

[Alien arc] [4] [Alucasa] [12328]

Rev 2.1 (Last edited on April 4, 2018)

Cecil Klisis AKA the Crimson wizard...

“The most ruthless dictator who saw people as mere numbers and punished them for speaking out their opinions. After taking over Venus from Illy O’ren and declaring independence, he ruled the planet with bloody iron fist.”

On a normal history book, that was what was said about the crimson wizard. The reality, however, was vastly different. What the text said was partially truth in his own time. As generations passed however, historians took different views on Cecil’s methods.

His accomplishments on rebuilding Venus was nothing like any other. He shed so much blood that it was hard to take a favorable view in his own time. However, looking back at his deeds thousands years later, people realized that *he had a point.*

Economy of Venus remained strong even after his disappearance, and after United Sol fell, the entire Sol system started to evolve around Venus as its capital. And eventually United Earth was formed by Venus. What was crucial was that hardly anything was altered ever since Cecil left the planet. It was a testament that he had a point and it worked.

Many historians voiced that people of his time should have tried to get to know him better instead of just branding him “the crimson wizard” and isolated him. However, their sentiments were largely ignored due to the moral values forcing them to acknowledge that he was nevertheless *wrong*.

Alucasa was a class C hyper human, a security officer working for United Earth military. With most of ESPs and hyper humans dead from the war with the aliens, he was one of few hyper humans who was still alive and most importantly was willing to battle still. Some had retired despite of being called into battles.

One day, Admiral Nottingham summoned him to his quarter for a critical mission. He was doubtful that he'd succeed. But he had no other spare hyper human or ESP left under his command.

"You called me, sir?"

A man of six feet height entered. He had a slender body which was common for hyper humans. He had stick gelled pitch black hair laid backwards.

"Yes, have a seat. I've summoned you for a very very important task."

As he sat on a chair in front of the desk, Nottingham began to explain the situation. The admiral made it simple: mankind's defeat was imminent.

Alucasa wasn't too surprised because he had been involved in battles. Anyone with a brain could see that mankind was slowly being pushed back which was exactly why some had retired; they saw no lay of hope and chose to spend reminder of their lives in fake happiness.

Admiral Nottingham declared, "We are being pushed out. The Sol system will soon disappear from space chart."

A short moment of silence dominated the office before Nottingham cleared his throat and continued.

"Only admirals and rear admirals know how serious it is. They are approaching Freedom colony now. I doubt they will be able to repel the aliens. However, I do think they will be able to hold a little bit. Your primary task will be to locate Cecil Klisis also known as the Crimson Wizard."

Alucasa twisted his head slightly in confusion. "Are you serious, sir? He'd be dead long ago, don't you think? And why would we search for him even?"

It was a certainly valid question. With resources stretched thin, searching for something unknown was the last thing any organization would do so.

Nottingham sighed as he nodded along. "I understand your sentiment perfectly. However.., we have reasons to believe that this alien we are confronting may have something to do with him. And, with his death never confirmed, there could be a chance that he is out there, somewhere."

Everyone was desperate to repel the aliens, somehow. But Alucasa felt Admiral Nottingham's idea seemed far-fetched.

He was asking him to locate a person who was already thousands years old.

"No human can live that long, sir," He told him bluntly.

"True," Nottingham replied promptly. "If he was a human to begin with."

Although it never crossed anyone's mind that Cecil Klisis might have not been a human in his own time, future critics questions Cecil's true identity. Some even claimed that he may have not been a human to begin with. Few boldly claimed that he was an android.

All claims lacked vital evidence to back up and usually dismissed outright.

Seeing that Admiral Nottingham was, for some reasons, adamant that Cecil had to be located either dead or alive, Alucasa accepted the mission. He figured that the Admiral must have had a valid reason.

Nottingham looked clearly please and told him, "Survival of mankind is depended on it. Your secondary objective is to locate anyone who's related to the Crimson Wizard. Perhaps, we could get some clues from them."

His smile quickly withdrew from his face as he informed Alucasa about the secret colony vessel, the Hope.

"Since... I do not think you will be able to come back in time, let me make it up to you." He was being blunt. "I know you have a younger sister, Alushana. I will

personally make sure that she will be aboard the Hope as a member instead of a refugee."

Although it wasn't known to anyone else, Alucasa and Alushana had an incest relationship. The sibling lost their parents early in their childhood and the bond between them grew too deep to be called normal.

When he realized the concept of incest and attempted to keep a distance from his sister, it seemed to have encouraged his sister more.

