



## Io - The Ashen

## Pre-game - Day 14/20

Taking, as it does, 3600 rem of radiation per day, the Jovian moon 'Io' was predicted to harbour no life, until the thick biological mats coating every one of the 400 or so active volcanoes on the surface were discovered by the first explorers. The thin, sulphurous atmosphere and relentless radiation make life difficult for homo sapiens, though those specifically tailored to exist within the subterranean cities and through brief surface sojourns find the world pleasant enough.

Inhabitants of Io, the Ashen, are probably the most unique of the current human family. Exposed as they are to near constant, cell damaging radiation, a radical medical treatment has been devised for inhabitants; continuous internal repair by nanobot fleet and directly secreted chemical mixes.

How this works in practice is quite complex. To summarise, pregnancy, childbirth and the first 18 years of life of all Ashen is spent deep below the surface, where some degree of protection from the Io / Jupiter flux radiation is given. Further, these deep city districts are lead shielded and visitors decontaminated. On or around the 18th birthday, Ashen are 'fixed'. What this means is a complex computer port system is grafted onto the right torso of each individual. This computer system is then loaded with a complete physical map of the individual. Via a fleet of nanobots and directed treatments, this computer system assesses and corrects for all changes in the physical makeup of an individual as efficiently as it can. There are errors made, there is a change tolerance window.

Memories are of course change. The nanobots crudely try to repair any synapse changes associated with new experiences, though such high resolution work is really beyond their means. Fragmented and battered memories do store within the Ashen brain, but the computer port system records a memory record which ideally overprints these native biological memories. Ashen can therefore be faced with duplicated, amplified, nullified or contradictory recollections - and extreme problems in forming empathic relationships.