

**JACK HARVSTERTON:  
MISTRUSTFUL  
AND  
BAD-TEMPERED**



**THOMAS TRALANTRY**

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# **JACK HARVSTERTON: MISTRUSTFUL AND BAD- TEMPERED**

**Thomas Tralantry**

# 1

“Jack Harvsterton?”

The bar was full of people, who either sat at tables, or stood somewhere in a corner with a drink or a bottle of beer in the hand. A man whispered something into the ear of a woman and got a slap in the face for that. Two men removed a troublemaker, who went off to several guests. From the volume, the whole thing was also not to be despised. And the music group on the stage with their rock sounds tried to surpass the noise, which ruled in the big room. But Jack still understood the man, who stood there in front of him in his expensive suit and got the attention from the other people in the room for sure. But no one cared about this man, although nobody would wear this in a bar. Nobody, who stayed here, would walk around in such a way, if he didn't want to be attacked and killed. Such a thing was too conspicuous in this area.

“Are you Jack Harvsterton?” the man asked again.

Once more, before he answered, he took a well-arranged gulp from his beer bottle and put it back on the table. Besides, the man gave time to himself.

“Who wants to know this?” he asked with a mistrust in his rough voice.

“My name is Simon Feller. I work for the Trescott company.”

Harvsterton had heard from the company. A company, which was highly respected and made money without end. With what exactly, he couldn't remember at the moment. Feller wanted to shake his hand, but Harvsterton ignored it and appreciated the hand with no look.

“What do you want from me?”

“May I sit down?” Feller asked, while he lowered his arm again.



"I would prefer you wouldn't. I don't know you. Maybe you want to kill me!"

"Believe me, Mr. Harvsterton, this doesn't lie in my intention. I would like to hire you."

After a short hesitation, Jack indicated with a nod at the chair, which was towards to him. While Feller sat down, Jack laid his right hand on his laser weapon, which he carried at the side. Because he already had this hand under the table all the time, his counterpart didn't notice this. Jack didn't trust the man in his expensive suit and tie, who was conspicuous in this bar like a glass of water between several glasses of Whisky.

"What is it you want to talk about?"

"Nice that you show some interest. I would like to hire you for a transport, which might pay off for you."

Jack drank a gulp of beer, but didn't take the eyes from his conversational partner. Money always sounded good, particularly in his current situation. His last transport didn't run as well as expected. Admittedly, he brought the product, consisting of steel bolt, to the destination, but the employer hadn't the intention to pay him. He wanted to kill him, what Jack didn't like at all. It came to a gunfight, where Jack shot the man and his both bodyguards. Then some of the gang members tried to shoot him down with a spaceship, but an asteroid belt gave him the necessary rescue. No big thing, such a scum like them had no right to live. But his financial situation became not better. And it was this thing, which went through his mind and bothered him during the last days. It seemed to be a coincidence of destiny that this Feller had appeared.

"What has to be transport?"

Harvsterton couldn't suppress the mistrust in his voice.

"Nothing illegal, if you should be afraid of this. You only have to transport one data carrier. I will inform you about the place of delivery, provided that you should show some

interest, Mr. Harvsterton. But here and now, I don't hold it for particular right."

He didn't like it how this strange man talked. Everything from his mouth sounded too good. His face showed a smile and was so trustworthy like that of a politician. His face looked like it never has seen one single hair of a beard, and his short hair was styled well. But even if Simon Feller had looked like a homeless person, the mistrust of Jack Harvsterton would have been the same. Trust no one was his slogan.

"And what kind of files are these?"

"Pure business data, which you couldn't use," the man said condescendingly.

"It's interesting to hear what you think from me," Jack returned harsh.

"Forgive me. Sometimes, I make a mistake in the tone and in the words. It wasn't my intention to denote you as stupid. In my job, most people are not very trustworthy."

"Oh, and in mine not?"

Feller swallowed. In his eyes, he could recognize that he had differently planned the conversation and saw himself in distress now. Optically, Jack was the opposite of him. Dark, short hair, round face. The brown jacket and the dark shirt fitted to him, just as the black trousers and the same-colored shoes. But now, Feller noticed that he had to be very careful.