They eventually went on their separate ways but the incest relationship wasn't over.

Alucasa beamed a grin vacantly. "Thank you, sir. That'd be great..."

Nottingham dropped his head and apologized in return. "I am sorry."

He was given 9 million credit for the mission. It was a lot of credit but Nottingham was adamant that he'd need it. He was told to depart when he felt he was ready although the Admiral told him to leave as soon as possible.

After spending some time in his quarter alone, it finally struck him that he wasn't going to return from this mission. Nottingham did mention that he wouldn't be back "in time". Whether he survived or not, he wasn't coming back. If he survived, he'd stuck out there because Sol system would be gone by then.

He had to contact his sister because it would be the last time to talk to her or even see her. He did consider about walking away from the mission. However, given the current situation of mankind, it sounded too selfish to even consider.

He decided to go for it and it was time to talk to his sister via a holographic communicator. When he explained the mission he received and that he'd be leaving for good, Alushana was clearly furious that he accepted the mission without consulting him first. She advised to abandon the mission by running away but he refused firmly.

"But you've run away from missions before."

"Not this time, Shana."

Shana was how he called his sister.

"You can't return before the Hope or whatever takes off. He is sending you to die literally. What kind of order is that? You shouldn't accept such an order!"

"This mission doesn't allow me to escape with the others. If I survive this mission, I will just have to manage to live on the other side of the galaxy. Listen, this is for the sake of mankind."

"Bullshit, trying to locate the Crimson wizard is for the sake of mankind? He is dead! He has been dead for thousands of years! I'd say the Admiral isn't right in his head. He sounds like he is gasping for straws!"

He felt she had a point because logically someone couldn't have lived for that many years. However, it didn't alter the fact that he was given the mission and Nottingham sounded sincere.

As a navy officer, if someone like an admiral gave him an order in person, he had to carry out.

Alushana hung up the communication eventually in anger and he was force to pack his stuff. There wasn't enough time to fool around, he felt. Clock was ticking fast already for mankind.

When he had his clothes and few other things packed up in a small backpack and was leaving his quarter, he was stopped by Alushana who looked as if she had arrived just in time by teleportation. Her hair was haywire and she was panting hard while glaring at him. However, she didn't say anything and simply collapsed on the floor.

A medic was called.

"She will be fine. She is showing symptoms of mild overexertion. She won't die from it," He said after checking her out on a bed. "Some sleep and she will be fine."

Then there was nothing to do other than wait. He eventually fell asleep while browsing the net in his room. No news was positive. Battle lost here and there. Where ads used to be was replaced by desperate pleas looking for people lost in action. He vaguely recalled watching news claiming that mankind lost six billions and the figure was just from United Earth.

He eventually fell asleep on his desk.

When he woke up, he found himself embraced from behind.

“Shana?” He lazily called out.

“I guess you are really going.”

“I can’t run away from this one. Not when the fate of whole mankind may be depended on it.”

“We could retire, you know. Some have done it.”

Alucasa made a short pause before breaking off from her embrace. “Running away won’t solve anything, Shana. We need to face the reality. We are being exterminated.”

Looking dejected, Alushana leaned against a wall nearby. “I wonder... what the Crimson wizard would do in a situation like we are in.”

He was never defeated according to the history. United Sol could not defeat him in space battles. The Bau could not defeat him on ground. Finally, he was never defeated, either, politically.

She had a point, he felt. What would he do if he were here? Would he be able to bring mankind back to the way of winning?

All of a sudden, he felt a weak surge of hope from a corner of his mind. What if, what if he was really alive? His death was never confirmed. What if he was really alive and could take the command?

In a way, he could see what Admiral Nottingham was feeling. All was lost but perhaps there was a tint of hope.

“I’ve accepted that you are going. Before you go though, sleep with me.”

“W, what?!” He jumped out of his chair and almost tripped.

“Listen, I am not joking. You aren’t coming back. Then at least give me something to cherish you, your seed and mini-you.”

Despite of having an incest relationship, they never slept together. After initial shock was gone, he became accepted.

The world was going Hell, so why not, he thought. He did have feelings for Shana. That was true.

.....

Alucasa was on Admiral Nottingham's personal battleship. He was personally escorting him to Pluto.

"I will drop you on Pluto. You will, then, take a civilian express to reach the Freedom colony. You will be on your own after that."

Both of them were on the bridge. The Admiral was in his chair and Alucasa was standing next to him.

"Thank you, Admiral."

