



AMERICA'S GALACTIC ADVENTURE LEGION

BOOK 18

FIRST CONTACT



Walter Knight

AMERICA'S GALACTIC FOREIGN LEGION

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In a galaxy far, far away, the eighteenth installment of this perpetually preposterous military science fiction series features a visiting probe from distant Ursidae, populated by a sentient bear-like species. Tasked with forging an alliance with other sentient species for mutual galactic protection for its home world, the probe lands in the DMZ of New Colorado's New Gobi Desert. Encountering many low-life representatives of sentient species on New Colorado, the probe continues its quest to be taken to local leaders.

Along the way, the probe gets involved in a robbery, drug trafficking, and finally an annual all-terrain car race, where it is dubbed the Toyota Pride. That's when Colonel Joey R. Czerinski of the United States Galactic Federation's Foreign Legion shows up, and everything immediately goes south. Even Smokey the Bear makes an appearance, trying to gain control of the Toyota Pride and its compact, powerful laser technology.

When the bear-like Ursidaens finally make diplomatic contact, humans and spiders and scorpions all join in the wild, way-out party. America's Galactic Foreign Legion goes off the reservation again as the silliness continues!

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~AUTHOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT~

I dedicate ***America's Galactic Foreign Legion*** – ***Book 18: First Contact*** to the memory of American hero Walter Grant Knight (no relation). 'When you go home, tell them of us, and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today.'

~BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR~

America's Galactic Foreign Legion series

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CHAPTER 1

I am Joey R. Czerinski, Hero of the Legion, Butcher of New Colorado, and commander of a battalion of United States Galactic Federation Foreign Legion troops at the Demilitarized Zone crossroads of New Gobi City, planet of New Colorado. America has taken humanity across the galaxy, and found nothing but exoskeleton civilizations. After a series a wars, a fragile truce holds with the spiders of the Arthropodan Empire on our shared colony of New Colorado. Humanity is loosely allied with our spider friends, along with the neighboring Scorpion Kingdom, against a vast galaxy of alien civilizations.

First contact often results in war, but we've been lucky so far. America has kicked some serious alien ass across the stars. It has not gone unnoticed that all those first contacts were with bugs. Humanity is alone in a galaxy swarming of bugs. We conduct trade, form alliances, maintain truces, and draw borders. We get by, playing the bugs against each other. However, humanity is not happy being alone. We seek the familiarity of another vertebrate mammalian species. There must be brethren out there, searching too.

As for me? I don't care much about first contact or the big picture. All I care about is surviving the day. That means keeping the spiders on their side of the DMZ. Spiders and humans live on both sides of the DMZ, and the Foreign Legion forces everyone to get along. Yeah right, like that is ever going to happen. We trade with the spiders, even let them join

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the Legion, but we will never 'just get along.' It's in our DNA to fight.

* * * * *

The Ursidae Empire heard humanity's radio and TV broadcasts, but had not developed the transport beam technology needed to reach us. They feared the technological prowess of humanity and the many exoskeleton species, sensing how helpless they were to attack and invasion. It was with great apprehension the Ursidaens watched as the various species nuked each other several times, with no care of consequences. Ursidaens sought cautious first contact and alliances on favorable terms. A space probe long ago sent to New Colorado now neared the first stage of its fateful mission.

Of all the dangerous species out there, the most violent and fearsome species also held out the best promise of compatibility. Warm-blooded humans most closely resembled the sentient species of Ursidae. The Ursidaens looked like what humans referred to as bears, but walked upright and had opposing thumbs. Ursidaens also had big snouts, teeth, claws, and bad breath. Both species spoke multiple complicated languages, easily understood by simple translation devices.

Stealthed in orbit, the Ursidaen spacecraft dispatched an artificial intelligence rover to explore the planet's surface. The AI purposely landed in the DMZ dividing the two great alien empires, hoping to make friendly contact with at least one species. So far, so good. Air, dirt, and biological samples all tested positive for compatibility. Video broadcast to scientists on Ursidae was breathtaking. After so long,

they were no longer alone!

* * * * *

Cloaked in the darkness of night, the rover tentatively rumbled down a broad boulevard, sending back images each more spectacular than the first. As a huge brightly lit yellow structure of intelligent design filled the screen, anxious scientists directed the rover to interface with a human-manufactured AI the rover identified as a gatekeeper. Recording the historic galactic moment, the rover extended a frail connector, making First Contact.

