



Mark O'Connor *(39 years, army engineer, pilot)*

*"When you find out you're going the wrong way, it's never too late to turn. That's what life's about.
But what if you're out of ways?"*





Truce. An Alliance ship to pick you up and a parade of your former colleagues-in-arms confirm that your boring and uneventful term as a prisoner of the Browncoats will end. The same goes for the guy walking in the opposite direction, in reverse. You look at him. War wounds, maybe? But no, you can't deny you recognize the particular scars of his face and the particular mutilations on his body: processing by Alliance interrogators. He survived carefully researched and engineered suffering - a masterpiece of Alliance policy. And now his eyes pierce you with reproach. And you imagine his rebukes. "It's your fault, Alliance monster!! You're one of them, you're never gonna wash off that guilt." It is this imagined sentence which bookends your decision. The Alliance is your past. You no longer want it, or want to live in it, so you won't.

You're trying to squeeze together the ashes of the passions which used to burn brightly in you to spark those righteous feelings again. You look at the picture of Mary. The memory of your bodies intertwined in the night. But you aren't the same. You feel lost in a dry and desolate desert, desperate for rain. You were born with passion for the Alliance and built a new one for Mary. How did these political and personal feelings intertwine, with both rising and falling together? But these rebels, maybe they're right. But to fight again now? To discover you're on the wrong side again? That it's another bunch of selfish opportunists? That it's not worth believing in? Is that worth doing? Yet it seems that nobody here would care about what you could or couldn't do. You drown here in the dirt of Moon, but you can't go back to the Alliance. Here you are nothing but there you were a monster. So you pick yourself up and turn on a smile. Be cool, be the optimist, and maybe that's what you'll become?

Character:

You're naturally friendly, the kind of person people like - happy and joking, lightening serious moods. Deep beneath this well-practiced façade, is a doubtful and undecided seeker of meaning and purpose. There have been times when you were so sure about everything, only to have fate slap you in the face and show you how wrong you were. It's easy for you to get excited about new things - whether a technical invention, a new philosophy, or a different perspective. You enjoy exploring. That spark of enthusiasm and exuberance associated with the new feels great. It's just that, the older you get, the less and less it happens. At times, you may act like an excitable child (especially in moments of extreme excitement); hopefully an endearing trait rather than an annoying or credulous one.

Past:

These days you have a different view of your time in the Alliance military but, even now, you fondly remember the night of the acceptance letter which made your boyhood dreams of service feel real. At 18, you had been accepted into the army as a technician and driver. And you told yourself, no longer would you envy your peers who enjoyed the boisterous parties, carefree life and comfortable wealth their parents could provide but yours could not. No more would you be a nerd who prefers messing around with electronics and machines to socializing. You had a greater purpose and a greater destiny. You would be doing what you enjoyed in a place where you could develop your skills; you were set for life. The Alliance Army prioritized technological progress, you would become one of their



engineers, and you would be an architect of its future. They would get a fancy university education, paid for by wealthy parents, but you would do things your own way, and make a real difference, the harder, better way!

A lot actually turned out as you imagined. You participated in exciting missions, developed your technical skills under excellent teachers and commanders, and knew there was nothing in the world more honourable than serving the Alliance. It was a good time. You never got into direct combat but, thanks to what you think of as your easy-going nature and realistic ingenuity, you were popular with the soldiers. You met one of the only Alliance people you're still in contact with around that time - James Scully.

At the time, the Alliance was involved in skirmishes with some of the outer planets. A handful of rebels, calling themselves the *Browncoats* (because they wore... brown coats), were fighting in a senseless struggle for separatism - at least that's how you saw it. At the time you were fully convinced that the Alliance was right and that the only reason the rebels were fighting was that they wanted to keep a barbaric lifestyle and escape punishment for their crimes. Most military engagements went quite well for the Alliance; as an engineer observing the action from afar, it felt like a damn exciting computer game.

