

## **Herb Bilanski-Adams**

**Delegation: Peace River**

**Nationality: Peace River**

Some people reach a point in their lives where they examine each and every aspect of where they are in the big journey, and realise that everything is all wrong. How you came to be a token diplomat, working for the expansion of a soulless megacorporation and married to an equally soulless career-junkie is something you've wondered about a lot in the past few cycles.

You were born in one of the reasonably nice bits Peace River's 3rd Tier, where the less disadvantaged members of the worker caste make their homes. Your parents were little cogs in the huge Paxton Arms machine, and you went to school with the other worker kids, all expecting to carry on in the same tradition. From the cradle to the grave, the company looks after its employees. You had a knack with people, though, which far outweighed your abilities with machinery or tools or maths. People liked you, could talk to you, came to you to help sort out their problems. Although in those days inter-caste mobility was still pretty much a pipe-dream, it was suggested to you that you should apply for a management course and maybe someday you'd be able to climb to the management caste.

You eventually had to settle for doing a night course in management while working the assembly lines during the day, but you were on your way to something better, you figured. It was while attending a lecture that you first met Laila. She was incredible. Beautiful and severe, with a razor-sharp mind and the kind of confidence and self-assuredness that made you feel like jelly. She was from the executive caste, and it turned out she was attending your classes as a sort of research into how the other half lives, for her thesis. To this day you don't know if she'd decided on a bit of fun slumming, but she asked you out and it took all of your self-control and willpower just to stammer out "...sure!"

After a few cycles you realised that you were just too different and things weren't going to work out. The War was on then, and you'd drifted apart and you were supervising your assembly line and waiting (and waiting, and waiting) to hear anything at all about your application for a management position when out of the blue, Laila called you up. She'd got a position in Peace River's diplomacy bureau and had a proposition for you. Apparently her department wanted a diplomat from the worker caste, just a token position to keep the worker radicals happy, but also she'd decided that the best way to fast-track her career was to show that she was in touch with the common worker - and what better way to do that than by marrying one? You made a deal - she'd get you the diplomacy job (you'd remain part of the worker caste in name but would be making a lot more money) and you'd be the sort of reverse-trophy husband. Your instinct told you that you were making a mistake, but you went ahead with it.

It soon became clear just how token you were. Your working day consisted of practically being told to sit in the corner quietly and play with your toys or something while the grown-ups did their work. You really were only there so that the CEO could point at your caste in the human resources statistics to appease the workers. Furthermore, from inside the machine you could see how it worked. Although Peace River's diplomacy bureau in name, it was blatantly obvious that Paxton was running the show and your office was basically errand-boys for them. And with the War going on, and the Peace River Army on the march, it was Peace River's worst-kept secret amongst the executives that it was really a land grab (Laila was even working to bring it about) - they were looking beyond the end of the War, they wanted to become a power in the Badlands and they were doing that by taking over nearby townlands. After the War, with the formation of the Peace River Protectorate, that was proven to have been utterly true.

When your estranged sister landed in jail a few cycles ago and you bailed her out, it turned out she'd been distributing pamphlets for the Badlands Revolutionary Front – a dangerously insane and directionless terrorist group, or so you'd always been told. But as she talked to you about them, you realised how much sense their cause made. They wanted to bring down Paxton Arms, to give Peace River back to the people as had always been Erbert Paxton's intent, rather than to the executives as was the twisted parody of that utopian vision which Peace River had become. It was obvious that the glacial lip-service CEO Simosa was paying to change was going nowhere – the only way to free the workers from their misery (and down on the 4th Tier things have always been really, really miserable) was to tear down the oppressive system and start from scratch.

Slowly you became more and more involved with the BRF – first donating money to them, then sticking up some posters by night, then syphoning off funds from your office. Since the Interpolar War started you've even been helping store weapons caches, but unfortunately Laila stumbled across a box of rifles recently – she didn't open it so you don't know if she knows what it is, but you're very concerned about it. This has only made the tensions between the pair of you even worse – you were barely civil to each other at the best of times and now the screaming matches are more frequent, although even still on occasion stress or alcohol leads you into each others' arms for a short time.

You're sick of your worthless job, you're sick of your wife, and you're sick of Paxton Arms. The only people on the planet with any real freedom are the Badlanders, and now Badlands towns are being forced into auctioning their freedom just to protect themselves from somebody else's war. You've had enough. When word of this mission came up you requested to be on board even before you heard who else would be going, and to your surprise your boss was quite happy to send you out into the Badlands on what he considered a daft game. The mutual disdained surprise you shared with Laila when you each found out you were both on the delegation still brings a smile to your face.

There's no way you're going to let this town fall prey to the all-consuming powers, and that includes Peace River. At this stage you're just about willing to fight for the freedom of the little guys – obviously this isn't the place, but you've half a mind to just turn your back on Peace River and side with this little town, helping them fight for their independence and not having to bow to the bullies at the poles and in the Badlands. It's a small fight, but it's representative of the plight of the entire planet...

## About Your Delegation <

- **Laila Bilanski-Adams** – Talk about your ice-queens. Utterly consumed by her career, thinks of nothing but promotion. Conservative about keeping the executives on the top and the workers on the bottom. Cares about nothing but climbing the ladder, disapproves of almost everything you believe in, and is basically, you have learned, just about exactly the wrong kind of woman for you. Furthermore, you don't know how much she knows about you helping the BRF and are scared of what she could do, and since finding that box she's been acting stranger than ever. But still, sometimes when she looks sidelong at you with that little sarcastic smile, you can't help but remember how good it was in the old days...
- **Marna Kounkel** – A bodyguard who was sent with you. Looks old but tough. Haven't spoken to him much yet, but Laila of course acts like he's not even there so you're kind of inclined to get friendly with him to annoy her.

- **Ual Guyet** – Typical Southern Republican sleazeball, he's working for the ambassador's office in Peace River and has become friendly with Laila.

## Resources <

Your group was escorted to the pick-up point by some combat hoppers from the air wing of the Peace River Defence Force, but they're certainly not yours to command. Laila is technically in charge of this mission.

## Goals <

- Keep the town independent. You're sure the BRF would support such an action, and if they have the resources to hold out in Lance Point against concerted efforts by the Southern MILICIA, they should be able to lend sufficient muscle to a no-man's-land town like this one.
- Try to find out what Laila knows about your ties to the BRF, and find a way to either keep her quiet or ensure that she can't do any damage with the information.
- Gather any support you can for the BRF's cause (which is, as far as you're concerned, the destruction of Paxton Arms and independence for the Badlands).
- You really are sick of your life in Peace River, but don't fancy having to go on the run and blow stuff up in your hometown. If you can get out, but join up with some group with similar ideas to your own, you could finally make a real difference.

## Additional Player Info: Herb Bilanski-Adams <

Herb is having what might be described as a mid-life crisis. He's ended up somewhere he realises he doesn't want to be and is slowly working up the steam to do something real about it. Fortunately he's found a few outlets, otherwise he might end up snapping a few cycles down the line and coming into work one day carrying a rifle-shaped box of flowers.

Terra Novans value the concept of honour highly, and Paxton Arms, being a corporation, is not motivated in the slightest by honour – just by profits. Herb has seen inside the corporate machine and it's an ugly place that does ugly things and turns people ugly too. Regardless of the empty promises coming from the government (i.e. the CEO of Paxton), there's no way such a machine can be turned to good – it just has to be destroyed or shut down. To complicate matters, his wife Laila represents pretty accurately that machine, and yet deep down, despite what he tells himself, he's still kinda-sorta in love with her. That's why the frequent blazing rows are so passionate.

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.