

MASTER DEFENDERS

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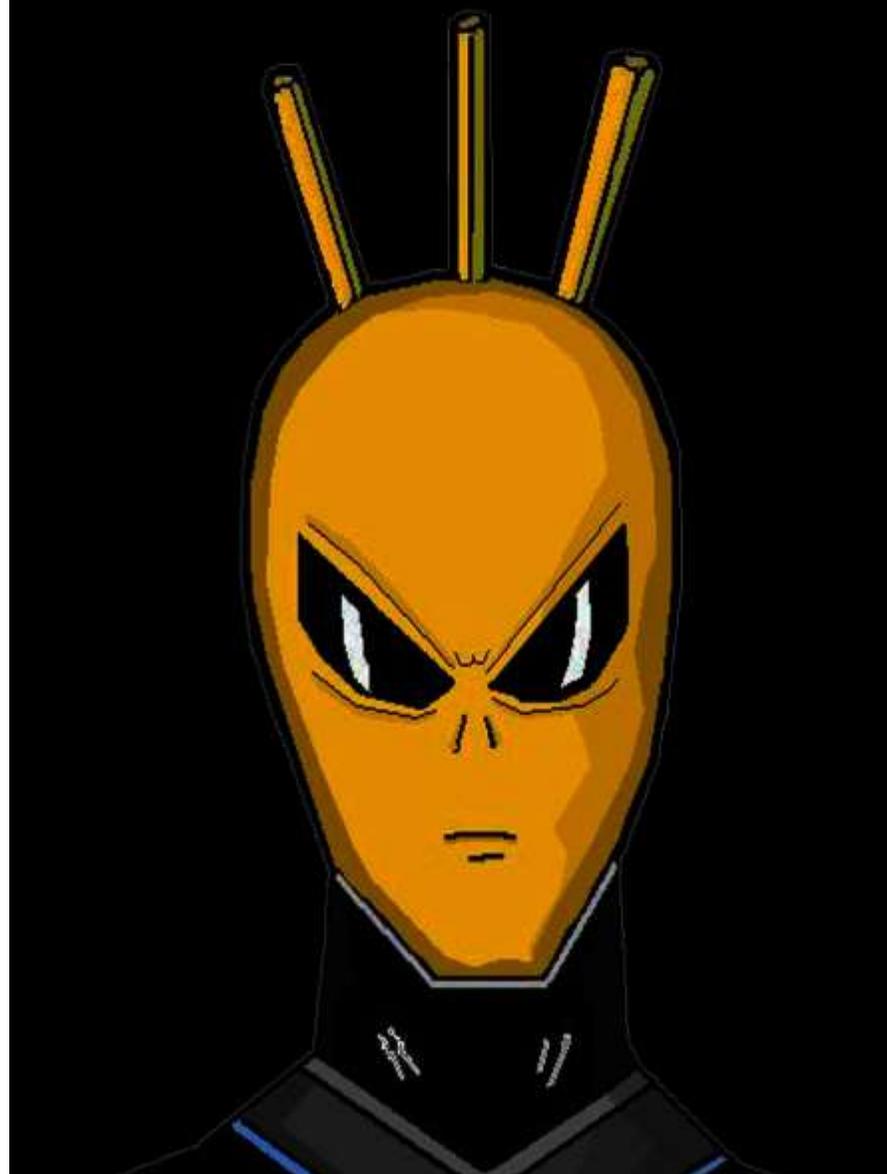
MASTER DEFENDERS
FICTION
MATTHEW BHANKS
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MATT BHANKS

MASTER DEFENDERS



FIVE YEARS AGO

“The things that you speak of right now...disturb me.”

“Trust me, this will work. At last we will finally be able to liberate the nation from the predators.”

“Look, even if it could work, the effects would only be limited to save our country, not the world.”

“The crisis has caused total trauma to the public. Imagine a world where these beasts listen to us!”

“You can’t unleash it. We were warned at Lasher Labs.”

“Do you really insist on listening to one of them?”

“They know the danger that lurks ahead if you succeed in your process. I trust its judgment. You saw what these things can do to them. The Lashers are dead because of this. And don’t forget their beloved son. He had a bright future ahead of him and now...he’s gone. Don’t go through with it.”

