

STAR WARS®

ROLEPLAYING GAME

Cat and Mouse

*A Star Wars Miniadventure
Using Ultimate Adversaries*

By Eric Cagle



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“Cat and Mouse” is a *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* mini-adventure for any era of play, but it’s probably best suited to the Rise of the Empire era. It’s designed for four to six heroes of 3rd to 5th level. Because the adventure deals with shady deals, gambling, and the black market, at least one of the player characters should be a scoundrel, noble, or other character with ties to the seedier side of the galaxy.

Introduction

Kelna Toodo is a gambler with a serious problem. A former pilot’s apprentice turned gambler, the Duros discovered early on that he had a talent for almost any game of chance. However, like any gambler, Kelna had a turn of bad luck, which unfortunately happened in Beeda the Hutt’s floating casino. Instead of losing his life, Kelna found himself deeply in debt to the Hutt and was forced to act as his messenger, snitch, and general errand boy.

Desperate to get out from under the Hutt’s grasp, Kelna will resort to almost any measure to repay the debt and move on with his life. Two recent events have given him an idea for a plan of escape. First, in a game of dice, Kelna managed to skin a sucker for almost everything he had, including his ship and its cargo. The ship, a vessel called the *Radiant Splendor*, was anything but—the aging hulk was on its last legs, but Kelna figured he could sell it as scrap for a bit of cash toward his debt. While most of the cargo was an almost worthless mix of textiles and holocubes, there was one item of interest—a huge enclosed cage that held a rare Corellian sand panther. The creature was worth a hefty sum on the black market, but Kelna worried that he’d never find a buyer for such an exotic and endangered species—not to mention that he didn’t want to risk his life handling the beast.

Kelna was about to space the creature and skin its hide when he received a message from Beeda. The Hutt ordered Kelna to deal with a group of meddlers (the heroes). Kelna, unable to refuse, was terrified—he was a gambler, not a mercenary. However, he saw an opportunity to kill the interlopers and deal with the sand panther at the same time by releasing it on them unawares. With luck, the heroes and the sand panther would kill each other off, or at least wound each other enough so that Kelna could dispatch them all without much fuss.

Ever the sneak, Kelna used his skills as a crooked gambler to snare the heroes into performing a “job” for him in payment for their debt. In exchange for overlooking their debt, Kelna demands that the heroes pilot the *Radiant Splendor* into Hutt space to deliver the ship to Beeda, while he pilots his own ship, the *Hot Streak*, behind. En route, Kelna plans on using a remote to unlock the sand panther’s cage, letting it prowl the ship and hunt down the heroes. Once the damage is done, Kelna will board the ship, finish off any survivors, and scuttle the ship to hide any evidence. Then he’ll return to Beeda and ask for his debt to be considered paid in full . . . he hopes.

Getting the Heroes Involved

To bring the heroes into the picture, you’ll need to tailor the first scene to your specific campaign. In general, the heroes need to run afoul of Beeda the Hutt in some way, so the adventure should begin on a planet in or near Hutt Space. The initial meeting between Kelna and the heroes should take place in a seedy frontier town, port, or any other spot that offers gambling.

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Here are some ideas:

- If the heroes are working for a higher authority such as the Jedi Council, they could be sent to investigate Kelna, who's been implicated in a spate of recent smugglings. They're instructed to maintain a low profile and get in close to study his scheme and find out who he reports to.
- If any of the heroes are gamblers, they've heard rumors of a Duros named Kelna Toodo who's looking for high rollers in a game of cards.
- If the heroes are of a more criminal bent, they're told by a contact that Kelna recently came into a vast pile of illegal wares and was looking for new partners to help him peddle the goods on the black market. This rumor is false, but Kelna's happy to play along in order to spring his trap on the characters.

The heroes don't need to meet Beeda in person in order to earn his wrath. Perhaps they disrupted one of his plans or got tangled up with one of his many minions. Either way, the Hutt holds a grudge and wants the troublemakers out of the way—permanently. He's also cruel enough to make a weakling like Kelna do the dirty work. The heroes shouldn't know that Kelna has any connection to Beeda, much less a debt to him.

Scene 1: A Turn of Luck

The heroes find themselves in the seedy port town of Akmalla (you can place this on any planet close to Hutt Space that you see fit). Thanks to a tip or just by chance, they find themselves in a ratty cantina called “The White Door.” Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The interior of the cantina is dimly lit and thick with foul-smelling smoke. The place is bustling with clients who all swagger about in a menacing manner. As you sip your drinks, a short Duros with dark green skin and glossy yellow eyes saunters up, looking a bit nervous. He fidgets with a coin in his hand, doing small tricks as he walks. “I couldn't help but notice that you were new to our fine establishment,” he says. “The name's Kelna—Kelna Toodo. May I offer you a drink?”

