

The Second Crisis

Adapted by

Machinima of Doom

from the novel FOUNDATION by Isaac Asimov

INT. ROYAL OFFICE CHAMBER - NIGHT

The scene takes place in an ornate, well-lit royal receiving chamber.

HARDIN, the Prime Minister of the planet Terminus, sits in a lavish armchair in a corner of the office. He has a CALM expression and RELAXED demeanor, and is looking into the center of the room at nothing in particular.

WEINIS, the Regent of Anacreon, sits in a (yet more) lavish armchair centered against a wall of the chamber. He has a SMUG, CONFIDENT expression.

Two uniformed SOLDIERS stand at attention with guns on either side of the door, staring straight ahead.

A large blank MONITOR is inset into the wall opposite WEINIS' chair.

WEINIS regards HARDIN with a SNEER.

FADE INTO MED. SHOT OF SOLDIERS

PAN TO MED. SHOT OF WEINIS

WEINIS  
(arrogantly, victoriously)  
Well, Minister Hardin, my fleet is  
on its way to your defenseless  
planet as we speak...

WEINIS motions toward the SOLDIERS with a nod.

WEINIS (CONT'D)  
...and you will be staying securely  
here. It would seem that the power  
your scientists have long withheld  
from Anacreon will soon be mine.

CONTINUE PAN TO HARDIN

HARDIN  
(nonchalantly)  
On the contrary, Regent, you  
will soon have no power at all.  
(beat)

A power outage causes the lights to go out suddenly.

CUT TO LONG SHOT, FROM CORNER

FOCUS ON MONITOR

(CONTINUED)

WEINIS

What?!

The monitor flickers to life showing a CLOSE UP of the haggard face of the uniformed PRINCE LEFKIN. He is in the dim metal cabin of a spaceship, lit by sparks and flickering light. The background is hazy, and the muzzle of a gun can be glimpsed in the corner of the image.

WEINIS leaps to his feet and reaches towards the monitor.

WEINIS

(anguished)

My son! What has happened?!

BEGIN SLOW DOLLY TO MONITOR

LEFKIN speaks haltingly, as though being prompted.

LEFKIN

The Anacreonian navy ... refusing to be a party ... to abominable sacrilege ... is returning to Anacreon ... with the following ultimatum issued ... to those who would dare to use profane force ... against the Foundation ... source of all blessings ... and against the Galactic Spirit. Cease at once all war ... and guarantee us of the navy ... as represented by our ship's priest-attendant ... that such war will never in the future be resumed, and that...

END DOLLY WITH C.U. OF MONITOR

LEFKIN pauses, then shakes his head in refusal. A warning shot can be heard in the background and LEFKIN jumps fearfully.

LEFKIN (CONT'D)

...and that the former Regent, Wienis ... be imprisoned ... and tried before an ecclesiastical court for his crimes. Otherwise, the royal navy ... will blast the palace to the ground ... to destroy the nest of sinners ... and the den of destroyers ... of men's souls ... that now prevail.

LEFKIN makes a STRANGLED SOB, and the screen flickers and goes blank, leaving the chamber in darkness.

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO C.U. OF WEINIS

A FORCE FIELD grows around HARDIN offscreen, casting WEINIS' SHOCKED/INCREDULOUS face in a bluish light (the chamber is lit with blue ambient light).

CUT TO MED. SHOT OF HARDIN

HARDIN appears CALM and COLLECTED beneath a faintly glowing blue field.

HARDIN

(sagely)

There is an ancient fable, perhaps told even in the age when man inhabited just a single planet, that might interest you. It runs as follows:

FADE TO ANIMATIC INSERT

HARDIN (CONT'D)

A horse having a wolf as a dangerous enemy lived in constant fear of his life. Driven to desperation, it occurred to him to seek a strong ally. Whereupon he approached a man, and offered an alliance, pointing out that the wolf was also an enemy of the man.

The man accepted the partnership at once and offered to kill the wolf if his new partner would only cooperate by placing his speed at the man's disposal. The horse was willing, and allowed the man to place bridle and saddle upon him.

The man mounted, hunted down the wolf, and killed it. The horse, joyful and relieved, thanked the man, and said: "Now that our enemy is dead, remove your bridle and saddle and restore my freedom." Whereupon the man laughed and replied: "The hell you say! Giddy up!", and applied the spurs with a will.

FADE TO C.U. OF WEINIS

WEINIS stares in SILENCE and DISBELIEF.

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO MED. SHOT OF HARDIN

HARDIN

You see the analogy, I hope. In his ambition to cement total domination over his people, the King of Anacreon accepted from the Foundation the religion of science that made him divine; and that same religion of science was his bridle and saddle, for it placed the life blood of technology in the hands of the priesthood -- who took their orders from us, be it noted, and not from you. You killed the wolf, Weinis, but could not get rid of the ma -

CUT TO OTS OF HARDIN INTO ROOM

WIENIS springs to his feet MADDENED, SHOUTING and gesturing WILDY.

WIENIS

And yet you won't escape! Let them blow us up!

WEINIS (CONT'D)

(hysterically)

Soldiers! Shoot me down that devil!

CUT TO MED. SHOT OF HARDIN

HARDIN slowly faces the SOLDIERS.

DOLLY QUICKLY TO C.U. OF HARDIN

HARDIN smiles calmly.

CUT TO MED. SHOT OF SOLDIERS

The SOLDIER nearer to WEINIS aims his weapon briefly before shaking his head and THROWING it to the ground. The other SOLDIER merely looks down at the floor.

CUT TO MED. SHOT OF WEINIS

FOLLOW HIM AS HE MOVES

WIENIS SCREAMS and leaps for the SOLDIER's discarded blaster. He quickly aims at HARDIN.

CUT TO MED. SHOT OF HARDIN

(CONTINUED)

WEINIS fires several times, but each shot merely causes the field surrounding HARDIN to brighten sharply with a sound effect, leaving HARDIN unfazed.

CUT TO C.U. OF WEINIS

WIENIS laughs MANIACALLY.

SPIRAL UP TO BIRDS EYE VIEW OF WEINIS

WIENIS gives a SHOUT of despair, and raises his arms.

CUT TO C.U. OF HARDIN

At the gunshot, HARDIN winces, then MUTTERS resignedly. The of a body falling is heard.

HARDIN

A man of "direct action" to the end. Violence is indeed the last refuge of the incompetent.

FADE TO CREDITS