

Harold Smith

“To betray, you must first belong.”
-Harold Philby

This planet simply disgusts you. All of the squabbling between its peoples, the complete and utter backwardness of its sciences, its provincial attitudes towards racial superiority. You hate your job. Unfortunately, you really had no choice.

Six years ago you were a Consulate Director in the grand galactic Thwarkian empire. Your job was a simple one- either put enough pressure on a planet to force it to submit to Thwarkian wishes, or lull it into a sense of false security before a Thwarkian invasion. It was a simple enough job, for most planets were perfectly willing to join the Thwarkian empire rather than be exterminated outright, and the Commonwealth ambassadors were usually incompetent buffoons from inferior races picked solely out of nepotism.

Unfortunately, the Military Diplomatic Corps combines both diplomacy and espionage. You had no background in espionage, and in order to get any sort of promotion it was necessary to take an espionage mission. You fell to an unfortunate play of office politics. Your supervisor, Arthwat Bandrai, convinced you that the perfect assignment would be upon a small, dirty little planet called Earth. You would be there and back within two years; three at most, he said. You should have realized that he was smiling far too much. You have been here five years, now; and while you are close to completing your assignment, you are positive that Tomas Bandrai, Arthwat's slimy little nephew, has taken the promotion that you so rightly deserve.

Things went bad right from the beginning on this mission. In order to provide a cover, your family was assigned to accompany you, no ifs, ands or buts. Your wife, Bess, hero of the 32nd Lighting Strike Marine Corps, was less than thrilled with having to abandon combat and wanton destruction in order to play a docile wife. Your daughter, Margaret, was irritated at being removed from the prestigious Berkin Academy and enrolled in an Earth junior high school where they taught matters she had learned within the first grade. You convinced them both that it would only be a short trip. You were wrong.

Things only got worse from there. First, your daughter rebelled against learning subjects she already knew by proving to the teacher how her knowledge of science outweighed anything the teacher knew. You were almost sunk before you began; if anyone found out how much science she really knew, questions would be asked, and people would begin to investigate. Luckily, you managed to convince the teacher that Margaret had merely quoted some gibberish she learned from a science fiction story. You then had Bess explain to Margaret exactly how important your job was and to teach Margaret how to pretend to be as boring and docile as most Earth women.

Then the supply shipments stopped. You were supposed to receive regular drops of gold, which humans apparently value. This would allow you to have the funds you needed to spy on the humans full-time. Unfortunately, a Commonwealth fighter attacked the cargo ship on one of the drops, and Military Diplomatic Corps High Command deemed it “wasteful and dangerous” to send more cargo ships. So you spent the first year on this stupid planet looking desperately for a job. Eventually, you found a place in Phoenix that would hire you as an insurance salesman. The advantages were twofold: first, as a diplomat you are a natural salesman, so the job is relatively simple; secondly, the area you were to manage included San Inguon, home of Ft. Lucas Rita and its Research Labs.

Your job here on Earth was threefold. First, you were to determine whether or not Earth would be a viable ally to the Thwarkian Empire. Secondly, you were to determine if the other two powers had sent emissaries to Earth. Lastly, you were to determine the latest technology weapons that Earth has and decide how much force would be necessary to eradicate it, if necessary.

The first part was relatively simple. Every day the newspaper tell stories of fighting between the “Soviet Union” and “America.” No country seems able to agree with any other on any subject. The Thwarkian Empire has no interest in planets involved in such civil strife. In addition, the technologies being worked upon are fifty to sixty years behind that of the Empire. There is no point to an alliance with Earth; therefore, it must be destroyed.

The second part was tougher. You spent three full years tracking down rumors of a “Roswell Project” and “Area 51” and other such things to see if they led to anything. “Area 51” led to what you needed to know: the American military had found a spaceship, and it belonged to the Commonwealth. From what you were able to gather, the Commonwealth does have an agent or agents here on Earth, but they have not approached the government. This means that it is highly unlikely that the Commonwealth will spare ships from the defense of its own planets in order to defend an unallied planet.

The third part took you a year. And you may have made a gross error. You focused upon making yourself known in San Inguon. Helping the mayor run for re-election, meeting your neighbors, becoming a community activist, and other boring, pointless activities that reinforced the idea that you were a regular guy who posed no danger to Earth. After a while, it was neither tough nor deemed unusual for you to buy a few drinks for some of the scientists. Of course, once they were safely sedated by the alcohol, you pried them for whatever information you could. From what they told you, the main projects the Labs were working on were analyzing chemicals from the ship in Area 51 and working upon new missile propulsion technologies. The chemicals might eventually take the Earthlings to space flight, but that will be years from now. Should they live that long.

Unfortunately secure in the knowledge that the Earthlings could pose no threat to the Empire, you radioed High Command three days ago to tell them to destroy this planet. They told you that they could only spare a single cruiser, and asked if that would be enough. You replied that it would be no problem; it would take longer to decimate the population, but the Earthlings had shown no possibility of being able to damage a Thwarkian cruiser. The cruiser was dispatched immediately and at top speed to avoid possible Commonwealth interference. It should arrive above San Inguon to pick you and your family up at 6:00 p.m. tonight. After that, it will begin to destroy Earth.

