

**FREE**



Permission granted to make copies for personal use only.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial.....	3
Spidorans Below.....	4
Reviews.....	14
A Timeline of the Natural and Political History of the Galaxy of The Sarge.....	18



Published by Black Swans with Atom Bombs Publishing™ in May, 2009

If – E – Zine is trademarked and © copyrighted 2008 by Charles Shaver. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to make copies of this issue for personal use only. For all other uses: No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the written prior permission of the author(s) and artist(s). Contact us at [ifezine@gmail.com](mailto:ifezine@gmail.com).

## Editorial

**F**or only the second time in If – E – Zine’s six year history, I find myself publishing an issue far later than I had originally intended. This issue was meant to be published on Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. Here it is a week later and I’m finally publishing it to the new ifezine.com.

It’s been a rough couple of weeks. Illness kept me nearly bedridden for two weeks. Then family obligations kept me otherwise busy. I attended the Motor City Comic Con last Friday and met The Ghoul and a few other artists. I had a good time. Now I’m looking to attend a horror convention, if I can find one relatively close.

Issue 14 finds us returning to Zalam’s tale in Part 1 of “Spidorans Below”. Picking up where “Zalam in the Lost City of Adul-Ra” leaves off, Zalam and new friend Olmec currently descend the Argonian Mountains... straight into the hands of an awaiting Norikahn! Hot on their tail, too, is the vicious Lizarus – mortal enemy to both Olmec AND Zalam!

This issue may be a little thin, but by no means do I think it lacks in quality or punch.

Enjoy!

~ Charles, ed.



## “Spidorans Below”

### Part I

© 2009 by Charles Shaver.

Here’s the latest story following Zalam of Protuculus. This story started as serialized blogs on my blog [www.blogspot.com/lordshen](http://www.blogspot.com/lordshen) and on the If – E – Zine™ MySpace blog, but was never finished. Here now is an extended version of the tale, featuring new material not previously blogged, in a two part serial only within the pages of If – E – Zine

\*\*\*\*\*

# M

Moisture dripped from subterranean walls. Clicking, clattering sounds echoed throughout the cavern. Little light gave heed to size nor grandeur of the earthen cave. Chitterings followed, as did the shuffling of inhuman feet. A triumvirate of figures bathed in crimson, silken robes gathered round a tiny red orb set atop an ancient metal machine. The glow of the orb gave the cave its only illumination.

Each of the figures was small, yet stood as enlightened creatures. Their thousands of eyes each sparkled in the orb's glimmer. The faces were ghastly atrocities -- part metal and part meat. Massive mandible claws extended from lipless mouths dripping with saliva. Their robes bespoke of their six arms each. The topmost pair of arms were thin and ended in tiny hands with painfully long fingers. The other four arms had no hands, but rather a single piercing steel claw each. The robes covered the four legs each creature stood upon.

The three were ugly creatures. Each was organic. Each was inorganic. And when they spoke their mandible claws struck together lightly to add savage intonation, inflection and unnerving clacking.

\*clack\*clack\* "Speak upon us the wisdom you have retrieved," said one creature named Aeroe.

\*click\*clack\*click\* "I've used our Seeing Orb to spy the Overworld. There is great unrest for those residing there," spoke Nauru.

\*click\* "What manner of unrest?" asked Enod.

\*click\* "The kingdom that has kept peace in the Overworld for generations has been usurped," explained Nauru. "The King of Protuculus has been replaced forcefully."

\*click\*clack\* "A war?" asked the Aeroe.

\*click\*click\* "Not much of one," \*clack\*. "The king hardly stood his ground, though he remains alive and free. His army was outnumbered nine-to-one."

\*clack\* "Who ousted the king?"

\*click\* "A creature called human. His name is Norikahn."

\*click\* "*Huuu*-man?" asked Enod. "What is this creature?" \*clack\*clack\*

Nauru explained. \*click\* "Humans are from a world over the Overworld. Those of the Overworld call it Heavens, but the humans call it Outer Space." \*clack\*

\*click\*click\*click\* Enod's mandibles worked fiercely. "A world over the Overworld? This could change the perceptions of all our kind." \*clack\*click\*

\*click\* "We have long known through our minimal contact with the allied Overworlders of a belief commonly held there is a world above the Overworld. There

should be no surprise creatures live in this... this..." Nauru struggled for a name to this alien place. "This Outerworld." \*click\*

The three Spidorans mulled over matters in silence. At last, Enod -- forever the questioner - asked, \*clack\* "How would this usurpation affect us?"

