

**Cimmerian Moon - Prequel**  
*Cheyenne Mountain*  
*March 22, 2012*

General of the Armies Moore strode into the Communication's Room exhibiting his authority, as he should. He held the highest military rank of the United States. It didn't matter if it was 0145 or 1345. He was on and ready twenty-four hours of the day. On paper there was only one man higher on the totem pole than him—the President of the United States. And contrary to what everyone believed, that was on paper only.

Everyone assumed the president was the one who had his finger on the little red button. No. If something like that was going to go down, Moore would call the president and tell him to push that little red button. There would be no asking for permission or wondering what to do while the president was deciding what the American people would think of him. This wasn't like the G-D movies.

“Talk to me Bradley,” he said, focusing on the junior officer fifteen feet in front of him.

As he walked through the room, his boots thumped against the linoleum that had been laid over the cement floor and echoed off the walls. No one turned to greet him as he strode past. Instead they focused all their attention on their workstation monitors.

He knew they were scared of him, so turning to greet him would have been out of character for anyone here. They kept their earpieces in, pretending they hadn't heard him. That was fine with him. He knew he didn't wield his power recklessly. They were scared of him because he was allergic to BS and didn't have time for formalities. There would never be, “How are the wife and kids?” or “Did little Johnny make it on the baseball team?” coming from him. No, he was all about business.

As Moore made it to Bradley, the junior officer turned to address him. “Sir, it's traveling at a high rate of speed. If it stays on its course we'll have an ETA in T-minus fifty minutes.”

“Where the hell did it come from? And while you're answering that, tell me what the hell *it* is.” Moore's voice thundered out.

Bradley swiveled in his chair to view his monitor. He tapped the screen with the eraser of his pencil. Moore, peering over Bradley's shoulder, viewed the mark where Bradley indicated. “Out of nowhere, it just showed up right here,” Bradley said. “Right before it appeared, there was a four-second anomaly. We didn't have enough time to blink before it appeared.”

Moore looked from the spot Bradley had pointed out to where the large dots were now on the screen. Shit. No wonder no one had time to react. The anomaly had appeared in the galactic barrier. Nothing ever happened in that sector of space. They hadn't even known there was a galactic highway drop-off point over there.

“But, I still don't know what it is.” Moore blinked a couple of times, just in case his eyes were deceiving him.

“Well, um...it appears to be a fleet, Sir.” Bradley paused for a few beats and, as he did, Moore let the words he had just spoken sink in. Then, using the same pencil, Bradley drew an imaginary outline around the cluster of unidentified objects. “They're arranged in an organized fashion, see?”

“How many ships are there?” Moore asked, trying to stay composed. He’d never stammered or stuttered in his life, and he’d never been left speechless, but he thought this was just about as close as he’d ever come to it.

“One hundred, Sir.”

Moore caught his breath.

*First time for everything.*

He gathered his composure and yelled, “Do we have a better visual?” He needed to see what they were dealing with. Bradley looked around the room. When no one instantly replied Moore yelled again. “I want visual on the big screen in T-minus three, two...” His words caught in his throat, as a picture of alien spaceships projected on the one hundred and fifty foot monitor at the front of the room.

“Good God almighty,” he whispered to himself.

Dead silence crept across the room like a fog. Everyone here had the highest clearance and had seen alien space ships before, so that wasn’t what held their attention. No one, including Moore, had ever seen anything like this. The monstrosities of the ships and their designs were... Well, it wasn’t anything he recognized.

He, like everyone in this top-secret room, was used to the Greys and a few other species that hung around Earth’s airspace and even one species that had set up residence at the bottom of three of the largest oceans. Treaties had been agreed upon and signed with the aliens who maintained open communication, Greys, Amikians, Qirtegs. But there were two alien species that deemed humans too insignificant to communicate with, the Mesertas who lived in the oceans and the Riquintergs who lived within the Earth’s core.

But even the aliens who had never signed the treaties didn’t pose a threat. When President Eisenhower tried, so many years ago, to get them to negotiate a treaty, the Mesertas had likened their relationship with humans as being the same relationship that humans had with insects. Moore thought it must have been degrading for Eisenhower to hear that putdown but, under Moore’s watch, things had been moving in a different direction. He was in the process of demanding that all of the aliens had to sign the treaty or leave Earth. Did he think any military on Earth had the capability of waging war with the aliens who hadn’t signed? No. But the message would still have gotten across.

“Have they made contact?” he asked Bradley.

