

# [Alien arc] [10] [Fallen Leaf] [12330]

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This is a standalone side story that roots itself from 'Gallo of the Gray mist' story "Seven days of fire". This side story fills some gaps for the story.

My father was a fine swordsman. Not many people in his era preferred using a melee weapon over a ranged weapon. My father was one of very few people who wielded a sword with his life.

My mother passed away few years after my birth. So, it was safe to say that I don't recall her at all. My father raised me alone. Being a single father and a good swordsman led to many strange occasions. It was inevitable that I was taught of swordsmanship.

It was when I was seven years old that I realized I was not good of a hyper human. My father's physical ability as well as his skill were outstanding. But my physical ability was just average. But when I was younger, I did not mind that much. I believed that, if I worked harder and harder, I would be able to become just like my father.

I wielded a sword and acted just like father. I wanted to make him proud of me.

The truth was so much hurting. It was when I turned fourteen years old. I applied for a formal testing of my hyper human rank. My class was ... C.

"What a disappointment."

He said it. He said so, and I overheard it. And it was the truth. I was merely a disappointment. Since then, everything in my life seemed so ... pointless. But I still believed that I could have done better if I put in more effort. The truth was that I was already doing my best. I couldn't have done better. I had become somewhat crazed for a while and, when I finally became stabilized enough to be able to look back at the path I've walked on, I was wielding guns. I did better with guns.

It was when I was twenty one years old. Father was ordered to become an instructor of newly 'crafted' soldiers. They weren't humans. They were engineered beings. Father had always been into spiritual stuff. He didn't believe that teaching the ways of sword could benefit such beings. So, he refused his order. Being famous and all, the government did not push him harder on surface. But, underneath public eyes, they were pushing him ... hard. Eventually, even assassins paid him visits.

It did not take long even for me to realize that father was involved in some kind of conspiracy. Shift of power was in action and father was one of their targets to get

rid of. I did my best to protect him. But then he wasn't the one who needed protection. I was.

Eventually, father decided to leave. We packed necessary belongings and transferred all possible assets into various cash cards and left New Earth behind in a small shuttle. Though small, it was a luxury shuttle. It had everything required for daily life, even including a full body steam bath.

We reached the planet, Freebie of the Smuggler's den. We were supposed to meet up with a guide into the nebula from there.

Freebie was one of the planets in Smuggler's den region. The whole region was poor. Freebie was the most developed place in the region although the planet still appeared to be pretty poor overall. The port of Freebie reminded me of ...  
craphole.

The port of Freebie seemed to be under reconstruction. But father told me that the port had always been under reconstruction. Many aspects of the port was incomplete.

"Hello!," A young man greeted us with a cheerful voice. "And welcome!"

He was Dacre. He was barely above twenties back then. He claimed to be a rogue. Though I believed that it was how he wanted to be. But he just didn't have the quality to be a scoundrel.

Father gave him half of a payment.

"This is only half of the promised payment. What do you think you are doing?"

Father told him that he would get the rest of money once he did his job as our guide.

"Fine, fine!" He growled for some reason. "I won't rip you off. I can assure you that."

But then his words were not supposed to be trustworthy as he claimed himself to be a rogue.

"Nice shuttle, you've got there!"

Dacre inspected our shuttle closely.

"I hope this thing can outrun fighters," He said.

Father asked why he said that.

"If what you were telling me was true, then I am sure we could be chased down on our way to Cyan."

Father asked why we were heading to Cyan. As much as he was a fine swordsman, when it came to the dark side of the society, he was quite clueless.

"Cyan is the entrance to the Nebula. We could enter the nebula from anywhere. But it'd be too dangerous. We can buy a safe passageway into the nebula from Cyan," He said.

Father asked where we would go once we enter the nebula.

"Well, you have few choices. Once we obtain a ticket into the Nebula, it is up to you where to go."

He asked what the choices were.

"Eh...," Dacre rolled his eyes for a moment. "There are three major factions, the Blackbirds, the Nomads and Claw of the Ra. And then there are lots of minor factions. Mind you that they call themselves clans rather than factions. Though personally I don't see how they can be clans. None of them are connected by blood."

Father asked about the minor factions.

"You sure have a lot of questions, don't you? Why don't we get going? I am sure you don't have a lot of time in your hands."

He was right. Though father seemed to be distracted. Perhaps, he knew something I didn't. Nonetheless, it was his business. He used to tell me everything that went on at his work when I was a kid. But he stopped doing so at one point.

We headed to Cyan. It took us eight days to reach there. I was getting worried. It was too easy. And my concern became reality.

They were waiting for us at the port of Cyan. A lot of them were there. While I was counting their number, I recognized a familiar face.

It was Taiyer. He was father's best student and father promised him me. That's right. It was an arranged marriage. Father needed someone to carry on his house after he retired. Obviously, I was not good enough and I was also a girl. Thus, he chose his best student.

Father also seemed to have recognized Taiyer. He growled at him and told him how he had no shame.

Taiyer, in return, simply sneered at him.

"Who the fuck uses blades when there are guns?" He said.

I never liked him. But I didn't dislike him, either. When I chose to accept my fate as a woman, I chose him as well. But the situation was different now.

It happened so fast. I couldn't do anything about him. Father ran toward Taiyer, wielding his energy blade. He was fast but not fast enough. They shot at him. He deflected most of incoming shots but not all. Their guns were... different.

"This is a new proto-type gun. It fires at near light speed," Taiyer said. Then, he laughed out loud. "Old man, you are going to die here. But don't worry! I will take care of your daughter very well. She's a fine woman to fuck!"

Taiyer looked at me with perverted eyes. I frowned. He changed, I realized. What made him change?

Father was on knees, bleeding pretty badly. But he still held his blade strong.

"Miss."

Dacre whispered to me.

"We've got to get out of here," He said.

I didn't see how we could get out of the situation, especially with father's condition.

"I've got some friends coming. All we need to do just earn some time."

I was quite surprised to hear what he had to say. For a scoundrel, he sounded trusting.

Taiyer and father were arguing over something. I was too far away and my hearing wasn't good enough to hear their conversation. But I did notice Taiyer became pale momentarily during their conversation.

It was that moment that he had taken out his real blade, called the Moonlight blade. Father never told me where he had gotten the blade. But I was told that he had been carrying it with him for pretty much his entire life. He even had it when he married my mother. He didn't bother to use it very often. I remember him telling mother that he had to take some kind of massive feedback whenever he dared to use the blade.

