**The Bench**

The man sat on the featureless concrete bench. He reached into the paper bag that sat next to him on the bench. He pulled a sandwich from the bag. He took a bite. An explosion sent a hail of gravel flying all around the man. The man paused for a moment, inspecting his sandwich. He plucked a single pebble from where it had landed on the bread of the sandwich and took another bite. One of the aliens from the species’ warrior cast scrabbled past the bench. Its chitton casing was shattered by ballistics fire. A glob of tissue landed at the man’s feet. He took another bite of his sandwich.

The first wave of URP marines charged up the hill. The alien particle beams slashed through the front line. A rocket flew from the shore, smashing into the alien weapon emplacement. A plume of flame reached into the sky.

One of the marines advancing up the hill stepped on a landmine, his legs were shredded into a fine red mist. The man on the bench pulled something from his paper bag. It was a bag of chips. Taking out one chip, he placed it in his mouth, then chewed. A volley of kinetic projectiles whizzed past the hand in which he held his sandwich. One of the projectiles clipped a divot in the edge of the lettuce that poked out from between the two slices of bread.

One of the marines dropped to a firing crouch next to the bench. An explosive went off next to her, sending her body flying to slam against the concrete of the bench. The ruined body rested across the back of the bench. Blood pooled on the ground. The man on the bench scooted two feet away from the corpse and took a bite of his sandwich.