“I’m spending three quarters of my budget on this project. I thought you would favour my decision, but I guess I was wrong.”

“I understand that you’re only trying to help, but is this truly a safe assistance for America? What about the President? Did he approve of this? Plus, first you would have to deal with the council.”

“I run the agency that is from what I can see, really corrupt in nature.”

“You don’t run the agency and suppose you are the cause of it being corrupted?”

“Why must you ask so many questions?!”

“Because I stand up for what’s right. Richard Rageous made a mistake by bringing the substances here. Messing with them isn’t going to help us at all. Please, just scratch the entire operation for your own sake.”

“The council will agree one way or another.”

“And how do you figure?”

“They just need to be persuaded by the right people.”

“They won’t give in.”

“Then I’ll go with the plan anyways. I wanted you by my side. However, you seem to have this sense that the creatures are safe. That makes you no different from them. The time will come when you will see my idea as a success. When that time comes, you’ll know who the real master is.”

“I don’t know how you got this way. I will stop you...whatever it takes.”

“You come to me with a couple of firearms and I’ll have an army. Names like Derwin Grant, Corometheus, Professor Shaw, Gustavo Salazar, Dark-Shallow, and Avinotch are enough to strike fear to the public. I’ve been watching over them for a while now. I can see the things they’re capable of doing. My group will expand as time goes on. How do you expect to defend yourself?”

“I’ll find a way.”



AUTHOR'S NOTE

All of the characters and events in this story were developed throughout my childhood.

THEY ARE COMPLETELY FICTIONAL AND ORIGINAL!

In absolutely no way do I believe in magic, super-powered humans, and malevolent spirits.

As for aliens...I haven't made up my mind yet.

-Matt Bhanks

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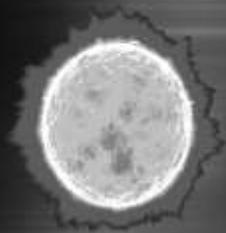
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For my friends and family.

PART 1

THE GATHERING



I

THE MASTER MISSION

THE BEST SEASON OF THE YEAR HAS TO be the brilliant season of summer. Who could resist its bright morning skies that fill the attitudes of children with spirits of joy? Regardless of the issue, the harmony is a pleasant one. Children playing on the swingsets, birds chirping lovely melodies, and the warm gentle breeze enhanced the soothing atmosphere. Should a tender environment such as this be put to question? Most times the answer would be a flat out “no”. However, this was not one of those times.

Here is a list of the world’s well-known generations: the Baby Boom Generation, Generation X, the Millennial Generation, the Homeland Generation, and now the Star-Pix Generation. They called it this because of the recent and paranormal event known as the Star-Pix Crisis.

The catastrophe was too great to be linked to any type of terrorist. It was an outburst of devastating creatures that somehow, some miraculous way, found themselves on our planet. The police as we use to know them are now the AIA, (Alien Investigative Agency). The agency is split into several sectors, each coming with their own form of cruelty. What pros and cons come from this grand event the world has seen? Anyone with half a mind can conclude that the side of the cons outweighs the side of the pros. What are the advantages? It has to be the sudden emergence of new heroes.

Captain Tina Truman is second in command of AIA East. The Caucasian lady was stunning as any woman. Her hair was chestnut brown and her jade eyes could stimulate any man. She had the curvature of the most attractive super models. It was a relaxing day for her. Her long and ravishing

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legs lounged on her large brown desk while she drank wine. It was her favourite kind. "*Dark Essence 1983*".

Still, resting didn't come often. A man came to accompany her. He sat down across from where she was sitting.

Pretending to ignore the situation, Tina pulled a magazine in front of her eyes. This was of no use as the man knocked it down. They remained looking face-to-face. Strange enough, he held his hand in front of Tina. His five individual fingers clamped together to make a firm fist. She knew who the man was, in fact, she knew him for five years. He was her leader, (the first in command of AIA East). His name was Cyphrus Abel Reid, but he was better known as Cyfreid. As for his rank, he was recognized as the Commander.

