

IGNITION CITY: A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE... IT'S A DANGEROUS THING

The year is 1956, and humanity is getting the hell out of space. The UN maintains a token fleet, all of continental Europe has signed the Isolationist Accord and the US and British space fleets are government controlled shells with funding that would make a hobo give them a dime. Asia could theoretically get into space, but they're too busy rebuilding after World War II.

After the Khargu allied with Hitler and started invading the Earth, the leadfeet (people who never made it to space) have been terrified. They blame the spacemen for the horrors that were visited on the American Midwest and central Europe. The science jockeys say that someday the land will be able to support crops again...someday. Every alien missile plot, every rumor of invasion, it all got blamed on the spacers.

Earth's last real spaceport is Ignition City, an artificial island on the equator, half way between South America and Africa. It launches ships 12 hours out of every 24, and it's the only real way to get off this rock. The launch pads ring the island, and are managed by the Port Authority. Until recently, they were the only ones who could communicate with the outside world, or with the stars. Being blacklisted by the PA meant never going back into space.

The interior of the island is a poorly regulated area. Years of conflicting laws and treaties make the interior a functionally lawless area, where force of arms is the final arbiter of what is allowable. There is only a single settlement, populated by former spacemen who either can't or won't go home. The PA has mostly ignored the settlement, ruling by the decree of the Marshal and ignoring most complaints.

Until about three days ago, when a little girl named Mary Raven (daughter of famous spaceman Rock Raven) gun fucked Marshal Pomeroy, the corrupt asshole she blamed for the death of her father. She also revealed that the Port Authority had been keeping Kharg the Killer as a prisoner of war. Kharg, for those who don't remember, was the Emperor of Khargu, the guy who poisoned the breadbaskets of America and Europe, and an all around evil bastard.

Little Mary took Pomeroy's badge, and the smart money says she's the new law in town. No one is quite sure what she has planned, but there's a lot of talk now about things like "rule of law." No one is really sure if she's right about Kharg, except that the movers and shakers in the settlement seem to believe her.

MOVERS AND SHAKERS

Marshal Mary Raven: Rock's little girl, who herself fought against Kharg years ago, all grown up. She's a genuine spacegirl, speaks pretty much every offworld lingo, and has gun fucked at least two people who deserved it since she got here five days ago. No one has argued with her about being the new Marshal yet, but it's only a matter of time. She's trying to get people excited about being a real city.

Rock Raven (deceased): Mary's dad, foiler of the Martian Missile Plot, and most recently, a gun runner for Lightning Bowman.

Lightning Bowman: One of the first three people in space, being marooned on Earth has driven him crazier than a sack full of rattlesnakes. He's been blacklisted by the PA, and the UN supposedly keeps tabs on him. He's a gun runner, trying to

save enough money to finally bribe his way off Earth for good.

Gayle Ransom: Lightning's ex girlfriend, and another of the first three people in space. She's not obviously crazy, other than the fact that she lives in Ignition City. She owns the Worlds End Bar, one of the few places in the settlement that remains civil even after the drinking starts.

Dr. Dragomir "Doc" Vukovic: Last of the first three people in space, Doc built the first human spaceship out of junk and spare parts. He's crazy, or at least so smart that he might as well be. Also blacklisted, the PA has been coming to his house every month or so to smash anything technological looking. It seems that Marshal Raven won't keep up the tradition, mostly because she hasn't smashed the radio set he built.

Piet Vanderkirk: Gayle's bouncer, and a former Chain Man. Unlike most of the ex-Chain Men, he hasn't killed himself or gone on a killing spree yet. (It turns out that losing access to the psychic Chain and the powers it gives you can play havoc with the psyche.) He does have a temper, and has killed a few Port Authority people (almost all of whom had it coming). Rumor has it that he's too stubborn to lose it completely. Of course, rumor also has it that he's madly in love with Gayle, so who knows?

Bronco: The man from the 25th century, and a total drunk, though a very lucid one. He claims that he was transported 500 years into the future, and then lost a war, and got sent back. He says that the future is full of death, and the only way he can deal with it is Gayle's whiskey.

Yuri: Yuri is Russia's greatest cosmonaut. And Russia's greatest love machine. Just ask him. Actually, please don't. Yuri is homeless, a sloppy drunk and wears the same spacesuit every day. He was the first man on Venus, but the stories he tells make no sense. Marshal Raven trusts him. Turns out, he warned her before some folks could shoot her in the back. Wait a minute, he was also the one who suggested that she take over as Marshal...