As he had taken out his blade from his belt, the small blade began to release very soft light blue energy particles. In a matter of seconds, it formed a shape of a blade. Father immediately slashed his blade against Taiyer. I believe Taiyer was wearing a battle suit. He was also a hyper human as well. Otherwise, he would have never completed father's training and tests. Taiyer realized he was too close to him and attempted to back off. Father was faster though. Taiyer's battlesuit resisted father's blade. Luckily for Taiyer, his attempt for backing off paid off. He received a severe chest wound, but he survived. He quickly shouted out and made an order for his men to shoot father.

All of them shot father immediately after Taiyer's order was given out. Although father couldn't deflect all of incoming shots, it looked like some kind of blue shield was on him. I was not sure though. What I did see was father didn't seem to be wounded after the shots.

Then it happened. A group of unknown men appeared from Taiyer's rear.

"They are here," Darce giggled. "My friends."

Dacre explained to me that he belonged to some kind of thieves guild. And that he had failed on a delivery mission, which had put him under a great debt. The police raided his traders. So, he made a deal with his guild that he'd give them a chance to revenge. Taiyer's men were the perfect target.

"More will come soon enough," He added.

Taiyer didn't seem to have expected to be attacked. His attention was no longer on father. Dacre and I took this chance and quickly approached father and carried him away. He was bleeding him his chest and abdomen.

"They shot his center-mass."

Dacre was right. In other words, father was fatally wounded. It amazed me that he was able to fight still with such wounds.

"I don't think he is going to make it."

I refused to believe his words. But I remember what father told me once.

*Truth is like bitter salt.*

Father was sweating hard and his body was cold. We carried him to the shuttle and laid him down on a backseat.

A man entered the shuttle. I didn't know him. But Dacre appeared to know him.

"I've completed my end of the bargain," Dacre said.

"Indeed, your debt is halved."

"I must get going. I am on a job."

"I can see that."

The man was also wearing a battlesuit, a black one actually. He looked tough with few scars on his face. He must have gone through a lot of battles, I assumed. He turned around and spoke to Dacre.

"I suppose you will not come back once you enter the nebula?"

Dacre laughed weakly in response.

He waved his hand as he left. "Good luck," He said.

Overall, I found him strange. Saying that Dacre had his debt was halved and then saying good-bye to him as if he wasn't coming back. How about the debt then?

I knew the answer. It was the men's world.

The men's world, something that I couldn't understand. Their pride and their honor - and most importantly it was how they intercepted those terms. But -

Meanwhile, I was looking down on father. He was bleeding badly but he still had his blade in his hand firmly and the blade was still on, venting out its blue particles around its edges.

I remembered him telling me that his "Moonlight" blade was alive and that it had its own will. I had never believed him. I simply thought he just really loved his blade.

Having a father like him, I had a lot of experience when it came to energy blades. I had never seen an energy blade acting in such a manner as my father's. It

certainly was different. The blade was releasing and taking back endless glimmering blue particles in a circular manner. It was very tranquil.

I was pulled out of my thoughts when I felt jerked. The shuttle was taking off. At the same time, I realized I just had to do something to stop his bleeding. I rushed into bathroom and grabbed every towels I could spot. I soaked them in cold water and placed them over his chest and belly. I hoped that decrease in temperature would slow bleeding. The white towels were soon drenched with blood.

"Hey!"

Dacre shouted from cockpit.

"How is he doing?"

"I ....don't ...."

I stammered badly.

"I don't ... I .. know..."

The shuttle violently jerked several times.

"Damn! Your friends are in orbit, too! I've got to shake them off and it won't be easy with a clumsy shuttle!"

I wasn't listening to him. I was staring at father's blade in his hand. Its tranquil blue particles seemed to attract me mysteriously. It was as if I was being possessed.

"Hey, what's wrong?"

Then I heard something explode closeby.

"Damn, we are hit!"

At the same time, the blade's blue particles began to expand in the vicinity. The blue particles slowly rose and began to cover father's chest and belly. At first, I thought the blade was attempting to heal father. On second thought, it didn't really appear so. It was sucking father's blood. I was startled when something touched my shoulder.

"Hey, we've got to be prepared. The shuttle is going down!"

Then, he also noticed the blue particles from father's blade.

"What the hell is going on?!"

He attempted to touch the particles, only to find himself instantly stunned briefly.

"These are coming off from the blade," He added.

We simply didn't know what to do. The shuttle was descending. We may had to perform an emergency landing also.

All the sudden, father opened his eyes. It was unexpected since he had lost an excessive amount of blood and was still losing blood. He raised his upper body with the blue particles on his chest and belly. The particles remained still. He looked at me and told me to take his blade. He also told me that the blade would not accept me. But the blade would let me be a holder for it until it finds a rightful owner.

It was hard to take his words seriously especially when I believed that he may be fading away.

"Yudai."

Father called me softly and warmly. I think ... it was the first time I heard him calling me like ... a real daughter.

"I admit that I was disappointed by your hyper-human rank."

Yes, I knew.

"But I swear I never regarded you as disappointment because of that. You are my only child and I have always loved you."

Strange feelings struck me. I felt that my father was speaking his last words. I wanted to stop him.

"Don't say anything, father. Save your strength."

"I will not survive, Yudai."

I ... knew. I knew ..., damn it.

"Don't say anything, father, please."

I knew, damn it!

"You will take the Moonlight blade and find a suitable person. The blade will tell you..."

"Enough!" I shouted, and Dacre looked back at me. "I have had enough of your blade!"

I stood up.

"You are dying! You can't make it! Stop your talking about the blade!"

Father beamed a peaceful smile at me.

"This blade is my everything. Taking it away from me is my death."

Father told Dacre to look after me until I settle down. Dacre didn't hesitate to answer father. Father became pale as blue particles withdrew and returned to the blade. It seemed ... the blade was holding him alive. Father coughed out blood and collapsed instantly.

"... He's dead," Dacre told me after checking his pulse. "... Take his blade."

I couldn't do anything.

"Take his blade, miss."

I couldn't do anything...

Dacre violently took father's blade. He was being stunned, but he managed to hand it to me forcefully.

"That is your father's legacy. Keep it well."

What could I have done? Not damn thing, nothing at all ...

Although Dacre was stunned by just touching it, it did not stun me. It was warm ... with father's warmth.

"Father..."

Dacre was back in the cockpit. He was a little pale. "We are going down! We will hit the ground in less than ten seconds!"

It was a luxury shuttle. It did have emergency handles on its walls. I secured myself on a handle as tight as I could after quickly tugging down father's body, and Dacre was inhaling deeply in the pilot's seat.

"We are going down!" Then he shouted.

