

## Mr. Lidd

(Fly on the Wall Viewpoint)

The small Martian prison conference room was silent cold steel except for the speaker's voice. "Hello Mr. Lidd." The prisoner was dressed in the bright red uniform of the mars prison colonies and sat across from the speaker. He was the infamous contract killer known only as Mr. Lidd, even in government records there was no mention of a first name. "You received our letter then?" The speaker was an older man, too skinny for his height and in a tidy gray suit that matched the color of his receding hairline spoke with the authority of a man in control of many eventualities.

"Yeah, I'm interested. Where's the fun here?" Mr. Lidd, whose calm belied his psychopathic disposition, answered looking around the steel box. "What exactly is the job?" That's one of the problems with sociopaths; they can pretend to be normal to attain their desires.

"An emergency situation has arisen that requires your unique...abilities." A second passed and Mr. Lidd answered.

"What's in this for me, besides getting off this rock?" Mr. Lidd smiled nervously eyeing the men in the corner of the room.

"A full pardon and a ticket on the next freight out of this system, but let's not get ahead of ourselves. First there must be a signing of the company contract, binding in all aspects including life and death." The gray suit man said as he lay the contract down for

Mr. Lidd to sign. He knew there would be no hesitation for such a desperate man, not even a desire to read the contracts contents.

Since he was sentenced to death within the next two cycles, Mr. Lidd signed without reading any text. "What now gray suit man?" Mr. Lidd asked tapping the metal chair with his hands, still cryo-cuffed in place.---

(Transport, 24 Mars Hours Later)

The vehicle came to a halt outside the ministry of time, a round building pulsing with light and faced in Martian diamonds. Mr. Lidd was escorted by two burly guards; he remained cryo-cuffed and helpless. He stepped out of the vehicle catching his first glimpse of the building while being hurried along.

"Oh shit," Mr. Lidd groaned, his knees buckling. "Time travel? That bastard never said anything about the ministry of time!" He struggled in vain as the guards moved him forward into the building. Walking through a maze of corridors, and into a small back office the gray suit man was seated there waiting for him; he appeared anxious and less confident than the first meeting. Mr. Lidd was rudely seated at the table by one of the guards. The speaker laid a picture across the table from him; Mr. Lidd took a long, hard look. He didn't recognize the man and shook his head to indicate no memory.

"Remember your contract from earlier Mr. Lidd?" The speaker asked laying the form next to the picture. "What do you know about the Solarist Political Party or S.P.P.?" Mr. Lidd took a deep breath and spoke as quickly as he could.

"Let's see... they formed about a hundred years ago around their founder's ideas. Strange

guy, mysterious, was supposed to have only spoken a few times, been seen a few times. His followers claim he's more than just one person, that he can live in different places at the same time. Anyway, whatever he said lasted and their party caught on like wildfire, maybe because it was before time travel; who knows? Anyway, his followers don't believe in putting time and effort into your own planet because it will be destroyed along with humanity eventually. Therefore, they don't participate in any of the usual Earthly activities...except politics. They openly state they want control of the planet to implement their pacifistic, spread to the stars crap. I know saying that is ironic being on Mars, but the damned thing has practically become a cult these days. Ignore earth? And they call me crazy..." Mr. Lidd scoffed and chuckled looking around for someone with a cigarette. No luck in this room.

"You seem to know quite a lot about them...for a killer."

"Well, I have had a lot of time to read lately." Mr. Lidd smiled back. "Anyone have a cigarette? Earth or Mars, it don't matter." No one acknowledged his inquiry.

"Had you read your contract you would have seen your job is to go back in time and assassinate their founder before he can take action and create this "cult" as you called it, is that clear Mr. Lidd?"

There was a moment of awkward, tense silence but Mr. Lidd was used to such situations. What he is not used to was the unusual request from someone so important.

"Why now? They've been around a long time." Mr. Lidd asked the speaker whose name he still did not know, and didn't care to know.

