

Command And Conquer

THE END OF THE TIBERIUM SAGA

Time: The end of the Last Tiberium War.

...I

Flash. Distant sounds of explosions and shouts. Silence. General Anton Slavick, leader of the Brotherhood of NOD, slowly opened his eyes. He felt dizzy and disoriented. Pain echoed all over his body, and the head was heavy. **“Where the hell am I?”** he thought, **“What happened?”** He looked around. He was in a big, dark room. The walls seemed to be made of steel. A few small fluorescent lamps gave dim, weak light. There were no windows, and apparently, no doors. Suddenly he felt someone’s presence near him. He looked at his right and saw GDI General Michael McNeil. He seemed to be glued to a wall, his hands and legs looked in metal ovals. He was unconscious. Slavick tried to move his arms, but wasn’t able to. He was also locked. His mind started to get clearer. It came back to him. He remembered that he was in a bunker, under another heavy Scrin ¹ attack. Suddenly the bunker shook and something hit him in the head.

“They’ve captured me” he thought **“and McNeil”**. **“But why?”** The war was almost over. Human population was now less than 100,000, and Scrin already knew the location of the remained human bases. It was only a matter of time until Scrin would completely wipe out all remains of human civilization. Humans fought furiously, but they were doomed, and each day only brought them closer to extinction.

“What are they going to do? Question us? Torture?” Slavick was an old soldier, and he wasn’t afraid of death, but the idea of dying in a Scrin prison after tortures and humiliation didn’t seemed to him. He preferred to die in a battle.

“Public execution? Been in that already” he grinned to himself. He tried to configure where he was, but it wasn’t possible to tell by the room.

“Probably still on Earth. Why would they bother to bring us to a space ship, and build a special cell for us?”

Scrin didn't breathe the same mixture of oxygen and nitrogen that humans did. They needed to wear environmental suits on Earth, but that wouldn't last for long. The terraforming of the planet continued. Not only did the flora and the fauna have changed, not only the climate wasn't reminding the old green planet, but even the atmosphere evolved.

Suddenly, Slavick's thoughts were interrupted by an acute sound. A big piece of a wall in front of him disappeared. A strange blue light filled the room. Slavick saw a black, tall figure coming in. It was a scrin, in a usual combat environmental suit. The door reappeared after the creature came in. It was hard to see him in details, because of the weak illumination, but the scrin could see them well. It was unknown whether their eyes could see in the infrared spectrum, or whether they had optical devices installed in their environmental suits.

Slavick noticed that McNeil was conscious and was also watching silently.

“Who will go first?” Slavick wondered to himself.

But the scrin did something else. He ² had a gray box in his tentacles ³, about ½ feet tall and a foot wide, which he put on the floor. The box opened like a flower, transforming into some complex structure.

A hologram appeared above the box. The image was in a glowing, blue color, and had the same dimensions as a human. In the beginning it was fuzzy, but suddenly it became clear.

Slavick and McNeil stared in amazement, fear and disbelief.

The figure on the hologram was.....Kane!

...II

Slavick couldn't believe his eyes. The thoughts in his head flashed like exploding artillery shells. He started to feel that his head was becoming heavy again. He felt an emotion he almost didn't know. Hope. As a soldier, as the leader of NOD, as the Black Hand commander, he never used this emotion. He knew only Will, he knew Belief in what he is doing, he knew Confidence in his rightness, and his victories. But he did not know Hope. Even in the recent times, when the GDI-NOD confrontation lost its meaning and humans just fought Scrin, and were loosing this battle- he didn't hope. He understood that humans will die, and not dared to hope for salvation. He thought that as a commander, he can not afford to himself to rely on hopes, this in spite of the fact that he gave hope to others- by his own calmness and self-control in the worst times, and by his stories that Kane will come back, and that this war is a punishment for Brotherhood's past sins.

But now his anti-emotional barrier that he built to himself was cracked. **"Is it possible? Maybe the salvation is here! Maybe Kane will solve all the problems? Maybe the war will over?"** all that thoughts arose in him.

Near him the former GDI commander was also shocked, and thought similar thoughts.

"Hello, Brothers" said a very familiar voice.

