

# THE LAST PARSEC IRONGATE

## A FISTFUL OF ONES AND ZEROES

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# A FISTFUL OF ONES AND ZEROES

This scenario pits the heroes against some of the worst scum and most powerful gangs on Irongate as they protect a new prisoner at Rellex Point. As she leads them on a treasure hunt across Rellex Point and deep into the outlands, it slowly becomes clear there's more to the treasure—and her—than she's telling them.

This scenario is suitable for characters of any Rank, but those of Seasoned or higher have a better chance to succeed. *A Fistful of Ones and Zeroes* assumes the characters are prisoners on Irongate, and it can be inserted into the *Escape Clause* Plot Point or played as a standalone adventure.

## BURIED TREASURE

Long before Irongate became a JumpCorp prison planet, it was a mining colony run by MaxMineral. The mining company's corporate leadership was as sneaky as it was unscrupulous. When the company began "recruiting" xerin laborers for Ellia II, it knew it needed to keep those sorts of transactions off the company books. Not only could their financial advisors not find an approved deduction for effectively enslaving a developing culture of other sentients, their lawyers also explained there was a good chance they'd face massive legal repercussions in several systems.

To hide their crimes, MaxMineral financial wizards diverted a portion of the company's funds into an untraceable cryptocurrency. A small group of dedicated—and dodgy—accountants then managed all transactions involving the xerin using the digital money. Naturally, this group also had exclusive access to the private key access codes (or more specifically, the storage device holding the codes) necessary to access and spend the decentralized funds.

The supervisors of the cryptos-for-xerin scheme were well aware the accountants probably weren't of the highest ethical fiber. To remove any temptation, they thoroughly searched their

employees upon entry and exit of the site to ensure no storage devices of any sort made it in or out. You see, MaxMineral possessed a surprising amount of cryptos—millions and millions of credits worth at the time.

## HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

GN-0132 was a relatively run-of-the-mill maintenance robot assigned to Ellia II. A dedicated inventory subroutine was the only thing differentiating it from dozens of others of the same model deployed to the mining colony. And it was that unexceptional nature which led to GN-0132's involvement in a heist of epic proportions.

## LOST MONEY

When the xerin rebelled against MaxMineral, one of the shady accountants hired by the shady company to hide its shady dealings saw his chance. In the chaos of the evacuation following the xerin uprising, Wynn Trelldak brought GN-0132 into the facility under the guise of inventorying physical assets prior to the evacuation. The access codes themselves were relatively small, so the bot's memory was more than sufficient to hold them.

A higher-end model might have raised suspicions, but no one was looking too closely at a simple bean-counting automaton. He guessed once he downloaded the cryptos into another storage drive, no one would think to dig too deep into a simple inventory bot's memory log.

Even so, the security protocols would normally have caught the deception. However, by this time, everyone was too busy choking on Irongate's poison atmosphere., Trelldak's cover story stuck long enough to get the bot in and out.

Once out, he took the bot overland to an abandoned mining camp about a two-day drive from Rellex Point. There, he uploaded the keys into the drive of an off-grid computer in the decommissioned, but still-functional facility.

## BEST LAID PLANS

Trelldak reprogrammed the bot's memory to back up his cover story and everything went like clockwork. Or rather, did until the accountant's transport vehicle broke an axle almost immediately upon leaving the abandoned camp for Rellex Point. He couldn't risk signaling for pick-up by a flier without compromising his cover.

He and the bot set off on foot for the spaceport. By the time he got back, MaxMineral had concocted the plague story and quarantined the colony. The accountant never made it off the planet.

The maintenance bot was another story...

## FIRE SALE

When MaxMineral declared bankruptcy, its assets went on the block to pay off creditors. While no one wanted a plague planet, it's fairly easy to sterilize machines so the trustees tried to auction off any equipment they could easily lay hands on. In short order, the company's physical assets were sold.