\*click\* "It may not," answered Nauru. "But we may desire a hedge in our wages should matters come to directly affect us. And I fear they may." \*click\*

\*clack\* "Why would that be?" Aeroe this time was the questioner.

\*click\* "Because of this human and his army of metal men."

\*clack\*click\* "Metal men?" exclaimed Enod. "Others like we?" \*clack\*clack\*

\*click\* "No, no," said Nauru. "These men are completely metal and appear similar in form to the human. They have minimal linguistic skills and therefore must be fairly stupid beasts. They are not enlightened creatures such as we." \*clack\*

\*clack\* "What of this human and its army?" asked Aeroe.

\*clack\* "It would appear he is bent upon a destiny of cleansing the world of all those who oppose. And those not of his kind are, if they do not willing give themselves over to be his servants, enslaved or murdered outright. It must be assumed the human would do the same with us." \*clack\*

\*click\*click\*click\* "Who's to say he would discover us?"

\*click\* "He may not. But know this: he tortures those he enslaves and often for information about this world. We once more must assume he would do the same to the few allies we have in the Overworld and that they would certainly speak of us in the fires of torture."

Again the three shared a silence.

\*click\*clack\* "What must we do?" asked Enod.

Nauru took his time formulating an answer.

\*click\* "As I see it," he said. "We either present ourselves to this human and offer ourselves as servants or we aide in any way the surviving king of Protuculus." \*clack\*

\*click\* "What matter does this ousted king have in this?"

\*click\* "It is thought as long as he's alive he threatens the authority of the human's throne. This is not unwise."

\*click\*click\* "Then we must help the old king," said Aeroe.

\*click\* "His family once claimed a desire for peace amongst the world's many inhabitants. Though we do not live within the Overworld, we are a part of this world -- perhaps moreso than the rest. Ours is an ancient race, a good race filled with the passion of reason. But now is the hour we may need to take increased action to defend our lives, our way of living, our passion for reason. If not, we the eldest race of Protuculus may perish."

\*click\* "But this human's metal men," interjected Enod. "Think you he may have the wisdom of Fronithus?" \*click\*click\*

Again Nauru took his time to answer. "Perhaps, but it is doubtful. Fronithus, our Creator, insofar as we know, had no dealings with this Outerworld." \*click\*click\*

\*click\* "Even so," said Enod, "perhaps this human knows the ways of similar alchemy that created us." \*clack\*click\*

\*click\* "There are things we must assume and others we cannot," argued Nauru.

"Where is this old king?" \*click\* asked Aeroe.

\*click\*click\* "He descends the southern Argonians as we speak."

\*click\* "We've an entrance there! We could meet with him directly!" exclaimed Aeroe.

Enod clacked nervously.

\*click\* "There is but one problem," said Nauru.

\*click\* "What problem is that?" asked Enod.

\*click\*clack\*click\* "The human's army gathers, also awaiting the old king so they may kill him or imprison him or both."

All three Spidorans clicked and clacked loudly, nervously.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Have you found the ousted king yet?" spake the massive head.

Norikahn stood before the holographic projection of Lord Furian's head in the control room of his new palace, seated in Zalam's old throne.

"No, father. Not as yet. But we've agents following his progress and I gather forces now to intercept him in his descent from a local mountainous region."

"Do you plan success?"

The question confused Norikahn. "Of course I do, father."

"Oh? It would seem I've assumed you've planned for success previously, yet there you stand a shameful failure."

"How have I failed you, father? I beseech you, tell me of my failures and I shall correct them."

Lord Furian breathed deep. The giant projected head considered his son. He said, "You ranked last in your class at the Academy. I practically had to bribe the generals there to let you pass and graduate. Since then, I've tried to nurture the warlord in you. I've

given you command of small skirmishes on various planets and you've lost every one but the last. So I let you try an invasion of an entire planet. In secret, I plotted the invasion. All you had to do was show up when the time was right. And, much to my surprise and - dare I admit - pleasure, you did actually show up. But the invasion would not have been so successful as it had been were it not for your listening to the locals. Your lower ranked commanders granted you the wisdom to take that palace! And yet... you managed to fail even then."

