

V - BATTLE IN THE NORTH

This is the first in a series of weekly sci-fi episodes written by Jason Bresner, an eighteen year old freshman enrolled in the Faculty of Science. Without wishing to give too much away, it's about a group of high school students who find themselves locked in a life-or-death struggle with a collection of mutant alien lizards - disguised naturally enough - as humans.

Chapter 1 -- First Things First

"Good evening. I'm Howard K. Smith and this is the state of the war tonight." The silver haired, middle-aged newsman began his nightly report with the same, carefully articulated speech. He stared at the camera and smiled proudly at the report he was reading.

"The island of St. Thomas has just witnessed its first, and hopefully last, Visitor attack. A squadron of fifteen skyfighters from the Mexico City Mother ship attacked the island, with no success. All of the soldiers and shuttles were destroyed by a quickly formed resistance . . ."

"Excuse me . . . I'm getting a live report from Los Angeles . . . We're going live now . . ." The TV screen changed to a shot of the Los Angeles skyline, now familiar for its dominating Mother Ship as the base for the Visitors' attack on Earth.

"Can you see it? . . ." Howard's voice was clearly excited and strained as he watched a monitor on the news set.

" . . . Yes, there it is!! A second Mother Ship hovering above the original. Not since the first appearance of the Visitors has there been two Mother Ships over one city. The new Mother Ship is slightly different in design and is . . . Yes! 7 MILES in diameter! And . . . Wait! I can see, . . . I think, . . . It's a large shuttlecraft leaving the newly arrived Mother Ship, en route to the original with an unknown cargo.

The report stayed live for almost an hour; the entire world glued to it for the full duration. Hardly anything else had happened since the shuttle disappeared into one of the original Mother Ship's landing base - until now. The entire hour had been filled with Mr. Smith interviewing important Army and NASA officials, trying to explain how another Mother Ship had arrived undetected, again.

The same shuttle appeared again and made a 'beeline' for the new Mother Ship. Once the new ship had accepted its 'child', it sped off back into outer space.

After watching its departure in complete silence, Howard spoke. "We have a direct sound-only feed from the Red Dust protected NORAD Tracking Station in Greenland. With us is Colonel Dawson Westcott, who is in charge of tracking systems at the base. Col. Westcott, are you there?"

"Yes, I am Mr. Smith," replied a voice.

"Are you tracking the new Mother Ship Col.?"

"Yes, using our satellite that we put up there two months before the Visitors returned. Even though the ship hasn't left Earth's orbit yet. . . Hey! . . . I've just lost contact with the satellite, Mr. Smith." Colonel Westcott's voice was crestfallen.

"Do you think that the Visitors might have destroyed the satellite, Colonel?" asked the newsman.

"If they have destroyed it, we're in big trouble. Since we didn't have time to put any more up there, we'll never know where they've gone now . . ."

Jack Bochner walked towards the rear of Matthew

THE BALLAD OF PUNKER
KLAUS

by Freemont
"Free" Fall

'Twas the night before
Christmas
And the pills were delicious
Not a punker was stirring
Not even Sid Vicious
Black stockings were hung
With a noose and a spike
Beside the swastika
Just beyond the Third Reich

The wavers were all crumpled
To a spot on the floor
"Aha", I thought, "now
is my chance to explore!"
As I stepped over bodies
In black leather jeans
I thought for a moment
I was down at Levine's

Then out in the yard
There rose such a clatter
Like beer bottles falling
Off the truck down at Satter's
Away to the window
I flew like a flash
Tripped over the carpet
And fell through the glass

With blood flowing freely
From my hands to the snow
Far off in the southwest
I saw a dim glow
Then what to my stinging
Red eyes did appear
But an '80 Camaro
Being hauled by a deer

With a big black gorilla
Long beard and a sack
I thought for a moment
John Lennon was back
Then more clearly I visioned
Pierced ears and green hair
And a "deer" that would give
Johnny Rotten a scare

As the Camaro drew closer
The lights, they did flick
And I swore I could hear
Tunes sung by the Fixx
Then suddenly I noticed
His hazards were flashin'
As it hovered above me
In whirlybird fashion

And then in a twinkling
My roof was aglow
With a rainbow of floods
Like a Sex Pistols show
Then I heard someone shuffle
With a muffled "ho-ho"
Then a belch and a fart
(Like you get from HoJo's)

Then suddenly I stopped
"Could it be?", then I paused
That car? That gorilla?
Of course, Punker Klaus!
I got so excited
I could barely remember
We hadn't a hearth
For ol' Punker to enter

-to be continued

by their senior common interests in baseball, basketball, and by their three girlfriends.

