* and the scenario calls for a capital ship that also could be taken from the pages of that accessory, the book isn't required to run this adventure.

Background

The rumor mill has been grinding out stories lately about a new fuel mixture component for sublight engines called a Quadronomic Fluxer. If rumors are to be believed, Fluxers can improve sublight speed by as much as 20 percent in Tiny and Small starships. The component has no effect on hyperspace, but all the life-or-death work is really done before the jump is made.

If Fluxers are for real, anybody who flies a transport ship even semi-regularly would want one. Whether or not it works, both the Rebellion and the Empire would be willing to risk a lot to find out if it's legitimate—and to keep it out of the hands of the other group.

In reality, the Fluxer hasn't been built yet, but the theory is sound, and the plans exist. They are currently held at the Nessem Shipyards, an orbital shipyard circling the planet Nessem in the Expansion Region of the galaxy.

Nessem

The inhabitants of Nessem are Human, and they're very pleased by the modest success of their shipyards. The Nessem Shipyards aren't the largest in the galaxy or the most modern, but the Nessemites are renowned for their craftsmanship and their apolitical tendencies. They build and repair ships for whoever has the money. This causes all sorts of people to rub shoulders in Nessemite conference rooms.

Because a significant percentage of the Nessemite populace lives and works in space stations that make up the various orbital shipyards, residential areas on the shipyards are like small towns. Nessem is not a Core world, but it's not so far out that the natives can't persuade traveling entertainers and art exhibits to make Nessem a stop on their tours. For a loose grouping of space stations, the Nessem Shipyards are fairly happening places to be.

As a result, the Nessemites take great pride in the shipyards, and they don't take kindly to running firefights in the hallways. Though their clients often are held in ill repute, the Nessemites won't let their shipyards become a smuggler's haven. Their security is tight, but not fascistic. The Empire has an on-site administrator, but the requisite bribes keep him busy looking the other way.

Getting the Heroes Involved

"Horning In" assumes that the heroes work for the Rebellion, or at least some patron interested in hiring their services. The patron sends them to retrieve the plans for the Quadronomic Fluxer and instructs them to begin by talking to the Rebels' inside man, Roald Lasdal. Roald is a shift foreman working on the sunward strut building a capital ship, and he has Rebellion sympathies.



IS IT LEGIT?

The Quadronomic Fluxer plans are what powers this adventure. Whether the device (if built) would actually work as theorized is for the Gamemaster to decide. In game terms, a Quadronomic Fluxer grants a +4 equipment bonus to Pilot checks when a character attempts the Increase Range maneuver. It might work quickly and flawlessly, but the modification would probably be more interesting if it were unreliable, overly noisy, or very expensive to implement.

Other options include:

- ☹ It doesn't work as well as advertised. The speed boost is noticeable but gives only a +1 equipment bonus to Pilot checks.
- ☹ It only works with a certain model of engine, which the heroes might or might not have access to.
- ☹ It just doesn't work.

You could also decide that the Fluxer does indeed work, but let it trickle down into your campaign and change things more slowly. For example, an engine manufacturer eventually could acquire the plans, mass produce the Fluxers, and get fabulously rich off the contract for speeding up the Empire's entire TIE fleet. Of course, the usual collection of lowlifes, scoundrels, and heroes could also get their hands on a version of the device.

Alternately, the heroes might hear rumors of the Fluxer on their own and try to make a grab for the plans. A scoundrel or fringer character might have a buddy who works at the shipyards and can pass them inside information. A noble might want to negotiate for the plans to augment his home world's planetary defense. And any pilot worth her cockpit would be interested in learning more about souping up her baby.

Scene 1: Customs Procedures

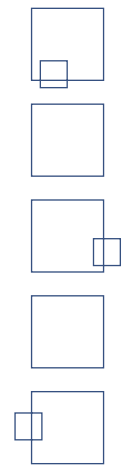
The adventure begins as the heroes arrive at the main station of the Nessem Shipyards. Sharing their landing bay is a Trandoshan mercenary named Ssorku. Ssorku arrives at the same time as the heroes in *The Long Scale*, his Koensayr ILH-KK *Citadel*-class cruiser (a model of ship described in the accessory *Starships of the Galaxy*). He tries to push in front of the heroes to clear the customs agents sooner and waits impatiently through every delay.

