

Dire Invasion

Rom™ and the Spaceknights™ of Galador

by William Tracy

In another area of the Milky Way galaxy, far from Earth, flourished the civilization of Galador. The inhabitants of Galador were a highly advanced and peaceful race, and spread their philosophy across the stars. About 200 Terran years ago, the Galadorian exploration fleet entered an area known as the Dark Nebula and encountered the nebula's inhabitants, an alien race known as the Dire Wraiths™. These hostile shape-changers were experts in technology and sorcery. Summoning a birdlike monster known as Deathwing, the Dire Wraiths ambushed and destroyed the Galadorian space fleet.

The Prime Director of Galador, after receiving the last message from the doomed fleet, asked for volunteers from the populace to participate in a special program. The volunteers' bodies would be placed in suspended animation while their brains and nervous systems would be grafted into a special suit of cybernetic armor. The mission of these volunteers, who were known as Spaceknights, was to defeat the Dire Wraiths before their evil could reach other civilizations. Rom™ was the first volunteer for this program.

The Spaceknights were provided with special weapons, space flight capability, and superhuman strength. Though the Spaceknights destroyed most of the Dire Wraith space fleet and the demon Deathwing, many Dire Wraiths escaped, and their forts were believed to exist in other sections of the galaxy. The location of the Wraith homeworld was unknown as well. The Spaceknights

swore to battle the Dire Wraiths anywhere in the galaxy until the last of them had been hurled into Limbo with the neutralizer guns of the Galadorians.

A special Galadorian space probe eventually detected Wraith activity on Earth and relayed the information back to Galador. Rom volunteered to go to Earth, and upon his arrival he learned that Earth's society had already been infiltrated by the shape-changing aliens. The Wraiths usually took over a world by killing and assuming the identities of their victims, who were often important members of society.

At first, Rom was hunted by the legal authorities for murder. When Rom used his neutralizer on the disguised Dire Wraiths to cast them into Limbo, it looked like he was killing human beings. Eventually, the population of Clairton, West Virginia, discovered that Rom's story was true after being shown the powers of the Dire Wraiths. Clairton then aided Rom whenever possible, even protecting him from federal authorities after he used his neutralizer on some high officials of the Pentagon who were actually Dire Wraiths.

While in Clairton, Rom met and fell in love with a human woman named Brandy Clark™, who in turn fell in love with the dedicated alien. Rom was soon joined by a fellow Spaceknight, his Galadorian fiancée Starshine™. When Starshine was killed by the Dire Wraiths and removed from her armor, Brandy Clark was placed in Starshine's armor by magical means as part of a scheme to destroy Rom. The plot failed and Brandy fought alongside Rom in Starshine armor. Much later, Brandy was removed from the



armor by the evil sorcery of Hybrid", the offspring of a human and a Dire Wraith.

When Rom was away from Clairton, it was protected by Brock Jones, the Torpedo™. Brock had come upon the original builder and wearer of the Torpedo armor suit, who had been critically injured in an unplanned battle with Daredevil™. The man told Brock that his name was Michael Stivak. Before Michael died, he told Brock about his suit and background. Michael was a Yugoslavian scientist who had been brought to America by his uncle, Senator Eugene Stivak. The Senator hired Michael to build and design a battle-suit for the American government, but Michael later found out that his uncle was working for some unknown and unfriendly organization.

Michael was trying to destroy the plans for the battle-suit when he had his accidental fight with Daredevil. Before Michael died, he made Brock promise to destroy the plans; Brock donned the suit and quickly did so. For the next few months, he acted as a part-time super hero, fighting a group called the Rocketeers™ several times. These men, hired by Senator Stivak, wore weaker prototypes of Torpedo's battle-suit.

The Rocketeers soon discovered Brock's secret identity, forcing him to move his family to another city, which happened to be Clairton. There he met Rom and became his ally. Later they found that Torpedo's battle-suit had actually been financed by the Dire Wraiths, who had been looking for a new weapon to use against Rom. Rom made Torpedo a special pair of goggles that enabled him to see Dire Wraiths, no matter what form they were in.