Then an awkward silence dominated the bridge.

Pluto was busy. Civilians were trying to leave the planet and Pluto government was trying to stop them by freezing shuttle ports. Since Alucasa had a permit, it wasn't a problem for him.

He showed the permit to a port officer.

"I saw the Admiral's ship and you came from it. You must be someone of importance," He said.

He replied stoically, "You could say that."

"Though I don't understand why the permit says that you are cleared to travel to Freedom colony."

"What's wrong with that?"

"It's been reported that the aliens are heading there. ETA's been reported to be a week. Six days to get there from here. Twenty four hours to do anything. Pretty tight time schedule, I'd say." He sighed and continued. "Besides, we have no ship going there."

"What? What do you mean?!"

"Claim down. We do have a ship going to the SOL colony number two, which is three days away from Freedom colony. It will take three days to get there. So, it's the same. Give or take few hours though."

"Don't scare me like that. You had me there for a second."

"But....," He glanced over at the civilians camped right outside of the port. "If any ship takes off, they might rampage."

"Why have you frozen the port? It's not like we are having a civil war."

"Well, we do not have enough ships to transport them at once. If we do open the port for service, it will be..., well, you get the picture. We are waiting for enough ships to arrive."

"Why aren't you telling them then?"

"We did. They just didn't believe the story though. They think we are running some kind of conspiracy." He laughed weakly.

"Is there any way at all?"

"Well, you have the permit. It says to get you out of here no matter what, under any circumstances. And it's been written personally by the Admiral himself. So, we will give you a ship. Take it and leave. We will just have to deal with the outcome."

Feeling bad for what might happen to him and everyone else at the port, he asked, "Is there anything I can do?"

"Yep, there is something you can do," Behind of the officer, someone of a higher rank appeared. "Greetings, I manage this port."

"Oh, greetings," They shook hands. He gave an eye signal to the port officer and he left. And then he led him to his office nearby.

He had a scheme. To sum up, he basically wanted to carry his family and himself out of Pluto. No, he wanted to get out of Sol system. He hadn't been able to since the lockdown order was in effect.

In the end, he refused. The manager looked obviously disappointed but nevertheless he gave him a small frigate-class ship.

Wanting to waste no further time, Alucasa went aboard the ship and simply took off ASAP. Just as the ship took off, he could see those who were waiting outside of the port were barging into the port. Port staffs were attempting to drive them off, but it looked futile. The port was going down for sure.

“No hard feelings,” He said to himself as he saw port gate being taken down.

After taking off, he inspected the freighter. He expected no surprises but was proven wrong. He did find a group of smugglers in cargo bay.

Actually, they were mere smugglers.

"Good to you see again, Port manager."

He seemed momentarily taken back by his rather kind words. He seemed to have his entire family with him; Two children and his wife.

"Is that your family?"

He nodded carefully.

Who could blame him? Alucasa certainly couldn't. He even slept with his own blood related sister in the name of chaos. What the manager had done was certainly far more justified.

"You can't send us back now..., can you?"

Alucasa shook his head. "No, but you are now going to help me."

The manager identified himself as Ryszard. He agreed to help only if he'd drop his family off Sol colony number two. Seeing there was no malicious intent, Alucasa agreed to his term.

The journey to the colony was uneventful. Ryszard stayed with his family most of time and Alucasa minded his own business at the bridge. While he had some questions for Ryszard, he let him be since it'd be the last time he'd be with his family.

When arrived at the colony, Ryszard gave every credit he had to his wife.

"Find a transport and get out of here as soon as you can," He held his wife's hands tightly. "Find kids a safe home." His wife begged him to come with them with tearful eyes, but he firmly refused and told them that he had a duty to uphold.

"Perhaps, I shouldn't bind you," Alucasa remarked as he welcomed Ryszard to the bridge, who set himself in front of a helm control and activate a small holographic monitor displaying his family on a docking bay. The kids were waving and the mother was sobbing.

"A man has got to do what he has to do." He turned away from the sight of disappearing figures of three. "Let's go."

Alucasa informed Ryszard of the mission as simple as possible. He omitted important bits while telling him that he was looking for exotic information on legendary figures.

Ryszard nodded along as he was briefed although it looked fairly obvious that he wasn't buying everything he was told. What he did realize, however, was that Alucasa was on a secret mission sent by Admiral Nottingham. Perhaps that was the reason he tagged along.

The week-long journey was rather smooth for Alucasa and Ryszard. Despite of the impending invasion by the aliens, there weren't a lot of commotions along the way. They did run into several freighters sailing away from Freedom colony, but none of them seemed to be urgently in rush to get as far as possible.