It came as a shock when your unit lost. Many of your friends fled (some died fleeing) and you found yourself a captive of the rebels, specifically by a group led by Michael Troy. The rebels also captured advanced Alliance tech, the stuff you were responsible for maintaining and using for the Alliance. Yet you knew if you tried to be a hero, the rebels would kill you. So you cooperated, as if you had a choice. You were certain you wouldn't be doing this for long; the Alliance could strike back swiftly and with tremendous force. The counterattack came the very next day. The combat-hardened rebels saw the odds and called for a retreat. Unfortunately, they also saw your value and took you as a hostage. Joseph, one the rebels assigned to guard you, wasn't clever or smart (unlike his buddy in the unit John Raw, who was both) but he was fierce. John Raw might have outsmarted or outplanned any escape attempt. Joseph held a knife to your throat throughout the retreat and dared you to try something. You were one of the last people put on their hidden ship. The rebel leader, Michael Troy, did not make it aboard.

The next years you spent as a prisoner educated you about why the rebels were fighting and what the Alliance was really like. What the Alliance does with inconvenient people. The twisted, inhuman machinery hiding beneath a façade of a system says it wants the best for all people. You stopped feeling like a prisoner. You started to feel like one of them, one of the *Browncoats*. At times, you wondered if you were manipulated or otherwise intentionally undermined. Brainwashed, maybe? Wracking your brain for evidence, you can't say you have. They weren't sophisticated enough to try to pressure you a subtle way; it was they did and said that convinced you.



As their prisoner, your friendly nature and a sense of humour worked for you. Before long, you had many friends among them. Only John Raw, who never missed an opportunity to make it brutally clear that anyone from the Alliance remained a threat, kept his original opinion. Fortunately, he and Joseph were captured by the Alliance during one of their missions before he “dealt with” you.

During this time, you met Mary Troy, the wife of the late Michael Troy. For the first time in your life, you knew what it meant to be more than friends. It started because of her loneliness, and probably because the other rebels kept her on a pedestal out of respect for her late husband. After cautious feelers, and a general reminder to all that she knew her own mind, you became friends. And slowly, secret lovers. Mary trusted you and believed in you. You told her how you had lost your love for the Alliance, and she told you that Michael, who was infertile, was not the father of her daughter Sophie. She also confessed the relationship with her late husband was not as loving as it might have appeared, that he was beating her and that, when he was at his worst, she sought protection with other men using what coin she had at hand. First with John Raw and then, also, with Joseph. She told you they both aspired to marry her before she married Michael.

You and Mary both successfully concealed your developing relationship (even from Sophie) but then the fighting ended. The *Browncoats* surrendered and, in exchange, they received pardon from the Alliance, provided that they surrender their arms and release their prisoners. And so it happened that you, as a part of the exchange of prisoners, met John Raw again. You will never understand the extent of the terrible things that the Alliance investigators did to him but the man was a wreck. Lame, with a tic in his eye, he had many visible sores and scars. His condition only reinforced the monstrosity of the Alliance. You could not go back into the Alliance Army but you lacked the courage to announce that, beneath it all, you had probably turned into a *Browncoat*. The Alliance would have executed you for that, if only as an example to other Alliance prisoners of war.

You compromised, and returned with a story of how little you wished to discuss your terrible imprisonment by the *Browncoats*, to commendations and a medal. Although difficult, you managed a discreet contact with Mary. In her last message, she let you know the remainder of their *Browncoat* unit had decided to go to settle on a newly terraformed moon, simply called Moon. The settlement on Moon would concentrate on farming and breeding cattle. The prospect of a life with Mary gave you new purpose. You decided to go after her, but couldn't go on your own - it might seem suspicious. You found Alliance acquaintances looking for places to settle after the war, who were seriously considering Moon as well. Their leader was named Chang. You capitalized on your past in the Alliance Army, and your commendations and medal, to wrangle a job as his bodyguard. You knew you would be a miserable bodyguard (after all, you never actually fought), but your good service record convinced him otherwise. Your chance to get to Moon and begin a new life was safe and secured.

You did find Mary and her seven year old daughter, Sophie, but also John Raw, who had become a leader among the settlers - one of the heads of a group of cattle drovers. As soon as you met him again, it was clear that, in his eyes, you would always be Alliance scum. You felt his hatred and his scorn as if



you were the one who had tortured him. It bothered you; you didn't want to fight him but you knew that his opinion would not change. Even worse, by some strange coincidence, he was always near Mary's daughter Sophie. Sophie liked him and called him "Uncle." Meanwhile, you felt like a stranger. He did not hide his opinion of you amongst his crew. If they were the the only group there, life might have become untenable.

