
TRAVELLER

THE PIRATES OF DRINAX

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THE PRODIGAL OUTCAST

'Conflict is the primary driver of Aslan society. Humans are instinctively non-confrontational except when threatened or unable to deflect conflict; Aslan respond to threats with threats, and embrace rather than deflect challenges. Every situation, every word is on some level a conflict to the Aslan mind. Someone must always lose.'

- Diplomatic Primer on Matters Pertaining to the Aslan Hierate, Imperial Office of Publications, Published in Deneb, 1010.

The Prodigal Outcast is the eighth 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. You should also review *Adventure 3: Ihatei!*, which also involves intrigue within the Aslan hierate, and includes rules for travelling through the Hierate.

This adventure takes place primarily in the Tliowaha subsector. The year is assumed to be 1105. The adventure begins on Drinax.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

War takes many forms among the Aslan. Without their codes of honour, without their traditions of ritual conflict, they would tear themselves apart in their insatiable desire for more territory, or dash their civilisation to pieces against the rocks of more powerful neighbours. They must sheathe their claws in custom to ensure they have a future.

To break these codes is to incur the wrath of an entire civilisation.

The danger of doing so is immense. The reward, even greater.

In this adventure, the player characters are recruited by Kasiyl. For many years, he's been an exile in King Oleb's floating court, a beggar-prince who refuses to talk about his past. Now,

Playing Kasiyl

Kasiyl is the lynchpin of this adventure. Ideally, the referee introduces Kasiyl to the players well in advance of starting this part of the campaign, so they are somewhat invested in his fate (*Adventure 3: Ihatei!* describes one possible such scenario).

While the referee plays Kasiyl as an NPC, make sure that he does not become the de facto leader of the player characters. This may start out as his plan for revenge, but it should quickly pass into the hands of the players once they realise that Kasiyl has bitten off more than he can chew (and for an Aslan, that is an awful lot...)

Kasiyl

Age 34, 5 Aslan terms

STR 9 DEX 9 END 10 INT 8 EDU 9 SOC 2 (was 12)

Diplomat 2, Tolerance 2, Carouse 0, Survival 1,

Leadership 1, Admin 1, Advocate 2, Computers 1,

Independence 2, Persuade 2, Streetwise 2, Social

Science 0, Space Science 0, Pilot (spacecraft) 2, Gunner

0, Mechanic 1, Broker 1, Deception 1, Melee (claw) 2,

Gun Combat (slug) 2

Armour 13 (Combat Vacc Suit), Eahkyasear long rifle (3D-3)

Playing Kasiyl

- Reveal as little of yourself as possible. Your past must remain sealed.
- You have lived among humans long enough to understand their ways – including their natural fear of Aslan. Use that to your advantage.
- Spend a lot of time meditating. Suppress your emotions.

he has discovered a way to reclaim his birthright. Kasiyl was condemned to exile because he murdered a noble of another Aslan clan, the Tokohfealrs. This murder was committed during a war of assassins, an Aslan ritual where members of both warring clans may legally assassinate each other, with victor going to the first authenticated blood spilt. These wars are overseen by Aslan judges called earleatrais.

In this case, Lokharl the earleatrais declared that Kasiyl's kill was illegal. Instead of being a legitimate strike in a sanctioned war of assassins, Kasiyl had committed murder – but the rules governing wars of assassins are ancient and outdated, and take no account of modern weapons or medical treatments.

The Tokohfealrs won the war of assassins. To avoid an escalation of the war, Kasiyl was sentenced to exile.

Everything hinged on the controversial decision of the earleatrais. Kasiyl always believed that the earleatrais broke his sacred vow of neutrality and deliberately favoured the Tokohfealrs. Now, he has a chance to find out the truth – the second-son of Lokharl, the earleatrais who judged Kasiyl, has come of age and is now adventuring in the Trojan Reach. Find that young Aslan, capture him, and use him as leverage to force his father to come clean, allowing Kasiyl to return to the Ahroay'if with honour – a simple plan.

And one that risks bringing chaos to the Aslan in Tlaiowaha subsector. When the Prodigal returns, there will be a slaughter...



THE TRUTH OF THE KNIFE

To understand the decision of Lokharl the earleatrais, and the size of the hornet's nest that the player characters are unwittingly poking, look to the complexity of relations between Aslan clans.

Start with the Ahroay'if. They were once a very minor clan, one of the first to seek out new territories across the Great Rift. They became a vassal clan of the Tlaiowaha, and prospered under their patronage. For a time, the Ahroay'if were used as warriors and mercenaries by the Tlaiowaha, whose fighting forces are infamously weak. It was the Ahroay'if who destroyed the old Kingdom of Drinax, when the Drinaxian kings threatened the Tlaiowaha trade routes.

In recent centuries, trade with the Imperium has made the Tlaiowaha even richer. Their Ahroay'if vassals have also grown rich and powerful, and fat and lazy, on their cut of the profits. Some elements within the Ahroay'if decided it was time to put this wealth to better use, and started preparing for wars of conquest, building new warships and training new troops.

This military build up alarmed the Tlaiowaha. So much of their fortune depends on trade routes that go through Ahroay'if territory. If their vassals grew too powerful, they might decide to change their relationship with the Tlaiowaha and demand a more equitable arrangement. The Tlaiowaha looked for a way to keep the Ahroay'if in their place.

They found it when the Ahroay'if launched an attack on a minor clan, the Tokohfealrs. When Kasiyl used a weapon of questionable legality, the decision on whether the attack was legal fell to the earleatrais Lokharl, of the Yerlyaruiwo clan.

The Yerlyaruiwo are the keepers of Aslan honour – very traditional, very upright, highly respected. Even they, however, are open to bribes from the bottomless coffers of the Tlaiowaha. The Tlaiowaha bribed the Yerlyaruiwo to make sure that Lokharl decided against the Tlaiowaha's own troublesome vassals, the Ahroay'if.

Shamed by the defeat against the Tokohfealrs, the warlike faction of the Ahroay'if fell out of favour in the councils of the clan. The Tlaiowaha's trade routes through Ahroay'if space were once again secure, and the Yerlyaruiwo's reputation remains intact – as long as no-one exposes the bribe paid to influence Lokharl...

1. THE HUNTER'S QUARRY

Kasiyl knows that Lokharl's second-son has left the protection of the Hierate and is abroad in the Trojan Reach.

He knows that if he captures the boy, he will have leverage over the hatred, treacherous *earleatrais*.

He knows that he needs a ship. He doesn't have one – the player characters do.

Kasiyl is an Aslan male; he was bred to be a warrior and leader, unconcerned with petty details like money or how things work. Even though he has picked up a few ranks in Independence (the skill that allows Aslan males to function without female supervision), he's still singularly ill-equipped to hire the player characters for the mission.

So, he turns up at their doorstep like a cat who has killed a mouse and wants to show you the spoils of victory. Pick some enemy of the player characters (either one created during character generation, or one they've made for themselves over the course of the campaign). Kasiyl drops the beaten and blooded foe in front of the player characters and announces that he has done them a favour; they should do one for him in return.

If your players do not have enemies, then either wait a few minutes for them to make some, or else have Kasiyl offer them something else valuable but unexpected.

The Exile & The Princess

If the player characters spend time on Drinax, one of them may see Princess Rao in deep conversation with Kasiyl. This whole scene is partly her doing. Does she have Kasiyl's best interests in mind, or is the ensuing chaos her design? Is she trying to cause chaos and strife in the Aslan Hierate to weaken them before Drinax makes its declaration? Rao's manipulations are further explored in Adventure 9: Blood of the Star Dragon.

THE QUARRY

Kasiyl explains that he wishes to speak to another Aslan, a young *ihatei* named Hwehalokharl, who recently came of age and embarked on a quest for territory as is traditional. His contacts in the Hierate report that Hwehalokharl arrived at the camp on Kteireo six weeks ago. Hwehalokharl must be taken alive.

Kasiyl initially refuses to explain what he wants with the young male, but if the players insist, he admits that Hwehalokharl is the key to restoring Kasiyl's honour, and that he needs Hwehalokharl to find the boy's father who wronged him. Any more than that is a private matter – although he does hint that

he will be in a position to greatly reward the player characters if they aid him (check out the Conflicting Stories sidebar on pg 7).

Finding Hwehalokharl: If the group has already played through Adventure 3: *Ihatei!*, then their decisions there determine where they can find Hwehalokharl. What happened in the camp on Kteireo? Are the young Aslan fighting on Fantasy, or Hilfer, or stuck in the ongoing war on Akoaft? Are they still sitting in the camp, arguing over which planet to invade next?

