

Session 02 - Rescue on Branzet 25 ASW4 (May 2001) Our heroes battle renegade droids to rescue captured prospectors. (Bail) (Branzet) (Choma) (Sturmwulf) (Reports) (Trini) (Vashti) (Zaky)

Rescue on Branzet

The Scenario

On the distant and desolate mining world of Branzet, something went terribly wrong in the settlement aptly dubbed "Junktown" -- according to witnesses who escaped, droids were running amok, and people were being rounded up and taken to a particular part of town. A total of ten people were unaccounted for, and it was unknown whether they might be alive or dead.

Our heroes were sent in to investigate, and, if possible, rescue these people still trapped in the town with the berserk droids.

Scouting Ahead

This time around, the team consisted of the Pardu brothers (Zaky and Choma), Professor Solaris, Jedi Guardian Trini, and a couple of soldiers (Axley and Karl). They flew in on a YT-1300, but encountered resistance in the form of an anti-air droid artillery unit patrolling the area where the missing persons were last seen. They nonetheless acquired an airborne image of the area, and proceeded to land outside the settlement, under shelter of the broken hull of some old starship wreckage, and examined the holographic display of the city block and observed droids, to formulate a plan.

At last, they opted to send in Choma, Zaky and Trini as scouts to investigate what appeared to be a repair shop at the corner of the observed area, sneaking past the large artillery unit droid and other droid sentries. Inside the repair shop, they found two DUM-series pit droids, and, at Zaky's instruction, they snuck up and hit each of the droids on the "nose" (actually, the large optic sensor) -- which prompted the small labor droids to promptly collapse and fold up into storage mode.

Rough Start

A quick search revealed no other droids (or anyone else) in the shop, so they gave the all-clear signal to the other waiting team members to dash across and into the shop. Axley made it into the shop without incident, but Karl stepped on an empty Fizzy-Glug can, attracting the attention of a hovering sentry drone, and a protocol droid. With expert marksmanship, Karl took out the drone in a single shot, but the protocol droid started yelling for help and ran off, alerting a tracked mining droid. Axley tried to lend help with a shot of his own, but missed his mark.

Karl realized that while he had been seen, the others had not, so he opted to run off, rather than drawing attention to their position. Axley decided not to risk the chance that they may have seen the shot come from his position, so he fled as well. The mining droid gave only a half-hearted pursuit, and when it was clear that they were out of the area, returned to its original post, while the protocol droid hid around a corner.

Eventually, Karl and Axley returned to the repair shop, and were joined by Professor Solaris, who had been searching another area. Inside the shop, they searched for any tools that might be useful in dealing with droids, and found some restraining bolts and a couple of caller units. They also found some schematics for several types of droids, as the technician based at this shop must have done work on most of the droids in the settlement. They decided that they might be able to learn something by questioning the pit droids, but that since none of their number could speak Binary, they needed the assistance of a protocol droid. Since protocol droids conveniently come with a mounting for a restraining bolt already in place, Axley and Trini tried sneaking down the street to get to the protocol droid, restraining bolt in hand, with the intent of capturing it and using it to interrogate the pit droids.

Meanwhile, Karl slipped across the street to the general store, to take up a good sniping position, and Professor Solaris continued to search through the schematics to find anything useful -- such as plans for that large artillery droid. Axley and Trini succeeded in surprising the protocol droid and to put a restraining bolt on it, but the mining droid proceeded to attack them with a drill. While they fended off the mining droid's attacks, the large, tank-like artillery droid returned from its rounds, just in time to see them standing in the middle of the street. It lobbed a shell, and the resultant explosion severely injured both Trini and Axley, destroyed the protocol droid they'd just disabled, and incapacitated the mining droid. Rather than standing there to take any more shots, Trini and Axley opted to run for cover.

Choma and Zaky, desperate to lend some assistance to Trini and Axley, rushed to the back of the artillery droid and hopped on, as it lacked any capacity to be able to do much against close-combat attackers. This action, however, alerted several other droids to their presence, and they began to pursue. Karl provided supporting fire, taking out one droid that was equipped with a blaster (and thus could present a very severe threat), though he was unable to find a sufficiently weak point on the artillery droid to be able to do anything about it. Professor Solaris discovered some plans for not only this droid, but a large one called "Gargantua", and rushed over to show these plans to Karl.

