

## YOUNG GLADIATORS

Issue 1 of 3

"Something Fishy This Way Comes"

by

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### **CHARACTER LIST:**

-- **STAR:** Female. African American. Genetically engineered by the U.S. government to herald in a new era of superhuman soldiers, Star was born and raised in a military base. Her first words were "Sir, yes, sir," and by the time she was seven, she could recite the military campaigns of every major American war. The only thing even remotely resembling a parent for Star is General Patterson, who oversaw the project that created her. While the government taught her everything there is to know about fighting, they taught her very little about normal human interaction, and Star often has trouble relating to other teens her own age.

POWERS: Star's body, much like an actual star, generates an immense amount of energy that increases her strength, stamina, and invulnerability. It also lets her fly and shoot energy blasts.

-- **OVERRIDE:** Male. African American. Real Name: Adam Brown. The first and only son of Jeremy Brown, co-founder and leader of the Panther's Rage, an underground African American organization determined to bring down what they see as a racist and oppressive U.S. government. Labeled terrorists by some, freedom fighters by others, the Panther's Rage philosophy was all that Override knew growing up, skewing his own view of the world.

POWERS: Override can take over a person's body and command it to do whatever he wants, kind of like controlling a puppet.

-- **AJAX:** Male. White. Real Name: Jonathan Ajax. Back in his Ohio high school, Jonathan was a star football player and well-liked student. But what his classmates didn't know was the suffering that awaited him at home, where his father regularly beat both Jonathan and his mother. One night, the beatings went too far and ended with his mother's death and his father's arrest. It was during the funeral the next day that Ajax's powers were suddenly activated, and he smashed

his mother's gravestone in a fit of rage and shame. Since then, his demeanor has been rough and standoffish.

POWERS: Ajax's body is surrounded by an invisible force field that leaves him almost completely invulnerable, as well as providing him with advanced superhuman strength.

-- **ISIS**: Female. White. While most believe the Cult of Isis disappeared centuries ago, few know that the Cult actually went underground, continuing to practice and evolve through the ages. And when a prophecy foretold that a child of power would usher the goddess's return, a follower named Adrianne tried to give birth to as many children as possible. Isis is her last and most powerful child, not to mention the most dark and gothic. But could she be the child of prophecy? Only time will tell.

POWERS: Isis can manipulate the energies of dark magic, often focusing it into energy blasts and using it to fly.

-- **DISC**: Female. White. Real Name: Angela McCarthy. Sweet and kind-hearted Angela was born in Belfast, Ireland, the only daughter of a hard working single mother. She had an ordinary and pleasant childhood, until her powers became activated at the age of 14. Her mother finally had to tell Angela the truth about her father, that he was Jupiter, leader of the Gladiators superhero team (and a married man). Despite this, Angela dreams of one day meeting her father and being accepted by him.

POWERS: Disc can create red, round energy discs about the size of a plate. She can completely control the disc and throw them like a frisbee or stand on top of them and levitate herself off the ground.

-- **AQUA & FIREBALL**: Males. Hispanics. These identical twin brothers were born in Mexico and raised by their "abuela" (Grandmother). They love video games, comic books, and all other kinds of fun. Objects they hate: all things "un-fun."

POWERS: Aqua's body is made completely of water, and he can manipulate it in a variety of ways. On the other hand, Fireball's body generates an immense amount of heat, which he can shoot as fire blasts.

-- **GENERAL PATTERSON**: Male. White. Late 50s. Real Name: Charles Patterson. General Patterson is your standard, life-long army soldier. He rarely smiles, often shouts, and serves God & Country above all else.

**PAGE ONE (2 PANELS):**

1 - We start with a bang, a large panel image (almost a splash) of the entire team huddled together in a "Danger Room-type" training space. The members who can fly hover above the others on the ground, who have their guards up, ready for action. An announcement comes over the room's intercom.

INTERCOM

Training session initiated.

STAR

Stay alert. I want a tight eagle formation with Fireball on point.

AQUA

Um, what did she say?

FIREBALL

I think she said she's got a slight nipple irritation.

DISC

(Laughing)

He he.

OVERRIDE

Stupid up, you idiots. This isn't the time for jokes.

AJAX

Override's right...

2 - A cluster of robots, each equipped with rocket packs and fists crackling with energy, come racing toward them.