"They do know we are losing, right?" Alucasa wondered.

"Losing, yes, the aliens haven't actually invaded neither Sol nor the neutral zone. I heard they are hammering Andromeda cluster though," Ryszard replied.

The journey was peaceful, yes, but when they actually arrived at the colony, the scenery told a different story.

There was no sign of active ships. It was eerily void of any ships. A large colony like Freedom colony would have consistent traffic.

"Civilians must have evacuated. Makes sense since they have been warned of a possible attack," Ryszard said.

They were soon hailed by the colony's lighthouse division.

"Whatever business you have, go back," They said.

"Can you grant us a landing permission?"

"We could," They said. "But we have no reason to issue landing permissions. Get out of here."

"I must land. I have a very important business."

"I assure you that ninety nine percent of civilians have evacuated. Whatever business you have, I am sure that it's canceled."

"Could you just let us land?" Alucasa raised his voice.

They didn't respond for a while but eventually replied, "Fine, but leave in three hours. That is before the total shut down on civilians services including docking bay."

It was certainly new experience to face a gigantic docking bay void of any ships and people. Considering Freedom colony was considered the busiest zone in clusters, it was very eerily.

"I wonder if there are even people in the city. You came here to buy information, didn't you?"

Alucasa nodded at Ryszard.

"Masters are weird. Perhaps, not all masters left," He remarked.

Masters were the ones who sold sensitive information. Usually, they ran a bar long with their black business. And, generally speaking, they were weird and hard to understand their philosophies.

However, there was no master left in the colony. They had no choice but leave the colony empty-handed.

"We have one more place to check out," Ryszard suggested. "We must go to a planet, Freebie."

The planet, Freebie, was a poor planet and it had always been. It was basically a shelter for homeless and the poor. It had, however, recently changed. With the aliens taking over other more populated planets in Andromeda cluster, Freebie became overcrowded with refugees who were looking rides to either the Nebula or elsewhere.

"Don't have a choice, do I?" To which Ryszard responded, "Nope."

"Off we go then."

This time, their journey was a little messier. There are a fair amount of traffic moving away from Andromeda cluster. Many of them warned them to stay clear of the zone as skirmish attacks from the aliens downed many ships so far.

Regardless, they pushed on and arrived at planet Freebie which, on surface, looked like uncolonized Moon. There was a small outpost in its orbit and that's where Alucasa's freighter moored with the outpost.

Mooring was another way to dock with a space installments. Instead of physically landing, a ship would moor with a reinforced communication cord.

Just as soon as the cord was connected, an emergency warning sounded on their bridge. It was basically a warning to evacuate. There was a confirmed report of an impending attack by the aliens.

There was also unconfirmed reports of Freedom colony being attacked and possibly already destroyed.

"Can't be, at least not yet. If something as big as Freedom colony was destroyed, we would have met the shockwave by now," Alucasa said and Ryszard agreed.

After the emergency message, they were able to access station service menu. Despite of the stern warning, the service menu looked surprisingly normal.

Looking through countless service offered by civilians on the menu, a curious title caught Alucasa's attention.

"Information for sale," it said. Having nothing to lose other than some time, he chose to click the title which brought up a direct communication between a middle-aged man.

"Thanks for considering using my services. I sell information. What is it you want?"

The middle-aged man had a fine attire and well shaven face. He looked more like a bartender.

Alucasa responded, "I am looking for some sensitive information."

The man grinned and answered sarcastically, "Don't we all."

"I am searching info on the crimson wizard."

The communication monitor froze momentarily as if the man stopped the recording for a moment. The recording eventually unfroze itself after half a minute.

"No one has been able to track him down. He finds you. No one finds him."

"Well, that's useless info," Ryszard remarked off the screen.

Regardless, Alucasa pushed on, "Do you know anyone who might be of help to track down him? If there is, where could I find the person?"

The recording froze momentarily again. After unfreezing itself yet again, it responded, "There is one who was especially close to the crimson wizard. Her nickname was the small witch." And then the recording froze once more for a second before resuming. "No, wait a second... Yes..., it's little, not small. The little witch. I do not know an answer for your original question. But I do know an answer for the witch."

With his arms folded, Alucasa nodded along. He wasn't sure he was getting genuine info but it was a start.

"Give me the answer for the witch," He said.

"Credit please."

"How much?"

"Four million."