No doubts, it was Kane... He was wearing a mackintosh and Black Hand commanders suit, and although it was hard to tell which color it was, it seemed that he was wearing the exact clothes he wear at the ending of Second Tiberium War, before his disappearance. His face was normal, without the scars that he gained in the First Tiberium War. Amazingly, he still looked, as decades ago, not aged a day.

"I wanted to see you. For the last time." he said with a small smile.

"As you well know the war is going to end very soon. It is only a matter of days. Also, in a very short time the terraforming will be completed. The Tiberium Vision will finally become reality."

"Who are you?" asked McNeil in a shaking voice.

"My real name is irrelevant, because you won't be able to pronounce it. You know me by the name 'Kane', and you can still call me that way."

As you probably figured after all we have been together” said Kane with a grin, “I am not a usual human. In fact I am not a human at all. I am scrin. My consciousness, my mind and thoughts were compressed and installed in this form, in this body. I must say that living among you was...interesting. I see it as great honor, because an opportunity to actively contact with alien creatures, even if they are inferior to me, is very rare.”

Kane stopped and looked on them. **“This is the real ME”- and he pointed on the scrin that brought the hologram projector. “I can not communicate with you directly, but only through this transmitter.”** Kane paused again.

“I know you have many questions, and I will answer them. But first, let me tell you the truth...”

Two men were still silently gazing at him. Slavick’s face showed pain, and McNeil’s showed fear and confusion.

“We are an old race. In Earth’s years, our civilization is more than 60 thousands years old. At some point of our evolution, we left our planet, and started to travel across space. We have found new planets, new worlds. They had no developed life forms, so we could easily colonize those planets. As our journey continued, we have found worlds with more evolved creatures, although not intelligent. At first we have tried to live in symbiosis with them, but usually coexistence had negative impacts on some side, and we just started to terminate them. Using terraforming technology, we changed their worlds to become our. But we haven’t just destroyed and killed. We also studied the plants and the creatures we found, we classified them, and used genetic engineering to extract their positive characteristics in ourselves. One of the results of our research was the ‘spores of our world’, a synthetically maid life form in crystal envelope, that you know as “Tiberium”. Using them, we could quickly transform entire biospheres.

We have occupied five planets outside our solar system. But we needed to expand, to conquer. Our journey continued. ‘The Path’ as we call it, must proceed...

Then we met this planet. For the first time we have encountered an intelligent species, a technologically advanced civilization. We decided to study you. Since the middle of the 20th century we have

watched you. What we saw was strange. You seemed to be intelligent creatures, but you destroyed everything you were in contact with. To our amazement, your world stayed before nuclear war. We decided to interfere. I was sent to your planet, in a human form, as a person you know as Kane. I became a personal adviser of one of human leaders, and secretly sabotaged the launch. When the people who call themselves 'Soviets' won the war, we decided to save you from the threat of nuclear war and I killed the soviet leader.

We have faced a dilemma. On the one hand, you were the first intelligent creatures we have met, and we would like to contact you. On the other hand, you could become a threat for us in the future. We saw that you can easily kill millions of your own specimen, and that means that you won't stop to attack us. But that was not all. You've also damaged your planet, sometimes irreversibly, wiped out other species of your planet with a great speed, and developed viruses and toxins to kill other life forms.

We have decided to invade your planet and colonize it. We have also decided to terminate your species, but not in a direct confrontation. You must be wondering why we didn't use mass destruction, as you, humans love to do. The answer is that we are interested in this planet in order to colonize it, and destroying it wouldn't help us. Also, the war could cost us in losses. And time wasn't important because it would take more than a century for our main forces to arrive.

The perfect solution was found. We would let you to kill yourself, by starting great wars, and by sending crystals of Tiberium to poison your planet while you battle. Thanks to your destructive nature our task was easy. You had many reasons for wars between yourselves; all you needed was a little spark. We discovered a small group that called itself "Brotherhood of NOD". We found that it has the potential to become a powerful opposition to the current world order. We also liked its ideology- something that many humans will be fond of. By dividing yourselves into those who have, and those who have not, and by the chaos and hatred that dominated your world, you have paved a way for wars.

I was assigned to the task.

You know what happened afterwards. As soon as the first word was said, the Brotherhood began to expand rapidly, and the First Tiberium War was inevitable. It was indifferent who will win this

war, because until one side will get full domination, the battles would continue.

