

REBELLION

A tabletop RPG inspired by the world's most popular science fiction. Written by Shane Ivey, © 2019.

Introduction

Rebellion is a roleplaying game about ordinary people who become heroes in a galactic struggle against tyranny. They may want to be heroes from the start. They might be bystanders just trying to live their lives. They might be scoundrels who scoff at heroism until they are the last hope. But they come together under the oppression of a galaxy-spanning empire. They defy a seemingly all-powerful dictatorship that controls its subjects with lies and violence. It placates the many with the persecution of the few and calls itself just.

Rebellion adventures are about confronting hatred and despair with courage and hope. Some adventures are about heroes just trying to help people survive and thrive. Some are about seeking knowledge and resources to weaken the empire, protect its victims, or strengthen the rebels who oppose it. Some are about inspiring victims to stand together against cruelty and remember that they are strong. All are about withstanding the violence that is the empire's cruel heart.

Rebellion is a traditional tabletop RPG in structure, built for one game master ("GM") to serve as creator and director of the adventure, and from one to six players to take the roles of heroes. It uses four-sided ("d4"), six-sided ("d6"), eight-sided ("d8"), ten-sided ("d10"), and twelve-sided ("d12") dice.

Rebellion Heroes

Rebellion heroes have a handful of scores and ratings that determine how they overcome challenges. Stats and skills are used the most often. When your hero attempts to overcome a risky challenge, you roll dice according to your hero's stats and skills. If the dice roll high enough, the hero overcomes the challenge.

- **Stats:** Seven ratings that broadly describe a hero's talents. Each is rated by the die type that you roll to overcome a challenge: d4, d6, d8, and so on. See "Stats."

- **Skills:** Areas of focused training and experience. Each is rated by the die type that you roll, along with the skill's stat, to overcome a challenge: 0 (for none at all), d4, d6, and so on. See "Skills."
- **Hope and Hate:** Points you can spend for your hero to persevere through failure. See "Hope and Hate."
- **Wealth:** A score that allows your hero to obtain equipment and aid. See "Wealth and Equipment."
- **Destiny:** Points that you can spend to keep your hero alive when all else fails. See "Destiny."
- **Experience Points:** Points that you can spend to improve your hero. See "Experience Points."
- **Emotional Attachments:** You may name characters (NPCs or fellow heroes) with whom your hero has a particularly deep connection. See "Emotional Attachments."

STATS

Seven stats broadly cover most challenges that heroes face in *Rebellion*.

- **Strength:** physical power and toughness
- **Dexterity:** reflexes, nimbleness, coordination, balance, and agility
- **Technology:** the creation and repair of high-tech devices
- **Knowledge:** education; note that Knowledge is not the same as raw intelligence or wits, which are up to the player to describe
- **Wisdom:** perceptiveness, intuition, self-control, dependability
- **Charisma:** force of personality, and innate ability to inspire and influence others
- **Power:** capacity for psychic abilities; you do not have psychic powers without learning Power skills

SKILLS

Each stat has four skills that deal with the details of overcoming challenges: **Endurance** to withstand hardship, **Discernment** to judge someone's trustworthiness, **Discipline** to withstand fear and distraction, and so on. Most are See "Power" for details on the Power skills.

SKILL LISTS

Strength	Dexterity	Technology	Knowledge	Wisdom	Charisma	Power
Athletics	Gunnery	Armaments	Cultures	Alertness	Coercion	Compulsion
Endurance	Piloting	Computers	Medicine	Discernment	Deception	Focus
Fighting	Shooting	Robots	Sciences	Discipline	Leadership	Projection
Starblade	Stealth	Machinery	Tactics	Survival	Negotiation	Sense

STAT AND SKILL RATINGS

Each stat and skill is rated not by a static number but by its die type, such as “d4” or “d6.” Unless the GM says otherwise, a d12 is the highest rating a human can have in a stat or skill.

STAT AND SKILL RATINGS

Rating	Stat Description	Skill Description
0	Incapable of acting	No training or experience
d4	Poor	Basic training or experience
d6	Average	Professional
d8	Talented	Advanced
d10	Prodigy	Expert
d12	Mighty	Master

Creating a Hero

To create a hero, choose ratings in stats, skills, Hope, and Hate.

STARTING STATS

Your hero starts with a rating of d4 in each stat. You can raise your stats seven times. Each “stat raise” improves a stat by one die type: from d4 to d6, d6 to d8, d8 to d10, or d10 to d12.

STARTING SKILLS

You start with a rating of 0 in each skill. You can raise your skills 25 times. Each “skill raise” improves a skill by one die type: from 0 to d4, d4 to d6, d6 to d8, d8 to d10, or d10 to d12.

As a shortcut, assign six skills ratings of d4 each, six others at d6, one other at d8, and one other at d10.

Only characters from certain rare backgrounds may begin play with the psychic abilities represented by Power skills. Ask the GM whether that fits the adventure and campaign. See “Power” for details.

STARTING HOPE AND HATE

Choose whether to start with 2 points of Hope, 2 points of Hate, or 1 point each in Hope and Hate. See “Hope and Hate” for details.

STARTING DESTINY

You start with one Destiny point. See “Destiny” for details.

STARTING WEALTH AND EQUIPMENT

You start with a Wealth score of 2, and with four pieces of equipment: one piece with a Value of 1, one of Value 2, one of Value 3, and one of Value 4. See “Wealth and Equipment” for details.

OPTION: A NONHUMAN HERO

You can create a hero of an alien species (alien to humans, that is) or a robot hero.

A nonhuman hero might have an unusual special ability, such as being able to see well in the dark, being able to breathe water, or having a maximum score of d12+2 in any one stat. In hero creation, such a special ability replaces one stat raise, or two stat raises if the GM and players agree that the ability is extraordinarily potent.

Furthermore, a robot hero has no Power stat and cannot have Power skills. It does not need to breathe or eat to survive, but must recharge its batteries from time to time. It does not heal naturally from damage but must be repaired. Robots in *Rebellion* are quite sophisticated. A robot hero can have Hope and Hate points and emotional attachments (described in “Emotional Attachments”).

To get some ideas for a nonhuman species, you can roll 1d12 four times on the “Sample Alien Features” table. For a less alien hero, make yours mostly human and roll for what stands out about it and what its species is known for.

SAMPLE ALIEN FEATURES

d12	It looks like a...	Crossed with a...	Most distinctive for its...	And it's best known for...
1	Bat	Mantis	Arms	Strength
2	Bird	Monkey	Coloration	Dexterity
3	Cat	Pig	Eyes	Technology
4	Crustacean	Robot	Fur	Knowledge
5	Devil	Scorpion	Head	Wisdom
6	Elephant	Slug	Large size	Charisma
7	Fish	Snake	Legs	Power
8	Gorilla	Spider	Mouth	Hope
9	Hippo or Rhinoceros	Squid	Personality	Hate
10	Housefly	Walrus	Skin	Loyalty
11	Frog	Weasel	Small size	Treachery
12	Lizard	Wolf or Dog	Voice	An unusual ability

Sample Characters

You may recognize these characters from the fourth episode of a popular science fiction series.

FATED FARMBOY

Str d6	Dex d8	Tech d6	Know d4	Wis d4	Cha d6	Power d8
Athletics d6	Gunnery d8	Armaments 0	Cultures 0	Alertness d6	Coercion 0	Compulsion 0
Endurance d6	Piloting d10	Computers 0	Medicine 0	Discernment d4	Deception 0	Focus 0
Fighting d4	Shooting d4	Robots d6	Sciences 0	Discipline d4	Leadership d6	Projection 0
Starblade 0	Stealth d4	Machinery d6	Tactics 0	Survival d6	Negotiation 0	Sense 0

RETIRED STARKNIGHT

The retired starknight has far fewer skills here than you would expect from such a hero's background. But if you imagine that he deliberately avoids using some skills or many have atrophied over long years in

isolation, he becomes an interesting player character without overshadowing the others. The GM could say that when circumstances force the retired starknight to reveal his full abilities—such as when confronting an imperial darklord, his archenemy—his full stats and skills are revealed. If that costs the retired starknight his life, his player may switch to the rebel princess.

Str d4	Dex d4	Tech d6	Know d6	Wis d8	Cha d6	Power d8
Athletics 0	Gunnery 0	Armaments 0	Cultures d4	Alertness d6	Coercion d4	Compulsion d8
Endurance 0	Piloting 0	Computers 0	Medicine 0	Discernment d6	Deception d4	Focus d8
Fighting 0	Shooting 0	Robots 0	Sciences 0	Discipline d8	Leadership d4	Projection d8
Starblade d6	Stealth d4	Machinery 0	Tactics 0	Survival d4	Negotiation d4	Sense d6

RAKISH SMUGGLER

Str d6	Dex d8	Tech d6	Know d4	Wis d4	Cha d10	Power d4
Athletics d6	Gunnery d6	Armaments 0	Cultures 0	Alertness d4	Coercion d4	Compulsion 0
Endurance d4	Piloting d8	Computers 0	Medicine 0	Discernment d4	Deception d4	Focus 0
Fighting d4	Shooting d6	Robots 0	Sciences 0	Discipline d4	Leadership d4	Projection 0
Starblade 0	Stealth d8	Machinery d6	Tactics 0	Survival 0	Negotiation d8	Sense 0

ALIEN COPILOT, BESTIAL BUT ENDEARING

The alien copilot's species has a maximum Strength score of d12+2, which reduces his starting stat raises by one.

Str d12	Dex d6	Tech d6	Know d4	Wis d4	Cha d4	Power d4
Athletics d8	Gunnery d6	Armaments d4	Cultures 0	Alertness d4	Coercion d4	Compulsion 0
Endurance d10	Piloting d6	Computers 0	Medicine 0	Discernment d4	Deception 0	Focus 0
Fighting d10	Shooting d6	Robots d6	Sciences 0	Discipline 0	Leadership 0	Projection 0
Starblade 0	Stealth 0	Machinery d4	Tactics 0	Survival d4	Negotiation 0	Sense 0

REBEL PRINCESS

The rebel princess' starting Power is much lower than later events may reveal.