Ryszard exclaimed in anger. "That is outrageous!"

Hearing Ryszard's shout, the man stoically stated, "I am a master. I charge how much I like to."

"What stops you from just taking money?" Ryszard talked right back.

"I would never do that."

"And we trust you just like that?"

"Because I am a master."

His answer was illogical but that was a kind of answer that a master would give.

"Fine," Alusasa replied, "Transferring the credit now."

Ryszard reacted angrily, "What? You can't be serious?! It's freaking four million!"

"Stand down, Ryszard. It's not your money. It's not my money, either. Besides, I don't think money will mean anything soon enough."

However, Ryszard didn't stand down. Instead, he charged toward Alucasa to stop him from transferring the credit. What he did not know was that Alucasa was a hyper human who easily dodged his attack and punched him away hard.

"What is the matter with you?!" Alucasa demanded as he knocked him down away to a wall. Despite of the initial setback, Ryszard came back at him aggressively. "Give me the credit!"

He was after Alucasa's money. If it wasn't for the mission, he might have just let him have the credit. After all, it wasn't his money. However, he was on a mission to seek a solution to mankind's impending doom. He had to make a quick choice.

Swiftly drawing out his energy pistol, he shot at Ryszard who was hit right at his forehead. Blood splattered through his back and floated in air under zero gravity.

Panting hard, Alucasa carefully approached him. An ESP could still live with his brain shot. Therefore, he had to be careful. Confirming his death, he made the credit transfer and the middle-age man responded.

"Sae the small witch...," He cleared his throat. "Sae the little witch is called 'the specimen' by Karma the third. It would appear that Sae the little who has seized functioning and is now in deep coma. She was found on Cyan. To be more precise, she is being held in a capsule in Karma the third's research base. I am uploading a map of Cyan and marking the location of his base where Sae the little witch is being studied to your ship. I am also uploading necessary navigational data to sail to Cyan in eight days from here to your ship." He paused for a moment before speaking again. "Thank you very much for your patronage."

With his shoulders sagging downward, Alucasa looked spent and sat in a captain's chair. "What a day," He said to himself.

After cleaning up the body, as in just dumping it into the space, and the mopping the bridge to get rid of blood, he set the freighter on course to Cyan. He had little sympathy or guilt for Ryszard. It wasn't the first time he killed a person, either. Therefore, overall, the event didn't shake him.

Cyan was a curious little planet. It was a rouge planet which meant it wasn't rotating any sun. In fact, unlike most of planets, Cyan's location wasn't circular. Instead, he drifted along the edge of the Nebula, moving back and forth.

The name of the planet came from a fact that the planet had the color of cyan when observed from space. On surface, however, it was just pitch black with nebula insight.

Finally, although Cyan was claimed under Andromeda union, it was in fact a neutral entity. Over centuries, the Nebula pirates started to have more influence on them but nevertheless Cyan had no government.

Although there was no ruling government, the planet was nonetheless run by local syndicate and it actually required a landing permission to land on the planet which Alucasa found it amusing.

For a port with no ruling government and public security, the place was surprisingly secure. There were armed thugs who were clearly watching over the zone as Alucasa made the landing and subsequently left the freighter. None of them asked him what his business was and minded their own jobs.

Back in the freighter, he had everything prepared. He had downloaded the data given by the self-claimed master back at Freebie into a memory module installed inside of his skull which started to project an overlay map of where he needed to go into his optic nerve as soon as he left the freighter. And he had two pistols on his belt and an energy blade.

While he had absolutely no way of knowing the credibility of the data in his brain, he had to trust that it'd lead him to something or someone because quite frankly time was running out and there was no other option.

“What have I gotten myself into..., fuck,” He whispered to himself as he left the port.

And it didn't take long for an action to occur.

After mere minutes following a path overlaid in his vision, he found himself surrounded by a group of thugs. And before he could even muster a word, there was an exchange of gun fire.

Being a class C hyper human helped, but the thugs appeared to be hyper humans as well and, before he could realize, he was already shot twice in the back. Still, there was no time to moan. He rolled and dashed to lose them, but they knew the zone far better than he did and he wasn't losing them at all. If anything, he felt as if he was being cornered.

It was when he saw an old-fashioned manhole cover at his feet. With all his might, he kicked an edge of the cover which flew off upwards. Without a second thought, he jumped into the manhole.

“Damn, this place stinks as fuck,” Alucasa muttered. He was navigating the sewer with a flashlight on his pistol. Good news was that he wasn't followed anymore. Bad news was that the map data seemed to be for surface. The path simply did

not match in sewer. Still, he had the general direction and slowly made his way through the wet and stinky place.

