

INTRODUCTION

Past, Present and Future

The seeds for Warriors of the Cosmos were planted in the far-away year of 1982, when I came across the most fantastic-looking collection of toys I'd ever witnessed while looking through my grandparents' Sears or Wards holiday catalogue. In those pre-internet days, such publications were collectively our gateway to all the new toy lines hitting the shelves. These particular figures were larger than the ones I had grown accustomed to and they had elements of both science fiction and fantasy, a combination that tickled my youthful fancy.

Needless to say, I spent much of my time acquiring these toys via begging my parents and picking and selling pecans. Once I obtained all the action figures, I set my sights on the biggest prize of the entire line: the massive skull-themed castle playset. It took a lot of pecan-picking, but my goal was reached within a few weeks. It was magnificent.

The associated cartoon hit the small screen a short while later and watching it became an after-school ritual for me, despite the fact that I was unhappy about the main hero having a secret identity. Still, between the toys, the mini-comics and the cartoon, this wondrous melding of two of my favorite genres made a lasting impression on me that resonates even to this day, several decades later.

All that has been documented in various places over the years, but something I don't believe I've ever mentioned was that Warriors of the Cosmos actually pre-dates the original version of Cartoon Action Hour by a couple of months. The setting and many of the now-familiar characters were the cornerstones of a disk-based game I designed that was played on a chess board.

When it came time to devise a fleshed out series for Cartoon Action Hour, Warriors of the Cosmos was a no-brainer. It had all the elements I was looking for in a series. Plus, it was born of the same inspirational source material that Cartoon Action Hour was. It was a natural fit, prompting us to introduce it as a 77-page book-within-a-book included with the core rulebook.

In 2008, Warriors of the Cosmos was one of the three featured series presented in the Cartoon Action Hour: Season 2 rulebook, where we unveiled many of the heroes and villains that debuted in the fictitious cartoon's second season.

Over the years, Warriors of the Cosmos has become what many fans consider the game's most iconic series. For that reason, when we made the controversial decision not to include it in the Cartoon Action Hour: Season 3 rulebook, we were bombarded with emails from longtime players and Game Masters who wondered why we were dropping the series.

The truth is, we never dropped it. We simply wanted to roll out the red carpet and give our most popular series the royal treatment rather than relegating it to being just another series lumped in with several others in the rulebook. The book that you're reading now *is* that royal treatment. It is, without a doubt, the most exhaustive source we've ever published about this exciting and quintessential series.

Series Summary

Iconia was once a utopia; a world full of prosperity and splendor... of unspoiled beauty and ever-present peace. But that was before the coming of Nekrottus, an evil sorcerer with a mind more evil and unfathomable than any before him. He founded the Blackskull Empire and brought with him a foul corruption that quickly began to spread like wildfire. With the empire at his command, he proceeded to methodically conquer most of the world. Now, the only major kingdom that remains free is Haven, the crown jewel of civilization. It has become the last bastion of freedom in Iconia, but Nekrottus will not rest until it, too, has fallen under his control.

The king of Haven, a just and noble man named Rastor, has seen the devastation caused by Nekrottus and has set about assembling Iconia's mightiest warriors into a group with the single goal of taking the realm back and restoring order to it.

They are the Guardians of Iconia!

The Origin

Everything has an origin, even a powerhouse franchise such as Warriors of the Cosmos.

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Was Warriors of the Cosmos a Real Cartoon?

This is a question some readers may ask themselves as they read this book. The answer is: no. The Warriors of the Cosmos was never an actual cartoon or toy line. It is presented as such in order to make it more immersive.

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Humble Beginnings

In 1978, following the fervor caused by Star Wars the year before, minor-league sci-fi novelist Gerald Peevey decided to cash in on the market. He devised a simple screenplay called "Warriors of the Galaxy." It was a straightforward movie idea that blended two distinct genres (fantasy and sci-fi) into a unique property. Peevey shopped the script around to various movie producers, who all deemed it too costly to make and therefore not a project they wanted to be a part of. Eventually, he stumbled across a struggling producer/director named Rommel Carver. Carver took an immediate liking to Warriors of the Galaxy. Forging an alliance, the two men set out to make it into a full-fledged motion picture.

The early part of this alliance went very well. They worked out all the details and dealt with many of the special effects that would be used. It would be a low-budget affair, but Peevey hadn't really expected to land a big budget blockbuster anyway. By the summer of 1979, however, Carver's gambling problem became apparent to Peevey and it was only getting worse. All the money they raised for the production costs was being siphoned into Carver's addiction. Seeing that his own money was being spent, Peevey took his ball and went home.

Carver wasn't pleased and threatened to sue him, claiming that the paperwork gave him full rights to the property. In response, Peevey hired a lawyer. The lawyer looked over the shoddy contract and determined that Carver owned the rights to the name "Warriors of the Galaxy," but none of the content itself.

