

Broken Planet

A Short Story

Written By

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The world thought it was prepared; it wasn't. Smoke filled the room and heat was felt all around. The concrete walls almost seemed to encapsulate the flames. Sergeant Jackson Sawyer lay on the ground, knocked from his bunk, his head filled with pain and his ears ringing. "It was a blast, someone attacked us." He thought to himself. Jackson rose from the ground frantically looking for his fellow soldiers, anyone from his squad, but all he could see was smoke. Flames came in from the main door catching on some of the bunks and lighting them on fire. Jackson knew he had to get up and out of there and find his squad, then they could figure out what just happened and who attacked them. Getting to his feet he was careful to crouch as low as he could as not to breathe in the smoke, his head still pounded but the ringing was going away. He could hear from the hallway pulse rifle shots, the energy bolts shooting from the little nuclear reactors that were the pulse rounds. Answering back was a sound Jackson didn't recognize, a hum that seemed to flow in the direction of the rifle blasts, then a scream, and a fading sound like white noise from a radio. He tried to look through the smoke to make out the commotion, but it was no use, the smoke was too thick. Still in his BDU bottoms and just a t-shirt he ran toward what he thought was the direction of the equipment locker, it was a success, he reached the locker and confirmed to himself what he already thought, he was in the barracks of the base. Jackson opened the locker and grabbed his gear, a BDU top, a tactical vest with extra magazines for his rifle and sidearm, a belt with his pistol armed with old-fashioned gunpowder bullets, his combat knife, and his pulse rifle. The rifle was a marvel of modern engineering, while it looked like the archaic machine guns of the past it was equipped with pulse technology. Each pulse round created a small nuclear reaction and fired that bolt of energy burning its target, and if it hit a person it would for sure stop them dead in their tracks. The nuclear bolts were not as radioactive as one might think and were far less lethal than guns of the distant past. Gunpowder bullets were

ancient but still had some use, as they were effective against force fields being able to penetrate them at close range. Jackson strapped his gear on as quickly as he could, taking a brief moment to admire the patch on the right breast of his vest, UEMC (United Earth Marine Corps) Jackson was proud to serve in Earth's last remaining defense force. Once he had his moment, Jackson crouched low and headed for the main entrance.

Jackson peaked around the corner and saw a figure in the distance, he could not identify it through the smoke but made his way carefully toward it. Creeping near the figure hoping against all hope that it was a fellow marine he readied his rifle just in case. The figure was just a short distance down the hall, but it seemed it was miles, likely due to the lack of fresh air. Jackson was feeling it now, even though he was below the smoke he couldn't help but breathe some of it in and it was making him sick. He needed to find an oxygen mask quickly. He came upon the figure and to his horror it wasn't a marine, it was a creature he had never seen before, tall bipedal, and scaly, its head had long appendages that resembled hair dangling, and its mouth was wide, covering its entire face and filled with long sharp teeth. It resembled a smile, but the most terrifying smile Jackson had ever seen. The creature held in its hands a marine; it turned to notice Jackson and dropped the marine and screeched the most blood-curdling scream Jackson had ever heard. The creature went to all fours and began running toward Jackson, the claws on its hands were as massive and as sharp looking as its teeth. He raised his pulse rifle and fired a blast at the creature, the blue bolt shot from the rifle pulsating rapidly as it connected with the creature. Nothing happened, the creature wasn't phased and kept running. Jackson was tackled by the creature, and it pinned him down staring directly into his eyes and screeching. Jackson as scared as he was put that fear behind him and reached with his free hand to his sidearm, the old-fashioned pistol that all marines carried. The creature opened its massive mouth and attempted to

bite down on Jackson but he was able to force his knee into the body of the creature disorienting it for a brief second. Stumbling off of him the creature didn't notice Jackson aim the pistol at its head and fired one round in-between its oval-shaped eyes. The bullet exited the back of the creature's head and left a gray liquid splattered on the wall; the creature fell to the ground dead. Jackson relieved, holstered his pistol, and made his way to the marine that was lying on the ground.

