



THE LAST
PARSEC
PRANAC PURSUIT

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PRANAC PURSUIT

This adventure is intended for a group of up to six characters of Novice or Seasoned Rank. Explorers taking part in this adventure work for JumpCorp and are part of a mission to an alien world where a previous expedition was sent and has failed to report back.

Their mission uncovers a primitive native race that has come to revere a series of alien probes in varying states of disrepair in their many villages. The team must help the natives repair these probes, discover where they originally came from, and eventually rescue their JumpCorp brethren stranded there.

OVERVIEW

On the outer edge of the Known Worlds lies the isolated Pranac star system. Decades ago, long range observations indicated the system held twelve planets. With more accessible clusters of star systems providing better prospects, JumpCorp had little interest in a single-system expedition.

About fifty years ago, the mysterious Triquan alien race dispatched the automated scout ship *Trasar* to investigate Pranac. *Trasar* detected a fledgling civilization on Pranac IV and descended to the planet's surface for a detailed survey. A fault in *Trasar's* weather assessment system caused it to miscalculate the severity of a storm covering the region. A lightning strike damaged the ship's propulsion and it crashed into a rugged mountain top.

Trasar continued its mission while searching for any kind of aid the planet might render. The ship sent out a wave of 50 scout probes. They were to contact the local population, called the jalur, and determine if anyone could help. The probes discovered that the jalur technology level was far too low to be of even basic help. *Trasar* ordered the probes to continue their surveillance and periodically attempt to advance the society so that it might one day be able to help. The ship

also ordered the probes to watch for any other interstellar explorers—Triquan or otherwise—that would be more likely to fix the *Trasar*. The probes scattered among the jalur villages before *Trasar's* communications system failed.

Two months ago, JumpCorp sent the scout ship *Distant Light* to survey Pranac. Unfortunately, the *Distant Light* picked up a glitch from hyperspace just before arrival. The glitch caused havoc in the starship's subsystems. The crew struggled for two days as system after system mysteriously failed. The crew managed to make orbit around Pranac IV, but a controlled landing was impossible. They set a distress beacon and piled into the escape pod. They knew that any search and rescue would be months in coming and they could only wait and hope.

The pod crash landed on a rocky butte, stranding the crew high above ground level. A hunting party from the jalur village of Craa saw their landing and soon rescued them. The jalur took the crew to their "sage" and treated them as both prisoners and honored guests.

The crew discovered the village's "sage" was actually a big piece of alien technology. Unfortunately, it shut down two local years ago when it was damaged in one of the periodic attacks by a rival jalur group, the nomadic Molil raiders. It took months before the *Distant Light's* crew convinced the Craa leader to allow them to repair the "sage." The crew hoped it would hasten their rescue and allow them to claim credit for discovering two new sentient alien species.

The planned repair took days of investigation and preparations in order to make best use of the crew's few tools and resources. The crew had to continually reassure their ever-watchful jalur hosts that the repairs would not increase the damage, or that the crew would somehow get the upper hand. Two months after the *Distant Light* failed to check in, JumpCorp assigned the player characters to investigate and stage a rescue if needed.

ACT 1: ASSIGNMENT AND DEPARTURE

The player characters receive their assignment for this search and rescue operation directly from JumpCorp. They may receive a pre-recorded transmission, perhaps relayed through a local subspace transmitter, or a personal briefing from an administrator. The instructions should include the following information:

A little over two months ago, JumpCorp ordered the scout ship Distant Light to make a preliminary survey of the unexplored Pranac star system. The ship is now two months overdue. Your team is to go to the Pranac system, locate the Distant Light and its crew, and bring them to the nearest JumpCorp station. We expect a report in no more than three weeks.

The Game Master may adjust the reporting time to account for the ship's proximity to the Pranac system. It is assumed to be an instantaneous trip to the Pranac system via hyperspace, since there is an astronav beacon there, requiring only the in-system travel time to reach the planet. The closest JumpCorp facility is JumpCorp Outpost/Depot 343.

The following information is also available to the player characters in the form of reports, video, and audio. The actual information is more detailed than this summary. The Game Master is free to invent additional details as needed to answer player character questions or accommodate their actions.

PRANAC

The existence of the Pranac system has been known for decades, but its remote location and lack of neighboring systems made it low priority for exploration until now.

The system has 12 planets of the following types (in order from the system's Blue Giant star): six rocky worlds, four gas giants, and two rocky worlds with an irregular orbit, suggesting they were captured after the creation of the star system. Many of the worlds have moons or smaller satellites as well.

There are no known inhabited worlds, though long-range observations indicate that Pranac IV and VI likely have the most viable atmospheres.

The survey is a precursor to sending a larger and more complete scientific expedition to assess the various planets and satellites for colonization, industrialization, and/or further exploitation.

DISTANT LIGHT

The vessel is a *Starshot*-class scout ship, in service four years with minimal modifications. It is highly reliable and resilient, built for operations beyond civilized space.

It has a crew of two humans and two robots, all of which are experienced scouts and surveyors.

The *Distant Light* is down to about 20 days of energy remaining, adding to the urgency of this mission.

It has a main deck with a cockpit, lounge, four staterooms, science lab, repair bay, medical bunk, and engineering. The main hold comprises the lower deck. Engineering also has crawlspaces around, above, and below the engines. It carries

ALTERNATE PREMISE

If the player characters are more the mercenary and bounty hunter types, JumpCorp hires them to pursue the *Distant Light*'s crew on suspicion they've run off with the company's property—or run afoul of some threat.

The heroes might also just be the closest recovery team, or could be on a different job when they detect the beacon.

WILDCARDS

✦ Characters with this symbol by their name are Wild Cards, meaning they roll a Wild Die and can take more than a single wound as described in *Savage Worlds*.

one escape pod, and is equipped with basic defenses and weapons.

The rescuers are given the schematics on page 7, as well entry and override codes in case they need them.

DISTANT LIGHT CREW

The crew worked together on three previous successful scout missions, all aboard the *Distant Light*.

Captain Stefan Wu is a veteran JumpCorp scout of 15 years. He is human, middle aged, and has a cybernetic arm, replacing one lost in a prior mission accident. He is fantastically curious and a respected explorer. He regards himself as an amateur scientist and takes pride in retrieving high quality samples from the worlds he surveys.

First Mate Janet James, otherwise known as “JJ,” is somewhat less experienced. She specializes in technology and anthropology. JJ is known among JumpCorp explorers for being the sole survivor of three risky scouting missions. Some scouts regard her as bad luck, but she continues to be successful, and Captain Wu clearly has no qualms about serving with her. She is defensive minded and cautious due to her prior experiences.

