TRAVELLER
THE PIRATES OF DRINAX

Written By Gareth Hanrahan

TREASURE SHIP

".... shall not contest, protest, intercede or in any way hinder the annexation of these worlds, which are deemed to be within the territory of the Aslan Hierate...
- The Treaty of Fist

Treasure Ship is the second adventure in the Pirates of Drinax campaign. If you are a player in this campaign, STOP READING NOW! If you're a Referee, then you should first read The Pirates of Drinax Campaign document to get an overview of the campaign.

This adventure takes place in the Borderlands subsector of the Spinward Marches. The year is assumed to be 1105. The characters can begin the adventure in any system where rumours can reach them.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS
The pirates learn that the engines of an Imperial Treasure Ship have malfunctioned, and the ship is currently grounded at the neutral port of Arunisiir. They've got a chance to steal one of the greatest prizes in the Trojan Reach.

Arunisiir is a world divided between Humaniti and Aslan; once the pirates arrive in-system, they need to either come up with a plan to capture the grounded treasure ship or else infiltrate the crew and get a berth on board.

Once on the Treasure Ship, the pirates discover that the ship was sabotaged, as part of a pirate plan to rob the ship. The saboteur is still on board, and the ship may jump into a pirate ambush after leaving Arunisiir.

Pirate saboteurs are not the only spies in the crew. The General Development Company has a scheme that plays on the Treasure Ship's reputation. They intend to plant a fake treaty in the vault. The Treasure ship jumps to Tech-World, where GeDeCo's agent obtains the codes needed to open the secure vault. From there, the ship travels to Byrni, where it runs into a standoff between the Imperial forces and the old Sindalian fleet that still patrols that system. If GeDeCo's plan (see the sidebar) comes to fruition, then the Treasure Ship is boarded and the false treaty is discovered.

All that, however, depends on the actions of the pirates...

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE
Treasure Ship is a non-linear adventure – the players can approach the challenge of looting the eponymous ship in any way they choose. The Referee should respond to the players' actions by adding detail wherever they investigate. The adventure is divided into three sections:
- The Treasure Ship describes the treasure ship itself, its crew, and its security systems. It also covers the Imperial escorts that protect the treasure ship.
- The Thieves of Arunisiir covers how the pirates learn of the downed ship, getting to Arunisiir, and the initial state of the ship.
- Voyage to the Hierate describe the repaired Treasure Ship's journey from Arunisiir to Tech-World to Byrni, visiting several other systems en route.

Three subplots complicate the pirates' task.
- The GeDeCo's plan to use the treasure ship to plant a fake treaty, thus stirring tensions between the Aslan Hierate and the neutral worlds of the Trojan Reach.
- The attempt by the pirate Hroal Irontooth to capture the Treasure Ship.
- Tensions and intrigue on board the Treasure Ship.

The most likely tactics used by the player characters are:
- Infiltrate the crew of the Treasure Ship on Arunisiir, gather intelligence about it, then either steal some valuables or sabotage it from within.
- Attack the ship while it's grounded at Arunisiir

Secrets of the Reach

On one side of the Trojan Reach is the Imperium; on the other, the fast-expanding Aslan Hierate. Between the two are hundreds of independent human worlds.

The Aslan have an insatiable desire for territory. Biological and cultural forces demand that they expand. The Imperium, hoping to avoid another border war, tries to slow the inexorable advance of the Hierate by either placating them with gifts or diverting their growth into unclaimed space. The neutral worlds between the Imperium and the Hierate are pawns in this game of empires.

The major brake on Aslan expansion is the Treaty of Fhaharl, which guarantees that the Aslan clans will never come within thirty parsecs of the Imperial borders. Doing so would incur the displeasure of the most powerful clans – and it is in the Imperium's best interest to keep these clans strong, so they can enforce the treaty.

The peace is imperfect. There are inevitable border skirmishes, raids, and renegades who defy the treaty, especially when the major clans fall to infighting. Still, it has held for hundreds of years. The neutral worlds of the Reach are free because of the treaty.

The sinister megacorporation known as GeDeCo was founded to improve the standing of the disparate human colonies, but it now aims to influence the course of history across the Reach. Their psychohistorians predict that unless the Aslan are stopped, they will inevitably conquer the whole Domain of Deneb and cut the Spinward Marches off from the Imperium. The Peace of Ftaharl cannot stand against the inevitability of demographics. The Imperium's policy of containment and appeasement is futile – the only way Humaniti can hold this region of space is through bloody war! GeDeCo intends to turn the whole Trojan Reach into a firebreak to stop the Aslan advance.

The Imperial Treasure Ships carry more than rare goods and valuable items – they also carry secret diplomatic messages between the Imperial Moot and the Aslan Hierate. GeDeCo's agents intend to plant a fake message in the cargo of the Treasure Ship, a false treaty that sanctions the Aslan conquest of a dozen worlds on the far side of the Trojan Reach. If this treaty were to be revealed – say, by a pirate attack on the Treasure Ship,or by an unexpected customs inspection that somehow breaches the secure vault – then public sentiment across the Reach would turn towards war. Even if the Aslan make no hostile moves (and they would not, as they would still be bound by the real Treaty of Ftaharl), the fake treaty would drive the neutral worlds into GeDeCo's arms.

Just spreading rumours about such a treaty is not enough. GeDeCo needs the legitimacy that comes from finding the treaty on a Treasure Ship with an open vault.

Opening the Vault: GeDeCo has two agents on board the Martin II. The ship's navigator and the purser are both employed by the corporation. The vault's door is connected to the ship's navigation computer, and Navigator Osha has installed a black box device that harvests data from the vault lock and the ship's navigation system. When the ship arrives at Tech-World, this black box will be taken to a TL15 supercomputer and used to crack the vault code, so the vault can be opened ahead of schedule at Byrni.

Purser Vaughan has the fake treaty concealed in his quarters. When the vault opens, his role is to ensure that the treaty is 'discovered' at the right time. The two agents are unaware of each other's identity, but both know that someone else is working for GeDeCo.

- Infiltrate the ship at Arunisiir, learn its planned course, then intercept it
- Infiltrate the ship, learn about the GeDeCo scheme, and use it to rob the vault
- Infiltrate the ship, stir up dissent in the crew, lead a mutiny
- Ally with Hroal Irontooth to capture the Treasure Ship
- Shadow the ship until an opportunity arises to rob it at Byrni
- Some PCs infiltrate the ship, while others shadow it in the Drinaxi Harrier or some other pirate ship.

Any tactics has a chance of succeeding, but the players will need to adapt to changing circumstances in order to win the prize.

1. The Treasure Ship

There are few ships in Charted Space as distinctive – or as ugly – as a Treasure Ship. The basic design is a venerable one – the earliest Treasure Ships were built in the First Imperium as an expression of the Empire's power. Treasure Ships were a way of impressing petty kings to encourage them to join the Imperium, or to haul away their wealth in safety. They are still used today out of tradition. Poets compare the ship's external profile to a castle, or a turtle, or a mountain of crystaliron, but the most accurate metaphor is that the Treasure Ship is a fist – a big metal fist clenched tight around the Empire's wealth.

The ship barely qualifies as streamlined. It can enter a planet's atmosphere, supported by its vestigial lifting surfaces and its overworked grav-plates, but it doesn't so much fly as fall in roughly the right direction. The prow of the ship is hinged, allowing access to the cavernous cargo bay. 300 tons of cargo space is unsecured, but the huge secure vault contains another 60 tons of space at the heart of the ship.

The vault is the reason the Treasure Ship exists. Even if an attacker punched through the ship's thick armour and reinforced hull, the vault is tough enough to withstand direct hits from starship weapons. Anything powerful enough to crack the vault would instantly incinerate anything inside. Some vaults even have psionic shielding that blocks teleportation. The vault's locking mechanism is virtually unbreakable. The locking code is derived from jump space co-ordinates and genetic material, so it can only be opened in the right system by the right person.

Atop the vault and the cargo section are the crew decks. In addition to engineers, pilots and gunners, every Treasure Ship carries a squad of Imperial Marines equipped with sufficient firepower to turn back any boarding parties. Conditions on board ship are cramped but comfortable. As Treasure Ships are part of Imperial diplomacy, the interior is richly decorated and the public sections can be reconfigured into a conference venue or ceremonial audience chamber. The officers' decks and flight deck are at the top of the 'fist'. An escape launch nestles between rows of laser turrets.

Aft are the ship's huge fuel tanks. Treasure Ships are ungainly, but are capable of three-parsec jumps. The engineering deck is at the tail of the ship, under the fuel tanks. The ship's second escape launch is also in the rear section, along with two more turrets.

Flying a Treasure Ship is like strapping an m-drive on a bank. Everything is massively heavy and unwieldy, there are security checks and alarms everywhere, and while parts of the ship are magnificently appointed to impress visitors, other sections are cramped and crowded. Everyone knows that the ship has a giant bullseye painted on it, and that every pirate and petty kingdom in the Trojan Reach wants to kill them and take their stuff.

> ### The Competition
> Another band of pirates have designs on the contents of the Treasure Ship. The Aslan Hroal Irontooth plans to steal its cargo. Three of the crew – a Marine named Salvesdes, a mechanic called Felmar and a launch pilot called Hanshaw – all work for the Aslan pirate. The original plan was to cause the Martin II to misjump into the outer reaches of the Tech-World system, where Irontooth's flotilla lurks in wait. Felmar worked on the jump drive, and was under orders to alter the plotted navigation solution so the ship jumped to the wrong part of the target system.
>
> Unfortunately, Felmar's sabotage was discovered by Chief Engineer Eco. Felmar panicked and opened the safety interlocks on the jump drive, causing the explosion that crippled the ship and forced it to land on Arunisiir.
>
> Now, the two surviving pirate spies, Salvesdes and Hanshaw, need to work out another way to get the Martin II into the trap – or they'll face the wrath of Hroal Irontooth.