If they have not played through *Ihatei* yet, then you can segue into that adventure now, or just have Hwehalokharl be one of the many Aslan staying at the camp on Kteireo. Tracking him down once the characters know the right system requires a Very Difficult (-4) INT + Investigate check taking 1-6 months if the PCs have no more efficient way of finding him; give the players plenty of DMs for clever plans or efficient use of their contacts or allies. Failure means that Hwehalokharl has moved to another system before the PCs find him.

The characters may also obtain rumours about Hwehalokharl's movements and background with an Average (+0) SOC + Carouse or Investigate check taking 1-6 days each, with DM-2 if the characters have no Aslan with them. If they successfully obtain rumours, roll on the table below. Rumours 6- are false; rumours 7+ are true.

2D Rumour

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 2 | Hwehalokharl died in battle (false – he was merely wounded and has since made a full recovery) |
| 3-4 | A false rumour about Aslan <i>ihatei</i> raids sends the characters in the wrong direction (DM-1 to their next attempt to find the Aslan) |
| 5-6 | Hwehalokharl's flying a standard 100-ton <i>ihateisho</i> scoutship (false – he arrived on Kteireo on one) |
| 7 | Rumours of Hwehalokharl's current location give DM+1 to checks to find him |
| 8-9 | Hwehalokharl is part of the retinue of an Aslan <i>ihatei</i> from the wealthy Yerlyaruwo clan. They are flying a powerful 1,000-ton <i>Aositoah</i> cruiser, commanded by Teirlas. Knowing this gives DM+1 to checks to find him, as the characters can search for Teirlas instead. |
| 10-11 | Hwehalokharl's father is an Aslan of some importance – a respected <i>earleatrais</i> judge. His father's influence helped get him his position. |
| 12 | By chance, the characters arrive at the same time as Hwehalokharl visits the current system. |

TRAVELLING IN ASLAN SPACE

Refer to Adventure 3: Ihatei for rules on travelling in Aslan space. Restrictions on Kasiyl and the risk of assassins still apply.

During The Hunt...

Use the time spent hunting for Hwehalokharl to put the players into an Aslan frame of mind. This adventure is all about the balance between clans, between public and private perceptions of honour, between the instinctive Aslan hunger for territory and expansion and their increasing dependence on trade with the Imperium. While it's presented as a simple heist – find Hwehalokharl, restore Kasiyl to a place of power, get rewarded by him – the situation is actually much more complicated. Players who blindly follow Kasiyl's instructions will find themselves making things worse for Drinax and themselves.

CAPTURING THE QUARRY

Hwehalokharl serves on board an Aslan cruiser commanded by his distant relative Teirlas of the Yerlyaruiwo. That clan (as Kasiyl can tell the PCs, or as a character with any knowledge of the Hierate knows) are one of the most powerful and influential. Together with their allies and vassals, they are the single most powerful bloc in the Aslan ruling council, the Tlaukhu. The Yerlyaruiwo see themselves as the keepers of Aslan honour and tradition. They are also politically conservative, preferring to keep the peace with the Imperium and make small, incremental expansions of Aslan territory instead of gambling on all-out war. As the Hierate slowly shifts towards trade and industry instead of combat, the influence of the Yerlyaruiwo is slowly diminishing.

What that means, for the player characters, is that Teirlas is wealthy and powerful enough to be given a ship ten times larger than the average gift to a young male, that crossing him will have dangerous repercussions, and that he's unlikely to be willing to risk too much – he will not be raiding deep into the Reach, but will use his firepower and family name to claim a respectable territory somewhere closer to home.

Once the characters locate Teirlas' ship, they need to capture Hwehalokharl alive. There are several options for this, and the players may, of course, come up with their own schemes. If present, Kasiyl suggests challenging Teirlas or else shadowing and kidnapping Hwehalokharl.

Direct Attack: If the pirates can take down a 1,000 ton cruiser (Alien Module 1: Aslan, p. 94) with the vessels they have on hand, they can try attacking the ship directly. There are likely other Aslan ships in the area that will come to Teirlas' aid, so the pirates may only have a few rounds in which to incapacitate the cruiser. Teirlas fights on for as long as he can (surrendering only

if his ship is unable to continue, or if reduced to Structure 6 or less), but will hand Hwehalokharl over to keep his crew alive if the characters give him that option.

See Teirlas' Retinue, below for details on his crew and their abilities.

Infiltrate & Kidnap: If any of the PCs are Aslan, they can attempt to join Teirlas' crew by posing as ihatei or mercenaries and succeeding at an Average (+0) SOC + Persuade check. Non-Aslan may do the same at DM-4. Alternatively, the characters could break into the ship when it's docked or landed. From there, they must sneak through the ship and locate Hwehalokharl. His cabin is the second stateroom aft of the shrine on the quarter deck; when on duty, he can be found usually on Deck 2; Teirlas has converted the missile storage bay into a war room for planning ground invasions.

Shadow & Kidnap: The best, albeit slowest option for the player characters is to follow Teirlas' ship until it lands, then follow Hwehalokharl until they can grab him when he is vulnerable. Teirlas spends 2D weeks in whatever system the players found him in (likely the same world they redirected the ihatei too in Adventure 3), before returning to Tliowaha (Tliowaha/0308) for celebration. Shadowing the cruiser may require a chain of Pilot, Sensors and Astrogation checks.

War & Kidnap: Teirlas and his retinue are looking for a war where they can win territory. All the PCs need to do is shadow the cruiser until it lands, sneak onto the battlefield, and grab their target.

Challenge: A Difficult (-2) Territory + Diplomacy check lets the characters convince Teirlas to accept a challenge to a duel – he will hand over Hwehalokharl if the PCs put up something equally valuable in exchange. It'll be a two-on-two fight – Teirlas and Hwehalokharl against two player characters.

TEIRLAS' RETINUE

Teirlas has some 500 Aslan followers, between the hundred or so on board his cruiser, those following along in an Owatarl-class 600-ton tender that carries the bulk of his supplies, and a swarm of 100-ton ihateisho scouts. The loudest are landless males, second- and third-sons of wealthy Aslan who came of age in the last akhuauhrekhyeh ceremony, but most of them are older males from lower social levels who follow the banners of the richer young bloods, veteran female mercenaries who've fought alongside ihatei before, and a few ambitious female technicians and pursers from poorer families hoping to attract a wealthy husband.

Notable members of the retinue:

Teirlas: A scion of the Yerlyaruiwo, Teirlas was born to rule.

Thousands of years of Aslan history and honour stand behind him; he is the descendant of kings. The Yerlyaruiwo are perhaps the oldest and most respected of the clans, the true aristocracy. He stands to inherit vast estates deeper in the Hierate if any of his uncles dies without issue, so this whole expedition into the Reach is a chance for him to see the galaxy and have some fun, not the life-of-death scrabble for territory it is for others. He's therefore fascinated by humans and other strange creatures, and is eager to learn more about life outside the Hierate.

If the player characters cross him or attack him, though, he will strike back with the full fury of his clan.

Playing Teirlas: You are a warrior prince, born with a silver spoon in your mouth and an ancestral sword in your claw. You are the chosen one.

Age 16, 0 Aslan terms

STR 11(17) DEX 9 (12) END 8 INT 9 EDU 10 SOC 13
Battle Dress 1, Leadership 1, Gun Combat (slug) 2, Jack-of-all-Trades 1, Tactics 0, Drive 0, Melee 0, Tolerance 0
Armour 19 (TL14 Aslan Battle Dress), Autorifle (3D)

Hwehalokharl: As befitting the son of a respected earleatrais,



Hwehalokharl is a studious young Aslan, always with his snout buried in a scroll. He was lucky to meet up with Teirlas, and hopes that their association will last beyond this expedition – a place in Teirlas' court as a councillor or envoy would be ideal for him. He knows Kasiyl's case – he's studied his father's career – and remembers that there were several meetings with senior emissaries from other clans, which is unusual, as such cases are normally decided only by consultation with tala'tyao and tala'si'khiraeohaor, scrolls of the ancestors and scrolls of precedent.

He considers non-Aslan to be unpredictable, uncultured barbarians who commit random acts of violence, and the only safe and sane response is to get away from them as quickly as possible.

Playing Hwehalokharl: Be slightly self-effacing, nervous, even nerdy. Then remind the humans that you're a seven-foot-tall alien bred for war.