Str d4	Dex d6	Tech d6	Know d6	Wis d6	Cha d10	Power d4
Athletics 0	Gunnery 0	Armaments 0	Cultures d6	Alertness d4	Coercion d6	Compulsion 0
Endurance 0	Piloting 0	Computers d4	Medicine 0	Discernment d6	Deception d8	Focus 0
Fighting d4	Shooting d6	Robots 0	Sciences 0	Discipline d6	Leadership d10	Projection 0
Starblade 0	Stealth d4	Machinery 0	Tactics d6	Survival 0	Negotiation d6	Sense 0

Overcoming Challenges

Picking up the dice in *Rebellion* should always create tension and suspense. Having to roll to overcome a challenge means there are significant repercussions for failure. If failure doesn't change the situation, don't roll. Just describe it.

SETTING THE STAKES

Failing to overcome a challenge should mean a serious setback, but it should rarely mean total loss. It could mean something that seems disastrous, such as capture by enemies. But there will be chances later for escape, for rescue, for gaining important information—for adventure!

The GM knows the most about the secrets and potential events of the game, so the GM decides what happens with success or failure. That puts a heavy responsibility on the GM to keep things fair. The players should not feel unfairly surprised by the consequences of failure. Surprised, often! But never *unfairly* surprised.

If the players feel the consequences came out of nowhere or unwarranted, the GM must take a moment to think it through. If it turns out that the players have a point—and they usually do—then the GM should reduce the consequences. Experienced players and GMs may know this process so well that it's intuitive. New GMs should communicate often with the players to make sure the stakes feel right.

Not everything should go the players' way! The risks of failure, catastrophe, and death are what make *Rebellion* characters heroes. But when disaster strikes, the players should feel it's justified even as they bemoan their characters' misfortune.

ROLLING TO SUCCEED

When the rules say to make a skill roll to overcome a challenge, that means roll the skill die and its stat die. For example, making a **Piloting** roll means rolling the Piloting skill die plus the die for Piloting's stat, Dexterity.

In most cases, you need to roll 6 or higher to overcome a challenge that's worth rolling for. If your stat and skill dice are too low to possibly succeed, find another way!

<i>Roll</i>	<i>Performance</i>
1–4	Clumsy
5–6	Not bad
7–8	Challenging
9–10	Impressive
11–12	Most impressive
13 or higher	Astonishing

ADVANTAGE AND DISADVANTAGE

Rebellion assumes that your hero is doing everything possible to succeed. But if circumstances are exceptionally good or bad, the GM might say you have advantage or disadvantage with your roll.

- *Advantage* means you roll the stat die twice and keep its best result.
- *Disadvantage* means you roll the stat die twice and keep its worst result.

If you have a source of advantage and a source of disadvantage, they cancel each other out. Roll normally.

In rare cases, you might have more than one source of advantage or disadvantage. For each source, roll the stat die another time and keep its single best or worst result.

OVERCOMING OPPONENTS

When your hero attempts to overcome an NPC in a challenge, or an NPC attempts to overcome you, only you roll dice. Each NPC has stats—Strength, Dexterity, Technology, and so on—that determine the number you must roll to overcome them. NPC stats are not dice but static numbers.

<i>Opponent Description</i>	<i>Expertise</i>
Weak	2–3
Amateur	4–5
Skilled	6–7
Advanced	8–9
Expert	10–11
Master	12–13

If you face opponents who have different stat ratings, roll against the highest expertise among them.

If your side is outnumbered by opponents, the enemy's expertise increases.

<i>Outnumbered</i>	<i>Expertise Modifier</i>
Less than 2:1	+1
2:1 or more	+2
3:1 or more	+3
4:1 or more	+4
5:1 or more	+5
<i>and so on</i>	

EXAMPLE: You are trying to sneak past an imperial trooper. That requires a **Stealth** roll against the opponent's Wisdom expertise. The trooper's Wisdom is 5. To sneak past, you must roll 5 or higher with **Stealth**. If there are three troopers, you still make only one roll, but you add +3 to their expertise because they outnumber you 3:1. That means you must roll 8 or higher.

SAMPLE OPPONENTS

Opponent	Str	Dex	Tech	Know	Wis	Cha	Pow
Desert raider	7	5	5	5	7	5	3
Belligerent thug	6	7	7	5	5	5	3
Imperial trooper	6	6	6	5	5	5	3
Bounty hunter	7	7	7	5	7	5	3
Imperial Darklord, more machine than man	12	7	9	9	9	9	13

COOPERATION

When heroes work together to overcome the same challenge, each of them attempts a roll. Some challenges can be overcome if only one hero succeeds, making cooperation very powerful. Others require the heroes to succeed separately, which increases the risk.

- **One Success:** If at least one hero succeeds, they overcome the challenge. *Example:* All the heroes are on the lookout for trouble. If at least one of them succeeds at **Alertness**, all are alerted.
- **More Successes Than Failures:** An extended challenge may require every hero to roll. If their successes outnumber their failures, they succeed as a group. *Example:* Combat. If too many heroes fail, then the group as a whole must flee.
- **All Must Succeed:** An especially fraught and difficult challenge requires all heroes to succeed. *Example:* Escaping pursuit, where those who fail must be left behind unless the rest turn and fight.

A SAMPLE CHALLENGE: PURSUIT

To escape pursuers or catch a target while on foot or riding a beast, make an **Athletics** roll against your opponent's Strength expertise. To escape pursuers or catch a target while in a vehicle, make a **Piloting** roll against your opponent's Dexterity expertise. If the roll fails, your opponent catches you or escapes.

In an extended race, or if the quarry has an extensive lead, the pursuer may need two more successes than failures to win or catch up.

Obstacles, pushing your mount or vehicle beyond its limits, exhaustion, and other complications can come up as described in "Perseverance and Complications."

Hope and Hate

Every hero can gain Hope points and Hate points. Hope points and Hate points are not directed at specific causes, allies, or enemies. They reflect a hero's general outlook. It's not uncommon for a hero to have both Hope points and Hate points.

No character can have more than 5 Hate points or 5 Hope points.

PERSEVERANCE AND COMPLICATIONS

If you fail a roll, you can spend a point of Hope or Hate to persevere and try to turn the failure around. This lets you try again but at heightened risk.

You can also spend a point of Hope or Hate to inspire or push an ally, allowing them to persevere at heightened risk if they wish. The ally makes the choice.

- *You can spend Hope* only when attempting to *help or protect* someone. You can spend Hope when attacking a foe only in order to save yourself or someone else.
- *You can spend Hate* only when attempting to *hurt* someone.

Perseverance ends the scene of the challenge, pursuit, or combat and continues the struggle in a new one. The GM and players should add one or two new elements and details to show how the scene has changed.

Perseverance is risky. If the new roll fails, you suffer a complication even beyond what was originally at stake. For the nature of the blowback, work with the GM to draw on the details of the setting and the action that's already been described. You might get hurt, your starfighter might get crippled, you may temporarily lose an irreplaceable weapon or have a replaceable one destroyed, and so on.

Describe the way the scene changes and moves forward as the risks and consequences rise.

For sample complications, roll 1d6:

SAMPLE COMPLICATIONS

1d6	Complication
1	Injury (see "Injuries")
2	Vehicle, tool, or weapon damaged, temporarily disabled, lost, or destroyed
3	Attention drawn from more enemies
4	NPC allies lose hope
5	Strain: suffer disadvantage with Strength or Dexterity (50% chance of either) for a few hours
6	Frustration: suffer disadvantage with Wisdom or Charisma (50% chance of either) for a few hours

RECOVERING HOPE AND HATE

Spent Hope points and Hate points return after you have a pause in the action to reflect on events. Play out a scene or conversation that explores what you've lost or risked.

THE POWER OF ATTACHMENT

When emotional attachments come into play (see "Emotional Attachments"), Hope and Hate are especially powerful. When you spend a point of Hope or Hate to persevere where an emotional attachment is at stake, you have a choice. You can spend the point normally, recovering it later. Or you can draw on your deepest reserves. You can put the point at permanent risk by bidding it.

If you bid a permanent point of Hope or Hate, add your Power stat die to the new roll that you gain through perseverance. If the new roll succeeds, you can recover the point of Hope or Hate as usual. If the new roll fails, you permanently lose the point that you bid.

Such desperate efforts are often transformative events.

GAINING OR LOSING HOPE OR HATE

Emotionally transformative events often affect Hope and Hate.

- A triumph of courage and goodwill, such as completing a galaxy-changing campaign, might increase your Hope by a point.

- An inspiring victory over strife and anger, such as coming to peace with an old foe, might reduce your Hate by a point.
- Committing an act of profound cruelty or betrayal might increase your Hate by a point.
- Deep grief and anger may cause you to gain a point of Hate unless you temporarily spend a point of Hope.

At the GM's discretion, an especially powerful transformative event might transform a character even more profoundly, changing all Hope to Hate or vice versa. A villain inspired to embrace love and die saving a hero might have all Hate points changed to Hope, finding redemption in death. A hero driven mad by grief might have all Hope points changed to Hate, becoming a villain driven by bitter fury.

You can also gain a new point of Hope or Hate through gradual experience. (See "Experience Points" for details.)

ATTACKING HOPE OR HATE

A character can deliberately try to reduce another character's Hope or Hate points. Attacking Hope or Hate could take the form of convincing the other character of the futility of their goodwill or their rage. Attacking Hate could mean convincing the other character of the futility of anger and showing the value of love and kindness.

Attacking Hope or Hate is a struggle between **Coercion** (for attacking Hope) or **Negotiation** (for attacking Hate) and an NPC's Wisdom, or an NPC's Charisma against a hero's **Discipline**. If it succeeds, the targeted character temporarily loses a point of Hope or Hate, as if having spent it.

Play out this conversation with as much detail and pathos as you can. If a player makes an especially compelling case, grant advantage to their roll.

SPIRITUAL BALANCE

A character who has 5 Hope points and no Hate is in harmony with the universe. The character gains a +1 bonus to every roll attempting to help or protect someone. The character can no longer gain Hate points nor take actions that might incur Hate points. Their Hope score can drop below 5 only due to a painfully transformative event.