	1600 tons		Tons	Price (Cr.)
Hull		Hull 32		192,000,000
	Streamlined, Reinforced	Structure 42	160 tons	
Armour		Crystaliron (8)	160	64,000,000
Jump Drive	P	Jump 3	75	140,000,000
Manoeuvre Drive	H	Thrust 1	15	32,000,000
Power Plant	P		43	112,000,000
Bridge			40	8,000,000
Computer	Model 3	Rating 15		2,000,000
Electronics	Military		2	1,000,000
Weapons				
	Hardpoint #1-8	Double Turret	8	4,000,000
		Beam Laser		8,000,000
		Beam Laser		8,000,000
Vehicles	Launch		20	13,596,000
	Launch		20	13,596,000
Fuel	1 Jump-3, 4 Weeks of Operation		536	
Cargo			299	
Vault		Hull 32	120	60,000,000
		Structure 32		
20 Staterooms			80	10,000,000
Extras		Luxuries	20	2,000,000
		Armour	2	500,000
Software				
	Manoeuvre/0			
	Library/0			
	Jump/3			300,000
Maintenance Cost (monthly)				55,942
Life Support Cost (monthly)				40,000
Total Tonnage & Cost			1,600	671,300,000

Lower Cargo Deck

The Lower Cargo Deck is unoccupied during flight. A stowaway – or even a group of stowaways – could hide here in the cargo holds if they can avoid the security systems (see page 12). This deck smells of oil and burnt electrical wiring, and is poorly lit. These are the bowels of the ship, crammed with junk and spare parts. The hard landing on Arunisiir damaged many of the light fittings in the hold, so the illumination flickers and dies seemingly at random.

1. Cargo Hatches: These large hatches can be over-ridden from outside with a Hard (-4) Dexterity + Mechanic test. They only open in atmosphere.

2. Ventral Airlock: The ship's grav plating does not extend to this airlock. It is mainly used for maintenance and docking with smaller spacecraft.
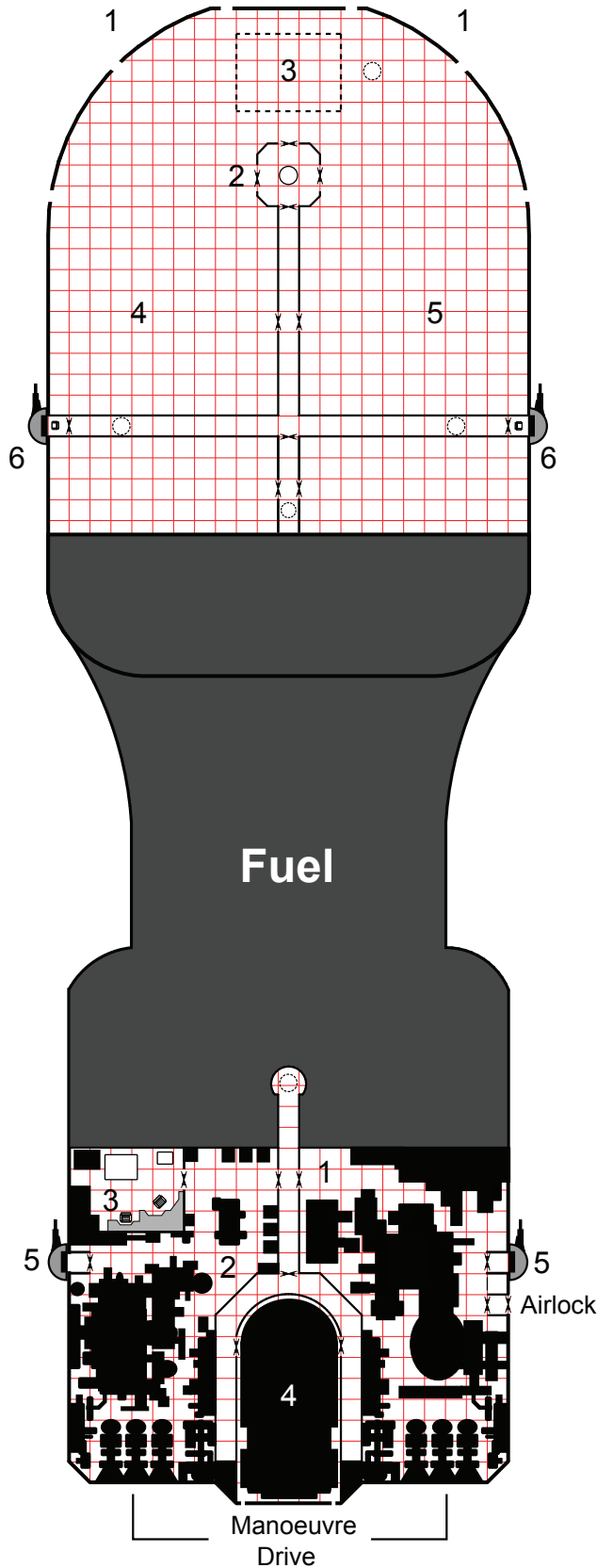
Treasure Ship

Lower Cargo Deck
Level 5

1. Cargo Hatches
2. Ventral Airlock
3. Cargo Lift
4. Port Cargo Hold
5. Starboard Cargo Hold
6. Laser Turret

Fuel

Chair		Machinery	
Acceleration Chair		Lower Berth	
Bunk		Access Panel	
Escape Capsule		Hatch	
Iris Valve		Hatch Floor	
Iris Valve Floor		Hatch Ceiling	
Iris Valve Ceiling		Hatch Both	
Iris Valve Both		Fresher Unit	

One Square = 1.5 Metres

Airlock

Manoeuvre
Drive

Engineering Deck

1. Jump Drive
2. Power Plant
3. Machine Shop
4. Escape Launch
5. Laser Turret

3. Cargo Lift: This grav lift connects to the vault entrance above. It is locked down during flight, but this security measure can be bypassed by an average (+0) Intelligence + Engineer (electronics) check.

4. Port Cargo Hold: This cargo bay is packed full of 120 tons of dust spice (6,000Cr/ton) destined for the Aslan market. The crates are stamped with the Imperial sunburst, but the spice itself is untraceable if moved to less ostentatious containers. Like its starboard counterpart, this hold extends into the deck above.

5. Starboard Cargo Hold: This hold contains 100 tons of Advanced Electronics and Advanced Manufactured Goods (both Cr. 100,000/ton). These items were constructed either in Tobia subsector or deeper in the Imperium. The components are all highly specialised and marked on a molecular level with radiotracers and serial codes, making them hot goods that must be sold through a fence.

6. Laser Turret. Each turret has a pair of lasers that are manually controlled from a firing station. The *Martin II* is lightly armed for its size, relying on its escort ships for protection.

Engineering Deck

The whole engineering deck bears the scars of the explosion that crippled the ship. There was a leak of high-pressure hydrogen that blasted through a pipe and expanded into the engineering section. Most of the crew were killed by flying debris, the sudden increase in cabin pressure, or by secondary explosions as hydrogen combusted with the oxygen in the atmosphere. The rest were killed when automatic safety systems opened the launch bay airlock, venting the atmosphere and saving the rest of the ship. While the crew were able to repair the ship enough to get it to Arunisiir, it is something of a miracle that the disaster did not cause more damage.

The narrow, cramped corridors of engineering were unpleasant and oily even before the disaster – now any part of the engine might be smeared with blood or bone fragments, and every surface bears the signs of abrasions and explosion damage. The explosion was centred on the jump drive; the power plant and M-drive are mostly intact.

1. Jump Drive: The jump drive was sabotaged by mechanic Felmar (see page 9). He caused the failure that resulted in the ship landing on Arunisiir.
- The jump drive is severely damaged. It can be repaired by a character with Mechanic 2 or Engineering (jump) 2 and several days' work, but the *Martin II* lacks the replacement parts. New parts can be salvaged from another jump-capable ship, or delivered by the rescue flotilla.

- A successful Intelligence + Engineering (jump) test lets a character determine the cause of the disaster. From the looks of it, the safety interlocks were disabled and the jump sequence halted at the last second. Instead of pumping nearly 500 tons of hydrogen into the singularity, the hydrogen vented into the engineering compartment. Anyone standing near the jump engine was must have been killed instantly.
- A successful Difficult (-2) Intelligence + Computers (or Engineering (jump), or Astrogation) check lets the pirates discover something strange in the jump drive's memory buffers. It looks like someone tampered with the navigation data. It's impossible to tell exactly what the changes were, but someone tried to manually change the ship's destination by altering the jump solution – which is like trying to change a plane's destination by hammering its rudder out of shape while it's accelerating down the runway.

2. Power Plant: The only survivors in the engineering section were both working on the power plant when the disaster hit. They made it to a survival locker just before the atmosphere was vented.

**3. Machine Shop:** The machine shop can produce basic spare parts, but not enough to repair the jump drive.

4. Escape Launch: This is the launch piloted by Hanshaw. She was in the launch when the explosion happened.

5. Laser Turret: The engineering crew used these turrets as a private recreation booth, as the scattered debris bears witness to. Searching through the junk turns up items like cigarettes, empty alcohol bottles, pornographic holos – and a credit chit belonging to Mechanic Talis (see page 9), who used the port turret for a sexual rendezvous with Felmar.

Upper Cargo Deck

The upper cargo deck is where the crew gather most frequently. The galley and the port cargo deck are the centre of socialising when the ship is in flight. The crew mostly ignore the monolithic black secure vault that dominates this section.

1. Vault Entrance: The only way into the vault is via this titanic hatch. The hatch is made out of the same material as the vault – an exotic form of bonded superdense material. The locks and grav-plates that hold the door shut are all contained inside the vault walls. A golden Imperial seal marks the entrance. If the right person (based on the genetic code programmed into the vault) inserts the right key (a ceremonial key kept in the captain's safe) at the right time (when the ship is in the Tyokh system), the vault opens.