Commandeering the Artillery Droid

Choma and Zaky climbed to the top of the artillery droid, and discovered that it had a cockpit hatch. Upon prying it open, they found that this "droid" was in fact a vehicle being piloted by a pit droid. They grabbed the pit droid and flung him out of the cockpit, whereupon Choma jumped in and tried to figure out the controls. As Choma really had no idea what he was doing, and the droid was about to smash into a nearby building (a droid combat arena, as it turned out), Zaky reached in and ripped out the fuses to stop the vehicle. In all the commotion, another droid had appeared to cause trouble -- a protocol droid equipped with several grenades. This droid succeeded in expertly tossing one right into the hatch and into Choma's lap, whereupon the grenade started spewing gas. Choma threw out the grenade ... and then another landed in his lap! That one went, too, and Choma was about to close the lid

to prevent any more coming in, until it occurred to him that this would mean shutting himself inside a confined, partially gas-filled area, with nowhere for the gas to escape.

Karl, meanwhile, methodically worked his way up to the roof of the general store and took out a sentry drone, while Professor Solaris discovered that she was no longer alone -- as another droid, armed with a blaster, had entered the store! She fled to the rooftop to seek help from Karl, and Karl calmly stuck his gun down the shaft and took out the offending droid. For an encore, he sniped the gas-grenade-chucking protocol droid from atop the roof.

By this time, the droids that had been alerted to their presence converged about the base of the artillery droid. Zaky got off the droid and sprinted across to climb atop another barrier to get away from the droids. Some more sniping by Karl narrowed down the number of hazardous droids, and Choma used some strange powers of his to levitate an astromech and to drop it on top of another, knocking them both over and rendering them unable to get back up. He also used his amazing telekinetic abilities to put a restraining bolt onto another protocol droid, and then they attempted to parlay with the droid to call off the others. By this point, however, only a tiny MSE ("mouse") droid was present, and as Trini and Axley returned, the MSE droid "attacked" Axley by repeatedly bumping into his boot ineffectually.

Regrouping and Information Gathering

The team regrouped back at the droid repair shop, powering the artillery droid back up and moving it over there to provide a defense, and bringing the captured protocol droid along. They bandaged their wounds and rested a bit, while Zaky got the artillery droid back in order, and Professor Solaris showed off the plans she'd found. According to the protocol droid, there were nine hostages being held in the arena, and the droids were going to issue demands that all "organics" leave the planet, and that the planet be declared a sanctuary for droids from all over the galaxy, or else the "organics" would be killed. He also indicated that the droids' leader was a battle droid called "Gargantua", and that there was also a tenth person there -- a "nice droid repairman" who supposedly was in the droid repair shop. (Incidentally, the team found no evidence of any droid repairman actually being in this shop at that time.)

The plans of "Gargantua" that the professor had found showed that -- like the artillery "droid" -- it was not a true droid, but rather a robotic vehicle. Karl searched around the shop to look for any sign of this droid repairman ... and found a secret passage leading to a long-forgotten mining tunnel. As they searched around the shop more, they found a holoplayer and some data cartridges. The first cartridge put into the player self-destructed, and Zaky determined that there was a security mechanism he could bypass, whereupon they were able to read the others.

They discovered a message from ex-Imperial warlord Shel Abadan, instructing the repairman (Jace Blazecutter) to "speed things up", and they also found that another cartridge contained several (illegally obtained) security access codes in use through the settlement, and yet another contained a layout of tunnels going underneath the settlement ... including a tunnel leading to the droid battle arena.

The heroes surmised that this "Gargantua" was actually being piloted by Jace Blazecutter, who also may have been responsible for modifying the behavioral inhibitors on the droids, to bring them under his command. They set up a rescue plan, sending Karl to sneak into the

arena and scout for any sign of the hostages, Axley to wait in the artillery "droid" as backup, and the others went into the tunnels to make their way into the arena.

Underground Mission

In the tunnels, Trini, Choma, Zaky and Professor Solaris encountered three battle droids and another hovering "cutter" droid. The "cutter" droid shaved a bit of hair off of Zaky, but Choma used his powers of telekinesis to great effect, by pushing the floating "buzzsaw" droid back into the battledroids, inflicting considerable damage against them. Professor Solaris downed one of the damaged droids with her hold-out blaster, Zaky took out another with his slug-thrower, a third was destroyed by Choma's droid-chucking antics, and Trini took out the spinning cutter-droid with her lightsaber. Finally, Zaky got past the security measures on the blast door, and they made their way into a secret passage under the arena, which led to a crawltube going up the "recharge port" for Gargantua, where it was still docked -- as Jace Blazecutter was inside the cockpit, doing maintenance.