“No, Sir.”

“Is there a possibility this fleet could be backup for a known species?”

Bradley shook his head. “No, Sir. We thought about that. We ran a scan of their radio frequency and compared it to the others. We don’t recognize it.”

What he didn’t need was for alien ships to pop up in outer space, easily visible to everyone. Good Lord, what a mess that would be. NASA would have a hell of a time trying to cover that up. “Open a communication channel. The message should be, ‘Stop movement immediately. Provide your intentions’,” he barked out. He didn’t worry that the aliens wouldn’t understand him. From dealings with them, he knew they all had some kind of communications chip planted within their brains, so understanding any new language was just a matter of downloading a program.

It was time to act. Moore strode over to the seat he usually occupied while in this room and snatched up his red phone.

The one he hardly used.

The one with a direct line to the President.

It rang twice before the President answered. Moore allowed for the second ring since it was 0150.

“Yes?” The President answered. His voice still had an edge of sleepiness in it.

“Bad news. We have our eyes on one hundred alien spaceships coming our way from the galactic barrier. We have an ETA of...” Moore looked at his watch. “T-minus forty minutes. They’re a new species. We opened up communication with a directive to halt and provide intentions.” He gave the President all the information he had without the fluff.

The President was quiet. Moore knew he was a thoughtful person. He was more than likely going over all the different scenarios in his head. The President also knew Moore had gone over all of them as well.

“Good job,” The President finally replied. “I’ll gather everyone in the ready room.”

“Yes, Sir,” Moore replied, and hung up the phone.

Once the President had all necessary parties assembled, they would link back to Moore. Moore expected the usual people who had clearance for this type of situation and he also expected the heads of the most powerful countries in the world. Dealing with alien species was the only time the countries came together. It was also the only time when countries weren’t treated as separate entities.

Moore switched on his monitor and watched the spaceships as they came closer and closer. He was used to the alien ships popping out of seemingly nowhere since, from what he had been told, there were three intergalactic highway system drop-off points in this galaxy. This was a system the human race was nowhere near being ready for. None of their ships had technology to survive or navigate a flight through a system where ships traveled faster than light speed.

Oh, scientists had asked for designs and knowledge regarding that matter, but none of the aliens had ever come through. Hell, nations have even offered to trade for the information. But the aliens didn’t think humans had anything worth trading for. So to broker a positive relationship with some of them, the governments, not just the US, had allowed the more humane aliens to take citizens off Earth, for experimental purposes only. Some test subjects had been returned, others had not. But as far as the higher-ups thought, it was a good deal. Moore hadn’t thought so, even though the brokerage began way before his time. While the Greys had provided some technology in exchange, it was nothing on the magnitude of space travel or even anything life-changing for that matter. Moore thought they gave information in dribs and drabs, and just enough to pacify the scientists.

Moore checked his watch. Two minutes had passed. Too much time.

“Bradley!”

Bradley peeked over his monitor. “No response yet, Sir.”

*What are they coming to Earth for?*

Whatever the case, negotiations were in order. A stunt such as this one couldn’t happen again. He had never negotiated with a new species. All of the aliens on Earth or around Earth had been present for hundreds—some for thousands—of years.

He watched his monitor and tried to guess the speed they were traveling at. He couldn't clock them, but knew it was something high-rate.

*What are you all in the rush to do?*

He caught his reflection in the glare of the monitor. He was up there in age now. All of his sixty-nine years showed on his face. He had wrinkles. His eyebrows were white and bushy. He didn't look nice. Stern would be a look that described his facial expression. His hat sat straight atop his head. If he were to take it off, he'd see short white hair and a receding hair line. He only took it off when he was in his quarters alone. There was no wife to worry about impressing and he was far too old for girlfriends. Besides, he didn't have time for anything recreational. He was married to the United States of America and she had been a good wife.

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By the time the President's call patched through, Moore found himself standing before the big screen again, with his hands clasped behind his back, staring at the fast-approaching fleet. The fleet appeared small and insignificant on his personal monitor but he knew whatever was coming was anything but.

"General," the President began. "I'm with Smith, Liston, Hastings, Clinton and Johnson." Moore made a mental note of all the names which included the Vice-President and key cabinet members. "Joining us also are..." Moore listened as the President went down the list of the top military leaders from the Navy, Marines and Army, key personnel from NASA, and heads of the biggest and most powerful countries of the world. When he finally ended, his last words were, "What have you learned so far?"

