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Colin Chapman

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ION GUARD

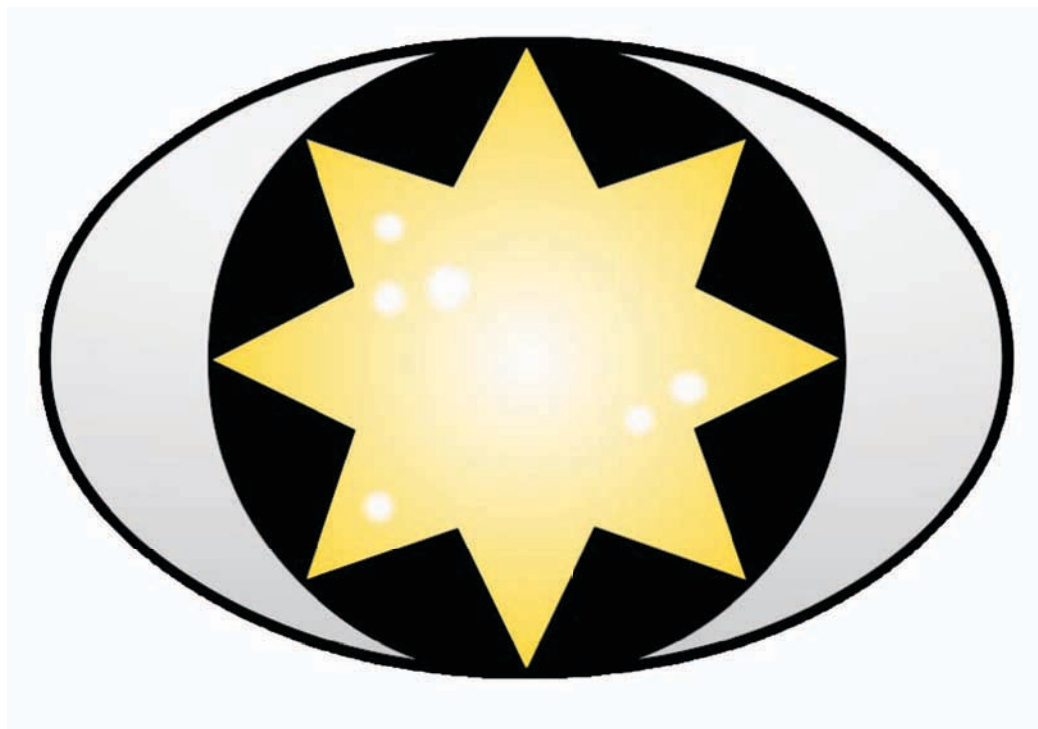


ICONS

SUPERPOWERED ROLEPLAYING

COMPATIBLE

ION GUARD



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to **ION Guard**, the first issue of **ION Space**, a series of licensed supplements for **ICONS Superpowered Roleplaying** by **Adamant Entertainment!** **ION Space** will introduce alien species and empires, interplanetary organizations, and galactic empires, and cosmic threats. Each **ION Space** issue may be slotted into your existing **ICONS** campaign individually, or woven together to provide a vast and expanding outer space setting for your heroes to explore...and defend!

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○ OVERVIEW

The **Intergalactic Ordinance Network (ION) Guard** is a heroic peacekeeping organization that has served to protect and defend the intelligent species of the many sectors of the Universe for the last billion years.

Dedicated to protecting sapient races against disaster, villainy, and intergalactic criminality, the **ION Guard** is a force for justice with an illustrious history, whose members have acted as investigators, peacekeepers, law enforcers, mediators, defenders, and aid workers throughout the Universe.

Each Guardsman — wearing the iconic golden **ION Fist** that has become synonymous with justice for many intergalactic inhabitants — is a cosmic powerhouse, capable of bringing the vast forces of an artificially harnessed singularity to bear against the enemies of peace, justice, and life.

Throughout the Universe they strive against evil and darkness. Though powerful, they are spread all too thin: they are but small lights, beacons of hope in the vast darkness enfolding the stars.

To be a Guardsman is to serve the Universe and a cause far greater than any one individual. To be a Guardsman is to wield incredible power with awesome responsibility. To be a Guardsman is to bravely face tremendous foes and staggering odds, no matter how overwhelming, when fighting the good fight.

Let evil fear the ION Guard!

SYMBOL ○

The symbol of the ION Guard is comprised of a golden eight-pointed star on a black circle, flanked on either side by a silver-white crescent. In combination, these elements form an eye with a star-shaped iris, representing the intergalactic vigilance of the Guard. The individual parts also have meaning as well: the central star represents the forces of light, banishing darkness, as well as the stars that provide so much energy and life to the cosmos; the crescents represent moons, but also protective hands that cup the life-giving stars.

Vigilance, protection, life, and the universe: all are represented by the symbol of the ION Guard.

ORIGINS

Noi, last of the Ancients, bore witness to the self-destruction of his race, its civilization powerful beyond any reckoning, brought low by its own cosmic technologies and hubris. At the end of a terrible war that spanned millennia, fought with supernovae and black holes as weapons, only Noi remained, a lone wanderer amidst the stars.

As untold eons passed, Noi watched in mournful silence as countless races rose and fell, and witnessed millions of worlds die in the shadowed clutches of villainy and war. Sickened by the endless cycle of destruction, of so many sparks of greatness flickering brightly only to snuff themselves out just as quickly, Noi made a momentous decision to intervene by creating a Universe-wide peacekeeping force: the Intergalactic Ordinance Network (ION).

Using his nearly unlimited powers, Noi harnessed a cosmic singularity at the center of the universe, setting it as the core of an artificially constructed planet of astounding technological construction

he built around it. Noi then embedded his very essence into the construct, uploading himself into the crystalline matrix surrounding the singularity, to become a planet-sized entity that was both a living being and the ultimate supercomputer — he became ION Prime.

As part of his plan to bring stability and peace to the Universe and combat evil, ION Prime created the ION Fists, artifacts linked to the singularity and capable of channeling its power. These first ION Fists were then launched out into the Universe, scattered across the manifold galaxies, designed to seek potential champions among the young races who possessed the necessary awareness, will, and desire for justice to wield the artifact's power. Drawn back to ION Prime, these diverse beings were given the choice to use the power of the ION Fist to fight intergalactic villainy and to bring peace to the universe, or to return home to live a mundane life. Those that accepted the challenge and donned the ION Fist became the first ION Guardsmen... and the Universe was forever changed!





Timeline

A billion years have elapsed since ION Prime came into being and the ION Guard was born. This vast expanse of time has seen the ION Guardsmen engaged in constant struggle across the Universe against the forces of war, destruction, and injustice. Listing even their greatest exploits would fill an entire databank, but here are a few key points of their more recent history, the highs and lows of the ION Guard's last century.

89 Years Ago: ION Guards investigate the destruction of a dozen life-bearing planets in the Eagle Nebula. Ravaged and barren, the planets are devoid of all life, as if scoured right down to the microscopic level. Ancient legends of such incidents bear the name of Infinitus, the World Vampire.

75 Years Ago: First encounter with the Sinister Sorcerers of Skathros. The ruling caste on their own planet, the Sorcerers begin a campaign of occult conquest, attempting to forge an empire by subjugating the local systems of Quintara and Gordania. ION Guardsmen fight hard to protect Quintara and Gordania, but the struggle is nearly lost due to the weakness of the ION Fist against magic. Although Quintara and Gordania are finally liberated, the Sorcerers escape to places

unknown, shrouded in magic, periodically reappearing to plague the ION Guard.

62 Years Ago: ION Guard intervention in the Vorcha-Lo'glai War brings an end to five millennia of conflict that engulfed the two star systems. Brokering a peace accord between the two races, the ION Guard also assist in the rebuilding efforts, and herald a new age of peace, prosperity, and cooperation between the once-bitter enemies.

44 Years Ago: A pair of ION Guardsmen, investigating distress calls from Ao, the home planet of a blue-skinned race of scientist-mystics, encounter an immense, cosmically powerful entity attacking the planet. In their brief and garbled emergency transmission, only the word "Infinitus!" is clear. More Guardsmen are instantly dispatched to the planet, but when they arrive all they discover is a stripped and lifeless rock. The original two ION Guards are never found.

21 Years Ago: Manis, the ION Guardsman of Helox IV, abuses the powers of his ION fist to seize control of his home world and declare himself Supreme Ruler, imposing his despotic will upon its helpless citizens. After several weeks of conflict, a team of ION Guardsmen finally defeat and capture



Manis, stripping him of his ION Fist, freeing the planet from his tyranny. Returning Manis back to ION Prime to stand trial for his crimes, the unit is inexplicably sucked into a Chaos Vortex and disappears. Given the unremittingly hostile nature of the Chaos Dimension, Manis is presumed dead.

17 Years Ago: When Ithora, the sun of the densely populated Vanthic System begins to go supernova, ION Guardsmen help organize and lead a successful multi-planetary evacuation and relocation to Talas II.

13 Years Ago: The Ebon Eye, a wandering black hole, passes close to ION Prime, causing massive disruptions and fluctuations to ION Fist powers, as well strange energy surges throughout the Universe.

12 Years Ago: A large force of ION Guardsmen join forces with Vanguard, an intergalactic superhero team, to protect the crystalline planet Diamos from the ravages of Infinitus and his cosmic-powered servitors, the Thralls of Infinitus. Many die protecting Diamos and its silicon-based citizens before forcing Infinitus and his Thralls to retreat in their dimensional ark.

8 Years Ago: Manis, fallen ION Guard and tyrant, reappears on Helox IV, grotesquely changed by the Chaos Dimension. Twisted and malformed, his right arm and hand have become a chitinous claw covered in blinking alien eyes, a mockery of the ION Fist he once bore. Calling himself Maniacus and clearly more unhinged than ever before, he channels horrific powers of Chaos to slay Shanit, the ION Guardsman assigned to the Helox sector, and then begins to lay waste to the planet of his birth. An ION Guard unit dispatched to Helox IV arrives too late, finding the planet in ruins, with some survivors Maniacus left to deliver a chilling message to the ION Guard: he has vowed revenge upon the ION Guard, never resting until he has

destroyed them and ION Prime itself. Maniacus has been a relentless nemesis of the ION Guard ever since.

3 Years Ago: ION Guardsmen foil the planned invasion of Earth by a strange species of fungal-insectoid aliens using Pluto as their launching point. The alien mothership is destroyed in the battle before the invasion can begin. Strangely, the databanks of ION Prime provide no insight into these mysterious aliens or their origins.

1 Year Ago: ION Guardsmen operate to successfully prevent the illegal poaching of star dragons during their migration through the Protoss Expanse.

One BILLION Years?!

Yep, that's a LOT of history, but only some of the key events of the last century or so have been mentioned. A lengthier, more detailed history would have taken up a lot of space, and most of it probably wouldn't see game usage, as only the most recent events are likely to have any tie to or impact on current events, and GMs usually end up making up their own stuff (which is great!). The upside of having so much history left unsaid, of course, is that it only has to be as detailed as the GM feels is important. This allows the GM unlimited flexibility in terms of linking adventures to ION Guard history as she or he chooses or creates!





○ Objectives

From its very foundation, the ION Guard was intended to be a force of good, justice, and peace in the Universe, to protect and serve the interests of all right-thinking intergalactic citizens of the ION.

The laws of the ION are many, stored in vast crystalline repositories, but ultimately they all center on the following core principles:

- Protect The Innocent**
- Apprehend Wrongdoers**
- Aid The Cause of Peace**

Looking at these principles in more detail provides a strong insight into how the ION Guard operates on the intergalactic stage, though it must always be remembered that these principles are constrained by the jurisdiction of the ION at all times. Though they sometimes work in cooperation with planetary authorities, they more frequently operate on their own to tackle those issues the local authorities might otherwise lack the resources, reach, or desire to deal with.