Doors

Lift

6

1

5

2

Cargo Bay Door

Cargo Bay Door

3

4

Fuel
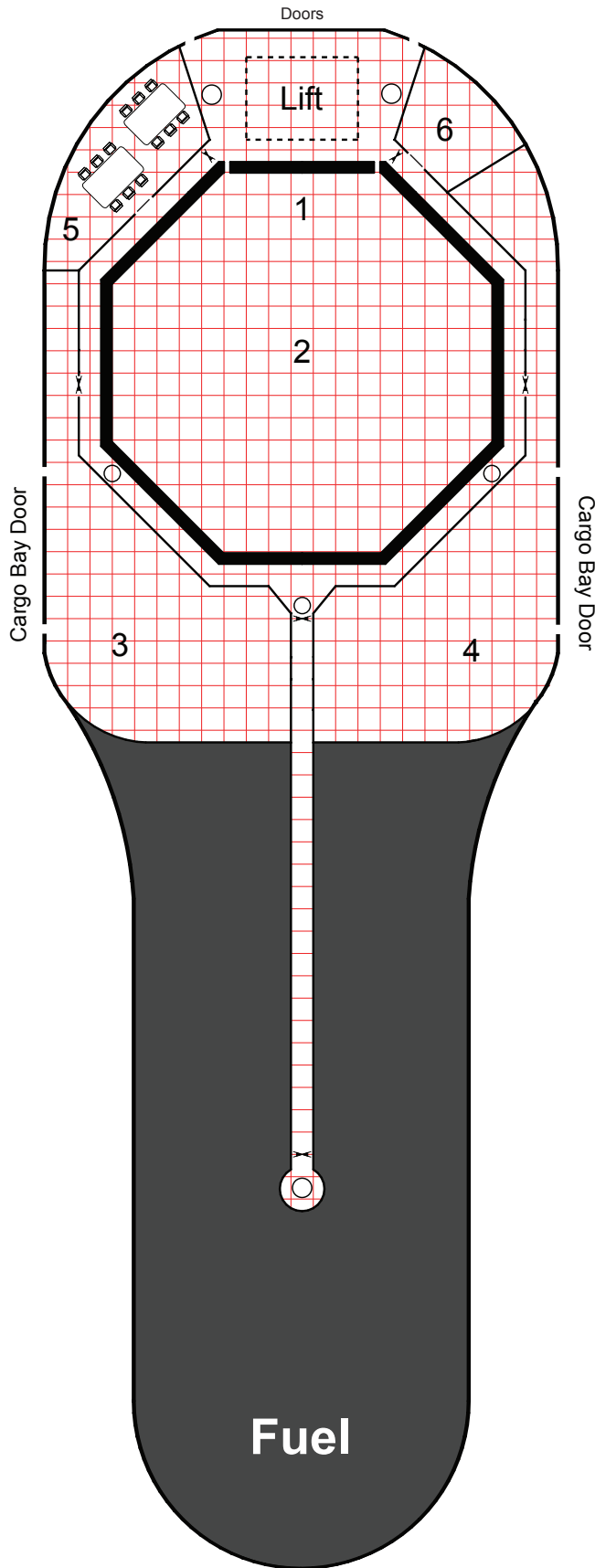
Treasure Ship

Upper Cargo Deck
Level 4

1. Vault Entrance
2. Vault
3. Upper Port Cago Deck
4. Upper Starboard
   Cargo Deck
5. Galley
6. Ship's Locker

Chair		Machinery	
Acceleration Chair		Lower Berth	
Bunk		Access Panel	
Escape Capsule		Hatch	
Iris Valve		Hatch Floor	
Iris Valve Floor		Hatch Ceiling	
Iris Valve Ceiling		Hatch Both	
Iris Valve Both		Fresher Unit	

One Square = 1.5 Metres

Examining the vault with a successful Difficult (-2) Intelligence + Sensors or Intelligence + Engineering (electronics) test discovers a microscopic data tap attached to the connection between the vault and the ship's navigation computer. Further investigation turns up a mysterious black box attached to the inside of the navigation computer (see Tech-World, page 18).

2. Vault: The treasure vault on board the *Martin II* contains:
- Four 5-ton mail drums of secure electronic communications between the Imperium and the Hierate. Cracking the encryption on these drums requires an Impossible (-8) Education + Computers test.
- Various legal documents relating to Imperial diplomacy and mercantile ventures in the Hierate. If the GeDeCo plan to plant a fake treaty goes ahead, it will be found amid these documents. These documents can be used to introduce future heists and plots, or just sold or ransomed back to the Imperium for Cr. 10,000,000.
- 40 tons of Luxury Goods (Cr 200,000 each).
- 20 tons of Pharmaceuticals (Cr, 100,000 each).
- 20 tons of Radioactives (Cr 1,000,000 each).
- Gemstones and other rare items of negligible mass worth another Cr. 30,000,000.

3. Upper Port Cargo Deck: This walkway overlooks the lower port hold. The crew's personal cargo and ship supplies like food, water and other essentials are stored here.

4. Upper Starboard Cargo Deck: The entrance to this hold is locked.

5. Galley: The ship's small but well-equipped galley is a popular place for the crew to relax.

6. Ship's Locker: A locked metal crate in the locker contains eight stunners and twenty snub pistols, plus ammo. There are also various forms of vacc suit and flak jackets.

Crew Deck

The crew deck is the most heavily populated part of the ship.

1. Staterooms: Most of the staterooms on this level are double occupancy. All staterooms are kept locked when unoccupied.

2. Marine Barracks: These staterooms are home to the *Martin II*'s marine team. Commander Harc has a private stateroom; his six subordinates all share their rooms. The marines stay aloof from the rest of the crew.

3. Marine Armoury: The marines keep their battle dress and other weapons in this locked chamber.

4. Airlock: This airlock is used for boarding actions and close-range space combat exercises.

Officer's Deck

The small officers' deck is off-limits to most of the crew – Captain Torsa maintains a strict social hierarchy on board the ship.

1. Staterooms: Most officers have private staterooms. Junior officers are obliged to share rooms. There are two empty staterooms on this deck, which are reserved for ambassadors and other dignitaries.

2. Computer Room: The *Martin II*'s computer is small and outdated, but it copes with the relatively undemanding mission profile required of a treasure ship. The second officer is stationed here, working on the ship's paperwork. Purser Vaughan also works from this room.

3. Conference Room: Also used as a dining room for senior officers. The ship's safe is in this room; it contains Cr. 5,000,000 in credits.

4. Medbay: This small medbay is locked following the death of the ship's doctor. Until a new doctor is hired, the autodoc cares for the crew's medical problems.

5. Airlock.

6. Laser Turret: Captain Torsa demands regular battle-drills when the ship is in flight; this is one of the few occasions when crewmen are allowed onto this deck to man the turrets.

Flight Deck

1. Bridge: The ship's comfortable and well-appointed bridge is manned at all times, even in jump space.
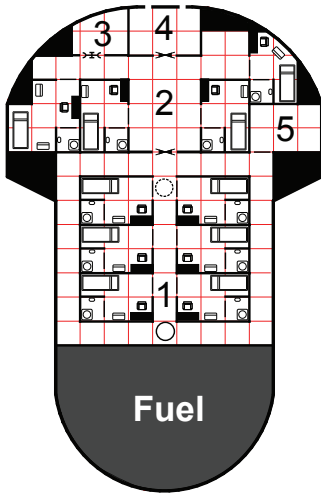
2. Escape Launch.

3. Laser Turret

Crew Roster

Individuals marked with a * were killed in the 'accident' that forced the ship to land on Arunisiir. Those in italics have longer write-ups below.

**Flight:** The flight team is composed of the senior officers and the pilots.
- *Captain Torsa*
- *First Officer Jagad*
- Second Officer Halbinar: Harried and overworked, Halbinar deals with the ship's logistics in concert with the cargo chief. She remains on Arunisiir after the ship departs to deal with the aftermath of the explosion and subsequent repair work. She's brusque, efficient and prone to space-sickness.
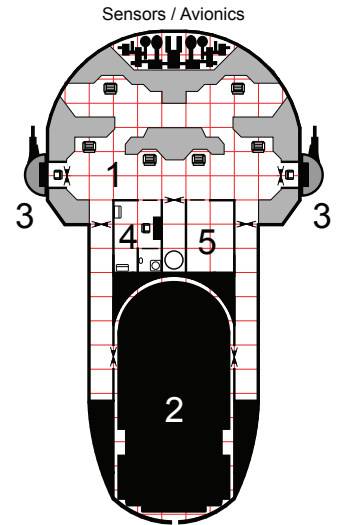- *Navigator Osha*

Crew Deck
Level 3

1. Staterooms
2. Marine Barracks
3. Armoury
4. Airlock
5. Utility/Office Room

Officer's Deck
Level 2
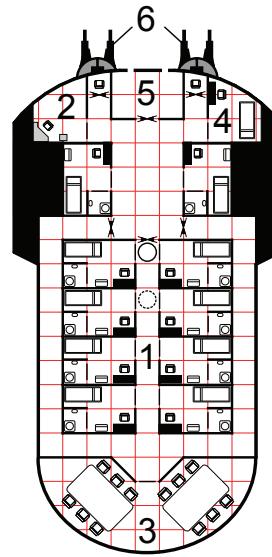
1. Staterooms
2. Computer Room
3. Conference Room
4. Medbay
5. Airlock
6. Laser Turret

Flight Deck
Level 1

Sensors / Avionics

1. Bridge
2. Escape Launch
3. Laser Turret
4. Captain's Office
5. Utility Room

- Assistant Navigator Ven Laffit: The young assistant navigator is on his first tour of duty. Tobia-born, he's a firm believer in the superiority of the Imperium, and loudly advocates punitive war with the Aslan instead of the current policy of appeasement. Torsa plans to keep him well away from any diplomats when the *Martin II* reaches Trokh.
- Lead Pilot Smith: The ship's chief pilot is a conservative naval officer on the verge of retirement. He knows the Borderlands subsector very well, and can recognise many famous pirate ships by their sensor signature.
- Co-Pilot Ashen: Ashen comes from the core worlds of the Imperium, and has a strange accent and customs. Off-duty, he wears bizarre garments made from tattered silk rags which he claims are the height of fashion on Capital.

Staff
- *Purser Vaughan*
- Ship's Doctor Bourke*: Bourke died in the aftermath of the explosion – he opened the airlock into the engineering section to tend to the wounded, and was then sucked out into space when the automatic systems vented the atmosphere.

- Cargo Chief Niven: Niven's a stocky, foul-mouthed stevedore. He's named the ship's two cargo robots after his ex-husbands.