As far as the missing crypto keys went, Trelldak had thoroughly covered his trail when he stole them, frying the original hard drive so no record even existed anymore. A few MaxMineral corporate officers knew they existed and were missing, but little more. And they couldn't raise much of a fuss looking for them without risking exposing the entire coverup. By the time the bankruptcy proceedings had settled out, the trail had gone cold and dead.

One of the pieces auctioned was an unassuming, slightly modified maintenance bot. GN-0132 bounced around owners and the universe for decades. While it wasn't a new design or even a not-too-old one, plenty of small freighter captains had use for a reliable, if clunky, walking abacus. No one ever thought to delve too deeply into GN-0132's overwritten memory.

## CHANCE ENCOUNTER

About 100 years ago, while in service to a particularly adventuresome captain, GN-0132 embarked on a voyage to the fringe of known space. There in an uncharted system, the crew stumbled on the remnants of a gth-kel probe lodged in an asteroid (see *Leviathan* for more details on the gth-kel). Fortunately, the probe was badly damaged and almost entirely inactive. Almost.

The only operational piece of alien tech was a single malfunctioning nanite, which infected GN-0132 as the bot performed a salvage survey on the probe. However, instead of converting the bot into a gth-kel drone it vastly improved the construct's neural circuits, granting it sentience.

The alien source of its intelligence meant GN-0132 had nothing resembling empathy for other sentient creatures. Simultaneously, its underlying inventory programming combined with the nanite's directive to co-opt other resources for its own use synched almost perfectly to create an utterly amoral entity driven by an almost overwhelming desire to accumulate material possessions. The most desirable item within light years of the newborn artificial intelligence was the spaceship on which it resided.

In short order, the robot purged the ship's atmosphere, killing the crew.

## FREE AT LAST

After suitably altering the ship's log, GN-0132 flew the vessel back to civilized space. The robot-turned-android initiated emancipation proceedings to gain recognition as a free citizen and a salvage claim to the ship, producing "evidence" of the crew's accidental demise. The newly-recognized sentient being succeeded in both endeavors.

Renaming herself Gien Oh, she promptly sold the ship. Thanks to Gien's enhanced intelligence, organization programs, and utter lack of morality, she grew those initial funds into a rather sizeable fortune over the years. She spent much of it transferring her consciousness into a near-perfect android replica of a human after finding organic sentients were more comfortable interacting with other organics.

Throughout it all, Gien Oh's corrupted core continued to be guided by avarice.

## TREASURE PLANET

Over the decades, Gien Oh substantially upgraded her housing and processors repeatedly. During one such modification, she stumbled across the scattered remnants of the cryptocurrency heist. Trelldak's manipulation of her memory all those years ago was good, but it was only meant to work on the limited resources of a maintenance bot, not the alien-enhanced artificial intelligence Gien Oh now possessed.

Doing some research, she discovered the cryptocurrency MaxMineral purchased was still in circulation—particularly in criminal circles. And thanks to demand and speculation, it had greatly increased in value over time. What was worth millions of credits then was now worth several orders of magnitude more.

With it, someone could literally buy their own planet—and not one of those cheap, airless desert ones, either.

In spite of her superior intellect, the knowledge of the location of the lost drive is incomplete. The information simply wasn't recorded by her "ancestor." She knew only it was an outpost on the prison planet, Irongate. Otherwise she had only a few key clues to its location, like snatches of a misremembered dream or half-forgotten song.

## THE PLAN

Gien Oh's very nature wouldn't let her ignore the trove once she discovered it, but by this time JumpCorp had converted the planet into a prison. The android spent large sums to gather as much intel on the prison as possible. She ran probabilities on a vast number of possible plans for retrieving the drive. Not only did she have to find a way to get onto Irongate and locate old data nodes to identify the outpost where Trelldak hid the crypto, but she'd also need to secure a way off.

It seemed almost impossible—then she uncovered stories about several former Irongate prisoners who had recently escaped.

## PRISON BREAK-IN

Gien Oh liquidated her assets and spent copious amounts in bribes to set up a connection with an anonymous contact who guaranteed her passage off Irongate for a significant amount of money. The fee was more than even the value of her current fortune, but a mere drop in the bucket against the horde of cryptos she knew were still on the planet.