Meanwhile, a shake-up in the Dire Wraith chain of command had occurred. So far, the Dire Wraiths on Earth had consisted of the males, who were experts in technology. The female Wraiths were experts in sorcery and were the leaders of the race. The females decided that the males weren't doing a very good job of world-conquering, so they took over all Earth operations and killed all the males present.

Then, while Rom was away from Clairton, the female Wraiths took over the town while magically clouding Torpedo's mind so that he wouldn't notice anything. Eventually, everybody in Clairton was dead and had been replaced by Wraiths. Torpedo died fighting Wraiths in his burning house. The Torpedo battle-suit was apparently destroyed in the fire. Rom and Starshine II swore to avenge the people of Clairton and the courageous Torpedo.

By this time, the government had discovered that Rom was not a homicidal alien, but a benevolent being trying to save Earth from the Dire Wraiths. The government placed S.H.I.E.L.D.™ and its psionic division in control of Wraith-destroying missions and enlisted the help of various super heroes, including the X-Men™ and Alpha Flight™. Eventually, a special branch of S.H.I.E.L.D. known as the Wraith-Hunter Rangers was formed to deal with the problem.

Rom soon gained two new allies: Rick Jones™ and a little girl named Cindy Adams™. Rick Jones, who has been involved with many super heroes, became one of Rom's closest friends and allies even though he was in love with Brandy Clark. Rick discovered that he was dying of an incurable form of cancer, the same cancer that killed Captain Marvel™ some time before. Cindy Adams was a normal child until she was attacked by a Dire Wraith. The Wraith was killed just as it had begun to absorb her memories. Because of this, a part of the Wraith's consciousness was lodged in her mind, and at times Cindy could guess what the Wraiths were planning.

Unfortunately, a government agent named Peter Gyrich™ was assigned to the Dire Wraith branch. Gyrich, who had worked with super heroes before, was apparently paranoid when it came to super beings. He caused many problems for Rom and his newest ally, the mutant known as Forge™.

After fighting a losing battle on Earth, the Wraiths decided on one final plan. They prepared to use their magic to teleport their homeworld to Earth's solar system, destroying the Earth and putting the homeworld in the Earth's orbit. Luckily, Forge was able to build a larger prototype of Rom's neutralizer and have it placed in orbit around the Earth. Powered by Rom's neutralizer, it was aimed and fired at the Wraithworld, destroying the planet

and a great portion of the Wraiths' power, since it was the source of their sorcerous energy. With the power of the Wraiths broken, mopping-up operations finished off the remainder of the alien invaders.

In time, Rom left Earth to return to Galador, accompanied by several of his fellow Spaceknights. They discovered that Galador, which had been transferred to a new galaxy by Galactus™, had been ravaged by second-generation Spaceknights who were to have defended the world. All the Galadorians were soon slain by the rouge Spaceknights, who were in turn defeated by Rom and his allies. Brandy Clark, who had been sent to Galador by the Beyonder™, helped the remaining Spaceknights find the means to turn Rom back into his original human form. His mission completed, Rom retired with Brandy to spend their days on Galador and rebuild its civilization, protected by the surviving Spaceknights.

Several characters described in the Rom saga have already appeared in modules and supplements published by TSR, Inc. The Torpedo armor was described in MHAC-8, Weapons Locker, and Peter Gyrich and Forge were described in MHAC-5, *Project: Wideawake*™. S.H.I.E.L.D. appeared in MHAC-2, *Avengers*™ *Assembled!*, as did Rick Jones™. The other important heroes and villains of this saga are given below.

ROM™

Spaceknight of Galador (Inactive)

Fighting: INCREDIBLE (40)
Agility: EXCELLENT (20)
Strength: INCREDIBLE (40)
Endurance: MONSTROUS (75)
Reason: EXCELLENT (20)
Intuition: EXCELLENT (20)
Psyche: GOOD (10)

Health: 175

Karma: 50

Resources: Amazing (government backed)

Popularity: 20

Talents: Rom had no special talents.