AJAX

(Finishing the sentence)

Looks like we've got company.

**PAGE TWO (5 PANELS):**

1 - The fight begins. Star shouts orders to the team, but they fall on deaf ears.

STAR

Form a perimeter. Aqua, Disc, I need cover fire on the flank.

2 - An android approaches Aqua from behind.

AQUA  
When is this *chica* gonna start  
speaking English?

DISC  
Aqua, look out!

3 - Aqua's liquid body explodes from the android's electric attack.

DISC  
Aqua!

4 - Isis, wet with splashes of Aqua all over her, looks concerned (or at least as concerned as her dark demeanor can allow).

ISIS  
By the goddess. Is he dead?

FIREBALL  
Nah. He'll wash up later. The drama queen.

5 - Isis, back to her usual dour self, flies away from the rest of the team.

ISIS  
Well, I for one have had enough of this.

STAR  
Isis, Stop! Don't break rank!

**PAGE THREE (6 PANELS):**

1 - Isis's eyes glow with intense, black energy.

ISIS  
Goddess of Death, Bringer of  
Strife, Grant me your strength...

2 - Isis, hovering in air, unleashes an array of black energy beams and destroys a bunch of androids.

ISIS  
(Finishing chant)  
Show them your might.

3 - The others stare at Isis's handiwork with shock. Only Ajax looks concerned and is pointing behind Isis.

DISC  
Sweet Mary!

FIREBALL  
I hope I never get on her bad side.

AJAX  
(Pointing)  
Isis, look out!

4 - An android shocks Isis with an energy blast.

ISIS  
Ahhh!

5 - Ajax rushes to a falling Isis...

6 - And he catches her.

AJAX  
I've got you.

**PAGE FOUR (5 PANELS):**

1 - Star, increasingly frustrated, continues shouting orders at her team.

STAR  
We need to form a defensive  
perimeter! Now!

2 - Disc is throwing some of her energy discs at the androids while Override stands beside her.

DISC  
Feel free to join the fight, Adam.

OVERRIDE  
You idiot! I control minds. These  
robots don't have any.

DISC  
Well, no need to be daft about it.

3 - Suddenly, an android pushes Override aside and shocks Disc unconscious.

FIREBALL (O.P.)  
Angie!

4 - Fireball, angry, starts generating more fire.

FIREBALL  
 (To the Robot)  
 Hey, slot machine. Didn't your mama  
 robot ever tell you that's no way  
 to treat a lady?

5 - Fireball blasts a stream of fire at the android, melting it.

FIREBALL  
 Especially the cute, red-headed  
 ones.

**PAGE FIVE (5 PANELS):**

1 - Star is furious now, and still no one will listen to her.

STAR  
 Regroup on my location. Now! Why is  
 no one listening?

2 - Aqua reappears and attacks some of the androids.

AQUA  
 Our bad, leader lady, but you know  
 how stubborn we Latino boys can be.

FIREBALL  
 Welcome back from the dead, bro.

3 - Star is blasted by an android mid-sentence.

STAR  
 Listen to me! All of you! This is  
 unacc--

OVERRIDE (O.P.)  
 Star!

4 - Star is falling toward the ground, and Override is racing to catch her.

OVERRIDE  
 I've got her! I've got her!

5 - SPLAT! Unlike Ajax's graceful catch, Star lands hard on Override and they both collapse to the floor.

**PAGE SIX (6 PANELS):**

1 - The androids suddenly shut down, though the heroes are mostly beat up or unconscious. An announcement comes out over the intercom.

INTERCOM  
Training session terminated.

AQUA  
Thank god.

FIREBALL  
Did we win?

2 - The general appears, clapping and genuinely impressed.

GENERAL  
Bravo! Bravo! Excellent work!

AJAX  
Really? Cause I could've sworn we  
got our butts kicked.

3 - The general uses some smelling salts to wake up Star. Disc and Isis are also conscious.

GENERAL  
Oh, you did. Make no mistake. If  
this had been a real combat  
situation, you would've no doubt  
been slaughtered. But teams aren't  
built in a day.

4 - A flashback image appears next to the General of the original Gladiators team: JUPITER, a hero with the power of the Greek god Jupiter, ARCHRESS, mistress of the bow and arrow, RAVEN, a dark bird-themed vigilante, and AMERICAN WARRIOR, patriotic Captain America-like hero. The team is surrounded by monsters.