E-874 is a standard model engineering/repair robot with three arms and a short frame. It maintains the ship’s systems and provides technical expertise in the field. The robot features a variety of built in and on-board tools and cutters, and carries a small supply of basic mechanical and electronics parts. It jealously guards the ship from damage and threats. The crew generally calls it 874, or “Great Eight” when repairs or projects go better than planned.

S-331 is a specialized exploration and science robot. It is tall, stout, and humanoid, though clearly robotic. It serves as a mobile science lab and sample storage unit. “S-3” is ruggedized, with survival programming and outdoor skills. Aboard ship, it also provides general maintenance and housekeeping. The crew calls it “Smarty” after its almost arrogant and know-it-all attitude towards virtually everyone. It is a very fast runner and has basic defense routines.

All of the crew can use light weapons and have self defense training. They carry laser pistol sidearms and rifles aboard ship.

DEPARTURE

The player characters should pick up any equipment or gear they require before leaving for Pranac. They are expected to use their own ship. If they do not have one or theirs is not appropriate for this mission (such as size or recharge time), JumpCorp assigns them a *Starshot*-class scout. JumpCorp also provides any reasonable additional supplies and equipment the team requests.

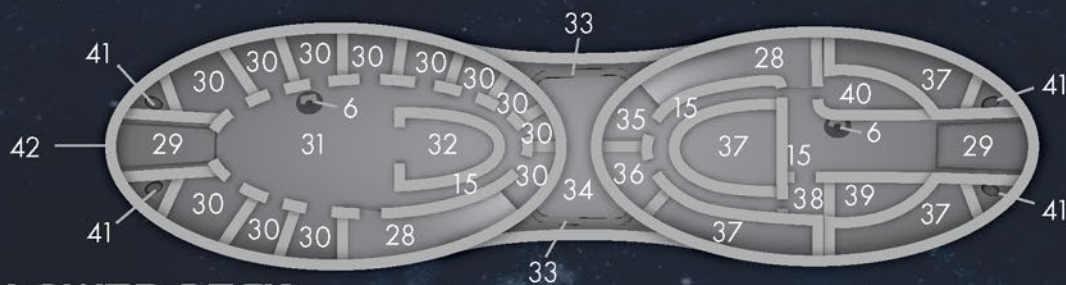
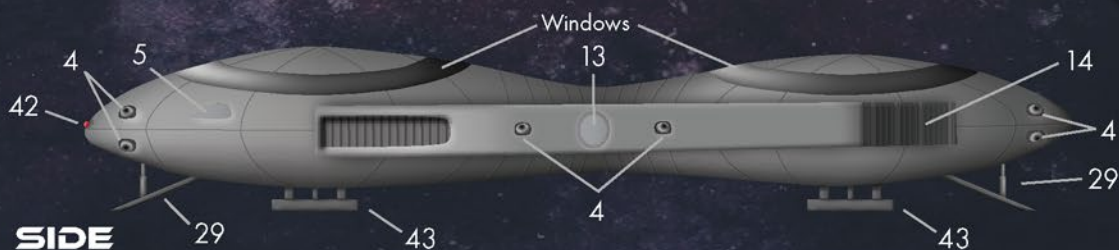
The rescuers may take ground or flying vehicles if the vehicles fit aboard their ship. They may be held liable for anything that is not returned in good condition, however. At the very least, they’ll have to talk their way out of the situation upon return.

The astronav beacon in the Pranac system is functioning, so the trip in consists of the remaining 2d6 days required to reach the planet itself (see the *Savage Worlds Science Fiction Companion*).

This part of the trip is uneventful unless their ship has quirks of its own or the Game Master decides to bring in a player character background, such as an Enemy.

After the trip and any sub-plots are dealt with, the rescuers arrive in the Pranac system.





Main Deck

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Cockpit (raised) | 11. Sample Storage & Storage | 19. Main Engineering Control Boards |
| 2. Lounge/Living/Dining | 12. Airlock & Retractable Docking Tube | 20. Science Lab |
| 3. Mapping and Analysis | 13. Airlock | 21. Medical Bay |
| 4. Maneuvering Thrusters | 14. Main Engines & FTL Drive | 22. Crew Quarters |
| 5. Retractable Lasers | 15. Corridor | 23. Captain's Cabin |
| 6. Ladder & Hatch | 16. Space and Environment Suits & Gear | 24. Observation Deck (raised) |
| 7. Food Storage | 17. Escape Pod | 25. Toilet/Bath |
| 8. Galley | 18. Parts & Droid Maintenance | 26. Machine Shop |
| 9. Shield Generator | | 27. Emergency Gear |
| 10. Sensor Suite/Equip. | | 28. Ramp Between Decks |

Lower Deck

- | | | |
|--|----------------------------|---|
| 29. Access Ramp/Airlock | 34. Ship's Systems/Equip. | 40. Damage Control Supplies |
| 30. Supplies & Storage (low head height) | 35. Life Support System | 41. Maneuvering Thruster Vents (from above) |
| 31. Large Cargo Bay | 36. Auxiliary Generator | 42. Emergency Strobe/Beacon |
| 32. Large Cargo Storage | 37. Energy/Fuel Storage | 43. Landing Gear |
| 33. Maintenance Tunnels | 38. Water Recycling System | |
| | 39. Water Tank | |

ACT 2: ARRIVAL AND APPROACH

Within minutes of arriving in-system, the heroes' communication system picks up the *Distant Light's* automated distress beacon.

It's not difficult to identify the ship's current location using sensors. The *Distant Light* is in orbit around Pranac IV and doesn't respond to hails or other attempt to communicate.

Once the sensors have had time to analyze the target a bit more, they show the *Distant Light* is largely shut down with only emergency systems running. There is no visible damage to the ship, however. It's in a slowly decaying orbit, but the characters can calculate that the drifting ship will enter the planet's atmosphere in three weeks.

Initial observations of Pranac IV reveal that it is a terrestrial world capable of supporting life. Extensive vegetation is apparent and some regions have energetic weather systems. There are no signs of civilization detectable from orbit. The *Distant Light's* life pod beacon was damaged during landing, restricting it to a low-power signal. It is easily missed on a cursory check from orbit unless the character's results are extraordinary. The *Trasar* and its probes are currently concealed and inactive.

THE DISTANT LIGHT

When the player characters get within visual range of the *Distant Light*, read or paraphrase the following:

The Distant Light appears to be in excellent shape, but it's dark, aside from a bright, flashing emergency beacon strobe at the tip of the ship's nose. It's also slowly tumbling toward the planet.