Known Powers:

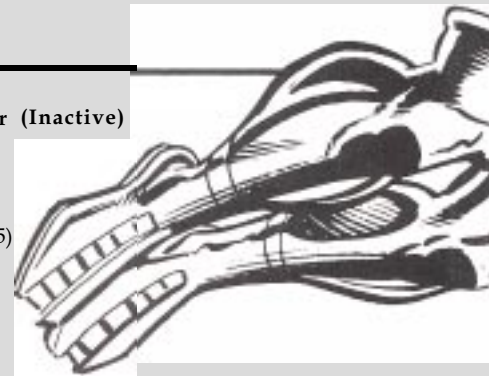
FLIGHT. Rom's armor was provided with twin rocket pods (electrically powered, low-density plasma engines) which enabled him to fly at Unearthly speed in the vacuum of space or at Monstrous speeds in an atmosphere. Rom also possessed special sensors that enable him to locate space warps with Monstrous ability and range, allowing "shortcuts" through space with Class 1000 range.

BODY ARMOR. Rom's suit of armor provided him with Incredible protection against all physical, radiation, heat-based, and cold-based attacks. He could survive in deep space indefinitely.

REGENERATION. Rom's armor had built-in microfactories able to repair damaged circuitry, providing him with Good regeneration.

Equipment Weapons: The following equipment was kept in a fold in hyperspace and could be mentally summoned and used in one turn.

ENERGY ANALYZER. This item's main function was to emit ultra-high frequency waves that scanned a being's molecular structure. The waves caused certain rare earth elements in the Dire Wraiths' bodies to emit special radio waves which were visible to Rom's visor sensors, enabling him to see the Dire Wraiths as they truly were, no matter what form they took. The analyzer could also scan other items and beings, and inform Rom of the object's or being's power potential. The analyzer could trace the energy trails of powerful beings or objects. The analyzer had no attack abilities, though it bathed the subject in a red energy field that could frighten the victim.



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STARSHINE™ I and II Landra (I) and Brandy Clark (II) Spaceknights of Galador

	I (Deceased)	II (Inactive)
Fighting:	REMARKABLE (30)	EXCELLENT (20)
Agility:	INCREDIBLE (40)	INCREDIBLE (40)
Strength:	INCREDIBLE (40)	INCREDIBLE (40)
Endurance:	MONSTROUS (75)	MONSTROUS (75)
Reason:	EXCELLENT (20)	TYPICAL (6)
Intuition:	GOOD (10)	TYPICAL (6)
Psyche:	GOOD (10)	TYPICAL (6)
Health:	185	175
Karma:	40	18
Resources:	AMAZING	AMAZING
Popularity:	10	10