GENERAL  
Even the original Gladiators  
struggled through their first few  
adventures, but over time...

5 - The flashback image next to the general changes to the Gladiators now, with over ten heroes in their ranks. The team is confidently fighting off a horde of zombies.

GENERAL  
They became the greatest superhero  
team on the planet. You too will be

GENERAL  
 molded into an effective fighting  
 force, and with time, your enemies  
 will learn to fear the might of...

6 - The general addresses the entire team, most of them with massive headaches.

GENERAL  
 The Young Gladiators!

AQUA  
 Seriously? That's our name?

FIREBALL  
 Beats being called the Junior  
 Gladiators, I guess.

**PAGE SEVEN (5 PANELS):**

1 - The general puts his hand on Star's shoulder. She has her hand lowered humbly.

GENERAL  
 I was impressed by your leadership  
 skills most of all, Star. You're  
 everything we hoped to achieve with  
 the program that created you.

STAR  
 Thank you, sir. I'm honored.

2 - The general is on his way out.

AQUA  
 Does this mean we get the rest of  
 the day off?

GENERAL  
 Why not? You've earned it. Just  
 make sure to have lights out at 9.

3 - With the general gone, Star now turns her angry gaze at the team.

STAR  
 What the hell is wrong with you  
 people?

4 - The group is taken aback by Star's scolding.



AQUA  
Ex-squeeze me?

STAR  
None of you followed a single one  
of my commands.

FIREBALL  
Maybe you shoulda given us an order  
we could understand.

5 - Override addresses Fireball.

OVERRIDE  
Watch your tone, white boy.

**PAGE EIGHT (4 PANELS):**

1 - Aqua and the others are surprised by the white boy  
comment.

AQUA  
Whoa there! Racist much?

OVERRIDE  
It's not racist if it's true.

AJAX  
Seriously? People still talk like  
this nowadays.

2 - Fireball gets face-to-face with Override.

FIREBALL  
You got a problem with white  
people, Adam?

OVERRIDE  
It's white people that have  
oppressed minorities for centuries.

DISC  
Come on. You're acting like bloody  
fools.

FIREBALL  
He started it!

3 - Star orders the pair to stand down.

STAR

That's it. I'm the leader here and  
I order you both to cool it.

AQUA

Cool it? What a great idea!

4 - Aqua sprays Override with water, launching him across  
the room.

AQUA

And for your information, we're not  
white, we're Latino!

**PAGE NINE (5 PANELS):**

1 - Override, on the ground, looks back at Aqua with rage.

OVERRIDE

You're gonna pay for that.

2 - A light blue aura appears over Fireball's head as  
Override assumes control.

FIREBALL

What the hell--?

3 - Fireball, under Override's control, shoots Aqua with  
fire.

AQUA

Yo, bro. Quit it! I'm evaporating!

FIREBALL

I can't control myself.

DISC

Stop this. This is crazy!

4 - Disc pleads with Ajax and Isis for help, but they just  
walk away.

DISC

Ajax, Isis, help me! We have to do  
something.

AJAX

Does leaving count as "something?"

ISIS

I can think of at least 20 better  
things to do with my time.

5 - Star slaps Override across the face.

STAR  
That's enough. This ends now!

SFX  
Slap!

**PAGE TEN (5 PANELS):**

1 - Override, even angrier, massages his face while still managing to yell at Star.

OVERRIDE  
What was that for? I was defending you!

STAR  
They are your teammates, not your enemies. I don't care what your beliefs are.

AQUA  
You tell him, leader lady.

2 - Now Star yells at the brothers.

STAR  
You two aren't any better. Start acting like a team right now or I'll kick you both out.

AQUA  
(A little afraid of Star)  
Um, yes, sir... ma'am... sir ma'am?

3 - Fireball, the constant flirt, puts his arm around Star.

FIREBALL  
So hot. You know I've always had a thing for *chicas* in command.

4 - Star flies away from the group.

STAR  
Grow up, Fireball.

5 - With Star gone, only Aqua, Fireball, Disc and Override are left, and Fireball and Override don't look too happy.

AQUA  
So... this is awkward.

**PAGE ELEVEN (6 PANELS):**

1 - Disc tries to get him to talk. Override scowls.

DISC  
Star's right, ye know. We have to  
get along if we're going to work as  
a team. Adam, why don't you tell us  
something about you?