Ssorku is a largely uninspiring Trandoshan. He's a professional mercenary—handy with a blaster and not shy about using it. He likes to compete, and he doesn't like Wookiees. The one thing that makes him stand out is his love of music. In between mercenary assignments, Ssorku fancies himself a decent amateur jizz instrumentalist and music critic. He practically looks for opportunities to argue over the merits of musical styles and particular musicians. The mercenary also takes his kloo horn with him on jobs in populated areas, and he brought it along to the Nessem Shipyards, as well. You never know when a good opportunity to jam will come up.

A Trandoshan or well-connected mercenary hero might know some of these details about Ssorku. The music-lover's not as well known as Bossk, but he's no lightweight in the mercenary world, either. However, it's not important for the heroes to recognize or interact with Ssorku right now. They

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just need to meet him, or at least observe him. (If the heroes provoke an immediate battle with Ssorku for some reason, you can find his game stats later in this adventure.)

Customs agents at the shipyards are strict and efficient, but not necessarily rude. Vibro and blaster weapons are not allowed on board the station, and agents are authorized to search anyone. Lightsabers are unheard of during the Rebellion era, so a Force-user can probably slip her lightsaber through customs with a simple enough story (or mind trick). Other weapons are allowed, but a weapon-owner's identity is submitted to the station database.

If any of the heroes do try to bring permitted weapons on board, the agents duly inform them that the station's Imperial administrator, Trivyakna Korl, reviews the list of new weapons-carriers each morning. They have no desire to wake the Emperor's watchdog and offer every reasonable chance for undesirables to alter their plans accordingly. The customs officials aren't lax, and they don't encourage the heroes to falsify information—they're simply interested in ensuring the shipyards' well being.

Scene 2: Chatting up the Locals

The heroes won't have to ask around long before they get directions to the sunward strut of the station, where Roald Lasdal works the second shift as a construction foreman. Roald is a simple type. He's friendly and straightforward but doesn't like to talk out in the open. If the heroes approach him on the job, he greets them and introduces them to nearby crewmembers as "friends of the family." Then he shoos them off, gives them directions to his family's home in the residential district, and tells them to meet him there after his shift.

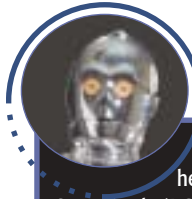
Once they're alone at his home, Roald herds his three children into another room, sits the heroes down around his kitchen table, and fills them in on the local color.

"Okay, here's what we know. The plans for the Quadronomic Fluxer were created by a team of Nessemite designers down planetside. Once the government got wind of what that was all about, they figured as soon as word got out, Nessem would be dead center of a big shooting war. They're probably right. Anyway, our government officials at work—in the interests of fair business—have decided to sell the plans to the highest bidder.

"Now, that's gonna happen tomorrow in a sealed-bid auction. It's very hush-hush. Not even the Imperial presence on the station knows about it, though some spies might show up. Only those with proper diplomatic credentials will be allowed to enter bids on the plans.

"In the meantime, the plans are being held on a recently completed capital ship on the sunward strut of the station. My crew just finished building it, in fact. It's a beauty. You might want to take a look at it while you're here.

"Anyway, anyone who tried to get those plans out of here before tomorrow would have to slink around in air ducts to find them and crack some electronic security on arrival. Coming in the front door would be pretty well near impossible, what with the droid guards and all. And since I'm a front-door kind of guy, I don't reckon that's the kind of work I'd be up for."



TURN UP THE HEAT

If you want to put a little more pressure on the heroes, you might give the ship's droid guards a Spot check (DC 15) to notice life forms moving about in the supposedly deserted capital ship.

If they do notice the intruders, they dispatch a destroyer droid to take care of any problems. The ship has plenty of room in which to run and fight, and while the station itself is crowded, only the destroyer droid will be on hand in the ship to complicate matters.

Use the destroyer droid statistics given in the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* core rulebook. Unlike Trade Federation droids, this droid operates independently and hunts down the heroes mercilessly.

Roald is a bit of a political spitfire for a Nessemite, having sided so strongly with the Rebellion. However, like others of his culture, he prefers to cite facts and let people draw their own conclusions, rather than try to persuade anyone. If asked, Roald's only comment on his planet's political choices is, "Neutrality's an expensive commodity."

Scene 3(a): Doing it the Hard Way

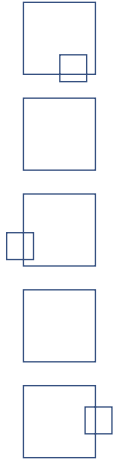
After the exposition, Roald asks the heroes what their plans are. He listens to any scheme with the same even temper. He doesn't suggest that stealing the plans would be a good option, but if the heroes mention it, he sets a datapad on the table and leaves the room "to check on the rugrats."