Protect The Innocent

This aspect of the ION's objectives is perhaps the most fundamental, as the other two primary objectives exist largely to facilitate this one. The ION Guard strives to defend decent, law-abiding citizens of many planets from the depredations of criminals and villains, and from larger

concerns such as war and invasion. Over the millenia, countless ION Guardsmen have risked and laid down their lives to protect others, providing active protection against hostile attackers and rogues of all stripes, but dealing with sapient threats is not the sole way in which the ION engages with this objective. The ION Guard also actively works to provide relief and aid when disaster strikes, whether natural or otherwise, and this support is not completely restricted to sapient species either: the ION Guard has also defended those intergalactic species recognized as endangered from the depredations of poachers too. The ION Guard is often called to protect endangered species, ecosystems, and entire unspoiled planets and systems from those who would cause them harm.

Apprehend ○ Wrongdoers

In areas where it has jurisdiction, the ION directs much of its energies towards the apprehension of intergalactic criminals and bringing them to justice. Although what actually constitutes a criminal varies from planet to planet, the ION Guard does not concern itself with individual planetary definitions, but rather a broader, general definition:

An intergalactic criminal is an individual or organization that causes notable

suffering, death, and/or environmental or planetary damage; and/or who engages in the theft of resources — material, energy, or living — either protected, prohibited, or lawfully possessed by others, inclusive of artifacts of power and/or significance; and/or who may or may not engage in piracy, organized crime, slavery, and/or the use of intimidation and subterfuge to obtain resources and influence for questionable purposes, whether for themselves, in the employ of others, or in employing others for such a purpose.

A Question of Jurisdiction

Because it respects the rights of planetary and interplanetary bodies to govern themselves and manage their own affairs, the ION Guard rarely intervenes in internal wars and issues unless these threaten to spill out into other areas of their jurisdiction. They also do not act to remove questionable governing bodies in their jurisdiction unless the greater proportion of a populace requests their assistance and the cause is clearly just. Though many Guardsmen chafe under this restriction, they recognize it as necessary in order to avoid jeopardizing the intergalactic acceptance and respect with which the Guard is treated, which would undoubtedly be at risk if they began to act as a force in internal political and legal affairs outside of their mission.

For similar reasons, the ION Guard publicly restricts its operations to regions of space where they are actively accepted by local authorities, or which are unclaimed by any legitimately recognized authorities. The key word here is “publicly” as ION Guardsmen will covertly track intergalactic criminals, even in areas where they lack jurisdiction, keeping tabs on them until they are in a position to be legally apprehended.

Aid The Cause of Peace

The ION sends appropriately skilled veteran Guardsmen to act as liaisons and neutral mediators where requested by planetary bodies, to help settle disputes and broker peace treaties. As necessary and when asked to do so, they also serve as peacekeepers with enforcement powers, though they only do so where they have appropriate jurisdiction. In this role, the ION Guard must respect and weigh the goals, opinions, and desires of both sides that they swear to serve. This is possibly the ION Guard’s greatest challenge, as they are often required to walk the neutral tightrope between war and peace.

Isn’t This All Rather Vague?

Absolutely. Just like similar organizations in comics, the actual restrictions and operations of the ION Guard are dictated as much by what’s cool and interesting than the actuality of detailed laws and rules. Apart from taking up a lot of pages with dry text covering laws, regulations, and restrictions *ad nauseum*, such a rigid approach would also diminish the GM’s flexibility to devise exciting and involving adventures. Being able to easily tailor the way the ION Guard operates within such broad principles, rather than being burdened with an overabundance of prescriptions and fiddly details, is very much a deliberate feature of the ION Space series.



ORGANIZATION

○ Organization

The ultimate authority in the ION Guard is ION Prime itself, or rather the uploaded consciousness of Noi. However, ION Prime does not become involved in any but the most dire of intergalactic emergencies, and even then has a hands-off approach, serving only to alert the High Guard of the organization to the threat, and then provide useful insight, information, and possible stratagems for dealing with it.

Of some concern to Guard veterans is the fact that ION Prime has become increasingly uncommunicative over the last millenium, though it has not elaborated as to why this is the case.

The **High Guard**, the five most powerful and suitable ION Guard veterans as selected by ION Prime, head the hierarchy that forms the Guard. Each High Guardsman oversees the efforts of ten Commanders, but is largely uninvolved in day-to-day affairs, instead using gathered information to build a broad picture of intergalactic affairs throughout the many sectors they are responsible for, and by working with the other High Guards to create a universal overview. Each High Guardsman is also responsible for an area of ION Guard operations, providing overall control, authority, and guidance on this area for the entire organization. These

operations consume much of a High Guard's time and energies.

Everyday operations and procedures are overseen by a 50-strong team of **Guard Commanders**, proven and experienced veterans of ability and wisdom. Each Guard Commander is responsible for many sectors of space and coordinating any noteworthy inter-sector efforts among those Guardsmen assigned to patrol them. Where larger or more serious problems arise, Guard Commanders work together to direct their subordinates.

Guard Commanders have the authority to assign Guardsmen as required, in most cases having them patrol individual sectors. In very densely populated sectors, or sectors plagued by a variety of problems, teams of Guardsmen may be assigned. It is not uncommon for Guardsmen to operate in pairs, threes, or even in multiple teams of half a dozen in the most perilous sectors.

On the frontline, individual **Guardsmen** have a great deal of leeway to operate independently and on their own initiative most of the time, only sending weekly reports to their commanders, or as needed when the importance or severity of a situation dictates. Guard Commanders, as a rule, do not often initiate communication with their subordinates, but when they do,

it is all but certain to bring an issue of great import to their attention that needs to be dealt with.

Among themselves, Guardsmen grant the greatest respect and deference to the most experienced among them, creating an informal hierarchy, one based on admiration and comradeship. In teams of Guardsmen, a leader is typically appointed by the Guard Commander, selection being based on a combination of leadership skill and temperament, though all things being equal, seniority often plays a part.

Numbers & Sectors

Currently, there are approximately 10,000 Guardsmen on active duty. While this may sound like a large number, these individuals are scattered across the known universe in 5,000 sectors.

Sectors are large sections of space centered on galactic areas with relatively high densities of sapient populations and civilizations. Each sector is given a code consisting of three digits and a letter. The sector containing the center of the universe, and thus ION Prime, is 001-A. As sectors are located further and further from ION Prime, the letter code increases. The sector containing the Milky Way, and thus Earth, for example, is sector 742-T.

The High Guard

The five High Guardsmen and their areas of control are:

Arn – An affable, patient Vorcha male (human-like, forehead ridges, orange skin)

★ **Relations:** Establishing and maintaining good relations between the ION Guard and other parties, including dealing with visiting diplomats and outsiders, as well as general public relations.

Bo-lak – An intense, decisive Cho female (short, hairless, ape-like, gray skin, tusks)

★ **Defense:** Responsibility for the defense of ION Prime itself, and the coordination of any major military efforts, should the Guard become embroiled in such.

Lorinth – A charismatic, dynamic Ullite female (graceful, luminous, diaphanous hair)

★ **Recruitment & Training:** Responsibility for recruiting new Guardsmen, ensuring full and effective vetting and training, including the assignment of suitable instructors.

Mzylrt – A precise, unemotional Vznt male (tall, attenuated, bipedal spider)

★ **Internal Affairs:** Responsibility for serious disciplinary actions, internal policing, and organizing the apprehension of rogue or renegade Guardsmen.

Romrad – Diligent, tireless Diamosite genderless (pale crystalline biped, faceless)

★ **Resources:** Responsibility for ensuring any maintenance and upkeep of ION Prime itself, as well as the allocation and maintenance of overall Guard resources, including the central databank.



RECRUITMENT

○ Recruitment

ION Guard recruitment is a very serious endeavor, and it is a testament to its efficiency and thoroughness that in the entirety of the Guard's history and the many millions that have served in its ranks, the number that have gone rogue or fallen to corruption numbers just under a hundred.

Key issues in recruitment include the physical, mental, and psychological

standards of potential Guardsmen, as well as whether or not prospective Guardsmen hail from sufficiently advanced planets. Recruitment and training have been found to be far easier if the individual in question already comes from a planet with established interplanetary and interspecies contact, with the level of technological development that implies. While exceptions have been made, primarily among those *Hand-Picked* (see boxed text), the sheer learning curve and culture shock involved

○ Hand-Picked

In situations of the direst emergency, such as the death of a Guardsman and a risk of the ION Fist falling into hostile hands, the ION Fist will initiate a self-defense protocol. It detaches from the dead Guardsman and ascertains its safest next course of action, which will be one of the following:

- ★ Finding an appropriate hiding place before going dormant.
- ★ Flying back to ION Prime (if doing so can be done quickly and safely).
- ★ Locating the nearest sapient individual of appropriate awareness, psychology, and moral outlook.

In the case of (1), the ION Fist will remain dormant until approached by another Guardsman or someone of the requisite

awareness, psychology, and moral outlook, at which point it will activate and make itself known to them, regardless of species and jurisdiction; this also occurs in the case of (3). The chosen individual is given a brief holographic overview of what the ION Guard is, what the ION Fist itself is capable of, and the option of donning the Fist and potentially becoming a Guardsman. Most usually accept, and with the Fist's guidance, make their way to ION Prime to undergo training, sometimes have to deal with whatever opponents killed the Fist's previous wearer along the way. These rare individuals, those picked by an ION Fist itself, are termed the *Hand-Picked*, are among some of the Guard's staunchest, if often unorthodox, members.

in becoming aware of intergalactic society and its myriad species adds a massive extra burden to an already tough process.

Although the Guard demands loyalty to itself above and beyond loyalty to existing ties of planet, family, and species, it is not so naïve to expect such ties to simply fall by the wayside. For this reason, and the fear of letting spies enter its midst, the Guard is also reluctant to accept candidates of species and intergalactic bodies that do not recognize its jurisdiction, or worse, actively oppose it. Such Guardsmen will face testing above and beyond anything else other recruits endure, and will have to prove themselves thoroughly before full duty and trust are bestowed them.

Fortunately for the Guard, many planets within its jurisdiction consider it a great honor to join, and well-publicized recruitment drives do much to enhance the public image of the organization.

Very few individuals meet even the most basic requirements of ION Guard membership: an astounding level of awareness combined with a reasonable level of intelligence, and above-average

drive and mental resilience. Though the high level of awareness certainly plays its part in aiding potential ION Guards when it comes to noticing peril, spotting clues, or instinctively getting a good idea of what is happening before an analysis is made, it is not the main reason for the requirement. Rather, an ION Fist simply will not operate for anyone below such a level of awareness; the ION Fist needs a powerful awareness to work with, one it can open up even further in order to wield the cosmic power it channels. In terms of intelligence and will, the ION Guard can't afford to employ fools, nor those deficient in reasoning and deduction, and it certainly can't afford to employ those likely to crumple under pressure, or who are too easily swayed from their tasks.

Potential Guardsmen are rigorously tested with interviews and scans before even being admitted to basic training. They must demonstrate moral fortitude, determination, and self-control. Individuals displaying unnecessary aggression, a tendency to buckle under pressure, questionable restraint, or flexible morals are quickly weeded out as unfit for service.





○ TRAINING

The potential recruits that are accepted into basic training face continual testing throughout their induction. They are constantly drilled, given instruction on the fundamentals of ION Fist use, and learn to work independently or as part of a team, both in active exercises and in theory. Flying, lifting things with focused ION Fist beams, uniform generation, blasting targets, creating a force field, and maintaining life support are core skills — but channeling cosmic energy effectively for non-standard uses also features. Automated training halls run robot-enhanced holographic simulations where rookies perform under the ever-vigilant gaze of seasoned instructors, and any undesirable traits not already picked up on are swiftly noted for correction or as possible grounds for expulsion.