Life After Death

Over the next year or so, Peevey worked hard, tightening the script, changing a few things around and reworking some of the characters. During this period, many of the concepts that would later appear in the cartoon began to take shape, such as the invention of King Crab (note the "C" rather than the "K" in the word "Crab"), the world being named Iconia, and even the fact that Nekrottus was a sorcerer.

In 1981, a man named Lewis Gretchman approached Peevey about basing a line of 5.5 inch action figures on the Warriors of the Galaxy property. Gretchman was one of the producers that Peevey pitched the script to back in '78, who since moved on to become a top executive for Grabbo Toys. He said that he always loved the concept behind Peevey's creation and never forgot it. He convinced the young man that Warriors of the Galaxy would make a fantastic toy line.

Contracts were signed, but there was one niggling problem: the name. Rommel Carver owned the name "Warriors of the Galaxy" (despite never doing anything with it), so another name would need to be selected. After some thought, Peevey proposed replacing "Galaxy" with "Cosmos." The idea was accepted, and the whole project began rolling forward.

On December 1st, 1982, the Warriors of the Cosmos action figures hit the stores with resounding success! The toys practically flew off the shelves. A few months later, Grabbo Toys was offered a lucrative deal to base a cartoon series on the Warriors of the Cosmos through Kilamir Studios. Despite some initial legal entanglements, the cartoon's pilot aired in September, 1983.

Adversity

The show immediately met with protests from two different parent groups: the Parental Care Committee (PCC) and Mothers Against the Corruption of Youth (MACY). The main bone of contention was with the principal villain, Nekrottus. They felt he was too horrifying for children and considered him to be a bad influence.

By February of the following year, the FCC was ready to cave in and force Warriors of the Cosmos into a premature retirement. Grabbo Toys and Kilamir Studios stood their ground, hiring a team of extremely talented lawyers to bring the matter into court. The court battle dragged on for months before the judge finally sided with Grabbo and Kilamir. The cartoon (and toy line) was given a new life and the controversy only served to increase the popularity of Warriors of the Cosmos.

Hitting it Big

In the matter of a few months, it went from being a popular kids' show to being nothing short of a sensation! This, of course, led to further licensing projects, and the market was quickly flooded with Warriors of the Cosmos merchandise: lunchboxes, Trapper Keepers, board games, toothbrushes, T-shirts, Underoos, and much more.

Warriors of the Cosmos was a pop culture juggernaut—its characters appeared on magazine covers, Friday Night Laugh Riot did a memorable skit involving the love life of Nekrottus, two different bands released songs that contained references to the cartoon and Gerald Peevey appeared on close to a dozen talk shows.

The show's popularity was such that the fourth season boasted a backdoor pilot for a spin-off cartoon that attempted to branch out into the "girl" market. It wasn't well-received and thus the proposed series went unproduced. Perhaps that was the first sign of things to come.

What Goes Up...

The show and toys continued to perform moderately well into 1987, but the market had become oversaturated with Warriors of the Cosmos merchandise. It was everywhere... and that's what led to a not-so-slow plunge in the property's popularity. The general public can only take so much before the balloon bursts and that's exactly what happened. Additionally, Gerald Peevey had stepped away from the show after Season 4, citing creative differences with the new management at Kilamir Studios.

By the time the 1988 fall line-up was announced, Warriors of the Cosmos was limping. To make matters worse, the creativity with both the show and the toy line was taking a huge dip. It seemed as if the writers and toymakers were grasping at straws, resulting in lame characters and implausible storylines. In the end, the ratings for the sixth season were so low that it was cancelled partway through; only the first seven episodes were shown.

The phenomenon was officially dead.

The Dawn of the Internet

Warriors of the Cosmos became an "80s thing" during the 1990s, right alongside the Rubik's Cube, Pac-Man and Night Court. It was largely forgotten, except by those who felt pangs of nostalgia when they thought about the cartoon or toys.

It was those people who used the internet to create fan pages, forums and email groups dedicated to the property. Soon, something of a cult following began to develop. It wasn't enough to create a resurgence, but it kept Warriors of the Cosmos from fading into complete obscurity.

Resurrection

The onset of the 2000s brought forth a wave of 1980s nostalgia. Everything that was cool in the '80s was getting a reboot in some way and Warriors of the Cosmos was certainly no exception!

Global Pictures secured the rights to produce a tent pole film based on the property, which took the world by storm when it was released in August 2007. While the film made some drastic changes to the established canon, most fans felt the changes were acceptable (though few were in favor of the addition of a romantic sub-plot between Noblara and Oshida). The film grossed \$703.5 million dollars, marking it as a massive box office blockbuster.

This success spawned a small line of highly articulated movie-related action figures and even led to more Warriors of the Cosmos goodness.

