

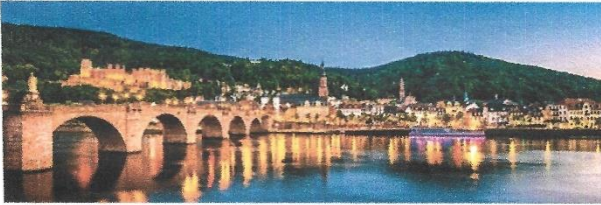
Inkslingers Blended Session

11th May 2024

The Prompt from The Bag Was:

"I A Termite Walks Into A Bar And Says, Is The Bar Tender Here?"

And the Visual



*Heidelberg on the river
Neckar, Germany*

A Termite Walks Into A Bar

Angelina Kelly

We get some strange people in the bar from time to time – one day a guy dressed as an Apache Indian came in and gave us to understand that he was the current chief of the tribe. We wondered at that because he had a flat Dublin accent which didn't go with the image. Still, who are we to judge, he sounded convincing, so we accepted his story and took it at face value.

Another time a very good-looking English man, with chocolate brown eyes and shoulder length wavy hair, came in claiming that he was the lead singer in a rock band that toured the world with sell-out concerts and chart-topping albums. He beguiled us with stories of champagne parties, and record promotions in India, Japan, Hawaii and just about every state in America. His favourite place was Heidelberg in Germany, where he met the girl who became his wife, the audiences there were more appreciative of the group's music than anywhere else. He told us that those days were over now because his band, that he was the founding member of, fired him because of his excessive drinking. He had a smooth voice and an attractive personality, so we were inclined to believe him but, we weren't too sure if he was just spinning tall tales. In the short time that he was with us he did drink rather a lot. A week later we heard that his wife had left him and he died alone, from drink related problems, so perhaps he was telling the truth.

The best one though was the guy who came in dressed as a termite – it wasn't Halloween or St Patrick's Day, so he seemed very much out of place. He opened the door with an expressive flourish, marched up to the bar and, in a loud voice, asked "is the bar tender here?" He had an American accent and seemed to be a tourist. The chatter in the room stopped and everyone turned their attention to the counter.

"I am she, what can I get ya? I replied.

"A glass of grass water, a plate of hummus and wood chips." He replied with authority.

“I can get the hummus easily enough, but the water and chips may take a little longer. Sit down and let me see what I can do for you.”

The patrons smiled behind their hands and gave me the thumbs up at my smart and quick reply.

While he chatted with the customers I busied myself in the kitchen attempting to grant his request. A few minutes later, I brought out a glass of water with green food dye in it and a plate with hummus and small pieces of rye bread. With a smile on my face and a pleasant tone in my voice I said, “There you go, enjoy.”

The patrons smiled and applauded me.

He looked at the food, nodded his approval, ate it up quickly and paid leaving a very generous tip. He left the premises with the same flourish that he came in with and we never saw him again.

Bernadette O'Reilly

Heidelberg Germany

I have visited Heidelberg
Through that beautiful film
The Student Prince
Oh to be a young student
Drinking
Singing
Dancing
In the cafes
No responsibilities
Soaking up knowledge
Life stretching out endlessly
A dream out of my reach.

Lordello town

Michael O'Brien

Eight rough and hairy bikers stood in a semi-circle next to their bikes on desert waste ground in New Mexico, a hundred years ago their bikes would have been horses, but aside from their mode of transport and dress there was little else that separated the spirit of these men from desperados a century ago.

The leader of the group could be identified without a word, he was in the middle of the semi-circle, and he seemed bigger and hairier than the rest, he was also the quietest, while the others joked and fidgeted he was still, checking the terrain, tense, nervous even, if a man like this could ever be described in that way.

A navy-blue ford mustang pulled off the main highway, and wound its way towards the waiting bikers, dust trailing high behind it. The car stopped at a safe distance in front of the semi-circle, a man got out, in contrast to the bikers he was clean shaven and immaculately dressed in a tailored suit.

The bikers became quiet, and the leader leaned off his bike, staring at the driver.

“Don’t make a mistake with this fucker” he whispered to the group, or to no one in particular.

“I thought this was supposed to be a business meeting”, the driver was well spoken, urbane,

When some of the gang heard him they smiled, glancing at each other thinking office lush, easy pickings.

“You men are not dressed appropriately”, he then gave a sly grin and affected an exaggerated southern drawl,

“Some of you boyzz look like you could use a bath”, he rubbed his left shoulder as he rotated it, grimacing a little as if he was soothing an ache.