Next thing I knew, I was literally thrown away from the handle I was holding myself on to. I almost lost consciousness as I bumped my head hard into a wall. I barely managed to hold my consciousness. Dacre seemed to be alright as well. He was bleeding from his forehead but it was nothing serious.

"Argh...," He moaned painfully. "Are you alright, miss?"

"Yes..., I am..."

"You are bleeding from back of your head," He told me.

I touched back of my head and felt wet. Indeed, I was bleeding.

"Though both of us seemed to be alright..." He suddenly frowned looked away. I didn't know why he did that at first. Soon, I found out. Father's body was in a very unpleasant shape.

Keeping his sights away, he spoke to me. "I am going to open the hatch. Once we get out of here, we need to find ourselves a place to hide for now."

"Okay," I answered him and looked back at father's body. Narrowing my eyes, I moved my eyes away from father's body.

As soon as the hatch was open, I heard loud gun shooting. Apparently, the fight was still going on. Darce went out first and made sure the area was clear. As I left the shuttle, I realized that we weren't far at all from where the shuttle originally landed.

Taiyer saw us and started to come after us with a small group.

"Kill the guy! Capture the girl!" He shouted to his men behind.

Dacre pulled out his twin pistols from his leather belt. "Ready to fend them off, miss?"

I was better with guns, but I chose to draw out a blade this time. Then, a thought struck me. I wanted to use the Moonlight blade.

The Moonlight blade did not stun me, so I thought it might even turn on. I tried to turn it on. However, there was a problem. There was no switch on the blade. I inspected it briefly and still did not find a switch.

"They are coming!" Dacre shouted as he started firing his pistol.

Growling, I put the Moonlight blade back on my belt and drew out my pistols.

With both of us firing, they were unable to come any closer. Dacre and I started to walk backwards slowly.

Taiyer was annoyed. He was too busy to deflect incoming pistol shots.

Then, Dacre said to me, "Miss, I see a building not far from here. Let us hide there."

I looked behind. There was indeed a four story building, and it seemed abandoned as well.

"Wouldn't they chase us into the building?" I asked him.

"They would, but if they have something squishy in their skull called brain, I would not chase us into there."

I didn't understand why, and he seemed to have read my mind.

"If they enter the building to get us, they can be trapped if their opponents enter the building as well. We may be only two but we will be a considerable force when they are attacked from front and back."

I understood his point, and we proceeded to enter the building. Taiyer seemed to be giving out orders to enter the building, but his men refused to follow. Before Taiyer could argue further, they were attacked from behind by rogues.

As soon as we entered building, Dacre speedily ran to a window and stood by it, leaning his back against a wall. I stood by door and made sure no one was approaching.

"Good, they are leaving," He said joyfully. "Let's get out of here."

"To where?"

"I have a fighter craft at the port."

I thought what might have happened if Dacre wasn't here. I would have been captured by Taiyer for certain. What might happen after that, I did not even want to imagine.

We were able to reach the port uninterrupted. Dacre wasted no time and got me into his fighter craft. Although it was meant for one person, it did have a small room behind the cockpit for the most basic needs for daily life. It was connected to a wash room and a very small storage room. Obviously, this journey was going to be unpleasant since we'd be sharing already tiny space meant for one person barely, but we had no other choice.

I entered the small room, and Dacre sat in the cockpit.

"Help yourself in the room," He said while checking the system. "Oh! And please do not mind the porn magazines in there."

Yes..., I did notice a bunch of magazines with naked women on its front covers.

Dacre wasted no time and departed right away. After an hour, he sat back deeply into the cockpit chair and said, "No one's chasing us. We will be relatively safe from now on."

"Where are we going?"

"I have no idea," He answered indifferently. "I am simply going in."

"You don't know where you are going?"

"I know general directions. I can only hope that we will eventually enter vicinity of some sort of civilization."

I was speechless for a moment. I could not believe I left my life to his man who didn't even know what he was doing. We spoke no more then.

I lost track of time. It had been so quiet. Dacre and I had exchanged not a single word ever since we had the last conversation. There was really nothing to do at all. I was so bored that I was forced to read his porn magazines. I didn't actually watch naked girls. There were few articles, so I read those, over and over.

60 days or so passed, there was no sigh of anything at all. I eventually initiated a conversation with him.

"Why are you helping me out?" A sudden question perhaps, but that was what I had in my mind for a while.

Dacre startled as he heard me talking. It was as if my voice caught him completely off guard.

"Why am I helping you out? I've been paid, haven't I?"

"Yes, indeed." Then, I realized. "Only half though."

Dacre was silent for a moment. "Indeed, I've been paid only half."

"I have some money, but probably not as much as what you should be paid."

"You can pay with your body," He bluntly told me.

I wasn't all that surprised to hear such an answer. After all, he had been keeping his words so far, and past 60 or so days, he did not show any hostile gestures. After all, he had done, I even thought about letting him have me once. *I was that bored.*

Before I could answer though, he replied to his own statement.

"It's a joke of course." He let out of a chuckle. "But you aren't all that bad looking girl, I must say."

I thought it was the very first time for me to hear that I wasn't a bad looking girl. I had never been compliment as a girl. Everything in my life had been all about swordsmanship and my abilities to fight.

I had never worn a skirt. I didn't know how to cook. At this point, I realized that perhaps I had never really considered myself to be a woman to begin with. Perhaps, that was why I accepted my fate as a woman when father promised me to Taiyer because it didn't really matter to me.

I imagined the worst case if I was given to Taiyer. I could hardly imagine how miserable my life would have been if so.

"I can't really pay you," I told him. "I am willing to let you ha-"

My words were cut rather hastily by Dacre.

"Don't mention it. It's not like I had a choice. I needed to escape anyway. Let's say I am giving you a ride. And for a ride, the payment I've received was enough."

He was certainly a nice guy for a scoundrel. He didn't take a chance for consensual sex and he didn't take a chance to get half of his remaining payment.

I grew an urge to ask -

"Why do you claim yourself to be scoundrel?"

"Because that is what I am."

I was a little confused.

"You are not a scoundrel. At least, your actions I've seen so far have had nothing to do being a scoundrel."

"That is because you misunderstand who scoundrels are."

I thought it was him who was misunderstanding scoundrels. Nonetheless, he refused to have me, and that was that. I had no reason to insist to be raped. Wait, well, I wouldn't be raped since I was okay with it. Still, it wouldn't have been pleasant experience. After all, I was a virgin.

Few days later, Dacre suddenly yelled joyfully. I was napping at the moment, and his joyful yell scared the hell out of me, resulting me to jolt and strike my head into the low ceiling of the room.