TWISTED EVIL

A character who has 5 Hate points and no Hope becomes consumed by hatred and cruelty. The character gains a +1 bonus to every roll attempting to hurt someone. The character can no longer gain Hope points nor take actions that might incur Hope points. Their Hate score can drop below 5 only due to a

redemptively transformative event. A hero who reaches such a state is no longer a hero and becomes an NPC. If the player agrees, such a fallen hero could become a villain pursuing the heroes, their former friends.

NPC HOPE AND HATE

Particularly important NPCs may have Hope and/or Hate points. An NPC can spend a point of Hope or Hate to force you to reroll a successful roll. If you succeed again, they suffer blowback or a complication in addition to the expected consequences of your success.

An NPC who has an emotional attachment with a hero can desperately bid a point of Hope or Hate forcing that hero to reroll. Add half the NPC's Power expertise (rounded up) to the expertise that the hero must overcome. If the hero's new roll fails, the NPC can recover the Hope or Hate as usual. If the hero's new roll succeeds, the NPC loses the bid point permanently.

Destiny

Currents of mysterious power in the universe sometimes move to preserve heroes from untimely death. That is represented by Destiny points. Each hero starts with one Destiny point. If the hero dies, spending a Destiny point saves a character's life in some imaginative way that the GM and player decide. A spent Destiny point never returns.

Extraordinarily important NPCs may have Destiny points.

A hero might gain a new Destiny point by accomplishing some major, life-changing goal, such as at the climax of a major campaign.

Wealth and Equipment

Heroes typically start off with a few key pieces equipment. They often find other useful things along the way, but sometimes they must buy or barter for what they need.

Each hero has a Wealth rating from 1 to 5. Most start at 2. The higher the Wealth rating, the more money the hero has ("imperial credits" are the usual currency) and the better the hero lives. Describe the hero's lifestyle, clothes, and accommodations accordingly.

<i>Wealth</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>A Worrying Amount</i>	<i>A Shocking Amount</i>
1	Scavenger	5 credits	50 credits
2	Struggling	20 credits	200 credits

3	Getting by	100 credits	1,000 credits
4	Prosperous	600 credits	6,000 credits
5	Rich	4,000 credits	40,000 credits

PURCHASES

Weapons and pieces of equipment have Value ratings. When you buy or trade for a piece of equipment and the GM says Wealth comes into play, compare your Wealth rating with the item's Value rating.

- **Lower Than Wealth:** If the item's Value rating is lower than your Wealth rating, you can easily afford it.
- **Equal to Wealth:** If the item's Value rating equals your Wealth, you can just barely afford it. If you buy it, your Wealth rating drops by 1 until the end of the adventure.
- **One Higher Than Wealth:** If the item's Value is one point higher than your Wealth, you can afford it only by drawing on all your resources. If you buy it, your Wealth rating drops by 1 permanently.
- **More:** If the item's Value is two or more points higher than your Wealth, you cannot afford it at all.

SAMPLE EQUIPMENT

Value 1	Value 2	Value 3	Value 4	Value 5
Flashlight	Water breather	Ship's passage, cheap	Ship's passage, typical	Ship's passage, luxurious
	Atmosphere mask	Thermal cloak	Space suit (<i>Heavy</i>)	Robot, expensive
	First aid kit	Survival kit (<i>Heavy</i>)	Armor	
	Comms link	Comms link, long-range	Electrobinoculars	
	Climbing kit	Holographic messenger	Security kit (<i>Heavy</i>)	
		Tool kit (<i>Heavy</i>)	Comms security kit	
		Medical kit (<i>Heavy</i>)	Communications jammer (<i>Heavy</i>)	
		Jet pack (<i>Heavy</i>)	Robot, typical	
		Robot, cheap		

COMBAT EQUIPMENT

Value 1	Value 2	Value 3	Value 4	Value 5
Club	Slugthrower pistol	Blaster pistol	Armor	Autoblaster (<i>Heavy</i>)
Knife	Grenade	Ion blaster	Blaster carbine or rifle	Disruptor rifle (<i>Heavy</i>)
Sling	Stun grenade	Slugthrower carbine or rifle	Disruptor pistol	Rocket launcher (<i>Heavy</i>)
	Bow	Flamethrower	Large grenade	
	Crossbow	Electrostaff	Explosive charge or mine	
		Vibroblade		

HEAVY EQUIPMENT

Some pieces of equipment are labeled “Heavy.” You can carry only one heavy item at a time.

OTHER LIMITATIONS

Robots cannot be carried as equipment. You can generally carry no more than one two-handed weapon at a time, such as a bow, crossbow, carbine, or rifle. Grenades and pistols are small but weighty. The GM and players should use common sense when it comes to carrying equipment.

COMBINING RESOURCES

If a few heroes—three to six, say—combine resources, their effective Wealth rating for a purchase is one higher than the lowest Wealth among them.

RICH REWARDS

For a reward after a rich score, the GM can say that every hero’s Wealth rating increases to 4 or even 5. A hero already at that level goes up one level, to a maximum of 5.

MAINTENANCE AND TRADE

When heroes fly a starship around the galaxy, the costs and trouble of keeping the ship fueled and maintained are not a matter for player bookkeeping but for the GM to work into adventures. A difficult or valuable cargo pickup, a scramble to refuel and refit the ship, or a need for costly and unexpected repairs is a challenge for the heroes to overcome in play. The GM can and should use big numbers for the

sound of authenticity (“Fifty thousand credits! That’s robbery!”), but the heroes’ skills and difficult choices are what’s most important.

Experience Points (XP)

Heroes gain experience points (XP) in play. You can spend them to improve stats and skills and to gain Hope and Hate.

GAINING XP

You gain XP at the end of each game session. The GM decides how many XP to award.

- *You gain 1 XP if you accomplished little.* This should be unusual, but it may happen if the players are unfocused or waste a lot of time.
- *You gain 2 XP if you made significant efforts toward an important goal.* This should represent most game sessions.
- *You gain 3 XP if you achieved an important, long-term goal.* This should be unusual, occurring maybe once every three or four game sessions.

SPENDING XP

You can spend XP only during a very long break in the action—typically between campaigns—or in a moment of reflection after a transformative event.

Improvement	XP Cost	Examples
Raise a stat by one die type	The stat’s new value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 XP to go from d4 to d6• 8 XP to go from d6 to d8
Raise a skill by one die type	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 XP to go from d4 to d6• 2 XP to go from d6 to d8
Gain 1 Hope or 1 Hate	The new Hope or Hate score. <i>(But the cost of raising Hope is doubled if Hope is currently lower than Hate.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 to go from 0 to 1• 2 to go from 1 to 2

Emotional Attachments

In *Rebellion*, the conflicts of the galaxy are driven by the conflicts of the heart: humility against ambition, charity against greed, kindness against ruthlessness, courage against fear, and love against hatred or selfish apathy.

Emotional attachments are sources of strength and of pain. They amplify the powers of both hope and hate. They help characters grow and improve. And they sometimes lead to transformative events that change a hero forever.

Your hero can have as few or as many emotional attachments as you want. List each on the character sheet with the other character's name and the nature of the attachment.

An emotional attachment could be romantic, familial, or a profound bond of friendship. The nature of an attachment is often clear and obvious. But characters could have an attachment that is ambiguous despite its power. Or they might have a mutual attachment that one or neither of them is willing to admit.

A player's hero is subject to an emotional attachment only if the player agrees. That is an iron-clad rule of *Rebellion*. A player decides whether their hero has an emotional attachment to another character. And a player decides whether their hero can be subject to an emotional attachment by another hero or by an NPC.

EMOTIONAL CONFLICTS

Many *Rebellion* adventures feature scenes of emotional conflict. A scene of emotional conflict is based around some thorny dilemma that stands between two characters who have an emotional attachment. Emotional conflicts often have more impact between heroes who have been through adventures together than those who are new to the players.

During the scene, play out how each character tries to resolve the conflict, or perhaps how they try to maintain the conflict to avoid changing or complicating the relationship.

Whether the characters resolve the conflict or not is never a matter for dice-rolling. It is up to the players involved, or the GM for an NPC's part. Play out whether and how the characters overcome the obstacles or what keeps them apart.

The effects depend on whether the heroes resolve the conflict. Either way, the attachment remains and it may grow deeper, if the players and GM agree.

- **Resolved:** If the players and GM agree that the conflict has been resolved or the obstacle has been overcome, each hero involved gains one extra point of Hope until the end of the adventure. This temporary Hope point does not affect Hate or count toward the 5-point maximum. The next time the hero spends Hope, they spend the temporary point and it does not return.
- **Not Resolved:** If they do not overcome the obstacle, each hero involved gains a bonus of 1 XP at the end of the game session, up to a maximum of 3 XP. For more about XP, see “Experience Points.”
- **Partially Resolved:** If one character thinks they have overcome the obstacle but the other knows they have not, the happily confused hero gains a temporary Hope point and the other gains XP.

EXAMPLE: Two heroes have a scene of emotional conflict. The players both have agreed their heroes share mutual attraction, but one player says her hero refuses to admit it. As they play the scene out, one character’s arrogance infuriates the other, and they do not resolve the conflict. Each gains a bonus of 1 XP, up to a maximum gain of 3 XP for the session.

TRANSFORMATIVE EVENTS

Adventures change us. A hero who experiences a major, transformative event gains the opportunity to change and improve dramatically during an adventure. See the sections “Hope and Hate,” “Experience Points,” and “Power” for the impacts of transformative events.

Transformative events come along infrequently. An event is transformative if it has an emotional impact that is obvious to everyone at the table. If it’s not obvious to everyone that an event is transformative, then it isn’t.

In the dangerous world of *Rebellion*, the most common kind of transformative event is witnessing the unexpected death someone with whom a hero has an emotional attachment, at the hands of an enemy or by self-sacrifice. Killing a loved one by your own hands or actions, accidentally or not, is also transformative but in a darker way.

Combat

Rebellion resolves fights as quick action scenes, not as blow-by-blow recreations. A *Rebellion* fight should be fast and intense.

In combat, you typically make a **Fighting, Shooting, Gunnery, or Starblade** roll, depending on your weapon. In most cases, you must roll equal to or higher than the enemy’s Strength expertise in melee combat or their Dexterity expertise in ranged combat. The GM may specify another enemy stat that must

be overcome. If your roll succeeds, you may have hurt or killed some of the enemies or driven them back. If your roll fails, you are forced back by the danger.