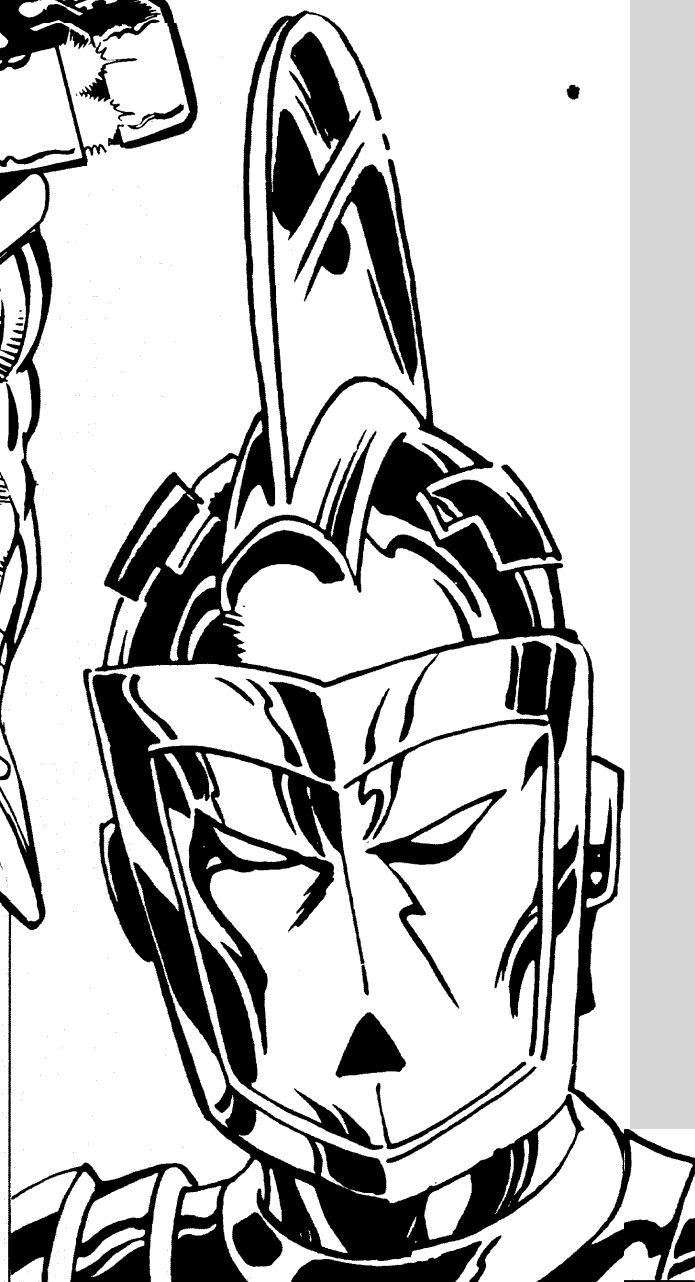
Talents: Starshine (II or II) had no special talents.

TRANSLATOR. This special micro-computer was able to translate any language it heard for at least six consecutive turns. It then fed the information into Rom's memory banks, enabling him to speak that language at will.

NEUTRALIZER. This was Rom's only actual weapon. Its main function was to neutralize any energy fields it encountered. When fired at a Dire Wraith, it neutralized the energy field surrounding the alien, causing a rift between the dimension of Limbo and this dimension. The rift hurled the Dire Wraith into Limbo without killing it. The neutralizer could kill a person when fired at full power, but Rom would have lost all Karma points for killing anyone, even Dire Wraiths. Rom could automatically determine the power level of the weapon. Dire Wraiths taken to Limbo were unable to escape from it.

At its lowest setting, the neutralizer could neutralize radiation poisoning in organic beings. At its highest setting, it neutralized the life-force of a being, killing it instantly. A human could not be transported into Limbo because a human could not survive the trip or a direct hit from the neutralizer set at that power level.

Anyone trying to use the neutralizer, except Rom, took Monstrous damage; no damage was taken by just touching the weapon. Brandy Clark, in human form, once used the neutralizer without dying, though she was badly injured. At the time, she was psionically protected by Charles Xavier™.



Known Powers:

FLIGHT. Starshine, like Rom, had Unearthly flight ability.

BODY ARMOR. Starshine had Rom's Incredible body armor and could survive in deep space indefinitely.

REGENERATION. Starshine had Good regeneration abilities.

LIGHT POWERS. Starshine used a form of energy known as the "living light" of Galador. She could project beams of this light from her eyes, doing concussive damage of up to Unearthly levels, and she can control the power level to do less damage as well. She was also able to use this power to emit normal light.

CINDY ADAMS™

Orphan

Fighting: POOR (4)
Agility: TYPICAL (6)
Strength: FEEBLE (2)
Endurance: POOR (4)
Reason: TYPICAL (6)
Intuition: GOOD (10)
Psyche: REMARKABLE (30)

Health: 16
Karma: 46

Known Powers:

SPECIAL INTUITION. A Dire Wraith was killed while it was draining Cindy's memories, leaving a residue of the Wraith's consciousness in her mind. If she could make a successful Yellow Psyche FEAT roll, she could guess what the Dire Wraiths are up to if she had enough clues. The referee should decide how much she is able to guess.