DISTANT LIGHT

Medium Starship: Size 8, Acc/TS 45/600, Climb 2, Toughness 27 (8), Crew 5, Cost C\$24M

Remaining Mods: 2

Notes: AMCM, Armor ×2, AI, Atmospheric, Deflector Screens, FTL Drive, Garage, Planetary Sensor Suite, Shields, Targeting System

Weapons:

- 2× Dual Linked Medium Lasers

The player characters may attempt to dock with the *Distant Light*, or board the vessel via spacewalk and spacesuits. Docking requires matching speed and rotation in precise maneuvers via a successful Piloting check. Failure simply means the ship misses the mark and must try again, a process that takes about 20 minutes. A critical failure causes a collision between the two ships. Further Piloting checks suffer a -2 penalty (non-cumulative) as the *Distant Light* moves and rotates in a new direction in response to the collision.

A spacewalk requires Agility rolls to cross between the ships and to latch on to the exterior tether rings and handholds. The characters' ship has adequate tethers to keep wayward individuals from floating away in the void.

The rescuers may use the provided codes to open the airlock. If the ships are not docked, the characters must pass through the airlock one (possibly squeezing two) at a time. Each full cycle takes three minutes. After boarding, it is obvious that life support and artificial gravity are inactive. The ship is powered down, with only minimal equipment preservation routines running. It is dark, except for the occasional indicator light or maintenance panel.

The Game Master should play up the suspense and eeriness of the dark, abandoned ship. Equipment and random items float in zero gravity and may bump into player characters or cause unexpected noises. The player characters can investigate the ship using Notice, Knowledge (Computers), Repair, Survival, and other reasonable skills to eventually discover the following:

- Nobody is aboard and the escape pod is gone.
- There are no signs of struggle or combat, but maintenance panels in every major compartment are wide open and repair equipment is floating about. A closer look reveals repair attempts to many of the ship's subsystems. Some repairs appear to be incomplete, while others clearly failed.

- The ship is salvageable with sufficient parts, though the rescuers are unlikely to have those on hand.
- A closer look at the subsystems reveals that some show signs of major electrical damage, burning out vital components. Notably, main power, the life support system, weapons, and defenses are unrepairable without parts.
- The propulsion system has shorted out but can be repaired enough to stabilize the ship's orbit, but not land. Most of the crew's belongings are still aboard. Some personal gear is missing, along with some tools and some of the exploration and survival gear.
- The ship's log is on the main computer. Video and text entries detail failing systems over two days, starting when the ship exited hyperspace. Each system failed one at a time as a weird power surge jumped from one to another. The lights flashed while doors and systems spontaneously activated and deactivated. The crew was unable to determine the reason for the surge. Once it hit the main power system, it set off a chain reaction of damage. The crew was forced to abandon ship when life support was compromised. They left details as to their intended landing point on the planet.

THE GLITCH

What really happened? A glitch, a semi-sentient energy being, boarded the ship while in hyperspace, via the hyperspace engines. It is currently trapped in the auxiliary power system.

Reactivating the system allows it to escape to another subsystem. Some characters may have heard of a glitch before and recognize the signs (Knowledge (Astrogation) or Repair, both at -4 as these creatures are extremely rare and considered little more than wives' tales by most).

The glitch wreaks havoc on systems while trying to escape and communicate. If the crew knows what they're looking for, they can detect its movements with a successful Repair check after it is released from the auxiliary power system. The glitch then moves from system to system trying to free itself.

The only way to get rid of the creature is to coax it back into the hyperspace engines and enter hyperspace. That requires the ship to be free of the planet's gravity well, so the characters should leave the ship in place and deal with the glitch later—after they've rescued the crew.

Main power *can* be restored to the *Distant Light* by running power cables directly from the rescuer's ship to the hulk's generators to "jump start" it. This is dangerous, however, for the glitch jumps to the hero's ship!

While it may cause havoc, the transfer also gives the team the opportunity to return the glitch to hyperspace after a two hour trip back out of the gravity well. See the **Glitch** entry below for more information, as well as its entry in the *Science Fiction Companion*.

GLITCH

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Notice d8, Stealth d10

Pace: 0; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities:

- **Accidental Mishap:** Each day the glitch is in the ship, draw a card from the Action Deck. If it's a black face card, the gremlin has burned out a vital system. Roll on the Critical Hit Table. The ship suffers no actual wounds, however, just the effects of the Critical Hit. A crew result means it has caused an accident for one of the crew (electrocution, an airlock incident, or even a private message blasted to the entire ship). Treat a Chassis result as minor effects with no lasting damage.
- **Ghost In The Machine:** Any use of the ship's systems suffers a -2 penalty due to the interference of the glitch, including gunnery, maneuvering, or jumping to hyperspace.
- **Removal:** Removing a glitch requires the crew to shut down every system on the ship except the FTL drive. Each 30 minutes a ship is powered down, the glitch makes a Smarts roll. If it succeeds, it locates the FTL drive and escapes back into hyperspace. A glitch will not exit a ship in normal space, even if the FTL drive is powered up, as normal space is instantly fatal to them. While the ship is powered down, the crew had best don spacesuits. Oxygen runs out and the temperature drops to below freezing in 10 minutes times the vessel's Size (see the Ship Size Table in the *Science Fiction Companion*).

ON TO PRANAC

Once the player characters have seen enough, they may proceed on to Pranac IV.

ACT 3: DESCENT INTO DANGER

Descending into the atmosphere is routine. The rescuers should scan for the escape pod's emergency beacon, but it's unfortunately weak. If they obtained the *Distant Light* crew's planned landing area, they may use it to cut their search time from six hours to one. Along the way, they might observe native villages scattered across the landscape. The *Trasar* is shrouded in bad weather in a large mountain range many miles away and isn't detectable. It's mid-morning local time when the rescuers start their search.

If the characters stop at a village to inquire about any survivors (see **Searching the Rulwan**), they must deal with the first contact situation (see **The Village of Craa**). If successful, they hear rumors of unusual travelers falling from the sky near the *jalur* village of Craa. They can be pointed in the general direction.

The escape pod's emergency beacon is transmitting at very low power but still detectable using sensors or scanning emergency frequencies from up to 20 miles away. Once the beacon is identified, it leads the characters directly to the escape pod. The landscape becomes drier and more arid as they approach the pod's landing site.