Age 22, 2 Aslan terms

STR 9 DEX 8 END 7 INT 10 EDU 10 SOC 9
Diplomat 1, Melee (Claw) 1, Advocate 1, Gun Combat (Slug) 1, Social Science (history) 2, Stealth 1, Tolerance 1
Armour 9 (Combat Vacc Suit) Autorifle (3D)



Eastekh: Not all of the ihatei are young nobles; Eastekh has twenty years of battle experience on Teirlas. He is one of the host of veteran warriors who sign on with whatever ihatei has ships and guns to supply them. He's notoriously unlucky to have never won his own territory despite all the wars and campaigns he's fought in – it's not for lack of courage or fighting skill. His lack of territory makes him morose and prone to depression, but he is terrifyingly fierce when roused.

Playing Eastekh: Always look on the dark side. Always anticipate what is going to go wrong. Always expect the worst – and then hit it with your giant axe.

Age 36, 5 Aslan terms

STR 12 DEX 7 END 10 INT 6 EDU 4 SOC 4
Battle Dress 1, Pilot (spacecraft) 1, Gunnery (turret) 2, Engineer (jump) 2, Mechanic 2, Melee (blade) 2, Heavy Weapons (man portable) 3, Leadership 1, Independence 2, Jack-of-all-Trades 2
Armour 17 (Ceremonial Combat Armour), Heavy Machine Gun (4D+4, Auto 8), Reaver's Axe (4D)



Teeahta: Teeahta comes from a low-ranked Aslan family, but ranks and lineages do not mean as much out on the hunt, so she and Teirlas share a bed. This is precisely why she went to the ihatei camp – young males hunt territory, and some females hunt young and promising males. Her family groomed her to be a suitable match for a higher-ranking ihatei – she spent years learning the finer arts of estate management and etiquette, while also studying to be a combat pilot and weapons technician.

Aslan males can marry multiple females if they have the territory to support them; Teeahta cannot expect to be his first wife, but even becoming Teirlas' second or later wife would be a huge advancement in her family's standing in Aslan society. She's therefore fiercely protective of her new lover.

Playing Teeahta: By Aslan standards, she is a stereotype – the 'ambitious female who studies combat and technical skills purely to attract an ihatei noble' – but there's no comparable concept in human society. Play her as a cross between a hot-shot fighter pilot and a Jane Austen character.

Age 20, 1 Aslan term

STR 8 DEX 10 END 8 INT 9 EDU 11 SOC 5
Pilot (Spacecraft) 3, Sensors 1, Computers 1, Mechanic 1, Zero-G 1, Admin 2, Comms 0, Gun Combat 0, Armour 9 (Combat Vacc Suit) Autorifle (3D)



Sahri: Sahri is another veteran campaigner. Unlike Teeahta, she has no interest in marrying and taking care of some land-owning male – she's in this purely for the money. She is a professional mercenary, specialising in running campaigns for ihatei. She has fought in wars all along the Aslan border. Of all of Teirlas' retinue, she has the most experience in dealing with aliens from outside the Hierate.

Playing Sahri: Is the current situation helping your employer win territory, and therefore helping you get paid? If not, then make the current situation go away. Do not let the nonsense that males and aliens (and especially male aliens) seem to cause wherever they go stop you from getting paid.

Age 28, 4 Aslan terms

STR 7 DEX 8 END 9 INT 9 EDU 7 SOC 6
Engineer (jump) 2, Broker 1, Melee (claw) 2, Gun Combat (slug) 1, Mechanic 1, Tolerance 2, Carouse 1, Stealth 2, Streetwise 1, Sensors 2, Computers 1, Comms 2, Gunner (turret) 2, Armour 9 (Combat Vacc Suit) Autorifle (3D)



Uhto: An eager young Aslan, Uhto is typical of most of the males in Teirlas' retinue – he is out on his own for the first time, and wants to fight; to see the galaxy, and to claim a chunk of it as his territory. Every cell in his body yearns for a land to call his own.

Age 16, 0 Aslan terms

STR 9 DEX 8 END 7 INT 10 EDU 10 SOC 9
Mechanic 1, Gun Combat (slug) 2, Gunner (turret) 1, Independence 1
Armour 9 (Combat Vacc Suit) Autorifle (3D)

2. THE CAPTIVE

Once the characters have secured Hwehalokharl, they need to stash him somewhere safe while they approach his father Lokharl.

If Kasiyl has not already explained why he wants Hwehalokharl, he does so now, telling the characters that he was wronged by Hwehalokharl's father and that he intends to expose the crime and reclaim his place in Aslan society. The characters may question Hwehalokharl on the topic; an INT + Persuade check is needed to get the young Aslan to discuss the matter while in captivity. See *Conflicting Stories* for details.

Kasiyl suggests that the characters leave Hwehalokharl in his custody on some obscure moon or other pirate hideaway while they head into the Hierate and make contact with Lokharl. Paranoid player characters may prefer to put Hwehalokharl somewhere safer (or somewhere away from the vengeful Kasiyl) – they could, for example, call in a favour and have Hwehalokharl imprisoned in the Gravity Dungeons on the Floating Palace.

Now that they have Hwehalokharl, they can move onto the second phase of Kasiyl's plan.

THE SECOND PHASE

Kasiyl wants the player characters to travel into the Hierate, find Lokharl, and force the old earleatrais to admit that his ruling was wrong, and that Kasiyl should never have been exiled. Kasiyl tells the characters the following:

Conflicting Stories

Both Kasiyl and Hwehalokharl agree that Lokharl was the earleatrais in the War of Assassins between the Ahroay'if and Tokohfealr, and that Kasiyl's killing of a rival noble is usually legal within the strictures of such a war. Kasiyl argues that any killing, regardless of method, is allowable under Aslan custom. Hwehalokharl says that Kasiyl's crime was overkill – he used a wye'oiheasarl, an Aslan weapon comparable to a PGMP. Such guns are supposed to be restricted to the battlefield, and not deployed in civilian areas.

Hwehalokharl does remember several nobles from the Yerlyaruwo clan visiting his father during the deliberations, but that means nothing – his father was, at the time, a very important counsellor within the clan, and the Kasiyl case was not the only matter occupying his time.

- Lokharl is likely somewhere on the planet Tlaiowaha. That really doesn't pin it down much – Tlaiowaha's population is in the billions – but he's a respected elder statesman. Finding him won't be that hard; threatening him will be trickier.
- Both Kasiyl's aunt Fyohierl and his sister Aual are in the Tlaiowaha system; his sister has better connections, but his aunt may be more willing to help. If pressed, Kasiyl admits that it was his aunt who started the War of Assassins that led to Kasiyl's disgrace, and that the aunt lost considerable standing as a result of Kasiyl's actions.
- Once they have made contact with Lokharl, they need to force him to confess his misdeeds. Kasiyl suggests amputating one of Hwehalokharl's dewclaws and bringing it as proof. However, they need to avoid attracting the attention of the Aslan security forces – if Lokharl alerts the clan authorities that humans are threatening him, it will put the whole plan into jeopardy. Tlaiowaha is, obviously, a Tlaiowaha world and Lokharl is of the Yerlyaruwo. The Aslan do not have a police force or security service in the same way human governments do – each clan takes care of its own. Therefore Lokharl would either have to beg a favour from the Tlaiowaha or rely on whatever limited forces the Yerlyaruwo have available on Tlaiowaha – either way, the odds are not overwhelming.
- Fortunately, Kasiyl knows that the territory of Lokharl's elder son is precariously located on a world likely to be captured by another clan. The old man cannot afford to risk the loss of his other son. Kasiyl believes that Lokharl will make a deal rather than sacrifice Hwehalokharl.
- The characters must also work out a way of ensuring that their threats have bite – they need to put Lokharl under pressure. Kasiyl suggests a time limit – Hwehalokharl will be executed within, say, XX weeks if Lokharl does not comply.
- Once the characters have Lokharl's confession, they must present it to the Ahroay'if clan elders on the world of Stoyhus, and have them lift Kasiyl's exile.
- Lokharl's recantation of his judgement will start the war between the Ahroay'if and the Tokohfealr once again – escalating it from a War of Assassins to a Strictly Limited War. Kasiyl asks that the adventurers stand ready to join in this war, as both clans will want it over and done with as quickly as possible, so having more combat-ready forces on hand will give Kasiyl the advantage.
- Once he has been restored to his place of honour at the right clan of the Ahroay'ifko, the clan leader, then Kasiyl will be able to reward his human allies from Drinax for their aid and hospitality.