"Sensors are detecting something!" He shouted. "I am going there!"

"Where ... are we?" I was robbing my eyes.

"I am not sure, but according to sensor readings, I think we entered vicinity of CoR."

"Co...R?"

"Claw of the Ra."

"The Ra...?"

Dacre told me that the Ra was the original clan that settled down in Nebula for the first time thousands years ago. He told me that CoR was long descendant from the Ra family.

After an hour, he told me that we would dock. I had no idea where we were going, but I was glad to be outside at the least.

"We will be docking at an orbit ring of CoR. I heard the orbit ring is pretty impressive."

He sounded very excited for a different reason than I was. I was just glad to be out there.

His fighter craft soon docked.

The very first thing we did as soon as we got out of the fighter craft was rent a room with a shower. For some odd reasons, we rented only one room and shared it. After all, we spent months in a very tight area. There was no reason to waste extra money for another room when we were used to being each other.

I took a shower first, and then Dacre took it. God, the feeling of cleansing was so good. I felt like I became a whole new person. I was in a pajama until a laundering machine cleaned all my clothes.

After we managed to get ourselves clean and had semi-decent meals, we started to talk about our next move. Really, Dacre did not waste time. I was beginning to think that he was more suited to be a soldier.

"You could settle down here," He told me. "But I advice not to. CoR is one of the three major clans in Nebula, and if you settle down here, you can be found relatively easily if anyone wants to find you."

Namely Taiyer, I bet.

"CoR is big. I bet they have some smaller clans under their control. I am gonna search them up and inquire them if any of them will take you."

Saying so, he left at once even without waiting for my answer. I felt that he left fast on purpose to leave me alone in the room. I was beginning to be attracted to the guy, a self-claimed scoundrel.

I was exhausted from the journey and felt sleepy. There was only one bed in the room. Perhaps, that was the reason he left. Whatever it was, I fell into the bed and was asleep within seconds.

When I opened my eyes, it took some time to realize where I was. Strangely burdened by quietness, I spent some time blinking my eyes, staring at ceiling in the room. It was a good sleep although I didn't know how many hours I slept. Dacre didn't seem to be here, so I decided to explore the orbit ring.

The orbit ring was indeed impressive. It was a gigantic circular structure surrounding a planet. Some sections of the orbit rings were entirely made of transparent materials, perhaps reinforced glass. The place was fairly crowded with people. It was hard to believe that I was in Nebula where I thought only small amount of people could survive.

Our room was in a residence sector. As I left the room, I was faced with an impressive view of the Nebula. It was ... breathtaking. The Nebula was glimmering in so many colors that I couldn't even count. It was as if countless clouds of different colors were gathered together. A side of the residential sector had a transparent wall which was apparently what I faced as I left the room. I approached the transparent wall and touched it.

"Cold..." I mumbled. It felt like glass. I spent some time staring into the Nebula. When I had enough of the view, I turned around, leaning my back against the cold transparent wall. There were some people who were walking around the section. Some were watching the nebula on benches mindlessly. Some were chatting.

It was quiet and it was peaceful, both of which I missed since the event.

When I returned to the room, I found Dacre who was packing little things we had.

"What... are you doing?"

He didn't appear to be in hurry. He turned around to face me and told me with a grin.

"Good news, I've found someone who'd take you."

I wondered why he was so dying to get rid of me, so I asked him directly.

"Why are you do itching to get rid of me?"

He was silent for a second, obviously thinking, and told me.

"The deal was to get you to safety. This place is not safe."

I felt a sharp pain in my heart. It was also when I realized fully that I had fallen in love with him.

"Is that so..."

Knowing that my fate had been severed, I decided to go wherever this damned fate would take me to.

"So, where will I be going?"

"The Gray Mist."

"The Gray mist?"

"Yes, they are a small sub clan of CoR. They accepted your application."

Application? I never sent any applications to anyone. I sighed. I felt as if my strength was being drained away from my shoulders.

We hadn't exchanged a word for a day. It seemed apparent that he may have realized what was going on in my mind. Regardless, we didn't talk about it or anything else for that matter.

Exactly, three days later, I was informed by Dacre that someone from the Gray Mist had arrived here to receive me.

"Hahaha!"

This man, supposedly from the Gray mist, was loud. I was at a docking bay. Dacre wasn't with me. He was doing his own things to get a job at CoR. This large man, who was standing in front of me, laughed out loud pleasantly.

"Welcome to the Gray Mist!"

"Um-, hello."

"Hello!" He struck out his hand to have a handshake with me. We had a handshake. His hand was almost twice bigger than me.

"My name is Darkan, one of the squad leaders."

This man, called Darkan, told me that my application was accepted. He was here to take me to the Gray Mist. He was willing to leave at any time but did inform me indirectly that he'd like to depart soon.

So, there I was. Darkan had brought only one fighter craft since, well, he has only one able-body. In other words, I had to ride in the back of his fighter just like I had done with Dacre.

Yes..., Dacre.

It was time to bid a good-bye to him. I headed to my room to pick up my luggage. But he wasn't there. In fact, there was a small piece of tissue on the bed. Something was written on it. As I got closer, I was able to read what was on it.

It was a good-bye letter from Dacre himself. I didn't bother to read it all. As soon as I realized it was a good-bye letter, I tore the issue into God knows how many pieces.

"Coward...", I said to myself.

Yes, he was a coward. He ran away. That was what he did. What a coward. What a coward. What a coward ...

"Luck is never with me, huh..."

I grabbed my luggage and left to meet Darkan. And like that, I left the orbit ring of CoR.

It was a few-days trip. I didn't bother counting days. I knew that I arrived as I felt jolts. Darken looked back at me and told me, "Lass, we are here."

My first impression about their station was ... clean. The docking bay was amazingly clean, and crew seemed to have been trained well. They knew what they were doing and wasted no time.

Darkan stretched his body and yawned like a big lion. He was a seriously large man, or perhaps I am too small.

"Lass, I take you to our boss now. Come on."

Where he took me was a chamber. The air in the chamber felt a little strange. It felt ... heavier, and there was slight haze, it wasn't dense enough to block visions. There was nothing in the chamber except what appeared to be a small pool in middle. It wasn't there for anyone to swim obviously.

"Old man, I've brought her," He said casually. A man with a hooded cloak appeared.

"Welcome to the Gray mist, Yudai, the daughter of Mizukaze." The old man's voice was husky, low, and quiet. It wasn't a common voice.

More importantly...

"How do you know my father's name?"

However, he did not answer me and instead walked closer to me. It was when I realized the man had a veil on his face along with a hooded cloak. Therefore, I could not see his face at all.