THE ESCAPE POD

The escape pod landed in a vast, dry plain dotted with rocky outcroppings and sparse vegetation. On approach, the player characters may glimpse the village of Craa tucked into a ring of decaying buttes about five miles away. Light from the village makes it stand out in the early to mid evening, when seen from the air. The pod half-buried itself in the top of a small, spindly



butte that stands 130 feet above the landscape. It's too small for the ship to land on, so the characters must be dropped off or land nearby and climb up. A series of jalur-made ropes and crude ladders provide a winding path up. Some sections require Climbing rolls and the rungs on the ladders are twice as far apart as normal. A Survival or similar skill roll reveals the ropes and ladders are too old for the crew to have made them, and there is no vegetation to make them from on the butte.

The escape pod holds up to ten people in tight quarters. It is scorched, battered, partially crumpled and wedged into a crack on top of the butte. There are clear remains of a camp site next to the pod.

The pod sits at an odd angle, nose buried. Its side hatch points upward, requiring anyone trying to enter to climb up to it. The hatch is closed but unlocked. There is no power because the batteries are drained, except for the fading emergency beacon. The hatch lets in some light, but contrasts greatly with the dark interior.

It is initially difficult to see, but E-847 is pinned by the wreckage on the crumpled side of the pod, facing the hatch. The moment the first person enters the pod, it immediately yells loudly in a screechy, damaged voice:

"Stop! Identify! This pod is under my protection. You will stop...and...i d e n t i ..."

E-847 expends his last reserves of energy with this last gasp and can no longer respond. The bot can be extracted using power tools and equipment from the character's lander. The task was beyond the limited tools the survivors had aboard the escape pod, and the jalur. Its legs and one arm are crushed and unusable.

If extracted, E-847 can be partially repaired. It takes a maximum of a half charge, but can be powered up with an energy line tied directly to a ship. Its voice skips and screeches from its damaged voice unit. It is very defensive until the player characters convince it they are rescuers or show it their JumpCorp IDs. Great Eight can answer any lingering questions about the *Distant Light* once powered. It has only partial memory of the crash landing. It knows everyone else survived, though with injuries. It also knows they met some native sentient aliens, but didn't see them. The survivors went with them. Great Eight has barely survived on standby for weeks.

The pod's interior has been picked over and is devoid of anything of use to the crew. All of the emergency gear, food, equipment, and shelter are missing from their storage bins. One of the seats is bloodstained, and patches of oil dot the floor.

Characters may use Tracking or Notice / Survival at -2 to discover weeks old tracks leading from the ropes and ladders off to the west, toward the ring of buttes. Some tracks are human, others are clearly robotic, and many are alien—oblong, with clawed feet. Following the tracks leads them to Craa.

E-847 "GREAT EIGHT"

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Notice d6, Repair d10

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities:

- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken, doesn't breathe, ignore one level of wound modifiers, immune to poison and disease, requires Repair to heal, no "golden hour."
- **Magnetic Pads:** E-847 can walk up and along metal surfaces at their Pace.
- **Size -1:** This bot is 4' tall.



ACT 4: THE VILLAGE OF CRAA

Craa is built within a ring of tall spires and buttes. There are entry points between the rocky formations, but those are blocked by rough stone walls. Obvious trails wind through narrow gaps between the massive rocks. Each trail leads to one of four gates, each guarded by three jalur warriors. Read or paraphrase the following when the player characters first see a gate:

The winding trail is bounded on each side by towering, near vertical rock formations. The rocks have a line of precisely painted abstract circular symbols about four feet above the hard dirt trail. After turning a sharp corner, the trail opens up to a much wider area. About 100' ahead of you is a stone wall, about 10' high with horizontal stripes mimicking the strata of the adjacent rocks. The trail leads to a narrow, 12' ornamental gate flanked by unusual watchtowers. The right side has a single stone arch sitting atop the wall. The left side has two stacked arches. A creature hangs by four long limbs in each arch, in front of a black, circular disk almost as large as it is.

When the player characters get a better look, read the following aloud:

The creature is long and thin with three limbs per side. One set of limbs is stretched straight up above its body, holding on to a bar hanging from the top of the arch. A second set stretches straight out to each side, holding a similar bar. One set of limbs hangs straight down from its flat, long torso. Between its upper limbs where you might expect a head is instead a pair of long eyestalks. Each ends in a bright blue eye. One eyestalk constantly scans the area, in front of and behind the creature. The other is unmoving, staring at you intently. The creatures are clothed in yellow garments that shine brightly in the direct sunlight, and their skin has a light greenish, slightly scaly sheen.

When the rescuers get within 25', or if they threaten the jalur, the one in the lower left arch swings back, pushing the disk up and out of the way as it drops behind the wall to go get help. The others call out to the characters in a strange language yelling "Staaap" in a very strange accent.

They are attempting to say stop, which they learned from the survivors.

The guards and many other villagers know a few words of English. They can't pronounce them very well, and draw out and distort the vowels. The words commonly known are staaap (stop), guu (go), heeer (here), faad (food), wirteer (water), hort (hurt or dangerous), worming deesk (warming disk) and Meetaal Saag (Metal Sage). They pantomime actions (using any or all of their six limbs) along with speaking.

The guards recognize the player characters are likely after the survivors. They also know the survivors are doing critical work in the center of the village—attempting to repair the village's "Metal Sage," the alien probe. The guards stop anyone from entering without approval from Clal, the village leader. They order the strangers to stop short of the gate and attempt to hold them there until the third guard returns with instructions. If the crew waits, the guard returns 10 minutes later with a dozen jalur warriors to escort them in to the center of the village. If the rescuers take offensive action of some kind, it makes dealing with the villagers much more difficult, if not impossible.

THE JALUR

The jalur are sentient beings native to Pranac IV. They are essentially cold-blooded reptilian-like creatures that require external heat sources to survive. They are typically found in warmer climates, or at least those areas with a lot of sunlight. The jalur have many methods and objects to help keep them warm, and their villages reflect these realities of their existence. Cold jalur begin to lose agility and concentration if they become cold for too long. They have six flexible limbs which they use equally well, and their dwellings and buildings have handholds for paths of travel above as well as on the ground.

Jalur live in small villages across a variety of landforms. The villages usually function independently, though friendlier villages engage

in limited trade. Relations between villages are also independent of their neighbors, meaning one village might be on good terms with two others that are enemies. Most villages have a single ruler or ruling family, though some have councils. Aside from hunting parties and adventurous merchants, most jalur remain in the area around their home village. The Molil raiders are a notable exception. Jalur beliefs and customs vary by village. Despite their primitive culture, many are actually quite sophisticated and can pick up if the strangers treat them poorly, obviously underestimate, or belittle them.

JALUR (TYPICAL)

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: —

Edges: Two-Fisted

Gear: Daggers x2 (Str+d4), Throwing Axe (Range 3/6/12, Damage Str+2d6, RoF 1) or Spear (Range 3/6/12, Damage Str+d6, RoF 1).