Jackson checked on the marine and recognized him, he was a member of his squad, Corporal Owen Hawkins. He could feel Owen's heartbeat, that was great, he was alive. Jackson picked up the unconscious Owen and made his way to the end of the hall where the smoke was the thinnest. Another T-intersection was at the end of the hall, Jackson knew to the left was a sick bay, but his attention was brought to the right as he heard a fight raging. The smoke had dissipated enough he could see four people, two closest to him were humanoid but wore strange clothes with helmets covering their heads and a black visor concealing their faces. The clothes looked like old chainmail that you would see at Renaissance fairs on actors playing knights of the ancient past, but they had a uniformity to them, they were militaristic but nothing he had seen before. Earth had been united as one world two centuries ago when after World War Three the remaining government leaders decided to unite and better mankind and focus on exploring the stars. There was only the UEMC left to be the defense of Earth should there be any threats from rebels or the stars. In two hundred years no rebellion ever rose, there was so much peace on Earth that there were talks of eliminating the UEMC. Whatever these people were they were attacking two marines in front of them. They held what looked to be pistols but they fired red laser beams that hummed, it was the sound from earlier. The targeted marine dodged the beam and fired back with a pulse blast; it connected but had no effect. Jackson screamed out to the Marines "Use your

pistols! Old bullets are effective!" The two marines fired their pistols, and the two intruders were hit and fell back. One of the intruders threw a ball at the Marines as they kept firing, and the two intruders fell to their deaths. Just as they died the ball exploded in a flash of bright white light and disintegrated the two marines into nothingness. "No time to mourn." Jackson thought to himself as he headed left toward the sick bay.

Jackson placed Owen on an exam table, he looked around, and swiftly reached for two oxygen masks. He put one on Owen and one on himself then pressed the ON button that was on the cylindrical oxygen machine connected to the masks. Within a minute Jackson was feeling much better and Owen began to awaken. Once his eyes adjusted Owen said, "Sergeant Sawyer, am I glad to see you, sir." Jackson relieved his Corporal was going to be alright asked, "Hawkins, what is going on here?" Owen reached out and grabbed Jackson's arm, "Something attacked us from the sky sir. I was in the control room when it was spotted, a fleet of ships from space, they all started firing all over the world at UEMC bases, and that's when we were hit. Smaller ships landed, then their forces started attacking, it was people, and those damned creatures." Jackson wiped the sweat from his brow, "Are these things aliens?" Owen coughed, "They have to be, nothing matches anything we know on Earth. The ships are a foreign design, sir, I think we've made first contact." Jackson lowered his head, "What the hell do we do now?" Owen took his oxygen mask off and sat up, "We get up to the control tower, General Chang should be there, it's the most fortified spot on the base. Coordinate with her and we fight these bastards." Jackson raised his eyebrows, "If we're going to the surface we're going to need some older guns, bullets are effective against not only the creatures but the soldiers as well." Owen nodded, "We got a plan, let's do this. There should be a few pistols in the back behind the doctor's desk in a lockbox." Jackson nodded, "Let's make these fuckers pay." Jackson found the

lockbox and it contained four pistols each with a full eighteen-round magazine, along with his and Owen's that made six pistols. As long as they aimed for the head that should be plenty to make it to the control tower on the surface. The men were fully prepared and headed out.

Both men still a little weak from the smoke inhalation made their way out of the sick bay and into the hallway leading to the main elevator. They turn a corner and spot two more of those creatures chewing on the corpses of fallen marines. Jackson bit down on his lip, gripped his pistol tight raised it, and fired off two shots hitting each creature in the head. Both creatures fell to their deaths as the previous two had done, Jackson's theory was correct, these things were not invulnerable to archaic weapons. Owen glanced at Jackson; he was in awe that his Sergeant had fired off two rounds before he could aim his weapon. The two men walked up to the dead marines, Jackson knelt and closed their eyes, then took their dog tags. Jackson looked to Owen and said with a crack in his voice, "They will not be forgotten." Owen put his hand on Jackson's shoulder and nodded, "That was Evans and Sanderson." Jackson grasped his forehead and hung his head, "This isn't fair, they were recruits. C'mon, I'm done with these fucking things, they're gonna pay" Jackson stood up and they headed for the elevator.

Jackson and Owen ran as fast as they could to reach the elevator, not once running into any more creatures or people, not even their marines. Smoke and flames still were in the air of the underground base but nowhere near as thick as it was near the barracks. The elevator was still in serviceable condition, Jackson pressed the up button and it just so happened to be on this lower level. The men entered the elevator, a loud boom was heard, and the elevator shook violently. Jackson stabled himself and pressed the button for the surface of the base. The elevator was slow to start but began its ascent, gears could be heard grinding up as well as more explosions from the surface. The radio that was connected to the operating console began to send out static and a

faint voice could be heard. The higher the elevator got the clearer the signal was becoming until the voice was as clear as if she were in the room, it was General Chang. Jackson picked up the mic and radioed in, "General Chang this is Sergeant Sawyer, do you read me? Hawkins and I are in the elevator and on our way up to the control tower." A brief silence, then a response, "Sawyer, they have the elevator surrounded, they'll kill you the minute you exit. We're safe in the tower for now but weapons are ineffective, we can't provide cover fire, I'm sorry." Jackson paused for a second, "General, gunpowder ammunition is effective, Hawkins and I have killed a few of these intruders. Get whatever gunpowder weapons you can and stay safe, we'll be there shortly." General Chang responded, "Sawyer, don't do anything stupid we..." Jackson cut off the radio, unholstered a second pistol and looked at Owen, and nodded. Owen unholstered his second pistol as the elevator reached its destination, he looked at Jackson and then pressed the button to open the door to the surface.