Luck or not, when he happened to locate a thick metal door on a wet curved wall of the sewer, he felt like he scored a jackpot because the overlay data was telling him it was the final destination. The door was rusted and opening it was bitch, but he eventually made into what appeared to be a medical facility of some kind. Only bare minimum light was on but it was enough for him to go on.

He ran into several liquid-filled capsules along the way and some of them had what appeared to be humans inside.

"Don't tell me they actually study humans here...."

He recalled being told that Sae the little witch was in coma of some sort.

"She's got to be one of these capsules..."

At one point, he ended up in what appeared to be a control room. A large console was present along with several empty capsules on walls. While he was skeptical he could access its data, he attempted anyway. As expected, the system was password protected. However, he could still access some of its data as a guest.

"What in the world..."

He was accessing casual notes made by Karma the third who was clearly studying the art of immortality.

Immortality became less of a subject ever since mankind's average lifespan became over four hundred years old. Majority of people were rather eager to end their lives after hundreds of years and many chose suicide in the end with approximately 60% choosing to end their lives voluntarily after they passed 400 year-old mark.

Additionally, with ESPs and hyper humans easily exceeding six hundreds years old, many felt that immortality was already there.

According to the reports made by Karma the third, however, he thought differently. He seemed to fear what was called "mental shutdown". An average human whose age was over four hundred may experience "mental shutdown" which was total shutdown of mental capacity all of a sudden one day, resulting death. Because there was no prior warning or symptoms before it would occur, it was certainly involuntary death. It was also informally known as "The blackout."

Karma the third was attempting to study the mental shutdown and was trying to prevent it from happening on himself. Perhaps, his idea itself wasn't a problem, but his method certainly was.

"My word..."

Karma the third was apparently one of those who firmly believed that Cecil Klisis was a God of some sort and still believed that he was alive somewhere out there. And having acquired one of his pupils, Sae the little witch, he had been researching her body. He had apparently been dissecting her body part by part

and implanting them into foreign bodies. Reading further required a password unfortunately.

Either way, it seemed clear that he was on the right track. Just as he turned away from the console, he saw the door slid open and several arms thugs barged in.

“There he is! Shoot!” One of them shouted and Alucasa ducked at instant.

The gun fight didn’t last for too long. Alucasa was on top of a downed thug and had a pistol aimed at his forehead.

“You are the last one,” He stoically told him.

“W, what do you want?”

“Tell me where they are keeping Sae the little witch.”

“The who?”

Alucasa raised his voice. “Sae the little witch. Don’t fucking kid me around, dude.”

“I, I don’t know what the fuck you are talking about, man!”

He felt the thug was telling the truth. Regardless, however, letting him go wasn’t an option and he shot him in the head.

Since it was apparent that they were after him, he decided to move around. His back wounds bothered him but it wasn’t severe enough to hinder him.

Within minutes after leaving the console room, he was welcomed with a shower of gun shots from afar. He was under heavy duress.

“They brought a whole platoon!” He muttered loudly as he sought a cover behind a broken capsule. And the next thing he felt was a sharp pain through his left shoulder. Apparently, an energy blade pierced through his shoulder.

His eyes filled with disbelief because he never saw or felt anyone approaching. Drawing out his own blade made the thug pull his blade back and a sword fight started. The attacker was eventually defeated but left him a deep shoulder wound and several cuts on his belly.

“God, this hurts.”

Applying pressure on the open wound, he ripped off his left sleeves in order to make a makeshift bandage. He did have a first aid kit on his belt but the wound was simply too big for what the kit could provide.

Once the first aid was completed, he leaned against a cold and wet metal wall and let out of a deep and long sigh. He had a distinct feeling that he wasn't going to come out of this alive. Standing on a pool of his own blood was somewhat of testament to his moody feelings.

At least though, he felt he was on the right track. Once bleeding had seized, he made his way deeper into the facility in stealth mode. He attempted to avoid any direct conflicts at all cost and made his way down several floors.

At one floor which was marked as 15B, his breath was becoming steam. At this point, Alucasa was crippled. Despite of attempting to avoid any direct conflict at all cost, he did run into more than ten instances of either melee and shootout.

Each conflict earned him a wound or two, and by time he arrived at this point, he was crippled. He wasn't feeling his left arm anymore and he had lost considerable amount of blood. He had two bullet holes on his abdomen and had large cuts on his back.