Whether the heroes agree or not, Kelna orders them a round of drinks and sits down next to the group.

Toodo leans in close and speaks just loud enough to be heard over the din. “I must admit it's not often that we get people of such upstanding caliber here. Most of the riff-raff in this place are nothing more than thieves and beggars. You, on the other hand, look like the sort of fine folks that enjoy a good wager. I happen to be arranging a game of skill with a group of high rollers, if you will—much like yourselves. Would you be interested in testing your talents against some of the local rubes?”

Kelna then tries to convince the heroes to participate in a game of sabacc that he's arranging with four other people. He lets it be known that the game will take place at midnight in the back room of The White Door. Find out in advance how many available credits the heroes have on

them, and have Kelna mention that the game's typical pots reach roughly that same limit—the better to bring them in. If the heroes agree to the game, Kelna smiles, says he'll see them later, and leaves the cantina.

If the heroes come back at midnight, they find The White Door even busier than before, with Kelna waiting for them at the bar. He offers another round of drinks and a bit of small talk before ushering them into the back room. The only characters allowed into the room are the ones who will be playing in the game, but Kelna politely offers to provide drinks for any characters who wish to remain at the bar.

The heroes who enter the small room find a gaming table, around which are seated four people—a male Human named Jokot, a female Twi'lek named Lyt Re, a male Cerean named Lar-Odo, and another male Duros named Bonna Noot. They seem anxious to get the game started. In truth, Lyt Re is one of Kelna's accomplices and has been instructed to lose big throughout the evening, but none of the heroes or the other players at the table know that.

The game begins and proceeds for many hours. During this time, any heroes who are playing can make up to four Gamble checks. Unfortunately for them, the game is rigged, and Kelna wears a special micro camera lens on his left eyeball (DC 35 Spot check to locate) to let him see the players' cards.

During the game, Lyt Re pretends to grow more nervous and despondent as she continues to lose. In the final hand, she makes a seemingly desperate move, offering “her” starship—a cargo hauler called the *Radiant Splendor*—and its cargo as part of the pot. Secretly make a Gamble check for the heroes, but in the end, they win the entire pot (five times the base amount that the game started with), and the ship.

The Twi'lek puts on a good show of cursing her luck. Alert heroes can make a DC 25 Sense Motive check to notice that she doesn't really seem to mind losing the ship all that much, but they'll discover nothing else out of the ordinary. Lyt Re hands them the access codes to the ship and tells them it's dry-docked at a port at the edge of town. Then she gulps down the last of her drink and storms out of the cantina. If any heroes follow her, they find that she simply goes to her room at a seedy hotel nearby.

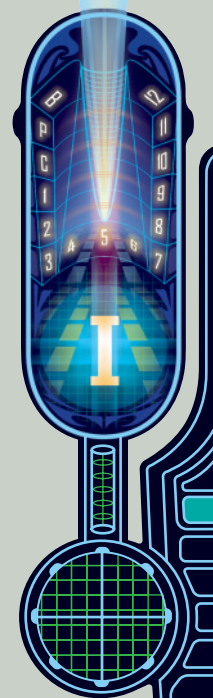
If the game somehow turns ugly—say, the heroes discover Kelna's camera lens or otherwise suspect treachery—Kelna tries to blame any impropriety on one of the other players. If a fight breaks out, Lyt Re flees, making sure to leave her datapad with the codes to the *Radiant Splendor* behind for the heroes to find.