Lord Furian huffed. "Hear me well, son. As long as the old king remains alive, your throne and rule will be questioned. Find and kill this Zalam."

"Yes, fa-"

The image flickered and was gone before Norikahn could complete the sentence.

Norikahn stood, humiliated. He was glad no one was near to hear the words or see the scowling face of his father. He resolved in his heart to fulfill his father's last uttered words... "Find and kill this Zalam."

He left the control room, heading for the stables where he would mount his steel stallion and ride as escort to the southern range of the Argonian Mountains. There he would await Zalam's arrival.

\*\*\*\*\*

Stony Olmec followed the far taller and more agile Zalam down the mountainside. They had left the snowy bite of wintry winds behind them. All around them now the mountains grew green with wild grass and flowers. Olmec could feel none of the changes in temperature, but his emerald eyes took in the beauty of of colorful nature all around him.

“Long has it been,” he called to Zalam, “since I’ve laid eyes upon such glorious colors. How I miss the greens of my homeland! How I miss the chatterings of the swamps.”

Zalam paused by a boulder, taking a brief respite from the descent as Olmec caught up with him. Together they shared the cool shade of the large stone.

“If all this proves false and ill-conceived,” said Olmec, “if you lead me into traps or towards a homeland still bereft with war, I’ll not mind for I’ve missed the colors of Malaeius that much and this flight we now take has granted me one more look at them.”

“Malaeius?” Zalam leaned his back against the cool, soothing boulder.

“It is the Olmec word for this world. Your people, I believe, have called it Protuculus. But our name is far older for we take it from the spidorans.”

“Spidorans? The metal spider men living below the world’s surface as voles?”

“The very ones.”

“I know little of the old myths,” Zalam admitted.

“Oh, but they’re not myths. The spidorans are quite real.”

“Have you spied them?”

“As a child, more than a century ago. It’s as if a dream came to me when my forefathers made peace with the spidorans.”

“Perhaps it was a dream.”

Olmec frowned. He saw he would not change Zalam’s mind. He said, “Perhaps.”

Zalam gathered some of the nearby whitgrass in his hand, crushed it, put it in his mouth and sucked on it.

“What is that you do?” asked Olmec.

“Whitgrass stores great amounts of rain and moisture for dry days. That is why it grows so steadily on these mountains, it’s quite the survivor. When thirsty, chew on some whitgrass. I was taught that while gaining my education in my uncle’s military regime. They taught us quite a few things about survival that I’m now needing to use.”

Olmec nodded.

“Know you who else passes on this wisdom?”

Zalam shrugged. “I’m uncertain. I supposed it’s well known amongst some.”

“The spidorans taught such things to my people.”

Zalam looked at him. He spit out a few of the blades of the whitgrass and said, “We are quite the odd pairing, aren’t we, Olmec? You a spiritual man and I from a military and noble upbringing.”

Olmec smiled. “Perhaps that is why we’ve survived so far together.”

Zalam chuckled. “Perhaps.”

He looked up the mountainside, tracking the large distance they had covered. He spied some small movement. He watched a moment.

Olmec, seeing Zalam concentrating, asked, “What is it?”

“Movement. And it’s coming this way. Someone must be following us. Would you know who?”

“I’m certain we made quite a few enemies in Adul-Rah,” said Olmec. “But none more determined than Lizarus.”

“Well, they come this way.”

“Why would it be an enemy? Why not an ally?”

“Anyone wishing to flee Adul-Rah most likely would have in whichever direction they saw fit. Only someone after us would be following us so precisely.”

Olmec nodded at this.

“Come, we must keep moving lest we need fight some more.” Zalam was shocked by his own words. Before, when he was king, he would have stayed and fought whatever enemy came at him. Now, without question and with too much unknown to him, he sought to flee to fight another day.

He had learned to survive.

Olmec and Zalam stood, taking up their descent once more. They did not know that while they fled from one small threat, they ran headlong towards a much larger enemy.

\*\*\*\*\*

It was not long before Zalam and Olmec spotted the mechano-men army gathered en masse at the base of the mountain. They spotted the large group before the army had spotted them.

“Who are they?” asked Olmec.

“Not a welcoming party. They are the army that overthrew my rule.”

“What shall we do now?”