A biker at the end of the semicircle to the drivers right giggled,

“We’re more into showers here mister”.

Again, the exaggerated drawl from the driver,

“Oh yeah, who’d that be with, your momma? Huh? Soaping each other up, maybe your half-sister could join in, get your cousin to pick some banjo”.

The group tensed now; some slowly moved their hands to the back of their jeans.

“Easy, easy,” the leader spoke,

“In case you haven’t noticed there’s eight of us”, he said to the driver with a slight grin,

The driver continued play acting in his southern drawl, which irritated all the group but particularly the leader. There were one or two, ‘what the fuck are we waiting for looks among the gang, but the leader nodded no’.

“I am such a naive cherub, coming out here to the desert n all, to meet you big tough men, all on my lonesome. You know like most of you boyzz I never really knew my daddy, momma just didn’t know who he was”, he nodded from one end of the semi-circle to the other as if they knew what he was talking about, “You boyzz know what I mean, I was raised by my uncle Barrett, he was sure protective of me, still is, always looking over my shoulder, long sighted man, didn’t talk much but when he did, well that just put a full stop to any conversation,. We never talk much but boy, he sure understands me, say, like right now, I was to lift my left hand just a little bitty bit, he’d know exactly what I meant, know what I mean?”

The landscape was all scrub, cactus and bluff, and with the heat shimmering off the ground the leader couldn’t be sure that there was nothing on the desert floor past a few hundred yards, he saw nothing on the skyline of the few hills that was in the range of a sniper.

The leader nodded,

“Let’s get to it”

The Girl Who Stirred the Waves

Greg Fields

She had no idea what she was doing, or even why she was doing it. ‘A release,’ her friends had said. ‘It’s all been too much lately, and you need a chance to unwind. Go for it, girl.’ And indeed it had been a tight several days, unlike any she had experienced before. Her work seemed to have hit a new level, and with it came new recognition, and with the recognition, new pressure. Immense pressure, and the scrutiny of hundreds of thousands of unknown eyes.

Rosie Carter entered the shop, looked around for someone she did not yet know, then ordered a latte and took a seat at a corner table for two. She would have to wait a bit. ‘Not a good start to this at all,’ she thought to herself.

After ten minutes or so a young man entered, and she knew at once that this was the one she would meet. A bit ruffled, with wrinkles on a shirt unevenly tucked into his pants, and wearing colours Rosie thought to be too loud for the occasion. Not bad looking, with a square chin and clear brown eyes, and certainly he seemed to be in shape. He saw her sitting there and approached the table.

“Rosie?”

“You must be Tim,” and Rosie stood to offer her hand.

“Have you been in here long? Jeez, I can be terrible with time. Seems I’m always running late.”

“Not a problem. I tend to run early. Go get yourself something to drink,” and he did so with a quick turn. When he returned with some complicated half-caf brew with shots of vanilla, or chocolate, or mango, or whatever, he sat across from her, and the dancing began.

“So tell me about yourself, Tim. Your profile was very attractive,” and Tim commenced to do so, in self-aggrandizing detail. A financial planner with a client list of names that he thought Rosie would find impressive, and a condo on the top floor of his building, and a five-day-a-week workout schedule so that, as he put it, “I stay as strong as I am,” and the

things that he cherished most – his BMW convertible, and a Rolex he was able to buy with last year’s bonus. This was Tim.

Rosie listened, smiled when she thought she should, and said very little. Internally, she counted the minutes. A mistake, this was. Everything she had feared.

At length, Tim leaned forward and sipped his coffee, then smiled. “I must say, I’m pretty excited to meet you. I’m impressed. To be sitting here with a pretty woman who’s not just any girl.”

“What do you mean?”

You’re the one who’s stirred up all this DaShawn Roberson fuss. God, you’ve roiled the whole city, made it sit up and stomp its feet. Not many people can do something like that. It’s been so great to watch.”

Rosie sat back in her chair. “So you found it all amusing?”

“Yeah, in its own way. I mean, things like this happen all the time, just another kid from the slums, but you turned it into a story. You really did. And people read it, and they got angry. That’s something special, Rosie.”

“He was a human being, Tim. He had a pulse, and a soul. He had a mother.”

“He was one of a thousand, Rosie. But you turned him into a cause. Your words did that.”