Apart from powers use, recruits are also instructed in common intergalactic law and basic investigative techniques, given vital information pertaining to the sector they will be assigned to patrol, and trained in various unarmed combat techniques. Throughout the process, tests, interviews, and scans are continuously performed

By virtue of this painstakingly difficult process, only 10% of recruits make it through basic training. If they do, they have much to be proud of, as they progress to the final stage of training: fieldwork.

Rookies that make it through basic training are assigned to accompany veteran Guardsmen on active patrol, but are recognizable because their generated uniforms do not yet feature the symbol of the ION Guard. They learn the ropes, pick up useful tips and hands-on experience, frequently experiencing their first taste of real-life action and pressure in the process.

After a year of fieldwork, they return to ION Prime to take their final oath to the ION Guard in a ceremony in the main hall of the Academy. As their recitation of the ION Guard oath finishes, the symbol of the ION Guard appears on the chest of their uniform, marking their final acceptance and graduation. Now fully-fledged Guardsmen, they can enjoy a very brief respite of off-duty celebration and reflection before being assigned to their own patrol sector as an active-duty ION Guardsman.

ION GUARD

OATH

**With golden light
I fight for right
Bear ION Fist
Against the night
This I swear
With spirit hard
Let evil fear
The ION Guard!**



○ From Space

The size of a small planet, ION Prime is an artificial world of silver-gray coryllite, surrounded by an orbiting ring of linked cylindrical towers of titanic size. Its smooth surface appears gently punctuated, like a mirror ball, by a multiplicity of colossally large lenses, all glowing with golden light — quite similar, in fact, to those found in miniature on the back of every ION Fist.

ION Prime itself is actually a massive transmitter unit for the power of the cosmic singularity at its core, and the lenses upon its surface serve to refract, focus, and channel the energies of the singularity outwards into the Universe, powering ION Fists throughout.

○ Planetside

On closer inspection, ION Prime is a largely seamless and bare surface, except for a large developed area on its north pole. This area, **ION Base**, is covered with wide-open streets, cylindrical towers, and a maze of walkways linking the towers at all levels. The air is crisp, unpolluted, and Guardsmen of a bewildering array of species can be seen flying from place to place about their business, walking with compatriots, or relaxing in the many small

parks. Sources of golden light pervade ION Base, making even the nighttime well lit.

The only vehicles to be seen are the few spacecraft of visiting dignitaries — docked on platforms at tower suites that house them and their entourages while they stay — and the occasional Pod Transport, a spherical silver aircraft with yellow lens-like front windows, used to transport bulk materials, raw recruits, and those unable to fly.

At all times, day and night, the sky is crossed by the massive ring of defensive towers that encircles the planet, creating a visually stunning band of pale silver and golden lights in the dark of night.

Training halls equipped with robots and solid-light holograms, gravity-functioned gymnasia, individual apartments, mess halls, pools, holographic entertainment suites, and gardens — outdoor and covered — make up most of the buildings in ION Base, though a few do stand out as particularly noteworthy (see **Key Locations** below). Most of the time, ION Base is only very lightly occupied. Perhaps a hundred or so trainees of varying grades, a hundred trained ION Guard veterans — many largely retired from more active

roles, involved in instruction and training, or guarding the forcels — and the Guard Command and High Guard make up the more stable numbers. Another hundred or so active Guardsmen are visiting or enjoying some well-deserved R&R at any given time, making the typical population of ION Base around 300 to 500, although it can host many times that number should emergency require it.

○ Inside the Buildings

Furnishings and décor in ION Base are simple and elegant, if spartan, giving the buildings an open-air feel. Only those carefully watched and guarded towers assigned as accommodation for visitors are heavily furnished or luxurious.

At key points in every building, small clusters of crystalline rods can be found, bristling up around polished golden lenses. These consoles provide basic, low-level access to ION Prime's databanks and internal communications for those not yet fully versed in ION Fist usage. Similarly, many tower levels are served with crystalline tubes and silver elevation disks to carry non-fliers between the base's many levels.

Key Locations

○ The Academy

The Academy lies at the heart of ION Guard training and testing, a tall cylindrical tower topped with a golden hologram of the ION symbol, a trio of smaller towers branching off the top of it, each emblazoned with the symbol of the ION.

At the center of the Academy is a huge hall and gravity-elevated stage, as well as several individual levitating rostrums. It is here that new recruits are greeted en masse, where announcements to the whole recruit body are made, and assemblies held at the start of each day to inspire and recognize the achievements of

those who excel in their training. It is also where the graduation ceremony is held, in which rookie Guardsmen, back from their fieldwork training, are granted full status and given the right to bear the symbol of the ION Guard.

The levels above the hall are study rooms and lecture halls, with the uppermost levels being the offices of various trainers and lecturers. Those responsible for the training and education of recruits live in individual apartments located within the three smaller towers branching off the top of the Academy.

Core & Databank ○

The most secure location on ION Prime is the Core, arguably even more secure than the subterranean forcels that house many intergalactic miscreants. The Core is the very heart of ION Prime, as well as the source of power for the entire ION Guard.

Occupying nearly the entirety of the Core is the immeasurably powerful

Training Robot ○

Prowess: 2-3 **Intellect:** —
Coordination: 2-3 **Awareness:** 2-3
Strength: 2-4 **Willpower:** —
Stamina: 8

Notes: Training robots can be programmed to display variable prowess, coordination, awareness, and strength to suit the role they play in simulations, as well as the general level of aptitude of the individuals they are fighting. Some are programmed to play the part of innocent bystanders or individuals in need of rescue, while others are programmed to operate as thugs, soldiers, or criminals.

During training, the robots are overlaid with holographic imaging to make them more realistic. Although programmed not to kill, some robots are armed with stun pistols or rifles (bashing damage 4-5), or may brawl or wrestle with trainees.



cosmic singularity. Surrounding it, like a huge, delicate, latticework eggshell, is the Databank, a crystalline matrix that houses the consciousness and knowledge of Noi.

The Databank also contains the power of the singularity, preventing it from destroying the artificial planet crafted around it. It serves as the repository of all of the knowledge collected by the ION Guard in its billion years of existence, and all the laws, records, and files pertaining to the millions of cultures, worlds, and important and/or nefarious individuals throughout the Universe. In total, ION Prime's Databank

forms one of the greatest archives of the most important information in the Universe. Access to secret or sensitive in the Databank is restricted to only ION Guard members, and it has thus far proven impossible to hack, no doubt because of its synergy with the consciousness of Noi, one of the greatest minds in existence.

Access to the Core itself can only be granted by a majority decision of the High Guard; only they possess the requisite authority and secret knowledge of how to reach it, and the reasons for them doing so must be dire indeed.

The Cosmic Singularity

Apart from sounding impressive and being a cosmic power source, defining the cosmic singularity is entirely up to the Game Master. Here are some possibilities:

What it is:

- ★ A black hole.
- ★ The birth of a universe, halted.
- ★ A micro-universe.
- ★ A rift or gateway in space-time, linked to alternate universes.

What it looks like:

- ★ A black hole.
- ★ A golden nebula, complete with billions of stars.
- ★ A vast iridescent sphere covered in arcs of golden lightning.
- ★ A coruscating ball of golden energy.
- ★ A morphic golden gemstone of staggering size, constantly changing its configuration.

What happens if you enter it:

- ★ You are destroyed by its raw

energies, disintegrated, or crushed into a infinitesimally small, superdense molecule.

- ★ Your consciousness is ripped from your body and added to ION Prime's databanks.
- ★ You are driven mad, your mind overwhelmed by glimpses of all time and universes.
- ★ You are transformed into a godlike being of energy, ascending to higher levels and realms, no longer concerned with the physical universe.
- ★ You are cast into a random point of history, alternate universe, location elsewhere in this universe, or into another dimension.
- ★ Your consciousness is swapped with that of another being from history, this universe, an alternate universe (perhaps an alternate self), or another dimension.
- ★ Any of these are possibilities, and can either be chosen by the Game Master, or randomly selected with a die roll. Alternatively, the Game Master might have their own ideas as to what happens.



○ Forcells

Several hundred forcells are located in the bowels of ION Prime, isolated from ION Base and the Core by hundreds of miles and a several-miles thick layer of coryllite. The sole entry to the forcells is a single tunnel, guarded by a specially trained contingent of twenty Guardsmen, along with innumerable robotic sentries, multiple alarm systems, scanners, sensors, and a dozen fortified robotically armed security checkpoints, all sealed within force fields.

The forcells themselves are power-negating prison cells, each of which also maintains the life of the imprisoned individual without need of nourishment. These small, featureless cells hold only a bed and chair extruded from the coryllite of the floor itself, but provide basic entertainment in the form of holographic vid news, games, and other edited content. Although they do not have doors in the physical sense, each cell is sealed with a translucent golden force field of great power.

In those few cases where extremely powerful prisoners cannot be held or have their powers inhibited by the forcells, these individuals have been placed into suspended animation within a forcell which are constantly monitored.

To date, no inmate has ever escaped from the forcells of ION Prime.

○ Hall of Light

This vast, golden coryllite dome is surrounded by a large, tranquil garden area. Inside, countless small niches cover the walls, each projecting a small holographic image, bathing the entire interior in golden light. These images are the likenesses of all those who have faithfully served the ION Guard down through the ages, but who are now lost to death. This tribute to the selflessness and sacrifice of these heroes serves as an inspiration to all.

Robot Sentry ○

Prowess: 3 **Intellect:** —
Coordination: 3 **Awareness:** 3
Strength: 4 **Willpower:** —
Stamina: 8

Notes: Sentry robots are programmed to issue a warning to any non-ION personnel detected in the forcells, unless such individuals have been issued appropriate passes by a High Guard or Guard Commander. Should someone warned fail to surrender immediately, they will open fire with their stun rifles (bashing damage 5). If disarmed, they will attempt to wrestle opponents.

Just How Tough Are Forcells? ○

Each forcell displays the following properties:

Material Strength: 10 (coryllite)
Force Field: 8-10
Life Support: 1 (Eating)
Power Nullification: 8-10

Forcells equipped to place subjects in suspended animation also have **Time Control:** 10 – “Freeze” target in time-like **Paralysis**, in which they age at 1/100th the normal rate.

Sensor Systems ○

The forcell area's in-built sensors have **Detection:** 8-10 for all listed areas of detection, unless it serves a storyline otherwise.

ION Council

Located at the center of ION Base, the ION Council is a star-shaped golden tower set within perfectly sculpted grounds and immaculately landscaped gardens that appear as the ION Guard symbol when viewed from above. This is where the High Guard and Guard Commanders conduct their affairs, and also holds the personal offices, meeting rooms, and war rooms of the ION Council. Given the importance of the ION Council, it is protected by defenses every bit as formidable as those guarding the forcels, including its own force field generator, reinforced walls, guards, and sensors.