The datapad contains schematics of the ventilation system for the newly constructed capital ship that holds the plans. Choose an appropriate capital ship from the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* core rulebook, or from the *Starships of the Galaxy* accessory. A Computer Use check (DC 15) or Knowledge: Architecture and Engineering check (DC 10) allows a hero to find the room on the schematics where the plans are stored. Since the ship hasn't been christened yet, several insulated air ducts still lead from the station to the ship itself, making entry this way fairly simple.

Following the instructions left by Roald requires a little more effort. The air ducts in a capital ship are a maze. If the heroes follow the foreman's schematics perfectly, reaching the room where the plans are stored takes only 30 minutes. However, for each 5 minutes spent trying to follow the schematics, the heroes must succeed at a DC 15 Intelligence check to identify and travel the correct path. The group might want to use the "aid another" rules to help find it.

On the other hand, the heroes might use the station's air ducts to get into the ship, then use the ship's regular corridors to reach the room. They can do this in about half the time, with no Intelligence checks needed. No one else is on board, so they're not challenged.

We're Number Two: When the heroes finally reach the room (by whatever means), they may make a Spot check (DC 15) to notice something amiss. The door is wide open, with security locks disabled. A Computer Use check (DC 15) veri-



fies that the security has already been cracked, the plans taken, and the computer's memory wiped. Someone got there before they did.

A successful Search check (DC 20) reveals a few reptilian scales shed in the area of the computer keyboard. There aren't too many Trandoshans aboard the mostly Human-settled space station, and only one that they've seen. All the characters need to do now is find Ssorku.

Scene 3(b): Doing it the Easy Way

If, while talking to Roald, the heroes ask about attending the auction, the foreman can supply them with the materials needed to forge an invitation. He has no idea what the invitation looks like, but a savvy slicer (Computer Use DC 25) can tap into the station's central datacore to find a sample to help generate a forgery.

It doesn't matter whether the forgery is successful, since the plans will have been stolen long before the auction is scheduled to begin the next day. However, if the heroes spend the day walking about the station instead of crawling in air ducts, they run into Ssorku again. This time, however, he comes across as friendly—even to Wookiees—rather than brusque and dismissive, and he talks animatedly about a concert that evening.

"It's Hova Mensk and the Blurtones; they're playing tonight in the Starbirth Lounge on Deck 56. Some music critics have dubbed them the next big musical sensation along the Inner Rim, although I find their harmonies to be derivative of their jizz forbearers, the Sozzenels. I mean, you can hardly believe otherwise when you know that their mozz box player studied under the same mozz legend, Rem Yonka, as the Sozzenels' Xornu flux—I mean, Plox. But you'd think they would at least try to hide their influences a little better."

If anyone rises to the challenge, Ssorku begins a loud, forceful, but still friendly argument about nearly any musical topic. He just seems ready to argue. If no one wants to take his bait, the Trandoshan leaves.

Give the heroes an opportunity to roll an opposed Sense Motive check against Ssorku's Bluff skill. If one of them succeeds, he or she gets the feeling that Ssorku's friendliness is the effusively relaxed kind, as if he'd just completed a stressful task. His slip in saying "flux" instead of "Plox" also indicates that he's hiding something.

Later, when the heroes discover (along with the other auction attendees) that the plans for the Quadronomic Fluxer have been stolen, Ssorku will have already told them where to find him.

Scene 4: Hunt the Trandoshan

At this point in the adventure, the political situation on board has gotten understandably hot, and Roald would rather not jeopardize his value as a Rebellion contact by continuing to be seen with the heroes. They're on their own. It would be messy for the heroes to try to alert the appropriate authorities. A dragnet would catch Ssorku, but then Trivyakna Kori would get involved, and that would mean Imperial entanglements.

If the heroes want to find Ssorku (and the stolen plans) on their own, they can ask around and make a Gather Information skill check. A success at DC 20 leads the characters to Sheffel Nan, a female Human concert promoter who has a lot of friends in the music world. Unfortunately for the heroes, Ssorku is one of those friends. If the characters talk to her, she discreetly alerts the Trandoshan that a group of people has been asking about him. He's still going to be at the concert, but he'll come prepared for trouble.