Zaky climbed up, bypassed the security again, popped open the hatch, and promptly tried to rip Jace out of the cockpit, though at first he failed, since Jace was securely held in place by a restraint. Jace went for a blaster pistol, but Choma used his telekinesis again, to rip the pistol out of his grasp. Somehow, mysteriously, Zaky experienced a surge of strength, and was able to pull Jace out of the cockpit, ripping the harness free, whereupon they dragged him down the crawltube to interrogate him. At first, Jace was resistant, but (once again somewhat mysteriously), he suddenly became convinced of the gravity of his situation, and spilled the whole story:

He was a technician in the service of Shel Abadan, the ex-Imperial warlord / space pirate, and had been sent into the area to create a disturbance to persuade the prospectors and hydroponics farmers to leave the planet -- as their existence there was already a meager one, and surely a severe threat to their lives would prompt them to find better pickings elsewhere. Toward this end, Shel Abadan provided him with funding so that he could undercut the prices charged by other mechanics and technicians, gaining himself access to many of the droids needing maintenance in the area.

He subsequently modified several droids to bring them under his control, and then engineered the so-called "droid revolt" to drive off the miners, taking a few hostage so that he could engineer an incident faking his own death, and send off the "hostages" with horror stories to tell the others. Ideally, this would get them to leave the planet, as Shel Abadan's secret base was located nearby. (Not so secret anymore!)

Rough Finish

Zaky used the blueprints of the vehicle and information pried from Jace to head up and get Gargantua to order the droids in the arena to all look away and search for intruders -- the idea being that while they were distracted, he could engineer a rescue of the hostages. The trouble was, there actually was an intruder for them to find: Karl! The droids immediately sprung into action, going after Karl. One of them took a route outside the arena, and Axley provided covering fire by taking out one of the larger and nastier droids, while Karl took down a

combat droid that personally menacing him. Before more mayhem could follow, Zaky got Gargantua to order the droids to stand down, and combat abruptly ceased.

Successful Rescue

In the aftermath, our heroes succeeded in getting the hostages out of the arena, and they captured Jace Blazecutter. They still took the hostages to the YT-1300 for extraction, without telling them about Shel Abadan's base, for fear that as soon as the warlord realized what had happened, he might enact some sort of retribution upon the settlement. Before leaving, Karl, Axley, Choma and Zaky helped themselves to some of the "spoils of war" to be found in Jace's droid repair shop, taking the pit droids, tools, and miscellaneous other gear that might be of use. (Professor Solaris abstained from what she deemed to be "looting", and Jedi Guardian Trini seemed to prefer traveling light.) Karl considered trying to get the explosive rounds out of the artillery droid, but Zaky pointed out that nobody on the team had any experience in mechanics, in heavy artillery, or in demolitions, and that if Karl wanted to get the shells out, he'd be doing so himself, and everyone else would be far, far away while he did so. Karl therefore gave up on that idea, and went along with the others.

Back on Narsus Prime, Jace Blazecutter was taken into custody, and the hostages and our heroes received medical attention as needed. Governor Tebesk-a-Susek was quite pleased with the outcome, and made certain that these new heroes would be hailed for their efforts ... though he judiciously kept secret the knowledge of Shel Abadan's base, so that there still might be an opportunity to launch a surprise attack. The cover story was maintained that it had been a case of a deranged droid repairman who "loved droids too much" who had compelled the droids to turn against their masters in this "revolt".

So, our heroes were commended for their bravery (and paid, too), and thanks to their heroics, nine hostages were rescued, a dastardly criminal was apprehended, and this was all done without excessive destruction of property.

End Game Results

4500 experience points were awarded for the adventure, divided amongst six present (and surviving!) PCs, and one Luck Point was awarded to each hero. During play, one Luck Point was awarded to Choma and Zaky each for some amusing in-character exchanges, but Choma spent his, so Zaky is the only PC to end the game with 2 Luck Points. All surviving PCs got one Reputation Point for their daring rescue of the hostages.