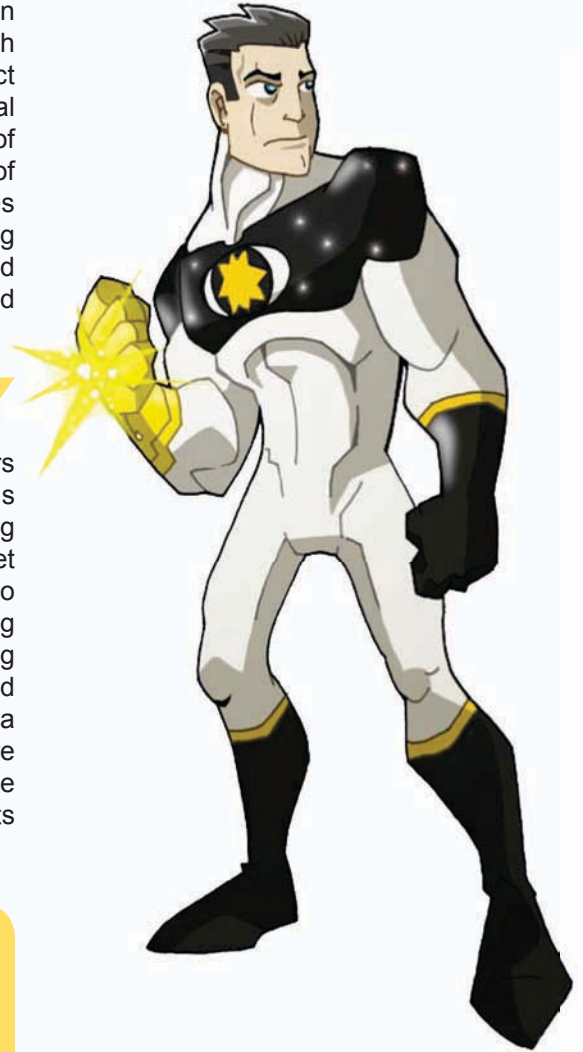
ION Ring

The artificial ring of linked towers surrounding ION Prime, the ION Ring is a defense network, capable of projecting a golden force field around the tiny planet and its atmosphere. Each tower also contains a dozen independently operating singularity cannons, and the tower ring is capable of rotating rapidly around ION Prime in any direction, providing a devastatingly punishing barrage of fire against any incoming hostile vehicles. The ION Ring cannot direct its fire inside its perimeter.

Firepower!

Rather than trying to work out just how many attacks a given invader suffers, simply assume that every attacking vehicle suffers 1-6 attacks each panel, each with Coordination 3 (shooting damage 10).

Attacking figures of human-size or smaller cannot be effectively targeted by the ION Ring, and must be dealt with by ION Guardsmen if the attacker manages to breach the force field.



RESOURCES

ION Fist

Casually known as the *Golden Gauntlet*, the ION Fist is the source of each Guardsman's powers, as well as a symbol of authority and justice throughout the Universe.

Created by Noi/ION Prime, using the technology of the Ancients, each ION Fist is a marvel of ultra-advanced engineering, an almost indestructible gauntlet of crystallized nano-matrix coryllite, with an interwoven latticework of ditranium connected to an amplification lens. This lens, mounted on the back of the Fist, constantly flows with power, illuminated with drifting motes and energy clouds.

Displaying morphic properties, the ION Fist adjusts its size and configuration to fit its bearer, almost regardless of species, though the general appearance is always consistent. It always resembles a golden gauntlet, glove, or extremity-sheath of polished gold, with a large lens on its back and circuit-like patterns surrounding it.

The ION Fist acts as both a conduit of and control device for the cosmic power of the singularity housed at the core of ION Prime; without it, a Guardsman cannot access their powers.



○ Removing the Fist

The removal of an ION Fist is never accidental, never the result of a simple grab in combat or out of it, as it resists being separated from an active wearer. Of course, the wearer of an ION Fist can remove it at any time, as can anyone with the full and just authority of ION Prime, though they may certainly have to defeat a bearer unwilling to relinquish the artifact in such cases. The same is true of villains depriving Guardsmen of their ION Fists — the Guardsman must first be thoroughly defeated.

Any removal of an ION Fist by anyone save its wearer or an authority of ION Prime should be an incredibly rare event, and likely the focus of a following adventure with the retrieval of the Fist as the main objective. As in the comics, removing a hero's power source should be extremely rare, even if real world logic dictates that villains would actively attempt to remove such an artifact at the first opportunity; the removal should be a powerfully dramatic event, e.g., the villain holds the battered and defeated ION Guardsman aloft in triumph before stripping their Fist from them, and then casts the broken hero aside. Of course, this should serve as a story hook for the next adventure, in which the hero proves that, despite her lack of powers, she is far from defeated and sets out to reclaim what is rightfully hers from the overconfident and incredulous villain.

Should anyone attempt to destroy an ION Fist, it has **Material Strength: 10**.

Core Powers ○

A handful of powers form the core repertoire of an ION Guardsman. The most ubiquitous power is **Flight**: the energies of the ION Fist can propel a Guardsman through an atmosphere or outer space and also enables them to hover effortlessly. In dangerous situations, or in an atmosphere, a Guardsman can reach speeds approaching Mach 3.2 (2,200 mph), capable of matching pace with all but the fastest anti-aircraft missiles, and outpacing nearly every military aircraft on Earth. In space, when focused travel over huge distances is required, a Guardsman flies through transwarp space, traversing huge intergalactic distances in anything from moments to days

Flight is so intrinsic to the way that ION Guards operate that they all learn aerial maneuvering and combat techniques as part of their basic training, and are capable of fighting in three dimensions.

Another standard ION Guard power is the personal **Force Field**. The ION Fist automatically projects a form-fitting force field around its wearer as necessary. This sheathe of golden light surrounds the Guardsman in a slender aura and can resist major impacts, explosions, and energy-based attacks, up to the power of a small missile.

The ION Fist is capable of manipulating energy for use as a grasping power, capable of lifting, moving, and holding objects. A beam of solid light is projected from the ION Fist at the desired target, and it can then be lifted, moved, held, or thrown, similar to **Telekinesis**. The beam is strong enough to handle objects up to the size of a small passenger jet and a weight of up to 100 tons.

The ION Fist can also project beams of coruscating golden force, enabling the Guardsman to **Blast** enemies and obstacles at a distance. The power with

which the beam strikes can be varied by the Guardsman, but at its top end it can deliver as much destructive power as the main cannon of a tank.

The most subtle power provided by the ION Fist is that of **Life Support**. While worn, the ION Fist sustains the Guardsman, obviating the need for food and water, and also provides whatever atmospheric needs the Guardsman requires in terms of breathing, temperature, and pressure. Given the routine operations of Guardsmen in space and alien atmospheres, it also protects against extremes of cold, heat, pressure, radiation, and toxins, as well as the effects of vacuum.

Instantaneous **Communications** with other ION Guards in the same dimension is also provided by the ION Fist, regardless of distance. These communications include visual and auditory elements, with the lens functioning either as a viewscreen or a golden light hologram projector.

The final core power, and one few individuals outside of the Guard itself realize is a power, is that of **Uniform Creation**. At any time while worn, the ION Fist can create the Guardsman's uniform, instantly transforming any clothes worn or simply creating the fabrics using its own cosmic energies. This means that a Guardsman needs never carry a uniform or worry about replacing one, and that damage to a uniform can be repaired in a moment with but a thought. Creating a garment that is not obviously an ION Guard uniform is a nonstandard use of the ION Fist.

Weakness vs. Magic

For all its might, the ION Fist has a serious flaw: it is vulnerable to magic. The occult forces of a magical dart, for example, cuts through an ION Fist force field as if it wasn't there. A blast of energy from an ION Fist fizzles harmlessly when it strikes enchanted armor. A magical entity can

walk unimpeded through the solid light telekinesis of an ION Fist.

This weakness only affects physical interactions, however; a blinding flash produced by an ION Fist can still potentially blind a magical foe, for example, and the ION Fist can still use its sensors to detect the presence of arcane forces at work.

Dealing with magical foes requires a great deal of creativity and ingenuity on the part of a Guardsman, usually calling for the use of the ION Fist's powers to affect the environment around a magical foe, for instance. Little wonder, then, that the Sinister Sorcerers of Skathros have vexed the ION Guard terribly in the past, and remain a very dangerous threat to this day.

Guardsmen have posited many theories as to why the ION Fist possesses such a weakness, the main rationale being that the scientific forces of the Fist are diametrically opposed to the occult powers of sorcery. In truth, no one knows for certain.

Intergalactic Flight?

There are no rules for intergalactic flight in ICONS or this supplement, because ultimately such travel is more story device than any specific superpower. If the GM wants the characters to reach a certain location in time, they do; if the GM wants them to arrive too late, they do – in other words, the heroes travel at the speed of plot. Crossing interstellar distances from Alpha Tatronti to Beta Gamalore is less important than what the characters actually do when they are at either of those points. In ION Space, adventure pacing and dramatic concerns trump the physics of time and distance measurements of interstellar travel.

○ Uniforms

ION Guardsmen have some flexibility in designing their uniforms to suit their personal tastes within the following restrictions:

The uniform must be black and white, with gold as an accent color. Black elements on the torso/abdomen must feature a starfield effect of white, twinkling stars, like the deep of space.

The uniform must feature the ION Guard symbol prominently displayed on its front, atop the starfield. **Trainees** are not permitted to bear the symbol of the ION Guard until they graduate.

Guard Commander uniforms are black and gold, with white as an accent color.

High Guard uniforms are gold and white, with black as an accent color.



Unconventional

Power Use ○

Beyond the core powers that account for 99% of what an ION Fist is capable of, the cosmic energies channeled can also be wielded in many other ways as well, though this requires creativity and determination on the part of the wearer.

Many ION Guardsmen will simply create a burst of **Blinding** golden light centered on the ION Fist. Some have been known to form handheld energy blades in their ION Fists, using these to **Strike** at foes in close combat. Others have used the solid light aspect of their cosmic energies to form rings of energy that coil around opponents, **Binding** them. A few creative individuals have modified their force fields at times, extruding ridges and spikes from them that form a damaging **Aura**.

In their investigations, ION Guards may find it useful to **Interface** with computing systems to locate important data, or to scan for various types of energies. Such **Detection** can yield valuable clues and trace evidence, as well as help to uncloak shapeshifted or disguised opponents.

In order to safeguard themselves against influence and control, some Guardsmen have manipulated the cosmic energies to form **Mind Shields**. Others have wielded these same energies to perform acts of **Healing** on others, or boost their own natural **Regeneration** abilities.

There are many other unconventional uses of the ION Fist that have been recorded, most so rare as to be nearly unique.

CREATING AN ION GUARD

CREATING AN ION GUARD

Creating an ION Guardsman is a simple points-based process, with certain limitations and specified powers, which replaces Phases 1 through 4 of the standard ICONS character creation process.

Phase 1: Origin

Unearthly: All ION Guardsmen combine the **Gimmick** Origin (specifically granting +2 Awareness) with another Origin dependent on species.

Alien species with an inborn power also possess the **Birthright** Origin, gaining access to an additional species-appropriate power (levels in this must be purchased using points normally).

Humans, near-humans, and other species lacking unusual powers also possess the **Transformed** Origin, gaining a +2 bonus to a single Ability of choice.

Phase 2: Abilities Specialties/Birthright Power

ION Guardsmen have 30 points to spend on Abilities, Specialties, and a Birthright

Power (if possessed), but must meet the following Ability minimums:

Awareness 6 (before the bonus from Gimmick is applied)

Intellect 3

Willpower 4

Phase 3: ION Fist Powers

The ION Fist provides the following:

Flight (Device) 8

Force Field (Device) 8

Life Support (Device) 8 - Breathing, Cold, Eating, Heat, Pressure, Radiation, Toxins, Vacuum

Wizardry Device (Cosmic Power) 8 - Blast, Telekinesis

Weakness: Magic

Phase 4: Continue Normal Character Creation

Determine the ION Guardsman's Stamina, Background, and Description as normal. Determination is always 1 due to the number of powers they possess. Appropriate Aspects are discussed below.

Example of Creation

Jess has decided that he wants to play an alien ION Guard, one that has a real background hook to use in play. He also wants him to be something of a bruiser. Although he could simply make up the appearance, background, and personality of an alien species himself (it's a big universe, and a Player can easily create their own alien race and planet), he talks with his GM to see if she has any alien species already detailed in the campaign that might fit his concept. Fortunately for him, one species does: the Grommoxians. These powerful brutes lived a peaceful and primitive life in their burrows on Grommox until they were enslaved by the militant Tai'shar Star Empire centuries ago. They continue to toil beneath the lash of their cruel, arrogant masters as laborers and drudges.

Jess likes the idea of a former slave, who has escaped to join the ION Guard: a big, normally peaceful brute with the desire to see his people freed from slavery someday. There's plenty of scope for future trials and tribulations there given that the GM has told Jess that the Tai'Shar Star Empire (and thus Grommox) is not within ION Guard jurisdiction.