Zalam looked up the mountain. He spied the form descending there. He looked to the foothills below. Their excited, agitated movement suggested they had seen their prey.

“We’ve found ourselves in a tough spot,” said Zalam. He added, “And sometimes, one must fight to survive.”

“We’ll fight them? Which one?”

“I doubt either would wait to place a blade in our heart. Often it is advised to do away with the weakest flank first so they’ll not pester you during the course of your attack. But right now, I’m feeling I want to draw the blood of an older enemy than a new.”

Zalam switched on the vibrating blades of his sword.

“We’ll attack the army?”

“We’ve no way to run, lest you can reason out a way.”

Just then a nearby stone moved so as to startle both Olmec and Zalam. The stone lifted, moss and rooted dandelions peeling away from the ground as it raised. From under the stone came a partially metallic face with large mandible claws at the mouth.

\*click\*clack\* “This way, friends,” came the chittering voice.

“Spidorans!” Olmec exclaimed gleefully.

Zalam could not believe his stygian eyes.

“Come, we’ll be safe with them,” Olmec said as he moved towards the stone.

“How know you that?” asked Zalam, grabbing his friend’s arm.

“Zpidorans and golems are allies and always have been. They’ll lead us safely from this predicament.”

Zalam doubted this, but as Olmec pulled free from his grasp and lifted the stone, as Norikahn’s army fell into formation and advanced up the foothills towards them, as Lizarus drew nearer still, he wondered what other choice he had.

Zalam crawled down through the hole, Olmec following after and replacing the stone above them.



## Reviews

### ***Legend***

**M** = Movie; **Cm** = Comic Book or Graphic Novel; **E** = Essay

**0** = Not worth your time; **1** = There's something redeemable about the material, either special effects or some use of language so it may be worth a rental; **2** = It's okay, but not great and if a movie it may be worth the price of a matinee; **3** = A pretty solid piece of work and worth your time and efforts, if a movie it's worth a full priced ticket; **4** = The absolute best you can get, perhaps life-changing artist triumphs

**A Boy and His Dog** (M) = 2 = A decent movie and often funny. It's worth watching for those of you that are into science fiction and especially the weird, psychedelic or tales of post-apocalyptic worlds. Give it a try

**"Why I Am Not A Christian"** by Bertrand Russell (E) = 2 = I was somewhat disappointed in the material here. While the argument is well made and thoroughly entertaining (especially considering this would be given as a speech), I felt the arguments put forth were sophomoric at best. What is said within this text is nothing every angry youth hasn't already argued. I expected far more.

**Charlie and the Chocolate Factory** (M) = 0 = I hate Tim Burton's remakes. And this is no exception. I fear sometimes I'm biased against his remakes, then I watch another one and am reaffirmed in my hatred towards this man's unoriginal tripe. Skip this entirely

**Tremors** (M) = 2 = I'm inclined to give this movie a 3 since I love it so much, but truth be told it's not a SPECTACULAR movie. It's good. Very good. Even and perhaps especially in its cheesiness. But not great.

**Ghostbusters** (M) = 4 = This movie holds up well after all these years. What an amazing bit of film history and pop culture.

**SLC Punk** (M) = 3 = I'm inclined to give this movie 4, but I'm uncertain of that rating. I'm positive it deserves at least a 3, though. A great movie that's smart and emotional and entertaining as all hell. Matt Lillard, bravo. He's far more capable than just playing Shaggy.

**My Bloody Valentine 3D** (M) = 2 = I expected cheese. I got cheese and I loved it. The 3D elements were fairly good, the story a tiny bit jumbled but easy enough to follow. It dragged a little about 3/4ths the way through as it tried to suddenly get very smart and fool the audience (failing in the process and more just causing confusion... knowing the truth is far more frightening than keeping things hidden from an audience), but overall could prove to be a good start to a solid series. I fear it may become worse, however.

**Stand By Me** (M) = 4 = The classic movie based on Stephen King's short story "The Body". This is a favorite movie of mine and a wonderful tale in general.

**Appleseed** (M) = 2 = Appleseed has an inarguable place in anime history and has influenced everything since it first came out. However, it doesn't hold up well to time. The art looks dated. The story and tropes, though perhaps original in the 80s, now appear cliché and boring. It's a good movie, don't get me wrong, but far from great. Anime fans should give it a try. All others should probably only watch if only really in the mood.