"It is unfortunate that you had to go through what you went through. I hope that you will find peace you once desperately sought."

I narrowed my eyes. He sounded as if he knew a lot about me, and "*peace I once desperately sought*"? What did he mean? Did he mean I no longer seek peace?

"You are heartbroken and have been betrayed. You need a shelter, and we will provide you with one," The old man said.

"Sir, I..." I tried to talk to him, but he was turning away from me.

"Darkan, you have her under your wing for now."

"Aye, old man. Lass, let us go."

"But I would like to-"

The old man was gone. I could not spot him in the chamber. "Where did he go?"

Darkan shrugged. "Your guess is as good as mine, but that's our old man."

That was how I began my life at Gray mist. I do not regret that I ended up with them. They were good men. They were honest men. They cheated when they could and they ran when they needed to. They weren't those people who had so-called "honor" and "dignity". They were simply trying to live in a harsh environment.

After learning how to fly a fighter craft, I was put into actions right away under Darkan's wing. Gray Mist was a mercenary clan, and their jobs came from CoR mostly. Their tasks were often risky, but Gray mist was exceptional at fighting against great odds.

There were other squad leaders. Darkan happened to be the first leader, and there was another leader whose name was Kazimir. After working for the Gray

mist for about ten years, I became the 3rd leader of Gray Mist, and Gallo became the 4th soon after.

Yes..., Gallo. I didn't hate him, but I disliked him very much. He sometimes reminded me of my father who I believed to have died a meaningless death. Just like what I had gone through, Gallo tried to learn the ways of swordsmanship. But no one at Gray Mist knew of such a skill. Melee weapons had long been phased out of service. Of course, I knew swordsmanship. I may not be excel at it, but I did know the basics. However, I refused to teach him.

I didn't want him to take the same steps of my father.

...No, let me be honest for once. I felt that I wasn't good enough. Look what I have become, I am a gunner. I handle guns. In the end, I chose to give him my father's book instead. I have always had it with me, but I decided to part with it. What changed my mind was an energy blade that Gallo had.

Then the situation changed quickly with CoR being declared a war by the Nomads and the Blackbirds. After Gallo was sent on several crucial missions, the situation turned for worse.

One of the friendly clan, the Osprey, was almost annihilated fighting against them. CoR, then, ordered us to do the very same mission which the Osprey failed horribly.

We were having a conference among the leaders.

"The Osprey clan has closed their door," Darkan declared gravely, "It was due to a fact that their last mission was a total failure and their numbers went down too greatly."

"Mind telling us what exactly happened?" Pikkal inquired.

"CoR asked them to launch a strike force on the Nomads in the bliss area. We did a mission for it before," Darkan looked at Gallo. "Gallo led the mission."

Gallo gave us a nod. Yes, he did lead the mission. He came back with few casualties.

He sighed and said, "And I failed, not completely though."

"Anyway, the Osprey clan brought exactly two hundred seventy six fighters."

"Hey, that's all of them," Kazimir said.

"And only twenty one returned."

I was shocked to hear that. It was a massive loss. They were annihilated figuratively.

"They lost their clan leader as well as all other leaders. Their number is now twenty four total. They terminated and withdrew their support from CoR and closed their door until they reach their number high enough to be functional once again," Darkan said.

"Well, that sucks," Pikkal muttered.

"This is not all." Darkan cleared his throat. "CoR has asked us to investigate the bliss area once again." Then he looked at everyone slowly. "This is a volunteer mission. Is anyone willing to take on this mission?"

Everyone was quiet. I was not going to volunteer, either. It was a suicide mission.

Suddenly, I heard the door open. It was the old man.

It was the first time for me to see the old man out of the chamber.

"I see that everyone is here," The old man's low and husky voice chilled everyone in the room.

"Sir, we were discussing the matter," Darkan said.

The old man looked as if he was looking for something. Then his attention was fixed at me.

"Yudai, my girl, why don't you tell them something else," He said slowly and quietly.

I had been doing a spy work on the outside world, so I knew more than others what was going on outside of the Gray mist station. Apparently, the old man knew my deeds.

"If you say so, sir," I responded. I had nothing to hide. "There is a rumor that the Nomads and the Blackbirds are now allied."

Darkan downcast his eyes and closed. Pikkal laughed nervously. Gallo remained calm. Kazimir and Calvin were whispering to each other.

"If that is true, this mission could well be a trap," Kazimir said.

"I agree. And the Osprey's case proves it," Calvin nodded.

"My dear children," The old man said, "If we do not take on this mission, that means we will be standing against Claw of the Ra."

"I don't have a problem with that, sir," Gallo said with a firm voice.

"I don't have a problem with that, either," Pikkal followed.

Gallo and Pikkal said they had no problem with fighting against CoR. I had a different idea though.

"But we will be facing CoR before we could get help from either the Nomadss or the Blackbirds," I told them.

"I assume...," The old man spoke. "CoR was aware that it was a trap. Perhaps, they made the Osprey to launch an attack so that they'd take a serious damage and become too weak to betray them. Perhaps..., they are doing the same to us."

What the old man said made sense.

"I will go," Darkan volunteered. "I am the first leader of the gray mist after all."

"Then I will go with you. This mission certainly calls for numbers," Kazimir volunteered as well.

The old man clapped once to gain attention.

"It is ... decided then. Prepare to launch your teams," He then turned around slowly. "I am... sorry."

I felt sorry for them as well. I was certain that only few, if at all, would return. I never truly understood the urge to sacrifice oneself for the good of others.

After two weeks, there was no news about them. When I was certain that every one had died, seven fighters returned.

The fighters seemed to be on auto-pilot and it crashed into the docking bay. We waited them to open their cockpit hatch, but that did not happen.

I rushed into the docking bay and told everyone, "Don't just stand there! Open it by force!"

Everyone was dead, but I saw no external wounds on them. I recalled that I had seen such cases. Those who were killed by ESPs were generally like them. Calvin, Pikkal and Gallo rushed into the bay as well.

"I don't fucking believe this!" Pikkal ground his teeth. "Seven are all?!"

Darkan and Kazimir weren't among those seven people, meaning they were probably killed in action.

No one cried, but they were silent.

"My children," The old man arrived at the bay and approached one of the dead bodies on ground which we pulled off their fighter crafts. "Gather around me."

The old man inspected the dead bodies.

"They are brain dead," He said. "Most likely killed by ESPs."

"The Nomads...," Pikkal mumbled swearing words.

"It is safe to assume that..." The old man darkened his face. "Those who have not returned are dead."