EXAMPLE: You are in a shootout with an imperial trooper whose Dexterity expertise is 6. That requires a **Shooting** roll. You roll 3 on your Dexterity die and 2 on your Shooting die, for a total of 5. This is too dangerous! You must flee or be captured.

Describe the action. What does it look like, sound like, and feel like when NPCs attack and when each hero fights back? Revel in exciting details and the suspense of the threats that face the heroes.

Most often, the GM describes the environment, how the fight begins, and what the enemies are trying to do. Then the players take turns describing how their heroes are fighting back and rolling for the results. The players and GM going back and forth gives a sense of the swaying tides of combat.

- **Success:** If more players succeed than fail, all enemies are slain, captured, or forced to flee.
- **Failure:** If not enough players succeed, you and all allies are forced to flee, or are captured if there's nowhere to flee. If you have NPC allies, they may be hurt or killed—that's up the GM. If your combat roll would have succeeded but for the opponents' numbers, you might take out some of the foes before ultimately losing the fight.

SEIZING ADVANTAGE

At the GM's discretion, you may be able to use a noncombat skill to help your side in a combat scene. You could attempt **Athletics** to gain the high ground; **Tactics** to organize allies in an ambush, assault, or defense; **Deception** to trick your foe; **Survival** to take the fight into an environment that has threats of its own that only you know; or some other gambit.

Describe your effort and how it could tilt the odds in your favor—and how it adds risk and could backfire on you. The other players and the GM describe how the other heroes and NPCs respond.

If your noncombat roll succeeds, you gain advantage on your combat roll. If your noncombat roll fails, you incur disadvantage on your combat roll.

PERSEVERANCE IN COMBAT

If you fail a combat roll, you can decide to fight on instead of retreating or surrendering, as described in "Perseverance and Complications." A frequent complication from persevering in combat is suffering an injury. See "Injuries" for details.

Remember that perseverance ends one combat scene and begins a new one as the battle continues. Perseverance is the difference between a short skirmish and an epic duel—especially when a hero faces an

NPC enemy who can spend Hate to persevere, too. The hero's attempts to overcome the enemy, and the enemy's attempts to thwart the hero, may carry a battle back and forth through many shifting scenes, and complications and injuries, until one or the other runs out of Hope or Hate and must live or die with a final failure.

ENCOUNTER RANGE

Many *Rebellion* combats happen at such close quarters that the effective range of weapons is irrelevant. As the players and GM describe an action scene, they can rely on the details and common sense to decide whether a weapon is at a particular disadvantage or can be used at all. If you need details on weapon ranges, use the "Weapon Ranges" table and these definitions.

- *Standard*: Make an ordinary combat roll.
- *Disadvantage*: Roll with disadvantage.
- *Ineffective*: Attacking is useless.

WEAPON RANGES

Weapon	"Close" (up to 20 m)	"Near" (21-50 m)	"Far" (51-300 m)
Unarmed or melee weapon	Standard	Ineffective	Ineffective
Flamethrower	Standard	Ineffective	Ineffective
Grenade	Standard	Standard	Ineffective
Sling	Standard	Standard	Disadvantage
Bow or crossbow	Standard	Standard	Disadvantage
Blaster, disruptor, or slugthrower pistol; or ion blaster	Standard	Disadvantage	Ineffective
Blaster or slugthrower carbine	Standard	Standard	Disadvantage
Blaster, disruptor, or slugthrower rifle	Standard	Standard	Standard
Autoblaster	Standard	Standard	Standard
Rocket launcher	Standard	Standard	Standard
Starship turret	Standard	Standard	Standard

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

The *Rebellion* combat rules assume that each combatant is taking cover, providing covering fire for friends, and otherwise doing everything they can to defeat the enemy. If the circumstances are unusually good or bad for your side—one side has plenty of cover but the enemy is out in the open, for example—apply advantage or disadvantage to your roll, or a more limited bonus of ± 1 or ± 2 .

Here are some examples. Feel free to change them or invent your own.

Area Weapons: Attacking with an explosive or other heavy weapon grants a +2 bonus to your **Shooting** or **Gunnery** roll. An NPC with an area weapon adds +2 to their Dexterity expertise. In close quarters, area weapons damage structures and technology, and put everyone nearby at risk. The GM determines whether such blowback applies only as a consequence of perseverance, or even with a successful combat roll.

Armed vs. Unarmed: If you're unarmed and fighting armed opponents, your **Fighting** roll has disadvantage.

Dual Weapons: If you attack with a weapon in each hand, each of your dice is limited to the lower of your stat or skill die. Add +1 to your combat roll. If you inflict an injury on an important foe, add +1 to the injury roll.

Gunnery Weapons: If you attack with a heavy weapon like an autoblaster or a starship turret, roll **Gunnery** instead of **Shooting**.

Stun Weapons: Many blasters (but not autoblasters) can be set to “stun.” An electrostaff delivers a charge that stuns but is not lethal unless applied for five seconds continuously. A stun weapon has the usual chance to incapacitate the target according to its injury roll. But it can leave the target no more than battered unless deliberately applied for an extended time.

Unsteady Environments: Heroes may be at disadvantage to combat rolls if they are on the back of a speeder in a rocking, twisting chase or on the deck of a starship that is falling apart beneath them.

STARBLADES

Starblades are the traditional weapons of the monkish psychic warriors called Starknights. The Starknights were dedicated to protecting ordinary people of all cultures and species, but were hunted to seeming extinction by the galactic empire.

A starblade is an electronic hilt that can emit a sword-blade of brilliant energy. A force field contains the blade's sun-hot plasma but lets matter in to be burned away. Starblades are extraordinarily rare. Each is hand-crafted by a combination of technical and psychic skills using exotic and invaluable materials that

have, like the Starknights themselves, been hunted and consumed by the empire. Obtaining one is not a matter of a purchase but a quest.

A starblade burns through nearly any matter, so it cannot be parried except by another starblade or by an electrostaff (which emits its own energy shield). There are legends of ancient swords infused with exotic materials that can withstand starblade energies, but those seem to be even rarer than starblades.

- If you wield a starblade against a foe who is wielding an unprotected melee weapon, you gain advantage with your **Starblade** roll.
- If you wield an unprotected melee weapon against a foe who is wielding a starblade, you suffer disadvantage with your **Fighting** roll.

EXTENDED BATTLES

Some battles are so large that the heroes face multiple fight scenes, one building to the next and affecting its odds and consequences. It's crucial for the GM to recognize that requiring multiple successful combat rolls increases the odds of overall failure. Such an extended battle should be a harrowing and uncommon event, usually reserved for the climax of a multi-adventure campaign.

Injuries

When heroes overcome ordinary NPCs or see ordinary NPC allies fall, do not roll for the details. The GM and players should describe it according to the circumstances and how well the heroes rolled. But if a hero or important NPC is injured, make a roll according to the weapon or threat.

Roll	Injury	Effects
2-4	Battered	Everyone can tell you've been in a rough fight.
5-8	Wounded	All your actions are at disadvantage. You must make an Endurance roll at 7 or higher or be incapacitated. Further wound rolls are at +1 per previous instance of being wounded or maimed.
9-12	Maimed	All your actions are at disadvantage. You must make an Endurance roll at 11 or higher or be incapacitated. You are likely to die if not treated. You may suffer permanent harm that must be addressed with a prosthetic. Further injury rolls are at +1 per previous instance of being wounded or maimed.
13 or higher	Dying	Incapacitated. Certain to die if not treated.

WEAPONS AND THREATS

The more dangerous the weapon or threat, the larger its injury roll.

Injury Roll	Melee Weapons	Ranged Weapons	Other Threats
d4+1	Unarmed	Thrown rock	Moderate
2d4	Club	Sling	
2d4+1	Knife or large club	Bow, crossbow, slugthrower pistol or carbine	Dangerous
2d6	Sword, axe, spear, or vibroknife	Blaster, slugthrower rifle, ion blaster (robots only)	
2d6+1	Vibrolance or electrostaff	Grenade (area), disruptor pistol, flamethrower (area)	Deadly
2d8	Starblade	Autoblaster (area), disruptor rifle, large grenade (area), rocket launcher (area)	
2d8+1		Starship turret (area)	Catastrophic

ARMOR

Armor downgrades an injury result by one level: from dying to maimed, maimed to wounded, or wounded to battered. You can decide whether your armor applies to a particular injury.

Armor can be used three times before it is weakened and does no more good until it is repaired. Armor that includes life support functions can protect you only twice.

Wearing armor is constricting and distracting. It limits all your skill dice to a maximum value of d6.

Uniquely well-made armor may impose less of a limit to skills or may be more durable. Obtaining such armor ought to be the objective of an adventure or even a campaign, never merely a transaction in a market.

SIDEKICKS

If you have a loyal NPC sidekick such as a robot, pet, or buddy who is always with you, you can decide that an injury affects them instead of you. The GM can veto this decision if they decide the sidekick is not nearby or not willing. If this kills a beloved NPC, it may be a transformative event that requires you to either spend a point of Hope or gain a point of Hate.

INCAPACITATION

An incapacitated character can take no actions and can use no stats or skills. The character is probably unconscious, but might be able to whisper a few words before passing out. The character recovers from incapacitation after the combat scene.

RECUPERATION

A battered hero recovers in a few days. No treatment is required.

With advanced medical treatment, it takes a few days to recover one injury level: dying to maimed, maimed to wounded, or wounded to battered.

Outside a modern medical facility, recovery requires the hero to make an **Endurance** roll once every few days. The roll must be at least 5 if the hero is wounded, 7 if maimed, or 9 if dying. If the hero is maimed and the roll fails, the hero's injuries worsen to "dying." If the hero is dying and the roll fails, the hero dies. If the hero is under the treatment of another hero, success with the **Medicine** skill (with the same difficulty numbers) offsets a failed **Endurance** roll, allowing the injured hero to recover.

Ship Combat

These rules regard small-scale starships, not capital ships like cruisers and destroyers. You can use the same rules for combat between ground vehicles of equivalent scales.