GDI's Ion Cannon almost destroyed me and it took me sometime to return. But even without my presence the wars continued. You fueled your own hatred. And it fed the wars. When the wars are over, those who had lost just doubled their hatred and very soon new wars began...

Busy with killing yourselves, you didn't mind the Tiberium growth. At the time that you call the "Second Tiberium War" the terraforming entered its second phase. We have staged a crash of one of our ships. Onboard we have placed an information holder, the Tacitus, which was supposed to be retrieved by the Brotherhood. Using your own technology, we could intensify the transformation. We could also use it for propaganda purposes. Unfortunately, although not importantly, the Tacitus was broken and was hold by different sides.

An interesting thing is that you, humans, both GDI and NOD, used Tiberium for new weaponry, and just caused a faster contamination.

Later I had to leave, but we wanted the wars to continue. By connecting my human body to machine that NOD have created for wars against NOD's enemies, we orchestrated another attack on now, although indirectly. It turned out that CABAL wasn't as strong as we expected and that you, NOD and GDI for the first time agreed to work together. But anyway, it was too late for you.

And here we come to the final point. When you were weak and feeble, with a planet that is no longer dominated by earth creatures, we decided to give the last hit.

Now your story is going to end. You will extinct. "

...III

Kane became silent. When he spoke his voice was somehow sad- or at least appeared to be. He didn't smile or grin. A serious expression was on his face.

During Kane's speech Slavick's head went lower and lower. He felt that darkness had surrounded him, and with every word it closed in. He felt as if weightless hammers were hitting his head, as if his blood was sucked. His inner world was ruined. All that he trusted and believed appeared to be a way to global destruction. He didn't feel anger, just emptiness and despair.

"The Brotherhood, the promises of peace, unity – that was a lie?" he asked slowly in a hoarse and shaky voice.

"Not exactly. Although our social structure is very different from yours, it can be said that we have created this utopian 'brotherhood'. But is it good for you, humans? Apparently- not. It failed to unite you. Your nature is against peace. Even inside the brotherhood humans remained humans- with their greed, hatred, and stupidity.

And that brings me to an interesting conclusion. Despite your high technological advance, you are far from being truly intelligent creatures."

"You bastards!" exclaimed McNeil **"If you are so civilized, so intelligent and advanced why do you destroy our planet? Why do you murder us?"**

"Are we the monsters here? Look at yourselves. You are like viruses. You destroy your own planet, creating ecological disasters. You kill entire species for no need.

But that is nothing compared to what you do to yourself. You are filled with hatred towards each other. You divide yourself into 'races', social and economical statuses. You claim that you were created by some invisible and insensible forces, which for some reason made certain specimen special, unique, 'chosen'. And you use this claim to murder other subjects from your race, sometimes killing innocent with indescribable anger. And when there is no anger there is apathy, even if thousands of your fellow specimens die. You greed has no limits. While we only colonize planets when we must do so for our survival, you spend your resources meaninglessly."

“You can look at this in that way:” Kane added with a sad smile, “We are the gods who came to punish you.”

“You could help us to restore our planet, to teach us how to use our resources to achieve equality!”

“It is not our purpose to educate. We explore in order to conquer, to ensure our own survival. But I assure you, if we met an intelligent race, that we will be able to cooperate with, we would do it. But there can’t be peace between us. You are inferior and aggressive creatures. Even if we tried to help you, we wouldn’t succeed. Even if we gave you resources, repaired the damage you done to your planet, even if supervised you, your nature wouldn’t be changed. ”

“You were a mentor and a father for me...” silently said Slavick.

“Your mentor is a bloody intergalactic killer!” cried McNeil.

“I don’t find a bad side in your deeds, Anton. You fought for ideals that I think are important for humans. And GDI fought for their. The problem is in your nature, in your species, not in a particular man. We gave you a little push towards war. Billions did the job for us. Was your fighting justified? Maybe it was. There were wars that were fought over less important issues.

You killed your own species in order to bring unity and freedom. Isn’t that ironic?”

A dead silence prevailed. The truth was fully unveiled. All things became clear. There was no one to blame for the terrible mistakes. Slavick and McNeil were silent. Each thought about the wars, about the ideology about the ultimate failure. The humanity failed. And there will be no aftermath.