★ Phase 1

Jess jots down **Origin:** Unearthly (*Gimmick* + *Birthright*), with a note to add +2 to his Awareness in Phase 2, and to purchase a few levels of the Burrowing power, a natural talent of his burrow-dwelling species, as well.

★ Phase 2

Jess spends 25 of his pool of 30 points on Attributes to build his Grommoxian ION Guard, one somewhat brighter, more determined, and stronger than most of his kin. He is careful to meet the minimum requirements for ION Guard membership. He ends up with:

Prowess 4 (a result of solid ION Guard training), Coordination 2 (a bit slow and cumbersome, but normal for one of his species), Strength 6 (slightly more powerful than normal for his species), Awareness 8 (6, boosted up to 8 by the +2 from Gimmick), Intellect 3 (matching an average human, but brighter than a normal Grommoxian), Will 4 (much more determined than a normal Grommoxian).

With his remaining 5 points he buys Burrowing 4 (his immense, shovel-like hands enable him to burrow through soil, brittle rock or brick), and a single Specialty in Performance - Singing (he has an impressive and operatic *basso profundo* singing voice).

★ Phase 3

Jess notes down the requisite powers of an ION Guard, as previously set out.

★ Phase 4

Naming his Grommoxian Maug, Jess calculates a starting Stamina of 10, notes Maug's Determination of 1, and his background, description, and appropriate Aspects. The fully completed write-up of Maug can be found on pages 36-37.

Jess then notices, with great interest, that Jo is creating her ION Guardsman: she's created a renegade Tai'Shar Amazon! That should create a rather interesting party dynamic!

○ ION Guard Aspects

Common Qualities possessed by ION Guardsmen include **Motivations** such as *Protect the Innocent*, *Apprehend Wrongdoers*, and *Aid the Cause of Peace*, as well as *Serve the ION Guard*. All obviously possess **Connection: ION Guard**, and some have **Catchphrases** based on parts of the ION Guard oath, such as “*Let Evil Fear!*” or “*I fight for right*” or the use of the ION Fist, such as “*Behold the ION Fist of Justice!*”

Common Challenges for all Guardsmen include **Enemy: Maniacus**, and **Enemy: Sinister Sorcerers of Skathros**, as these bedevil Guardsmen everywhere. The ION Fist has **Weakness: Magic**, and most ION Guards have **Weakness: Powerless without ION Fist**.

Beyond such common Aspects, ION Guardsmen may also have more personal ones too.



○ ADVENTURE SEEDS

The following outlines can provide the inspiration or core concepts behind a number of ION Guard-related adventures. None of these name a specific planet or location, and so can be set anywhere in the Universe.

move recorded and broadcast live. The media hounds intrude everywhere, get underfoot, and endanger themselves and others when several incidents occur that the ION Guardsmen must deal with.

○ Defend the President!

The ION Guardsmen have been invited in to serve as bodyguards for a powerful interplanetary official during a visit to another planet or space station. The official is responsible for bringing much peace and stability to their region of space, but has attracted much hatred from several concerns with an interest in destabilizing the region including extremist factions and criminal syndicates. His visit is to be the focal point of several assassination attempts by different groups, and the Guardsmen are in the line of fire.

○ One Of Our Planets Is Missing!

Investigating the strange silence and odd reports reaching them regarding the planet, the ION Guardsmen find out that the planet has literally disappeared! Who has stolen the planet, how, and to what end?

○ Live On Pangalactic News!

The ION Guard makes periodic recruitment drives to seek strong candidates for membership. Working as part of such a drive, the ION Guardsmen find themselves hounded by planetary media, their every

○ Magic Bullet!

Several ION Guardsmen have been slain recently while confronting wanted criminals, criminals that do not possess the power or resources to take a Guardsman down. When investigated, it turns out that some kind of magic blaster or gun has been used in each case, of identical power and effect. Someone is manufacturing magical weapons and selling them on the intergalactic black market as an anti-ION Guard weapon! The manufacture and trade has to be stopped!



○ Super Soldiers!

Despite the best efforts of ION Guard mediators, two planetary factions are set on war! Each blames the other for assorted treacheries, and things are about to get extremely ugly as both sides have also created super soldier programs! As total war breaks out, the ION Guardsmen receive a tip-off that the “treacheries” are part of some elaborate scheme to foster the war. They must brave the wartorn world, trapped between two armies of super-powered soldiers, to uncover the truth. Is it a warmongering planetary faction, or an outside agency, and will either side listen when the truth is uncovered?

○ The Maze!

The ION Guardsmen find themselves teleported inside a strange cell. Worse, when they attempt to use their ION Fists, they find they are non-functional! They, and their greatest foes, have been transported to a cyclopean maze by a cosmic being intent on observing the worth of lesser beings. They are given basic melee weapons and armor, and set forth into the trap-laden maze where they face their similarly powerless enemies and other strange creatures. How will they fare, and how will their actions influence the strange cosmic being observing it all?

Worldstorm! ○

Strange, unnatural storms have beset the planet! When the ION Guardsmen investigate, it becomes clear some outside agency is using advanced technology or magics to corrupt and control the planet’s weather, creating chaos and confusion! Worse, the attacks are so intense that the planet faces potential annihilation in a matter of days! They only have 48 hours to save the world!

Using Existing Adventures ○

It’s entirely possible to use existing adventures set on modern-day Earth for space-supers like the ION Guard. Simply change the locations and trappings to make them more exotic, alien, and science fiction, and upscale things where necessary. Take a simple bank heist in New York by a minor power-armored villain who tries to escape with a bag full of money by flying through rush hour traffic, for example. In Ion Space that would become an assault on the orbital Theed Consortium Vault by a small troop of power-armored Xanbrakians attempting to secure ditrillium crystals, who then try to escape by flying through a stream of commercial spacecraft!





○ **SAMPLE GUARDSMEN**

The following trio are all beginning Guardsmen, and may be played independently or as a team.

ION Guards ○ **& Other Supers** ○

There is always a chance that not everyone in your group of players will be interested in playing an ION Guardsman, or even playing in a science fiction-based supers campaign. There is likely to be one player, however, who really likes the idea of this type of character and really grooves on the setting. Assuming the GM approves, that player can use this material to create an ION Guard character who will fit seamlessly into your group's existing ICONS campaign.

When incorporating an individual ION Guardsman into a campaign, for the purposes of the ION Space setting, the GM can assume that he is the Guardsman assigned to the planet Earth, the Solar System, or even the entire Milky Way Galaxy. This, of course, will depend on the size and scope of your group's campaign and setting. This character can either be an Earthling (probably the easiest or most desirable choice), or an alien of an existing or even an extinct race. In any case, Earth should be the ION Guardsman's place of residence and primary area of protection.

This can provide some interesting play possibilities for both the player and the GM.

The player will likely enjoy being part of an intergalactic organization that sets him apart from the rest of his Earth-bound supergroup. He will have knowledge and stories of places and times that are beyond the scope of the other players. In addition, he will have the ION Guard as a support group and information resource to draw upon in a particularly tough struggle or crisis.

This will also give the GM a built-in opportunity to introduce science fiction elements into her game. An ION Guard player gives a perfect reason to drag all the characters off to some distant alien planet, or to add that extra little bit of detail or style to an alien invasion.

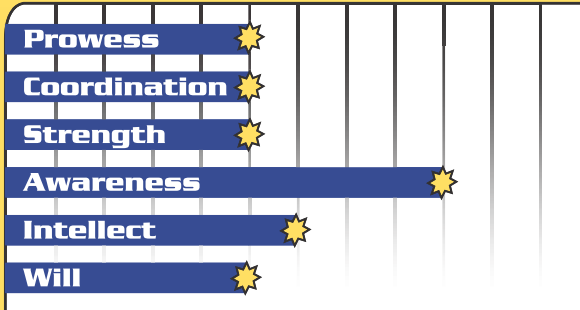
If the points-buy method of character creation is used, the supers of the other players should be built using around 70 points in order to maintain balance with the ION Guardsman.

Caine Carston

Origin: Unearthly (Gimmick + Transformed)

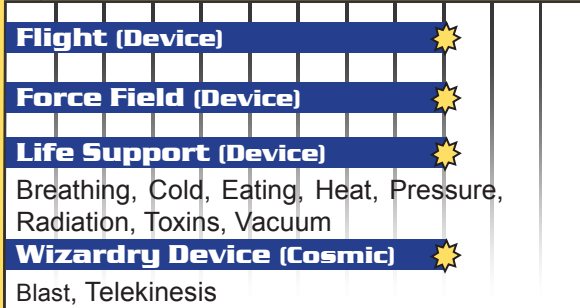
Abilities

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Powers

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Qualities

Catchphrase: "Justice Is Served."

Connection: The ION Guard

Connection: Janet Davidson, FBI Agent

Motivation: Serve the ION Guard

Motivation: Uphold Justice and Law

Challenges

Enemy: Maniacus

Enemy: Sinister Sorcerers of Skathros

Motivation: Protect Innocent at Any Cost

Weakness: Powerless without ION Fist

Weakness (ION Fist): Magic

Specialties

Criminology, Investigation, Law



Stamina



Determination

Caine Carston

On Earth, Caine was a field agent in the FBI, and a darned good one at that. He seemed to have an uncanny ability to notice even the smallest detail, and was justifiably proud of his record in solving crimes and tracking down criminals. Unfortunately, someone as diligent and dedicated as Caine would inevitably run afoul of his enemies...

It seemed like a normal case. Someone had been stealing a wide variety of hi-tech laboratory components from various places across the U.S. for unknown purposes, and Caine had been assigned the case. He worked night and day for months, chasing every lead, unearthing

every clue, before finally arriving at an abandoned warehouse in upstate New York, which was swarming with gun-toting thugs. Caine called in for backup, and waited, but then things went downhill rapidly. As he watched, a cage containing a terrified family was hauled out of a truck and into the dark of the warehouse. This complicated matters considerably, and Caine decided he couldn't wait for the backup. Quietly clambering onto the warehouse roof and peering through a broken skylight, he saw what appeared to be a large ring-like device, humming with power, that was constructed from the stolen laboratory equipment. He watched as a costumed freak in a strange lab coat and goggles rubbed his hands together

maniacally as he flicked a switch, and the center of the ring crackled with a pale green vortex. One of the thugs dragged a young girl from the cage towards the device as the villain watched on gloating. It was clear they meant to throw her in for whatever vile purpose they intended, and Caine had no choice but to act immediately to stop them! He drew his sidearm and jumped through the broken skylight, shooting at the thugs as he dove in. Shots struck the device, spitting sparks, and green arcs of lightning flashed upwards! The villain howled as the reckless hero smashed down hard on top of the device's ring, barely catching himself on it with one arm, his feet dangling on the edge of the vortex. Caine heard the sounds of sirens in the distance before his grip gave out ... and he fell into the swirling vortex.

When Caine awoke, he found himself lying down on a bank of what seemed to be purple grass, looking up at an amber sky... with two suns. He also saw HAL-0, the ION Guardsman assigned to investigate the dimensional anomaly that heralded Caine's arrival. HAL-0 took Caine back to ION Prime for questioning. During the interrogation, the ION Guardsmen recognized in Caine that rare awareness that distinguished a potential Guard recruit, coupled with his already impressive dedication, powers of deduction, and passion for law and justice. The ION Guard offered Caine a choice: he could be transported home to Earth, or serve law and justice on a greater scale. He didn't need to be asked twice, and has since become an exemplary ION Guardsman.