- *Light Ship*: a fighter, shuttle, speeder, or light bomber, up to about 15 meters long
- *Medium Ship*: a freighter or bomber, up to about 50 meters long
- *Heavy Ship*: a heavy freighter or corvette, up to about 150 meters long

HERO PILOTING AND GUNNERY

A hero in ship combat rolls either **Piloting** or **Gunnery**, whichever is worse. The hero must roll a number equal to the opponent's Dexterity expertise or higher.

- *Success*: The enemy is destroyed, disabled, or forced to flee.
- *Failure*: The hero is forced to flee—unless the hero perseveres to get another chance. This works the same as in "Perseverance in Combat," but failure inflicts damage to the hero's ship.

If the heroes's ship allows gunners, other heroes can make **Gunnery** rolls against the enemies and the pilot can choose to roll **Piloting** if that skill is better than **Gunnery**. If more players succeed at their combat rolls than fail, the enemy is destroyed, disabled, or forced to flee.

If a hero is trying only to escape without shooting back, the hero rolls **Piloting**. The GM decides whether that can let the hero get away.

Heroes in ship combat can use other skills to gain advantages and can persevere through failure, as in ordinary combat.

OPPONENT PILOTING AND GUNNERY

An opponent ship with a co-pilot adds +1 to its Dexterity expertise for piloting.

If the opponent ship has a gunner, the hero rolls against the opponents' Dexterity expertise for either piloting or gunnery, whichever is best.

An opponent's ship with more than one gunner can add a bonus for outnumbering the heroes, if its gunners outnumber the heroes.

SHIP STATS

Starships have a few stats of their own.

Piloting Potential: The maximum Dexterity die that the pilot can use when maneuvering. If the ship is piloted by an NPC opponent of the heroes, the value of this die determines the opponent's maximum Dexterity expertise for piloting. The NPC's actual expertise may be lower.

Co-Pilot: Having a co-pilot with at least d4 in **Piloting** adds +1 to the pilot's **Piloting** rolls.

Minimum Crew: A ship can be flown with only half its minimum crew but **Piloting** rolls are at disadvantage.

Gunnery Potential: The maximum Dexterity die that gunners can use when attacking. If the gun is fired by an NPC opponent of the heroes, the value of this die determines the opponent's maximum Dexterity expertise for combat. The NPC's actual expertise may be lower.

Gunner Capacity: The maximum number of gunners that can attack with ship's weapons.

Gunnery Damage: The damage inflicted to another ship by the ship's guns.

Bomb or Torpedo Capacity: The number of torpedoes or bombs a ship can launch. Bombs and torpedoes can hit a non-capital ship only if it is disabled, in which case they do 2d10 damage.

Collision Damage: The damage the ship inflicts by colliding with another ship, unless the collision was glancing or at very low speed. (Use the other ship’s collision damage to determine damage to yours.) Deliberately colliding with another ship requires beating its pilot’s Dexterity expertise with a **Piloting** roll.

Defenses: The maximum number of times the ship can use its defenses to resist damage.

Ship Qualities	Light Ship	Medium Ship	Heavy Ship
Piloting Potential	d8 to d12	d6 to d10	d4 to d8
Co-Pilot?	No	Yes	Yes
Minimum Crew	1	2	6
Gunnery Potential	d6 to d12	d6 to d12	d6 to d12
Gunner Capacity	0-1	0-6	0-6
Gunnery Damage	2d4 to 2d6	2d4 to 2d8	2d6 to 2d8
Bomb or Torpedo Capacity	0-2	0-6	0 to hundreds
Collision Damage	2d8	2d10	2d12
Defenses	0-1	2-6	3-9

SHIP DAMAGE

If your ship is damaged, make a roll according to the attacker’s gunnery damage or collision damage.

Roll	Damage	Effects
2-4	Battered	Everyone can tell the ship has been in a rough fight.
5-8	Damaged	All your maneuvers and attacks are at disadvantage. Further damage rolls are at +1 per previous instance of being damaged or disabled.
9-12	Disabled	The ship is totally disabled. It cannot maneuver or attack. Further damage rolls are at +1 per previous instance of being damaged or disabled.
13 or higher	Burning	Certain to explode soon. Get out!

SHIP DEFENSES & SIDEKICKS

A ship’s defenses represent shields and/or sheer mass. Each use of a ship’s defenses reduces a damage result by one category, such as from Burning to Disabled or from Damaged to Battered.

If you have a loyal NPC sidekick such as a robot, pet, or buddy who is always with you, you can decide that they are maimed (as if suffering an injury with a roll of 9–12) when your ship is damaged. That reduces the damage to the ship by one category. The GM can veto this decision if they decide the sidekick is not nearby or not willing.

Power

The Power stat indicates a character's potential to master psychic abilities.

No Power skill can be attempted without having at least a d4 in the skill.

After you succeed at a roll with a Power skill (or activate a Power skill that does not require a roll), your Power rating drops by one die type. It returns to full strength after you have a few hours to rest and/or meditate.

NPC POWER

An NPC using a Power skill does not roll. The effect is the same as with a roll equal to the NPC's Power expertise. The NPC's Power expertise drops by 2 with each use of it.

COMPULSION

The **Compulsion** skill affects the perceptions and actions of other living beings. It has no effect on synthetic life forms that lack the Power stat.

Manifestation: You can create a simulacrum of yourself, visible at any distance and even through electronic sensors but only to the living. You can manifest to another character up to about 100 meters away with a roll of 5; across a city with a roll of 7; across a planet with a roll of 9; across a star system with a roll of 11; or across the galaxy with a roll of 13. If you have an emotional attachment with a character to whom you wish to manifest, you roll with advantage. If the character does not want to interact with you, you roll with disadvantage. The simulacrum lasts only a few minutes, enough for a brief conversation, and can take no complex actions. You can create a manifestation that can take complex actions or that lingers up to about an hour, but it is dangerous. After the manifestation ends, you suffer an injury. Use the number needed for your manifestation (5 for 100 meters up to 13 for across the galaxy) as the value of an injury roll.

Mind Trick: You can persuade the target of something unlikely but not impossible, or you can briefly make the target hear or see something that isn't there. To affect an NPC or resist an NPC's Mind Trick, roll **Compulsion** against the target's Power. The target must be within speaking distance.

Solace: If you roll 7 or higher, a wounded character that you touch does not suffer disadvantage to actions due to being wounded. If you roll 11 or higher, an incapacitated character that you touch can act but suffers the penalties of being wounded. This lasts a few hours if the character is resting comfortably, or a few minutes if the character is fighting or taking strenuous actions. This does not heal the injuries.

Telepathy: You can send a brief, telepathic message or image to the mind of another living creature. You can reach up to about 100 meters with a roll of 5; across a city with a roll of 7; across a planet with a roll of 9; across a star system with a roll of 11; or across the galaxy with a roll of 13. If the recipient does not want to communicate, your roll is at disadvantage. If you have an emotional attachment with the recipient, your roll is at advantage.

FOCUS

The **Focus** skill enhances your own abilities.

Enhancement: You can improve a non-Power skill in which you have at least a d4. The skill's die type changes to d6 with a roll of 5, d8 with a roll of 7, d10 with a roll of 9, d12 with a roll of 11, d12+1 with a roll of 13, d12+2 with a roll of 15, and so on. If the new die type is not an improvement, use the old die type instead. The change lasts a few minutes.

Recovery: You can meditate for a few minutes to regain Power. If your roll is higher than your current Power die type, your Power die rises by one type, up to its maximum. If the roll fails, you cannot attempt to use Focus to recover Power again until you rest or meditate for a few hours.

Starblade Forging: If you have at least d4 each in **Focus**, **Armaments**, and the **Starblade** skill, you can attempt to create a Starblade. This requires exotic materials and technology that may require a campaign to acquire. Roll for Technology or Power, whichever is lowest, and the **Starblade** skill. You must roll 9, 11, or 13, depending on the quality of materials available. The GM determines how long it takes to create a Starblade.

Starblade Mastery: If you have at least d4 each in **Focus** and the **Starblade** skill, you can activate Starblade Mastery. Activating it does not require a roll. Until the end of a combat scene, you can use either your Dexterity, Wisdom, or Charisma stat instead of Strength when making **Starblade** rolls.

PROJECTION

The **Projection** skill lets you project, absorb, or manipulate telekinetic or electrical energies.

Assault: You can make a **Projection** roll in combat to redirect harmful energies and attacks, and you can telekinetically slam, choke, or electrocute a target. You can even harm someone seen only on a viewscreen or barely in sight, but your roll is at disadvantage. You decide whether your roll harms your opponent or

simply protects you. If you cause an injury to an important character, make another **Projection** roll to determine its severity. You can limit the severity of injuries you inflict.

Dash: You can multiply your sprinting speed and leaping distance by the value of your **Projection** roll. Usually, a roll of 5 lets you sprint 100 meters or swim 20 meters in only a few seconds, take a running jump over a 30-meter chasm, or leap to the roof of a single-story building; or a roll of 10 lets you sprint 200 meters or swim 40 meters in only a few seconds, take a running jump over a 50-meter chasm, or leap to the roof of a two-story building.

Healing: By touch, you can channel and amplify energy into living cells to facilitate healing over the course of only a few minutes. Using **Projection** for Healing costs a point of Hope. You can change an injury from wounded to battered (or you can purge the character of poisons) with a roll of 11 or higher, from maimed to wounded with a roll of 13 or higher, or from dying to maimed with a roll of 15 or higher. Whether you can heal a disease depends on the nature of the disease and is up to the GM. An injured character can benefit from the use of **Projection** for healing only once until after they are fully healed.

Telekinesis: You can lift something into the air, draw it to you, or fling it away. You can lift about 1 kg with a roll of 5, about 10 kg with a roll of 7, about 100 kg with a roll of 9, about a ton with a roll of 11, or a starfighter with a roll of 13. Your reach is about 10 meters. You can extend your reach to about 100 meters but you roll with disadvantage. To pull a weapon out of an enemy's hand, overcome their Strength expertise with **Projection**.

SENSE

The **Sense** skill grants uncanny instincts, precognition, or clairvoyance.