But Raw was not the only foreman. William Taylor, a wealthy businessman, led one of the other main groups of immigrants. Your new friendship - and only friendship - with Caroline Grey (Moon's radio operator; you met due to your interest in seeing Moon's archaic, but new to you, radio setup), also mitigated Raw's scorn.

Chang had brought a specially bred (better, for most meanings of the term) cow from the Alliance to possibly claim a larger share of the local cattle market for his people. Because of that and also because of Chang's past in the Alliance, Chang's and Raw's people were always hostile to one another. Yet this may have eventually settled down, had disaster not struck: a disease which largely spread only with Alliance immigrants. Moon settlers said it was because of those special cows, muttering about genetic modifications. Chang, however, talked about bad luck and the need for medicines to fight and cure the disease. Taylor was said to have these medicines, but wanted a ridiculous amount of money for them. But one day, soon after the ridiculous amount of money was collected, Chang disappeared. As did the money.

You were with Mary that night, and still keeping your relationship a secret. (Although by then, Sophie had discovered it, and promised she wouldn't tell anyone.) You were supposed to be Chang's bodyguard, didn't have a publicly-relatable alibi, and Chang was gone. The rest of the Alliance settlers decided to give up, and leave Moon. You didn't want to give up Mary and your dream of the life on Moon. Anyway, at that point it was unlikely that they would have let you go with them, had you pressed.

You decided that from now on you would be completely free, live by your own rules, and leave your Alliance past behind you. Caroline helped you establish yourself here as a farmer, if not a rancher (you'd have to deal with cattle drovers regularly as a rancher). You've found a decent side job as a ship pilot, which twice a year represents the main physical connection between Moon and those outside. (Other ships come by, by not as dependably as the one Moon has assigned to you to run their regular import/export milk runs.)

As life as a farmer and pilot fell into a routine, your semi-secret romantic relationship with Mary began to taper off to friendship. And Mary decided to leave Moon, to find something else out there. (You remember her outbound passage on Moon's ship fondly, if sadly.) Sophie remained on Moon, and as Mary asked you to, you kept a protective eye out for her daughter. Sophie lived with you like she was a child of yours (and Sophie did know you and her mother were an actual couple). You're not sure how



this situation looks to John Raw or anyone else, and don't care. Sophie understandably doesn't really talk about her visits to "uncle" John Raw with you - probably the same the other way, too.

You underestimated one thing. Boredom. Piloting and farming became routine. No one cared about your technical skills, your engineering talents, as on Moon there was little chance to develop them. Everything began to seem banal and you began to survive more than live. Sophie would get married, leave, and then what? This wasn't quite what you dreamed of; were you expecting too much? Too little?

Years passed. The occasional reports that Mary sent came through a mutual acquaintance, the supplier James Scully. Sophie grew up, and the little girl who laughed at the faces you made became a beautiful young woman.

She made mistakes, and despite what you feel, you addressed them as well as you imagine Mary could have. A mistake like Ian Nest, a playboy, oddly also one of the settlement's postsecondary educators, who seduced her practically over the course of a week or two and immediately, confidently ignored her and pretended as if nothing had happened. Sophie told you all about their breakup, crying. And you know she wasn't the only heart he's broken. Nest claimed to be a hero, a radical *Browncoat* and an enemy to the Alliance. When Caroline told you that fighting broke out between the Alliance and the *Browncoats* on the outer planets, you brought it to Nest and egged him on to act. And he left, hopefully not to return.

You reluctantly suggested Benedict Grey as possibly a better pairing for her, which Sophie considered, but declined to act on, saying he was "too immature." You were relieved, a bit saddened, and jolted at how quickly the years were going by.

Half a year ago you were piloting the routine flight to Moon. You were transporting cows out for Taylor and unusually had several passengers on the return leg. To your displeasure Ian Nest, who apparently survived the war, was returning back to Moon, with, some rough-looking girl named TJ and then another man you knew: Joseph, now Father Joseph. It seems he became a priest.

But your routine shipping schedule was interrupted by a strange ship. The Alliance. "Transport control; get ready for the entry of the Alliance units. We are looking for an escaped criminal, a traitor to the Alliance." Nest says they must definitely be after him. You hid him and don't know who they were looking for but they didn't find it on your ship that day.