“It wasn’t my words. It was a bullet shot into the chest of a 15-year-old kid, and a city that would have just shrugged it away, like all the others. I just wrote about it when no one else cared to do so.” Rosie stood now, and her dark eyes flashed lightning. “And I’m so glad you found it amusing, Tim. I’m so glad you can add me to your list of contacts. But you’ll never add me to your list of acquisitions.”

She threw down her napkin onto the table, and a bit of her unfinished latte sloshed over the side of the cup. “Have a nice life,” and she spun out of the shop and into the late summer heat.

There on the sidewalk she drew deep breaths to compose herself. This was where she was now. This was who she was. And there was no

release from this pressure, no escape from the intensity of being Rosie Carter in a newly aware city. There were no jokes to tell, no new young man to ameliorate the stress, no clear streams from which to drink cool waters.

Rosie collected herself, then turned to find a cab. She would be in bed early this night, alone and as unsettled as the nights just past.

Simon and Mary

Mark L'estrange

This story is about Mary and how she met Simon. Mary was an only child and totally spoilt. She lived at home till she was thirty-five. She didn't have to work because her family gave her all the money she wanted. She didn't have to pay for anything. Then her dad had to stop working due to ill-health, he didn't have enough to fund her addiction to clothes shopping. She got a job in Dunnes stores beside where she lives.

She hated it and spent most of the time there painting her nails and looking at all the outfits, which Dunnes stores management, as you can imagine, were not a big fan of her. She got a lot of warnings in the store, but she didn't pay them much attention, she worked for five minutes more than she used to, only while the manager was watching.

One day she was pretending to work, packing a few teabags and Coffee jars. When Simon turned up on the floor to introduce himself, Mary didn't take much notice of him at first, she asked with a smart voice "Who are you?" He answered, "Simon the new manager of the store what's your name?" she then spoke in an apologetic voice "I'm Mary nice to meet you, you looked like a guy that was bothering me a few minutes ago" Mary was happy when Simon got called away by another manager who needed his help.

Simon was attracted to Mary from the first day he saw her. He thought she was interested in him too. He asked her out, one day as he was leaving the shop. Her eyes lit up because she knew he was loaded. She said, "Yes definitely what time and where?" "How about tomorrow night there is a nice Italian restaurant close to here, I heard they have great food and wine!" "That sounds great, what time?" He asked, "Does eight O clock sound, ok?" "Perfect, looking forward to it."

They met outside the restaurant Simon said to Mary "You look stunning Mary!" "Not too bad yourself Simon" They just walked straight into the restaurant, but they were stopped by the waiter who said "Sorry folks you need to wait to be seated" Mary wasn't the least bit impressed by this. When they finally were seated Mary asked to speak to the bar

manager to complain about having to wait. He came over and said to Mary. "You wanted to see me?" "Yes, that was disgraceful having to wait to be seated, don't you know my boyfriend is very wealthy how dare you.? "I am sorry, but everyone has to wait."

To be continued.

The Termite and The Bar Tender

Ciaran O'Melia

I was there when the termite walked into the bar, and he looking for the barman. Now I had a few drinks on me, but I remember the day well. He was small and round with a

hairstyle that would shame a cat.

The manager says, “\$#5^ &%^” or “Gobble, gobble, guk” as you would say yourself.

Ye see it was new to me, the bar, I mean, and I was saying, I had a few drinks on me, so I said, “I didn’t know you speak terminate”.

“Ye have too around here.” This, he said gruffly.

“Why,” I asked, his reply fascinated me.

“Ye, we get a lot of that around here.” It was the way he said it; oh, he had a gruff accent, but I know he was affected by a lot of termites as the chair broke under me weight.

He said, “Wait till I get you a new one.” This added to my esteem for him, as did the fact that he started to pull a pint.

Finally, he brought over the pint and chair. Then the door opened, and a large cock roach came in saying, “Where’s the termite? The whore ate my sandwich and invited the rest of them to the party.” He added then, “The bad inclined termite, I wish I could say more, but the present company excludes from saying, in fact I have said enough already. Where is Sheamus the barman.”

The manager gives his take on the matter: “I’m the manager of the bar, and so far, people are asking about him. That is the second person or thing that came in here asking about our Sheamus. Can you tell me what is going on here? Is he on the take?” He excused himself calling the cock roach a thing or person.

The manager sat beside me with a heavy heart and said, “What do ye think of the place?” before adding, “Great cheese here. Would you like to try some?”