PRISONER COMPLICATIONS

Roll 2D, applying the DMs noted below. On an 8+, the PCs avoid a complication – if the roll fails, choose from the options listed or roll 1D. If the player characters are not present to deal with the complication, the referee may choose to either determine the results himself, or have the players play secondary PCs.

- DM+1: The players find a very secure hiding place for Hwehalokharl
 - DM+2: Hwehalokharl is placed in suspended animation or similar restrictions
 - +Deception: The players take pains to hide their movements
 - DM-1: The Pirates are an Irritant to the Aslan Hierate (as per the Standing rules)
 - DM-2: The Pirates are Infamous foes of the Aslan Hierate
 - DM-3: The Pirates are Enemies of the State in the eyes of the Aslan Hierate
 - DM-1: The players leave Kasiyl in charge of watching over the prisoner
 - DM-1: Teirlas is in pursuit of the PCs
 - DM-1: The PCs have an Enemy or Rival who might cause trouble in this instance.
1. Escape: Hwehalokharl manages to break out of his prison and escapes on board a stolen ship (jump-capable if one is available). Once he learns where he is, he tries to return to Hierate space as quickly as possible. If the PCs or their agents cannot recapture him before he reaches the safety of the Hierate, their plan to pressure Lokharl is doomed.
 2. Rescue Attempt: Teirlas (or another Aslan ihatei) attempts to storm the hiding place to rescue Hwehalokharl. If Teirlas is aware of the plot, then he arrives in his cruiser; otherwise, it is 1D 100-ton ihateisho raiders. If the Aslan are able to rescue Hwehalokharl, they carry him back to the Hierate.
 3. Kasiyl's Fury: In a fit of anger, Kasiyl attacks Hwehalokharl. His frustration at his long exile boils over, and he takes his wrath out on Lokharl's son. Throw 2D; on an 6+, Hwehalokharl is merely injured. Otherwise, he is mortally wounded and requires a Medic roll to save his life.
 4. Pirate Raid: A rival pirate attacks the hiding place. Choose a suitable pirate from those listed in Section 10 of the Pirates of Drinax Campaign Overview. Roll 2D; on an 8+, Hwehalokharl is captured.
 5. Sickness: Hwehalokharl falls seriously ill – he needs an expert in Aslan biology or a TL13+ medical facility to make a recovery. Otherwise, he perishes in 6D weeks.
 6. Prince Harrick's Interference: Prince Harrick of Drinax discovers that the pirates have kidnapped a member of the influential Yerlyaruiwo clan. The last time Drinax attracted the wrath of the Aslan, the Ahroay'if clan bombed Drinax from orbit and brought an end to the old Kingdom. This cannot be allowed to happen again! Prince Harrick demands that the prisoner be released!



3. IN THE JAWS OF THE BEAST

The Tlaiowaha system.

Named after the clan that conquered it, in the heady years of the first expansion into the space across the Great Rift. The Tlaiowaha Clan are one of the great clans, the Tlaukhu; they are the traders and merchants of the Aslan, the engine of the Aslan economy. If the Yeryaruiwo are the keepers of Aslan honour, then the Tlaiowaha are the keepers of the Aslan coffers.

Tlaiowaha is not their homeworld, but it is their stronghold.

The planet itself is a sun-scorched ball of hot rock, barely big enough to hold an atmosphere, but its wealth is in the constellation of moonlets and asteroids that orbit it. This is the Tlaiowaha Anchorage, the main Aslan base in this sector. It is operated by the Tlaiowaha Clan, but they have arrangements with a dozen other clans to berth and maintain their warships here. There are uncounted thousands of ships here; enough to conquer every world from Drinax to Pax Rulin, enough to turn the whole Trojan Reach into ash.

A mere fraction of the Aslan's strength would be enough to shatter the Kingdom of Drinax once more.

Travelling past the fleets of ships, past the countless cruisers and assault carriers and multi-thousand-ton capital ships – each one painted in the heraldry of a different clan, and decorated with calligraphic scrolls describing the history and glorious deeds of the captains – the characters are intercepted by Tlaiowaha System Defence Boats. Security is immensely tight here; if the characters resist, they are dead in space. If they are in an Aslan ship, or have up-to-date and verifiable papers of passage from Tyokh (see Adventure 3: Ihteil!), then they can get through customs without incident as long as they pass an Average (+0) SOC + Admin check and aren't carrying any contraband. Apply DM-1 if the characters standing with the Aslan is 0 to -5, and DM-2 if it's worse than -5.

If they are carrying illegal weapons or other items, then have a player throw two dice; they need a 10+ to pass the check. Hidden storage compartments, creative sensor jamming and clever distractions give DMs at the discretion of the referee.

Breaking the Law

The Aslan do not have police or security. They have clan agents. A clan agent is legally entitled to investigate and safeguard the affairs and interests of the clan. So, if a Yeryaruiwo is robbed on a Tlaiowaha world, and is unable to deal with the problem himself, he would contact the local Yeryaruiwo clan agent and have her handle the problem. Think of clan agents as a cross between private detectives, freelance police and mafia goons ("these guys causing you trouble? You want me to rip their throats out"). On some planets, a clan might have thousands of clan agents on site, specialising in different types of problems. On others, a clan agent might visit once every few months, like a wandering sheriff.

If the player characters break the law on Tlaiowaha, roll 2D and apply DMs as follows:

- Pirates travelling under false identities: -1
- Mild violence (non-lethal combat): +2
- Minor property damage or theft: +0
- Major property damage or theft: -2
- Use of heavy weapons: -4
- Attack on member of the Tlaiowaha Clan: -2
- Guide passing on information to relevant clan: -2

RESULTS

If the result is a 6 or less, then the characters are targeted by a Clan Agent. The Tlaiowaha, as the dominant clan on the planet, can deploy overwhelming force if they wish (say, one Battle-Ready Clan Agent per player character). Other clans must rely on more subtle means – 1-3 Investigative Clan Agents.

Battle-Ready Clan Agent

Age 34, 6 Aslan terms
STR 11 DEX 10 END 12 INT 8 EDU 8 SOC 8
Investigate 2, Gun Combat (energy) 3, Sensors 2, Streetwise 2, Stealth 1
Armour 19 (Aslan Battle Dress, Grav Assist, Vislight Chameleon), Laser Rifle (5D+3)

Investigative Clan Agent

Age 22, 2 Aslan terms
STR 9 DEX 8 END 7 INT 10 EDU 10 SOC 9
Diplomat 1, Melee (Claw) 1, Advocate 1, Gun Combat (Slug) 1, Social Science (history) 2, Stealth 1, Tolerance 1
Armour 9 (Combat Vacc Suit) Autorifle (3D)

If the result is 7-9, then the Tlaiowaha assume that the situation is the result of human foolishness; instead of a clan agent, they assign a Tlaiowaha guide to the characters (replacing their existing guide, if any).

If the result is 10+, the crime passes without comment.

PIRACY

Piracy here is absolute suicide. It is the most heavily trafficked naval base in the entire sector. If players are stupid enough to try, they get targeted by spinal meson guns and fusion cannons immediately. They are toast.

If there are any problems with the characters' travel papers, cargo or weapons, or if they arouse suspicion in any way, they are diverted to a secure station orbiting Tlaiowaha for questioning by Aslan security. There are tales of unlucky human travellers vanishing for months or even years if the Aslan are not satisfied by their stories.

ACCESS TO THE ANCHORAGE

Docking space at the Anchorage is hotly contested; it costs an extortionate Cr.10,000 for a docking bay.

Moving through the Anchorage is disconcerting for humans unused to Aslan environments. The artificial gravity pulses faintly, as though the whole asteroid has a heartbeat. Small animals – or maybe robots in meat suits – scurry through the artificial underbrush. As Aslan love open expanses of territory, then every wall is covered by a hologram or view screen looking out over some alien savannah, making it seem that every structure, even the smallest, is bigger on the inside. The air smells of sweat and blood, and there's a constant underlying hum of violence, of threat. Humans describe it, correctly, as the feeling of being prey.

Guides

Once the characters land at the Anchorage, they are offered a choice of guides. Most human visitors to Aslan space rent an artificial intelligence agent or robot to advise them on the intricacies of Aslan custom and culture, but there are also plenty of Aslan 'interpreters', 'advisers', 'guides' and 'bodyguards'.

