

Straker's Checkmate

by Ed Straker and Amelia R

Straker's Checkmate a new original ufo series story by Ed Straker and Amelia R.

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Dedicated to poor delusional Gloria, who didn't have a chance. Straker would say she shot far short of the cup and way over par.

Jasper didn't get a Bentley. Or a rematch.

"One more month and I retire from the commission, praise God."

"Tell the truth Jasper, you love coming to work," his wife Gloria commented, amused.

"Every six months it's the same thing. They lock heads like animals in rut. Straker used to be his aide, for pity's sake. Now he's his patsy. Why don't they do it the proper way? Pick pistols, march ten steps, turn, aim and blow the hell out of one another. Then we could all go home for tea."

"You English are all alike. You take the piss out of one another in Parliament, but a good satisfying knock down drag out intellectual match between two Americans is something you aren't interested in because its dreadfully hoi polloi."

"You might have heard of a chap called Hitler, Gloria dear. We ran the nutter off. You Americans were still playing with coloured tissue and scissors making paper chains during the Blitz."

"You might remember Lend Lease, Jasper. That is, between boasting that you British are so much superior to us lowly Yanks while still kowtowing to a Royal family who are more German than pesky Adolf."

"Not all Yanks, dearest. I married you."

"I hold no delusions about your eternal love Jasper. You married me simply because I can actually manage to tie a windsor knot and I have more money than you do."

"Shot starboard Darling, sinking fast. So now where are they? I've never known your Great White Hope Straker to be late."

"You've been on my side of the bookcase again, Jasper. Henderson popped in a

minute ago, he's been off grumbling to another member in the corner. I could make a rug out of those eyebrows. Nobody taught the poor boy to use shears."

"Shears? That scarlet nosed beast would need our gardener's hedge clippers just to be able to see."

"Terribly clever, Darling. He does look like one of those sheepdogs with that vast eyebrow fringe of his."

"Sheepdog? What's your precious Straker then?"

"Darling! He's one of those terribly sleek tasteful white dogs you see on art deco friezes."

"You mean borzoi? So just where is our bony helmet haired Nehru wearing friend? Doesn't he know we lost India? Is he going to be wearing a turban and charming snakes next? "

"Jasper, if you took your eyes off your wallet, you'd notice that the borzoi has a body you can only dream of and that Nehru he wears displays it with elan. He's positively streamlined. I hear all he does to maintain it is walk. As for snakes, he can charm this snake anytime."

"Walk? Really darling? A man with that much of a helium propelled ego doesn't walk. It's done for him. I doubt he even ties his own shoes. His manservant takes care of that for him."

"I think you've mistaken me for Prince Charles. Besides, I favor ankle boots. More efficient. Didn't I checkmate you at your club, Mr. Coombe? You still complaining about it? Not very stiff upper lip and take crushing defeat with grace of you."

"Commander. I uh ...didn't see you come up. About the games I lost, anyone can have a spot of bad luck. That's all it was."

"Bad luck was all it was? Is that how you'd dismiss the sinking of the Titanic too? I beat a former British chess champion. Three times. Or have I mistaken you for someone else, Mr. Coombe?"

"You're looking ever so handsome Commander Straker. Our nine holes must have done you some good. Yes, my husband Jasper underestimated you. He was too busy engaged in his favorite hobby, talking about himself. He isn't even good at that."

Straker gave the woman a nuclear blast of a look.

"Excuse me." he said.

"Your nine with Straker? Some new sin you want to confess, dear?" Coombe muttered under his breath, still swatting at his sweat with his pocket handkerchief. Straker had been directly behind him. He had no idea how long Straker had been there, and it was a most distressing lack of knowledge.

"I teach golf. Remember? That pays for drinks at your club, Lord knows you don't," Gloria whispered back.

Henderson had turned around at hearing Straker's resonant voice.

"Ah so God finally decided to join His lesser angels. You're more than fifteen minutes late, Straker." James Henderson growled

"I'm delighted to hear you missed me, General."