Crew started to talk about possible break-down of the clan.

"What are we going to do now?" I asked the old man.

The old man's eyes filled with a strange dimming light. I felt almost as if his eyes were glowing, but it stopped too soon for me to make any meaning note of it.

"We will still support Claw of the Ra on surface for now," He said gravely.

"I don't fuc....," Pikkal started to course out loud and I had to stop him.

"Pikkal!" I bellowed at him. He gave me a strong glare and ran out of the docking bay.

"Yudai, you are the chief leader now," The old man said to me. "Gallo, I have a mission for you."

"Yes, sir," Gallo replied firmly.

"I want you to head over to Cyan and take control of the planet."

I was surprised to hear the old man's words. It meant he was counting on Gallo for survival of the clan. The old man counted on Gallo, not me.

What was it about me that he couldn't depend on me? Was it my gender?

"Sir..., I thought we were...", Gallo didn't finish his sentence as the old man interfered.

"A minor clan, yes," The old man nodded weakly. "But desperate time calls for desperate measures. We must act normal on surface and still support Claw of the Ra. On surface, you will be just on a trade mission."

Gallo narrowed his eyes. "Are you absolutely certain about this, sir?"

"Why, Gallo, are you getting afraid now?" I sneered at Gallo, and I realized that I acted out of jealousy.

"Shut the hell up, bitch. That is not my concern."

"What did you just call me?!" I drew out my pistols and, at the same time, Gallo drew out something off his belt. It was an energy blade.

He chose to use an energy blade whereas I drew out my pistol. Was that it? Was this why the old man chose Gallo over me?

The fact that I was a bad hyper human?

"Both of you, enough! This is no time for internal conflict," The old man stood between me and Gallo.

Sighing, Gallo withdrew his blade and deactivated it. "Excuse me, sir, I need to get some different air," Saying so, he turned around.

"Gallo," The old man said and Gallo paused.

"Come to my chamber, I need to talk to you about the mission."

Gallo nodded and left the bay at once.

I saw Gallo and the old man left. As they left, the crew started to talk aloud.

"What is going to happen to us now?" A crew said.

"Did the old man say something about Cyan?" Another said.

Although we called ourselves a clan, none of us was related by blood. There was no couples in our clan, either. For some odd reasons, none of us enjoyed companies of opposite genders. The whole clan was friends, nothing more and nothing less. Being a squad leader didn't mean much, either. They followed leaders because they trusted them, not because they were disciplined to follow their orders.

"Enough!" I barked at them. "Carry the bodies, and check logs in the fighter computers to see anything unusual."

I oversaw the operation at the docking bay for few hours before I left and went to my quarter. I was curious what mission the old man gave Gallo. Most importantly, I wanted to know why he chose Gallo rather than me.

I was by the door to the old man's chamber. I waited Gallo to come out, and he did soon. He glanced at me briefly and passed me.

I knocked the door, but there was no response from the old man. I knocked again, and there was silence.

"Sir," I finally spoke aloud. "I'd like to talk to you."

At last, the old man allowed me to enter the chamber.

"What is it, child?"

I told him honestly that I wanted to know what mission he gave to Gallo, and the old man told me honestly as well.

"Could I..." It took some courage to be able to speak what was in my mind. I had nothing to lose. "Could I do that mission? Why did you choose Gallo? Do you not trust me?"

*My father did not trust me.*

*Dacre did not trust me enough to embrace me, either.*

*And now, Gray mist was rejecting me.*

*Why?*

The old man approached me and stared at me.

"Do you trust yourself, child?" He asked me softly.

It was a tricky question. My father didn't trust me.

"Your father is dead, child. I am asking you."

He read my mind completely.

"Do you trust yourself, child?" He asked me again gently, but I could not answer.

"That is why Gallo took this task, child. He would answer the question in a heartbeat with a firm yes. You do not however."

I was told to leave the chamber after then. I felt... nothing, no resentment or any sort. I felt... nothing.

As soon as Gallo departed, the old man ordered the station to relocate. In order to relocate, we needed to lock up the fighters in the docking bay. Otherwise, fighters might get loose and collide.

I saw Pikkal looking after his fighter. He wasn't tightening it however. In fact, he was activating its system.

"What are you doing?" I asked him.

"Nothing. I want to just test her out a bit," He told me with a smile.

I found him a little weird on that day, but we had lots to do, so I didn't pay too much thought. Pikkal took his fighter out of the docking bay "for a ride". However, he did not return after a considerable amount of time. When I asked the command center to track him down, they responded that his fighter was nowhere near the station.

It was obvious that he had run away. Impact of the incident was huge. I was the only squad leader currently left in the station. Calvin was away with a mission to fight for CoR, and Gallo was away to acquire Cyan.

However, the old man said no word regarding the incident. I also thought about leaving the Gray mist as the whole situation looked grim, but I chose not to.

Betrayal was not something I was willing to take on. As my mind was made up

and decided to stick with the Gray mist until the end, I felt a strange thought that I was going to die soon.

Meanwhile, the old man appeared to know the region very well. He relocated the station to a wormhole which we had never heard of. He claimed that it would lead the station to the Bliss region. He assured us that it would be the perfect place to hide until things settle down.

When the station relocated to the Bliss region, no sensors started to work. Sensors that our station equipped was powerful sensors specially designed for nebula, so it worked fairly well in nebula. However, even such sensors were ineffective in the Bliss region.

The Bliss region was basically much more dense part of nebula. When we arrived there, all sensors went static and there was a strange constant humming sound. It was coming directly from nebula itself. Thus, we had no way of preventing the sound. Some of crew started to go a little weird from the sound.

We had been staying there for few weeks. Actually, I lost track of time. The consistent humming twenty four seven started to have an effect on me as well. What made the situation even worse that we had no liquor. The station had one bar ran by Jessamy, and he went with Gallo to Cyan along with his liquor vault. Therefore, we were stuck with just water.

While we were attempting to maintain our sanity, an unexpected event occurred. It was Gallo. I had no idea how, but he was there in the Bliss region with a clan called Mystic. After the old man literally drew away Gallo, he made an announcement to prepare for a fight.

I was summoned by the old man to his chamber.

"You called me, sir?"

The humming sound was not present in his chamber. I was surprised to know that.

"The Nomads should have detected our communication signals. It may have been faint, but they will investigate anything unusual," He said to me.

"We will fight them then," I answered unexpectedly indifferently. Perhaps, my sanity was leaving me just as it did to others.

"We will, but the fight will likely mark our end."

"Sir?"

"It will be our last battle."

I narrowed my eyes. The old man had never been wrong.