AI or robot guides cost Cr.2,000 for the entirety of the characters' time in Tlaiowaha space, but are programmed to report anything suspicious to the Tlaiowaha clan. Disabling this protocol requires a Formidable (-6) EDU + Computers or Comms test; failure alerts the Tlaiowaha to the attempted tampering. Possession of such a guide machine indicates that the traveller is a wealthy but inferior visitor and should be treated kindly, as one would deal with a child. Characters do not need to roll on the Reaction Table (see below) when accompanied by a guide machine.

Aslan guides range in cost from Cr.25 to 250 per day; they have a Reaction Table DM of +0 to +4, and a cost of their DM + 1D x Cr.50. Roll 2D on the Clan Table to see which clan the guide reports to.

Clan Table

2-3: Minor or No Clan

4-5: Ahroay'if

5-8: Tlaiowaha

9: Yerlyaruiwo

10: Tokohfealr

11: Syoisuis

12: Roll again twice: the first time for the clan that the guide pretends to be from, and the second for the clan that the guide is really reporting to. Treat a re-roll of a 12 as No Clan the first

time it happens, and Syoisuis the second time.

Guides gain DM+1 on the Reaction Table when dealing with representatives of their own clan.

No Guide

If the characters do not have a guide or interpreter with them, then they have DM+0 on the Reaction Table.

Reaction Rolls

Aslan often do not react well to outsiders. Alien Module 1: Aslan has detailed reaction rules on p.139; if you prefer a quick-and-dirty system, roll 2D whenever the PCs encounter an Aslan, applying their Reaction DM.

2 or less: Belligerent. Roll again; on an 8+, the Aslan challenges the PCs to a fight or just attacks. Otherwise, treat as Hostile.

3 to 5: Hostile. The Aslan has no interest in helping the PCs. At the very least, they are rude; they may also go out of their way to interfere with the player characters' plans or report them as troublemakers.

6 to 9: Disinterested. The Aslan has little interest in helping, but a bribe or incentive of some sort convinces the alien to at least listen to the PCs' request.

10 or more: The Aslan is helpful or even enthusiastic about the request.

Finding Lokharl

It is exceedingly difficult for the characters to find Lokharl on their own. As a distinguished diplomat, he values his privacy. He has no public presence on the TL14 equivalent of social media. The obvious route – and the one recommended by a reputable guide – is to contact the Yerlyaruiwo representatives who deal with business from outside the Hierate and ask them to arrange a meeting with Lokharl. Alternatively, The PCs can make their own enquiries outside the usual channels, or go to one of Kasiyl's relatives and ask them for aid.

Through Clan Channels

A successful Very Difficult (-4) SOC + Diplomat check coupled with a suitable explanation of why they need to speak with Lokharl gets the characters a meeting through the Yerlyaruiwo representatives. As part of this process, the Yerlyaruiwo carry out background checks on the PCs, so apply DMs as follows:

-1: The PCs do not have any Aslan among them

-2: The PCs' Standing with the Hierate is 0 to -5

-4: The PCs' Standing with the Hierate is -6 or less

-4: Tierlas has returned to Aslan space and knows the PCs abducted Hwelokharl

If the result is 2-, then the Yerlyaruiwo report the PCs as spies to the dominant Tlaiowaha clan – see Breaking the Law, p.9).

Through the Bureaucracy

If the PCs cannot come up with a plausible reason why a bunch of suspicious 'free traders' from outside the Hierate would need to speak with an Aslan judge, then their requests are channelled through the surreal realm of Aslan bureaucracy. The Yerlyarui agents stare at the PCs suspiciously, then direct them down to the Paper-shuffling and mundane record-keeping is not suitable work for a noble Aslan warrior; in the past, it was done by slaves or captured aliens. In these more enlightened, modern times, it is done by robots and computers, but tradition dictates that certain records are still kept on paper. So, the characters are shown to a vault where TL14 humanoid servitor robots consult leather-bound tomes and scrolls. A successful Difficult (-2) EDU + Admin check is required to start the search; there is a 1-in-6 chance per week that the characters actually get an answer out of the bureaucratic system

Hitting the Streets

And the corridors. And the corridors that are holographically disguised as endless forests. And the floating cities overhead. There is not a lot of real land on Tliaowaha, but there is still a lot of ground to cover.

A Very Difficult (-4) INT + Streetwise check taking 1-6 days lets the characters track Lokharl down through their own devices. Failure means the characters offend a group of Aslan (perhaps by trespassing into the wrong area, making enquiries in the wrong bar, asking the wrong questions, or just by being aliens.) Roll 2D each for the number of Aslan and their average SOC, and once on the Clan table for their clan.

Socialising

A Very Difficult (-4) SOC + Carouse check taking 1-6 hours gives the character a chance to make a contact who knows Lokharl. After the test, roll 2D; on an 8+ and the test was successful, the character gets an introduction. On a failure, or on a 7- on the second roll, the character takes that much damage from potent Aslan liquor or bar brawls.

AUAL, KASIYL'S SISTER

Aual is one of the Ahroay'if representatives to the Ya'soisthea, the interclan body that dominates Aslan politics coreward of the Great Rift. She is a member of the New Horizon faction of the clan, a group that believe that the Ahroay'if's – and the Ya'soisthea's – future lies in trade with the Imperium. She wears human-style clothing, and speaks excellent Galanglic. She even eats human-style, preferring dead meat as opposed to live (or psuedo-live) prey.

Invoking Kasiyl's name gets the characters a meeting with her, but she is not sympathetic to her brother's cause. Her brother has always been a troublemaker, unwilling to listen to the wisdom of the clan elders. He came under the influence of their aunt Fyohierl at an impressionable age, which is never a good thing. Worse, he associated with the Syoisuis, the clan of spies, assassins and conspirators, and thought himself cleverer than everyone else. Now look at him – a beggar living in the ruins of a world devastated by his own ancestors!

She meets the characters on board a Ahroay'if courier vessel docked at the Anchorage, where she can trust the crew and ensure that she is not being spied upon. Aual urges the characters to return to Kasiyl and tell him to release Hwelokharl, to avoid destabilising relations between the clans. However, good roleplaying (playing on her loyalty and love for her brother) coupled with a successful Persuade roll, convince her to put the characters in touch with Lokharl. She insists that if they are foolish enough to go ahead with Kasiyl's idiotic scheme, they should go straight to the clan council on Stohyus (Ranib/0805) after speaking to Lokharl and consult with the Ahroay'ifko, the head of the clan himself. They should not presume to meddle in Aslan affairs more than they already have.

FYOHIERL, KASIYL'S AUNT

Fyohierl lives and works on Tliaowaha; she is, according to the sign on her door, the Undersecretary for Customs Traffic Operations. Her cramped office looks more like a junkshop than anything else; unlike every other room the PCs visit on Tliaowaha, she doesn't have holographic screens to give the impression of open terrain. It is a spacer's room.

On the wall behind her desk is a painting of an Aslan fleet bombing a planet from orbit; this depicts the Ahroay'if fleet bombing Drinax and putting an end to the old Kingdom. Most of the other decorations are prizes from Fyohierl's time as a pirate. Alarmingly, there is an ornate human skull inlaid with gold that she uses as a paperweight on her desk.

Fyohierl was once a fearsome pirate – "privateer", she insists, laughing as she pours the characters drinks (even if they have not explained why they are here, they are more interesting than traffic policy meetings). The Ahroay'if used to be great warriors, feared across the Trojan Reach, but they've gotten soft and fat in recent generations. Too much trading, not enough fighting. She spotted that the Tokohfearl clan were vulnerable, and started a war to steal territory from them. As an unmarried female, she could not own territory of her own, so she recruited her young nephew Kasiyl to take the lead. It all ended badly for both of them – Kasiyl was exiled, and she was grounded in this dead-end job.

Fyoheirl's politics is the opposite of her niece – she is part of the Ascendancy faction, who want the Ahroay'if to escape the shadow of their patron clan, the Tlaiowaha, and to rise to become part of the Tlaukhu back in the Hierate. To achieve that aim, the Ahroay'if would have to conquer more territory and win influence through combat, not trade. Most of the other members of the Ascendancy faction are elderly male landowners and traditionalist scholars; Fyoheirl just likes fighting.

When asked about Lokharl, she snarls in anger – she is still furious at her nephew for using a “giant star-spitting plasma death ray” when an assassin's blade would have been more appropriate, but she hates Lokharl all the more for declaring her war was over on a technicality. However, she doesn't know where Lokharl is on Tlaiowaha (“they keep him away from me so I don't rip his throat out”) and suggests that the characters try Aual.