Marine Squad
- Marine Commander Harc: Paranoid Harc is convinced that the ship – and, more importantly, one of his soldiers - were the victims of sabotage. He suspects that there is a Zhodani agent on board. Harc's only happy when dressed in battle armour with a gun in his hand and he's floating in deep space towards an enemy ship. He's got several cybernetic enhancements, including a misaligned cranial jack. With the death of the ship's doctor, he needs someone with Medic 3 to realign the jack after every jump or he suffers blinding headaches.
- 6 Marines
- Marine Jen Laral: She joined the Imperial Marines to see the galaxy, and always goes out exploring each new world the *Martin II* visits. She cultivates her popularity among the crew so she can switch duty rosters and ensure she can take time off on planetside.

- Marine Codenko*: Killed by the explosion.
- *Marine Salvesdes*
- Marines 4-6

Gunnery
- Tactical Officer Grimsbold: A veteran naval officer and a close friend of Pilot Smith, Grimsbold hails from the Spinward Marches. She butts heads regularly with Commander Harc.
- *Launch #1 Pilot Hanshaw*
- Launch #2 Pilot
- 8 Gunners
- Crewman O'Leary & Crewman Ilin: This pair of troublemakers go drinking in every port. Captain Torsa loathes them, and intends to have them both transferred off the ship after the mission. The two know their days are numbered, so they intend to make as much trouble for the captain as possible.
- Gunners 7-8*

Engineering
- Chief Engineer Eco*
- Mechanic Polo: With the death of the chief engineer, Polo's taken over the engineering section. He's a simple, salt-of-the-spaceways mechanic who never wanted to be in command, but he feels that he owes it to the dead crew to get the *Martin II* to its destination. Polo is very superstitious and likes to hire people who seem 'lucky'.
- Mechanic Talis: It's an open secret on the lower decks that she and Felmar were lovers. If questioned, she reveals that Felmar kept talking about a 'new beginning' for both of them where they'd be rich and free, but he refused to explain the plan. He also spent a lot of time talking to Launch Pilot Henshaw and Salvesdes.
- Mechanic Felmar*: Part of Hroal Irontooth's team. Most of the crew suspect Felmar was to blame for the explosion. He was notoriously unlucky and sloppy, and he worked on the jump drive.
- Engineers 4-6*

Captain Torsa

Commanding a treasure ship is a prestigious but ultimately hollow assignment. Treasure Ships are a symbol of the power and wealth of the Third Imperium, and are a vital part of diplomatic and trade missions, so their captains are effectively ambassadors and representatives of the Iridium Throne. At the same time, a treasure ship is really just an overblown freighter, and will never engage in combat or win glory. The captains of the Treasure Ship fleet, therefore, tend to be those whose political connections and family backing are balanced by their lack of talent.

'Prestigious but ultimately hollow' also describes Captain Torsa. His family connections got him a command, but he is entirely lacking in charisma or imagination. Charitably, he might be described as 'meticulously attentive to detail' – he's the sort of commander who might berate a subordinate for failing to polish a computer screen to a mirror finish, while remaining completely oblivious to the approaching pirate ship on that screen. He runs his ship in strict accordance with the manual, and tolerates no deviation.

He's precisely the wrong person to command the *Martin II* right now. He panicked when the jump drive exploded, and effectively gave over command to his first officer. He knows that he needs to reassert his authority if he is to have any hope of retaining command after this mission.

During flight, Torsa rarely leaves the top two decks; the only time he descends into the crew or cargo sections is to berate the crew for not scrubbing the deck plates or respond adequately to his battle drills.

Captain Torsa
Age 42, 6 terms
STR 6   DEX 6   END 9   INT 4   EDU 10 SOC 11
Admin 2, Advocate 1, Astrogation 1, Battle Dress 0, Carouse 2, Comms 1, Diplomat 2, Leadership 1, Pilot (spaceship) 1, Tactics (naval) 1, Vacc Suit 1, Zero-G 1

Playing Torsa:
- Be snooty and superior. Look down on the rabble and barbarians around you.
- Speak in a clipped tone. Give orders.
- Have a nervous twitch.

Using Torsa:
- If any of the pirates have a Naval background (especially the Imperial navy), then they can convince Torsa to hire them as temporary crew.
- If the characters convince him that he can rely on them instead of Jagad, then the pirates can manipulate themselves into positions of authority on board the *Martin II*.

First Officer Jagad

When they assigned Mari Jagad to the Martin II, they made it clear that her real role was to babysit Captain Torsa. Jagad's a fast-rising star in the Imperial Navy; she was top of her class at the Tobia Naval College, and can expect to be promoted to captain within five years. She won't be given the Martin II – she has her eye on a Gazelle, and that's only a stepping stone towards her dream of commanding a warship.

She took charge during the disaster, and gave the order to vent the atmosphere from the engineering section. Some of the crew blame her for the deaths, saying that if only she'd waited, more of the engineering crew might have survived. Others credit her with saving the ship. She's also taken charge of the repair efforts – if she carries the Martin II across the Trojan Reach, it will boost her prospects of promotion immensely.

Jagad loathes pirates – she served on a pirate hunter patrol early in her career, and saw firsthand the destruction wreaked by raiders.

Commander Mari Jagad
Age 34, 4 terms
STR 7   DEX 9   END 7   INT 10   EDU 11 SOC 7
Admin 2, Astrogation 1, Battle Dress 0, Comms 2, Computers 1, Engineer (power plant) 2, Gunner (turret) 2, Leadership 2, Mechanic 1, Pilot (starship) 2, Recon 1, Sensors 1, Space Science 0, Tactics (Naval) 2, Vacc Suit 1

Playing Jagad:
• Imagine her as the slightly Mary-Sueish protagonist of a series of military-sci-fi novels. She's the heroine of an adventure that's happening parallel to the adventures of the pirates.
• She's forthright, charismatic and heroic. She's always in the thick of the action.
• Stay on your toes. She's always ready for action.

Using Jagad:
• If the pirates impress Jagad with their technical skills, she may hire them for the repair work or even for the journey to the Hierate.
• On board, the characters can exploit Jagad's unpopularity with the crew to turn them against her.
• Jagad leads any investigations on board ship.

Navigator Osha
Osha comes from the waterworld of Dolberg, in Sindal subsector, and has the genetic modifications common to people from that planet – bluish skin, gills, webbed fingers and strange ridges of body fat. Few ever leave the cold waters of Dolberg, but Osha is an exception. She joined the crew of a tramp trader at the age of fifteen, and has travelled the stars ever since. She ran away because her family name was disgraced with accusations of gene-mod DNA corruption, and on Dolberg, your gene-line counts for everything.

Eight years ago, she helped the crew of a lost scoutship return to Tobia, and was rewarded with the offer of a commission in the navy. She knows many of the more obscure systems of the Reach very well, and so is considered a valuable asset to the navy.

Secretly, she's working for the General Development Corporation. GeDeCo's agents control the government of Dolberg; they've promised to erase the stain on her gene-line if she completes her assigned task. She's planted a black box device inside the navigation console. This device harvests data from the jump engines and from the locking mechanism of the vault. The calculations needed to crack the vault's encryption are beyond anything on the ship – but GeDeCo has a computer on Tech-World that uses cutting-edge TL15+ technology. With the right data from the black box, it can crack the vault.

Navigator Osha
Age 34, 4 terms
STR 8   DEX 5   END 9   INT 7   EDU 9   SOC 5
Athletics (swim) 2, Astrogation 3, Computers 2, Deception 1, Mechanic 1, Pilot (spacecraft) 2, Sensors 1, Space Science (planetology) 2, Stealth 0, Streetwise 1

Playing Osha:
• You're really not cut out for intrigue and espionage. Stammer and flap your hands nervously in any conversation about the explosion or the plan to rob the vault.
• Check your fingers for the black lesions that mark incipient genetic corruption.
• Puff out your cheeks and act slightly fishy.

Using Osha:
• Osha's the weak link in the GeDeCo scheme – if the players investigate Osha, they can find the black box.

Purser Vaughan
The arm of the General Development Company is long indeed. Their agents are everywhere in the Trojan Reach, pulling strings and manipulating events to push the sector into the right sort of war with the Aslan. Vaughan was an ambitious clerk in the naval office in Tobia. A GeDeCo spy started by bribing him to pass on gossip and internal rumours... then they bribed him a little more to pass on shipping schedules and naval patrols. The bribes grew bigger, and soon Vaughan crossed the line from criminal to traitor. If his treachery were ever revealed, the Navy would imprison or execute him.

Now, Vaughan is so enmeshed in GeDeCo's schemes that he can't back out. The company promised him an escape – if he completes one last mission, they'll set him up with a new identity in some distant sector. All he needs to do is make sure that the false treaty gets into the right hands.

The fake treaty is concealed in his quarters (see page 7).

Purser Vaughan
Age 50, 8 terms
STR 5   DEX 6   END 5   INT 9   EDU 10 SOC 8
Admin 3, Broker 2, Comm 1, Computers 2, Deception 2, Gun Combat (slug pistols) 1, Stealth 1, Steward 2, Streetwise 1, Zero-G 0
Concealed on his person, Vaughan carries a Gauss Pistol (4d6).

Playing Vaughan:
- You come across as a grey bureaucrat, caring only about paperwork and protocol – Captain Torsa's right-hand martinet.
- Secretly, you know this is the most important flight of your life. If you get the fake treaty into the hands of the Byrni Star Guard or even an influential pirate band, then you're guaranteed a retirement of sybaritic luxury on some distant pleasure-world. Fail, and you're a dead man.
- Be cold, unsympathetic, and even murderous if necessary.

Using Vaughan:
- Vaughan should remain in the background until either the players discover the GeDeCo plot, or until it's time to get the fake treaty into play.

Marine Salvesdes

Salvesdes is a veteran of a pirate hunting expedition into the Trojan Reach. He received the Medal of Tobia for his actions when storming a pirate space station in Dpres subsector. According to the official account, Salvesdes was separated from his team, but managed to singlehandedly break through enemy defences and forced the pirate leaders to retreat.