DIRE WRAITHS™

Fighting: GOOD (10)
Agility: POOR (4)
Strength: REMARKABLE (30)
Endurance: REMARKABLE (30)
Reason: REMARKABLE (30)
Intuition: TYPICAL (6)
Psyche: GOOD (10)

Health: 74
Karma: 46
Resources : AMAZING

Known Powers:

SHAPE-SHIFTING. The Dire Wraiths most important power was their uncanny shape-shifting abilities. When faced with physical combat, the Dire Wraiths could change into the form of some alien beast more suitable for combat. The Dire Wraiths often took the form of the Deathwing:

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
Go	Ex	Ty	Re	Re	Ty	Go

Health: 66 Karma: 46

In Deathwing form, a Dire Wraith could fly at Typical speed and breathe fire one per turn for Incredible damage with Typical range.

SPECIAL ATTACK. The Dire Wraith's most insidious form of attack was its barbed tongue, which also secreted a powerful acid. The tongue instantly penetrated an unprotected human skull. If the skull was armored, the acid secretion and barbs of the tongue did Excellent damage to the armor each turn. Any item made of Monstrous material or better could not be pierced by the tongue.

The Beyonder removed all traces of Dire Wraith influence on Cindy's mind at the end of the Rom saga and resurrected her parents as well. Cindy's statistics may be used for a child in a similar predicament if desired.

ROCKETEERS™

Real names unknown

Fighting: EXCELLENT (20)
Agility: GOOD (10)
Strength: GOOD (10)
Endurance: GOOD (10)
Reason: TYPICAL (6)
Intuition: TYPICAL (6)
Psyche: TYPICAL (6)

Health: 50
Karma: 18

Known Powers:

BATTLE-SUIT. The Rocketeers wore special battle-suits which had rocket backpacks, enabling them to fly at Good speed and providing them with Good protection against physical attacks.

RANGED WEAPON. The Rocketeers carried special portable rocket launchers which had a four-area range and did Incredible damage. They each carried a maximum of five rockets at a time.

Special note: The original Rocketeers were human (from which the statistics above are derived). Later on, the Rocketeers were replaced by Dire Wraiths in human form.



The tongue had range of one area. To successfully use the tongue, a Dire Wraith had to completely surprise a victim from behind or grapple an opponent and roll a hold result, indicating that the Wraith held the victim in front of itself.

The referee should allow a victim a dodge roll or escape roll before the Wraith's attack, because a successful hit indicates instant death to the victim. Right after the tongue hits, the victim's body turns into dust. The Wraith gains all the knowledge and memories of the victim, and the Wraith is now able to become a

perfect duplicate of the victim, down to the victim's voice. After taking a new form, the Wraith's physical abilities become those of the form taken. The Wraith loses all normal abilities and vulnerabilities except for its shape-changing power. If more damage is taken than its new form can withstand, it is forced to return to its true shape, and the previously taken damage is retained.

HEAT RESISTANCE. The Wraiths originated from a planet with a great deal of volcanic activity. They took half damage from fire- and heat-based attacks. At the same time, they took double damage from cold-based attacks.

MAGIC. The Dire Wraith species consisted of two branches: the males, who were experts in advanced technology, and the females, who were spell-casters. Female Wraiths had Monstrous Psyches and Good Reason scores (see pages 10 and 32 of the Campaign Book for rules concerning magic).