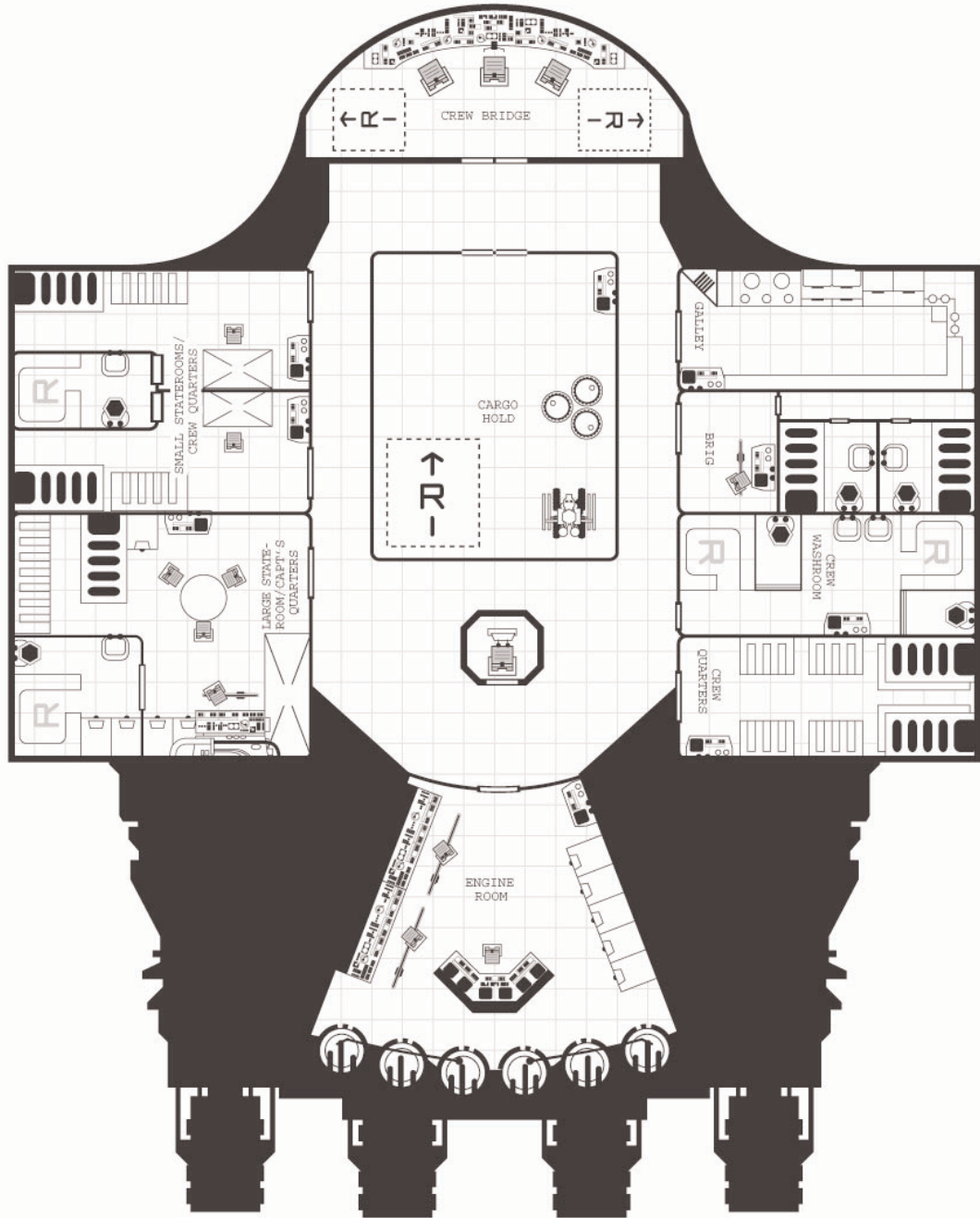
Refusing the Bait

If the heroes decline Kelna's invitation to the game during their first meeting, or if they agree to meet but fail to show up, the Duros will come up with some other scheme that ends with their taking possession of the *Radiant Splendor*. He feels the heroes are his best chance of getting out of Beeda's debt, and he'll do whatever it takes to entrap them.

Kelna Toodo

Kelna is short for a Duros, standing 1.75 meters tall. His skin is dark green, with glossy yellow eyes. His clothes are all very fine quality but show a lot of recent wear. He usually has a coin or a die in hand, performing small tricks with it as he fidgets.





0 1 2 3 4 5
scale in meters

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Kelna Toodo: Male Duros Scoundrel 4; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Defense 15 (+3 class, +2 Dex); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 21/10; Atk +2 melee (1d3-1, unarmed) or +5 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ illicit barter, lucky (1/day), precise attack +1; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +2; SZ M; FP 3; DSP 3; Rep 1; Str 9, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 13. Challenge Code C.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, the *Hot Streak* (Z-95 Headhunter, except Hyperdrive:2), marked cards, loaded dice, miniature datapad with remote (see above), 500 credits in cash, 60,000 credits in debt to Beeda the Hutt.

