

# S.H.A.D.O. Play

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Ed Straker paused for a moment, looking at himself in the mirror behind the bar. He looked resplendent in his all-black tuxedo which showed off his white, close-cropped hair.

He turned around and looked out at the crowd of actors, their agents, producers and writers. Tonight was a celebration of an award that was given to Harlington-Straker Studios for their contributions to the community.

Straker hated these events. He felt it was an unnecessary distraction from his work as Commander of the Alien Defence Organisation. Almost half of the people here were under his command; they, too, had parts to play in this shadowplay.

No, he smiled to himself. A S.H.A.D.O.-play. If the presenters of tonight's award really knew the contributions he made...

And thanks to the miracle of television, all of S.H.A.D.O. would be watching him during this farce. What might they think? Would they feel proud of the contributions of their "cover" organisation? Or dismayed at the thought that they would never really be recognized for their day-to-day sacrifices, the lives lost?

It angered Straker that, in this era of space exploration, his people still had to remain secret. And now, they were considering cutting his budget. Do more with less. Bloody government! If only there was some way to increase the budget.

Surveying the crowd, he had a brilliant idea. He walked up to one of his producers. "Gerry," he said, "I have this idea for a new science fiction series..."