

Raid on Eltaes

Special Mission

The heroes were hired again by the governor, this time to go after a Pardu smuggler by the name of Skabi, implicated in the bombing attempt on the Pearlesca Undersea Colony on Narsus Prime. A patrol craft had observed his shuttle landing in the jungle canopy, and thus had approximate coordinates as to the likely location of his base. The heroes were again loaned the Century Hawk, a standard YT-1300 space transport, to get to Eltaes.

To Dye For

Zaky was especially concerned that, if they were going up against Pardu, that their ship might be ransacked while they were away, so he invested in several dye packs and small charges to rig up traps around the ship such that the unwary would be sprayed with dye especially chosen to be bright and garishly colored, and impossible to wash out of fur. Alas, Zaky, having no real experience in rigging up such traps, ended up setting off one charge at the door to the ship, painting it green, save for an outline of a surprised Pardu ... and Zaky's backside was rendered neon green. Later, while trying to rig up traps in his cabin in the ship, he set off another one, this time painting himself and half of his room bright neon blue. Bail Solaris intervened to give assistance to Zaky when rigging up the traps -- that is, those outside his room -- so that there were no more mishaps, and the entrance to the ship, the entrance to Zaky's cabin, and containers within his own room were thus successfully booby-trapped, once Zaky had observed the proper way to set these things up.

Mapping Out the Jungle

Upon arriving on Eltaes, the YT-1300 made several passes over the area designated by the coordinates, but did not see any obvious signs of a base, despite several scanner sweeps. At last, they set down about eight hours' of a walk away, and rigged up the traps on the ship, instructing their DUM pit droid to set off an alarm if anyone entered the ship. (They didn't bother to specify whether "anyone" would be themselves or anyone else, figuring that it wasn't worth making the instructions overly complex for the simple droid.)

With their holorecordings of the local topography, they plotted out a course to bring them closest to the center of the area the base was believed to be located in, and set out in the rain at sunset.

Night-Rippers

In the dark, the heroes spotted a couple of large lizard-like creatures, and while they were all focused on them, a number of unseen predators leaped from the shadows, attacking those members of the group who weren't carrying obvious light sources. The creatures slashed viciously, but after the heroes fired off a few blaster shots, the creatures scattered back into the trees. The heroes figured out fairly quickly that they were afraid of light, and dug through their packs to get out more glowrods. (Not all of the party were using them, as some had nightvision goggles or natural ability to see in low light.)

Puffers

The heroes encountered some very large mushroom-like structures that exploded when approached, sending clouds of spores into the air. Bail fortunately was able to hold his breath reflexively and didn't breathe in any of the spores, as Vashti revealed that these spores would set in the lungs and grow, requiring medical treatment. Everyone dug out face masks, in order to protect against the spores, and Vashti took a sample of the mushrooms to try to compose a remedy in case someone got infected.

Got Light?

They noticed a fairly tall rocky structure and decided to investigate it, sending Zaky to climb to the top. Unfortunately, he did not bring a light source with him, and was attacked by the night-rippers again. Choma was about to throw a vibro-axe up at the creatures, but Vashti suggested he throw a glowrod instead, seeing as the creatures were afraid of light. The other heroes shot down two of Zaky's attackers, and the other two fled, whereupon Zaky got back down and was bandaged up.

Night-Ripper Repellant

The group pressed on, eventually setting up a small camp about halfway into their projected trip, so that the badly wounded Zaky could rest and be treated for his wounds again. Another stone spire was noticed, and Choma went to investigate, while Karl scanned it with his scope at a distance. The group discovered an electronic emitter with its own power supply, sending out a high-pitched signal, and they reasoned that this might be some sort of device for warding off Night-Rippers. They calculated the likely locations of other such emitters in order to set up an electronic "fence", and scanned the horizon for signs of other such emitters. Sure enough, other rocky spires also held emitters, set up in an arrangement that allowed them to triangulate the likely center of the Pardus' territory -- and thus correct their path through the jungle. Bail kept a recording of the signal, just in case it might prove to be useful for warding off night-rippers later.

Pardu Territory

From that point on, the group did not encounter any more night-rippers, but they did encounter traps. Bail, acting as point, discovered and fell into a pit trap, and had to be rescued

by the others. His blaster had fallen into the hole, and Zaky used his grapples to fish around and pull out the blaster, though accidentally setting off its trigger and firing a couple of blasts in the air in the process. Choma used his Force abilities to levitate Bail's glowrod out, since it was considerably more visible.

Moving on along, the group encountered an obvious spiked log trap, and another pit trap. They then stopped there, entering into a loud argument about what to do next. Unbeknownst to them, the cubs of the Pardu clan had been tracking their movements through the night (observing occasional blaster shots and the movements of glowrods) and had set up an ambush right here in front of the traps. The arguing gave them time to carefully sight up on the heroes and to fire off stun blasts. Amazingly, thanks to strong fortitudes, those of the group that were hit were unfazed by the stun bolts, and they drew their weapons and started firing back at the cubs in the trees. Zaky and Choma soon figured out that their attackers were, in fact, cubs, and urged the others to switch to stun weapons -- They tried climbing up trees to deal with the cubs personally, but in the process exposed themselves to almost point-blank stunner blasts, and were knocked out of the trees and unconscious. Bail was knocked unconscious as well, while Karl and Vashti actually sought cover, and Trini started using her lightsaber to hack at the trees the cubs were hiding in.