Caine Carston



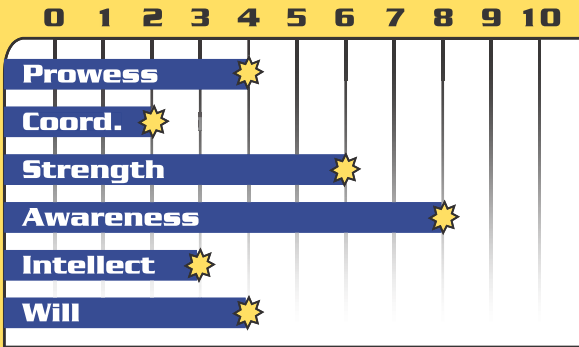
Height: 5'11

Weight: 195lbs

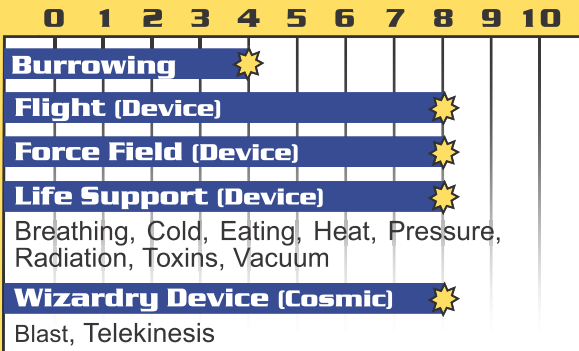
Maug

Origin: Unearthly (Gimmick + Birthright)

Abilities



Powers



Qualities

Catchphrase: Sings opera during combat

Connection: The ION Guard

Motivation: Defeat the foes of freedom!

Motivation: Serve the ION Guard

Challenges

Enemy: Maniacus

Enemy: Sinister Sorcerers of Skathros

Personal: Hates slavers

Personal: Rudimentary sense of humor

Weakness (ION Fist): Magic

Specialties

Performance – Singing



Stamina



Determination

Maug

Maug was born into slavery on Shar, the capital of the Tai'Shar Star Empire, and never knew the rocky burrows of his home planet, Grommox. His mother, Glau, raised him with songs and tales of his homeworld, filling his young head with dreams, only to have those dreams crushed by the lash and oppression of cruel Tai'Shar masters.

Though peaceful at heart, Maug was stronger in body, spirit, and mind than most of his kin, and as he toiled ceaselessly in the quarries and mines of Shar, he nurtured something that most Grommoxians had forgotten: hope.

After centuries of enslavement, the Grommoxians, by nature peaceful and docile, accepted their fate as drudges... but not Maug. When the chance arose, he did not hesitate to seize it: a merchantman's ore barge bound for Kabulos, a neutral trade planet outside the Star Empire, was left unattended for a moment. That moment was all Maug needed to jump aboard enter and bury himself within an ore bin. Upon arrival at Kabulos, a swift punch to the face of the Tai'Shar merchant was all that Maug needed to secure his freedom. Unfortunately, he found himself adrift in a strange world, with no money, job, or friends. It didn't take him long to fall afoul of some local

thugs at the spacedock, intent on having some sport bringing down the “brainless brute.” Maug fought them valiantly, and although he could have destroyed them, he fought with restraint, defeating them without killing them. This did not go unnoticed by Ableesh, an ION Guardsman

passing through Kabulos while tracking a criminal. Ableesh recognized the potential in the Grommoxian, and befriended him. Vouching for him, she recommended his entry into the ION Guard... and he did not disappoint her.

Maug



Height: 6'6

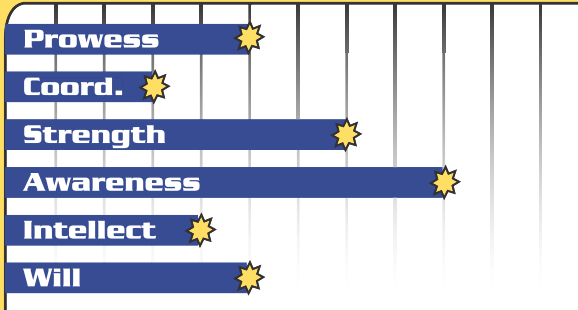
Weight: 447lbs

Tamari

Origin: Unearthly (Gimmick + Transformed)

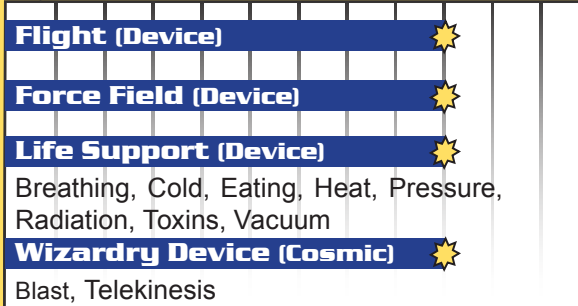
Abilities

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Powers

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Qualities

Connection: The ION Guard

Epithet: The ION Amazon

Motivation: Prove herself just and true

Motivation: Serve the ION Guard

Challenges

Enemy: Maniacus

Enemy: Sinister Sorcerers of Skathros

Enemy: The UI-Hath Family of Tai-Shar

Personal: Somewhat arrogant and impetuous

Weakness: Powerless without the ION Fist

Weakness (ION Fist): Magic

Specialties

Acrobatics, Martial Arts, Military, Weapons - Blades



Stamina



Determination

Tamari

Tamari, scion of the noble UI-Hath family, had it all: wealth, prestige, luxury, slaves, and so much more. Despite all of that she felt lost, alienated from everyone and everything around her. She was unhappy, bored, and uneasy, feeling as if there was something very wrong in the arrogant, decadent, and cruel way her fellow Tai'Shar lived.

For most of her young life, she tried to lock her increasing disquiet away. She tried to ignore it, by losing herself in her martial studies and training as an Amazon. But even that only staved off the inevitable, for as she watched slaves die in the coliseum for the amusement of her

peers, she finally realized that she could not reconcile herself with the way her people lived. Tamari still believed that her people were a superior species, but she felt they should instead elevate their lessers, instead of subjugating them and grinding them into the dust. She also knew that her beliefs, if ever expressed, would cause a huge scandal and get her imprisoned in the UI-Hath dungeon. Unable to continue living the lie of the Tai'Shar elite any longer, she realized she had no choice but to leave and make her own way in the Universe.

Stealing one of her family's star yachts, she made good her escape, but just as quickly ran into peril outside of Tai'Shar space when her ship was attacked by space pirates. Outgunned

and outmatched, her ship was disabled, and she readied her blade as the space scum boarded. Outnumbered as she was, she knew she had little chance of survival, but fought with grace and flashing blade, laying pirates low about her. Exhausted from the fighting and her many wounds, she prepared to meet her death as the horde of pirates surged forward ... but this was not her time. Golden beams of light

flashed in her eyes as pirates fell about her, and just before she passed out, she saw a vision of a warrior-god with a golden halo, laying low all the pirates about her and lifting her out of her broken ship.

While not exactly a warrior-god, the Vanthic ION Guardsman Orin had indeed saved Tamari from the pirates and took her back to ION Prime for healing. She recalled the tales of the ION Guard she had heard, her people calling them “meddlesome fools” with undisguised contempt for their “soft-hearted ways.” Yet those tales no longer rang true to her, and she had an epiphany: she would find her purpose among the ION Guard. And now, having done so, Tamari works to prove herself worthy of the uniform she now wears, striving daily to unlearn all that she was taught about the Universe by her cruel and heartless people.

Tamari



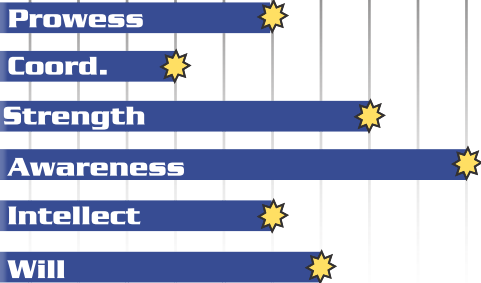
Height: 5'7

Weight: 124lbs

Maniacus

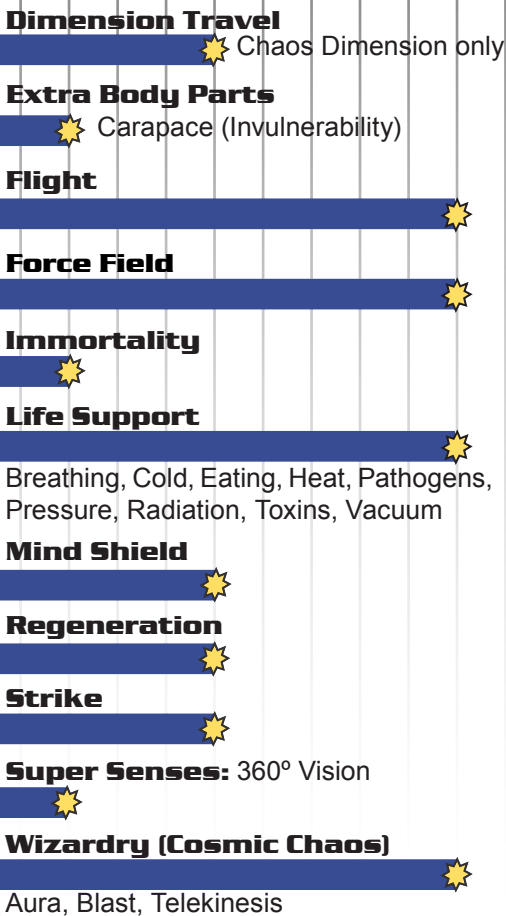
Abilities

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Powers

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Qualities

Cause Suffering to the ION Guard
 Chosen of Chaos
 Fallen ION Guard
 "I Am Maniacus! I Am Chaos!"

Challenges

Bouts of Self-Loathing
 Twisted in Body and Spirit
 Unpredictable Madness and Rage

Weakness: Cosmic Order

Specialties

Aerial Combat, Power (Strike)

13

Stamina



Height: 6'3

Weight: 279lbs

40

Manis was a paragon of the ION Guard: strong, capable, unwavering, and dedicated. He was the pride of Helox IV, the only member of that planet to reach the prestigious heights of the ION Guard. But there was a hint of darkness within him, the faintest whisper, of which perhaps even he was unaware... one that would eventually grow to consume him.

For years he served the ION Guard faultlessly, a hero to his people and a credit to the Guard. But pride and power began to take their toll. It seemed to Manis that no matter how hard he worked, he could not completely eradicate crime and corruption, that for every villain he defeated and apprehended, more simply arose. What if, he began to think, more could be achieved if he was in control? He was the hero of his people, was he not, and much loved? It would be a simple thing to take the reins of power on his planet with an ION grip, to crush villainy and avarice and usher in a new Golden Age for his people! And thus began the sad and terrible fall of Manis.

By virtue of the power of his ION Fist, Manis wrested control from his Helox IV's planetary government and quickly dispatched all who opposed him... "for the greater good." It felt right, he believed, it was the way things should be. After all, was he not still a hero? Was he not saving his homeworld from itself? Was he not more powerful than the weak-willed fools he replaced?

But Manis quickly became consumed with ultimate power, and following in a long line of despots throughout the Universe before him, he created a reign of terror, not just among the criminals he oppose, but eventually among the common people too. He became a tyrant, and any who stood against him were eliminated, dismissed as weak and corrupt fools, enemies of his greater vision for the people of his planet.

Months passed before news of Manis' reign of terror reached ION Prime, and a team of loyal Guardsmen was sent to apprehend him. Deep within the madness of his despotism, Manis knew they would not understand, that they would be bound to their petty laws and

regulations... and that they would attempt to remove him from power and destroy all that he had worked for. And so he fought, bringing the Heloxian military forces to bear against the Guardsmen, before finally engaging them himself. After weeks of destructive planet-wide conflict, the Guardsmen finally cornered and defeated Manis, stripping him of his ION Fist and placing him in a stasis pod for transport back to ION Prime to be tried for his crimes.

Manis remembered little from the moment he was put into the stasis pod, save for awakening in a world of pain and insanity, of shifting elements, of terrifically powerful storms in hideously twisted skies. He heard only gibbering screams in his head, voices seductive and foul, felt his body impossibly warped and torn... and then something, someone giving him a choice, a choice of life, of power, of revenge... a choice he seized without hesitation.