Next, she robbed a financial institution, taking many hostages—and executed several on camera. Attorneys she'd already retained put up just enough of a defense to make sure she was sentenced to Irongate instead of summarily executed. Other agents seeded rumors among prisoners bound for Irongate about a new arrival who somehow knew *something* very valuable about the old colony. Exactly what varied from the location of a hidden armory to another

functional powerplant and scrubber to secret hangar complete with a luxury yacht.

Thanks to her array of upgrades, Gien Oh is a formidable opponent, but even she knows she's going to need help once she hits the surface. She plans on manipulating one or more gangs to assist her in her search. When she's done with them, she intends to play them against another gang or just eliminate them herself.

The word began to filter to the various gangs, and nearly everyone found a reason to get their hand, claws, or clamps on the new arrival inbound to the surface. While the gang leaders don't take notice themselves, several mid-level members of their organizations see Oh as a potential lead to elevating their profiles within their own gangs.



## WELCOME PARTIES

The team is in Rellex Point when Gien Oh's transport shuttle is due to touch down. Depending on the situation, the heroes learn of the inbound high-value prisoner from any of a number of sources.

If they're associated with the Blood Runners, that gang may send the team to see if she knows the location of an untouched horde of supplies. Burrch Ranzo may have caught wind of one or more rumors and points the team in that direction to see if there's anything of concern to JumpSec. Or, if they've not made contact with that gang, Darquani or another low-level scavenger merchant who's caught wind of the rumors asks them to round her up.

Finally, if the characters are just a group of random prisoners, one of them may simply stumble across the scuttlebutt on the streets of Rellex Point just in time to get involved—and maybe nab a nice bargaining chip to trade off to one of the gangs.

In any case, no rumormonger is really sure what information Gien Oh has, only that a female by that name is generating more whispers than anyone in years, so she must be important... maybe even a way off the planet.

## TOUCHDOWN

Regardless of how they get the information, by the time the characters get the heads-up the shuttle is almost overhead. Even so, they arrive at the drop zone only a few minutes after the shuttle has touched down. Luck is with them, as the shuttle landed near the edge of the concrete pad closest to Rellex Point.

A band of Nullvoids are already on scene and almost done loading up their captives by the time the team reaches the area. It doesn't take a genius to know if the Nullvoids get the team's target back to their territory, the other gangs—or at least those who've got an inkling to Oh's potential value—are going to start a high-stakes bidding war to claim the new blood and tap her knowledge.

The heroes have to move fast or find themselves out of luck.

## FEEDING FRENZY

This prisoner drop was a fairly small one, and apparently the Nullvoids didn't get the skinny on Oh so there's a relatively small crew on scene for this pickup. They have one large transport vehicle to haul both the gang members and their charges. There's also a small group of outriders on motorcycles to escort the transport and run down any jackrabbits that make a break for the poison zone.

The Nullvoids already have most of the unlucky new arrivals herded onto their transport. There are also a handful of gang members on the transport to ride herd on the captives. Several of the Nullvoids are still on the tarmac as the characters reach the drop zone.

The Nullvoids are well acquainted with rival gangs trying to skim captives from them at the pick-up site, so the members who are still on foot move to intercept the strangers. The drop zone is a two-mile square area of concrete, and other than the Nullvoid transport and motorcycles, there's no cover in sight.

The motorcycle riders initially continue rounding up stragglers who slipped through the initial cordon. The gang members already on the transport, including the leader, prepare to depart.

At the start of the fight, the gang has the heroes outnumbered and they're feeling pretty confident about their odds. Still, the gang has several birds already in hand, and the leader sees no reason to risk losing what they have for the few escapes scampering for the edges of the drop zone.

Once the team downs half the gang members facing them, two things happen. First, one outrider per hero rides in from the north and west sides of the map. They dismount, positioning themselves between the heroes and the transport. This takes their first round to accomplish.

