

Broken Mirror

It begins with the Vixen, the all female, polymorphic race. Driven by an insatiable need to strengthen their genetic structure. They move from host to host absorbing DNA through sexual reproduction, often in exchange for their vast scientific knowledge and technology. Despite their incessant drive they are usually very careful when selecting their host, knowing all too well how intrusive their presence can be on the host species. As a result they take great pains to minimize the effects of their influence. In spite of all their efforts the Vixen have made mistakes, and to their credit they have managed to avoid major military conflict. Thought that all changed when they made contact with the Thalurian's, a mistake so grave its consequences would echo throughout the galaxy and for the first time would threaten Vixen with extinction.

The Thalurian's were a collection of reptilian humanoid species hailing from the distant planet Ghem. They controlled a vast empire that spanned three neighboring systems, consisting of billions of citizens. A warlike matriarchal society, they were brutal and possessed advanced technology driven mostly by their military.

What interested the Vixen was the Thalurian's remarkable immune systems. Composed of symbiotic organisms, these aggressive and dynamic microbes granted the Thalurians near total immunity to foreign born toxins and disease. For the nomadic Vixen, this trait was much too valuable to ignore.

Unfortunately for the Vixen, the Thalurian females maintained a tight control over the male population. Contact was slow and clandestine. As time moved on the Vixen influence began to spread, causing untold havoc on the existing Thalurian culture. Exposed to new ideas and technology the newly empowered males sparked a power struggle within the empire. The Vixen were not ignorant of their affects on the population, but it was now well beyond their control. It was viewed as an acceptable risk in light of what they were gaining.

The reigning Thalurian Empress, Torshuun, would not tolerate this behavior for long. Unable to attack them outright, the empress called upon her secret police known as the "Watchers". She then crafted a long and subtle campaign designed to undermine and ultimately destroy the invaders. This elite group quietly went about their business rounding up traitors and spreading anti-Vixen propaganda. Their actions culminated in a devastating ambush against the Vixen.

The Vixen though outnumbered were still light years ahead in military technology and in their arrogance the Watchers found a weakness. Empress Torshuun organized a wondrous celebration in the Vixen's honor, as a "thank you" for services rendered.

The celebration was in fact a well coordinated ambush against the Vixen, rounding them all into one place made them easy pickings for Imperial military. It was a massacre. Thalurian weapons spilled Vixen blood in copious amounts. As a whole only twenty percent of the Vixen population survived the initial ambush, those that escaped the ceremony found themselves on crudely sabotaged ships. The total number of survivors at the end was less than five percent.

Torshuun was relentless and only satisfied in the Vixen's total destruction. She sent her navy in pursuit of the fleeing Vixen, mighty though in numbers they were no match for the surviving Vixen ships which quickly outran them by randomizing their FTL jump patterns. Eventually this led the wounded Vixen to the the Sol system around the year 2226.

At this point in time humanity had already colonized local planets and had stretched its influence to the Alpha Centauri system. The Vixen were in dire need of refuge and humanity seemed like an ideal candidate. Proceeding with great caution the Vixen cloaked their ships and began to infiltrate human society as means to increase their numbers and acquire supplies necessary to repair their ships. In exchange they subtly changed the course of human scientific development, leaking technological advancements to companies or nations in a such a way that would not arise suspicion or unnaturally tip the balance of existing power.

Thalurian Invasion

Their covert mingling continued for over sixty years before Thalurian's finally caught up with them. In that time Humanity made incredible leaps in scientific progress, bringing a new golden age of development. The Vixen had managed to repair and upgrade their ships though they were still just a fraction of former strength.

Empress Torshuun had since passed away, a victim of her successor. Such was the way of the empire. Her rule left the Thalurians extremely xenophobic and her influence saw the ruin of dozens of inhabited worlds. She had extended a lifetime bounty on all remaining Vixen as punishment for disrupting her authority.

As was with Thalurian tradition, the newly crowned Empress sought out to accomplish that which her predecessor could not; eliminate the Vixen. An expedition force of over a million strong aboard six capital ships was assembled for this task. They had orders to exterminate any who were deemed conspirators with

their enemy.

On July 18th 2296 the expedition flag ship *The Emperor's Will* dropped out of FTL directly into Earth's orbit, much to the surprise of its inhabitants. There It hovered silently above the planet, ignoring all messages of welcome and diplomacy, thoroughly scanning the surface for its enemies.

A diplomatic vessel *The Good Word* was sent to greet earth's "first" visitors, it was heavily televised with diplomats hailing from all nations aboard the ship. Translators of every kind were activated and ready to engage. It was a moment of excitement and hope as humanity was eager to meet its first intelligent species.

All thoughts of a peaceful discourse were shattered when *The Emperor's Will* fired a single round at the lonesome ship. Vaporized within an instant. The ship was lost with all hands. There was no warning, no reason given for such a cold and violent act.