**Maximum Overdrive** (M) = 3 = Another classic Stephen King tale, and his only directorial effort. Cheese, homicidal trucks, Yearley Smith and Emilio Estevez. What more could you want?

**"The Etymology of Cyberpunk"** by Bruce Bethke (E) = 4 = An essay about the history and origins of the word 'cyberpunk' by the man that coined the term. It's a short read, a personal essay and an entertaining bit of insight. All sci fi fans should look for it online.

**King Boxer** (M) = 2 = A classic of the kung-fu flick genre. While it's a good movie, it's not great. Others may argue, but I don't think it's that great.

**Green Lantern Corps: Recharge** (Cm) = 1 = Wow. What a waste. About the only thing worthwhile is seeing all the different lanterns. The story is convoluted and told improperly. There's hardly enough tension. Blah.

**Kingdom Come** (Cm) = 3 = A wonderful comic, but not as good as a lot of people tout.

**The Battle of Nickfaces** (M) = 0 = A locally produced indy movie made by high school kids here in Mid-Michigan. It's horrible, it's campy, it drags, it's even a little narcissistic. But it's a full length movie that got done by high school kids and has many entertaining moments. Okay, not many... a few.

**Suburban Commando** (M) = 2 = I love this movie more than it deserves, truth be told. But it's a pretty solid fare starring Hulk Hogan.

**Berry Gordy's The Last Dragon** (M) = 4 = If you love 80s movies or kung-fu movies, then you'll love this one. Ernie Reyes, Jr., Taimak and Vanity. What more could you want?

**Wayne's World** (M) = 3 = I can't believe this one has stood the test of time. It's still a fun movie.

**Water Margin** (M) = 3 = Based on several chapters from the ancient Chinese novel of the same name, this movie is one of the all-time greats and must-sees in kung-fu flick history. How can you not love Black Whirlwind?

**Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>** (M) = 3 = This is the new (2009) movie. And I loved it. Every bit of it. I think it'll breathe new life into this old franchise.

**House of 1000 Corpses** (M) = 3 = I didn't expect much from this movie. I wound up getting a great experience. It gets a little weird at the end, but overall is a solid horror movie. Bravo, Mr. Zombie. Bravo.

**Harold and Maude** (M) = 4 = One of the most touching films I've ever seen and a personal favorite. I highly recommend this one.

**Taken** (M) = 1 = I couldn't buy Liam Neeson as a former bad-ass agent. But then I saw the movie and was pleasantly surprised. They pulled his character off well. It's still not a great movie, though.

**Problem Child** (M) = 1 = I hated this movie when I was a kid and, upon revisiting it, I hate it just as much. It's a horrible movie. Trite. Boring. The late John Ritter and a few gags are all that's redeeming about this movie.

**Dirty Mary, Crazy Larry** (M) = 3 = Wow. What an amazing ending. And what great cars. And Peter Fonda. Likeable outlaws. Good story. I can recommend this movie.

**Watchmen** (M) = 4 = A spectacular take on one of the most intelligent graphic novels of all time.

**Choke** (M) = 1 = A boring movie. In nearly every way. But there's some decent story here with a few funny moments.

**Great Balls of Fire!** (M) = 1 = A slow, boring take on Jerry Lee Lewis. I love Mr. Lewis and I just don't think this movie does him justice. It concentrates entirely on his marriage to his cousin, an interesting and controversial aspect of his life indeed.

**The Haunting in Connecticut** (M) = 2 = A far better movie than I expected. It's worth watching for horror fans.

**Resident Evil: Degeneration** (M) = 3 = The first truly great story to be told within the RE universe besides RE 4. I <3 Leon! Haha

**Seven Doors of Death** (M) = 2 = A Lucia Fulchi movie. AN odd story that takes you everywhere, including into examining the odds and ends of the human psyche. Truly weird horror movie, but worth watching for hardcore horror fans.

**Zombi** (M) = 4 = The classic movie from Lucio Fulchi. Definitely worth a watch for horror and zombie fanatics alike. Gore, gore, gore abounds! In fact, most the movie only deserves a 3, but the ever-present tension and well filmed gore pushes this movie to a 4.

**Zombie Strippers** (M) = 3 = Robert Englund and Jenna, what more do you need? I expected a campy movie. I got that and a lot more! Please, whatever you do, do NOT underestimate this movie. It's dumb, sure. There's a few plot holes. And it's fantastic.