Time seemed both fluid and still in that moment, and the being once known as Manis stepped forth from the Chaos Dimension onto the soil of his homeworld. 13 years had passed since his capture. The ION Guardsman now assigned to Helox IV arrived to investigate the dimensional rift caused by the reappearance of Manis, now Maniacus, who began his campaign of revenge and chaos by effortlessly killing the Guardsman.

He then turned his attention to Helox IV itself, to rid it of the weak-willed scum he'd once sought to save. Maniacus made sure that they once again knew terror, despair, and death, reveling in the glorious gore and utter destruction he left in his wake. Amidst the burning ruins of his world, to those few survivors he left to hear his message, he screamed: "Let all who hear this know! I am Maniacus, Chaos Incarnate, and I will not rest until I have brought about the downfall and doom of the ION Guard!"

For the past eight years, Maniacus has relentlessly haunted the ION Guard, appearing at seeming random to attack them, to cause them massive anguish and suffering, and to tear them down and destroy them.

Sinister Sorcerers of Skathros

Abilities

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Prow. ★

Coord. ★

Str. ★

Awareness ★

Intellect ★

Will ★

Powers

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Wizardry (Magic) ★

Dimension Travel, plus choose one power from each of the following pairs:

- ★ Affliction or Life Drain,
- ★ Binding or Blast,
- ★ Extra Body Parts – Carapace (Invuln.) or Force Field,
- ★ Flight or Wall-Crawling

Slave Warrior

Prowess 3 **Coordination 3** **Strength 3**

Awareness 2 **Intellect 1** **Will 3**

Stamina: 6

Specialties: Typically none.

Notes

Mid-level sorcerers such as these frequently operate in small groups of two, three, or five, and may be accompanied by slave warriors. Slave warriors are unthinking fanatics, utterly devoted to their sorcerous masters, and resemble them, but are naked save for black loincloths. Typical weapons include wicked and cruelly barbed swords and axes (slashing damage 4).

Qualities

Hates the ION Guard
Pact with Unspeakable Entities
Ruling Caste
Sinister Sorcerer

Challenges

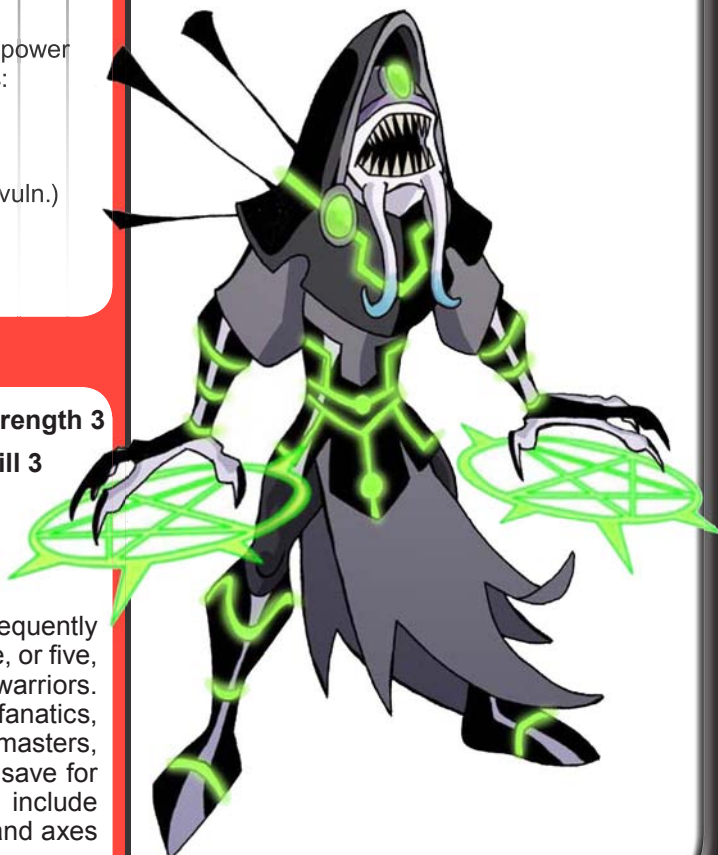
Arrogant
Covets occult power
Must gesture and incant to use powers

Specialties

Occult



Stamina



Height: 6'

Weight: 140lbs

Sinister Sorcerers of Skathros

On the outermost edge of the Universe, where galaxies and nebulae give way to unending darkness, the planet of Skathros can be found, orbiting a pale, unnamed sun.

Like Uranus in the Sol system, Skathros is tipped on its axis 90 degrees, so that its northern pole perpetually faces the sun. It never deviates from this, and as the northern hemisphere is continually blasted by the sun, the southern hemisphere knows only the frigid cold of constant darkness. Skathros should never have seen the spawning of life. But, such as it is, it did.

In the slender equatorial band of twilight between north and south, an dark and twisted species was born, their hellish world breeding a cruel, vicious, merciless people, among whom the most cunning unlocked the secrets of the occult and made pacts with unspeakably alien forces... perhaps the very same forces who brought their race into being.

These were the first Sinister Sorcerers, and they became the tyrannical rulers of their world. The populace were quickly bent to their will and to unquestioningly serve them with zeal and fervor. From among the enslaved people, the Sorcerers gathered the most apt and trained them as acolytes, and sacrificed untold numbers of the other for their nefarious and mysterious purposes, as they forged a ruling caste that wielded great arcane powers, seated upon basalt thrones in colossal temples raised in their honor.

After a thousand years of rule, of countless deeds too gruesome to describe, delving into blasphemies and horrors beyond all imagining, the Sorcerers turned their soulless eyes

upon the lights of the neighboring stars... and set their black hearts upon conquest.

The peaceful planets of Gordania and Quintara were completely unprepared for the dimensional rifts that ripped opened across their lands, and even less prepared for the waves of screaming pale creatures that swarmed out. The fanatical slave armies of Skathros surged across both worlds in a tide of savagery, led by black-cowled sorcerers and their terrible magic. Within a few short days, both planets were conquered, all resistance mercilessly and swiftly crushed.

The ION Guard responded in force, with nearly one hundred Guardsmen sent to each world to liberate them. Almost as soon as they arrived, the Guardsmen were immediately repulsed by the magic of the Sinister Sorcerers, their powers seemingly no match against those of the Sorcerers, and the Guardsmen fell back to regroup. A bitter struggle ensued, and the ION Guardsmen rallied the peoples of both planets to their banner. They fought with cunning, learning to use their powers on the environment to hinder and defeat their foes, ultimately emerging victorious. But the battle had been hard won, and many lives had been lost. Worse yet, on the cusp of defeat, the Sorcerers themselves vanished, along with many of their fanatical followers, without a trace, their whereabouts unknown.

Sadly, this was not the last that the Universe or ION Guard would see of the Sinister Sorcerers. They have since appeared from time to time, hungrily seeking occult lore, dark artifacts, hideous rites, and places of ancient, obscene powers.





Infinitus & His Thralls

—○ Infinitus & His Thralls

Some heroes and villains wield cosmic forces — Infinitus *is* a cosmic force. Born of the energies unleashed by the Big Bang, Infinitus has existed since the Universe itself sparked into creation, a physical incarnation of entropy, the extinguishing of life, the end of existence

Since that time he has traveled the cosmos, sating his appetite on the energies of countless life-bearing worlds, and many worlds bear tales of the World Vampire, tales counted among myth and legend in the minds of many.

Infinitus is not evil, not good — indeed, he is above such distinctions and concerns. He simply *is*, and does what he has always done, bearing no more remorse or pity than most humans might when stepping upon an ant.

In terms of power, Infinitus is beyond any force that the most advanced civilization can muster, and the most powerful of superheroes are but gnats to him, minor irritations and distractions

at most. Even the most witheringly destructive nuclear assault will do no more than slow him down, assuming the near impossibility of such an attack taking him unawares.

In his natural state, Infinitus is the size of a mountain, a humanoid being of terrifying aspect whose face vaguely resembles that of whatever species views him. He has the ability to grant great powers to mortals, as evidenced by his Thralls. He is capable of constructing technological devices of scope and power beyond anything else in the Universe, including his moon-sized dimensional ark, and the life-essence distiller he uses to suck every iota of life energy from an entire planet.

Infinitus can shrink his form down to the subatomic level, and can teleport anything or anyone — even entire planets — across whole galaxies. He can penetrate and read the most guarded of minds of any race in the Universe, and capable of manipulating any thoughts and memories found within. He can control local time, instantly transmute

or control matter and energy at the atomic level, and even move things with the power of thought alone. He can resurrect the dead, and is himself immortal — if somehow he is “slain,” he will simply rematerialize again after an indeterminate time, somewhere else in the Universe. These are only a few of the powers he has been known to demonstrate, and he undoubtedly has many others which have yet to be revealed.

○ How Do You ○ Defeat A God?

Defeating Infinitus is clearly not a case of simply attacking him, all powers and guns a-blazing, hoping somehow to beat him physically. Even if his Thralls are not around to keep such annoyances as the characters away from him, he himself could wipe them from existence with only the barest effort.

The key to his defeat (or more likely, somehow directing him elsewhere or convincing him to leave a singular planet alone) is by plot twist and Determination expenditure. Perhaps a timely quest to explore his dimensional ark could yield a device capable of harming him, or at least banishing him elsewhere for a time? Maybe the characters can locate a life-bearing planet nearby with no sapient species yet evolved, and divert him there?

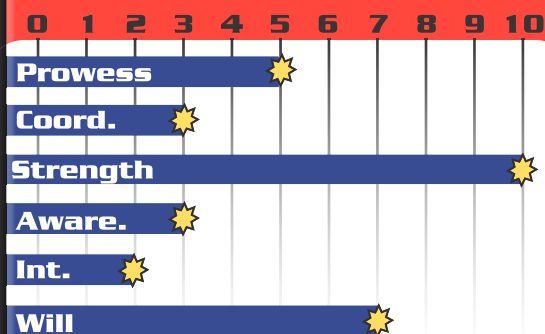
Infinitus, therefore, is a plot device, a means of leading the characters into creative quests and adventures as a means to halting or redirecting him, even if only for a time.

Infinitus is not alone, however. He allows himself to be served by his Thralls, aliens transformed by him into powerful super-beings, each marked by a glowing red “heart.” The Thralls serve him as scouts and heralds, seeking planets for him to devour, and as defenders as well, removing the nuisance of dealing with annoying lesser beings and their attacks. Although they frequently operate alone, they are also sometimes encountered in pairs or, more rarely, as a large team led by Komett (see below).

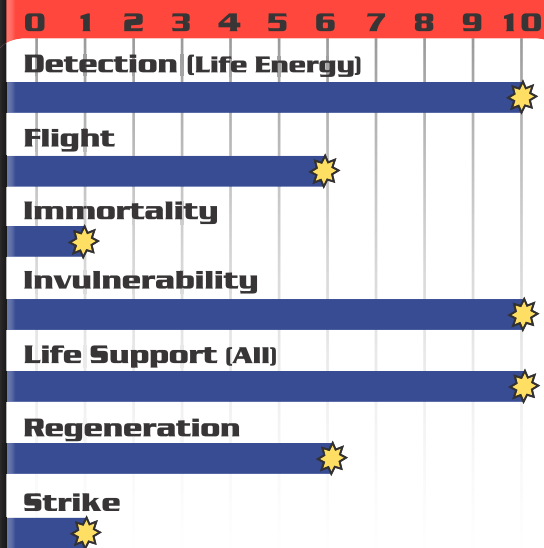
Infinitus has had many Thralls over the aeons, and currently there are four in his service: Asterox, Komett, Nebulea, and Starr. He treats them as valuable commodities and pets, and should one flee, it is a given that he would pursue them without fail, unto the end of time itself and reclaim them.