I declined, thinking about the termite and the cockroach. It was then the horse came in and inquired was a termite in there; before he knew who he was talking to, the manager said, "Me heart is scalded by them whores." Then he drew back on that and said sweetly, "Would you like a sandwich." "What's in it," asked the horse.

"The finest cheese." He replied.

"Gives me heartburn." He declined.

So the bar settled down, and the next he heard was a bell being rung, and "Have you no homes to go to" as Sheamus picked up the glasses.

He said, "Where is the termite?"

Sheamus, in reply, "Ye what."

Heidelberg Auction

Max McCoubrey

I attended the auction with a heavy heart.

It was held in Heidelberg on the River Neckar, Germany. That was where it had all begun. I saw the drawing immediately I entered the gallery.

There it was, proud, clear, and speaking to me with a graceful voice.

Every line on it played a part.

Every stroke of the charcoal pencil worked toward the perfect capture of that unforgettable expression. The eyes that had seen so much reflected every moment of that night. The horror of betrayal was there, the moment of revelation too.

The mouth that had tasted the sweetest of kisses and the richest of food and wine effortlessly drew the eye of the onlooker.

Even the cheekbones told their story. Either side of the famous face they had, in their twentieth year on this earth, been sought after by photographers and designers who knew their value in promoting products and commanding the attention of the media.

The signature of the artist was of great interest to the press.

The bidding started and ended at one million. It came from the lady in the blond wig and shades. Nothing could disguise a face and voice so well known.

Nobody wanted to outbid the heiress. Her voice was as familiar to them as their faces. They had seen her on screen all of their lives.

She would win at any cost. She always had. Always would.

The press were on their speed dials before the mallet had reached the wood.

The auctioneer had calculated his commission even faster than that.

Those carefully positioned strokes held by the hand that had fired the gun to end the life of the model were now the source of value to the bidders.

Bridge to the future

Miguel A. Rivera, Jr.

Lodged in the brain of Jeff McCall, sat the vivid recollection of the day that a red-haired stranger had crossed the Heidelberg Bridge in Germany. To the average eye, that “red” fellow looked every bit the American foreign exchange student or tourist, not unlike the countless others that crossed every single day. Jeff would later discover that he’d been no tourist at all.

He’d instead, made a beeline for the Max Planck Society, and entered their ultra-restricted research and development wing. After that, the legion of soldiers, cops and Kriminalpolizei that descended on that building could not be understood by the thousands of civilians, students, and eventually, media personnel who began gathering near their facilities.

The rumor was that a red-haired stranger had entered and stolen some experimental technology of the military variety, the likes of which could not be relocated. So too had the mysterious ginger-stranger vanished, seemingly into thin air.

The next morning Jeff awoke in his flat and began the routines of the day in order to be ready for his first class. He did not want to be labeled by his German professors as the “lazy American” student, always late and hung over with grades floating just above the expulsion point. A bathroom visit, a shower, and then some hastily prepared breakfast, saw Jeff in his tiny kitchen reviewing notes on his laptop as they related to his experiment on nanotechnology, due to be turned in that very morning.

Jeff glanced at the mirror which hung in his equally small living room’s wall, and it caught his attention. The glass seemed to glow for a second and then it was as if a water faucet had been left open. Out poured a glowing liquid which began taking the form of a man.

Mouth agape, Jeff began wondering what possible hallucinogen had been in the beer that he’d shared all night with an attractive German girl at a nearby pub filled with students. The form took full shape and

there stood the red-haired spy/terrorist who it seemed, was presently wanted by the entire country.

“What...what is this? Who the hell are you? Why are you in my apartment?”, The questions poured from Jeff’s mouth. While his shock was more than pronounced, Jeff began gripping his butterknife and contemplating some good old-fashioned American violence.

The red-haired man stood for a moment and smiled. He then produced a small item about the size of a quarter which projected a complex schematic into the air.

“Hello Jeffrey. My name is Charles B. Bullinski, and I’m your great, great, very great grandson. Yes I realize this is all a bit much, but I’m here to assist you with your school project. You are going to help change the future of humanity”.

To that perplexing and cryptic statement, Jeff had no response. He instead began feeling dizzy and choking on his toast. What appeared to be a small, baseball-sized, floating head then left Charles B. Bullinski’s chest, and went through Jeff, causing him to instantly pass out. When he came to, gone was the red-haired man and any sign that he’d ever been more than a figment of Jeff’s alcohol-soaked brain. There was however, an odd and inexplicable new file on Jeff’s laptop. One which as foretold, would soon lead to a great many changes in his life...