HELL HOUNDS™

Fighting: EXCELLENT (20)
Agility: EXCELLENT (20)
Strength: GOOD (10)
Endurance: REMARKABLE (30)
Reason: FEEBLE (2)
Intuition: GOOD (10)
Psyche: POOR (4)

Health: 80
Karma: 16

Known Powers:

PHASING. The Hellhounds had a phasing power similar to that of Shadowcat™. Any machinery a Hellhound phases through must make an Endurance FEAT roll or be scrambled and inoperative. Machinery without an Endurance score is scrambled automatically. Mechanical beings take Incredible damage, while battle suits and other machinery is made inoperative for 10 turns.

The Hellhounds attack with their phasing ability, using a Fighting FEAT roll to determine success. A success roll indicates that the Hellhound has phased through the person, causing Remarkable damage. Also, the victim must make a yellow Endurance FEAT roll or fall unconscious for 1-10 turns.

Background: When the Dire Wraiths first arrived on Earth, they used their advanced technology to mutate ordinary dogs into these powerful creatures.

HYBRID™

Fighting: GOOD (10)
Agility: EXCELLENT (20)
Strength: GOOD (10)
Endurance: MONSTROUS (75)
Reason: EXCELLENT (20)
Intuition: EXCELLENT (20)
Psyche: UNEARTHLY (100)

Health: 115
Karma: 140

Known Powers:

FLIGHT. Hybrid was able to fly at Typical speeds using his mental abilities.

MENTAL ATTACK. Hybrid was able to project mental blasts which could do up to Unearthly damage.

MENTAL POWERS. Hybrid had the powers of telepathy, image generation, telekinesis, and mind control at Unearthly levels.

BODY ARMOR. Hybrid's skin provided him with Excellent protection against all physical attacks.

SHAPE-SHIFTING. Hybrid had a Monstrous shape-shifting ability.

MAGIC. Hybrid had powerful magical abilities, using Personal and Universal energies with Remarkable skill.

Background: Hybrid was the first offspring of a human and a Dire Wraith, and was a sworn enemy of Rom.

Spaceknight character generation

Though most players may want to play Rom or Starshine in a MARVEL SUPER HEROES campaign, some players might want to create their own Spaceknight characters. This section helps players do this. First of all, the procedure for rolling a hero's abilities is changed as follows:

Fighting. Roll on the following table:

Die roll	Fighting score
01-60	Excellent
61-80	Remarkable
81-96	Incredible
97-99	Amazing
00	Monstrous

Agility and Strength. Roll on the following table:

Die roll	Ability score
01-10	Excellent
11-30	Remarkable
31-70	Incredible
71-90	Amazing
91-00	Monstrous

Endurance. Roll on the following table:

Die roll	Endurance score
01-30	Amazing
31-90	Monstrous
91-00	Unearthly

Note that Endurance scores refer only to the need for rest, as Spaceknights could withstand exposure to deep space indefinitely.

Reason and Intuition. Roll as per the rules in the Campaign Book, but shift the results two ranks to the right, to represent the fact that the characters come from an advanced race. The characters have been fighting the Wraiths for a long time, too, which would increase their scores in general.

Psyche, Roll as per the normal Campaign Book rules.

All Spaceknight characters have the same flight, body armor, and regeneration abilities possessed by Rom and Starshine. In addition, each Spaceknight character may roll randomly for 1-2 extra powers using the hero-creation section in the Campaign Book. Some variations should be made to the powers, as noted below.

Resistances and Senses: Protected Senses, Extraordinary Senses, and Infravision are possible.

Movement: Lightning Speed and Teleportation are possible.

Nature Control: Not possible.

Energy Control: All powers are possible.

Body Control: All powers are possible except Plasticity, Shape-shifting, and Body Transformation.

Distance Attacks: All are possible.

Mental Powers: All are possible.

Body Alteration (offensive): All are possible.

Body Alteration (Defensive): All are possible.

Weapons: Only Unique Weapon are possible.

Keep in mind that these super powers are produced and made possible by the Spaceknights' advanced battle suits. The power ranks of their powers, after being randomly rolled, should be shifted to the right one column to indicate they have been created by an advanced technology. A power's rank should have a maximum of Monstrous.