Tina Truman understood the fist concept as an analogy. *As individuals we are nothing, but together we are powerful.*

The concept was rather confusing since it considered independency as nothing. Nevertheless, it was just Cyfreid's way of saying that a group brings better results than an individual. She nodded and smiled. Now was the time of union.

It has been eight years since the Star-Pix Crisis and so far only a number of humans accepted aliens to their dominant race. Many became overwhelmed by the whole situation and some desperately tried to avoid it. Tina was ordered to travel to Detroit, Michigan. When being there, she was to meet up with a group of miners; one of them was believed to be an extraterrestrial.

Only one word kept circling in Tina's mind in which her leader tried his hardest to stress. *Union* was what it was. Being an eye-catching agent of the agency, she realized that this was a classified mission. She spotted the miners in the distance and traveled by foot to greet them.

"Welcome everyone," she politely said but then was immediately corrected by a miner who said, "If anything, we should be the ones welcoming you."

If there was one thing that Tina hated, it was being interrupted, especially by a man. She stated, "I'll do the talking

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around here for now on...do I make myself clear?" The look on her face was greatly severe. All of the diggers agreed to label this woman as their instructor for the remainder of the evening.

Hours passed and evening became night. The miners sacrificed hundreds of sweat drops in order to find what Tina was looking for. One of the workers was more sensual than the rest. He was tall in stature and possessed a bushy mustache. He looked young, but that was not certain.

"Just what exactly are we looking for?" he asked. "Because if it's love my lady, I found my match." As Tina turned her head, she stared down the miner. Her response was plain and simple.

"Sorry wise guy, but you're definitely not my type."

"But my lady," he began. "You and I can make a nation of strong and attractive people. I have what is called *the key*, and you have what is called—"

Before he finished the inappropriate message, Tina swung at the sensual worker. Everyone watched as the miner was clouted in the face. The result was the vilest bruise that they've ever seen.

"My lady...that wasn't nice," he painfully said with his hand cupped on the swelling.

"Focus on the job you idiot! And that goes for the rest of you!"

They continued to obey the contentious female. The stars of the nighttime sky constantly sparkled. Each digger looked up at its fine beauty. Overall, the mood didn't fit with the task they were ordered to do.

A number of different minerals were extracted and ranged from copper to gallium and then iron. None of which was as extraordinary of a substance Tina scouted to find.

The substance that Cyfreid asked for was called Pixaliemain. This type of mineral was unknown to the public. Even Tina was slightly ignorant with some of its traits. Cyfreid believed that if this substance wasn't secured in the right hands, it could be the end of the human race. It was as if the pressure of the critical mission kept breathing down Tina's back. One

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thing was for sure and it was that the operation was going much slower than she expected.

“Please do me a dire favour and pick up the pace,” the agent ordered.

“We are tired as it is, Tina. We need to rest immediately so why don’t you do us a favour and stop treating us like dogs!” shouted a miner from the group.

Another worker stepped in the conversation and added, “We are being treated more like slaves than dogs!” The complaints grew. The workers set aside their obligations for another time, or perchance never.

This is pointless.

Cessation among them rose to a great extent. Some began to laugh aloud when finding the comment rather amusing. A little humour couldn’t hurt them, even when being in the cold and quivering condition.

“Listen you slaves!” said the woman classifying them as undeserving and unfortunate workers. “My leader brought me here to command you fools. If there is one thing that slaves do, it’s complaining to their masters. Therefore, the more y’all complain, the more I’m going to treat you like slaves. I’m willing to stay here all night if I have to. In fact, I’ll do anything to ensure the human race continues!”

The miners’ faces turned with confusion. One asked the question that was going through each person’s head.

“What in the name of Jesus are you talking about? The fate of the human race is at risk?”

“Yes it is! That’s why you must continue!” Tina screamed.

“What’s *really* going on here? Who are you working for?”

“That doesn’t matter. What matters is that you find Pixal—”

Tina stopped her sentence, remembering that there was an outlander nearby.

“Never mind,” she concluded. They inferred the obvious; Tina Truman was up to something grand. They continued to search the deepest levels of the Earth’s crust.

There's still nothing.

"My lady...you're as crazy as you're attractive. Just tell us what this substance is," suggested the sensual miner. Upon saying this, a loud voice was heard by a worker.