Special Abilities

- **Cold Blooded:** The jalur suffer -2 to all trait and skill rolls in weather below 50 degrees.

JALUR (MOLIL)

As the typical jalur except with Agility and Fighting d8.

CRAA GOES CRAZY

The well-worn path from the gate winds through town. The characters pass tall, two or three story stone buildings and caves holding dwellings, simple shops, and storage buildings. The arches with black discs are repeated on most buildings. Some arches are expertly carved with a deep black disk, while others are utilitarian, worn, and scratched. They are currently empty.

If the characters ask about the disks, they are told they are warming disks, but may have some trouble understanding their purpose. Characters with Knowledge (Science) or Knowledge (Biology) realize the jalur are somewhat lizard-like and likely cold blooded. The black disks absorb sunlight and aid the jalur in heating up.

The trip through the village takes five minutes. None of the inhabitants are on the streets. They are all watching the repair effort. When the characters arrive at the center, or “Lurru,” read the following aloud:



You arrive at a wide, circular plaza encircled by three buildings with occupied arch disks. The plaza is jammed with hundreds of the alien creatures. They are all quiet and focused on activity at the center of the plaza. A few look at you with wonder, then return their attention to the center.

There you see a 10' tall dais with a 12' high, conical metal structure. It is clearly much higher technology than anything you've seen on this world so far. The structure sits on five short legs equally spaced around its base. Its metal exterior is weathered and pitted. One side is dented and looks like it once caught fire. The cone is dotted with shallow metal and glass domes and topped with vertical metal rods. At the base, you see several open panels. It appears that two humans are leaning into one of the openings, with their heads and hands inside fiddling with something. An ornately dressed jalur stands by, watching closely.

The escape pod survivors are working on the probe. They finally convinced the jalur to let them repair it in hopes of using it to quicken their escape or rescue as well as find out exactly what it is. This is their first actual repair effort after investigating and planning. If the player characters try to get their attention, the nearby jalur try to quiet them. The survivors are fully engrossed in their work and the noise from their

repair work within the enclosed space means they can't hear much else. If the newcomers make headway getting to the center, or just observing, read the following:

Suddenly, the glass globes on the structure light up and flash with brilliant colors. The crowd yells and hoots in excitement. You're unsure of what it means until you see the humans celebrating on the dais. Several panels slide open above the humans. The crowd goes quiet. Abruptly, two metal tentacles shoot out from the open panels, grab the humans and their gear, and pull them inside. All of the panels slam shut, and the structure launches straight up without an obvious engine blast. It rapidly clears the cliffs above and disappears to the north. The crowd starts yelling in shock, fear, and rage. Those who notice you turn angrily in your direction.

The guards quickly hustle the characters away from the crowd, then lead them into the leader's hall, which is one of the nearby buildings. They are soon joined by the ornately dressed jalur they saw on the dais, along with her entourage of around 20 guards and aides.

DEALING WITH THE JALUR

The leader's hall is a vaulted stone building ending in a circular room capped by a low dome. The room is decorated with abstract circular symbols similar to those on the trail and other buildings. A single symbol is painted on the underside of the dome. It is the most repeated and may indicate the village itself. The hall is lit by glass windows below the dome and around the perimeter, supplemented by candles and large oil lamps.

The jalur moves to the center of the dome, climbs up and hangs on the most ornate arch and disk thus seen. Characters making a Notice or Knowledge (Engineering) or Repair-2 check realize the windows above the dome are actually lens-like crystals arranged to direct the light towards the arch, no matter where the sun is.

The strangers are led within and told to stand on a slightly raised, well worn, large circular stone and face the leader. If they try to talk, they are hushed by flanking guards. They speak in jalur, but it is clear they are explaining where the humans entered the village.

The jalur struggles to introduce herself using very broken Universal. She is Clal, leader of the Craa. She has a much better command of Uni



compared to the others, but still has a small vocabulary. She welcomes them as “honored prisoner guests” but confusingly mixes the concept of honored guest and prisoner, as well as struggling with other words or concepts..

Youuu uthr worlders. Honored prisneeer gusts saaaay mooooore cooome see for thyy. Takk bak to far hooome. Theeey takk Meechanicl Saage from Clal and Craa. Youu now prisoneeer gusts of jalur of Craa. Honored vissiteers in sad hauull of Clal, weelcoome house. Youu whoo?

Once confirmed that they are associated with the survivors, she demands to know where the “Mechanical Sage” went. They want it back. As it becomes more difficult to communicate, she signals to a nearby guard. A side door opens and a small gilded metal cage is rolled in. It holds one occupant, S-331.

S-331 shows minor damage from the crash. It has conserved power by restricting its movement, though it is now on its last reserves. The jalur doesn’t trust the “metaal monstaar.”

S-331 knows a large number of jalur words and can translate to some degree. It knows that the survivors recognized the Metal Sage as an alien device and attempted to repair it after it was damaged months ago in a Molil raid. The jalur don’t know where the sage came from, and it never moved after its arrival. Some other villages nearby have similar devices, but not all.

If the discussion goes well, either the crew or Clal may suggest visiting one or more of the other villages to see what they can learn from their devices. She indicates some friendly villages occasionally swap stories or information from the probe, but rivals and isolationists may guard and/or fear it. Clal offers to send Priton, a scout and accomplished traveler as a guide. He knows some Universal and can serve as intermediary. The crew eventually learns he has only visited two other villages, but is considered well traveled. He has a crude map of the region. S-331 may go too, but needs charging after three hours of activity.

★ CLAL

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Universal) d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d8

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow (Major—the village)

Edges: Command, Inspire, Two-Fisted.

Gear: Ceremonial daggers ×2 (Str+d4).

FIRST CONTACT

When the player characters first encounter the jalur, it is a first contact situation. If they stop at any village other than Craa, they are the first off-worlders the village has ever encountered, aside from the Triquan probes. See **Searching the Rulwan** for more information on the attitude and reaction of each particular village. Language is a major barrier, but the jalur are quick to understand hand signals and pantomime.

At Craa, the jalur have been living with humans and one robot for weeks, so they know something of how to respond. However, they won’t know exactly how to react to any character that is obviously another race.

The jalur adopt the attitude of the newcomers. If they are aggressive, the jalur don’t back down. If the crew act with care, the jalur do likewise.

If attacked, they defend themselves, but must make a Sprit roll to continue fighting the first time any high-tech weapon is used (+4 if defending their village) or retreat into the hills.

Special Abilities

- **Cold Blooded:** The jalur suffer –2 to all trait and skill rolls in weather below 50 degrees.