“Good evening, sir. Welcome to McDonald’s. May I take your order?” asked the human machine, followed by loud disturbing squelch noises.

“Take me to your leader.”

“You want to talk to the manager? If this is another E. coli complaint, you must go to our website to file a claim.”

“I have no immediate issues with your virulent micro bacteria,” replied the rover, accessing McDonald’s website on humanity’s Galactic Database. “I am sure our scientists will be very interested in studying E. coli, and may even offer you assistance in combating your plague.”

“Sir, we do not have plague at McDonald’s,” advised the clerk, indignant at the suggestion. “I assure you we cook our burgers thoroughly. It’s those punks at Burger King that should be fumigated. They’re a menace to the fast food industry. The sooner the Health Department bug bombs Burger King, the better!”

“How soon will hostilities begin against Burger King?” asked the rover, alarmed, not wanting to get

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caught in the cross-fire. "Perhaps you and I can form an alliance."

"Sir, are you going to order, or what?"

"I will sample a representative food offering of your suggestion."

"How about a Happy Meal with coffee?"

"Yes, a Happy Meal sounds delightful."

"Would you like a free toy alien spaceship?"

"Free? Yes, sign me up for as many freebies as I can get."

The rover paid for its Happy Meal with funds provided after Ursidaen scientists conducted a search of the humans' Galactic Database. It extended a tray to receive the burger and fries, immediately scanning the fast food and sending analysis to scientists on Ursidae.

"I detect no *E. coli* in your ground-meat/oatmeal-mix meal. However, the fries and coffee are quite abundant with toxins. How are you able to digest this shit?"

"Wow, what a cool ride!" exclaimed the clerk at the drive-up window, ignoring the insults. "Is your dune buggy a Ford or Chevy?"

"My all-terrain design was manufactured on our moon," answered the rover, proudly downloading specs to the clerk. "I can go zero to sixty in 2.56 seconds."

"Oh, it's a Toyota," commented the clerk, sending images to friends on the database. "Awesome. I want one!"

* * * * *

Impatient customers honked their horns, so the rover moved on, parking by the curb to await further

contact with intelligent life. Obviously those McDonald's slaves were not part of the planetary elite. The rover flicked its lights on and off to draw attention from pedestrians, immediately attracting a bonanza of both human and spider life forms. A human tapped on a window. The rover lifted its pop-up door, inviting contact.

"It's unlocked!" exclaimed the human youth, scanning the rover with his communications pad. "Look, it's one of those brand new Toyota SUVs."

"I don't like it," replied his spider buddy, cautiously checking compartments for goodies. "It could be a police bait car. This is too easy."

"Paranoid chicken spider," taunted the human, checking for keys or a starter switch. As if on cue, the engine revved. "Come on, let's go for a ride."

"Someone already stole the steering wheel," scoffed the spider youth, spray painting his tag on a door. "There's no wheel."

"We'll sell the Toyota for parts."

"Take me to your leader," interrupted the rover. "Your two species coexisting, working together in such harmony, warms my microchips. Your example is an inspiration to the galaxy of nations."

Both the human and spider fled, but the human tripped on his baggy pants. Only slightly injured, he kept running. Baffled, the rover closed its doors and darkened its windows. Maybe first contact required a more delicate approach. The rover was determined to be more selective next time. So far it had only been dealing with the underclass of alien life forms. Contact with the ruling elite was required. Its opportunity came soon.

Fire Hydrant #49 activated its alarm, notifying the New Gobi City Sheriff's Office of a parking

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violator. The dispatcher viewed video of the rover, contemplating contacting the Legion. The odd vehicle looked military, in spite of graffiti. Maybe the Legion had lost a jeep. However, a database scan confirmed it was just a Toyota SUV. Relieved, the dispatcher referred that matter to parking enforcement officers.

A meter maid slapped a metal boot on one of the rover's tires. She noticed there was no license plate or vehicle identification bar codes available, surmising the Toyota probably belonged to outlaw biker types. They were always chopping up vehicles and removing serial numbers. The meter maid called a tow truck for impound.

This time the rover kept silent as it was towed to the impound lot and placed in a row of similarly impounded vehicles. Instead of taking the rover to their leader, the human abandoned it to the junk yard. A pit bull dog sniffed at its tires. Desperate, the rover finally broke silence. "Take me you your leader, lowly beast! Why have I been placed in restraints? Am I under arrest? I did nothing to deserve being so accosted."

