

Outcomes by Tristan Inthavong-Patricio

I sat in my dark lab; a shanty warehouse on the outskirts of reality, staring at my computer screen, the desktop littered with sorted piles of historic outcomes; combinations of circumstances and decisions that lead to what is ultimately the end. I clicked on the next file; what would be the fourteen-million, six hundred and fifth outcome I've seen thus far. Up comes a video stream of a well-dressed man standing at a podium in front of numerous people. Given the man's rather alien appearance, it was clear he was not human, as well as many other individuals that stood in the crowd amongst the humans. No one seemed afraid of each other, only collectively clapping and cheering as the extraterrestrial speaker began his speech. "People of Earth! People of Skai!" he starts. "I come to you today to celebrate with you the eightieth anniversary of the liberation of my people; the Skaians!" Much of the crowd cheered, many of the more alien people in the audience going up in roars. "Almost two centuries ago, the people of Skai lived in relative peace under our Lunarian overseers. We were fed. We lived. We had the most grandiose and advanced technology one could ask for. But something was missing: our freedom. And yet, we never stirred in their grasp." "One day, I remember it vividly, we were suddenly at war with a race we'd never heard of: the humans. I remember the war effort. Many of us were forced into the fighting, citizens drafted to fight the fight the Lunarians started." The man, shuffling cards, took a breath before continuing. "The battle seemed weighted in our favor. We clearly had the advanced technology versus our enemies. Hundreds of thousands fell at our hands. It looked like we were winning. But that was only on the surface. While we had the upper hand in technology, the humans had numbers. For every one that they lost, ten more rose up. Before we knew it, we were on the ropes. I remember the day when the fight was brought to our home planet. The smell of fire and the sight of Lunarian ships as they fell from the sky. We were defeated. I remember lying at the feet of a human soldier. I thought it was the end." He paused. "But then, he put his hand out to me. I took it. He smiled and I smiled back, confused. Next thing I know, we're indoctrinated into the humans' way of life. We join forces. We became the utopia we are today. We lost the war, but at the same time, we were liberated. It was the best mistake our race could've made." The crowd erupted in cheers and like that, the stream ended. I sighed. Could I leave it at that? It was a good ending, but we could've achieved it differently. An ending where no one had to die. But maybe this was for the best. Sometimes, time didn't need rewriting.