S-331

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Jalur) d4, Notice d10, Shooting d6, Stealth d8

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6 (2)

Gear: Molecular knife (Str+d4+2).

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Additional Plating.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken, doesn’t breathe, ignore one level of wound modifiers, immune to poison and disease.
- **Sensor Suite:** +4 Notice vs sound, motion, chemicals, radiation and electrical fields up to 500 yards distant.

ACT 5: SEARCHING THE RULWAN

The surrounding region is the Rulwan (see page 10). It spans the flatlands from the western low hills of Rull to the eastern Wanwon river valley and from the southern Kirwo lake-sea to the northern rocky Vortol Hills and mountains. There are several villages to the north and fewer in the other directions. The rescuer likely choose to go north, following the path of the probe. If they choose another direction, the Game Master may create similar villages that may or may not have a probe.

The characters may travel on foot, by vehicle, or use their ship. Priton shows his curious explorer's attitude by enthusiastically boarding and examining any vehicle. He constantly looks at their equipment and devices, but is very respectful of them, using them only when told or if he asks first. He asks often, pointing and saying

"Try?" Speedy vehicles make him hang on with all six limbs. After 20 hours out of the sunlight, Priton starts looking for heat sources to warm up.

The team may go to any village they wish, and likely more than one. When they encounter a probe, they may learn or experience the following:

- The probes all look alike. Most are active.
- Inactive probes are damaged. Some might be repairable. All Repair checks are at -2, cumulative after every failure. A critical failure cause the probe to fry itself.
- Upon seeing a ship or vehicle, an active probe immediately powers up and flies to investigate. The villagers react with fear when seeing a ship for the first time, but react more strongly to the probe suddenly activating and seemingly abandoning them.
- If the JumpCorp operatives approach on foot, the probe activates when it notices high technology, such as weapons or equipment.
- If the rescuers try to communicate, the probe responds using the Jalur language. It can be convinced to answer some questions and asks its own, trying to assess any threat the characters pose and their Repair skills. If successful, the probe leads them to the *Trasar*. If it cannot travel, it gives general directions to the crash site.
- If things go poorly with the probe or local jalur, the probe might grab the most intelligent seeming player character and fly to the *Trasar*. The rest of the crew must follow as best they can, or wait for their friend to contact them if they have commlinks. The jalur are angry, confused, or relieved at the development, depending on the situation.
- If the player characters attack, the probe tries to flee as fast as it can. If it gets away and out of sight, it circles back around, and heads to the ship.





VILLAGES OF THE RULWAN

Below are the village names, travel time from Craa as known by Priton, location, brief description, leader name, treatment of their probe, and their initial attitude to strangers. Priton has been to Ranaa and Kortkru. He doesn't know if their probes are active. He also warns the characters away from the lands of the Molil raiders.

FERAA

Four days away. This dense village is so closely surrounded by an alien forest that the nearest clearing big enough to land a ship is two miles away. The probe is actually at the center of the clearing. It is a burned out shell, long abandoned. Leader Toru's ancestors destroyed it on arrival, fearing it as an evil being bent on twisting their lives. The clearing is evil and they believe anyone interested in the probe evil as well. A group of 30 armed jalur arrives 10 minutes after someone enters the clearing and tries to chase them away.

KORTKRU

Five days away. The villagers live in dozens of caves dotting many hills. The probe failed a year ago and the villagers placed it in an underground stone tomb. Priton is friends with the leader, Aloko. With the newcomers' help, Priton may persuade or bribe her to let the characters see the tomb. If they manage to convince Aloko that it's repairable, she allows them to lift the decorated stone slabs covering the vault. The probe can be fixed with a Repair roll at -4 and six hours (half that with a raise). Unfortunately, its propulsion system is burned out.

RANAA

Three days away. This large village sits on the open plain, almost surrounded by a large lake and protected by a wall on the landward side. The probe is active but heavily damaged and considered too frail and valuable to trust regular jalur to talk with it. It is kept in a fortified octagonal building.

The leader, Nopp, saw the Craa probe fly from the south. He fears theirs might also fly away and resists letting the strangers see it. Nopp is on good terms with Priton, and there is minor trade with Craa. Priton tries to prevent the player characters from ruining the relationships.

VORTRAA

Seven days away. This is a village on a large open hilltop, at the edge of the mountains. Its wooden buildings are short and arranged in concentric rings centered on the top of the hill.

The probe towers over the center, sitting on a 20' tall wood-like structure, with a stair and wooden platform at its base. Their leader is Graol. The probe is revered as a god, which the jalur guard jealously. They are very defensive and quick to threaten anyone getting too close.

Nearby is the wreckage of a crashed spaceship. It is old and unrepairable, but its battery can be used to give constructs a full charge before it finally expires.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE RULWAN

Draw a card each time the group heads toward a village and consult the table below to see what they run into. If the card is a Joker, draw two more cards and combine the results.

Card	Obstacle
Ace	Thunderstorm: A huge but isolated thunderstorm drenches the team. Wind whips them, lightning brightens the sky, and the thunder rolls cross the landscape. If they linger, a lightning strike hits nearby or a tornado passes within a few miles of the heroes.
King	Sparklestone: The group spies a large shard of clear crystal the jalur use in some windows and other items. It doesn't look like it belongs in the area, but perhaps dropped on or near the road. The heroes can use it to barter for food or items in friendly villages.
Queen	Stuck in the Mud: The lead hero's foot suddenly punches through the trail or road surface to expose a hollow area below. A successful Agility roll at -2 allows the character to pull back, otherwise, he falls through the shallow hollow (about six feet) and into a sticky, muddy mess, likely needing help to get out. Perhaps something else lurks down there as well.
Jack	Distant Raider Camp: A band of two dozen Molil raiders are camped in the distance near the road ahead of the heroes. The raiders leave the following dawn, heading away from the road.
Ten	Survivors: 1d4 injured jalur survivors of a Molil raid are struggling to get to the next village. The attack might have been recent, or many days ago, as needed. The jalur are cautious but grateful for aid. They flee if attacked or threatened.
Nine	A Road Less Traveled: The road/trail the heroes are using becomes very poor for several miles, causing the heroes to lose the track (requiring a Tracking roll at -4 to find it again).
Eight	Traders: 2d4 jalur merchants approach the heroes from the nearest village (unless it is the village they just left). Roll on the Reaction Table in <i>Savage Worlds</i> to see how they respond to what is likely their first encounters with alien beings.
Seven	Discarded Equipment: The heroes run across an old tent, damaged jalur tools, or other abandoned items. If repaired, the equipment can be traded in friendly villages. Not all can be fixed.
Six	Broken Weapon: The heroes find broken spears, arrows, bows or other simple damaged weapons. If repaired, the weapons can be traded in friendly villages.
Five	Craa Hunting Party: A party of eight jalur from Craa cross the road ahead of the rescuers. If any Craa jalur are with the heroes, the lead hunter knows him or her. They've been on the hunt for many days and don't know what has transpired in Craa.
Four	Unknown Jalur Hunting Party: A hunting party of 3d4 jalur overtakes or passes near the heroes. They are from a nearby village other than Craa. Roll on the Reaction Table in <i>Savage Worlds</i> to see how they respond to what is likely their first encounters with alien beings. They defend themselves and only attack if they have greater numbers.
Three	Trasarian Grazer: A large herd of grazers crosses the road ahead, blocking the way. The herd ignores the heroes and all eventually pass after about 10 minutes. If startled, the herd stampedes away from the strangers, aside from two bulls that charge to protect the herd. Use the Grazer stats from the <i>Science Fiction Companion</i> .
Two	Molil Raider Surprise Attack: 3d4+1 jalur Molil raiders ambush the heroes on the road or when camped. They are more interested in taking equipment than killing the prey. They try to make off with the best of whatever is at hand, using their superior speed to try and escape if they sense they are outmatched.