The truth is very different. Salvesdes remembers cutting through an airlock door with his battle dress's built-in torch – and then being overpowered by a huge Aslan, even though Salvesdes was in power-assisted armour and the Aslan wore only a light vacc suit. The Aslan – Hroal Irontooth – disarmed Salvesdes, and then held him down while a woman removed his helmet. The woman was a telepath... and Salvesdes remembers nothing more.

He knows, but cannot remember, that he must serve Hroal Irontooth. The telepathic conditioning lodged in his brain ensures his compliance with the pirate's plans.

Marine Salvesdes
Age 26, 2 terms
STR 9   DEX 8   END 10 INT 6   EDU 9   SOC 5
Athletics 0, Battle Dress 2, Gun Combat (energy rifle) 2, Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1, Melee (blade) 1, Melee (brawl) 3, Pilot (small craft) 1, Sensors 1, Stealth 0, Zero-G 1, Vacc Suit 0
Salvesdes carries a body pistol (3d6-3) at all times. If he can, he wears his Battle Dress (TL13) and carries a laser rifle (5d6) or PGMP-13 (12d6).

Playing Salvesdes:
- You're trapped in a living nightmare. You're conditioned to obey Hroal Irontooth, and he's forcing you to break every oath and turn on your fellow soldiers.
- When pressed, you use violence. The conditioning turns you into an amoral, remorseless killer when necessary.
- Try to cram as much living as you can into the brief gaps when you're not controlled. Others see you as a wild, dissolute pleasure-seeker, when in fact you're living desperately.

Using Salvesdes:
- He's the main combat threat on board the Martin II. If the players try to thwart Hroal's plans while onboard, then they'll have to deal with a psychotic space marine in power armour.

Launch Pilot Hanshaw

Hroal Irontooth's agents are thorough. They tracked Hanshaw's daughter to her school on Cyan in Pax Rulin subsector, and told the child to pass on a message to her mother. 'Do what we tell you', they said, 'or the child suffers.' As Hanshaw was an offworlder, going to the notoriously insular Cyanese authorities was pointless. She agreed to help the pirates.

She hoped that it would all end without bloodshed, that the conservative Captain Torsa would surrender when his ship misjumped into an ambush. That hope ended when the jump drive exploded. Hanshaw was in her shuttle adjacent to engineering section when the explosion happened, and saw everything through the thick viewport. She watched as her co-conspirator Felmar tried to insert a new jump solution into the drive, watched when Chief Engineer Eco noticed Felmar's fumblings... and watched in horror as Felmar panicked and blew up the engineering section.

Now, she's trapped. If she doesn't complete her mission for Hroal Irontooth, they'll kill her daughter. If she tries to alert the captain, then Salvesdes' programming will kick in and he'll kill her... but there's so much blood on her hands now that she can't bring herself to go through with the crime. She wants to find a way out – preferably, a way that doesn't send her to a military prison or an airlock.

Launch Pilot Henshaw
Age 30, 3 terms
STR 6   DEX 10 END 4   INT 7   EDU 7   SOC 4
Admin 0, Astrogation 1, Comms 1, Computers 0, Gunnery (turret) 1, Pilot (spacecraft) 1, Pilot (small craft) 2, Mechanic 1.

Playing Henshaw:
- You made a mistake when you let Hroal's men intimidate you, and you made a bigger mistake when you let Felmar kill so many of your crewmates. You want to make amends, but don't know how.
- You've been a wanderer, bouncing from one starport to another. You're most at home with travellers and vagabonds, and find the strait-laced naval crew boring. Bond with the player characters.
- Your daughter is your anchor. She's currently at a boarding school on Cyan.

Using Henshaw:
- If the players befriend Henshaw, then she turns to them to help her escape her predicament.

Encounters & Events

Timing on these events is left deliberately loose, but they happen in the following order. They all assume inaction on the part of the player characters – obviously, if the players stop Salvesdes or intercept the ship themselves, then events will play out very differently.

Jump Restrictions (Before Leaving Arunisiir): Captain Torsa inspects the repaired jump engines, and decides not to push them. He announces that the ship will only be making two-parsec jumps until she's fully repaired. Instead of jumping directly to Tech-World, she's travel via Acrid to Exe, then Tech-World, then Ergo, and then Byrni. The news is greeted with grumbling from the crew, as it adds several weeks to the journey.

- This change in route gives the players several more opportunities to intercept the Martin II.
- See Voyage to the Hierate, page 16, for details on each system along the way.

Grumbling on the Lower Decks: Many of the crew, notably Cargo Chief Niven, feel that the Martin II is too badly damaged and the crew too demoralised to complete the mission. They argue that the Treasure Ship should turn back and return to Tobia – another ship can carry their cargo to the Aslan Hierate. The captain refuses to listen to any such suggestions.

- The pirates can use this growing dissent to make allies among the crew.

Co-Ordinated Jumps

Travel through jump space is always uncertain. The vagaries of the little-understood alternate phenomenon mean that even if two ships depart at exactly the same moment, they may precipitate back into realspace at different times. A jump takes, on average, 148+6d6 hours. This makes convoy travel and co-ordinated attacks problematic – a freighter might arrive thirty-six hours ahead of its escort. Ships can also end up widely scattered. One ship might appear right on the 100-diameter jump limit, and its escort might arrive a few light-minutes out.

It is possible to make co-ordinated jumps that allow multiple ships to jump together, so they all arrive at the same place at the same time. Making a co-ordinated jump gives a -1DM to the Astrogation check (-2 if the two ships are more than 500 dtons apart in size, -3 or -4 if the proposed jump is especially tricky or if lots of ships are involved).

Ships in a co-ordinated jump do not exist in the same jump bubble – they still spend a week alone in a bubble universe, and cannot communicate or interact with each other in jump space.

Seizing the Treasure Ship

Instead of stealing some of the cargo or attacking the Martin II, the player characters may prefer to steal the whole ship. To do so, they need to:

- Eliminate or suborn the crew
- Seize control of the bridge
- Override the ship's security systems (Formidable (-6) Computer security)

The vault can be opened by the Drinaxian scientists of the Scholar's Tower, using similar TL15 techniques to those used by the GeDeCo conspirators. Selling the Treasure Ship is impossible, but the pirates can use it as a pirate ship or strip it for parts.

The New Plan (Before Exe): Salvesdes and Henshaw meet secretly in Henshaw's launch on the engineering deck, and decide on a new approach – or, rather, another attempt at their old approach. They need to make sure that the Martin II jumps into Hroal's ambush. Henshaw knows astrogation, so she can calculate the necessary course, but neither of them have access to the ship's jump engines or navigation computer.

- If the player characters are nearby, they can spot the meeting and eavesdrop.

Killing Laffit (Before Exe): After Henshaw completes the jump calculations and gives them to Salvesdes, the marine goes to the quarters of assistant navigator Ven Laffit and kills him. He then takes Laffit's log-in codes to the ship's navigation computer.

- Salvesdes uses a silenced body pistol to kill Laffit.
- If possible, Salvesdes tries to set up a distraction or frame the player characters for the crime.
- If Laffit is not in his quarters, then Salvesdes roams the ship until he finds him and then waits for an opportunity to strike. This means that the murder may take place near wherever the pirates are.

Seizing the Bridge: Finally, Salvesdes takes his battle dress from the locker on the crew deck, exits the ship via the airlock on that level and then walks along the hull to the uppermost level. He enters the ship again by forcing open the launch bay airlock and storms the bridge, killing Habinar and Smith.. He inputs the new jump co-ordinates and activates the jump engines.

- A successful Intelligence + Social Science test confirms that Salvesdes is under some sort of mental compulsion, like a post-hypnotic conditioning or telepathic control.
- Salvesdes goes via the airlock to avoid attracting attention (walking to the bridge in battle dress is pretty much the definition of 'attracting attention'). If the pirates are shadowing the Martin II in space, they may spot Salvesdes leaving the airlock.

- It takes Salvesdes several minutes to cut through the airlock. While he avoids detection by the ship's security systems, the player characters can use this time to stop him.
- See Irontooth's Ambush if this comes to pass.

Trapped in Jump Space (only if Salvesdes succeeds): If Hroal's pawns complete their mission, then the Martin II is locked on course for an ambush. The crew have a week in jumpspace to prepare for their inevitable confrontation with Hroal's fleet.

- The Martin II has no chance of prevailing in a stand-up fight, and Captain Torsa isn't tactically imaginative enough to come up with an alternative. If the player characters step forward with a plan, they can save the ship.
- Alternatively, this is an excellent time to whip up support for a mutiny. Many of the crew argue that surrender is their only hope, but Torsa refuses to even contemplate abandoning the cargo to the pirates.
- See Irontooth's Ambush for the confrontation with the pirates.

The Second Debate: After Irontooth's ambush (or, alternatively, after Salvesdes' attempted take-over of the bridge is foiled), the crew's dissatisfaction with the ship's course grows. They elect one of the marines, the popular Jen Laral, to bring their concerns to the senior officers. Captain Torsa refuses to listen, and threatens to put Laral in the brig. He announces to the crew that the ship has a vitally important mission to complete for the good of the Imperium, and that nothing will convince him to turn back.

- If the pirates have infiltrated the crew, one of them could accompany Laral to the meeting with the captain.
- This incident can be used to stir up more dissent or spark a mutiny.

Jump Drive Blowout (After Exe): The damaged jump drive fails to function again. Fortunately, the safety systems work this time, so there isn't a repeat of the previous explosion, but the two Gazelle escorts jump away, leaving the Martin II to fend for itself until they return.

- If a player character is on hand in the engine room, a successful Intelligence + Engineer (jump) can save the day.
- As the Gazelles are capable of Jump-4, and only made a two-parsec jump, they will return in two weeks. Protocol dictates that the Martin II wait for them to return.
- If the pirates are shadowing the Treasure Ship, then this is an excellent opportunity for them to attack.

Escort Ships
Once the Martin II leaves Arunisiir, she is accompanied by two other vessels – the Gazelle-class escorts Arshad and Komino (see the Traveller Core Rulebook, page 123). All three ships jump in unison, using co-ordinated jump solutions (see sidebar). Technically, Captain Torsa of the Martin II commands the flotilla, although the other two captains are well aware of Torsa's limitations as a tactician.