(To be continued upon request)

The Bridge

Gerard Byrne

Most people would have loved this view. Had gotten their camera phones out and took a million pictures that nobody would ever look at. But not Mickey Leech. He was scared of large bodies of water. Especially crossing them, which unfortunately in his drunken state he had walked out into the middle of the night previous and passed out in the centre. Now here he was, trapped in the middle, unsure of which side to run to. He didn't know where his irrational fear, as the doctor called it, came from. It was just something that grew deep inside him. Consuming the more positive parts of his psyche with it's annoying intolerance to water.

Mickey Leech couldn't even cross the Liffey back home without panicking. His mate Bernard used to drag him across like a bold schoolchild that was on the mitch. He'd sweat, shake and stammer as he dealt with any small body of water over the last seven or eight years. But this was different. Now he was hundreds of feet from either end of this bridge. Alcohol had not been the saviour once again. Drowning his sorrows the night before because Sinead, his long term crush and friend, had spurned his sloppy partially drunken kiss. It had been a stupid thing to do, Mickey could see that now. Their friendship couldn't go back to the way things were before. No more punch ups with rival football teams outside the stadiums. Which was a pity because Sinead was fairly handy with her matching gold knuckle dusters. Amazing how she always got through customs with them. Then again, no one dared search her fake foot. The results of an accident with a Luas while out of her head on magic mushrooms. She honestly thought that she was fighting a giant earthworm at the time. Get her drunk enough and she still did think that it was that beast that took her foot. But that would never happen again for poor Mickey. He'd ruined it all with his mouth. He punched himself hard in the lips. The pain shocked him back to this earth, while a few drops of blood trickled onto the road below him. He tried to think of something to take his mind off the current predicament. An old joke of Sinead's came to mind. The one about the termite. Took Mickey a long time to get the punchline. Days to be honest. Sinead had grown bored repeating the gag, but Mickey hadn't

given up until it finally clicked in his head. Then he couldn't stop laughing. Pissed everyone right off. Still did, since he would start laughing to himself even now when he thought about it. Unfortunately the current situation was more worrying. There was no time for comedy, just action.

Mickey stood up, holding onto the wall for dear life. He had pissed himself during the night and his pants smelt like week old boxers. He looked around for someone to help him, but the many tourists passing him by, gave him a wide berth. Suddenly a voice rang out from one end of the bridge. It was Sinead. She was carrying a baseball bat on one shoulder and a golf club on the other. She must have been already heading for the pre match riot down the park. The one he should of been preparing for as well.

She asked him in her own colourful language, what the hell was he doing out on a bridge so far?. Sinead knew all about his phobia and had genuinely tried to understand it for all of five minutes. Mickey hadn't an answer to that question and leaned back against the wall for moral support. Unfortunately it was a lot lower than expected and he fell head first into the drink. Thankfully the river rescue was quite punctual. They pulled poor Mickey out in record time. He missed the riot that day. But there would be others. Unfortunately just not with Sinead. She was now serving six to ten months for an assault with a deadly weapon. But Mickey already planned to wait for her. Just as long as the prison gate wasn't over a river

Termite Tales

Tadg O'Brien

In a small town in Ireland on a damp Tuesday afternoon, the unlikely sight of a termite walking in to a bar, like it was the most humdrum thing in the world, transpires here on this day, in this place.

The termite walks in to a bar and says, "is the bar tender here?"

The rear of the bar was deserted, in fact the whole pub was empty, save for one elderly man nursing a pint of Guinness in the corner.

"I said, is the bar tender here?"

The termite looked over to Guinness man expectantly. The man is now hiding behind his peak-cap, like a shy teenager hiding from the plain awkwardness of being.

He nudged him gently on the arm.

"Excuse me, have you seen the —"

"Stop bugging me!" the old man snaps back, now struggling to conceal a smirk that celebrated his victory in finally coming up with a pun worthy of the situation.

The termite is crestfallen, or whatever passes for a crest on its insect face, was fallen.

The old lad, seeming to find new sympathy for the poor creature, gestures it to sit. He speak softly now.

"Jack's the man you're after. He's at the back catching up on his novels. He's a real, book-worm, you see."

"You're a real asshole", the sullen termite retorts in his heavily clicking insectoid voice.

Me? An asshole? You don't know me at all my insect friend. Let me tell you about me ...

I am brilliant, I am great,
Without me you would meet your fate,
I'm all-knowing, an intellect!
I can have what I select.