ACT 6: TRASAR

Once the rescue team learns the location of the *Trasar*, or follows a probe, they can search for the mountain crash site. Priton wants to go along to see the probe delivered back to Craa. The ship is an hour's flight time from Vortraa. Thirty minutes in, the weather turns atrocious. Severe wind batters the ship. The mountains are always clouded over and visibility is extremely poor. Any probe they follow disappears into the storm. They may fly high over the weather and try to drop down, or brave crashing into a mountainside. Sensors can help. Failed Piloting rolls result in near misses with a mountain or severe wind blows them off course. Two consecutive failures cause the ship to scrape the top of a mountain, causing 3d6 collision damage. If the group waits for the storm to clear, it lessens several hours later, but the mountain remains shrouded in clouds. Their approach is easier, however, as the winds are reduced, and visibility slightly increased.

When scanners eventually detect the *Trasar*, the team discovers it is a circular disk about 100 feet across, two stories tall, and two-thirds buried in snow and ice. It's tilted down towards the valley, so they must make a landing on a precarious, snow covered ledge just above.

A large hatch faces the ledge atop a tall icy bank about a mile across. Warm protective clothing, eye protection, and climbing gear or rope is recommended. Visibility remains poor and the strong wind and blowing snow slows movement to a crawl. Have each character make a Survival roll (–2 without snow gear). Those who fail suffer Fatigue until they spend at least twenty minutes out of the cold. A critical failure means the character suffers a fall for 3d6 damage, unless the group used rope or other precautions—in which case he's just Fatigued from **Bumps and Bruises** (see **Hazards** in *Savage Worlds*).

Once at the hatch, it opens on its own and closes with a menacing, echoing thud once the entire group is inside.

Read the following aloud:

The hatch and airlock are big enough for the probes to fly through. Once inside, you pass through a 20 foot long hall and enter a large chamber that seems to take up most of the ship's interior. It is very wide, about 15' high at the edges, and the ceiling slopes up while the floor slopes down. It is dimly lit, but it doesn't appear to have a proper floor. Much of the upper half is filled with empty suspended racks, one of which holds the probe from Craa. Below you appear to be rows of large containers and many large glowing cylinders.

In the center is a raised platform 15' across that is almost equal to your level. It is surrounded by eight additional platforms cantilevered on massive braces at various heights. Some platforms are brightly lit, and you see humanoid figures working on one of them. A booming voice announces, "Welcome, travelers and mechanics. I am Trasar of the Triquan. Damaged systems are identified on the lighted platforms. It is to your advantage to proceed with repairs with all haste."

The voice is the ship's artificial intelligence, and it is lying. Only the survivors of the *Distant Light* and the player characters are aboard. If any crew were taken by a probe, they are also on the platform. The ship speaks Universal. It apologizes that its floating maintenance platforms are worn out and urges the "repair crew" to traverse the cluttered floor and climb the central pedestal. Any attempt to ask the ship why the repairs are "to their advantage" is responded with "Repair first, then reward."

The ship says it won't let the characters out until repairs are complete. It points out that heat, food, and water may all become an issue if they don't work quickly. The survivors are out of the little food they had. Breaking through the hatch requires cutting devices from the ship, and even then it is slow going.

Characters traversing the chamber floor must wind their way through the boxes and tubes. The boxes are cold and locked, but the tubes are transparent. When they pass, the characters can

see an alien creature floating inside, dead. Most of the tubes have other bodies but some are empty. These are the specimens the probe collected in its travels. It intends to add at least two humans and at least one of any other race it encounters. There are no jalur. The characters also find broken and worn out multi-armed maintenance robots scattered around.

Repairing the ship's damaged systems requires climbing the central platform. The survivors are overjoyed to see them. They are banged up, hungry, and thirsty. They agreed to repair the ship if it took them back to civilized space.

The ship's damaged systems are propulsion, sensors, and communications. It takes at least six hours using the unusual tools provided (half that time with a raise) to fix each one. Attempts at sabotage require an opposed Smarts check with the AI or are detected immediately.

When repairs are complete on a given system, the maintenance panels slide shut. When the communications system is repaired, the *Trasar* recalls all probes. The first two arrive within 15 minutes and another every thirty minutes thereafter. They dock at the hanging racks. The ship waits to take off until at least 20 probes return.

