

# **Laila Bilanski-Adams**

**Delegation: Peace River**

**Nationality: Peace River**

There aren't many people who understand you. For as long as you can remember now you've driven yourself hard, forced yourself to go on when you just wanted to stop and rest, climbed the ladder rung by rung. The workers and managers who think they've got it hard just because they don't get paid as much as you just can't see what it takes to be an executive – you're born into a position of responsibility that never, ever lets up, and damn sure you earn every single cent you make.

You were born into the executive caste, your parents both high-flyers in Paxton Arms, and from a young age were given the best (and therefore hardest) in education. Even back then you had to push yourself to stay on top of things, because it was a punishing schedule. Besides from training in the usual school stuff, you had to study several foreign languages, business etiquette, diplomacy and international cultural studies, and when you had a free moment you'd accompany your parents to business dinners where you had to be quiet and polite and amuse the foreign delegates with your knowledge of business matters. It was only when you reached university that you had a chance to relax for a bit.

Studying to become a diplomat, you continued working hard and qualified near the top of your class. You went on to postgraduate studies in order to open more doors when finally you began your career, and when you were writing your thesis you decided you needed to see how the other half lives, as it were. You signed up for night-classes in low-level business studies, where low-ranking management caste types and even a few from the worker caste came to better themselves. You got to know some of them, and it was there you met Herb. A likeable worker caste guy, he was working an assembly line by day and studying by night, hoping to climb the ladder too. There was something carefree about him, and the simplicity of his life, and eventually you asked him out. You were young and naive, and it was several cycles before you realised that there was no way it was going to work out – you were just too different. You broke it off.

It was during the War of the Alliance, when you'd graduated and started your career in the Peace River diplomacy bureau, that you decided to call Herb again. Word had come down from on high that there was to be a worker caste representative employed in the bureau – a token, to appease the elements complaining about how everything's run by the executives (well of COURSE it is, executives are raised to the task and workers don't know the first thing about it). Furthermore, the atmosphere in the office at the time was that promotion would come quickest to someone who was in touch with the common worker. Seeing a chance to get a crucial advantage, you cut a deal with Herb. You would ensure he got this job in the diplomacy bureau, and he'd marry you and provide you with your proof of your connection to the workers. It was a rash decision, but, you figured, it's those decisions that make or break careers.

It worked out, at least the career part of it. You did indeed have a small but crucial advantage over your colleagues and promotions were that little bit easier to come by. You still had to work extremely hard of course, putting in long, long hours and practically living at the office for sometimes a week at a stretch. During that time you were deeply involved in the formation of the Peace River Protectorate, a sphere of influence that Peace River would trade with, assist governmentally and protect from the squabbling poles – a fantastic chance for many small towns that couldn't otherwise stand on their own two feet to ally and benefit together, with the muscle backing it up to keep the poles from getting uppity and deciding it's annexing time. Since the start of the marriage things hadn't been great with Herb, but as the cycles went by they got worse and worse.

A few cycles ago your work brought you into contact with a suave junior ambassador from the Allied Southern Territories embassy in Peace River, Ual Guyet. To cut a long story short, one thing led to another and you started having an affair two cycles back. Of course, a love affair with a Southern diplomat would certainly be seen as a conflict of interests within the office, and for that reason you've kept it a secret from Herb as well. Nevertheless, the affair provides you with something on an emotional level that has long (or perhaps always? You can't even remember) been absent from your life and so you've kept it going. You don't know if Herb suspects or not.

Of course, it's difficult to have a conversation with Herb. For the past few cycles they've often devolved into yelled arguments, and even at the best of times you're barely civil to each other. From time to time the stress of your job and the alcohol you drink to help deal with that leads you into one another's arms, but those are brief events and the frosty atmosphere has always returned come morning.

And now things are getting worse. Of course, your career is as excellent as ever, and your prospects are good – more than one person has suggested you might one day head the bureau, and a few have even wondered if you might go further again. You just need to keep the lid on a few things, like the affair and the state of the marriage, but that's just another couple of sacrifices to add to the long, long list of things you've had to do or not do to get to where you are today. Unfortunately a few weeks ago you found that Herb, who had long expressed displeasure with the system that nurtured him and all Riverans, had a box of rifles in the attic. You have no idea what use they could be for, and with the Interpolar War blazing that just leads to more possibilities. You haven't mentioned it to him, although he knows you found them, but that's added to the tension plenty. And worse yet, only a few days later you discovered you're pregnant. And you don't know by whom, Herb or Ual. And even if you did, you wouldn't know what to do about it. You haven't told anybody at all and were desperate to get some time to clear your head. But of course you can't appear flaky at work.