If you know me you are famed
and all your friends must be ashamed
that they don't associate with me.
If you know me, you are free.
So there you have it, that is me.
If you know me you can see
the light of day, the dark of night,
And you are filled with lots of might.

The termite scoffs.

Cute little verse, it needs a few tweaks.

You:

You're a nuisance, you're a pest,
The person I do most detest.
For B.O. there is no contest,
Make no mistake I do not jest.

Your little rhyme I do not rate,
And sorry but you're not my mate.
You have developed — it's correct —
A sad delusional complex

With the charisma of a flea,
The wit of a used bag of tea,
Life's a bitch so hold on tight!
Cos on this earth you are a blight.
The only one who is ashamed
is me to find I'm in your frame
of reference — And you must not read
in to the fact I speak with thee

FTFY: Fixed that for you!

Just then Jack appears, clutching a well-worn copy of Emma by Jane Austin.

"What'll it be lads?"

The World Wide Webb (telescope)

Gerard Keogh

Chapter 2

Reconnaissance

The Chinese spy balloon that was shot down by the U.S. Air Force off the coast of South Carolina in 2023 caused a political and diplomatic storm (kind of appropriate, given the Chinese Communist Party's insistence that it was a weather balloon), which centred on the potential threat to national security and the Biden administration's reaction to the incident. By the time it had been shot out of the sky by a Lockheed Martin F-22, the balloon had flown over some highly sensitive military installations in the United States. In addition, there were several other instances around that time of mysterious objects being shot down in the airspace above North America. When asked by a reporter if these objects could be of extraterrestrial origin, an Air Force four-star general replied by saying he had not ruled out anything.

Prior to this flurry of UFO incidents, there had been the release by the Pentagon of video footage of "Tic Tacs" flying at alarming speed and manoeuvring at impossible angles, during a U.S. Navy exercise off the coast of California, in 2004. These airborne craft (in the familiar-looking shape of those little mints we carry around in our pockets) were detected by the radar system on-board a guided-missile cruiser; their heat signatures were recorded by FLIR (forward-looking infrared) sensors on Navy F/A-18 fighter jets; and the pilots and weapons system officers on those aircraft confirmed visuals on the targets.

On the one hand, these incidents (and many others that are not recounted here) may have entirely innocent explanations. On the other hand, they could be indications that foreign powers have technology that is far beyond the capabilities of the U.S. military; or that these unexplained aerial phenomena are possibly engaged in reconnaissance for an approaching extraterrestrial invasion force. You at the back of the class, stop laughing.

It seems unlikely that Russia or China could have developed technology that is so superior to that of the West; they both have a long history of

engaging in industrial espionage and brazen theft of intellectual property from Western companies. The notion that either of them could have taken such a great leap forward (no pun intended) in military technology is one that does not bear scrutiny.

It is possible, of course, that those Navy pilots and sailors were mistaken in their interpretation of events, or that their sensors were faulty. That may be true in some of the cases, but it surely cannot be true in all of them. Which leaves us with the awkward possibility that we're about to be invaded by freaking E.T., for crying out loud. How would we defend our home planet if called upon to do so?

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 recently awarded the U.S. military a topline figure for national defence of \$883.7 billion. In addition, the different branches of the military, and the eleven combatant commands, are mandated by Congress to submit an unfunded priorities list, which is a wish list of funding requests that didn't make it into the final NDAA, but some of which could be approved if Congress votes to add them to the budget. This year's unfunded priorities lists come to a total of almost \$30 billion. In other words, the most powerful military in the world (by expenditure, if not in manpower) belongs to the United States.

China is catching up rapidly, with a defence budget of \$230 billion in 2024; it is growing its nuclear weapons arsenal; and it already boasts the world's largest navy. We have seen how Russia's military can use World War II-style brute force to overwhelm an enemy and wear them down by attrition. North Korea has spent huge sums of money on developing its own nuclear weapons, as well as the delivery systems with which to threaten its neighbours and the rest of the world. India is also a nuclear power with a large army. It's probably just a matter of time before Iran becomes the latest member of this exclusive club (joining Pakistan, the UK, France and Israel).

Conventional military doctrine for an invading army recommends a force-ratio of three to one in favour of the attacking force. Would the countries listed above put aside their differences, combine their military might, and save the world from possible annihilation at the hands of an alien invader?

As a species we can't agree on whether to use Fahrenheit or Celsius. So, what do you think?