You and your wife celebrated that night. Bess was ecstatic at the thought of being able to go back into battle again, and began practicing with her sondran (a tri-bladed dagger that is the favorite of Thwarkian Marines) right away. You have not told Margaret yet. You worry about how she would react. She has anthropomorphized these vile humans, treating them with the kind of decency and respect that one should only show to another of the true Thwarkian race. You thought at first that she was merely acting civil so as not to cause you any problems; you now worry that she might have feelings for this insipid little race. Why, only two months ago you found a record filled with the disgusting music she calls “rock and roll!” She is assimilating into this miserable culture, and you worry that she may do something rash when she finds out that this planet is to be destroyed.

Assuming that it is. For you ran into one of your scientist “friends” this morning, and he gave you an early copy of the “Technology Report” to be given tonight at five. You glanced over it while chit-chatting with him, only to see to your horror that the third item to be shown was the “Titanium Alloy Tipped Nuclear Warhead (TATNW).” You asked him about it and your worst nightmares were confirmed. Apparently, the humans had come up with this idea many years ago, but not until Dr. Bates made a stunning breakthrough a week ago was any project made. This type of warhead is about to go into production, and has the power to blow through twenty-three feet of steel.

Unfortunately, Thwarkian battle cruiser armor is only eighteen feet of steel.

Now you are upon the horns of a dilemma. You have two options. First, you could call High Command and have them recall the cruiser. But this means waiting until a large force can be assembled to assault the planet, risking Commonwealth interference as well as your wife’s wrath for delaying her trip home. In addition, making such a mistake will not look good upon your record, and you may end up as a Consul at a Betazoid colony, which will assure that you are never taken seriously again.

Your other option is to let the cruiser come and hope that you can find a way to neutralize this technology. You’d have to find a way to break into the Research Labs, and from there either break the prototype so that it fails miserably, modify the plans so that new ones manufactured are defective, or something of that ilk. Otherwise, in the forty-eight hours it will take to destroy all life on this planet, it is possible that someone will be

able to manufacture some and use them to destroy the cruiser. With you and your family on board.

And even if you survive that, it'll be a Betazoid assignment for you.

Stock Quote: "Hey, how ya doing?"

Mannerisms: Harold comes across as the standard '50's guy- always dressed in a suit, smoking a pipe, and talking business with a smile. A salesman from the get-go. In fact, he is a Thwarkian spy who despises everything he sees around him.

People You Know:

Margaret Smith: Your daughter. You worry that she is too involved with these humans.

General Hiram Cork: Commander of Ft. Lucas Rita. Wouldn't last five minutes in the Thwarkian Army; he's soft, fat, and old.

Colonel Fred Daniels: Commander of the troops stationed at Ft. Rita. Might last five minutes, but certainly not fifteen.

Dr. Marshall Fields: Eccentric head of the Chemistry Department at the Research Labs. He's been researching the rocket fuel found at Area 51. You'd better check to see how far he's gotten with it; if he's learned to attach it to the rocket carrying the TATNW, Earth might be able to become a player in the Galactic War.

Dr. Lawrence Bates: Head of the Physics Department at the Research Labs. He's responsible for the breakthrough on the TATNW. You'll need to find out how far he's actually gotten; if it's still mostly theory, you might be safe. You better also see what other projects he's working upon; you don't need any other nasty surprises.

Mayor Cunningham: The greasy, slimy politician who tries to run this town. People like him are the main reason the Thwarkian Republic was so pathetic. You pretend to be a good friend of his so that he won't trouble you.

Dr. Gerald Forbes: Head of the Biology Department at the Research Labs. You doubt that he is doing anything of interest to you. But you'd better check, just in case.

Dr. Sarah Carroll: Head of the Astronomy Department at the Research Labs. You'll need to keep an especially close eye upon her; if her department notices the cruiser flying towards Earth, they might have a chance to prepare the TATNW.

Bess Smith: Your loving, devoted wife who would rip your head off if she found out exactly how you had bungled this chance to get off this stupid planet. You can't let her know that anything's wrong.

Goals:

1. Stop the TATNW from being producable. Destroy the prototype. Modify the plans. Convince Dr. Bates that it's unworkable. Do something so that Earth has no defenses when the cruiser shows up tonight.

2. Remind your daughter what she really is. Make sure she understands exactly how pathetic, backwards, and anarchistic these humans are. Make sure she understands the destiny of the Thwarkian race. Get her to agree that these people have no purpose

other than to be ground underfoot as a warning to all that would oppose your race. Then try to break the news to her that this planet will soon be destroyed. It's so hard raising teenagers.

3. Keep your problems a secret from Bess as long as possible. If she finds out that there are problems, she'll be furious. And nothing is worse than a furious Space Marine Commander. And after she gets over the anger, she won't speak to you for a week. You'll just get that glare. That look that says, I know I should have married that fighter pilot, but no, I had to be swept off my feet by a smooth-talking diplomat and look where it's gotten me, stuck here on this backwards planet with nothing to do but pretend to be docile. That sort of look. And don't even think about sleeping anywhere but the couch for the next two months. Definitely keep Bess thinking that everything is going just grand.