The cable network Animation Nation struck a deal to produce Warriors of the Cosmos Forever, an all-new cartoon series that launched in 2008. With a slightly older target audience in mind, this new series drew inspiration from anime for the animation style, featured more mature stories and ratcheted up the violence a bit. It garnered critical and commercial success, but was canceled after two seasons for reasons that remain ambiguous to this day.

The highly anticipated movie sequel, Warriors of the Cosmos 2: Nekrottus Rises, barreled into theaters in July 2010, reaching even higher levels of profitability than the first. Many critics have suggested that much of this surge is owed to the fact that the movie was the big screen debut of two fan-favorite characters, Combato and Bubblor.

When Warriors of the Cosmos 3: the Gem of the Ancients premiered in July 2013, it defied the odds by shattering numerous records despite four of the actors from the first two films departing. The replacement actors won over fans and film critics alike, a rare feat in Hollywood.

The fourth installment of the saga, Warriors of the Cosmos 4: Annihilation, is slated for release in August 2017 and is reportedly going to be an epic-length movie with multiple character deaths.

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A Note From Gerald Peevey

Has it really been more than thirty years? Man, time sure has a way of zipping right past you, doesn't it? The truth is that by the time the Warriors of the Cosmos toy line hit stores in 1982, this world and many of the characters had already been a part of my life

for about four years. That's pushing forty years, which I can't really wrap my head around.

Back in those days, I never dreamed that it would still be around decades later. Hell, it even came full circle. I proposed it as a feature film in the '70s and although I failed to land it in that medium back then, it has now been the subject of three successful summer blockbusters, with no end in sight. Call me a wimp if you will, but I broke down into tears after watching the original film for the first time. Some macho man *I* am, huh?

Seeing the film was an emotionally poignant moment for me, to be certain, but I have to say that I'll probably break down and cry all over again when I see the end result of this book. Never before has such a complete encyclopedia of Warriors of the Cosmos been published. There's a reason for that. You see, after having an online conference with the authors, I decided that it was time to divulge some secrets to them -- secrets that would change the very fabric of Iconia!

I've been sitting on a lot of additional, never-before-seen material for decades: concept art for characters I wanted to bring into the toy line and cartoon, background and setting information that was never used for one reason or another, story outlines for episodes that didn't materialize and something that no one thought existed... a map of Iconia! The map was badly outdated because it was drawn during the first season on the cartoon, but I worked diligently with the authors to bring it up to date.

Another crucial piece of the puzzle that I handed over to the authors is the full script for an animated Warriors of the Cosmos movie that was meant to end the series at the conclusion of the fourth season. It had been the plan all along to wrap the show up at that time, but the Powers That Be decided to milk the franchise for more money rather than offer a definitive and artistically satisfying finale. This was the reason I departed.

Before closing this off, I just wanted a chance to thank you, the fans, for keeping Warriors of the Cosmos so close to your hearts for all these decades and for helping me feed my family when this show and its merchandise was my sole means of support. I love you all.

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The Gateway to Excitement

Think of this book as your portal to a wondrous, faraway land that offers unlimited adventure for you and your group of friends. Let's take a look at what you can expect to see in the coming pages.

Introduction

This is what you're reading right now. As you most assuredly know by now, this section brings to light all the basics of the series, from its core premise to its meta-history.

The World of Iconia

Explore the exotic landscape of Iconia. You'll learn about the various kingdoms; their histories, details about who ruled them before the coming of Nekrottus, the current state they're in and more. You'll discover the strange (and sometimes illogical) geography of the land; interesting locales ripe for adventure, information about the different regions and so on. You'll meet the denizens; primitive tribes who haven't been brought under the rule of the Blackskull Empire, the escapees looking to mount a rebellion, the creatures that pose a threat to anyone who crosses their paths. You'll get an inside look at the two primary factions that drive the stories of the episodes—the heroic Guardians of Iconia and the villainous Blackskull Empire.

The Seasons

Each of these sections presents an extensive look at one of the six seasons of the cartoon series. From an overview of the season and data about key episodes to in-depth profiles of debuting characters, vehicles and playsets, no stone is left unturned.

The Animated Movie

Find out how the cartoon series was supposed to end! In this section, we disclose all the details for the very first time. Who lives? Who dies? How does it all end up? The movie-that-almost-was will answer all these questions.

Warriors of the Cosmos Forever

This section examines the 2008-2010 reboot of the cartoon that affected a more anime-inspired art style and more mature themes than the original series.

[Episode Title]

Jump into the world of Iconia with this full-length, ready-to-play episode. It comes complete with six pre-generated PCs, based on characters that Gerald Peevey wanted to include in the cartoon series and toy line.

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The Live-Action Movies

This book covers only what was presented in the Warriors of the Cosmos cartoons and the original toy line. The live-action films are beyond the scope of the Cartoon Action Hour: Season 3 game system due to their not-so-cartoony tone.

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