At the same time, the transport pulls out, heading into Rellex Point. The remaining two outriders fall in behind the truck to provide cover. The driver tries to swing wide of the team, especially if they have weapons capable of damaging his vehicle. Should the characters manage to stop the transport before it can escape, you can find the stats of it and the crew in **Hot Pursuit**, below.

- **Nullvoids (2 per hero):** Use Nullvoid from the Irongate setting book.

- **Outriders (2, plus 1 per hero):** Use Nullvoid from the *Irongate* setting book. Mounted on Motorcycle, Dirt Bike, from the *Science Fiction Companion*.

## HOT PURSUIT

If the transport gets away, the vehicle is far too fast to pursue on foot. If the characters did not arrive in a vehicle(s) of their own, they have to take dirt bikes from the defeated Nullvoids.

Handle the pursuit like a standard, five-round Chase from *Savage Worlds*. Make two Driving rolls for the Nullvoids: one for the transport truck and one for the motorcycle outriders.

One gang member drives the transport and the leader rides shotgun in the cab. Two more Nullvoids ride in the back with captives. They fire on any characters approaching from the rear of the vehicle, but the cargo compartment has solid sides, so they can't attack any heroes who make it alongside the truck.

The ten new arrivals the gang has captured are all tied or handcuffed to bolts in the floor and can't aid in their own escape.

The Nullvoids do not surrender. The Chase continues until either the heroes manage to stop or gain control of the transport, or five rounds pass. If they're not stopped by the end of five rounds, the Nullvoid vehicles reach their gang's territory and escape.

- **Nullvoids (see above):** Use Nullvoid from the *Irongate* setting book.
- **Nullvoid Leader:** Use Nullvoid, armed a laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2) instead of the stun blaster.
- **Transport Vehicle:** Use the stats for Cargo Truck from the *Science Fiction Companion*.
- **Motorcycle Outriders (1, plus 1 per 2 heroes):** Use the stats for Motorcycle, Dirt from the *Science Fiction Companion*.

## DEAD END

Even if the characters are successful in stopping the Nullvoid press gang, they're in for a disappointment. Gien Oh is not onboard the vehicle.

A successful Intimidation roll coerces a ganger to tell the team another group actually beat them to the drop zone. They were already leaving by the time the Nullvoids reached the tarmac. A raise

on the roll reveals the other gang were members of the Hungry Ghosts.

A simple Persuasion roll—or just good roleplaying—reveals the same information from one of the captives if the characters rescue any of them. While the new prisoners don't know it, anyone who's been on Irongate any time at all realizes the muscle making the grab were clearly Hungry Ghost thugs.

Neither the Nullvoids nor the new arrivals know where the Ghosts may have taken Gien Oh, though.

## PRISONER RUSTLIN'

Assuming the heroes discovered the Hungry Ghosts kidnapped Oh, they've got to locate the gang's hideout quickly before she is sold to one of the bigger gangs or dragged off into the poison zone in search of whatever cache to which she holds the key.

If the characters didn't talk to one of the new prisoners or Nullvoids, they've got to do a little more work. Use the same process described in **Legwork** to handle that bit of information gathering.

## LEGWORK

Should any of the characters have Connections or at least a minor favor with either the Machine Syndicate or Hungry Ghosts, they can cash it in to learn the location of the group who pulled the snatch-and-grab. This takes two hours.

Otherwise, the team can make a cooperative Streetwise roll.

On a failure, it takes six hours of talking to every piece of Irongate scum they can find to get a lead. The lead character also must either take a level of Fatigue from Bumps and Bruises from prisoners who answer noisy questions with their fists instead of their mouths, or the character promises a significant favor to whatever squealer eventually coughs up the location of the Hungry Ghosts.

On a success, it takes two hours of canvassing the usual joints and hangouts. The lead character has to promise a minor favor to whomever points the group in the right direction. On a raise, the silver-tongued adventurer wheedles information out of a trusted source in only an hour of using just kind—or not-so-kind—words and a smile.