**Evil's City** (M) = 0 = This looks like someone's college film who then slept with the right person to get it distributed. I shouldn't say that. There's a lot of good college films. This is not a good film at all, college or otherwise. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> worst movie of all time, right behind The Beast of Yucca Flats.

**Frogs** (M) = 2 = A classic movie. Great for fans of 1970s campy horror.

**Blade Runner: Final Cut** (M) = 3 = There's so little that's different between the Final Cut version and the controversial Director's Cut that I was left wondering why Ridley Scott wanted to do the Final Cut at all. Oh yeah, probably for money. And, let's be fair, since he didn't truly have a hand in the Director's Cut he probably wanted to truly finish it the way he wanted. There's little difference, though. Not so much it'll make me angry, but not enough to make that much of a difference to general viewers. I would give the movie a 4, but I docked it down to three because of the lack of difference.



## A Timeline of the Natural and Political History of the Galaxy of The Sarge

*“Without war we would not be human.”*

– Command Marshal Broderick Grimfall  
to Sergeant Dalius Severin Drake



he ballistic missile exploded high in sky after entering planetary atmosphere. Hundreds of missiles leapt forth from the initial Mother Missile, each a tiny container, each a single Pod housing a lone soldier within. The Pods streaked across the sky as a meteor shower during daylight hours. The Pods scattered, spread across the surface of the world. As each came to the surface, the Pod would explode in two halves, flaying out and igniting tiny jets underneath a remaining platform upon which the protected soldier stood until he came to stand upon the ground. Then each soldier ignited his own jet pack, on the bounce as commanded towards some predetermined destination. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers entered the enemy skies thusly.

The Gregor army was invading.

\*\*\*\*\*

Sergeant Dalius Severin Drake’s debut was March, 2004 in Issue #3 of If – E – Zine™. In that issue I wrote a thirty-page short story titled “The Sarge” and the character as yet had no name. He was referred to simply as “Sarge”. Then in March, 2008 – exactly four years later – I published Issue #10 and within was the beginning of the serialized story “Rescuing the Dead” once more featuring “Sarge”. This time he had a name, the military complex in which he served was expanded and described to some degree and sketches were made of some of the weapons he and his fellow Gregor soldiers used.

In August, 2008 I published If – Errata, a review and guide to the first five years of If – E – Zine. Within If – Errata were additional notes concerning Sergeant Drake in the article “Future Marine: Being Notes About the Universe of The Sarge”. This included the aforementioned sketches, a breakdown of ranks within the Gregor army and various other notes.

Expanding upon that article, I present to you “A Timeline of the Natural and Political History of the Galaxy of the Sarge”. The first note concerns the title: in the errata of If – Errata I refer to the setting of Sergeant Drake as a “Universe” and here I call it a “Galaxy”. I have decided that ‘galaxy’ is more appropriate, as the setting will concern itself only with the one galaxy and not an entire universe. It’s a simple matter, really, but perhaps an important one in a few respects.

On with the notes.

\*\*\*\*\*

## A TIMELINE OF THE NATURAL AND POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE GALAXY

The Year	pre-1000 – Humanity develops multiple systems of language
	1500 – Invention of the first printing machines
	1900s – Humanity ventures from The Cradle into space for the first time in history
	2100 – Humanity begins exploring the The Cradle’s system, but finds their progress impeded by limited scientific technology
	2219 – An alien race calling themselves Yoals visits The Cradle and gives Humanity the technology for extended space flight, bringing the Stars of the Heavens within reach of Humanity
	2221 – The Yoals venture deeper into space, never to be heard from again
	2340 – Humanity begins a quasi-religious expansion into space; colonization of The Cradle’s system and exploration outside the system is conducted
	3460 – Humanity has progressed into space and now has many colonies across many systems; the first stellar governments form – most are crudely constructed and run by despots, merchants and outlaws; the first inklings of Yoalin – a religion worshipping the mysterious Yoals – begins
	3900 – Humanity has spread completely across the galaxy
	4200 – Stellar governments have completely replaced planetary governments; six major governments have been founded and literally hundreds of minor ones
	4341 – Galactic War I begins as a dispute over territory, namely a system of six planets rich with valuable ores
	4390 – Galactic War I ends with a peace treaty between the initiating governments and a new generation of politicians tired of the war
	5122 – Galactic War II begins after a dispute over trade
	5160 – Galactic War II ends with the formation of the Galactic Union of System-States (GUSS) and a regulated economy
	5288 – Galactic War III begins when trade ships from different System-States open fire on one another in a dispute about trade routes
	5312 – Galactic War III ends with the formation of the Trade Police; respective of the 3 Galactic Wars, people turn to religion for answers about and causes a surge of spiritualism resulting in Yoalism being spread all across the universe
	5600 – Ignus Maxus, President of the Coalition of Cradle States (CSS) – the largest and most economically powerful of the stellar governments – converts to Yoalism and bringing about a new age and interest in the religion