Farsight: You can see and hear things that are otherwise blocked by distance, barriers, or time. You can sense up to about 100 meters with a roll of 5; across a city with a roll of 7; across a planet with a roll of 9; across a star system with a roll of 11; or across the galaxy, or even something that happened in the past or might happen in the future, with a roll of 13. If you are trying to sense a living creature who does not want to be sensed, your roll must beat their Power rating. If you have an emotional attachment with a creature you seek, you roll with advantage.

Life Sense: You can sense the presence of living things up to about 100 meters away with a roll of 5; across a city with a roll of 7; across a planet with a roll of 9; across a star system with a roll of 11; or across the galaxy with a roll of 13. If you have an emotional attachment with a creature that you are trying to sense, you roll with advantage. If you are trying to sense a creature who does not want to be sensed, your roll must beat their Power rating. If you roll 2 higher than you need, you can discern some details, such as the numbers or kinds of creatures. If you roll 4 higher than you need, you can discern fine details, such as specific numbers, the identities of creatures you have met before, or their locations with

enough precision to conduct combat despite blindness or darkness. As a variant of this skill, you can tune out most life forms and sense only those who possess Power skills. Another variant is using Sense not to detect life but to sense objects around you despite lack of light or sight.

Starblade Defense: If you have at least d4 with both **Sense** and the **Starblade** skill, you can activate Starblade Defense. Activating it does not require a roll. It remains in effect until the end of a combat scene. Starblade Defense has two effects, *protection* and *deflection*. **Protection:** If you suffer an injury during that combat scene, you can make a roll of Power plus either your **Sense** or **Starblade** skill, whichever is lower. If that roll equals or exceeds the injury roll, you reduce the injury's severity by one level: from dying to maimed, from maimed to wounded, or from wounded to battered. Starblade Defense can protect you from melee weapons and most ranged weapons, including blasters and lasers, but it cannot protect you from area attacks. (If an NPC uses Starblade Defense to reduce injury, compare their Power expertise to the injury roll.) **Deflection:** If enemies attack you with blasters or lasers (but not disruptors or slugthrowers), you can use your starblade to make a ranged combat roll (Power plus the lower of either **Sense** or **Starblade**) by deflecting the energy of their attacks back at them. (If an NPC uses Starblade Defense to deflect heroes' attacks back at them, compare their Power expertise to the heroes' combat rolls.)

POWER AND HATE

When you use a Power skill to kill a living creature, such as by using **Compulsion** to trick someone in a way that kills them or using **Projection** to kill a foe, you gain a point of Hate.

If your Hate points exceed your Hope points, you suffer disadvantage when using **Compulsion** to ease suffering, when using **Focus** to recover Power, when using **Projection** to heal, or when using **Sense** to sense life.

POWER AND HOPE

A character who has a Power skill, 5 Hope, and no Hate, being in harmony with the universe, is also in harmony with the currents of psychic power that suffuse the universe. The character has learned that the secret of Power is not in bending the universe to one's will but in being guided by the universe to the most possible good. The character gains advantage when using any Power skill to protect or inspire others.

After death, the consciousness of such a character might be able to linger as an insubstantial spirit, manifesting from time to time to guide, inspire, and protect someone with whom the character has an emotional attachment and who has at least a d4 in **Sense**. The lingering spirit retains Hope, Power, and Power skills, but has no physical body. Whether a spirit can linger, and for how long, and the extent to which it can interact with the world, are all up to the GM.

Adventures and Campaigns

Rebellion adventures mean thrills and action. They mean ordinary people becoming heroes, and heroes changing as a consequence of adventure. The heroes face fear, grief, and temptation. Sometimes they grow. Sometimes they die. Sometimes they succumb to grief and hatred and become the villains of another story.

All of that applies not only to individual heroes but to the heroes as a group. Whether they are a ship's crew, a commando team, a family in trouble, or a cell of rebel conspirators, the nature of the group itself changes as a consequence of its adventures and the changes to its heroes.

A *Rebellion* adventure usually takes one or two game sessions to play, or between three and six hours at a game table. You can consider the scope of the action in a single adventure as roughly equivalent to a one 30-minute TV episode (or two 20-minute episodes), two or three issues of a comic book, or one or two chapters of a novel.

At that scale, a *Rebellion* campaign of four adventures—the recommended structure—encompasses events equivalent to a full-length film or novel, a TV series of six to eight episodes, or a 12-issue run of comics.

Building an Adventure

For each adventure of a *Rebellion* campaign, invent a single setting, a few threats, and scenes that demand adventure and emotional choices. And keep things moving fast!

INSPIRATIONS

Create a *Rebellion* adventure by mixing and matching elements from the works that first inspired it.

- The plots and conflicts of samurai cinema and spaghetti westerns
- The action set pieces of World War II air battles, bomber missions, and commando raids
- The trappings and grand scale of space opera, inspired by Flash Gordon serials and epitomized in over 40 years of films, television, comics, novels, games, music, and costuming set a long time ago and in a galaxy far away

Taken together, those elements often include:

- A galactic empire that rules by vast technological and military might; when it notices its far-flung subjects, it offers only oppression and fear
- Isolated communities preyed upon by corrupt governments, warlords, slavers, bandits, and crime bosses
- Mysterious strangers on the run (usually the heroes), trying to avoid too much attention but drawn into conflicts by dint of their consciences and their dangerous skills
- Chases and desperate escapes
- Freedom fighters at risk of being wiped out
- Space warfare and interplanetary battles
- Space piracy
- Space dogfights and bombing runs, particularly when overcoming or escaping the might of the empire against desperate odds
- Risk-taking for love or kindness, sometimes despite one's better judgement
- The power of spirit, hope, trust, and courage
- Would-be allies who are paralyzed by fear
- Romance and self-sacrifice
- The heartbreaking losses that make courage so difficult and admirable

OBJECTIVE

The heroes should have one clear, important, simple objective, and it should be big. Over the course of one or two game sessions, the heroes will struggle against opposition and complications to accomplish their objective. Breaking out of an enemy stronghold—and freeing all the prisoners and slaves at the same time. Escaping bounty hunters—and saving a peace-loving world from the corrupt governor who aids them. Helping a rebel fleet escape imperial assault. Rescuing a captured friend—and bringing down the powerful crime boss who held her. Stealing a treasure from a crime lord or an imperial transport that can let you retire for life—or that can save a world from starvation. Giving a rebel leader critical data that will save the rebellion itself.

When you craft an adventure's objective, decide also what happens if the heroes fail. The story does not end! They may be driven back in defeat, their cause weakened, their allies scattered, but the next adventure waits for them to rise.

The scale and scope of a *Rebellion* adventure should be grand and impressive. If your instinct is to make the objective personal or local, think bigger and make its repercussions sweeping. The stakes of an adventure might change a world. The stakes of a multi-adventure campaign should change the galaxy.

SETTING

Set each adventure on a single world, base, or large ship. Every *Rebellion* setting and scene should be exotic and colorful, taking the players out of the everyday world. To flesh out the setting, create some mix of the following elements that you can include in scenes, ideally two or three of each.

Exotic Locations: Create distinctive sites where the scenes will play out. Make sure one or two locations are unknown to the players until their heroes discover them or are driven to them. For each, start with a real-world location that catches your interest, or pick a location from a favorite work of fiction and change it slightly to make it feel new. Change or exaggerate one or two of its features until it belongs not on our everyday world but in the fantastic *Rebellion* universe. Change the colors. Change the sounds and smells. Change the materials. Make it dangerous in some obvious way that reminds the heroes that the universe is unpredictable and unsafe. See the “Setting Elements” table for a few possibilities.

Alien Details: Create weird twists that you can insert into the exotic locations. Take mundane features that you might expect to see in the locale and start adding exotic descriptors until you have something new and surprising. See the “Setting Elements” table for a few possibilities.

Crises: Create events that will endanger the heroes and the things they value if the heroes do not investigate them and try to stop them. And for each event, think up things the heroes can discover that reveal the next threat to come. That way, success and failure alike drive the heroes further into the adventure. See the “Setting Elements” table for a few possibilities.

Environmental or Technological Difficulties: You've created the elements of an exotic, alien, dangerous setting. Now detail a few threats that put heroes' objective at risk. See the “Setting Elements” table for a few possibilities.

Means of Access and Escape: Bring together the setting's locations, critical events, and environmental or technological challenges to shape the threats or obstacles that keep the heroes from escaping to safety getting where they need to go. Each is a challenge that the heroes must overcome. If they fail, they may face capture by their enemies or damage to their ship, or they may face loss of Hope as allies are captured or killed.

Complications and Surprises: Make sure there are twists and threats that the heroes could never see coming. Look back on the locations, alien details, and challenges you have already created. Add complications or new threats that hit even when the heroes succeed in overcoming a challenge. And make sure every complication leads to another suspenseful challenge where the heroes must deal with the new, rising threat.

Interesting Characters: Every adventure needs interesting NPCs to help point the heroes toward their critical objectives, means of access and escape, and sources of information, and to either help with or incur new challenges, complications, and surprises. If the players seem stuck, have an interesting NPC, whether an ally or a rival or an enemy, show up or send them a message. See the “Setting Elements” table for a few possibilities.

Adversaries: Who or what opposes, pursues, or wants to prey upon the heroes? Invent two or three (or more) adversaries, each of them distinctive and uniquely memorable. Every threat should be dangerous, either directly or by incurring complications. A lone imperial trooper or tavern thug might be easy to overcome, but defeating them should draw attention from worse threats. Finally, pick the most dangerous adversary of the adventure and increase its size and scope beyond anything the players might expect. An imperial ground assault is a threat—a ground assault with walking tanks the size of skyscrapers is incredible!

Sources of Information: Come back to this step after you have outlined the scenes for your adventure, but do not forget it! Every challenge, whether the heroes succeed or fail, should point toward another scene or two. The players should never feel like they don’t know where to go or what to do. See “Connecting the Scenes” for more.