2. THE THIEVES OF ARUNISIIR
Rumours are the lifeblood of piracy. There is little chance of finding a valuable prize by chance alone. Pirates scour the shipping registers and port schedules for clues about potential victims. They pay spotters in ports to track the movements of freighters and merchants; they shadow other ships as they go to and from the starports, looking for any sign that a target is worth the risk. In bars and dives across known space, rumours are traded and sold.

Some rumours are evergreen. Knowing that a merchant makes a regular round trip between five systems, or that a corporation has a mining base on a particular moon is always useful to pirates. Such rumours can be exploited at any time. Just lie in wait in the right place, and your prey will come to you.

Other rumours, though, must be acted on immediately.

The Treasure Ship *Martin II* was supposed to cross the Reach as part of a convoy of Imperial megafreighters and their escorts, but she suffered a critical failure of her jump drive and had to land on the backwater world of Arunisiir for repairs. The convoy carried on without her, leaving a single Gazelle-class escort in orbit to watch over the grounded Martin II. As information can only travel as fast as the ship that carries it, it may take several weeks for rumours of the Treasure Ship to reach the pirates.

The news disseminates out from Arunisiir at a rate of 3 parsec/week, roughly. So, if the pirates are in the Borderlands subsector, they hear of the grounded ship within two weeks; if they are in Tliowaha, it takes another week or two for news to reach them.

Rumours and Lies
All the stories start out the same way – one of the fabled Imperial Treasure Ships broke down and landed on Arunisiir.

The following rumours can be obtained in any starport bar or pirate den with a successful Intelligence + Streetwise roll. Rumours in italics are false. Roll a number of times equal to the Effect of the check to determine how many rumours the pirates pick up. The pirates can keep searching for rumours (or analysing news stories, which amounts to the same thing) if they wish, but each additional search takes 1-6 days.

The pirates can also pick up rumours at Arunisiir docks once they arrive, at only 1-6 hours per Streetwise roll.

Getting to Arunisiir
Depending on when and where the pirates receive the rumour, it may take them several weeks to reach Arunisiir in the Borderlands subsector.

Eight weeks after the *Martin II* lands, the rescue flotilla arrives at Arunisiir.

Rumours

11	An explosion forced the Martin II to land.	41	Captain Torsa of the Martin II is a marionette who got his position through family connections.
12	Her engineering section is damaged.	42	The first officer, Jagad, of the Martin II is a Naval veteran who favours other veterans.
13	Her chief engineer was killed.	43	The second engineer, Polo, is very superstitious.
14	*All the engineering staff were killed.*	44	The commander of the marine detachment, Harc, is a cyborg.
15	The ship's jump drive is damaged.	45	The ship's navigator, Osha, comes from the Reach.
16	The Imperium is sending a repair crew to fix the ship.	46	Tech-World is a lair of spies and strange creatures. Be on your guard there.
21	*She'll never jump again.*	51	All Treasure Ships carry a squad of Imperial Marines on board.
22	*She was attacked by pirates.*	52	*All Treasure Ships have a built-in self-destruct device.*
23	The ship is guarded by a single Gazelle.	53	The vault on a Treasure Ship can only be opened when the ship arrives at its destination.
24	*She's unguarded.*	54	*The captain has a key that opens the vault.*
25	The Imperium is sending another three ships to escort the Martin II.	55	The vault on a Treasure Ship is locked using an unbreakable mathematical code derived from stellar positions and jump data.
26	The rescue flotilla arrives in eight weeks.	56	*The vault is unbreakable.*
31	Every Treasure Ship carries valuable goods.	61	The Treasure Ship's route goes through Tech-World and Byrni.
32	The Martin II carries a secret treaty on board.	62	*The Treasure Ship's route goes through Exe, Falcon and Byrni.*
33	*The Martin II carries bioweapons on board.*	63	This rumour gets the pirates the ship data of the Martin II.
34	*The Martin II carries an Ancient artefact on board.*	64	This rumour gets the pirates the deck plans of the Martin II.
35	The Martin II has a consignment of gemstones on board.	65	This rumour gets the pirates the crew manifest of the Martin II.
36	The Martin II is a relatively small and unimportant ship.	66	The Martin II was sabotaged.

Twelve weeks after she lands, the repaired *Martin II* launches again and jumps for Tech-World (see page 18). If the pirates do not arrive within this time limit, their chances of intercepting the Treasure Ship are extremely remote.

Arrival at Arunisiir

Arunisiir (see Worlds of the Reach, page 20) has few of its own ships. Waiting in orbit, however, is the Gazelle-class escort Arshad. Remember to check the pirates' Standing with the Imperium – if their standing is -6 or less, and the Arshad identifies them, it will attack. The pirates can hide their identity from the Arshad with a successful opposed Education + Sensors test.

Arunisiir is a lawless world – once past the Imperial patrol, the pirates can land anywhere they want, although landing too close to the *Martin II* attracts unwanted attention.

Arunisiir StarPort

Arunisiir's Class B port consists of a few square kilometres of packed pseudogranite landing pads surrounding a knot of buildings. The Aslan invaders destroyed the old traffic control building. Today, the hulk of an Aslan Sakhai assault carrier serves as the heart of the port. Surrounding it are a dozen missile turrets – while Arunisiir is officially TL6, it retains a few high-tech industries and can produce surface-to-space missiles.

Six ships occupy pads in the starport.

- The *Martin II* Treasure Ship: The Treasure Ship occupies a pad on the edge of the StarPort. Access to the ship is strictly controlled (see Security Precautions, below). She obviously landed badly – her stern is supported by grav platforms, and her impact cracked the granite pad underneath. Scaffolding surrounds the damaged ship.

- Far Trader Fafnir: An Imperium-registered independent trader, owned by a husband-and wife team called Hral and Gila Zafnen. They've dabbled in piracy in the past, and were drawn here by the same rumours as the player characters. However, they've learned that the vault on the Treasure Ship is impenetrable, and have given up on their grand schemes of robbing the *Martin II*.

- Imperial Scout Service Ship (Type S) Whistlestop: This ship, crewed by an eccentric scout called Yan and his robot sidekick Bucket, served as a courier for the downed *Martin II*. Yan jumped back to the Imperium, informed the naval office at Fist about the crash of the Treasure Ship, then returned to Arunisiir. He sees himself as the hero of the hour, and can be found in the starport bar being bought drinks by the grateful crew of the *Martin II*.

- Far Trader Hopeful Wanderer: The Hopeful Wanderer, out of Acrid, is a fixture of shipping and trade in this subsector. If the pirates befriend her captain, a woman named Bel, she tells them that she spotted Hroal Irontooth's flagship lurking in the Exe asteroid belt (see Exe, page 17).

- Arunisiir Defence Force Ships Tiger and Lion: Arunisiir's home-grown ships are a mismatch of TL6 human technology and a few bits of scavenged TL12 Aslan tech – they look like eggs with grav drives. They're lightly armed and are no match for a modern vessel (no armour and a single pulse laser each), but they still bravely challenge any intruders.

Encounters At The StarPort

Timing on these events is left deliberately loose, but they happen in the following order.

Aslan Extortion: Arunisiir is a human-dominated world, but the aristocracy are the descendants of Aslan conquerors who landed some three hundred years ago. The Aslan are figureheads now, kept as pampered pets by their human retainers. Sometimes, though, the Aslan remember a little of their former pride, and act out.

The pirates are approached by an angry Aslan male named Ekaft. He tells them that their ship has landed in his territory, and that they must pay him a fee based on the value of the ship – a value he will determine personally by inspecting it. If the pirates refuse, then Ekaft threatens to have them thrown off the planet. It's largely an empty threat, but Ekaft can draw unwanted attention to the pirates.

If they accept, then Ekaft demands a nominal payment (100 Cr/ton).
- The main purpose of this scene is local colour, but it can also lead into local politics (see the entry for Arunisiir in Worlds of the Reach, page 20).
- Technically, the *Martin II*'s landing pad is also in Ekaft's territory. He lacks the confidence to demand payment from the Imperium, but if the players feed his ego, they can convince him to demand an inspection of the Treasure Ship – this is a possible route for the players to get onto the *Martin II*.

Wild Times at the Arunisiir Bar: Crew from the *Martin II*, the orbiting Arshad and the other ships at the starport crowd the bar. The locals at Arunisiir welcome the extra customers – Arunisiir is off the regular trade route. While at the bar, a successful Routine (+2) Carouse test lets the pirates befriend Crewmen O'Leary & Ilin from the Treasure Ship. This pair of hard-drinking rogues may tell the players that their ship is looking for extra hands, or even smuggle the players on board for a nice bribe.
- The bar is an excellent place to pick up rumours or introduce NPCs.

- If the players are stuck, then have Mechanic Polo approach them and offer them a job.

The GeDeCo Man: If the pirates are still hesitant about approaching the *Martin II*, then have them run into a strange offworlder in the starport. Aparo claims to be a passenger on the Hopeful Wanderer, and mentions that the *Martin II* is looking for qualified engineers. He's a broker in spare parts – if the pirates would do him a small favour, he will reward them with a 1,000Cr bonus. All he wants is a report on the status of the *Martin II*'s engines.

Aparo works for the General Development Company; he is here to ascertain whether or not their plan is still viable. He wants to use the player characters to check on the engines so he does not draw attention to the two GeDeCO agents already on board.
- If questioned, Aparo claims that he has replacement engine parts in his cargo space on the Hopeful Wanderer, and wants to find out how extortionate a margin he can charge.
- Investigation reveals that Aparo joined the Hopeful Wanderer on Tech-World. Breaking into Aparo's cabin/ questioning Captain Bel or hacking into Aparo's hand computer reveals that he is renting a warehouse in the starport under the name 'CP Computing'.