The door opened and two of the humanoid people were facing away from the two men. The sky was an overcast gray, and several large circular motherships could be seen, they were massive, hard to tell from the ground but possibly as big as a city. Smaller ships likely carrying ground troops came and went from each mothership. Jackson and Owen fired one round each into the back of the helmeted heads of the people, blasting their insides through the fronts of their heads. Gray liquid hit the ground as Jackson and Owen ran out into the grounds of the base's surface, they took cover behind a large transport vehicle. The rest of the intruders surrounding the elevator caught sight of them and started firing their laser weapons. Each laser beam passing the marines and connecting with the administrative building behind them. Jackson and Owen raised over the vehicle and fired into each of the intruder's heads, killing them all. After a short firefight, the battle was over, and they came out of cover. Jackson saw the control tower just

ahead of their location near the elevator and motioned for Owen to follow him. The sound of more intruders could be heard coming toward them as they ran and made their way to the fortified tower. The tower was built to withstand just about any kind of attack, and it still stood tall with the base commander inside. Jackson waved frantically as they both ran, seeing several marines including the General through the window of the tower. It worked because the force field dropped and the giant metal door opened, Jackson and Owen made their way inside just as a laser beam went flying by Owen's head. The force field raised, and the door shut, the sounds of the intruders could be heard yelling a strange vocalization that neither man understood. The men were safe, for now.

Two guards met Owen and Jackson and brought them up to the control tower's main control room. Standing in the center of the room was General Chang with a worried but stern look on her face. Surrounding her were four other marines that Jackson or Owen did not recognize along with the two guards. Jackson and Owen saluted, and General Chang said, "At ease marines. So, this is what's left of our marine corps, a General and eight marines." Jackson's eyes widened as he sweats profusely, "This is all of us, the whole corps?" General Chang lowered her head, "It is. Word has come in from several cities around the world, the aliens have eliminated the marines in every base on this planet. We are the last holdout." Jackson felt his knees weaken and he fell to the ground, "What the hell is going on? How did we not see this coming?" General Chang put her hand on Jackson's shoulder, "Yesterday they started to appear, none of our radar or sensors picked up anything, whatever material the ships are made of blinded our sensors. UEMC Intelligence told everyone to stand by but not to worry, they didn't believe the aliens were hostile. The President activated First Contact Protocol and he prepared to receive the aliens at the

capitol. The small ship landed, and the troops and those creatures killed the president and started attacking. With the President gone, I am now the leader of United Earth, and to be honest I don't know what to do." Jackson's eyes began to water as he asked, "No one was able to fight them off?" General Chang helped Jackson up, "You are the first to report an effective way to combat the aliens, once you told us I radioed to every human listening to use gunpowder weapons. There is resistance but it is a hard fight." Jackson exhaled a bit of relief, "Good, as long as people know and are willing to fight, there is hope." General Chang glanced at Owen and then asked Jackson, "Sergeant, who is this marine? I know every marine stationed here and I don't recognize him." Jackson shook his head and said, "General, that is Corporal Owen Hawkins. He is one of my squad leaders." General Chang stared at Owen as she said to Jackson, "There is no Corporal Owen Hawkins, your squad leaders were both Privates. Guards take this man into custody." With her order, Owen frowned, raised his pistols, and attempted to fire at General Chang before the guards were able to subdue him. The once calm and frightened demeanor of Owen Hawkins was replaced by a sly grin. General Chang picked up one of his dropped pistols and placed the barrel to his head, "Talk, now. Who, or what are you?" Owen kept the grin and that seemed to irritate General Chang even more, but he responded this time his voice deeper than it had been before, "I underestimated you, General. Your Sergeant here was easy to manipulate, a simple device was placed on the back of his scalp and all the memories of Owen Hawkins were implanted. He fell for it and led me directly to you." Jackson ran toward Owen and punched him as hard as he could, General Chang lowered her pistol as Jackson asked, "You're one of them aren't you?" Owen just smiled as Jackson continued, "Why kill your people with me?" Owen looked into Jackson's eyes, "A necessity to convince you I was one of you. You lead me to your commander, and I eliminate her. Each commander we eliminate, the less threat you are, and we can take

complete control of your world." Jackson reached for his holstered pistol and fired a shot right into the head of Owen Hawkins the alien impersonating a human, Gray liquid leaked from the exit wound confirming Owen was indeed an alien. General Chang looked at Jackson, "Under normal circumstances, I'd place you under arrest, but I understand. However, that was our only connection to get information on these aliens." Everyone switched their attention to the window where a small ship could be seen landing in front of the tower.