- 5608 – With the increase of Yoalins in the galaxy, the Church of Yoalin creates the office of Exalted Worship Overlord to be the galaxy’s spiritual leader and advisor to all politicians
- 5612 – Ignus Maxus is deemed a traitor by various groups and is assassinated; many claim responsibility but none were proven guilty of the assassination; one of the major suspects for the assassination was Iago Dorif, president of the People Democratic Republic of Bastia (PDRB) and public detractor of Maxus on many fronts
- 5613 – Amidst the fervor and aftermath of Ignus Maxus’ assassination, the CSS declares war on PDRB, sparking Galactic War IV
- 5713 – Galactic War IV is put to an end when PDRB nukes The Cradle of Humanity, rendering it dead and utterly useless, killing everyone on the planet
- 5714 – Iago Dorif is called upon by His Exalted Worship Overlord Benevilan to present himself to the GUSS assembly; Dorif at first refuses, then is pressured to do so; Dorif is subsequently sentenced and executed on the spot by His Exalted Worship Overlord by hanging; the system-states reel from the execution and fear rebuking the action
- 5801 – The first Exalted Worship Overlord dies at the age of 89; a new Exalted Worship Overlord is appointed; fear of the power of the church fades
- 5888-6688 – A series of Exalted Worship Overlord hold the office; the galaxy is largely at peace
- 6503 – Political power is signed over to the Exalted Worship Overlord, making whomever holds the position the ultimate leader in the galaxy; all other politicians retain control over their governments but as system-states under one ruler
- 6688 – His Exalted Worship Overlord Hrakkuris III is installed after the passing of His Exalted Worship Overlord Kurkraven VIII dies violently in a spaceship explosion
- 6696 – Altean soldiers, after years of speculation about the position the Exalted Worship Overlord would take on inner system fighting, invade Brandis-12 in the Havorin system that has long been disputed politically between Gregor and Altea
- 6697 – After a year of minor skirmishes on Brandis-12, Altean soldiers fully invade the Gregor planets along the Altean border
- 6698 – Public outcry causes His Exalted Worship Overlord Hrakkuris to speak on the Gregor-Altean border disputes and in a public speech He states, “Mine are the matters of the spiritual, not petty politics. If humanity wants to continue to mar itself with blood, that is in the stars and a matter each man must deal with when he finally confronts the beloved Yoals.”; many took His words to be the scathing review they were intended to be, but others took it to mean the Exalted Worship Overlord would not interfere in political

- and military matters, thus beginning a new era of warring System-States
- 6699 – Dalius Severin Drake is born; his father is a farmer from Krannis VI and mother a local politician from Horus Moon (a satellite of Krannis VI) in the Gregor System, capital system of the Gregor System-State
  - 6700 – After an extensive and galaxy-wide arms race, each of the System-States enters the war begun by Gregor and Altea thus beginning Galactic War V
  - 6715 – Dalius Severin Drake turns sixteen years old; the war has ravaged his home system, leaving virtually no work to be employed by with the best prospects either struggling to survive as a farmer as his father did or to leave the planet and join the war efforts in factories or on the frontlines; Dalius Severin Drake enlists into the Gregor National Army (GNA) as a foot soldier
  - 6716 – Complete with training, Private Drake sees combat for the first time planetside on Haltius Foth – a frontline planet heavily battled over between Altea and Gregor; Private Drake is promoted first to OverPrivate, then Corporal
  - 6722 – Sergeant Dalius Drake is reassigned to the swamp-world Dakkaran – a planet intended to be a new frontline of the war
  - 6723 – The events of the short stories “The Sarge” and “Rescuing the Dead” take place