"Probably, you deal with another kind of people as I do."

"Whether suit or not, the character remains the same. Don't think that you and your suit friends are something better than us, who do not earn thousands of dollars per day!"

Jack drank the last gulp of beer from his bottle, and put it with light strength on the table.

"I apologize, Mr. Harvsterton. Maybe we should start again."

Harvsterton noticed that Feller had to clench the teeth, so that any wrong word didn't slip out to him. Mentally, Jack smiled. He liked this. However, he didn't show it.

"Go on."

"Thank you very much. Like I already said, an easy transport, which is paid also well. Two million dollars."

Jack nearly would have dropped his laser weapon.

"Two million dollars? It has to be something very important what I should transport."

"It is for the company. And we want to make sure that it also reach its destination. That is why we have decided to hire the second-best man in this business."

"And why haven't you choose the best one?"

Feller smiled.

"The best was recently found with a big hole in the chest in a side road."

"Delightful."

"Well, Mr. Harvsterton, here is my card. Come to my office tomorrow morning, then we discuss everything. Shouldn't you appear, than I know that I have to look around for another person."

Feller passed his card to him, which Jack accepted.

"Have a nice evening, Mr. Harvsterton."

With a smile, which looked very much arranged, but at the same time pleased, the man left the bar. Some people watched him, but then they concentrated upon her drink and the band, which started to play a new song. And it seemed as if the singer wanted to test, how long the microphone would take part in his shouting.

Harvsterton still sat there for a while, and stared at the card, which he turned several times. And once more, he recalled the conversation to himself. Furiously, he clenched the teeth when he thought of the smile in the end. Simon Feller knew that Jack wouldn't say no to this. Two million dollars were a lot of money. He never had got so much money for a transport. And currently, his financial situation

was not the best. His transport business had seen quite better times, even if his fame was damaged only partly after the last story.

*Now, at least, I am the best in the business,* he thought, even if he didn't like the circumstances. He had known the best man in this business. And also what concerned his last order. He was too careless what had cost his life.

Jack Harvsterton wouldn't make this mistake.



## 2

The office was clean and tidy, like if somebody had never worked in it before. A big picture, which showed Planet Earth, hung on the wall. Next to it stood a table with an ashtray. Otherwise, there were only a few smaller tables and some chairs in the room, which would still have needed some more furnitures, because it looked cold and too clean. Simon Feller got up behind his desk when Jack, accompanied by a secretary, entered his office.

“Good morning, Mr. Harvsterton. I am glad that you are followed my invitation and show interest in my offer.”

Feller didn't give the hand to Jack. Something what he still remembered from yesterday.

“Two million dollars are a lot of money. Who would say no? But I hope, it doesn't concern something what could cost me my life. With so much money, there is the feeling that it doesn't become safe.”

Feller looked scared at him.

“Mr. Harvsterton, I would never endanger the life of another person. Like I already said last night, it concerns merely a transport of a data carrier, which has to be brought to the Earth. You bring them to the place and get the money after confirmation. That we offer so much money to you is due to the fact that the transport is very important. And we would like to hire the best man in this business. It is also worth to us.”

“Yesterday, we already had the topic with the best. But I have one more thing, which I would like to get rid of it. From the money, I would like to have half of it in advance.”

“Don't you trust me?” Simon Feller asked him with a wide smile in his face, what Harvsterton already didn't like in the bar.

"I trust nobody. If it was up to me, I would want to get the whole money in advance, but such a thing isn't usual anymore today, because nobody trusts to the other anymore and that for a good reason. So only half of it."

Simon Feller poured in a cup of coffee to himself and offered Jack also a cup, but he declined this with a movement with the hand.

"I like you, Mr. Harvsterton. I agree. Do you have more conditions of which you would like to inform me?"

"No, this would be all."

Jack got out a pad from his pocket. After he gave in something, Harvsterton gave it to the business man, who signed the contract with a computer pen on the pad after reading it. Then he gave it back, and Jack sent a copy of it to Feller's electronic adress, which he got from his card.