Landing on Moon meant landing directly into the election campaign for the new governor. Benedict Grey vs. William Taylor. Promising unspoiled kid versus scrooge businessman. Your sympathies were clear. Additionally, Caroline led Benedict's campaign. Your passenger TJ was publicly hailed a hero, who saved the life of Caroline in some situation which you're still a little unclear about. Anyway, Benedict's victory pleased you. Perhaps under his governance Moon will move forward and make some technological advances. That would make you happier.



Benedict's first crisis came quickly. The disease, which people now call Chang's Disease, is back and spreading again. Still no cure on Moon. Unsurprisingly, both John Raw and William Taylor independently contacted you to order a shipment of medicines from outbound. They were pushing you quite hard for a rush order, and you promised you would use your Alliance contact, James Scully, to expedite things. After all, you live on Moon, too. You know Scully and his partner sometimes smuggle, and this was certainly for a good cause. So far, no luck and no delivery.

Both Raw and Taylor are looking for scapegoats; especially Raw - you suspect what this man is capable of when disappointed, and he's always hated you. You will likely see both of them today on this and other topics, as same as every week, Caroline has invited you today to the governor's hacienda to discuss the issues of the day. At least, it'll be more interesting than staying on the farm...



Your relationship with the Alliance and the Independent:

You believed in the Alliance, until you became convinced that it was monstrous. You believed in the Independents, even though not all the Independents believe in you. You know the Alliance is a technological superpower and you regret you cannot be the technologist you feel drawn to be; the Independents are barely more than farmers and ranchers. For so long you've had a clear view of things in your life (either one way or another) but now you don't know...

Relationships with others:

Caroline Grey: radio operator on the Moon, and certainly a person you like. She has helped you many times to look at things differently and generally has often assisted you.

- This is either character and, in some cases, it can be played as a man named Carl Grey. The gamemaster will inform you about that at the start of the game if this is a case.

Gideon Allen: Doctor. He came from the Alliance on the same ship as TJ and Nest.

Sophie Troy: You like her very much as if she were your daughter. You take care of her and care about her quite a lot.

William Taylor: A guy who is mainly interested in money and his own benefit. He has pretty decent power but fortunately he did not become the governor.

- This is either character and, in some cases, it can be played as a woman named Wilma. The gamemaster will inform you about that at the start of the game if this is a case.

John Raw: A heartless guy whose life has been ruined by the Alliance. A walking accusation of your activity in the Alliance. You know that he hates you and he awakens the feelings of guilt in you. You would like to set things right but you don't know if it's even possible.

Ian Nest: He seduced and then left Sophie and you cannot forgive him that. Definitely a good speaker but not overflowing with morality.

Benedict Grey: Son of Caroline and the current Governor. Sometimes he seems a bit naive and weak to you but you definitely do not doubt he means good. You'd like to help him so that he could govern well.

Tanya "TJ" Stone: celebrity and hero. She apparently saved Caroline's life. She can play it on the people and she certainly enjoys this life. But her brutality will never cease to astonish you. Actually, you're a little afraid of her.

- This is either character and in some cases it can be played as a woman named Talbot. The gamemaster will inform you about that at the start of the game if this is a case.

Father Joseph: Your memories of him from when you were captured are not so good but it seems that he has grown wiser since then. He became a priest, and though you are not extremely close to him, you respect him.



In the game:

Hidden beneath this façade is an internally doubtful and undecided seeker of meaning and life's truth.

(Sophie Troy) Mary told you a lot. That Michael, who was infertile, was not the father of her daughter Sophie. She confessed that it did not work out very well with Michael, that he was beating her and that, in the time when it was worst, she sought solace in other men.

(John Raw) You will never understand the full range of all the terrible things that the Alliance investigators had to do to him, but the man was a wreck.

(John Raw, Sophie Troy) Even worse, that by some strange coincidence he often took care of Sophie. She obviously liked him; called him "Uncle" while you felt like a stranger.

But then the disaster struck. In form of a disease which spread among your people. Maybe because of those cows that you brought.

But you didn't watch him, you just experienced one of the most passionate nights with Mary.

(Sophie Troy) You started to take care of her as if she were your daughter and Sophie began to live with you.

The only connection with Mary was occasional reports that she was sending through your acquainted supplier James Scully.

(Ian Nest) He took it and, properly boasting, he immediately took off. "Hero." Thus you got rid of that flirt and a would-be hero. You hoped it would be for good.

Therefore you arranged with James that they would bring the medicines and hand them over to a reliable person that would bring them to you. But so far nobody brought them to you..