The Buzz of the Scout: A refitted scout (stripping out staterooms for extra fuel and cargo space) buzzes the starport, dodging past the vigilant Arshad to make a fast pass over Arunisiir before jumping out again. This scout belongs to the pirate retinue of Hroal Irontooth, and is here to check on his prize's status. Irontooth expected the *Martin II* to jump into his trap weeks ago.
- A successful Difficult (-2) Intelligence + Comms test lets the players detect a burst transmission from the Martin II to the scoutship. This is an encrypted report from Henshaw, telling Hroal about the explosion and asking him to be patient.
- If the pirates visited Theev (in Honour Among Thieves or some other adventure), then a successful Intelligence + Sensors test lets them recognise the scout ship as the Dancing Spider, a ship belonging to Hroal Irontooth's band of pirates. (See Hroal Irontooth, page 17.).
- If the players intercept the scout and parlay with her captain, Thedik Vance, then he may inform them about Hroal's plan to capture the Martin II.

The Imperial Cavalry: Three more ships jump into the Arunisiir system – the Gazelle-class Komino, the repair ship Henry Ford (Merchants and Cruisers, page 83) and the patrol cruiser Sincerity (Traders and Gunboats, page 118). The Komino takes up a defensive posture alongside her sister Arshad, while the Henry Ford descends to carry out final repairs to the Martin II. The Sincerity overflies the port (see below) before landing to refuel.

Within 48 hours, the competent engineers of the Henry Ford have the Martin II ready to take off again. After refuelling, the

Ford heads coreward again. The Martin II joins the two Gazelles in orbit, ready for her voyage to the Hierate.

The Sincerity is on a pirate hunting mission. Before landing to refuel, she scans every ship in the port. If the players have a Standing with the Imperium of -6 or less, they again need to disguise their ship or else hide to avoid arrest. The Sincerity has better sensors than the Arshad, so the players need to make an Education + Sensors test at a -4 DM to hide if they stay landed at the starport.

The Sincerity's pirate patrol takes her through the Borderlands trade route and then out along the Sindalian main – the players may run into her again on some future adventure.

Getting on Board
There are three ways to get on board the Martin II.

Getting Hired: While the ship's grounded on Arunisiir, they need deckhands and technicians to clear out the damaged sections of engineering and repair cracks in the ship's armour. Any characters with the requisite skills (Engineer (any) 2+, Mechanic 2+, appropriate Trade 2+) can get a job on the repair crew (earning Effect x 100 Credits).
- Repair crew workers are restricted to the engineering section, and cannot explore the rest of the ship. They are watched at all time by two armoured marines.
- Any repair workers that impress the officers (through roleplaying, or by having useful skills like Engineer, Computers, Sensors or Gunnery (turret) and who have clean records (or suitable fake Ids) can bargain their way into temporary contracts for the duration of the voyage to the Hierate.

Stealth: Sneaking onto the ship is tricky. All approaches are watched by armoured marines, and large signs warn that they are under orders to shoot to kill. A successful Very Difficult (-4) Dexterity + Stealth test is needed to make it past the guards.
- Once on board, the characters can easily hide in the cargo bays, which are only rarely checked during flight.
- It is much easier for a member of the repair crew to slip away and hide, requiring a Routine Stealth test.

Raiding: If the players want to abandon subtlety, they can just tool up with armour and laser rifles and try to storm the ship. The Martin II is protected by six Imperial Star Marines, and all of her crew have at least basic training in firearms. The local authorities also respond within minutes, sending groundcars full of troops armed with slug rifles. On top of all that, there's the Arshad in orbit with her ortillery missiles and assault launch. A direct assault on the Martin II is likely to be suicidal.
- That said, a small strike team might be able to sneak on board and then either storm the bridge or try to break into the vault, especially if backed up by a distraction.

3. Voyage to the Hierate
The Martin II clambers out of Arunisiir's gravity well, and takes her place between the two Gazelles. The Treasure Ship is obviously still damaged; she handles like a drowning cow, and the fresh paint on her aft cannot hide all the scars. A good captain would turn around and head for a proper drydock in Imperial space, but Captain Torsa is determined to see his mission through.

With her range restricted to two-parsec jumps, the Martin II and her two escorts pass through seven systems en route to the Hierate. In each system, unless otherwise noted, the three ships land at the starport, refuel, and then jump out again as soon as possible. On average, the Martin II spends three days at each port and another seven days in jump space, so the voyage takes around 70 days.

Descriptions of each system are found in the relevant Library Data entry. (Some systems are described in the forthcoming Demon's Eye adventure.)

Following the Flotilla: If the player characters have their own ship(s), they can try following the Martin II across the subsector. Following the same course as the flotilla for one or two jumps does not arouse suspicion, although the pirates may be hailed by the Martin II or her escorts – it is standard practice to greet one's fellow travellers.

Following the flotilla for three or more jumps, though, is suspect behaviour. Unless the players come up with a plausible excuse to explain why they are sticking so close to the Martin II, they may be intercepted and boarded by the Arshad.

Alternatively, the pirates can stalk the Martin II from a distance, jumping into a different part of the system and then picking up the Treasure Ship on long-range sensors.

Acrid
Acrid's caustic atmosphere can eat through an inch of armour plating in only a few hours, and acid storms and methane hurricanes lash the arid surface constantly, but it is still one of the more pleasant worlds visited en route to the Hierate. The population here is only a few thousand, clustered around the settlement on Sentinel Mount, the tallest mountain on the planet.

Weather control systems open a landing corridor for the Martin II and her escorts to land. This corridor is an unnaturally calm column within the raging storms.
- Daring pirates can attack while the ships are in the landing corridor. Moving outside the safe corridor means exposure to the violent winds of Acrid (which give a -4 DM to Pilot checks). The corridor is relatively narrow, constraining the movements of ships within it. The pirates have a chance to take on one Gazelle at a time instead of both at once.

- Attacking within the corridor means exposure to Acrid's four automated missile turrets.

Exe

Hroal Irontooth's pirate band lurk on the fringes of this system, waiting for the hijacked Martin II to jump into their midst. Hroal's band consists of:

- His flagship, the Meatgrinder, a 1,200 ton Aslan Halaheike pocket warship (Alien Module 1: Aslan, page 133)
- The Monkey Business, a 300-ton Bug-class Salvage Hauler with four pulse lasers and a particle beam turret, piloted by the uplifted ape Pirate George (Scoundrel, page 103).
- The refitted Far Trader Sindal's Shame, fitted with a missile/sandcaster turret and a twin pulse laser turret (Traveller Core Rulebook, page 118).
- The scoutship Dancing Spider (Traveller Core Rulebook, page 115).

Irontooth's Ambush

If Hroal's plan works and the Martin II jumps into his trap, then the Treasure Ship is in big trouble. She's outgunned several times over by the Meatgrinder alone, whose twin particle bays can punch through even the Martin II's armour. Unless the player characters intervene, then the Martin II is pummelled until she's drifting in space. The Aslan's forces then board the Treasure Ship and fight a bloody battle with the surviving marines. Hroal has no way to loot the vault, but he'll steal the cargo and leave the carcass to be picked over by scavengers like the player characters.

The Martin II appears some 45,000,000 kilometres away from the rest of the flotilla; it takes the two Gazelles the best part of a day to respond. By then, the ship is dead and drifting, but the vault is still intact. The Komino jumps out to bring word of the disaster back to the Imperium, while the Arshad tows the hulk to Exe. The pirates still have a chance to get the loot if they can find a way to break into the vault.

Hroal Irontooth

The Aslan criminal is perhaps the most aggressive and daring of the Theev pirates. The pirates may have encountered him during Honour Among Thieves – if not, they quickly learn that he is loud, aggressive and dangerous.

The pirates may be able to come to an agreement with Irontooth to split the treasure from the Martin II or form an alliance. Hroal expected that the captain of the Martin II would be able to open the vault. He was wrong, so he needs the player characters' help to get into the vault. Once they have served their purpose, he may honour his alliance or just eliminate them depending on his mood.

Purser Vaughan (see page 10) tries to get the fake treaty into the vault, or else plants it somewhere that the player characters find it.

If the player characters are on board, then they will be killed unless they can come up with a way to outwit Hroal or (more likely) change sides and form an alliance with Hroal.

The Battle of Exe

If Hroal's plan doesn't work, and the Martin II arrives safely at Exe, then Hroal Irontooth switches to his Plan B. His band outguns the two Gazelles, so he leads a direct assault on Exe, hoping to capture the Martin II by sheer force of arms.

It's a bloody battle. The Gazelles are armed with nuclear missiles, and the Meatgrinder takes the bulk of the punishment. Hroal's smaller ships dance around the fringes of the battle, trying to score a lucky hit on the Martin II's fuel tanks to stop her jumping out. The Gazelles keep the majority of their fire targeted on the Aslan ship, but the Martin's sixteen beam lasers are enough to dissuade most attackers from coming too close.

As the Meatgrinder approaches, she launches her ten fighters. Swarmed by these interceptors, the Arshad chooses to take a more aggressive approach. Leaving the Komino to guard the Martin II, she heads at full speed towards the Meatgrinder. Twin particle bays flare again and again, blasting the Arshad's prow to scrap, breaching her hull, destroying her weapons turrets – but the hulk keeps coming, and even in her ruined state, she is faster and more manoeuvrable than the Meatgrinder.

Hroal jumps out. The wreck of the burning Arshad tumbles through the empty space where the pirate ship was seconds ago.

With the loss of a big ship on both sides, the odds turn against the pirates. The Komino's nukes destroy Sindal's Shame. The Monkey Business retrieves six of the fighters, then jumps out, followed instantly by the Dancing Spider. The Imperial forces are victorious – but both ships have suffered heavy damage. The Komino is down to Hull 0, Structure 5 and has lost both beam turrets, while the Martin II is at Hull 30.

Tech-World

After the carnage of Exe, Tech-World's cool mechanical embrace is a welcome relief. The Martin II docks here for repairs if necessary, and the crew are given an extra three days shore leave.

The GeDeCo plan

While on Tech-World, Navigator Osha leaves the ship carrying the GeDeCo black box concealed in her backpack. Guided by her personal robot, she goes to a warehouse rented by a corporation called CP Computing. The players can follow her with Streetwise or Stealth.