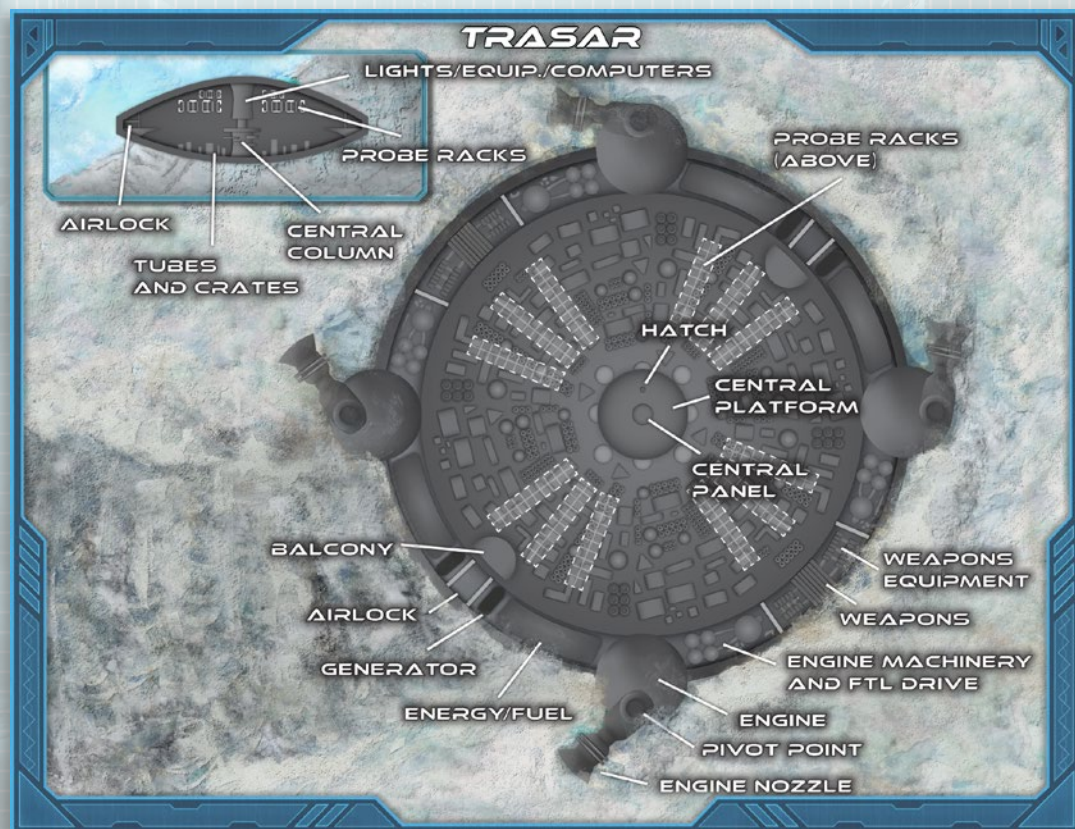
Once all repairs are finished, *Trasar* says "stand by for your reward." Suddenly, the Craa probe (and one more per player character) activates and attempts to Grapple (see *Savage Worlds Deluxe*). With a raise, the probe moves to one of the transparent tubes and shoves the victim inside! It's impossible to climb out given the tight fit, and the next round a thick green gel starts filling the tube from grates in the bottom. Two rounds later, the gel reaches the prisoner's head and he is in statis. A victim who breaks out recovers 2d4 rounds later.

Powerful weapons like lasers, guns, and similar weapons pierce the tubes, but they don't shatter easily (Toughness 10).

The probe(s) tries to capture one example of each different species. Once finished, it attacks the remaining characters.

The crew may escape one of three ways:

- Destroy the AI control module in the center of the pillar. It is accessible by a hatch at the top level, but requires the character to climb 15' down to the correct panels or somehow set off an explosion at that level. It only takes 10 points of damage to destroy the module from inside the pillar.



- Successfully convince the ship they can destroy it, or its specimens and/or mission sensor logs. (This might be a good time to use the Social Conflict rules from *Savage Worlds*.)
- Cut through the hatch or a portion of exposed hull. This requires heavy duty cutting tools and 10 rounds to complete.

If the ship can take off before dealing with the interlopers, it does, but it takes 15 minutes to restart the ship's engines and blast off.

TRASAR PROBES

The probes scattered throughout the villages are actually robots. Each one is 12' high with a conical metal structure. The probe has five short legs equally spaced around its base. The cone is dotted with shallow metal and glass domes and topped with vertical metal rods.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d10, Shooting d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 13 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Heavy Armor.

- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken, doesn't breathe, ignore one level of wound modifiers, immune to poison and disease.
- **Flight:** Pace 24", Climb 0.
- **Segmented Tentacles ×2:** The probe has two retractable metal tentacles for manipulating objects and retrieving samples. Reach 2, Damage Str+d4 (but it prefers to Grapple and capture targets alive).
- **Sensor Suite:** +2 to Notice vs sound, motion, strong chemicals, radiation, or electrical fields up to 2,000 yards. Includes low light and thermal vision.
- **Size +4:** The probe is a 12' high metal pyramid.
- **Storage Compartment:** The probe has a large storage compartment for samples and gear, able to fit up to three human-sized individuals.
- **Weapon (Stun Gun):** Any one of the crystal spheres can issue a stun ray once per action (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6, RoF 1. On a successful hit, the target must make a Vigor roll or fall prone and Incapacitated. See the *Savage Worlds Science Fiction Companion* for further details).

★ TRASAR AI

The ship's AI has no physical presence. It's spread out over the ship's many different systems. It maintains an advanced wireless network with the probes that act on its behalf.

Unlike some AIs, this one is fully capable of lying about anything it feels suits its mission parameters.

Attributes: Agility —, Smarts d12, Spirit d6, Strength —, Vigor —

Skills: Intimidation d6, Notice d10, Persuasion d6, Piloting d8, Shooting d8

Cha: 0; **Pace:** —; **Parry:** —; **Toughness:** —

Hindrances: —

Edges: Ace

TRIQUAN AUTOMATED SCOUT SHIP

Large Starship: Size 12, Acc/TS 40/500, Climb 1, Toughness 35 (8), Crew 50 (Robots+AI), Cost C\$53 M

Remaining Mods: 4

Notes: Atmospheric, Deflector Screens, FTL drive, Fuel Pods, Galactic Sensor Suite, Garage / Hangar (for the probes and storing captives).

Weapons:

- 2× Medium Auto-Cannons



★ CAPTAIN STEFAN WU

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Jalur) d4, Knowledge (Physical Science) d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Piloting d8, Repair d6, Shooting d8, Survival d8, Tracking d4

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Curious, Loyal

Edges: Cyborg

Gear: Molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2).

Cyberware: Replacement Arm (Strength +1).

★ FIRST MATE JANET JAMES

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Jalur) d4, Knowledge (Xenobiology) d8, Notice d10, Piloting d8, Repair d4, Shooting d8, Survival d10, Tracking d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Danger Sense, Luck, Scholar

Gear: Molecular knife (Str+d4+2), laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2).

RETURN TO CIVILIZED SPACE

If the heroes and survivors escape, they are free to return to their ship and depart. They may revisit the villages if they want, but are under no JumpCorp obligation to do so. They likely cannot salvage the *Distant Light* on this trip, but may do so on a future mission.

When the group returns to JumpCorp they are debriefed and should fill out any required Incident Reports. JumpCorp has some interest in Pranac, but is very curious about the mysterious alien probes and the *Trasar*.

If the team brought back pieces of either, or even better an actual probe, they are recommended for a commendation. If the *Trasar* was stranded on Pranac, JumpCorp might assign the group to return for a science and salvage mission—with heavier equipment if needed this time...