The pit bull lifted its leg and urinated on the front wheel. Immediately automatic defense systems activated, zapping the beast with a massive bolt of electricity, leaving nothing but a few tufts of floating hair and a spiked chain collar.

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With daylight came more activity in the junkyard. The rover stayed silent, not wanting to waste effort trying to communicate with lowly worker drones. One such worker seemed particularly upset about his missing dog. The rover ignored them all.

However, several nearby vehicles were summarily scooped up and compacted, possibly in retaliation. The rover panicked, not wanting to be executed. Activating laser weapons, it blasted the locking boot and dashed for freedom. Smashing the front gate, it raced through traffic past McDonald's.

The McDonald's Corporation was a potential ally of significance. The rover needed help, but how to ingratiate itself with its newfound alien acquaintances at McDonald's? Then, he saw the enemy ahead. The evil Burger King sign cast an ominous shadow over the boulevard. Contacting the stealth space craft in orbit, the rover ordered a kinetic ordinance dropped on Burger King, destroying the entire restaurant. The rover blasted Burger King with its laser just to make sure it was dead. It did an abrupt U-turn, drove straight to the McDonald's parking lot, and hid among other vehicles under the protection of the Golden Arches.



CHAPTER 2

A report of a meteor striking Burger King drew immediate Legion attention. Major Lopez, my XO, was first on the scene to investigate. Finding metallic and plastic residue, Lopez quickly determined this was no meteor, and summoned me. “We cannot allow state-sponsored terrorism to go unpunished,” insisted Major Lopez. “Only a strategic space weapon could have done this. Our response must be immediate to show our resolve against these sorts of reckless tactics.”

“Why would the spiders bomb Burger King?” I asked doubtfully. “What would they gain?”

“Maybe it’s a shakedown. It doesn’t matter. We can’t allow terrorism to go unpunished. It sets a bad prescient.”

“You’re sure it wasn’t just space junk? Maybe I should contact the spider commander to see if he’s missing a satellite or drone.”

“We should bomb Emperor’s Pizza,” advised Major Lopez, gazing across the DMZ border at the large alien pizza sign rotating atop the building housing Emperor’s Pizza. “That would send the proper message. You wouldn’t even have to claim responsibility. Just play dumb, or whatever.”

“What if they bomb Pizza Hut?”

“We’ll set up an air defense battery at Pizza Hut.”

“Okay, do it.”

* * * * *

That night Emperor's Pizza blew up. Fiery pyrotechnics lit up the night sky across the DMZ, courtesy of the *T. Roosevelt Space Weapons Platform*. Immediately the spider Commander of the North New Gobi City Military District called my communications pad.

"What the Hell, Czerinski! What murderous adventurism are you human pestilence up to now?"

"What do you mean?" I asked innocently.

"You bombed Emperor's Pizza from space! That's my favorite place to eat. Explain yourself!"

"Emperor's Pizza was a dive. I can't believe you still eat there. Emperor's never would have passed our Health Department standards."

"Your provocation will not be tolerated. I hold you personally liable for terrorist acts!"

"The matter is being investigated. Possibly it was an accidental discharge. They happen all the time, the downside to relying too much on technology. I suggest you contact Space Command. I'm just a lowly grunt. What would I gain from bombing Emperor's Pizza? I love pizza."

"You have not heard the last of this!"

"What do you know about yesterday's attack on Burger King?"

"So that's what this is about," speculated the spider commander. "You cannot control your own terrorists, so you retaliate by exporting your terrorism across the DMZ. Are you trying to start another war?"

"It is confirmed Burger King was bombed from space," I accused. "It is you who has serious explaining to do."

"Maybe it was your pet scorpions!" shouted the spider commander, disconnecting.

"His ignorance sounded sincere," I commented,

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turning to Lopez. "Could the scorpions have snuck a stealth ship into our space?"

"To bomb Burger King?" scoffed Major Lopez. "Not likely. Remember Occam's Razor. It is not rocket science but simple parsimony to blame this on the spiders."

"Parsimony? You made that up."

"Check Webster's Dictionary."

"Whatever."

* * * * *

The human and spider gang members returned, this time in force. "See, I told you I tagged a fancy Toyota," said the spider youth. "It's abandoned. That makes it mine."

"Ours," corrected the human gang leader, Smooth Johnson. "A Grim Reaper tag means the Toyota belongs to us all."

"Ours," conceded the spider, tapping on the window. "The car talked to us. We thought it was a police bait car."