"It is too late for me to run away now," I told him, "I guess this will be my end as well."

"Will you hand over Moonlight blade to me for a moment?"

As expected, he knew what the blade was. Who is he really?

"I would love to, but the blade will shock anyone who it finds unfit."

"Do not worry, child. It will not accept me, but it will not harm me, either."

At this point, I bluntly inquired, "Who are you?"

"I am the old man," He answered me right away. But he was evading my question.

"You knew my father's name. You knew what this blade was. Who are you?"

No one could ever see his face behind his veil. Only shape of his face could be seen hardly, but I thought I saw him smile behind the veil.

"I am the old man, child."

I realized that he was not going to answer me. In the end, I handed him over the blade. As he said, the blade did not stun him. What was more shocking was what was going to happen next.

The old man activated the blade, and for the second time, I had a chance to see its beautiful sword. Blue particles formed around its lens as if moths were gathering around a light source. The particles became firm and started to arise from its lens. In a matter of seconds, it formed a firm light blue transparent blade.

"Ahah...," I was in awe, total awe. "How... How can you turn it on? I've never been able to..." I realized something wet on my cheek. It was a tear. "Father..."

The old man practiced few swings with activated Moonlight blade. It was... just too beautiful. But it didn't last long. He deactivated it and gave it back to me.

"How... can you turn it on? I've never ... found a switch to it." I asked him, but I did not expect an answer, for I knew that from a part of my heart that the blade had to accept its bearer to be activated.

The old man said to me, "Do you trust yourself, child?"

It was the same question he asked me before, and this time I answered him almost instantly.

"I do not." Yes, that was the truth. "I do not trust myself."

"Good, now you have the answer, at last."

"Is it bad?"

"Perhaps, but it is definitely better than not having an answer."

My end was coming as the old man said. It was only a matter of time before the Nomads located this station. I decided to fight to death when it would occur.

It had been only few days before the Nomads began attacking the station. The sensors did not detect incoming attacks. It was when the station was taking fire that we realized that we were under attack. The old man made an announcement to repel invaders.

I was in my quarter when the announcement was made. I equipped my pistols and its energy cells around my belt. Taking a deep breath as I was done, I told myself, "Let's get the show down the road."

Despite the impending doom, I was surprisingly calm. Even better, I felt confident and strong.

When I arrived at the docking bay, the Nomads infantries had already breached the hull and was flowing into the bay. The docking bay had the thinnest plates, so

we expected them to come through there. I was with tens of crew armed with weapons.

"Attack!" I shouted as I charged toward the infantries.

I did my best to fight back, but we were slowly being outgunned. The infantries kept on coming and coming in numbers. Eventually, they started to set up machine guns to fight us. However, the machines guns were soon taken out and their overwhelming numbers meant the inevitable.

"We must get out of here!" A crew shouted. "We can't hold back!"

"Belay that!" I shouted. "Hold our position!"

Regardless, in spite of me wanting to hold the position, it was futile. We were battling ten times more numbers and were in danger of being wiped out. If there were more of us, we may have held them back for longer, but it was futile. Even if Darkan and Kazimir didn't get killed and we have their number, we'd still be facing total wipe-out.

"R, retreat!" Eventually, I shouted at others whose number was less than ten at this point.

"Where to, ma'am!"

I didn't know. I... didn't know.

"Ma'am!"

"To... to the command center! We can't let them take there!"

We locked down any doors we could find on our way to the command center.

When we got there, we found the old man with two guards.

"Sir, what are you doing here?"

The old man was doing something at the central console. "This is the brain of this station. This place must be the last place to be breached," He replied indifferently.

We stayed there for a bit and we could hear the infantries breaching through sealed doors. It was becoming louder and clearer: They were getting close.

"It is time."

It was the old man. Everyone's attention was on him.

"It is time," He repeated. "Prepare to evacuate."

"Sir?" I said to him, "The docking bay has been taken over."

The old man turned around from the console and looked at me, no, he was looking at everyone.

"This is an old station. The docking bay they've occupied is not the only docking bay we have. We have another docking bay that has not been under service for many years."

I didn't know how many years "many years" meant, but I was certain that it must have been pretty old.

"I have contacted the quartermaster, Ghahin, to arrange a small freight vessel to take off." He looked at me this time. "Go now, child. Take everyone to the bay.

"Ghahin will contact you momentarily to lead you to the old docking bay."

Crewmen were rushing out of the command center and were waiting for me. But I noticed that the old man was not moving.

"Sir, are you not going?"

"I am the captain of this station, and a captain goes down with its ship."

"But sir..."

"Yudai," He said to me. The tone was different which made me startle a bit.

"Everyone has their places and their own ends. This is my place and my end. You will find your place and end soon enough." He turned around back to the console.

"Now, go."

I bowed at him and left the command center with remaining men. I was soon contacted by Ghahin. He was giving me instructions on where to go. Where we ended up was a cargo bay.

"Cargo bay?"

But it was apparently not. I saw Ghahin with seven men carrying supplies into a small freighter vessel. Even by the looks of it, the vessel was hundred years old kif not thousands. I could tell that by simply knowing that the vessel had windows. No recent vessels manufactured in nebula had windows.

"Good, you are all here," Ghahin noticed us. "Get in. We will be taking off soon. Help us move the supplies. We are going to need them."

We started to assist Ghahin. By time we were almost done, I sensed vibrations from ground. It was faint, but I could tell that it was generated from foot steps of the Nomads infantries.

"They are coming here," I said to them, and Ghahin informed us fatal news.

"Someone needs to stay behind," He informed us. "Someone needs to operate the docking arms to move this ship into a launch position. This is a very old bay. Everything needs to be done manually."

Whoever stayed behind would die. It was certain. For so, everyone was hesitant to volunteer.

"I will do it."

It was me. It was me who said that. I think they looked at me with admiring eyes for the first time, which I could care less to be honest.

Ghahin approached me and handed me over a key card. "This will unlock the controller over there." He pointed at a small console by the exit of the bay. "The control is simple. You should be able to figure out quickly."

Taking the key, I gave him a firm nod.

"Yudai..., thank you," Ghahin bowed to me deeply, and the rest of crew did the same.

Perhaps..., it wasn't such a bad idea after all.

Ghahin and others were rushing to complete transportation of supplies.

Meanwhile, I was at the controller, trying to learn its ways. It was really simple, so it didn't take me a long time to master it.

"Yudai!" Ghahin called me from a hatch of the vessel. "We are set! Initiate the arms!"