He was just glad that his gut wasn't spilling out at this point.

"Damn, it's cold here."

"Hi."

Startled by the unexpected greeting, he looked afar. There was a man standing. Since he never felt his presence, he assumed he had been waiting there.

"Hi." He greeted back either way. The man looked different from the rest of thugs. He donned a dark red coat. He looked rugged as well.

"Sorry, nothing personal." Having said so, the man draw out an energy blade and activated it. "You cannot go further."

Alucasa drew out his as well. "And I must go further."

After momentarily glaring at each other, they dashed toward each other. Upon just first clash, however, Alucasa coughed hard and started to bleed from his mouth. Additionally, he struggled to keep his pose afterwards.

"Dude, just turn back. You ain't gonna make it," The man warned him. "Killing a crippled man makes me feel inadequate."

Wiping out blood from his mouth, Alucasa responded, "I don't have any place to return to. The world is going to Hell and I am on a critical mission."

The man chuckled in response and said, “Dude, you talk as if you are here to save mankind.”

Alucasa’s silence in return made him narrow his eyes. “For real?” He asked.

“I don’t know to be honest. The answer lies with someone on this floor, I believe.”

“Who are you talking about?”

He wondered whether to tell him more about his mission. Although it sounded risky, at least the man could be talked with unlike the thugs who simply attacked him on sight. Still, it sounded simply too risky.

“I cannot tell you. Can you just let me go?”

The man scratched his head in frustration. Eventually though, he grunted loudly as he threw his blade toward him.

Looking down at the deactivated blade, he was confused. “What?”

“You didn’t notice? Your blade lens is shattered. It’s malfunctioning. Take mine. I am just not good with a blade.” Then turning around at once, he walked away.

Groaning and picking up the blade, he said to himself. “Should have asked his name at least...”

Either way, he needed some sort of rest. Chewing on his ration, he sat in a corner to find a little bit of warmth. Alas, the metal walls meant no warmth whatsoever. After catching his breath and settling down his mild vertigo, he stood up with a loud grunt and proceed further into the facility.

The floor was clearly different from other floors. It seemed far well maintained than other floors.

When he eventually made into another console room, he figured that he'd attempt to make a report to Admiral Nottingham. It'd be his first as well as the last. While he had little hope for the connection to be actually established, to his surprise, the connection did establish and the Admiral's face appeared on screen.

Just as he started to talk to him, someone was banging the door. Muffled voices could be heard from the other side.

"Admiral, can you hear me? Admiral?"

There was heavy lag but the connection was definitely established.

"Officer Alucasa? Where are you? What is the status of your mission?"

"Sir, I believe I have located someone who may know whereabouts of Cecil Klisis."

"You do?! Who is it?"

"Admiral, I -" Then he heard loud bang from behind. They apparently used explosives but the door held on.

"Officer, what is going on there?"

"I am being chased, sir, by someone known as Karma the third. I don't have time to make a full report, sir, I am -"

Then he heard another loud bang, and this time, the door was heavily bent and deformed.

“He’s in there! Get the laser cutters!”

Sensing that Alucasa was in great danger, the Admiral ordered withdrawal which Alucasa refused firmly, primarily because he had no way out. He was positive that his freighter had already been taken over even if he made out alive somehow.

“Admiral, it is already too late. I don’t have the time to explain you everything. What I can tell you right now is that my location is planet Cyan and I am after Karma the third. That is all I can inform you at the mo-”

Another loud bang and this time, the door gave in. At least six thugs rushed in with their guns firing. The console was the first to go out and so did the communication. When the console exploded, it knocked him out cold. Having been exhausted and crippled, the explosion was a little too much for him to handle. His consciousness faded in an instant and there was nothing he could do about it.

.....

When he regained consciousness, he realized he was captured. He was tied up and was blindfolded. He could hear a conversation however.

"I think he contacted Sol system."

"From Sol? What for?"

"Your guess will be as good as mine."

"Timing is bad though. The boss was about to perform his final test."

There were three voices.

"What did the boss say?"

Make it four.

"Kill him, he said."

Alucasa startled involuntarily and they seemed to have noticed the movement.

"Hey, he's awake. He's been listening to us."

Then the ground jolted as if something exploded from afar.

"What was that?! What's going on?" They, too, obviously feel it. "Let's check it out!"

"Sleep for a while!" Upon an impact on the head, his consciousness went blank.

When Alucasa gained his consciousness, he found himself being handled by others. Fearing that it was the thugs who were going to put him down, he struggled with all his might to no success.