Investigating with an Intelligence + Admin or Intelligence + Computers test reveals that CP Computing is a fake company – it's a shell created by GeDeCo. The warehouse contains a super-advanced TL15 dedicated supercomputer built by the engineers of Tech-World for CP Computing, designed specifically to crack the vault lock. The warehouse is guarded by a swarm of TL15 Combat Robots (similar to the Combat Drones described on page 95 of the Traveller rulebook, but with artificial intelligence and improved targeting and self-repair systems.

An android named Virgil oversees the computer. It refuses to divulge its employers. (Optionally – the computer determines that it needs Captain Torsa's genetic data to crack the vault code, so Virgil or Osha hire the player characters to steal a sample of Torsa's blood before the Martin II leaves Tech-World.)

Before the Martin II leaves Tech-World, Virgil sends a package to Purser Vaughan containing a small device. Activating this device opens the Treasure Ship vault.

Ergo
Ergo's a Red system, so the Martin II visits only the automated refuelling station before departing. Ergo is one of the last chances for the pirates to intercept the Treasure Ship before Byrni.

Byrni
When the old Empire of Sindal fell, it left outposts and colonies across the Trojan Reach. Some – like Drinax – survived and thrived for a few generations. Others collapsed into barbarism or decayed into dust.

Byrni ossified. The system was a major naval base before the Empire fell, and it stayed a naval base after the Empire fell. Even as the planet's technological base declined, the stalwart sailors of Bynri kept their ships flying. Loyalty to the memory of empire became the highest virtue in their society.

Now, the Aslan and Humans of Byrni are brave defenders of civilisation and trade in the Trojan Reach. Massive investments by GeDeCo rebuilt their crumbling infrastructure and upgraded their aging ships. Byrni patrols guard against pirate attacks along the Imperium-Hierate and Imperium-Florian League trade routes.

Byrni Patrols: The Byrni patrol consists of three Systems Defence Boats (Traders and Gunboats, page 92); a second patrol of another three boats is only 20,000 kilometres away.

The GeDeCo Plot: The final section of the GeDeCo scheme to plant the fake treaty comes into play in Byrni. The corporation influences the Regent of Byrni to order all ships passing through the system to be searched for contraband. Captain Torsa grumbles, but allows the inspection. The ship's vault will, of course, remain sealed.

The Treaty of Fist
GeDeCo's forgers did an excellent job – the treaty is identical to a genuine Imperial treaty, right down to the genetically-coded seals affixed next to each signature. According to the Treaty, the Aslan claim the right to annex any worlds in the subsectors of Dpres, Sindal, Tliowaha or the Borderland, on condition that they do not take any planet within six parsecs of the Imperial frontier. In exchange for not protesting these territorial claims, the Imperium is granted favourable trade terms.

Currently, the independent worlds of the Trojan Reach look to the Imperium for protection. The independents have no love for the Imperium, but they believe that the Imperium will contest any large-scale advance by the Aslan to protect its own borders. The Trojan Reach's status as a buffer zone between the two star empires is a major factor in interstellar politics. The treaty strips away that status, casting hundreds of human worlds into the maw of the Aslan in exchange for profit.

Such a treaty would not only panic the independent worlds and drive them into the embrace of the General Development Company, it would also stir up the anti-Aslan, pro-military factions within the Imperial nobility. Currently, Imperial politics is divided on the Aslan question, but the treaty would be seen by those opposed to the Aslan as a massive, unconscionable step towards abandoning the Reach.

If word of the treaty spreads out into the Trojan Reach, then every independent world will start looking for allies and support.

The revelation of the Treaty would not only help GeDeCo – it would also benefit the dreams of Drinax. If the players allow the treaty to spread, then roll 2d for every independent world visited by the player characters. On an 8+, that world moves one step closer to Haven. However, revealing the treaty also raises tensions with both the Imperium and the Hierate, dropping the players' Standing by 1d6 with regards to both empires.

A Byrni patrol vessel docks with the Martin II, and a team of Byrni marines, wearing the antique armour of the Star Guard of Sindal, board the ship. Notably, all the marines wear communications headsets that transmit all they see and hear back to their home base. They conduct a thorough inspection of all the holds, and then come to the vault. Surreptitiously, Purser Vaughan activates the control device obtained on Tech-World.

The doors of the vault swing open. The Byrni marines enter, over the objections of the Imperial officers present. Purser Vaughan is one of several Imperial crew who enter the vault to remonstrate with the Byrni soldiers. In the confusion, he puts the fake treaty on a shelf in the vault.

One of the Byrni marines is under orders from GeDeCo to look for any official documents, and she spots the treaty. If she picks it up, then her headset will immediately transmit an image of it back to Byrni – and once it's transmitted, there will be no way to hide it.

- If the player characters are on the Martin II, they may be in a position to spot Vaughan planting the treaty.
- They can also try stopping the Byrni marines.

After the vault is opened, tensions between the Byrni ships and the Imperial convoy are high. A shooting battle could easily break out, if the players push the situation one way or another. If the players do not intervene, then Captain Torsa decides to continue with the mission. The 'malfunction' of the vault is a disaster, but it's not his fault – he'll deliver the contents of the vault to the Aslan as ordered. He orders one of the remaining Gazelle escorts, if any, to jump back towards the Imperium at high speed to warn them about the opening of the vault.

Sink

At Sink, the Martin II is met by an Aslan escort flotilla consisting of an Aositaoh-class 1,000dton cruiser and two 800dton Ekawsiykua escorts. That is considerably more firepower than the player characters are likely to be able to deal with. The players have a small final window of opportunity to rob the Treasure Ship before it joins up with the Aslan ships. If they fail, the prize is lost.

Worlds of the Reach

Acrid

Life on Acrid makes the surface of Venus look like a balmy resort. The few thousand permanent residents of this world are primarily miners and industrial chemists working for the PRQ megacorporation, which also runs the nearby mining colony of Argona. Most of the planet is unexplored, and the miners recently discovered signs of bacterial life in caverns underground.

Patron: Gera Hollis
Reward: Acrid and Argona become Havens.
Mission: Both Acrid and Argona chafe under the PRQ's rule. Conditions on both planets are extremely hazardous and unpleasant, and the company treats the workers as slaves. The revolt of '38 improved conditions for a time, but now PRQ has decided to cut pay and increase the workforce on both planets by 40%, making already cramped living quarters into hellholes. The miners intend to revolt and declare both planets independent – but they have no ships of their own. They want military support from Drinax to fend off the PRQ's strikebreakers. The PRQ has two System Defence Boats at both planets, and will dispatch mercenary cruisers to deal with any resistance. The war for Acrid and Argona may be a brief one, but it will certainly be bloody.

Arunisiir

An Aslan ihatei and his retinue conquered Arunisiir three hundred years ago, but their descendants are now figureheads in the government.

Patron: Ekaft
Reward: Arunisiir becomes a Haven.
Mission: Ekaft is an Aslan landowner who dreams of reclaiming lost glories. He wants the pirates to carry a message to his distant cousins in the Hierate, telling them to come to Arunisiir and conquer it once again. Upsetting the status quo on Arunisiir will almost certainly lead to civil war, so Ekaft wants the players to fetch an overwhelming Aslan force.

Byrni

By rights, Byrni and Drinax should be natural allies, as both claim to be part of the old Sindalian Empire. However, the Regent of Byrni regards the Kings of Drinax as pretenders to the throne, and has so far refused all diplomatic contact... until now.

Patron: Regent Stoylis of Byrni, Lord Commander of the Antispin Star Guard
Reward: Byrni becomes part of the Kingdom of Drinax
Mission: Stoylis has heard through secret channels of Oleb's scheme to rebuild Sindal, and is willing to support the plan – but only if Oleb proves that he is worthy to rule. The players must come up with a way to demonstrate Oleb's wisdom and benevolence – two things that the King cannot be said to possess in any large measure.

Ergo

Ergo was destroyed by civil war between different members of the ruling Council of Barons, who squabbled over tax revenue from the newly-built GeDeCo starport. Today, it's a wasteland inhabited by barbarian tribes.

Patron: Imperial Scout Ballis of the No Stone Unturned
Reward: A favour from the Scout Service.
Mission: Ballis's co-pilot, a scout named Ferish, was in an air-raft conducting a survey of the planet when an anti-aircraft missile shot him down. Ballis wants the player characters to help recover Ferish from the warring gangs.

Inurin

Inurin is a prize world, nearly Earthlike, with considerable mineral deposits and rich farmland. The inhabitants – Sindalian colonists – all follow a curious religion that claims that jump travel steals the traveller's soul. They prefer not to deal with offworlders, as there is every chance they are husks possessed by demons. Another major part of their faith is the use of a hallucinogenic fungus, called Sarna. Production of the fungus is strictly controlled by the xenophobic priests.

Patron: Free Trader Laro Smith
Reward: A share in the profits, if any
Mission: Smith believes that sarna can be made into a highly profitable recreational pharmaceutical, but his previous attempt at stealing the secret of the fungal caves from the priests resulted in him fleeing the planet pursued by a torch-wielding mob. The Inurini now consider him to be the Prince of Lies and

he cannot return to the planet. He wants the pirates to sneak into the fungal caves and learn the origin of Sarna.

Tanith

Tanith was recently settled by a long-range colony ship from the Ayldem/Tobia system. The planetary government has applied for client state status with the Imperium, and the newly-built Class A startport stands as testament to their ambitions. Tanith is a jungle world, amiable to human life.

Patron: Councillor Abros
Reward: Cr. 100,000
Mission: Four ships – a scout, two traders, and an Aslan vagabond – recently left Tanith starport. After they departed, it was discovered that all four accidentally picked up stowaways. Specifically, all four ships carried away small primates called volays. The primates like to live in warm, dark caves, and find the air ducts and storage lockers of starships to be ideal.

Researchers just discovered that the volays carry a parasitic mite in their fur. On Tanith, this parasite is harmless as it is kept in check by its own predators, a form of local fly. Offworld, without the flies to eat the mites, the parasites' numbers expand exponentially – and in large concentrations, they are deadly poisonous to humans. All four ships could effectively be carrying lethal poisons. Abros wants the pirates to hunt down all four ships and eliminate the volays and the parasites. If they fail, Tanith may be declared a Red Zone by the Imperium.