Asterox

Abilities



Powers



Asterox is a near-mindless force of destruction, an embodiment of raw physical power. Before he became Asterox, Neb Mirg was a simple thug on his home planet, who leapt at the chance to be transformed and serve Ininitus when the World Vampire arrived, without even a shred of regret as he watched his world was drained of life. Now he is Asterox, a hulking thing of rock, pitted with impact craters, a blunt instrument of immense strength who likes nothing better than bringing devastation and terror with his stony fists, or by high-speed impact from space.

Qualities

Juggernaut of Destruction

Thrall of Ininitus

Unbreakable

Challenges

Unthinking Brute

Weakness: Sinks and Cannot Swim

Specialties

Power (Strike), Wrestling



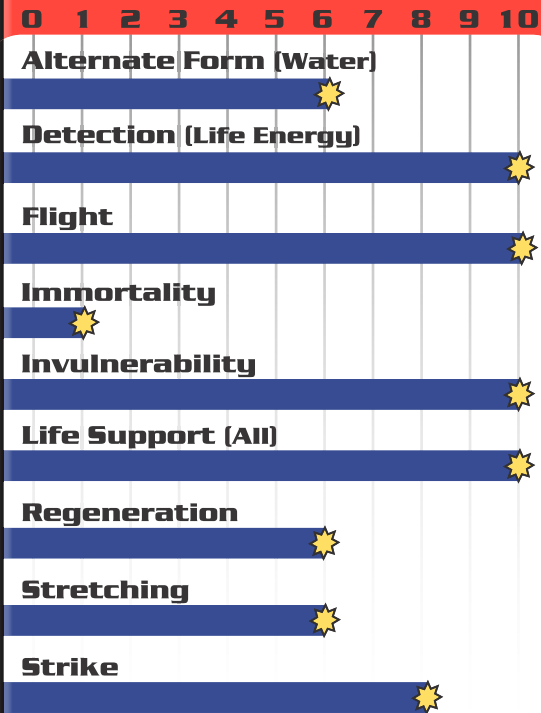
Stamina

Komett

Abilities



Powers



An astrophysicist, Komar Deer was one of the most brilliant minds on his homeworld. When he tried to warn his people of the approach of Infinitus, they wouldn't listen, dismissing the World Vampire as mere myth.

He raced to intercept the approaching World Vampire in a spaceship, and met an intellect, ancient beyond all reckoning, greater than anything he could envision. Entranced by what he found, he offered himself as a Thrall in exchange for Infinitus sparing his homeworld. Mildly amused at Deer's temerity, and even slightly impressed by his intelligence, Infinitus granted his request.

Komar was stripped of his feelings, leaving only cold logic in its place, matching that of the fluid icy form that became his body. The leader of the Thralls, he serves Infinitus faithfully as Komett — it is the only rational choice.

Qualities

Cold Logic
Scientific Mind
Thrall of Infinitus

Challenges

Bound By Logic
Distracted By Scientific Discourse

Specialties

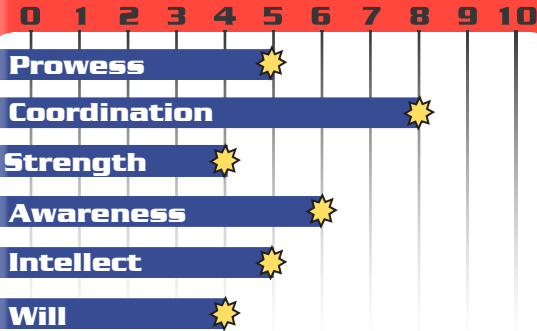
Aerial Combat, Leadership, Science –
Astrophysics Master



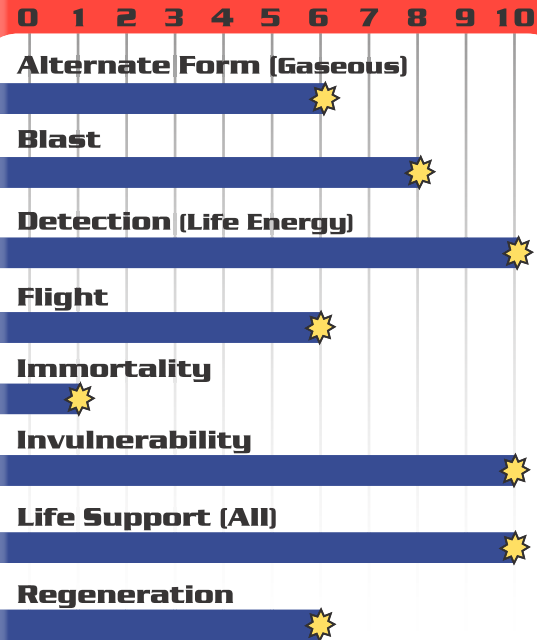
Stamina

Nebulea

Abilities



Powers



Stamina

Jindra Nasus studied xeno-anthropology on many worlds, finding the infinite variety of cultures and sapience fascinating. As she traveled from world to world, she encountered the same myth again and again, that of the World Vampire, a deific destroyer. On Hadron, amid the ruins of an ancient civilization, she found an accursed volume and artifact, one she briefly wished she had not, before her mind was instantly and inescapably connected to that of Ininitus. In that single moment, she was given but a single choice: serve or die. Too afraid to face death, she was transformed into Nebulea, a being of cosmic gas, energy, and ephemera, a Thrall of Ininitus.

She serves Ininitus out of fear, filled with shame and remorse. In whatever small way she can manage, she tries to lessen the damage he inflicts, even secretly trying to save some small number of lives... but they are as nothing compared to the untold billions he extinguishes as she watches on helplessly. She feels utterly alone and trapped, a servant of the most destructive force in the Universe, from whom she can never escape, and to whom she owes complete obedience.

Qualities

Ephemeral Beauty

Thrall of Ininitus

Challenges

Filled With Remorse

Hates and Fears Ininitus

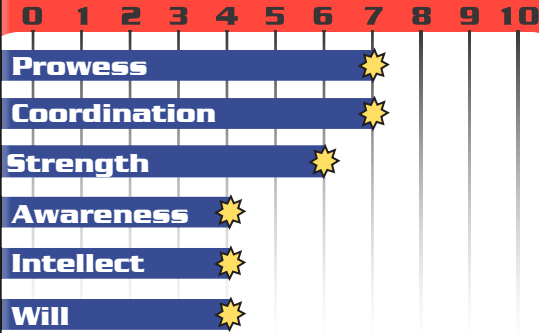
Wants To Save Lives

Specialties

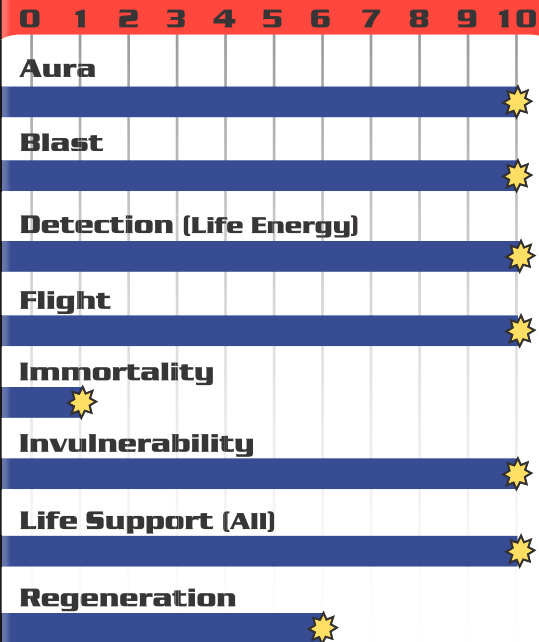
Aerial Combat, Science – Anthropology Expert, Stealth

Starr

Abilities



Powers



In'noj Torm was a young starfighter pilot, a brash and aggressive youth, with a yen for flying... and blasting things. In and out of trouble constantly when not in his cockpit, he would have been booted from his planet's military service if he had been anything less than the best pilot in the starfighter corps.

When Infinitus attacked his world, In'noj strove to drive him off, watching in stunned amazement as his entire squadron and his planet's starfleet were casually and completely destroyed around him. Weaving amid the wreckage, he dove straight toward Infinitus, plasma cannons blazing, intent on ramming his starfighter straight into the World Vampire's face!

Time froze, and Infinitus fixed him with one great eye. "Serve me," a voice as terrible as it was ancient echoed, "and your urges need never be reined in again." Too weak-willed to resist, In'noj acceded, and in an instant, his starfighter erupted into a brilliant ball of flame, transforming him into a being of fire and plasma: Starr, Infinitus' newest Thrall.

Qualities

"Burn!"
Living Inferno
Thrall of Infinitus

Challenges

Hot-headed
Impetuous

Specialties

Aerial Combat, Pilot – Master, Power (Blast)



Stamina



○ TYPICAL VEHICLES

The following vehicles are generic types, representing those most commonly encountered by ION Guardsmen, whether operated by friends, foes, or bystanders.

○ Gravcar

The typical flying car as used as everyday transport in many hi-tech civilizations.

Strength: 6

Powers: Flight 4.

○ Gravtank

The typical flying tank used by many hi-tech militaries, crewed by a minimum of 3 (driver, main gunner, commander/support gunner).

Strength: 8

Powers: Blast 8 (Main Gun), Blast 5 (Support Gun), Flight 3, Life Support 6 (Cold, Breathing, Heat, Pathogens, Radiation, Toxins), Supersenses 1 (Radar).

○ Starfighter

The typical starfighter as used by many space navies throughout the Universe.

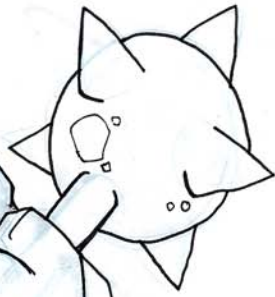
Strength: 7

Powers: Blast 7, Flight 8, Life Support 7 (Cold, Breathing, Heat, Pathogens, Radiation, Toxins, Vacuum), Supersenses 1 (Radar).









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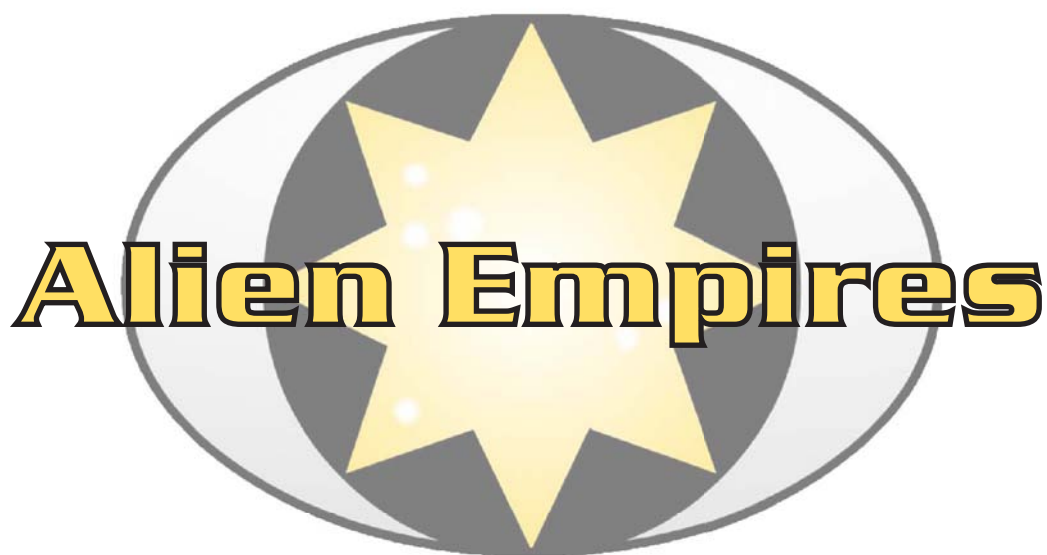
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