"We've contacted the Greys. They've been tight lipped." Moore almost cringed at his choice of words for the last sentence. The Greys didn't have lips, so the figure of speech was oddly misplaced. "They've told us the new aliens are called Acrididae and they are not coming in peace." Numerous gasps came through the intercom. "We've asked the Greys for assistance if this becomes a war."

"Do you think it will come to that?" a woman asked.

"So far the Acrididae haven't responded to any of our hails."

"Maybe they don't have a universal translator?" the President asked.

"Impossible," Moore responded. Every species that we've encountered has one." There were even key people on Earth, whose main job was to communicate with alien life forms, who had them. So the idea of the Acrididae not having that kind of technology but the ability of warp drive was misplaced. "We've also put a call in to the Amikians and Qirtegs for assistance. No word yet."

"You'd think offering our citizens up as specimens would gain us some loyal allies," the Vice-President muttered.

"If you all will remember, I wanted to add a clause to the current treaties to ensure that during an alien invasion, the aliens resident on Earth would provide protection." Moore said, trying to keep his calm. He'd been pushing the international community to side with him on this for one for years. Humans keep giving and giving, and for what? Technology that's so insignificant to the aliens that sharing it isn't even an issue?

“We remember,” The President stated. “And, sadly, the time has come when such an amendment would have been very beneficial. We should have been more proactive at having our visitors sign the amendment. Hindsight is twenty-twenty.”

Moore closed his eyes and took two deep breaths.

“Sir?” Bradley said, interrupting his two-second meditation break.

Moore didn’t verbally respond, but opened his eyes and cocked an eyebrow at Bradley. The look he hoped to portray was “This better be good.”

“Radar shows two Meserta ships departing from the Pacific Ocean, one from the Atlantic Ocean, one from the Indian Ocean and one from the Arctic Ocean.”

“Repeat that, son,” the President said.

As Bradley did, Moore couldn’t keep a thought from penetrating his mind. *This is bad.* The Meserta obviously knew who the Acrididae were and had no intention of sticking around to find out what outcome would play out. Why? The Meserta obviously already knew or thought they knew what the likely outcome would be.

According to the Meserta, their specie had resided on Earth for over four thousand years. Their colony had stuck to the bottom of the Oceans. Folklore named them mermaids and mermen, but Moore had seen these creatures, hell, even had conversations with them, and they didn’t look anything like the whimsical half-fish, half-human portrayed in fairy tales. No, these creatures were not pretty at all, and they were not playful or nice. The only thing the books got right was that they sang, which was actually how they communicated and lured people out into deep water and to their deaths. But since the governments had cracked down on the murders they were committing hundreds of years ago, the Meserta had agreed to stay away from populated areas.

The Mesertas weren’t worried so much about the ramifications of their actions. None of the countries had any weaponry that could reach their ships, which also served as cities, but they were afraid of humans finding a chemical weapon that could be used to poison the water and effectively kill them. The Meserta weren’t into being friendly with humans, but thus far humans and Meserta always shared a common ground where Earth was concerned. And now, with the threat of something ominous coming this way, they were jumping ship.

“General, how soon before they get into firing range?” the President asked, interrupting his train of thought.

“Wait? You’re going to start a war with this new species?” someone, it sounded like the Danish prime minister, asked. “I say we continue to try and communicate with them and then decide, as a group, what to do from there.”

“We are attempting to contact them, with no response I might add. If the Meserta are leaving and the Greys are not being forthright with their information, then it’s safe to say these new aliens are not arriving with the best of intentions. We must get ourselves together and act on the defensive. If by chance they do open communications, we will stand down,” the President said.

“Our weapons will be ready as soon as the Acrididae are in range, Sir,” Moore said.

“I don’t agree. Denmark will wait to establish communication.”

“So will France.”

Moore cursed under his breath. He'd never been in a situation like this before, but he knew the best attack would only be advantageous if everyone acted together. One country's sole attack probably wouldn't do anything to what was coming their way.

“Russia is with the Americans.”

“So is China.”

“So is Japan.”

“South Korea will wait for communications.”

Moore waited patiently as all the countries gave their vote and sighed at the end of the count.

The President exhaled a long breath. “The vote is in. We wait for communication.”

“Mr. President and Mr. Vice-President, I suggest you evacuate the White House, get all key personnel to secured locations and that you both get underground ASAP.”

“Already on it,” the Vice-President stated.

“And, Sirs?”

“Yes, Moore?” the President asked.

“May God help us all.”