“The Forgotten-what about them? Do you plan to kill them too?” asked McNeil after minutes of silence.

“For now, those *homo-Tiberius*, ‘mutants’ as you call them, will remain untouched. Their population is not big, and they could be easily controlled. They are bound to Tiberium and their nature is different from yours, so we might find a common language. Otherwise, they will be terminated.”

“What are you going to do with us?” asked Slavick with an indifferent voice.

“You will be scanned in order to get the needed information. Your physical parameters will be studied. You are of the finest specimens of the human race.

Your conscious is not necessary for the process. Afterwards, you will be terminated.

You are unique creatures, and it was interesting to interact with you. Goodbye.”

Slavick and McNeil felt little pricks in their arms. Darkness slowly covered their eyes. McNeil tries to say something but wasn't able to do so. Before Slavick lost his consciousness he looked at Kane. Kane looked at him and greeted him in a Black Hand way. The screen “Kane” also raised his tentacle, as if in act of farewell...

Epilogue

Time: Two weeks later

Location: Somewhere in Northern Asia.

The third stage of the terraforming has ended. Sky's color was sulfur yellow. Scrin demolished the ozone layer, and added various chemicals to Earth's atmosphere to make it breathable for them. Eighty percent of planet's solid surface was covered with Tiberium fauna. Tiberium organisms dominated the warm waters.

In the middle of a big, lonely desert stood a huge dome. It was made from somewhat flexible, transparent and very strong nano-engineered materials.

A cylindrical structure, about 20 feet high and 30 feet wide stood near the dome. It was a fusion-based nuclear reactor, which supplied the structure with energy. Four big spaceships were "parked" in something that looked as a spaceport. Shuttles were cruising between the dome and the ships.

In the center of the dome a spectacular view could be seen. Hundreds of scrin stood in a perfect formation, all turned towards something that looked like a stage. On this 'stage' stood another scrin. The Scrin didn't wear their usual big environmental suits, but only much smaller biomechanical suits- the atmospheric conditions were friendlier for them now.

To a human all the Scrin looked the same- they had no marks on them, no special suits, and it was impossible to differ between them or tell their position. But Scrin did have a mark that showed their rank. The problem was that it the mark was painted in UV paint, which human eyes couldn't see.

To a human viewer it looked that the scrin were just standing there, not uttering a sound. But Scrin didn't use verbal communication. They were techlepathic- they used a technologically assisted telepathy as a way of communication between themselves.

If we would be Scrin that what would be appear in our minds:

“My Brothers ⁴!

Today is a glorious day for us. Human resistance has been demolished, and their race has been annihilated. This planet is almost processed, and our mission here is completed.

Brothers, I am honored to announce a VICTORY!!! ”

Feelings of moderate excitement, satisfaction and pride could be felt from everywhere.

“It was a long way to come to this standing. This operation was the longest we ever had. For the first time we stumbled upon active and furious opposition.

I will not tell you the whole story- you know it as good as I do. But I do want to tell you something about this species, “humans” as they call themselves. Before the Great Council decided whether we should make peace with them or invade the planet, they were meticulously studied. We learned surprising things about them. Despite the advanced technology, they were wild, barbaric creatures. They were filled with hate, caused by social tensions. They believed in some galactic forces they called ‘gods’ that made some people or groups believe they have the right to do whatever they want, or to stop someone from doing something. They divided themselves into different races-that in spite of their almost complete genetic similarity. They arranged their social system in such way, that the strongest is taking from the weakest. That some individuals, by some unseen right, are granted power over others, and would push others down so they might climb. They tried to create greater social structures that they called “governments” and created huge groups of armed subjects, whose purpose was to defend one structure from another, using firepower and terror.

Their other typical characteristic was their unnatural greed for resources. That greed not only killed them, but also caused irreversible damage to their own planet.

We couldn’t live side a side with such creatures. The decision was to terminate them.

I tell you this, because we must never repeat such mistakes. The fate of those creatures should be a remainder for us, about how important our laws and ways are. How important is to bring about one world, unified, living in peace, and following a single path toward a common goal of equality.