"Roger!" Inserting the key, I operated two pairs of mechanical arms to secure the vessel to relocate it into a launching rail. It was the same time when the Nomads infantries were spotted.

"Damn!" I pulled out a pistol and started to shot at them. I didn't aim properly as the passageway was full of them. Using my other hand, I continued to operate the controller. After relocating the vessel into a launching rail, I released the two pairs of mechanical arms. Now, I had to initiate the launching mechanism which would push the vessel to a certain speed through the rail. It would then be launched into space. The vessel would not initiate its engine and thrusters until then. If it did, it would crush the launching rails due to thrusting powers.

As I attempted to start the last sequence which would push the vessel through the rail, A Nomads infantry jumped on me with a plasma knife. I struggled with him and I could see more coming.

"Get off me, damn it!"

When I finally managed to shake him off, his plasma knife was deep into my upper arm. It was bleeding pretty badly but I didn't care at all nor did I feel any pain. I shot him in the head with my pistol and got back to the controller. Just as I initiated the final sequence, I saw many infantries jumping on me. I successfully dodged them this time as I rolled away from the controller. Pulling out my second pistol, I started to shoot at them.

"Yudai!"

It was Ghahin's voice. But I had no time to look back.

"What!"

"Come! I think you could make it!"

It was really weird, but I didn't feel like saving myself. Was it because I felt that this was my place and my end. Was it because what the old man said?

"Yudai! Come on!"

Still shooting my dual pistols, I looked behind briefly. The freight vessel was slowing moving forward on the launching rail. It was gradually accelerating. I started to take steps as I remained shooting. I looked behind once again to

confirm my position, and that was when I felt a sharp pain on my left shoulder: I was shot.

"Yudai!"

I was shot again in my left arm and I could no longer hold on to my second pistol. They knew I was wounded and I could shoot only one pistol. Therefore, they became much more aggressive. One of them even threw his knife on me which struck into my abdomen. My aim was disturbed, and the next thing I faced was a heavy blow on my face with an elbow. My nose was broken instantly from the blow, and I was thrown back.

"Yudai! You are almost here!"

Indeed, he threw me back to the vessel almost.

"Get me a rope! Anything! Now!" Ghahin was desperately trying to save me, but I realized that I could no longer be saved anymore because... I could no longer stand and my left arm was numb.

Moonlight blade...

I wanted to activate it. For the last time, I wanted it to accept me. My pistol was already out of its energy cells, and I was unable to refill its cells with just one hand, so I was left with pretty much no choice. I held on to the blade and pulled it

out. There was no switch to it, I knew. I simply had it in air, hoping that it'd activate.

However, it did not activate. Still I kept holding it in air.

"Come on... For the last time..."

Still, there was no sign of activation from the blade. A Nomads infantry jumped on me, and we struggled. When I finally managed to shake him off just barely, his knife was shoved deep into my neck.

I was coughing, and it was becoming harder to breath. Still, I had my right arm arise in the air with the blade in my hand. I was staring at the blade, hoping it'd activate, hoping it'd accept me, hoping it'd grant me my last wish...

It was strange. I was hearing my heart beats so loud in my ears as if I had my ear right on my left chest. Everything was in slow motions. I wanted to keep my right arm arise with the blade, but I could no longer as my arm was shot various times. I wasn't feeling my right arm, either.

My eyes were becoming blurry...

That is it. This is my end. My fate ends here.

The Nomads infantries approached me, perhaps trying to confirm that I did go down.

"Is she dead?" One of them said.

I felt few fingers right below my chin. One of them was checking my pulses.

"Still alive. Though weakening fast."

He was right. My consciousness was fading fast.

"Kill her. We need to proceed."

I assumed that the freight vessel had already taken off because I could see that the infantries were not shooting at anything. I could see that even with my blurry visions.

Nothing was going in my head even after hearing that I'd be killed soon. I waited and waited. But nothing happened. Instead, I heard screaming.

"Who the heck are you?!"

Their voices were in panic and fear.

Some kind of liquid was spattering. It didn't take long for me to realize that someone was killing the infantries ruthlessly without mercy. The way this someone was killing must have been very brutal as pellets of blood were spattering all over me nonstop.

Remaining infantries were either screaming or peeing on their pants. I didn't understand what was going on. They didn't fear me and my pistols, but they were fearing this stranger...

My head was facing sideways away from the battle scene but it seemed to be happening very near me. I moved my eyes but could not clearly see what was happening. Then, I noticed that Moonlight blade that I was forced to drop was vibrating. I could see its blue fairy particles forming around its lens.

"You stood in my path. Therefore, you shall die."

It was a rather feminine voice. I think ... I heard the voice before..., didn't I? I couldn't recall... I was drowsy...

As bits of blood and flesh showered all over my body, a figure walked right above my head. It was strange ... The person was wearing a robe... a very ... crimson robe ... It had silver linings and laces as well. Overall, the robe seemed to be very noble. Then the scene of battle was viewable from my side.

"You all will die here."

His or her words contained powers. It was as if their future was set to be killed. One of the infantries screamed as he set his machine gun to burst at the person. With unbelievable footwork, the person managed to dodge and evade every single shot of plasma. I simply could not trust my eyes. It was so surreal. The person was wielding a pair of strange blades. It was glowing dark red. He swung the blades in a fashionable manner and the infantry who was bursting his gun was beheaded.

For a moment, I even thought that his moves were beautiful. My father's ... moves were powerful and elegant. But his moves were... beautiful and dignified.

I wonder... if I was that good ..., would my father have been satisfied of me?

I wonder....

I am too tired now... I want to sleep...

The old man in a crimson robe was looking over a dead body which was once Yudai. He no longer had his veil, and his face was clearly seen. All other infantries in the area were dead.

She was killed brutally. She had a knife in her neck and in abdomen, and her right arm was shot so many times that much of flesh was burnt to ashes by plasma. Two plasma shots could also be seen on her left shoulder as well as in her left upper arm. She was dead with her eyes open, staring aimlessly.

"You held on well, Yudai," The old man said to the dead body softly.

As if not wanting to give a moment of silence to moan her death, lights turned red in the bay and a computerized voice was speaking through all available speakers.

"SELF-DESTRUCTION HAS BEEN INITIATED. ALL PERSONALS ARE ADVISED TO EVACUATE THE STATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THREE HUNDRED SECONDS UNTIL SELF-DESTRUCTION."

The old man approached Moonlight blade. He picked it up and was about to leave the bay. However, he turned back to Yudai's corpse.

"TWO HUNDRED FIFTY SECONDS REMAINING."

He placed Moonlight blade on Yudai's chest and closed her eyes.

**Fin**