SETTING ELEMENTS

d12	Location	Details	Crises	Difficulties	NPC Features
1	desolate plain	ancient	compelling plea for help	dangerous atmosphere	afraid
2	choking swamp or forest	crowded	unexpected attack	technological scavengers	angry
3	endless cave or tunnel	deadly	discovery by an enemy	unknown predator	brave
4	menacing ravine	dessicated	destruction of a refuge	deadly storm	charming
5	bottomless chasm	floating	friend’s self-sacrifice	stubborn malfunction	dead or dying

d12	Location	Details	Crises	Difficulties	NPC Features
6	maze of corridors or alleys	frightening	pursuit by enemies	thieves or marauders	greedy
7	ancient ruins	glowing	suspicious encounter	hazards make flying dangerous	inspiring
8	disreputable tavern	huge	betrayal	unexpectedly lethal environment change	kind
9	starport or dock	living	it's a trap!	radiation spoils sensor readings	impatient
10	military base	reptilian	allies risk everything	spies or enemy soldiers everywhere	loyal
11	prison or detention facility	robotic	allies despairing	robots or aliens persecuted	secretive
12	rustic home with no comforts	wet	ally pursued by enemies	too little food, water, or shelter	treacherous

A SETTING EXAMPLE: ESCAPE THE ICE PLANET

An adventure features the heroes' escape from their hideout while the forces of the galactic empire descend. The setting is an ice planet. It might feature these elements:

- **Exotic Locations:** A rebel base carved out of the ice; endless snowy plains; the cave of a dangerous snow-monster
- **Alien Details:** exotic riding animals; the dangerous snow-monster; unpredictable storms due to the alien climate
- **Crises:** an apparent meteor lands with strange characteristics and must be investigated; imperial forces land and must be delayed and escaped
- **Environmental or Technological Difficulties:** a sudden storm; malfunctions in the heroes' beloved starship
- **Means of Access and Escape:** a blockade by imperial warships must be escaped; an overwhelming ground assault must be delayed so allow rebel ships can take off and the base's giant guns can distract the warships
- **Complications and Surprises:** ambush by the snow-monster; the meteor turns out to be a probe robot that attracts imperial forces

- **Sources of Information:** decoding the probe robot's signals; the spirit of a dead mentor offers guidance
- **Interesting Characters:** the spirit of a dead mentor
- **Adversaries:** the imperial probe robot; the snow monster; the huge, armored vehicles of imperial ground forces; imperial blockade ships

SCENES

The heroes will interact with the setting in a series of brief scenes. Plan for eight to ten scenes and add a couple of setting elements to each. The more scenes you can pack into a game session, the better! A good *Rebellion* game is filled with action and incident at a breathless pace.

Outline possible scenes ahead of time. If you don't happen to play one that you outlined, save it for the next adventure. Build each scene around one or two key features, threats, or characters of the setting.

There are five key types of scenes in *Rebellion* adventures. Not every adventure needs to feature every kind of scene. Some adventures feature more of one kind of scene than another. But if these are the recurring modes of action, the game will feel more like *Rebellion*.

Combat: The galaxy is a dangerous place, especially for heroes. Action-packed fight scenes are integral to the *Rebellion* brand of space opera. Make sure some in person and some are in space. Early fights should show the heroes the threats they face. Later fights should be harder as the heroes have determined to face dire threats. In each combat scene, identify one or two possible complications that can be brought into play by heroes seeking advantages and persevering through failure. *Typically requires Strength and Dexterity skills.*

Emotional Conflict: Conflicts between characters that share an emotional attachment are part of the best *Rebellion* stories. They allow characters to grow in the quiet moments of an adventure. Establish what stands between the attached characters. It must be something powerful on each side. Personal motivations, moral commitments, obligations, and duty make for the strongest conflicts. Imagine a way the adventure's overall objective might pit the characters against each other. Equally compelling scenes can be built around the question of whether an attachment even exists (star-crossed lovers often deny their feelings) or whether it should continue. See "Emotional Conflicts" for details.

Negotiation: Some NPCs must be talked, coerced, or bribed into helping the heroes, providing information that they need, or just looking the other way. *Typically requires Charisma skills.*

Pursuit: On foot, on weird alien mounts, underwater, in speeders, or in starships, a chase is a part of every good *Rebellion* adventure. The heroes may be trying to escape a foe, catch a foe, or both. *Typically requires Strength and Dexterity skills.*

Problem-Solving: A dilemma with no right answer. A tense infiltration. A puzzle with deadly consequences. A hard choice. A mechanical breakdown at the most dangerous moment. Conflicting information. An environment that challenges survival. Making do with scant resources. Such challenges keep the players in suspense. Failing to overcome them should make the next scene all the more challenging. Even better, that might make the players make impossible choices between their personal motivations and their obligations to each other and to NPCs. *Typically requires Knowledge and Technology skills.*

SCENE EXAMPLES: ESCAPE THE ICE PLANET

The escape from the ice planet might be outlined with ten scenes.

1. **Problem-Solving:** A hero searches for the meteor in the deadly wastes (using Wisdom), which leads to ambush by the snow-monster in Scene 3.
2. **Emotional Conflict:** Two heroes argue over their emotional attachment.
3. **Combat:** An ambushed hero must escape the snow monster, which leads to unexpected guidance from a dead mentor.
4. **Problem-Solving:** Another hero searches for the hero who escaped the snow monster (using Wisdom).
5. **Emotional Conflict:** The earlier conflict takes new dimensions when the rescued hero returns.
6. **Problem-Solving:** The meteor turns out to be a robot; the heroes investigate it (using Technology), fight it, and realize the empire is coming.
7. **Problem-Solving:** Some of the heroes must repair their malfunctioning ship (using Technology).
8. **Problem-Solving:** Meanwhile, another hero helps organize the defense and evacuation of the base (using Charisma).
9. **Combat:** Meanwhile, another hero battles the empire's enormous, armored vehicles to buy time for their allies to escape.
10. **Pursuit:** The heroes must escape as the empire's forces close in.

CONNECTING THE SCENES

A *Rebellion* adventure is a space opera with mythic resonance and emotional power, not a puzzle to be deciphered. Each scene must directly and obviously connect the heroes to other scenes.

Do not be subtle. What's critical is that the players choose from possible paths. The players' question should never be what their options are, but what risk they are willing to take or what sacrifice they are willing to make.

Every scene should reveal more and more information. Insert connections in the most obvious way. If the players get bogged down in debate or uncertainty, spur them along by interjecting a dangerous threat, accident, betrayal, complication, or revelation that answers their question and moves them to the next scene. A willing helper, an elderly mentor, or a total stranger might offer advice, a discovery, a reason for courage, or a means for the heroes to find their way or overcome a threat. During a battle, the heroes' adversaries may leave behind or reveal clues that answer the heroes' questions and show their path going forward.

The galaxy is vast and strange. The heroes should face wonder, mystery, and danger no matter which way they turn.

A Rebellion Campaign

The GM can build a thrilling *Rebellion* campaign with nearly any kind of structure, as long as threats and emotions rise and fall and rise again to a final, heroic crescendo. Science fiction games have proposed countless suggestions over the years.

Still, there is a particular structure to a traditional *Rebellion* campaign. It echoes the growth of heroes in certain studies of Western mythology that inspired the stories that inspired *Rebellion*. *Rebellion* does not assert whether or not those studies are valid. But campaigns built in this format are likely to evoke powerful themes and have deep emotional resonance.

A traditional *Rebellion* campaign features four short adventures that drive the heroes toward an ultimate goal of epic scope. If the heroes attain that goal, it will be a spectacular victory even if it comes with heartbreak. If they fail, it will be a spectacular tragedy.

THE CAMPAIGN GOAL

A campaign's ultimate goal is never subtle or small. A campaign goal is not just capturing a ship, it's destroying a battlestation the size of a moon. It's not just saving a life, it's saving a world—or the entire rebellion against a galactic empire. Exaggerate the action and consequences to the limits of your

imagination. The end of a *Rebellion* campaign should change the galaxy. That's what makes it worthwhile to follow the heroes through their travails.

Sample campaign goals include:

- Saving a world from invasion and enslavement.
- Uncovering the secrets of a plot to destroy the galactic republic.
- Saving the galactic republic from secret powers that want to turn it into a dictator's empire.
- Stealing a treasure that could make you and a crime boss rich for life—or that could give life to a rebellion against the galactic empire.
- Stealing secrets that could destroy the empire's ultimate weapon.
- Finding or rescuing a captured hero, and then attempt to destroy the empire's ultimate weapon.
- Helping a rebellion escape the grasp of the galactic empire.
- Attacking the galactic empire's new ultimate weapon, and confront the empire's powerful leader.

CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE: REVENGE OF THE EMPIRE

The GM builds a new campaign to follow one that the heroes played through before. In the first campaign, the heroes dealt a shattering blow to the galactic empire. In this new campaign, the empire wants revenge. The whole campaign will be about the incredible courage and resourcefulness it takes just to get away. The campaign goal is simple: *Escape the empire!* As you read further examples of how this campaign is built, watch for ways you might play out each adventure in eight to ten exciting scenes.

CAMPAIGN STRUCTURE

A *Rebellion* campaign begins with an adventure that pulls the heroes out of their ordinary lives. In the second adventure, the heroes discover the scope of the wonders and dangers ahead of them and learn of the ultimate campaign goal. In the third adventure, they experience the fullest extent of the dangers of pursuing that goal. The campaign ends in a final, heroic adventure that may change the galaxy, and that certainly changes the heroes.

ADVENTURE 1: DEPARTURE

The first adventure takes the heroes away from a stable situation—probably not pleasant, but stable. It demonstrates what normal life is like for the heroes. If the heroes are not already together, each hero

could get a very brief scene establishing their situations and what brings the heroes together. If the heroes have gone through previous adventures, the first adventure should establish how each has been changed by loss and triumph. By the end of the first adventure, the heroes enter danger and go toward the settings of later adventures.

The campaign's ultimate goal is rarely apparent in the first adventure. The heroes often begin with a different, more modest goal for the first adventure. Adventure One is about the heroes choosing whether to seek out mysteries and face dangers. The first adventure's threats may hint at what's to come, but the ultimate dangers and goal are usually a mystery to be found in Adventure Two.

The features of Adventure One include:

Home: The heroes begin in the stability and familiarity of everyday life, whatever that looks like for them. Mundane difficulties oppress them. They may feel walled in by boredom, lifeless work, culture, structure, or rising helplessness. They may be fulfilling obligations but are unable to fulfill their personal motivations. Or they may be fulfilling personal motivations but not their obligations to others.