Skills: Appraise +10, Bluff +10, Computer Use +7, Forgery +10, Gamble +13, Pilot +11, Profession (gambler) +8, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Duresse, Read/Write Huttese, Read/Write Sullustese, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of Hand +9, Speak Basic, Speak Duresse, Speak Gamorrean, Speak Huttese, Speak Sullustese, Spot +8.

Feats: Point Blank Shot, Skill Emphasis (Gamble), Spacer, Trick, Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

Scene 2: It Ain't Much to Look at...

Once the game is over and the other players leave, Kelna congratulates the heroes.

"I must say, that was a remarkable show of skill, my friend. She never saw what was coming. Of course, I've seen that ship that you won from her. Maybe it's not so much of a prize after all."

If the heroes want to investigate the ship, Kelna offers to come along, as his vessel, the *Hot Streak*, is parked nearby. If they refuse, he will comply and leave, making a hasty retreat to the hangar where he can wait for them.

The *Radiant Splendor* is located at Dock 3 of the hangar. It's a ragged, stock SoroSuub Barzo cargo freighter that looks like it could barely make it into space. The access codes allow the heroes entrance, but the ship is mostly bare, with a few of the Twi'lek's personal possessions (giving no clue about her true connection to Kelna) and a few boxes of textiles and holocubes in the cargo hold (worth about 200 credits total).

The cage that contains the Corellian sand panther is located in a secret hold beneath the main cargo bay. Kelna's datapad has a remote that activates many functions on the *Radiant Splendor*. By spending a standard action, he can do any of the following to the ship from a distance of up to 10 kilometers away:

- Open the cage of the sand panther.
- Open, close, or lock all the doors on the ship.
- Shut down the ship's main computer, including primary power, lights, and engines.

If the heroes bring Kelna with them to the hangar, he shows his general disgust in the condition of the ship. Without seeming too eager to volunteer information, he tries to make it clear that the *Radiant Splendor* has sat here for months while the Twi'lek tried to find a buyer for it, but that there've been no offers. Only by taking the ship out of the system will there be any chance of making a profit from it. Kelna would prefer to wait for the heroes to ask him for help directly, but sooner or later, he mentions that he could help them take their new prize to another system to sell or repair it—for a modest fee, of course—while he follows in his own ship to help broker the deal.

If the heroes did not invite Kelna to accompany them to the hangar, they find him waiting for them there anyway as he "inspects" his ship, the *Hot Streak*, which sits next to the *Radiant Splendor*. The Duros shows surprise at meeting the heroes again so soon after the game, and he does his best to convince them to sell the ship as described above.

Sealing the Deal

Naturally, some of the heroes might be suspicious of Kelna and wonder why he's pushing them to unload the *Radiant Splendor*. If he detects any sign of this attitude, he pretends to be embarrassed to have been "caught," spinning a tale of how he's already got a buyer for the Twi'lek's ship lined up and is eager to make some quick credits—which he's more than willing to share with the heroes. Kelna would rather have the characters believe him to be a bit of a wheeler-dealer than to suspect that he's steering them toward the ship for some other reason.

If asked why he didn't just buy the Twi'lek's ship himself and fly it out of the system, he sheepishly "admits" to being down on his luck and unable to afford the purchase. It seems that although he likes to invite people into games of sabacc in the back room of The White Door, he's a poor gambler himself.

Scene 3: A Cat Plays with Its Food

Kelna does whatever he can to get the heroes to board the *Radiant Splendor* without seeming too pushy. If necessary, he even acts as if he's coming aboard with them, though he'll be last in line and pull back at the last second. However it happens, he waits for just the right moment to spring his trap.

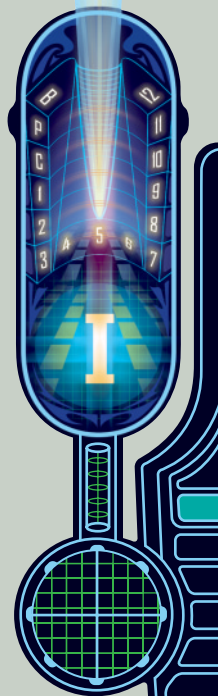
As soon as all the heroes are inside the ship, Kelna uses the remote on his datapad as follows: Close and lock the main door, open and jam all interior doors, shut down the main computer, and open the sand panther's cage. If he was forced to board the *Radiant Splendor* himself, he'll duck into an empty room and close and jam its door, sealing himself off from the rest of the ship and from the carnage that he hopes will ensue.