OVERRIDE  
No.

2 - Fireball's fiery temper comes out again.

FIREBALL  
I don't get it. Why would you even  
join this team if you hate  
everybody?

OVERRIDE  
Because I...I don't know.

3 - The others are surprised by Override's response.

AQUA  
Well, I didn't expect that one.

OVERRIDE  
I don't remember joining the team.  
Or coming here. I don't even know  
where here is!

4 - The others realize the same thing.

AQUA  
Hmm. I guess I don't really  
remember, either.

FIREBALL  
Me too!

DISC  
Too strange.

5 - Override storms off.

OVERRIDE

There's something fishy going on here, and I'm going to find out what, with or without you idiots.

6 - The others watch him leave.

AQUA

Sooo charming.

**PAGE TWELVE (6 PANELS):**

1 - Ajax is about to enter his room when Isis calls out to him.

ISIS

Ajax, wait!

2 - Isis approaches Ajax.

ISIS

What you did for me, catching me.  
It's not easy for me to say thank you...

AJAX

Don't mention it.

3 - Isis's eyes light up with energy as she falls into a trance.

ISIS

I sense so much... pain... in you,  
so much suffering... all centered  
around....

4 - Ajax's face floods with shock.

ISIS (O.P.)

Your mother.

5 - Ajax grabs Isis by the neck and pushes her hard against the wall.

AJAX

I don't know who you are or what you know, but mention my mother one more time, and there won't be one more time.

6 - Ajax slams the door as he enters his room. Isis is massaging her neck.

**PAGE THIRTEEN (5 PANELS):**

1 - In the Recreation Room, Aqua and Fireball are playing video games on the couch. Disc is sitting between them.

FIREBALL  
So, where are you from, red?

DISC  
Ireland. Belfast to be exact.

AQUA  
(Mocking her)  
Are ye now?

2 - Fireball puts on his best flirty face.

FIREBALL  
And are all the girls in Ireland as cute as you?

DISC  
(Smiling)  
Flatterer.

3 - Aqua and Fireball turn their attention to the video game.

AQUA  
So how'd you get your powers? Freak frisbee accident?

DISC  
I inherited them from my father.

FIREBALL  
Oh yeah, who's he?

DISC  
Jupiter.

4 - Aqua and Fireball suddenly stop playing, and look over at Disc in shock.

AQUA  
Say what now?

FIREBALL  
The Jupiter? Leader of Gladiators, Jupiter?

DISC

It's true. He met my ma while on a mission to Ireland...

5 - Flashback. Jupiter is flying above an angry mob lead by his archnemesis MIRAGE, master of illusion.

CAPTION (DISC)

His rival, Mirage, had used his powers to trick everyone into thinking it was the 1800s...

**PAGE FOURTEEN (6 PANELS):**

1 - Thanks to Mirage's illusion-casting powers, the crowd sees Jupiter dressed in a British Army uniform.

CAPTION (DISC)

...And that Jupiter was with the invading British army.

2 - Jupiter grabs Mirage and flies him away from the crowd.

CAPTION (DISC)

But my pa was too noble to attack the innocents. He went straight for Mirage.

3 - Moments later, Mirage is tied up and unconscious in the bended metal of a fire escape. The mob below is starting to wake up.

CAPTION (DISC)

And forced him to end the illusion.

4 - Jupiter is walking among the crowd of people.

CAPTION (DISC)

Afterwards, Jupiter stayed to help the people in my city.

5 - Jupiter sees Disc's mother, Rachel, and is taken aback by her beauty. She smiles at Jupiter.

CAPTION (DISC)

And that's when he saw her. My ma said it was love at first sight.

6 - Jupiter smiles back.

CAPTION (DISC)  
 Sadly, it couldn't last.

**PAGE FIFTEEN (5 PANELS):**

1 - Back to present day, with Disc sitting between Aqua and Fireball, who are laughing at Disc's story.

DISC  
 Jupiter was married then. He still is. It's quite tragic really.

AQUA  
 Yeah, tragic, and completely made up.

FIREBALL  
 No way that happened.

3 - Disc yells at them.

DISC  
 It happened exactly like that, you... you thickos! And one day I'm going to find my pa and we're all going to be one big happy family!

4 - Disc storms out of the room.

DISC  
 Goodness, you're both so annoying!