After the ship landed a door opened and out walked what looked like an alien of some importance. He was dressed in a more regal-looking uniform and did not have the helmet covering his face as the troops did. He was humanoid and male, but his skin was silverish gray, the features were not quite human but close enough. He had human-shaped eyes, a nose, a mouth, and a bald head with no eyebrows either. The man held up a box of some sort and began to speak into it, a sound resembling a gargled screech rang out loud enough for the marines to hear it. He stopped and spoke to another alien that was a subordinate, he raised the box back and spoke, this time in English, "General Chang and crew, you are all that remains of your planet's defense force, and you are surrounded. Prepare to surrender your planet to the Kaznian Empire. You have five minutes to comply, or we will obliterate one city for every minute you do not surrender." Jackson looked to General Chang and asked, "What now?" General Chang thought for a minute, "We surrender. I will not see them kill innocent civilians." Jackson scoffed, "They're going to do that anyway whether we surrender or not. We have to try and fight, what about experimental weapons, explosives, anything?" General Chang shook her head, "I have to surrender Sergeant. I will keep this mind link on me, use this other piece to listen." General Chang handed Jackson the other half of the mind link. He removed the alien device that implanted the false memories and replaced it with the General's mind link. "Sergeant I am hereby

giving you a field promotion, by the powers vested in me by the United Earth Marine Corps I hereby promote you to the rank of General and acting president of United Earth." Jackson felt a sense of dread come over him as if this was the last time he would see his Commander, "General please, don't do this." General Chang smiled, "Listen in, I will get as much information as I can, take it, and rebuild the Corps. Fight these pieces of shit, take our world back." General Chang looked around at the remaining marines, "Sawyer is your General now, I have faith he will lead you all to victory, follow his orders." General Chang looked at Jackson, "General Sawyer, the Corps is yours." With that said General Chang walked to the elevator.

Jackson ordered the seven marines to stand down as they watched General Chang walk to the alien leader. He could feel the nervousness in his gut as he listened in to the conversation.

"Ah General Chang, you came around. Good, no one needs to die." The Alien said.

"What is going on here? Who are you?" General Chang asked,

"We are the Kaznian Empire, the ruling house of the galaxy, and I am Kestus, Prince of the empire sent to take control of this planet."

"Why Earth?"

"Why Earth?" Kestus laughed, "You basically invited us here to take over."

"We did nothing of the sort."

"Of course, you did. Your little golden disk don't you remember?" Another alien whispered to Kestus, "Oh, my apologies, that might have been a long time ago for you. It did take us quite a while to get here, you are pretty much in as you would say here, the backwoods of the galaxy."

“The only golden disk I know of was sent on a deep space probe way back in the twentieth century. It was meant to be a greeting of peace not a declaration of war.” Kestus laughed, “Oh but it was a greeting of peace. We extracted all the information from it and learned everything we could about your world. Our probes got here before we did and sent us back all kinds of data. We were elated to find that your planet is abundant with platinum, a metal that our bodies need to survive. Our home world has been depleted and we as a race are dying off, and no other world in our empire has platinum. So, knowing your planet is in the galaxy but not in the Empire, we decided to bring you into the Empire.”

“We would’ve helped you; you didn’t have to eliminate our defense forces.”

“See all the data we received tells us you would have never helped us without a trade. The only thing we have to trade is technology, and why would we give our slaves technology to rival us.”

“Slaves, is that how you see us?”

“Of course, you are inferior to us biologically. You will all be treated fairly so long as you get us what we need. Resist and we kill you.”

“Then where do you get the platinum if you kill off your slaves.”

Kestus frowned, “Enough General, take her on board, she will help, or she will die.”

“I will do no such thing.” General Chang said as she reached into her pants pocket and pulled out three old-fashioned ball-shaped grenades. General Chang pulled the pins as she ran to Kestus and wrapped her arms around him. Jackson watched in horror as the grenades exploded, the blast taking the ship and all the Kaznian Empire soldiers with it. One of the marines looked at Jackson and asked, “What are your orders, General?” Jackson swallowed hard as he heard the radio

started to broadcast chatter, several civilians all over the world were starting to fight back and were winning. They were looking for the UEMC General asking what their next move should be. Jackson knew this was the beginning of a resistance to the Kaznian Empire and this war had just begun. This was going to be a long and arduous fight, but he felt in his heart even against the odds that Earth could win. General Jackson Sawyer, the new leader of the entire world looked to his marines and said the only thing that mattered, two words, we fight.