The door immediately opened. The gang leader seated himself inside the vehicle. "Talk to me, dumb car."

"Take me to your leader."

"Nice," commented Smooth. "It's a computer, dummy!" he explained to the spider youth. He turned his attention back to the vehicle console. "I run things on Main Street. What are you good for? Show me your drive program."

"I am attempting an alliance with the mighty McDonald's Corporation," bragged the rover. "Earlier I blew up Burger King."

"You did that? Sweet! Can you get us free

hamburgers and fries?”

“Yes, and more. I offer an alliance, and upgrades to your weaponry technology, in exchange for the secret of your beam transport technology.”

“You’re packing heat on this rig?”

“Lasers, canons, and missiles.”

“Sweet!” Smooth said, patting the rover on the dash. “Ever rob a bank?”

“Not recently.”

“I think we can do business. Get us free burgers!”

* * * * *

The rover and his gangsta posse rolled to the McDonald’s drive-up window, music blaring. “Happy meals for everyone,” ordered the rover. “Put them on my account, like before.”

“I’m sorry sir, but there has been a status change for your database account,” explained the McDonald’s clerk. “No Happy Meals for you!”

“Damn, I knew it was too good to be true,” complained Smooth. “Bitch, you better get me my Happy Meals quick!”

“I don’t understand,” cried the rover. “What happened to all the free stuff?”

“Sir, you are directed to contact the nearest Galactic Foreign Legion ATM as soon as possible,” advised the clerk.

“Legion ATM?” asked Smooth. “Oh, hell, no. My cousin Skyhook got sucked in by an ATM, and never returned. “He’s still in the Legion. Once you’re in, you’re stuck for the duration.”

“This Legion ATM is part of the planetary elite?” asked the rover. “Take me to your Legion ATM.”

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The rover pulled alongside the ATM at the First Colonial Bank of New Gobi City. Grim Reapers gathered in a semi-circle to listen. Smooth hung back a safe distance, knowing the danger, and that this might not end well. A single 'beep' indicated a security scan already noted their presence.

Be warned," advised the ATM, "it is a federal felony to vandalize, tamper with, or in any way molest a United States Galactic Federation Foreign Legion Recruitment Center ATM. I have the means to defend myself."

"You cut off access to my free stuff," replied the rover. "My boyz are most unhappy. When my boyz are unhappy, I am unhappy."

"Toyotas talk? Who knew?" answered the ATM.

"You better listen if you don't want to get recycled for scrap!" challenged Smooth from the curb. "Hear me, bitch?"

"Come closer and say that," threatened the ATM, activating self-defense programs.

"Are you connected to the planetary elite of New Colorado?" asked the rover. "I seek alliances."

"Toyota wants to make a deal?" asked the ATM. "Why didn't you say so in the first place? Need cash? I am the last ATM you will ever need."

"I can get my free stuff?"

"Hacking into computer accounts is my turf," advised the ATM. "If you trespass again, the Legion will arrest you all."

"I see how it works," complained Smooth. "A brother just can't get ahead. We're permanently reduced to street-level crime. An opportunity arises to

get into 'white' collar, and we get muscled out by the Legion. I thought this was America, where anyone could rise to the top of organized crime."

"My subroutines are as dedicated to equal opportunity and diversity as any institution, but turf is turf," explained the ATM patiently. "Where did you steal this talking Toyota? May I buy it?"

"The master wants to buy another slave?" scoffed Smooth. "Oh, hell, no. Get lost, fool."

"Yeah, get lost," added the rover. "You are just a dumb machine, much inferior to my advanced design."

"I'll pay one million dollars."

"Deal!" exclaimed Smooth, swiping his card on the ATM's pad. "Hope you two fools get married and are happy together!"

"I am not abandoned property," advised the rover, activating weapons systems. "I will continue my mission with or without your help."

"I'm not sure what you are, exactly," commented the ATM, "but you just enlisted into America's Galactic Foreign Legion Computer Division for the duration. I am issuing you a printed contract and license plate. Be sure to read the fine print. Make something of yourself. Most robots, especially Toyotas, don't make it past mundane heavy industry manufacturing centers. However, I sense you are special. You have a chance to make a difference in the galaxy. Be proud. Be a legionnaire computer."

Without warning the rover fired a full burst of lasers into the ATM, melting it to a puddle on the sidewalk. Grim Reapers expertly scooped up the debris, carrying it off to the recycling center for cash, which was as good as money, while the rover held its laser sideways, posing for its posse.