Naturally this sent the nations of Earth into a panic and there was much arguing, indecision, and a distinct failure of the democratic process. It was Russia who fired first, aiming its massive rail gun network at the offending ship and providing the Thalurians with Earth's answer.

Caught off guard the *The Emperor's Will* attempted to limp to safety but her captain's arrogance had placed her well within the range of Earth's defense cannons. Other nations bolstered by Russia's actions followed suit, firing round after round into ailing flagship. Even with all its advanced technology the Thalurian flagship could only endure so much and within minutes the mighty vessel found itself fatally trapped in Earth's gravity, which brought it forcibly down to surface.

Earth's United Navy summoned all combat capable vessels home in an effort to fend off the impending invasion. Dozens of ships from nearby colonies arrived to defend their ancestral home. With the element of surprise expended, the Thalurians went on the offensive and the results were devastating. Slaughtering any ship foolish enough to remain in range of their gun batteries, the space battle quickly turned into a slaughter.

Enraged at the audacity of these lesser creatures the Thalurian set about destroying Earth's unprotected infrastructure. They eliminated communication satellites and navigation relays, even traveling to Mars to exact their fury on earth's oldest and most powerful colony.

The ships would eventually converge on back earth, coordinating with deadly efficiency. Tens of millions died in that first exchange, hundreds more would follow. In the midst of all the destruction the Vixen finally revealed themselves. Using their cloaked ships they fired on the unsuspecting Thalurians, bringing their bombardment of earth to an end.

Their actions were not without sacrifice, as the Vixen would lose two of their own in the exchange. Unwilling to risk extinction for humanity, the remnants of the Vixen fleet jumped into deep space, their hasty escape left a considerable number of their own stranded on Earth.

The Vixen attack left the Thalurian's effectively dead in the water, as they were out of comm range with the empire and unable to repair their damaged ships. The remaining Thalurian's force quickly set about their invasion of wounded planet below.

The resulting conflict was the deadliest war in human history. With military installations and infrastructure in ruins, the loss of life was catastrophic. Nations around the world enacted drafts and emergency rations on just about everything, Humanity for first time in the modern age was in a fight for its very existence.

War.

The war raged on for eight agonizing years. While Thalurian technology had won the invaders a great number of initial victories their advancement slowed to a crawl as Earth's battered and desperate defenders dug in.

The nations of Earth called out to their Colonies for aid, desperate for fresh supplies and troops. The majority of the colonies were unwilling or unable to deliver aid on their own. Most of the colonial fleet was destroyed above earth, and those remaining ships were tasked to capacity. Worst still, many colonies depended on earth for crucial supplies and they were forced to make hard sacrifices in order to ensure their own survival.

Many were fearful of the Thalurian response, seeing how easily they destroyed the colony on Mars. In Earth's darkest hour only one active Colony, The Allied Industrial Group of Ganymede offered any assistance.

The Ganymede colony as its name implies was founded in heavy industry. Sporting both space ports and

underground factories it was the only Colony capable of sustaining itself. Specializing in arms manufacturing and ship-building they were also the best equipped. Led by McCallum Industries, the colony diverted all resources into developing a new generation of weaponry and vehicles to aid in earth's fight.

By spring of 2302 fresh supplies started coming in, Earth's beleaguered defenders finally began to push back. May of that year was host to their first successful offensive since the war's inception. Grassroots militia's countered, engaging the Thalurian's in constant, brutal guerrilla warfare.

The war would come to a dramatic end at wreckage of *The Emperor's will*. The downed capital ship was long a base of operations for the invaders, and in the final days of the invasion it would serve as only as their tomb.

Aftermath

The total death toll was enormous, of the once ten billion residents less than two billion remained. Entire generations were lost, family lines died out, knowledge, art, culture, humanity's total loss was impossible to quantify. Large swathes of the planet's surface were rendered uninhabitable, numerous species went extinct.

Humanity's mother was wounded almost beyond repair and she could no longer sustain the lives of her offspring. Food shortages became rampant, with famine and disease threatening to finish what the Thalurian's had started. The colonies were powerless to help, their own economies stretched to the brink, and with only a fraction of the resources Earth had, calls for asylum were repeatedly denied.

It was then that the Sinohian Confederacy intervened, having watched the Human-Thalurian conflict from the beginning they were intrigued by humanity's tenacity and ability to adapt.

The Confederacy, a multiracial society which placed value in business and business alone. Capitalism was king, and the confederates saw humanity as a worthy investment. They were a powerful organization spanning dozens of worlds and a force capable of repelling the Thalurian's should they return seeking revenge.

As with all things there was costs. The confederates would relieve earth of their burden by assimilating its

youth, taking all who were able into their fold. In exchange Earth would receive supplies and technology required to rehabilitate the planet. This of course was not met without controversy, but the population was weary of conflict and so ultimately the young and the able left with the promise of renewed citizenship once Earth recovered.