“Within the last twelve Earth hours the S.P.P. stole a time device with the crystal veil removed and activated. Now, for the layman idiot...i.e...you. THIS IS A BAD THING! Do we understand each other?” The patronizing tone washed off Mr. Lidd like a well worn mountainside. Experience had taught him that words and insults meant nothing; it was the action that mattered. Besides, he had been treated much worse than this, no need to antagonize the situation, he let it play out.

“I understand.” Mr. Lidd nodded curtly, wanting to get off of Mars so badly he could explode through the cryo-cuffs. 'A hundred years or a thousand, past or future, at least I'll be far from this piece of red shit planet.' Mr. Lidd thought to himself after telling gray suit man what he wanted to hear.

(Mr. Lidd's Viewpoint)

Everything was a blur, too fast to remember, and it seemed gray suit wanted it that way. First was the IV with some kind of drug knocking Mr. Lidd out so he couldn't fight back against the procedure. When he was good and doped up they stuffed him into an electric cage of white crystal hooked to a quantum modulator. They weren't gentle about it either. It didn't matter too much since he was feeling no pain, but he felt the shock when they began to route the quartz fluctuation through the quantum DNA computer. He only remembered people in blue coats murmuring and scurrying, followed by a buzz and flash of light so bright he had to cover his face with both hands. When the light was gone, it was one hundred and two years in the past, right before the religious nutcase made his most famous speech.

Mr. Lidd went into what they called a town back then and got a room, there were fliers at the front desk advertising the next days gathering. He was comforted knowing he was at least in the right place, or right time.

“Are you lost, lonely, and overwhelmed? Of course you are, this is not the reality you deserve, come to Grailey's town hall tomorrow at 7pm to find the answers you seek!”

There was a picture of a little man wearing a tuxedo and pointing up.

“Cute,” Mr. Lidd said to himself. “That will be his last appearance.”

(The Gathering)

The hall was packed, people crowded in like fish, and it was standing room only in back.

There was a small stage with a single light burning a spotlight in the darkened hall. A man stepped into the light and Mr. Lidd almost fainted.

The man on stage was HIM... it was...HIM! How else to explain? How could this be possible? How am I on stage and standing here at the same time Mr. Lidd thought? His mind swirling, his grasp on reality doing back flips, and there he was on stage spewing some type of religious filth. It was beyond belief and it was too late, the Mr. Lidd on stage was speaking. The shock of seeing himself on stage was overwhelming and caused Mr. Lidd to hesitate for the first time in his life. How could he kill himself? ‘What is this? I founded the Solarist party?’ There were no words. Mr. Lidd could barely hold himself together, his knees were jelly, his stomach was a knot, backing out he ran to where he entered this realm hoping for some escape, there was none. He staggered around the field for awhile screaming, hoping some type of portal would open, anything

at all. There was no portal, no machine; it was a one way trip. Only one thought was left in his head, to take the gun and end it all, just blow his brains out. He failed the only reason he was here, to stop the Solarist party.

‘Might as well be now,’ Mr. Lidd thought. Putting the gun under his chin he cocked the hammer.

“I wouldn’t do that if I were you,” it was a familiar voice coming from behind him. Mr. Lidd was in a shocked, manic state after what he saw.

Turing quick and pointing the gun Mr. Lidd accidentally discharged a round striking his double in the chest. He let out a groan and fell to the ground as the stench of gun smoke and fire filled the time traveling Mr. Lidd’s nose.

A crowd had gathered around the two Mr. Lidd’s after hearing the gunshot. Most of the people were in the audience during the speech earlier, they were the first followers of the S.P.P.

Laying on the ground the Solarist founding Mr. Lidd raised his hand and pointed to the first as he stood there trembling with the gun in his hand, a broken man. Time travel can do that to the toughest. He was trying to say don’t kill yourself, but could no longer speak. No one in the crowd knew what he said, but the way he held his fingers as he pointed became a symbol of the new party.

Just as the original Mr. Lidd raised the gun to shoot himself a portal opened behind his head. Black with a swirling blue light it sucked him out of their existence as if he were never there. The first followers were left there to gawk and stammer as they scrambled

to help their fallen leader to no avail. He died on the ground where the shot struck him, but his followers spread the message that he still lived, existing in another time and dimension.