

The Flying Money Pit

By Alex Greene

Premise:

The characters begin play looking for a ship or for transport off world. Somehow, they stumble into ownership of an old free trader with a reputation – it is a money pit.

Introduction

The characters begin the scenario in a public park, feeding pigeons and flagpies with the last of their food. They have literally only the clothes on their backs and their personal comms. If they have assets such as Travellers' Aid Society membership and combat implants, the characters retain them.

One of them has an Ally who owes one of the characters and who will stump up Cr. 50,000 on a one-time basis only, and that is it.

Referee, let them start thinking up ideas to try and raise funds to get off world, before reading this aloud.

In the midst of your brainstorming, [name a character]'s comm chimes. It is one of [character]'s Contacts. She has some information of use to you.

First Act – A Good Word

The characters meet with a Patron at the Rancid Spectrum bar, as directed by the Contacts. The Patron needs an in to a gambling den and one of the characters can vouch for the Patron.

The character must also join the game, which requires a stake of Cr. 10,000 for each player who comes in. The Patron puts up her own cash, and promises to split a portion of any winnings she makes, if she wins.

Second Act – The Gambling Den

The character can persuade the bouncer to let the Patron and other characters through:

Vouch for characters and Patron, Persuade, Soc, 10-60 seconds, Difficult(-2)

The characters, once in, cash in their Cr. 10,000 stake to purchase their way into the various games of chance. Have each character make two Gambler skill checks, and work out how much they win or lose:- *Games of Chance, Gambler, Int, 10-60 seconds*

The difficulty determines the odds faced: *Easy(+4) – evens. Winner receives his stake back plus 100% of his stake. Average(+0) – 6/4 on. Winner receives his stake back plus 150% of stake. Very Difficult(-4) – Long Shot. Winner receives his stake back plus 500% of stake.*

The last skill check has a twist. Playing against an inebriated man, the player is encouraged to go all-in: all his cash, against a keycard, the opponent's last asset. The game goes in the player's favour; the character is now in possession of one battered Fast Trader, in addition to whatever else he won.

Third Act – Berthed

The ship, the *Jarvis*, is currently in Berth 39 at the Starport. The keycard contains the documentation authorising its bearer, the player character, as the Master and new owner of the ship.



When they get to the berth, they will discover the following problems. First, the ship is not spaceworthy. Close, but she needs a full two years' worth of maintenance to get her up and running.

Second, they are now responsible for berthing costs. Berth 39 has been occupied for 18 months, at a cost of Cr. 750 per month.

Third, the *Jarvis* was a disaster as a business. Apart from the physical costs of repairs, she begins with a deficit of Cr. 300,000 on her books from the start.

Third, the ship has the following features due to her age (30 years old; see page 136, *Traveller Core Rulebook*):- Blacklisted, increase all maintenance costs 100%.

Fourth, the Air/Raft is in perfect working order.

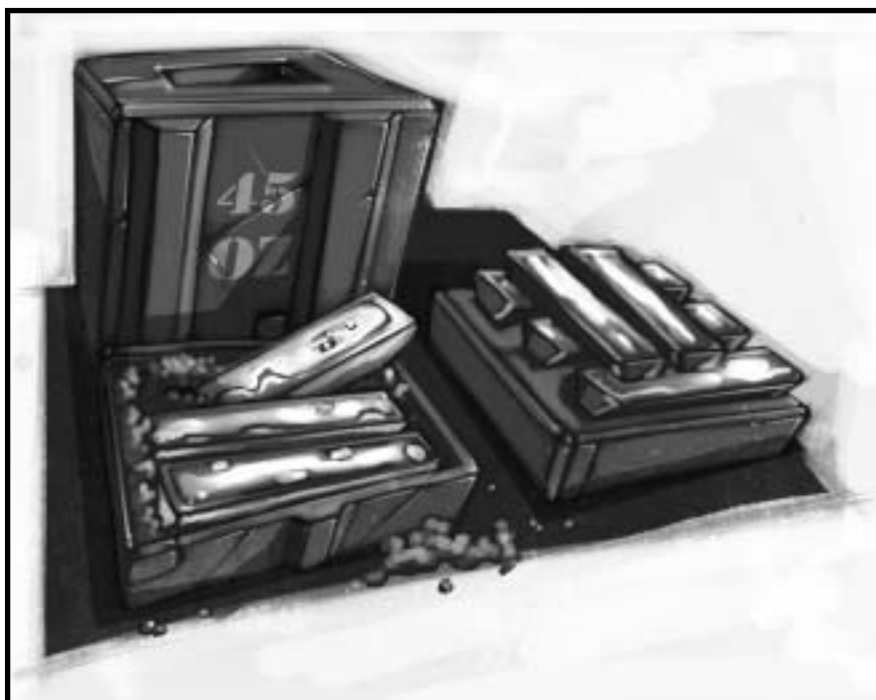
Other than the fact that they have 100% ownership and no mortgage, though, they are good to go.

Fourth Act – Patron

To pay for the ship, in order just to get her airborne, the characters will have to go back to the wealthy Patron whom they helped the previous night. She is amenable to help the characters, but she will need persuasion (a Difficult Persuade check) to fund their repair efforts.

Repairs will take one month. The *Jarvis* is a standard Type A2 Far Trader (page 118, *Traveller Core Rulebook*). Assuming the Patron can be persuaded, the characters will effectively be forced to perform three dangerous missions for her during this month, to work off their debt to her. The Referee can work out what those missions will be.

The Patron will not pay off the financial deficit. That is the characters' job.



Fifth Act – Forgotten Asset

While looking through the books, the Purser discovers an old receipt for a warehouse on the planet they are berthed on. The account at the warehouse is still active, and may still contain a cargo that can solve their financial crises at a stroke.

The cargo is (roll 1d6):-

- 1 – Luxury goods worth Cr. 100,000.
- 2 – Spare parts for a Type A2 far trader – cutting costs to get the *Jarvis* spaceworthy and airborne to 25% at a stroke.
- 3 – Illegal contraband pharmaceuticals with a street value of Cr. 200,000.
- 4 – Gone; someone had accidentally exposed it to the elements and native bacteria have turned it into a pulpy mess.
- 5 – A consignment of 25 lonely, pre-owned human-looking lifelike pleasure bots, ten female, ten male, five androgynous, each unit worth Cr. 40,000.
- 6 – A previous owner's seventy kidnap victims, all alive, all held in cold storage, each one worth a ransom of Cr. 150,000, or a reward of Cr. 15,000 apiece if they are restored to their families.

Sixth Act - Complications

The characters will have to pay the warehouse owner's fee, which currently stands at Cr. 120,000. They can either add this to the bills they will have to pay before they can touch sky, or go and visit the Patron again.

Either way, the warehouse owner will want his cash. Up front. Now.

Any illegal cargoes, of course, will necessitate the characters attempting to smuggle the contraband past Customs, an adventure in itself.

Seventh Act – Resolution

Assuming everything goes smoothly for the characters, they should have themselves a working far trader, a cargo hold full of goods, and a huge collection of debts on their heads. Getting rid of those debts ... that is another adventure.