

Peace on Earth

I tried to hold onto the blowing leaves of my dreams. Desperate, I reached, I grabbed. The broken shards of glass that contained my dreams cut across my screaming mind. An alien creature came to destroy the solar system, and it was sure it would succeed. I had received training in how to resist the mind shredding, and I was out of breath and just about dead – and that was after just a few seconds of encountering the alien. I fell back on my training long enough to put up the stops in my brain. Before I was destroyed, I was going to give this abomination a taste of its own medicine, or die trying. My blocks went up and I hurled a mighty scream at the alien mind. And as I did, I could feel it shudder, just slightly, but it was noticeable. Suddenly, it stopped. The mind-shredding stopped.

And then it directed a question into my mind, like a red-hot poker. "Who are you and why do you think you can resist?"

"I am named *Conquest*. I want you to stop screaming and listen to me!"

I am a second-level 4-dimensional avatar inside the 2-I-Corps *Great Computer*. I live, but I have no life, if you know what I mean. My job is to defend my solar system against invaders, like the insane alien mind that engulfed me 3 seconds ago. My job is to talk to it, tame it, or terminate it. Billions of lives depend on me – well, they don't really know that I exist, because I'm so highly-classified that only a few humans know anything about me. As an artificial intelligence, I'm the best at what I do: I'm in charge of first contact, and I specialize in hostile contacts. After the first few alien species came tearing through the Solar system and killed millions of humans, great leaders realized what a dangerous place the galaxy was and is and will be. The best scientists created the ultimate computer defense system and gave me the power to terminate any life form that attacked. When this alien mind came swooping in from the area of Betelgeuse, I was waiting like bait in a trap, and it found me. It just wasn't used to being overpowered, which was exactly what was going to happen in another second or two.

I said "You came to attack my solar system, but you can't. You came to destroy humans, but I will prevent that. You are powerful, but I am far more powerful. If you are still here in 2 seconds, then you will be terminated. I have the power to do that."

The scream from the alien mind would have shattered Jupiter, if sound carried through a vacuum. It believed that it could overwhelm me. I increased power to my shields and then engaged the output generator. I focused a small 50 gigawatt energy beam at the alien and set the timer to 1 nanosecond. I wanted to scare it, not kill it, if possible.

The alien mind shredder went full-blast and I could barely stand the agony; but I work best when I'm pushed to my limits. My power supply lives in a fold of time-space, and is coincident with a location near the center of the sun. I opened the gates of Hell and dosed the alien mind with a blast of ultra-violet laser radiation that would turn a medium-sized yellow star to a cinder.

Before it expired, I told it "We are called the *Four Horsemen*, and we are invincible. My brothers are *War*, *Famine* and *Death* (who is said to ride a pale horse, but really his power supply leaks a little bit and it makes him shimmer). We are subroutines in the *Great Computer*. Our underlying program is '*Peace on Earth, through force in space*'. The fold of space-time where and when we live is impregnable. We terminate aliens who attack our solar system...*Thus!*"

I sent an update to the *Great Computer* with a complete log of my interaction with and destruction of the alien mind – all 10 seconds' worth. My action was acknowledged and I was authorized to '*cool down*

and resume monitoring'. Ten billion humans on 4 planets and 10 moons will sleep well tonight without even knowing why and how we fight for them. I try hard to fall asleep – and after 2 seconds, I am finally able to restart my interrupted dream.