"Calm down. We are on your side."

He doubted what he was just told. No one would be on his side. However, they untied him and removed the blindfold.

There was one male and one female. The male was half naked with tight leather pants and the other female wore tight leather pants, which were brown, and dark brown crop top shirt with a jacket.

“Who are you?”

The half naked man answered, "We are the Gray mist. An enemy of Karma the third is our friend. Besides, I believe you dueled our squad leader. He told us to save you."

“Your leader...?” The only one who came to his mind was the man who donned a dark red coat.

“Either way, come with us.”

Alucasa sternly refused. “No, I have a mission to pursue here.”

"Karma the third is a coward. But his wealth is not something to underestimate. He has hired too many mercenaries. We cannot hold long. You either come with us or you will end up dead."

"Why did you attack here in the first place then?"

"We'd like to take control over Cyan. For that, weakening Karma the third is vital. Our number is smaller than his. But I do believe that we are more individually skilled though. We are trying to weaken his forces. Originally, our planned attack is two days after today. But our squad leader changed the plan. One of our secondary objects is to save you and get you out of here."

"No, I am not leaving. I cannot."

The half naked man pointed at numerous points at him. "Look at you. You have wounds pretty much everywhere on your body. Some of them seem pretty critical. You do not stand a chance."

Ignoring him, Alucasa inquired, "Perhaps you can tell me the location of what I am looking for." And then he told them he was looking for Sae the little witch.

"Well, we ain't after it, so I guess why not. You wanna die? So be it."

Sighing, the half naked man told the female. "Fine, Karesinda, draw him a map or something."

The female draw a crude map with blood from thugs on a piece of a rag.

Was it because he was facing impending death? Or was it adrenaline? He was running down a corridor with great haste. His wounds appeared to have no negative effect on him and he was breezing down the way.

The reality was that he wasn't really feeling the pain, partially thanks to the cold temperature of the zone. His ten fingers and ten toes were showing signs of frostbite. His face was pale and his lips were dark blue. He was at his death's door but something was driving him with vigor.

At the end of the crude map, he found a chamber where there was a lone capsule in middle and various surrounding instruments connected to it.

And in the greenish liquid filled capsule, he saw what looked like a fully naked pre-teen girl floating inside.

“Sae the little witch...” He murmured. In a way, the nickname made sense. Either way, he needed to talk to her in order to find out whereabouts of Cecil Klisis. However, it was certainly easier to be said than done. He had no idea of how to operate these instruments.

In the end, he decided to crack the capsule open with the blade given by the man who donned a dark red coat. As he activated the blade and rose it to smash the capsule, a group of thugs led by a man in a science coat rushed in.

“STOP HIM! SHOOT!”

He was shot God knows how many times in the back. Still, he managed to slash and crack the capsule while being shot. He saw the capsule leaking liquid and it was the last sight before he lost his consciousness.

Or so he thought.

He was on verge of losing his consciousness but somehow he held on. Facing down in pool of his own blood, he started to choke only to be picked up by someone.

“Damn, motherfuckers, they never let me sleep.” A very high pitched, feminine voice, he heard. Then he heard screams, presumably from the thugs. He could hear flash ripping and bones cracking. He even heard someone begging for life

before seemingly cut down. During this surreal events, he was being dragged around like a little toy.

When it was over, he was put down, facing up. He saw the pre-teen girl looking down at him.

“Are you ..., are you the witch?” He could only whisper and was unsure whether she heard him.

“You forgot little, little witch.” Looking annoyed, she pouted.

He smiled or at least attempted to do so. “I guess... I didn’t fail the mission completely...”

“What mission?” She had this cute curious look on her face. “Who are you anyway?”

“Alucasa..., a class C hyper human from United Earth...”

“United Earth?”

“... On a mission from Admiral No...ttingham...”

“What mission?”

“Save the mankind... I ask you... No, we ask you... to help us to regain our place again...”

"Who are we?"

"We.... those who sacrificed their lives.... to hold back... Those who are still fighting... We..., everyone...."

.....

Tears drop from Alushana's eyes. She tried to resist tears, but it is futile. Drops of tears just flow through her eyes and started to float in front of her face.

Alushana was currently aboard the Hope. She has been debugging the ship's mainframe on the Hope's secondary bridge in preparation of final take off.

"Could I be excused?" Before her supervisor would answer her, she rushed out of the bridge.

Leaning on a wall in a corridor, she sobbed. "So, he's dead...."

- Fin