5 - Aqua and Fireball go back to their video game.

AQUA  
 You know, bro. I'm starting to think nobody here likes us.

FIREBALL  
 Nah. They like me just fine. It's you they hate.

**PAGE SIXTEEN (5 PANELS):**

1 - Star is knocking on Ajax's door.

SFX  
 Knock, knock, knock.

2 - Ajax opens the door, just enough to see Star through the crack.



AJAX  
What do you want?

STAR  
Ajax, I wanted to commend you on your fighting skills today, and offer you the honor as acting as my second-in-command in all future--

3 - Ajax interrupts her. Star is surprised by his response.

AJAX  
No thanks.

STAR  
But it's a great honor. And I believe you are more than qualified for the position.

4 - Ajax slams the door shut on Star's face.

AJAX  
(Through the door)  
I said no! Leave me alone!

5 - Star is upset.

STAR  
What is the matter with everyone?

**PAGE SEVENTEEN (5 PANELS):**

1 - The door to the general's office is ajar.

2 - In the office, Override is looking inside a folder, which is empty. All around him are other empty folders.

OVERRIDE  
Empty. Just like all the other ones. There's nothing here.

GENERAL (O.P.)  
And what exactly were you hoping to find?

3 - The general is standing near Override.

OVERRIDE  
Answers. Why can't I remember joining this team? What have you done to us?

GENERAL

Now, now, Adam. I know how  
difficult it can be to adjust to a  
new environment.

4 - Override storms out of the office.

OVERRIDE

Save it. Something's not right  
here, and I'm gonna find out the  
truth.

5 - The general watches Override as he leaves.

GENERAL

(To himself)

You're a stubborn one, Override.  
Such a shame.

**PAGE EIGHTEEN (5 PANELS):**

1 - Star is standing next to Isis, who is levitating off the  
ground in a pose of meditation.

STAR

And that is why I think you would  
make an acceptable second-in-  
command. It will, of course,  
require a great deal of  
responsibility on your part.

ISIS

Not interested.

2 - Star can't take it anymore. The frustration rushes out.

STAR

What do you mean, "not interested?"  
It's for the good of the team to  
have a second-in-command. Don't you  
care about that?

3 - Isis stands.

ISIS

That's just it. I don't care. And I  
don't know why or when I joined  
this ridiculous team. Do you  
remember?

4 - Star is confused.

STAR  
Of course, I... well, not exactly,  
I just...

5 - The girls are interrupted by a building-wide alarm.

INTERCOM  
Red Alert! Red Alert! Room 31B!

STAR  
That's the general's office!

**PAGE NINETEEN (4 PANELS):**

1 - Star and Isis appear outside the office just as Aqua, Fireball, and Ajax arrive. The alarm is still blaring.

INTERCOM  
Red Alert! Red Alert!

FIREBALL  
Could this Red Alert be any more  
annoying?

STAR  
Computer, abort alarm.  
Authorization 68-Tango.

2 - The red alert stops.

AQUA  
*Muchos gracias*, leader lady.

DISC  
Where's Override?

STAR  
Doesn't matter. We're not waiting.

3 - The group enters the office, which has been torn apart. The heroes are shocked.

DISC  
Sweet Mary!

FIREBALL  
The general needs a maid. Big time.

AJAX  
Not a time for jokes, matchstick.

GENERAL (O.P.)  
 (Weakly)  
 Star...

4 - Star rushes over to an injured general on the floor.

STAR  
 Hold on, sir. We're going to help  
 you.

GENERAL  
 No... No time... It was Adam... He  
 did this...

**PAGE TWENTY (4 PANELS):**

1 - Star is holding the general in her arms as his life is slipping away.

STAR  
 General, I...

GENERAL  
 He's too dangerous... Find him...  
 and kill him... that's an...

2 - The general dies in her arms. Star is devastated, but tries to stay strong.

GENERAL  
 (His last words)  
 ...that's an order.

3 - The team stares at Star and the dead general in shock.

FIREBALL  
 That racist bastard!

DISC  
 I'm so sorry, Star.

AJAX  
 This is messed up.

AQUA  
 What are we gonna do now?

STAR (O.P.)  
 You heard the general. We have our  
 orders.

4 - Star looks back at the group, her eyes and fist crackling with energy and rage.

STAR

We're going to find Override. And  
we're going to kill him.

TO BE CONTINUED...