"Tina!" cried the echoing voice. "Tina, I think I found something!"

Tina and the others intensely sprinted towards his location. He was certain that what he just found was extraordinary. The remarkable substance was giving off an illuminating light. Tina smiled upon seeing it.

"Nice going, slaves!" she said only amusing herself. Everyone continued to stare at the glory of the rock. The light was bright blue; it was widespread and looked supernatural. The first half of the task was complete. The stunning agent was ready to shift to the second phase.

Her commanding officer happened to be correct after all. Pixaliemain was revealed to the public, but Tina had to act fast. She looked at each person only to see that the focal point of their attention was the precious light.

She realized that no matter what the circumstance, one of the diligent miners would not resist the substance. Certain tactics had to be improvised.

"Everyone move away from it immediately!"

The workers who were unaware of its traits ran away from the substance. All obeyed the female except for only one.

The agent walked towards the miner. He mumbled different phrases.

Tina was a very educated woman. She could speak all the different languages known to man, but she was unfamiliar with the miner's words.

"Are you deaf? I ordered you to move away!"

It was of no use. He continued to speak the phrases as if he was reading something mystical; a spell perhaps. The AIA agent was unsure of how to handle this. She contacted Cyfreid and explained the situation at hand.

After she explained everything, many screams were heard by Cyfreid.

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“Stop him at once!” he shouted while being back at the confidential base. “Don’t let him finish those words!”

With plenty of caution, Tina pulled out her pistol and aimed it at the mumbling man.

“Stand down!” she commanded. Still, this did no good as the miner continued to speak. It was an unnerving voice.

Tina had no choice but to shoot. When firing, the man turned to her completely unharmed.

“That does it! I’m calling the cops!” a miner said.

“I am a cop!”

“Lady I can’t take you anymore! The boys and I are gone!”

At that very instant, the miners hastily departed in their vehicles. A farewell would’ve been respectful, but Tina had no time to say her goodbyes. The darkness of the night only added to the harsh drama she was experiencing. The swift breeze continued to wave her brown hair back and forth. According to the miners, the first option was departure; according to Tina, the first option was fighting.

The random phrases continued. Tina aimed her pistol one more time. The mumbling man stared at her; she stared back. As more outlandish phrases were said, his skin started to peel off. The outer layers landed and resembled wet mush. The human face dropped down like an old wrapping. The new look was horrid and grim. It was a creature with maroon eyes and gold-yellow fangs. Its skin was navy blue with multiple craters.

Tina fired ten times only to find out that the creature was barely wounded. The punctured bullet holes meant nothing. Some dropped, sprinkling down like spitting raindrops and causing high-pitched rings to her ears. The gruesome predator moved into attack position.

As it approached Tina, she pulled the trigger as many times as she could. Each shot pushed the creature back a step.

Tina’s eyes were locked on the predator. She attempted to figure out the best target. There was a possible answer.

The enemy’s mouth.

She thought that this way, all phrases would end. There was nothing to lose. Her breathing was heavy as she held the pistol at the charging alien. It jumped high, tongue swaying and dripping drool, teeth meshed and ready to finish its human prey.

Before it could, Tina blasted it in the mouth with one pull of the trigger and drop-kicked the predator. It gave a strident cry and then the scream eased.

At last, the agent was able to catch her breath. The incident wasn't traumatizing to her at all. She was trained for handling these tasks. She slowly walked towards the creature as it twitched on the ground with its mouth overflowing with plasma. She hoped that it was truly dead when considering that there was no more ammunition.

The head of the monster turned to Tina. It spoke. When seeing that the alien was speaking English, Tina hurried to find her communicator in her pocket. Something like this had to be shown at AIA East. The creature's words were as followed:

"You humans stand no chance.

Your race will be crumbled by the new authority.

Many will be killed and some will be forced to serve him.

Give up now and submit to Earth's new master.

Give praises unto the eternal reading.

All hail Xaliemer!"