Axley backed up out of the range of the stun blasts, and used this vantage point to sight up on the cub in the tree Trini was trying to cut down, and fired off a lethal blast that killed the cub outright, whereupon the cub fell out of the tree to the ground. The cubs, shocked by this turn, briefly stopped firing, and an ominous series of clicks could be heard as they switched from stun to lethal settings and began taking aim on the offender. Axley, rather than seeking cover, ran up to the dead cub, took her blaster, and then ran up to the base of one of the trees ... whereupon the Pardu cubs opened fire upon him with full power blasts, and killed him from the combined assault. Karl, his calls to surrender having gone unheeded, opened fire on a cub that he had spotted and sighted up on, killing the cub instantly. Trini succeeded in chopping down a tree holding a third cub, and the two remaining cubs fled.

Mourning

In the aftermath, the stunned heroes recovered, and were aghast at the outcome of the firefight. Trini, refusing to accept Axley's death, desperately and vainly tried to administer aid to him, but to no avail. Zaky and Choma were shocked by the deaths of the cubs, and Choma exhibited his usual schizophrenic swings, going from his earlier passive stance to desiring blood for Axley's death and for the cubs being sent up against the heroes. Nonetheless, they administered first aid to the remaining cub, and Zaky questioned him about what had happened -- then allowed the cub to run off with a comlink. Vashti, sickened by her part in the deaths of the cubs, abandoned the party, heading back to the ship. The others buried the two cubs, and set up a camp, expecting the Pardu clan to be on their heads at any moment.

Surrounded

At sunrise, and a lightening of the rainfall, a skiff arrived, flanked by four speederbikes, two of them piloted by his Pardu wives, and two of them piloted by Catuman warrioresses, while his own skiff also had a third Catuman woman and a modified ASP droid. Choma and Zaky presented themselves with weapons set aside, and Skabi demanded that the heroes put down

their weapons and surrender ... and then indicated that he would be turning them all over to Shel Abadan. At this, the heroes decided that this was not a desirable fate ... and bolted. By some miracle, even though they had several weapons trained on them at once, they managed to dash off at a breakneck pace into the cover of the jungle before even a shot could be fired, and the speederbikes soon launched into pursuit.

Speederbike Bash

What followed was a frenzied battle in the jungle. Two of the speederbikes bore down on Zaky and Choma, one of the women downing Choma, though Zaky knocked another off of her speederbike, sending the vehicle careening off and exploding against a tree. The other two speederbikes went after Bail and Trini, and Trini managed to pull another rider off of her bike as it whipped past, and Bail managed to do one up on that: he not only managed to knock the rider off, but to land on the bike itself, albeit backwards. Through amazing dexterity, he managed to steer the bike to avoid hitting trees while reversed, though he at last turned around, and brought the speederbike in an arc to go after Skabi's skiff. Karl went after one of the unmanned speederbikes and boarded it, while Trini took cover.

Bail aimed his speederbike in a suicide run at the skiff, then dove off of it at the last moment, knocking himself unconscious from the fall, but succeeding in sending his speederbike into the larger vehicle. The resultant explosion destroyed both speederbike and skiff, and killed all aboard, including Skabi. Meanwhile, Zaky struggled with the woman he had pulled off of a speederbike -- incidentally, the mother of the two cubs who had died earlier. Though he attempted to tell her that he wasn't responsible for their deaths, she would hear nothing of it, and slashed at him furiously, until he bodily knocked her aside.

The remaining bike-rider screamed at Skabi's death, and opened up the accelerator on her speederbike, putting herself on a collision course with the speederbike that Karl was riding. Karl managed to leap off in time, but the two speederbikes hit head on, and exploded. Amazingly, Bail was spared, though horribly wounded, since he was on the ground within the blast radius.

When the smoke cleared, Skabi and all of the women (save for the one Zaky had disarmed) were dead, and all the repulsorlift vehicles destroyed. The one remaining Pardu woman slipped off into the woods, and while the group was patching wounds headed back to the Pardu base, grabbed the cubs and any easily obtained valuables, loaded them up into a shuttle, set demolition charges, then took off -- Skabi's base erupting in a succession of fire balls behind her as she fled.

Aftermath

A Narseti patrol craft eventually showed up to lend aid to the heroes and airlift them back to their YT-1300 and administer medical treatment. Although Axley had died, there were no further casualties in the group. When they eventually got back to Narsus Prime, they learned that, while Governor Tebesk-a-Susek was disappointed that Skabi couldn't be interrogated, he still considered the mission a success, as a smuggler base had been eliminated. (And, the Narseti were never terribly fond of the Pardu anyway.) The surviving members were paid for the mission, treated for their wounds, and ammunition expenditures were covered.

Results

A total of 6000 experience points was divided up amongst the five characters present at the end of the adventure (Karl, Trini, Choma, Zaky and Bail), giving them 1200 each. John C was allowed to use half of Axley's accumulated experience point total toward his next character, a Fringer. Professor Vashti was given a token amount of 300 points for participation in part of the adventure.