But there is another thing we can learn from them. And that is their ability to fight till the end, even when they know that the battle is lost, and their struggle is going to fail. Some of our specialists speculate that this was the ability that helped them to survive. Even when they were a minority, with almost no firepower- they continued to fight. This is something we should learn from them.”
The scrin paused.

A common agreement could be felt. This briefing was very strange- usually if a commander wanted to say something, he just sent a general message. But they understood that this was an important operation. Also, he was their commander, which meant that there could be no disobedience or hesitation.

The scrin lifted one of his tentacles, and a small, spherical object flew towards him. It was a metal sphere, about a foot in diameter, with small antennas on its top. This object was a powerful multimedia transmitter. Through special technologies that combined Scrin's biology with mechanic implants, sound and vision would appear directly in viewer's head, as if he wear a virtual reality helmet. Scrin touched special areas on the object, and an image appeared in his mind. The same image appeared in the minds of the hundreds of scrin that stood there.

For a human, such experience would be very strange. Suddenly, the world he saw through his eyes would disappear, as if he was teleported to other location.

A big, green forest appeared from a bird's eye view. The spectator would feel as if he fell onto the ground, as the forest became closer and closer. But it wasn't a forest. At least not the usual one. It was a forest from big Tiberium crystals, trees and strange looking plants; some have been never seen before. Since the end of the second war new types of Tiberium fauna have evolved, and entire forests replaced the tiberium fields. The view stopped from descending and did a slow 360 degrees turn. The green forest was huge. All the terrain, in the range of hundreds of miles was covered with green. Unnatural green. In the middle of the forest was an empty spot. Outlines of a huge building could be seen. Smaller objects- probably construction robots- were swarming near it. A cargo space ship flew towards the construction yard. It was one of the Scrin first permanent bases.

In a blink of an eye the view changed. Now, it was a coastline. It was hard to tell where exactly the water line ended, because the water near the coast was filled with some strange substance, which looked like some

gigantic seaweed on the water's surface. The camera (or whatever it was) zoomed at a particular place. Again, some structure was built there. A cargo vessel, that looked similar to a hovercraft, glided upon the gray water towards the building, possibly carrying equipment and materials.

Then a bright white light struck the eyes (to a human observer). The bright white light came both from the sky and from the ground. It was Antarctica, and the snow reflected the sunlight. The view moved. On the omnipresent white surface was a big orange flame that apparently came from beneath the ground. It was the last human bunker. There was no one alive there for weeks, and it was detonated more than a week ago, but still was on fire. Strong Antarctic wind kneeled it down.

The snow, which now could be seen in biggest details wasn't perfectly white. Some areas were covered with some yellow and gray materials, which came from the atmosphere. Small green and blue crystals were lying in some places.

The environment changed once again, unveiling another magnificent view. It was this planet, Earth, floating in space. In the past, the "blue planet" had white clouds and beautiful, attracting blue oceans and seas. But it has been changed. The water was no longer blue. It seemed gray. Major parts of the continents were covered with green. Clouds seemed to be of the color of a dirty snow, and the bigger ones were dark yellow. It didn't seem to be "planet of life" anymore. The look moved towards left. A number of colossal spacecrafts were slowly moving towards the planet.

The view disappeared, and the spectators "reappeared" in the dome.

Scrin commander spoke again.

"Third phase has been completed. That ship is bringing the second wave of 'Path builders'.

Our work here is completed.

Brothers, the "Command and Conquer" operation is officially finished!"

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Notes:

- 1: "Scrin"- the general name of those extraterrestrials. "scrin"- a particular creature
- 2: It is unknown whether Scrin could be divided into sexes, and whether they could be "it", "he" or "she"
- 3: Scrin didn't have two arms as humans do, but instead they had four upper limbs that looked like human hands, but with a different structure, and also a number of "tentacles" that came from the back.
- 4: Scrin's social structure is somewhat different from ours, so this translation is not precise.

Inspired by:

- "Fury of The Messiah" by KIRBY098
- "Occam's Scalpel" by Theodore Sturgeon
- And of course -the C&C Series.

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This short composition is based on the Command and Conquer Series.

The Tiberium Saga consists of (in chronological order of events):
Red Alert, Tiberian Dawn, Renegade, Tiberian Sun, Firestorm, Tiberian Twilight.



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