Those were the alien's final words as it closed its eyes and died in front of Tina. She understood that this was common; she murdered many creatures in the past. Hunting aliens was her hobby; her enjoyment; her passion. The only thought that she had was its last words. The final sentence struck her the most. *"All hail Xaliemer."*

She wandered to find the substance. When she spotted it, she picked it up and was unafraid of what it could do. The rock didn't harm her at all. It was believed that Pixaliemain only had effects on aliens and not humans.

She scouted again, seeing if there were more traces of the substance. Not a single rock substance of Pixaliemain was

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found other than the one she possessed. Tina contacted Cyfreid once more.

“I almost died,” she stated.

“I understand,” said Cyfreid. “Did you retrieve a sample?”

“Yes, it’s in good hands now.”

“Excellent. There is much to be discussed.”

“Who is Xaliemer?”

“I don’t know...but whoever he is, his powers are linked to that reading. Trust me, I’m sure of it.”

“You said the human race is at risk. Is it really that serious?”

“I’m afraid so. Tina, I need to tell you something. There are more traces of Pixaliemain in North America. If it comes in contact with any alien, then it’s the end. I’m ordering you to travel to Washington, D.C. and when there, you’ll await further orders. The time of union is here. We must build a special alliance to counter the Governor. I feel that we are already too late. Tina...we need Canavin.”

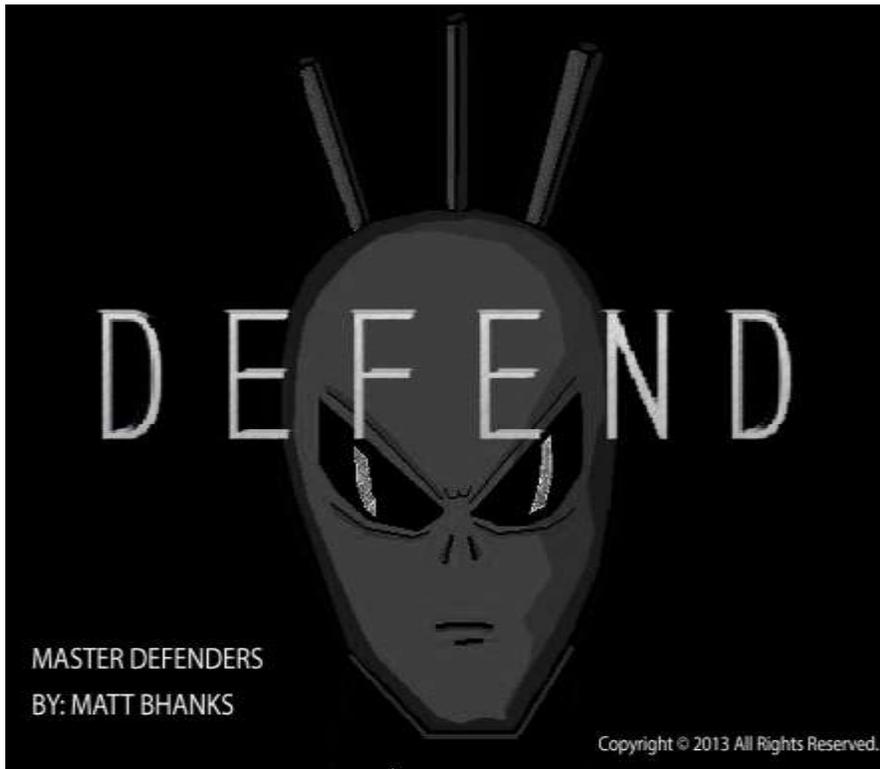
The words coming from her master almost filled Tina with anxiety. Many aliens—or Pixalians as they preferred to be called—settled on Earth and even acted as humans in disguise. Tina lowered her head with disbelief. Any mistakes and the world will be at war, and probably for its final time.

A bright light shone behind her. As she turned to look, she sighted the rising sun. Night had now shifted into morning. The entire extraction process, the battle with the predator, and the search for remains of Pixaliemain happened to take the entire night. She checked the time on her watch.

“6:45 a.m.” she read.

The morning resembled the relief she now had after killing the creature. The problem was that morning will always shift to night.

With that being said, there were greater circumstances waiting. If it was the end, it would take a group of special individuals to defend the planet. Such talented and well-trained individuals cannot be ordinary, but instead must be extraordinary.



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