A Call to Adventure: Surprising news, an unexpected blunder, or a sudden crisis drives the heroes to the dangerous unknown. The call to adventure promises wonders and rewards that suit the heroes' personal motivations. Great opportunities and risks are at stake. Events push or lure the heroes toward uncertain and dangerous places.

A Reason to Stay: Despite being driven by crisis and opportunity, the heroes may be confronted by compelling reasons to not heed the call. Such reasons to stay home could include contrary obligations, the risk of making new enemies, the fear of unnecessary danger, or the uncertainty of the reward. The heroes must choose to enter the adventure, but it must not be an easy choice. It means giving up things that really matter. This is especially important in the first campaign featuring new heroes, because it helps the players define what matters most to their characters. At the GM's discretion, a hero turning away from obligations to embark on an adventure may be a transformative experience that permanently costs a point of Hope.

A Helper or Mentor: A trusted friend (either an NPC or a player's hero with specific instructions from the GM) may help persuade the heroes to begin the adventure. That may mean appealing to their personal motivations or morality, assuring them of the protections (or demands) of nature and destiny, or helping them find meaning and purpose if disaster befalls their home.

A Dangerous Threshold: Having chosen to embark on the adventure, the heroes immediately enter an unfamiliar and dangerous situation. The dangers hint at other risks to come, the reasons for those risks, and the appeal of staying home after all. It must be unequivocally clear that going forward means deep uncertainty and mystery, and ultimately either change or death. They face sharp danger and escape into the mysteries of the second adventure.

Alternative First Adventure—A Second Chance: In the heroes' second or later campaign, their motivations and situations may be well established. You could replace the "Departure" adventure with a stand-alone adventure that gives the heroes a chance to redeem a failure or loss from the previous campaign. If a hero was captured or a villain escaped justice, the new campaign could open with a rescue or with confronting that villain after all.

EXAMPLE: REVENGE OF THE EMPIRE—ADVENTURE 1

"Escape the Ice Planet." The heroes' first adventure is the galactic empire's discovery of their hidden base on an ice planet. The heroes must escape and help their fellow rebels escape, too. We broke down this adventure's setting and scenes in "Building an Adventure." They are driven out of a place of stability, their hidden base. Since this is the second campaign featuring these heroes, the GM decides not to give them a compelling reason to remain in stability. This adventure is all about learning the need to escape and then getting away. The heroes are desperate to escape, but they don't yet see that escaping the empire is in fact the ultimate goal of the whole campaign, or just how far the empire will go to take its revenge.

ADVENTURE 2: INTO THE UNKNOWN

The second scenario establishes the strangeness and mysteries of the larger world outside the heroes' everyday lives. It may take place at the destination of Adventure One or on the way to the original destination. Either way, it takes place in a new setting.

Trials and Challenges: The heroes encounter unexpected wonders and dangers, perhaps guided by a mentor. Surprises, strangeness, and mysteries abound in all this adventure's scenes.

The Quest: The heroes learn the ultimate goal of the campaign. They learn of a path toward pursuing it in Adventure 3, and they learn of risks that they may face by pursuing it.

EXAMPLE: REVENGE OF THE EMPIRE—ADVENTURE 2

"Hiding and Seeking." From the ice planet, the heroes split up. The ambitious GM decides to run the adventure with two settings! Going back and forth, with half the scenes in one setting and half the scenes on the other, keeps all the players entertained and in suspense.

Into Asteroids: Most of the heroes are together on a ship that malfunctioned and failed to escape the imperial blockade around the ice planet. They go to a new setting, a deadly asteroid field. They must battle pursuing enemies, using their piloting skills to survive where the enemy cannot, until they find a place to hide and repair their ship.

A Mysterious Mentor: One hero goes off on his own, searching for a mysterious hermit who can teach him Power skills and the ways of the Starknights. The player has been saving XP just for this chance! The

hero must find the hermit, persuade the hermit to become his teacher, and then play through physical and mental challenges that represent training in new skills and learning the Starknights' philosophy.

ADVENTURE 3: THE ORDEAL

The heroes come close to the campaign's core goal without being able to reach it. That means they face heightened challenges and dangers, and likely suffer great loss to the key threat of the campaign.

The ordeal often demonstrates the power of sacrifice, and gives the heroes a chance to learn to appreciate life for its own sake. The heightened dangers of the ordeal put the heroes at grave risk and may culminate in tragedy.

For the campaign's stakes to feel satisfying, the ordeal of the third adventure must mean one of three things:

Sacrifice: The heroes pay a heavy price, such as the death of a hero or of an NPC who means almost as much to the players. Paying that price changes them and may give them powerful new motivations or obligations. Or...

Surrender: The heroes see the risks and surrender to the temptations of fear and selfishness. Or...

Victory: The heroes overcome overwhelming odds and profound dangers, coming so close to tragedy that it leaves the players feeling just as shaken.

EXAMPLE: REVENGE OF THE EMPIRE—ADVENTURE 3

“Trust and Betrayal.” In the third adventure, the GM continues to go back and forth between the heroes. The third adventure of the campaign is the heroes' greatest ordeal, so the GM really lays on the threats. Even if the heroes succeed, they face terrible choices and consequences.

The Floating City: The heroes who hid in the asteroid field attempt repair their ship, but the GM has more in store for them. The asteroid itself comes alive and drives them out! They must come up with a way to hide among the enemy ships until the enemy ships give up and depart. Then they must find haven at a place within reach of their damaged ship, a city that floats above a cloud planet. They must try to persuade an old companion to help them, then they must try to escape when the companion betrays them to imperial troops and bounty hunters and their nemesis, the imperial darklord from the prior campaign. If they cannot escape, one of them will be either killed or taken away as near-dead cargo.

The Darkness Within: Their friend in Starknight training must attempt to use his new psychic skills to prove he is ready for further training. More importantly, though, he faces a test of his willingness to confront terror without relying on violence: a duel with the heroes' nemesis, the imperial darklord! But

this duel is really a duel with the hero himself, so he cannot spend Hope to destroy his foe, only Hate. Then, his newly awakened skills reveal the danger facing his friends. He must choose: Does he heed his teacher's warnings and remain in place, trusting in the psychic currents of power and hope in the universe that he just has begun to experience? Or does he ignore his teacher and go to help his friends? The campaign's final adventure will look very different for him, depending on his choice!

ADVENTURE 4: DESTINY

Having passed through the fear or sorrow of Adventure 3, the heroes face a compelling opportunity to abandon their quest and leave the campaign's core goal behind. They must make a conscious choice to keep going, realizing what is at stake.

If the heroes choose to keep going, the final adventure is filled with action and powerful confrontations. The heroes have a chance to achieve the campaign's goal. They are certain to be transformed by their choices and experiences.

Out of the Abyss: The heroes regroup from the ordeal of Adventure 3 and find resolve and meaning in their loss. They move through a climactic series of encounters toward the greatest, most important battle of the campaign.

Rebirth: The heroes learn the campaign's deepest mystery as they obtain the campaign's ultimate goal. That means transformation, a chance to recognize that even terrors and tragedies are validated by the gift of life. It means spiritual death and rebirth.

Reward: The heroes attain the final goal of the quest. This may be a tangible reward that reflects the spiritual illumination that the heroes have gained. It may be a miraculous source of energy, safety, or freedom for the people who depend on the heroes. It may come from the destruction of a terrible weapon, or from decisively defeating an invading enemy. It may come from orchestrating a dramatic exodus or rescue. It may come from escaping with an enormously valuable resource or piece of information that is absolutely certain to save countless lives. It is a triumph of life over death on a grand scale.

Celebration: The campaign may end as the people who benefit from the heroes' work join them in celebrating their victories or contemplating and honoring their losses. If completing the quest meant the self-sacrifice by the heroes, the players may see the hope that they've brought, and recognition of the heroes' courage, though the heroes themselves cannot. This brief celebration or moment of reflection ends the campaign.

EXAMPLE: REVENGE OF THE EMPIRE—ADVENTURE 4

"Truths and Consequences." The heroes come together at last at the floating city.

Betrayed for Good: The heroes in the floating city are sad and angry as they are taken into captivity and one of them is taken away by a bounty hunter. But the supposed friend who betrayed them is overcome with remorse. He becomes a new hero, played by the player whose hero has been taken. With his help, the heroes can attempt to escape the imperial forces, reach their ship, and escape pursuit by imperial ships—if their treacherous host repaired their ship after all!

Against All Hope: Meanwhile, the hero in far-off training ignores his teacher's warnings and hurries to his friends' rescue in the floating city. The city's patrolling fighters let him through. He pursues his friends' captors. Then he is diverted by the heroes' nemesis, the imperial darklord, this time facing him in person. The lone hero is drawn into a duel that includes shattering revelations. The darklord tries not to kill the hero but render him helpless, destroy his Hope, and force him to turn to the darklord as his only chance of survival. The would-be Starknight may be able to escape only in death, or by drawing on his new psychic skills and the power of his emotional attachment to his friends.

Reward and Celebration: The heroes rejoin the rebel fleet that they saved at the beginning of the campaign. With the fleet, they escape the imperial forces at last. They celebrate their survival and the survival of the rebellion itself, and look ahead to ways to redeem what they have lost.

A Trilogy of Campaigns

An especially ambitious game could be structured from three campaigns. Each serves as a stand-alone story, and is one act of three. Three linked campaigns could be equivalent to a trilogy of films or novels.

CAMPAIGN 1: INCITEMENT

The inciting incident of the larger trilogy. It establishes the contradictions and uncertainties of the heroes and allows them a chance to resolve those contradictions heroically, if only for a moment. *Example:* *Attacking the empire's ultimate weapon.*

CAMPAIGN 2: CONSEQUENCES

Exploring the rising action and stakes that explicitly follow from the first campaign, and the consequences of the heroes not yet mastering the skills and self-awareness they really need. *Example:* *Escaping the revenge of the empire.*

CAMPAIGN 3: RESOLUTION

Resolution of all subplots as the heroes confront the trilogy's core threats and come to a profound new sense of who they really are. *Example: Attacking the empire's newest weapon, even worse than before, and confronting the hatred of the emperor with the power of hope.*