Note that if the heroes succeed at a Gather Information skill check (DC 25), they can track Ssorku down without going through Sheffel, which means that the Trandoshan's guard will be down.

Lounge Lizards

The Starbirth Lounge is a rectangular room with a stage on one end. It has four doors, two in each long wall, one at the front, and one at the back. Ssorku hangs out backstage before the show with his kloo horn in its case. He emerges just before the show starts and sits at a reserved table front and center.

The room is dimly lit, and once the concert begins, a haze of smoke rises to hang near the ceiling. Small, round tables dot the crowded room. Perhaps 200 people have come to listen to the band.

If Sheffel warned Ssorku about the heroes, he keeps an eye out for them during the show, making Search checks frequently. If he sees one of them, he waits until the end of the first set, then tries to escape through the stage entrance. If Sheffel didn't warn Ssorku, the heroes can try to apprehend the Trandoshan at any time. He won't be watching out for them—he's too busy enjoying the show.

Ssorku keeps a sporting blaster hidden in his kloo horn case. If the heroes seem seriously threatening, the Trandoshan will draw it and fire at them three times (thanks to the Quick Draw and Rapid Shot feats). Then he breaks for cover.

And the plans for the Quadronomic Fluxer? They're hidden inside Ssorku's kloo horn, which remains inside the instrument case. Of course, the Trandoshan reveals their location to no one without serious persuasion, but a successful opposed Intimidation check will crack him open.

Ssorku: Male Trandoshan Scoundrel 4/Soldier 6; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 20 (+8 class, +1 Dex, +1 natural); Spd 10m; VP/WP 69/14; Atk +12/+7 melee (1d3+3, punch), +10/+5 ranged (3d4, sporting blaster); SQ Better lucky than good, illicit barter; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +3; SZ M; FP 1; Rep 6; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Equipment: blaster, kloo horn case, kloo horn, datapad.

Skills: Appraise +6, Astrogate +9, Bluff +6, Computer Use +7, Disable Device +7, Entertain (kloo horn) +3, Forgery +5, Gather Information +6, Intimidate +6, Listen +8, Pilot +9, Repair +7, Search +9, Sense Motive +2, Spot +7, Treat Injury +6.

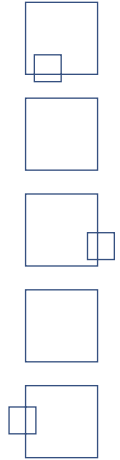
Feats: Armor Proficiency (light, medium, heavy), Heroic Surge, Persuasive, Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Rapid Shot, Sharp-Eyed, Skill Emphasis (Entertain: kloo horn), Skill Emphasis (Computer Use), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

Ssorku may be a mercenary, but he's not the grubby, amoral

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kind—at least, not grubby. He's willing to talk before he fights, and he knows when he's outnumbered. But he makes sure he has friends wherever he goes, so he's rarely as outnumbered as he appears to be.

Cue End Credits

If the heroes end up fighting Ssorku to retrieve the stolen plans, they might need to make a quick getaway. That's because once they've recovered the plans, escaping from the station itself can be as harrowing or simple as they've allowed it to be. More destroyer droids might be in line if they've fired shots. If they caused a serious problem, the Imperial presence on the station is aroused, and storm-troopers may also be summoned to stop their escape.

If they can make it back to their ship, customs agents don't even slow them down. They want to expedite the disappearance of troublemakers, letting them get into their ship so that exterior weapons and TIE fighters can finish them off outside the station.

About the Author

Sooner or later you're going to wonder, so I'm telling you now. Jeff Quick is the former Senior Editor of *Star Wars Gamer* and Editor-in-Chief of *Star Wars Insider*. Now he's a game designer for WizKids Games. He lives in Seattle. These things are all as true as the sun.



OTHER ERAS OF PLAY

The Empire, in the form of Trivakna Kori, keeps a lazy watch on the Nessem Shipyards. The administrator is only in the adventure to keep the heroes on their toes and make them do their own legwork. If they play their cards right, Trivakna will neither know nor care that they're even on board. Replacing the Empire administrator in another era is as easy as finding someone with weight to throw around, and someone the heroes don't want throwing at them.

Old Republic Era: The Nessemites have bargained for protection from the Trade Federation during the Republic era. A Federation overseer keeps tabs on trade practices and keeps destroyer droids nearby for emergencies.

The New Jedi Order Era: A crime lord uses the Nessem Shipyards as her base of operations, keeping the place fairly clear of opposing criminal elements, but taking her cut of the profits.