However, if they have already tried that approach, she has a backup solution. As Undersecretary for Customs Traffic Operations, she can access the travel schedules of various Aslan dignitaries – and she knows that Lokharl is due to visit a conference on Suiaoir (Nora'a/0308) and he will be travelling on board a Ktiyhui-class Courier (200 tons, J3 – see Alien Module 1: Aslan p 89). If the PCs were to intercept that courier and take Lokharl alive, they could force him to confess. Fyoheirl does not recommend that route – it will really annoy the Yerlyaruiwo, and she will have to turn Outcast so they do not arrest her for giving confidential travel data to alien pirates – but if there are no other options, she is willing to risk it.

She also says that if the characters can get Lokharl's confession, then they should not waste time bringing it to Stoyhus and the clan elders – they should head straight to Hkakh (Ranib/0807) and reopen hostilities there. If they are willing to do this, she will assemble a fighting force and rendezvous with them there.

A VISIT FROM THE SHADOWS

At some point while the pirates are searching for Lokharl, they are approached by two Aslan, a male and a female, both of whom wear ornate robes over skintight armour – anyone familiar with Aslan military tech recognises the armour as soisu'hru, assassin's garb”. The two introduce themselves as Tye and Yekh ('Star' and 'Void'). These are representatives from the secretive Syoisuis clan, a clan of spymasters and assassins technically allied with the Yerlyaruiwo.

If the pirates are travelling under assumed names or with false papers, the two Aslan hint that they know exactly who they are talking to. They do not, however, wish to threaten or antagonise the pirates – instead, they are simply curious. What are the pirates looking for in Aslan space? What does it have to do with the outcast Kasiyl? Why, he hasn't been seen in the Hierate since that shameful war of assassins between the Ahroay'if and the Tokohfealr...

The Syoisuis thrive on conflict and intrigue – they will help the pirates find Lokharl, and promise to help restore Kasiyl if the player characters bring them Lokharl's confession first. They also offer the gratitude and assistance of their clan in navigating the treacherous maze of Aslan politics. “We are good friends to have,” says Tye, “especially when no-one else knows we are your friends.”

INTERCEPTING THE COURIER

Lokharl's courier ship goes Tlaiowaha->Asoietal->Fiyleakh (Goertal subsector)->Erasaso->Ehrafou->Sei'eal (Nora'a subsector)->Suiaoir, staying in Aslan space throughout. If the Aslan are already hunting the PCs, then the pirates need to dodge their own pursuers while chasing Lokharl. Otherwise, they face minimal resistance from Lokharl's crew and bodyguards. Fyoheirl's data contains not only Lokharl's planned route, but also security patrol schedules making the attack exceptionally easy.

4. LOKHARL

As befitting a Yerlyaruiwo dignitary of some importance, Lokharl lives on the grounds of a high-security palace. His apartments are in an obscure wing of the fortress, so while the security is tight, it is far from overwhelming. Obviously, visitors to the fortress are not permitted to bring weapons or armour apart from ceremonial weapons like hi'asoi ('monkey-blades', worn by humans integrated into Aslan society as a replacement for dewclaws). Sneaking a weapon past the automated scanners requires a Difficult (-2) INT + Deception or Sensors check; failure counts as Breaking The Law (p.9).

If the PCs locate Lokharl through official channels (his clan, Aual), then they are escorted past security and straight into his apartments. However, Lokharl is not alone; also attending the meeting are a Yerlyaruiwo 'handler' named Yohorlor and one heavily armoured Aslan bodyguard per two PCs. Yohorlor tries to ensure that Lokharl does not discuss the incident involving Kasiyl; the PCs can still extract a confession by distracting or threatening to kill Hwelokharl.

If the PCs locate Lokharl through unofficial channels (their own investigations, the Syoisuis), then they need to sneak or bypass the fortress's security (Difficult (-2) DEX + Stealth or INT + Sensors, or SOC + Deception to look like they belong). However, in this set up, Lokharl's accompanied only by a servant and his nursemaid.

Lokharl's apartments are musty and cramped; like Fyoheirl's, it's full of mementoes of his old career, but Lokharl seems almost mummified. There are no electronic devices or computers in his rooms other than a few bits of medical equipment; he talks and acts like an Aslan from the days before spaceflight, as though he has retreated into the past.

TALKING TO LOKHARL

Lokharl dislikes humans, and makes his distaste clear – he only speaks trokh, the Aslan language, and growls if the PCs use translator devices. His nurse or handler can translate if the PCs do not speak trokh.

If asked about Kasiyl, he shrugs and claims he cannot recall the incident. If prompted, or given time to consult his records, he remembers the war between the Ahroay'if and the Tokolfhears. His opinions of the two clans involved are equally dismissive. The Ahroay'if are "fat merchants – they used to be good warriors, but the only warriors left in their ranks are idiots", while the Tokolfhears are "dirt-grubbing vagabonds who deserve to get their territory taken by the more deserving".

He eventually remembers Kasiyl as "the idiot who used a wye'oiheasarl in a War of Assassins", and laughs scornfully. It was, he says, an easy decision. He understands that it put an end to the Ahroay'if's military ambitions, but if they're going to use inappropriate weapons at the War of Assassins level, then doubtless they would use equally inappropriate tactics at other levels of warfare. War for the Aslan is a form of art, of culture. Humans, Lokharl understands, think that fencing and duelling are refined, cultured forms of violence, where brute impulses are reified into something more. The Aslan do this for all forms of violence. Why, if humans had bombed Drinax from orbit, it would have been nothing more than a blind convulsion of hateful destruction. When the Aslan did it, though, they did it with grace and artistry, turning nuclear annihilation into poetry.

LOKHARL'S CONFESSION

To extract a confession from Lokharl, the PCs need to tell him that Kasiyl is holding Hwehalokharl, and that the boy will be killed if Lokharl does not admit he was wrong and reverse the judgement that led to Kasiyl's exile. Optionally, a Routine (+2) SOC + Persuade check may be needed if the players have given Lokharl reason to underestimate them. If they wish to force a confession from Lokharl without alarming the handlers – say, by dropping subtle hints about Teirlas' retinue – then it's a Difficult (-2) SOC + Deception check.

In his confession, Lokharl admits that he was ordered to ruin Kasiyl and the Ahroay'if's territorial war against the Tokohfealr, and that those orders came from his superiors in the Yerlyaruiwo clan. He does not know why his superiors wished to bend the ancient rules of honour in order to sabotage the Ahroay'if, but he guesses that it has the stink of Ya'soisthea politics. These stars of the Trojan Reach, he complains, are pestilent and vile, and contribute to the moral decay of the Aslan.

If the PCs have no recording devices with them, then Lokharl writes his confession on a scroll, and seals it with his eaiasu'ikh, his soul-shield or ceremonial seal. To Aslan eyes, such a document carries as much weight as Lokharl's own voice.

THE NEXT STEP

Once the pirates have Lokharl's confession, they need to decide what to do with it – which clan do they approach?

Kasiyl's original plan called for them to bring the confession to the Ahroay'if leaders on the golden world of Stohyus (Ranib/0805). More ambitiously, Fyoheirl wants the characters to bring the confession to Hkakh (Ranib/0807) so she can restart her war of conquest.

Aual wants the characters to return to Kasiyl and convince him to give up his quest for redemption. That means jumping back to whatever out-of-the-way system the pirates stashed Hwehalokharl.

The other options can all be followed right here on Tlaiowaha.

The Syoisuis may have offered to help the pirates in exchange for early access to the confession.

More ambitious pirates could try to cut a deal with the Yerlyaruiwo or the Tlaiowaha.

IS THIS EARLEATRAIS-GATE?

Characters (and players!) unfamiliar with Aslan culture may wonder exactly how damaging Lokharl's confession is. He certainly broke his sacred oath as an earleatrais, the ceremonial 'referees' in Aslan warfare. While the earleatrais is supposed to be utterly neutral and incorruptible, that's rarely the case. Every time one side loses a conflict, someone blames the referee. Sometimes, the earleatrais show blatant favouritism, or are simply incompetent. A Yerlyariowo earleatrais should be much better than the average, but the real scandal here is not Lokharl bending the rules – it is that he was ordered to bend the rules by his clan superiors.

Is it a minor scandal, or is this going to shatter the entire Hierate and bring down the clans?

It is somewhere in the middle. Certainly, it is embarrassing to the Yerlyaruiwo, whose reputation is founded on being the keepers of Aslan honour. Their centre of power is back in the Hierate proper, though, so they can brush off the scandal as a mistake made by a minor branch of their clan.

The confession will certainly restart the war between the Ahroay'if and the Tokohfealr.