So when word of this mission came along you jumped on the chance to get out into the Badlands for a few days, worry about something other than the usual work, deal with some people who don't know you and maybe get your head sorted out. And maybe the change of scene would sharpen your skills once again, you can pull something remarkable out of the bag in these negotiations and send your career yet further. But things are never that simple. Somehow, Herb found out you were coming on the mission and got himself involved too. So much for time alone. Then just days before leaving, Ual said he'd be going out of town for a few days, and typically, here he is. Some days it just doesn't pay to get out of bed. But of course, you'll keep soldiering on, although you feel just about ready to snap...

## About Your Delegation <

- **Herb Bilanski-Adams** – A whinging kid trying to do what the adults do – he's not cut out, raised or trained for executive caste work but still he complains when he's left out of it and is incompetent when he's included in it. He hasn't got the discipline or maturity for the executive world, but with the level of responsibility he's got he's liable to do stupid and dangerous things without even knowing what he's getting into. He has strong opinions on topics he knows very little about and too much free time. Infuriating though he is, there's still something about him that reminds you of the old days, when you felt freedom, just by being in his company, and you like that.
- **Marna Kounkel** – An old but grizzled-looking bodyguard that was sent to keep you safe. You don't usually fraternise with the hired help.

- **Ual Guyet** – A junior diplomat in the Allied Southern Territories embassy many cycles your junior, but that's a breath of fresh air into the claustrophobic stuffiness of your life. The chance to feel genuine affection and to let down your substantial guard once in a while has made up somewhat for the things you'd forced yourself to miss out on in your life. Lately, however, you're unsure if he still feels the same way about you, which is yet another burden on your heavily-laden mind.

## Resources <

You were escorted to the pick-up point by a squadron of Peace River Defence Force combat hoppers, which are awaiting further orders out there. As official leader of this mission, they are yours to command.

## Goals <

- Bring this town into the fold of the Peace River Protectorate. They'll be joining many others like them, and of course to be seen to be still working for a project you helped create many cycles ago won't hurt your career.
- You're not a sales rep, but there is a war on and you've got a unique opportunity to talk to some widely varied people here. A few weapons sales would be a real feather in your cap, and you have the permission to offer some provisional package deals and the like, if necessary.
- Port Arthur and Peace River have been at loggerheads ever since Port Arthur's formation, moreso now that they're trying to win the allegiance of Badlands towns too. PRDF forces often skirmish with Port Arthur Korps opponents, but cutting a deal with them, any kind of a deal, could be a real coup!
- Finally, and most difficult to face, work out where you're going from here. With Herb, with Ual, with the pregnancy.

## Additional Player Info: Laila Bilanski-Adams <

Laila, bless her, is the archetypal career bitch. She has a responsibility to herself to do the best she can, and a responsibility to everybody in Peace River to keep the system running smoothly. It's not all bonuses and dinner parties, being in the executive caste. And nothing proves that so well as the amount of sacrifices she's made in her life for the sake of her Career – a few of which are now catching up with her. She doesn't know what Herb's got himself mixed up in, and she can't help worry about it because on some level that she hides from herself (she's pretty good at doing that) she still loves him. That's why the frequent blazing rows are so passionate.

At the moment she's torn between putting her head down and working really hard and coming out of these negotiations with yet more material for the C.U. as it were, or actually facing up to her real problems for a change. A better opportunity for the latter might not come – almost certainly won't come, seeing as the pregnancy puts a real deadline on things – but it's something she dreads. Navigating the web of international intrigue in this room and coming out on top is, for her, the easy option.

Peace River is to all intents and purposes owned and run by Paxton Arms, and all citizens are part of the caste system – the worker caste are the majority and do all the work, the management caste manage the workers, and the executive caste run things from the top. If you're born in Peace River, you become part of the caste your parents belong to. The Badlands Revolutionary Front (a terrorist group operating in several locations but particularly strong in Peace River) are fighting to change the way things are.