Jack remembered his friends' life stories which they had shared many times. Matt was born into a stable, well-to-do, middle class family with two brothers; one older, Rick and one younger, Reggie. Matt's family lived only two houses away from Dave's.

Dave's life was less fun-filled than his friends' since his mother died in a car accident just weeks after his younger sister, Tammy, was born. Although on the brink of bankruptcy after her death, Dave's father managed to retain, and even improve, his family's lifestyle. The fact that Dave was black also caused problems but it had no effect on his friendships with Matt and Jack.

Jack hit a bump and nearly lost control of his machine. Since his house was still quite far away and he wanted to make it there in one piece, he decided to slow down.

Jack's own life had been quite normal until his father left town with one of his schoolmates' mother. But that had been just two months before the Visitors arrived the first time and the turmoil they had thrown the world into made searching for him even more impossible.

But not that it mattered much. Being his second marriage, Jack's father expected more from his son than Jack could give. During the first few years of Jack's adolescence, the feelings of mistrust, hatred and separation grew, past the breaking point.

The night that his father left for good, Jack was both happy and sad: happy for obvious reasons but sad because of the hell his mother and older sister were going through. But Jack's life changed for the better when he and Mandy began dating in high school.

ON SNATCHING KISSES

I am a woman so truth will be told
Men chase women and they aren't aware
When dealing with men, women's hearts are
cold;
It is a fact, however unfair.

I watch in silence and take it all in
While women play games with men who are
fools.
These games women play no gentlemen could
win,
For in the game of love there are no rules.

When out on hunt most women are coy
Yet they will smile and nod and lend an ear;
Playing hard to get is a common ploy.
This you will learn if you try to get near.

If you can, avoid Cupid at all cost
For a love-cause is a cause lost.

GAMES WOMEN PLAY

With great sorrow I speak of men who shy
Away from women who at first resist;
If in love-battles a man should persist
! ove buried deep would not silently die.

Women are coquettes who flutter and sigh,
They tease (but always in fun they insist).
Most women think they have nothing at risk
For it on men's honor that they rely.

It is only patience that some men need
For women's resolve is easily worn;
Listen, for this is advice you should heed,
Snatch a few kisses and love will be born.

In short, relax there is plenty of time
Teasing women is certainly no crime.

Amanda (Mandy to her friends) Davis was the smartest, most beautiful girl Jack had ever met. She lived with her parents and her younger brother, Barry, not far (but far enough) from Jack's house.

Jack snapped out of his thoughtful daze, his eye catching a flash of light reflecting off something silverish. He watched it disappear below the tree line into the large field ahead. His intense curiosity forced him to gun the engine. He raced to the field as fast as the machine would go, only to wish he hadn't. He stopped the ATC and gaped in horror.

Sitting proudly in the middle of the field was a Visitor skyfighter. The hatch was open and smoke periodically puffed from the aft compartment.

Jack shut off his machine, silently crept towards the shuttle and, although he knew he shouldn't, decided to go inside. Just as he was about to climb the ladder to enter the ship, a sound drifted towards his ears. He turned to see another Visitor shuttle descending from the night sky - only this one was three times as large as the first.

"Oh my God" thought Jack. "What am I going to do now?"

Jack still faced away from the open shuttle hatch so he couldn't see a dark figure emerging from the vehicle. The deck squeaked loudly - caused by the weight of a Visitor. Jack spun around, only to find himself at the butt end of a laser rifle.

Jack caught the blow on the right side of his head. The force made him continue his half-spin until he fell face down into the snow. He remained conscious long enough to see a man dressed in red and black standing over him. Jack's vision, blurred by tears of pain, went completely dark as he slipped into the nothingness.