At a rough guess, a clan would pay at least MCr.500 to keep such a scandal from seeing the light of day.

If the players guess correctly that it was the Tlaiowaha that bribed the Yerlyaruiwo to rule against the Tlaiowaha's own vassals, that that's far more damaging. It's an unforgivable breach, and if revealed will shatter the alliance between the two clans. The Ahroay'if will have to return to their more warlike ways; the Tlaiowaha will lose access to the critical dust-spice trade route and be plunged into recession. Stopping that is worth far, far more.

More than enough to kill for...

5. THE YERLYARUIWO RESPONSE

One does not simply threaten a member of the Yerlyaruiwo and expect to get away with it. Soon after the player characters extract a confession from Lokharl, the Yerlyaruiwo dispatch a team of clan agents to recover the confession and punish the player characters.

Roll 2D on the Clan Agent Reaction table to determine how long it takes the Aslan to respond, applying DMs as follows. Stats for Clan Agents are on p.9.

- 2: Teirlas warned the Yerlyaruiwo about the PCs
- 2: The PCs have a Yerlyaruiwo guide
- 1: The PCs went through the Yerlyaruiwo bureaucracy
- 3: The PCs have already caused trouble on Tlaiowaha
- 1: Lokharl is able to alert the authorities within 24 hours
- 2: Lokharl is able to alert the authorities within 2 hours
- 4: Lokharl is able to alert the authorities immediately
- +2: Lokharl is forced to mislead the authorities
- +highest rank of Deception among PCs
- +1 to +4 depending on the degree of preparation and misdirection employed by the PCs

Result Reaction

1 or less	Battle-Ready Clan Agents
2-5	Battle-Ready Clan Agents arrive within 2D minutes, pursue player characters
6-8	Investigative Clan Agents arrive within an hour, investigate case
9-11	Investigative Clan Agents arrive within 8 hours, investigate case
12+	No reaction (apparently, you can threaten a member of the Yerlyaruiwo and get away with it)

COMBAT

Clan Agents are adept at minimising collateral damage – even a Battle-Ready Agent in full battle dress prefers to use a comparatively weak (but accurate) hunting rifle in most situations, or even closes to melee range to use a fierah thong or a curved taleryu blade to deliver justice. If the PCs are packing heavy weapons, though, the Clan Agents can break out laser rifles or even gravity spears (2D damage, ignores armour).

The Clan Agents attempt to take the PCs alive; prisoners are brought before the Yerlyaruiwo elders (see page 18).

INVESTIGATION

If the PCs escape with a head start, then roll 2D – the best Deception among the PCs every day. On an 8+, the investigators are on their trail and gain DM+2 to future rolls to find the PCs; they also learn whether or not the PCs are still on Tlaiowaha or if they have left the system. On a 10+, they have found them and arrive in force (Battle Ready Clan Agents if the PCs are still on Tlaiowaha or another Yerlyaruiwo-friendly world; Investigative Agents if they track them down elsewhere).

Describe how the PCs feel pursued and hunted by the Aslan; every customs check or starport landing becomes fraught with paranoia.

PURSUIT THROUGH SPACE

If the PCs are en route to another planet, then the Yerlyaruiwo pursue. The clan allocates a trio of 800-ton J4 Escorts (Alien Module 1: Aslan, p. 99) to carry out the search; if Teirlas is also hunting for the PCs, add his ships to the mix. The escorts pursue the PCs from Tlaiowaha (or from wherever the PCs intercepted Lokharl's courier), splitting up only if there are multiple potential systems to search. They may be able call on additional Yerlyaruiwo ships in other systems – roll 2D, adding +2 if there is a Tlaukhu naval base in the system and +2 if the government code is H, L or N; on an 6+, add 1-3 ihateisho 100-ton scouts, and on a 10+, add a 1,000-ton Cruiser.

If the Aslan intercept the PCs, they demand that they surrender and accompany them to the Yerlyaruiwo stronghold on lysewekh (Ranib/0610). Refusal is met with lethal force.

6. APPROACHING THE CLANS

Let us talk about the delicate balance of the clans, before the player characters blunder in and mess it all up.

The Tlaiowaha are rich traders, but most of their holdings are back across the Great Rift. In the Trojan Reach, they rely on their vassals, the Ahroay'if, to defend their trade routes and manage their affairs.

The Ahroay'if were once noted warriors – they are the clan that destroyed the old Kingdom of Drinax – but in recent centuries they've become traders and vassals to the Tlaiowaha. They get more wealth from trade than they did from conquest, which is just what the Tlaiowaha want. Stability is good for business.

When Kasiyl and his aunt Ftoyierl launched their war with the Tokolfeahr, it threatened to disrupt the Tlioawaha's arrangements with the Ahroay'if. War brings instability, and instability endangers trade routes. However, the Tlioawaha decided they couldn't risk simply ordering their vassals to give up the chance to conquer – conquest is a birthright of every Aslan male. Instead, they arranged for the war to fail disastrously, undermining their own vassals. They bribed the Yerlyariowo to order Lokharl to find an excuse to rule against the Ahroay'if.

Kasiyl's fate was sealed not because he was impulsive or dishonourable, but because merchants hundreds of parsecs away feared that if the Ahroay'if tasted victory, they would hunger for more.

AHROAY'IF

The world of Stohyus (Ranib/0805) is one of the richest worlds in all of known space. It is a planet of fabulous natural beauty and wealth. Few outsiders are ever allowed land on this golden world. The leader of the Ahroay'if clan, the Ahroay'ifko, rules his domain from a magnificent floating palace that glides through the glittering skies like a pleasure-barge cutting through a sea of diamonds.

The comparisons to Drinax – before an ancestor of this very Ahroay'ifko blasted the planet from orbit – cannot be understated. Here is another outpost of culture and wealth amid the barbarity of the Trojan Reach.

The player characters must decide whether they wish to present Lokharl's confession publicly, to the clan council, or privately to the Ahroay'ifko himself. Aual, if she is with the characters, urges them to act openly at all times.

The Syiosuis

If the PCs go to the spymaster clan, Tye and Yekh ask what the characters want out of this situation? Is restoring Kasiyl's honour all that matters to them, or are they more interested in leveraging this treasure for some other reward – like restoring the Kingdom of Drinax?

If all the characters want is to restore Kasiyl's honour, then the Syiosuis offer to approach the Yerlyariowo on their behalf. The spymasters can arrange for the Yerlyariowo to restore Kasiyl's honour without reopening the war between the Ahroay'if and Tokolfeahr. All they need to do is stage a duel to the death between Kasiyl and Hwehalokharl. The duel can be as fixed or one-sided as the PCs wish. Without his son's territory to support him, Lokharl's reputation will no longer matter, and the Yerlyariowo can discard him without any repercussions.

If the characters want help for Drinax, then the Syiosuis can arrange that too. They can approach the Ahroay'if and convince them to restart the war. They'll even send ships to help Fyoheirl, ensuring that her war on Hkakh is a successful one. Drinax will gain the Ahroay'if as allies, the Yerlyariui's reputation will be undamaged, and the Tlaiowaha will be weakened. Everybody wins – but for this to work, then Kasiyl must be silenced forever. The Syiosuis will leave that task in the hands of the pirates...

Public: The pirates may not be aware of this, but Ahroay'if politics are divided between two factions – the aggressive, expansionist Ascendancy faction, and the conciliatory, trade-orientated New Horizon. The Ascendants supported the war against the Tokolfeahr, and lost much of their influence when Kasiyl was exiled. Now, many of the New Horizon members have moved to the Tlaiowaha system and other worlds closer to the trade routes, leaving the Ascendants in control of the clan's ceremonial court, but bereft of wealth or power.

That means that the pirates get a very warm response from the court, and are treated as heroes for bringing proof of the Yerlyariowo's perfidy – but they don't actually have the ability to take action. The Ascendants control very few ships or warriors. To get access to the clan's military, the characters must persuade the Ahroay'ifko himself.

Private: The characters are ushered into the private chambers of the Ahroay'ifko. He is an immensely old and frail Aslan male, surrounded by medical robots and life support machinery. A successful Very Difficult (-4) EDU + Medicine test taking 1-6 seconds recognises his condition as a degenerative genetic condition caused by exposure to a mushroom that grows on

several worlds in the Trojan Reach. The Drinaxians long ago developed a treatment for the condition – the characters can offer that cure as leverage or trade.