Feller got a small, square object from his desk drawer and gave it to Harvsterton.

"This is the good piece. Fourfold encoding, so that nobody approaches the data."

Jack knew how the last sentence was meant. If he should have the idea to look at the files, he wouldn't manage this.

"You simply keep this in a drawer?"

"Of course, I have got it from the safe deposit before. Don't worry, it always has been kept safe. And I hope that this will be also the case with you."

Feller gave him a slip of paper.

"Here is the address on Earth, where it has to be delivered."

"And here is the information, where the money should be transferred to," Jack said and gave him his slip of paper.

"I'll see to it at once."

Now, Feller expected that his opponent would say goodbye and go. But he was wrong.

"I will wait."

Jack could see how the smile of Simon Feller froze. He didn't like it, that Harvsterton was still here and waited for

the fact, that half of the amount was transferred. But fast, the businessman started moving and gave a few information into his computer.

“Done.”

Jack didn't move. Almost without to blink, he only stood there and looked to Feller. Silence spread in the room. Only the machines of the spaceships, which were flying heavenward outdoors, were to be heard. When Feller wanted to say something, a beep sounded, and Jack grabbed in his jacket pocket, where he got out a small computer. After a short look at the screen he started to smile.

“Money has arrived. The company says thanks. I contact you, as soon as I have delivered the object. See you.”

Feller also said goodbye. When Jack had left the office, he breathed out. And his smile disappeared.

### 3

"You cannot start with the ship!"

Hank smoked his thick cigar with a fierce expression, which just gave so much smoke like the chimneys of some companies in the industrial zone. Furiously, he closed a hatch on Jack's spaceship.

"Some repair work is still to be done. Otherwise, the ship will blow up in your face. Or she breaks up piece by piece, if you will use light speed!"

Hank strongly started to cough.

"These damned things will kill you," Jack said and had a critical look at his spaceship. At the side, several cables hung out of it, and some of them were split. And a wing was easily damaged. The last flight hadn't been good for the girl.

"Oh no, you are, who will bring me into the grave, if you continue in that way. Which person with a healthy common sense flies through an asteroid belt?"

"I had some very angry people, who were behind me and wanted to kill me. The asteroid belt was the only way out, which has come up to me. And it has also functioned. I came out healthy, and the others have kissed an asteroid. So what do you want from me?"

"I wouldn't call this a good idea. I have used hours until I had repaired the left wing. The autopilot was totally damaged. A laser cannon had to be completely replaced. Do you know what had cost all that again?"

Hank was so furious, that he almost lost his cigar.

"Don't worry about the costs. I have a new assignment, which will bring a lot of money. I already have collected half of it. Immediately, I will give you the money for the repair costs."

Jack looked at Hank.

“And I will also give you money for new clothes. I cannot see you in this yellowed undershirt and the tattered working trousers anymore.”

Hank looked surprised at Jack. Both knew each other for a long time. Harvsterton had hired him at that time, when he started the transport story, so that he took care of the spaceship. The payment was good, even if a stagnation ruled at the moment. But this wasn't the only reason, why he worked with pleasure for him. Although they often argued, nevertheless, they were good friends, and such a thing was rare. Harvsterton trusted basically nobody. However, he needed Hank, and Hank needed a job. Therefore, they worked together and managed also with each other, even if Jack never suppressed the mistrust towards people. Hank also didn't have many friends or people, whom he trusted. However, he counted Jack to it. And it sounded, that money came into the cash box once more. But to ask Jack instead for it, something else came to him over the lips, what Harvsterton would have failed to hear with pleasure.

“I have only been wearing this undershirt for three weeks!”

While both men worked on the spaceship, Jack Harvsterton told Hank everything. With the sum, which he got to hear, the cigar almost fell from Hanks mouth, but this time not of fury.

“Maybe we can get more assignments again afterwards. Nevertheless, to work for such a big company is a good publicity.”

“It wouldn't be bad. To live on a continuing basis on the reserves also doesn't go. Good that you have bought and not rented the hangar. Otherwise, the outgoings would be astronomical.”