When they realize what's happened, the heroes might try to restart the ship's computers. This requires a DC 25 Computer Use check and takes 10 minutes. As long as the computer remains down, the *Radiant Splendor* is in near total darkness (40% miss chance). Trying to shut any of the interior doors while the power's off requires either a DC 25 Strength check or a DC 20 Disable Device check, and while the doors might close, they won't lock. Each interior door has DR 10 and 24 wound points, while the main door leading outside the ship has DR 12 and 40 wound points.

The sand panther, of course, is irritated from having been cooped up in the cage for so long, and it's extremely hungry. As soon as Kelna opens its cage, it leaps out and begins hunting the heroes. A crafty predator, the sand panther first picks off any character that it can catch alone. In any combat, it fights to the death.

Corellian Sand Panther: Medium predator 4; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Defense 22 (+2 Dex, +10 natural); Spd 16 m; VP/WP 26/14; Atk +13 melee (1d6+5, 2 claws) and +7 melee (1d8+2, bite) or +6 ranged; SQ species traits; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2; SZ M; FP 0; DSP 0; Rep +1; Str 21, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 3, Wis 13, Cha 16. Challenge Code D.

Skills: Climb +8, Hide +12, Jump +8, Listen +6, Move Silently +12, Spot +4.



Feats: Multiattack, Track.

Species Traits

Claw Bonus: The sand panther's claws are unusually sharp and grant it a +4 bonus on claw attacks.

Poison: The sand panther's claws are envenomed. Anyone who takes wound damage from a claw attack must make a DC 14 Fortitude save. On a failed roll, the poison deals 1d6 points of Con damage and forces another save 1 minute later, which, if failed, deals another 2d6 points of Con damage.

Pounce: When first attacking an opponent, the sand panther pounces, allowing it to make a full attack even though it has already moved.

Rake Attack: The sand panther often tries to grapple a foe with its front legs. If it succeeds, it then rakes the foe with the claws of its hind legs (melee attack +8, 1d6 points of damage per claw and poison). The beast can make a rake attack when pouncing.

Scent: The sand panther can detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell. It can identify familiar odors just as Humans recognize familiar sights and detect opponents within 10 meters by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 20 meters; if downwind, it drops to 6 meters. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted. Overpowering scents can be detected at triple ranges.

When the sand panther detects a scent, the exact location is not revealed. Instead, the sand panther knows only that its quarry is present somewhere within range. It must spend a full-round action to note the direction of the scent. At a range of 2 meters, a sand panther can pinpoint the exact location of the scent.

The sand panther can follow tracks by smell, making a Survival check to find or follow tracks. The typical DC for a fresh trail is 10 (no matter what kind of surface holds the scent). This increases or decreases depending on the strength of the quarry's odor, the number of creatures, and age of the trail. For each hour that has passed, the DC increases by 2. This ability otherwise follows the rules for the Track feat. Sand panthers tracking by scent ignore the effects of surface conditions and poor visibility.

Skill Check Bonuses: Sand panthers gain a +4 species bonus on Climb, Jump, and Listen checks.

Scene 4: It Was All Just a Big Mistake

If the heroes manage to fend off the Corellian sand panther, they'll probably try to find Kelna. Assuming he wasn't trapped in the *Radiant Splendor*, Kelna made his way back to The White Door to wait for a few hours before returning to the ship to see if the heroes and the panther finished each other off. Entering the vessel with his blaster drawn, Kelna attacks the heroes if they were seriously injured in the fight. Otherwise, he won't put up much resistance and surrenders if his chances seem slim.

If captured, Kelna reveals the details of his plot, including his debt to Beeda and the fact that the Hutt has a grudge against the heroes. He does his best to cut a deal that will keep him from getting killed or turned over to the authorities. He'd rather not pay for his long list of crimes, including possession of an endangered and dangerous animal.

Wrapping Up

As a short adventure, "Cat and Mouse" is worth 1,000 experience points, multiplied by the average level of the heroes involved and then divided equally among them. If the heroes recapture the sand panther without killing it, they each gain an additional 1,000 experience points. They also get to keep the winnings from the rigged sabacc game, but if the authorities learn what's happened, they impound both the *Radiant Splendor* and the *Hot Streak*. Finally, if the heroes were working for a higher authority, they receive praise for a job well done.

About the Author

Eric Cagle is a freelance game designer at Wizards of the Coast. Recent credits include the *Fiend Folio*, the *Ultimate Alien Anthology* and *Ultimate Adversaries* for the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*, *Urban Arcana*, and the *d20 Menace Manual*. He's a frequent contributor to both *DRAGON* magazine and the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* website.

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