"What were you doing all this time, Straker? Sightseeing in London? That what the fisherman cap is about?"

There was a guilty, appreciative titter around the table at Henderson's joke. Straker seated himself, poured water from a crystal carafe into his glass, took a long sip. Henderson was having far too much fun. He didn't notice Straker's hand was shaking badly

"The cap does have something to do with my reason for being late, yes, yes," Straker responded coolly.

"Now I begin to see. You saw it on sale at Marks and Spencer and you thought you simply must have it." Henderson grinned, enormously pleased with himself as he looked around at the commission members, expecting their repeat demonstration of brown nosing.

Silence.

Henderson scowled, then looked back at Straker. Henderson went whiter than Straker's Nehru.

Straker had thrown the cap down on the table in a rare blatant gesture of contempt. That action had caused his jacket sleeve to fall open. For the first time, the onlookers had seen his thick gauze wrist bandage with blood stains still visible on it.

Henderson in the meanwhile was just staring uncomfortably at the long yellowish purpled gash on Straker's forehead, situated dangerously close to one blue eye, wound edges fused together with seven surgical staples.

"I didn't set out to remind the commission so graphically of why I continue to come here, General. Although God knows I've seen and showed you worse. This morning my car was hit by UFO fire and torn apart by a blast in the same way you'd pull open a tin of kippers. I lost control, and wound up fighting off two of our unpleasant little alien friends wanting a ride. I killed one, the other made an attempt to cut my eye out but fell short. I say short because even after a very painful visit to hospital, I was alive, thank God, and could see. Alien number two was already dead, as horrible a death as I could give him for his trouble. They've now apparently decided to rob us of our eyes too.

Unlike the countless other victims that lost vital body organs, while most of you were

just waking up, I was losing my breakfast and an alarming amount of my blood waiting for the shado medical helicopter, yes, yes but I was luckier. U F O Incidents like mine is why I come and ask you to make your contributions to SHADO. Up that close and that personal, what aliens do to humans isn't pretty, is it? So perhaps my mishap will have a positive outcome after all. Excellent.

If you'll excuse me, I'll leave my paperwork with the General and have my associate Colonel Freeman pass the hat around later. I find that still feel poorly and need to go home.

A few words before I leave if you will. Mr. Coombe, you'll forgive me, but I'm looking forward to your retirement. General Henderson, feel free to keep the cap, if you're so inclined. I accepted it from a doctor in the hope I wouldn't make my civilian driver nauseous from being forced to look at my wounds. I needed to come here in his cab. My car didn't survive the attack as well as I did. Good day, ladies and gentlemen."

The Coombe couple walked toward the car park a week later, after voting to continue shado funding along with the other IAC members.

"If you ask me, that bastard probably slipped and fell on something sharp, like his tongue. Just thought he'd put the fear of God in Henderson. Old coot swallowed the bait and broke open the piggy bank. Alien attack my arse, just typical Straker melodramatics. And how was I to know he was that good at chess?" Coombe ranted. "The members of my club have been mocking me ever since."

"Thick as a board, aren't you, Jasper? The Commander's been winning at chess with Henderson for years now. Straker just never needs a board or pieces to score a checkmate."

"You teach him golf?"

"I did try to teach him other things that day, but he wasn't at all pleased about my idea of combining my hole and his one. Which judging from how his damp golfing trousers felt, his one must be astonishing. I fancied myself yelling foreplay before every stroke. He just gave me the most hideous look, and walked off the course. You do understand sex, don't you dear? I had to try. Just look at the man. He wanted to kill me when I grabbed him between the legs. Even so, he never said a word and he never looked sexier. The swine drove off with my own electric golf cart and his bag, left me to drag my bag all the way back to the clubhouse in the rain."

"Simply disgusting."

"Jasper darling, comfort yourself with what I'm going to give you at your retirement soiree."

"I could do with a new Bentley."

"I could do with a double gin and a new husband. I'm just giving you divorce papers, Jasper. Taxi!"

The End

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