The Ahroay'ifko explains that he already knows that the Yeryaruiwo were bribed by his allies, the Tlaiowaha – he had no proof of this up until now, but he guessed it was so. His instinct, though, is to do nothing. The clan has chosen its path. They are to be traders, not conquerors. The fire in his soul has gone out, and he wants nothing more than to maintain the status quo. He asks that the characters destroy Lokharl's confession, free Hwehalokharl, and ensure that Kasiyl finds a better life outside the Hierate. As compensation for their efforts so far, he offers them MCr.100 or a used Ekawsiykua-class Escort (Alien Module 1: Aslan p. 99, roll three times on the Old Ships table in the main rulebook). Broker can be used to increase the Aslan offer (treat as a standard Broker attempt when selling, as per the rules on page 164 of the Traveller Core Rulebook).

A successful Very Difficult (-4) SOC + Persuade check can change the Ahroay'ifko's mind (DM+2 if the PCs have already garnered the support of the court by presenting their evidence publicly, DM+4 if they offer him a cure for his condition). If they convince him to put the clan's military under Ascendancy control, then the war is back on and Kasiyl can return in triumph.

Alternatively, they can trigger a civil war in the Ahroay'if by revealing the Ahroay'ifko's weakness and complicity. Kasiyl can return in this case too, but he comes home to a golden world scarred by burning cities and spilled blood.

RESTARTING THE WAR

If the characters head to Hkakh (Ranib/0807), they meet Fyoheirl there. She has assembled a small fleet of former pirates, mercenaries and militant clan members who are willing to restart the war of conquest as soon as the PCs arrive with the necessary paperwork. To present the clan with a fait accompli and ensure full support, she needs to seize the planet immediately once the conflict begins again. For that to work, she needs to cut communications.

There are two Aslan vessels about to depart Hkakh – a 200-ton Ileliy-class messenger and a 600-ton Owatarl-class tender. She needs the PCs to intercept and disable both ships so they cannot carry news of the invasion to the rest of the Tokolfeahr clan. If the PCs take out both ships before they jump, the invasion goes off without a hitch and the Ahroay'if clan conquer Hkakh, reinvigorating the Ascendancy faction and redeeming Kasiyl. If they only disable one ship, then have the players throw 2D; on a 9+, the Tokolfeahr are able to respond in time and reinforcements arrive to give them the victory. If the players fail to disable both ships, then the Tokolfeahr win on a 5+.

If the Ahroay'if win, then both Kasiyl and Fyoheirl ascend to positions of influence and importance in the clan hierarchy, and owe the pirates a considerable favour.

If the Tokolfeahr win, then it's still a partial victory for the PCs, as Kasiyl is still redeemed.



YERLYARUIWO

The Yerlyaruiwo homeworlds are far away across the Rift, but the PCs can approach the local clan elders on Tlaiowaha and negotiate with them. The Yerlyaruiwo are likely already furious with the pirates, but they'll pay to make the problem go away. They will purchase Lokharl's testimony – and the PCs' silence – for MCr.150 and Hwehalokharl's safe return. If the PCs throw in Kasiyl's head, the payment rises to a staggering MCr.200. Negotiation in this case is not an option – Aslan do not quibble with outsiders.

There is a downside – the PCs are now forever barred from Aslan space, and will be targeted by Yerlyaruiwo assassins (see Adventure 3: Ihatei!) if they dare enter the Hierate again. The Yerlyaruiwo will forever be enemies of the player characters, and this will have drawbacks later in the campaign.

PCs who approach the Yerlyaruiwo in a conciliatory fashion, with plenty of Diplomat skill ranks, can claim they were only helping the honourable clan avoid a misunderstanding, and can get the payment without incurring their rancour.

T LAIOWAHA

The Tlaiowaha have the most to lose in this affair – they need the Ahroay'if clan to remain stable and secure their trade routes. If the player characters approach the Tlaiowaha with Lokharl's testimony, then the wealthy clan offers MCr.300 for the player characters' silence. They will permit Kasiyl to live, as long he never returns to the Hierate. The player characters may negotiate for a higher price.

Alternatively, the characters may blackmail the Tlaiowaha, holding the testimony in reserve. The Tlaiowaha are arguably the most influential clan in the Trojan Reach, and certainly they have the most influence in this subsector. Having leverage over them could be very useful in the future.

TOKOLFEAHR

The minor Tokolfearh clan have little to offer the player characters, compared to the politically powerful Yerlyaruiwo or wealthy Tlaiowaha. The one advantage the Tokolfearh offer is that they're not enmeshed in Aslan politics. That's why the Ahroay'if picked on them, and that's why they can give Drinax direct support, unencumbered by clan ties and debts. If the player characters contact the Tokolfearh and offer them Lokharl's testimony, then in future, whenever the pirates visit an Aslan port, roll 2D on the Tokolfearh Agent Table below to determine the port's temporary status.

	Government Type						
2D	G	H	J	K	L	M	N
2-5	Unfriendly	Unfriendly	Unfriendly	Unfriendly	Unfriendly	Unfriendly	Unfriendly
6-8	Unfriendly	Tolerant	Unfriendly	Unfriendly	Unfriendly	Tolerant	Neutral
9-11	Tolerant	Friendly	Unfriendly	Neutral	Unfriendly	Friendly	Tolerant
12+	Haven	Haven	Neutral	Tolerant	Neutral	Haven	Friendly

DMs:

+1 if the Population is 6+

-1 if the Law Level is 6+

7. A STONE IN THE WATER

Once the players have made their decision about Lokharl's testimony, all that remains is for them to return to whatever backwater system or isolated asteroid where Kasiyl is waiting.

Are they coming back to restore his honour, or to murder him?

Kasiyl's fate – and the decisions the players made – have repercussions beyond this one Aslan outcast. The results will not be felt on Drinax until later in the campaign (in Adventure 10: Finale), but the stone has been thrown into the waters of the Hierate. In months to come, the pirates may need friends inside the Hierate. Have they made any?

Note which clans benefited from the PCs' actions, and which now consider the pirates of Drinax to be their enemies, and consult the Clan Standings table to determine the adjustment, if any, to the PCs' Standing with the Hierate. Keep track of the individual results too, as they will factor into Adventure 10: Finale.

If a clan was unaffected by the PCs' actions, use the neutral column.

Some clans have situation-specific modifiers.

CLAN STANDINGS

Clan	Attitude to PCs		
	Grateful	Neutral	Vengeful
Ahroay'if	+2	+0	-4
Tlaiowaha	+4	+0	-10
Yerlyaruiwo	+2	+0	-8
Syiosuis	+2	+0	-6
Tokolfeahr	+0	+0	-2
Situations			
Ahroay'ifko treated with Drinaxi tech	+4		
Kasiyl Restored	+2		
Hwehalokharl Killed	-4		
Per serious crime in Aslan space	-2		



APPENDIX 1: WORLDS OF THE REACH

Vume

Vume Station is a huge modular habitat, built by an unknown alien civilisation many thousands of years ago. Only a tiny fraction of the structure is inhabited by human scavengers and scrap merchants. The station was originally discovered and exploited by travellers from the Imperium, but they succumbed to a bacterial infection and many of them went insane. Today, the station is divided between four different factions, each of whom has a different strain of the alien sickness. Each strain has different effects on human thought processes, so the four factions are biologically incapable of understanding each other – or uninfected outsiders.

Patron: Priel Marsden

Reward: Vume becomes a Haven, Cr.500,000.

Mission: Marsden represents an Imperial corporation that prefers to remain nameless (PRQ, perhaps, or GeDeCo). The Vume station is a potentially lucrative source of technology and scrap metal – once the thousands of current residents are removed. How the pirates accomplish this is up to them, and Marsden has no interest in their methods. All she wants is an empty space station, ripe for development as a luxury waystation on the Floriani tourist route.

Chalchitlicu

Chalchuitlicu's millions dwell in a small number of island-cities. They have added to these structures over the centuries since the planet was first settled, and they are now baroque labyrinths of tenements and plumbing, hundreds of stories huge and powered by the seething tides. Population control dominates society here, as further expansion of the cities is impossible. Culture is extremely stratified (literally – the further away one is from the water, the higher one's social standing), and contact with space travellers is limited to maintain the city council's influence over the people.

Chalchuitlicu exports radioactives and other minerals dredged from the sea bed.

Patron: City Councillor Jilacua

Reward: Chalchuitlicu moves towards Haven.

Mission: Jilacua wishes to relieve the population pressure in his city by sending people off into space. For every 1,000 people the pirates take, his city moves one step towards Haven. However, Jilacua cannot be seen to be defying the other city councillors, so the pirates must smuggle these passengers offworld to claim their reward.