

For readers to understand this chapters better. It's probably best to read up few lore files.

Personally, I find this specific story ... lacking but it was written a really long time ago, probably somewhere between year 2001 ~ 2005.

Additionally, this story is closely tied to [Shattered union arc] [1] [Revolts] [9599]and [Shattered union arc] [2] [Karin Bau] [9603].

I also warn you of extreme violence and gore.

## [Ashuta arc] [2] [Mud Fight] [9600]

Rev 1.3 (Creation date forgotten | Modified on 2015 Dec 22)

Year 9600.

Shortly after Venus and Mars went independent and Cecil's resignation, United Sol was completely decentralized. They needed new leaders and had no time to prepare for a full election. They simply did not have the time.

Grace period was automatically declared soon after Cecil Klisis resigned. Grace period was a period of time where bribing would become legal. Generally, it would last only few days. However, this time, no deadline was declared.

This led many politicians grow their own ambitions.

Those who had the ambition to seize powers were bribing people to be on their side and convincing admirals to join them.

The Ark on Earth was simply too busy to take care of anything other than their own business.

Nalen was one of those ambitious people. He would never have a chance if it were a proper election. He was an old friend of Admiral Gabrio who was in charge

of Saturn. At first, he had no political supporters. However, having an admiral was a powerful asset that many couldn't overlook. As a result, he started to earn political powers rapidly, eventually forming a political faction which Nalen himself called "The revolutionary party of Earth".

Another rapidly growing faction was led by Uzma. She named her faction "The new democratic party of Earth" and had support of Jupiter administrator Rommel.

There were other smaller factions but none of them really stood up without backings from admirals. Furthermore, the Bau was being silent.

Nalen and his close advisor Chaths were conversing in a small but secured room. Ashuta stood guard by door outside.

"Any words from the Bau?" Nalen asked Chaths who was going through various holographic windows in front of a wall. He was checking messages.

"They are being silent. They probably don't know who to support right now."

The room had a round table that took up one third of the room and there were few consoles sticking out of walls where one could use to access mails and browse the Net. There were no windows for security.

"Damn them. If we can get their support, I could be the president right now."

"Which is why they are silent right now," Chaths replied to Nalen's complaint. "To be honest, Nalen, Uzma's faction is bigger than us."

"True, but not by much."

"If Uzma gains the Bau's support, she could be the first female president of United Sol. That's giving her some edge here."

"If I could become a woman by cutting my balls and my thing, I'd do it right here right now."

After a short silence, Chaths asked, looking amused, “Really?”

“No, I am just saying.”

“Well, we do have an option of ... taking Uzma out of the scene.”

Nalen knew what he meant. “Assassination isn’t covered under grace period though.”

“As long as no one finds out who did it, I’d say it’s covered.”

Nalen inhaled deeply and gave the option a thought. “Ashuta! Come in.”

“Yes, sir.”

It was normal for lives to be lost in political conflicts, but it didn’t mean that they enjoyed killing off others. Some may have actually enjoyed killing but Nalen wasn’t one of them.

Few days ago.

“Gabrio!” Nalen called out. “Long time no see, ser.”

Admiral Gabrio saluted at Nalen. “Indeed, it’s been many years, old friend.”

They were in a cafeteria of the Ark.

As they shook their hands, Nalen told him, “Let’s get a table, shall we? I will get some drinks.”

“Black coffee for me.”

“Aye, ser.”

“It looks like I came a little too late,” Gabrio remarked as he dipped his coffee.

“It was good that you arrived late, however. You saw what happened Admiral Jack and Admiral Rommel.”

Gabrio let out of a short laugh. “What were they thinking, I don’t know. I’ve seen Cecil long enough to know that he’d trick them.”

Nalen smiled with a visible shoulder shrug. “And the guy resigned.”

“I was surprised but not totally unexpected.”

“Yeah?”

“He’d never become the president of United Sol. He has too much bad memories for Earth.”

Nalen didn’t respond and continued to dip his tea instead. He didn’t feel that was the reason but chose not to argue. No point in damaging the fragile relationship after all.

Gabrio continued meanwhile. “So, what’s going on at the Ark right now?”

“Grace period was declared today and they didn’t announce deadline.”

“Very interesting. I assume you called me here to form a political party?”

“Yes, you are one of few Admirals who still hold fleets. Quirino and Tibor don’t even have authority to call their fleets without the president. Kalas got scared and left Earth at once upon hearing Jack’s fate. I am not sure about Admiral Rommel but I doubt he will support anyone considering what happened to him.”

“Hmmm,” Gabrio dipped his coffee with a long groan.

“You will probably be replaced by the new president. Support me and I will make you the administrator of Jupiter assault station.”

“Nalen, I thank you but I was born and raised on Saturn. I am happy to remain as an admiral for Saturn.”

“If you insist, so you will support me?”

“I suppose I have no other choice. You are quite correct that I will likely be replaced when a new president is elected.”

“Thank you, Admiral. With your support, I should be able to convince others much easier.”

Gabrio and Nalen worked in the same fleet when they were just cadets. Nalen eventually chose to be a politician whereas Gabrio remained in the navy.

“Nalen, I will be in space. I will not leave the vicinity, so give me a call if you need something.”

“Very well.”

Everything went well for Nalen and his new political party. It gained a momentum right away but the unexpected occurred when Uzma appeared with Admiral Rommel’s support. Admiral Rommel was more powerful than Admiral Gabrio. Therefore, Nalen’s was naturally behind Uzma.

Other smaller political factions attempted to merge together to stand against Nalen and Uzma but they weren’t simply enough in numbers to mount any serious challenge.

“I am here, sir,” Ashuta reported.

“I want you to shadow Uzma and assassinate her when time is right.”

Chaths added, “I don’t think it will be hard. I don’t think I’ve seen Uzma with bodyguards. She roams alone surprisingly.”

“There was never any assassinations during grace period. Perhaps, that is why,” Nalen explained.

“Records are there to be broken,” Chaths stated.

Nalen nodded and said, “True enough. Ashuta, do it.”

“Understood.”

Since Uzma was unaware of such an intention, it was easy for Ashuta to track her down. He was hiding in shadow. He was hiding at a corner which was close from the main entrance. There were several large sculptures which helped him to hide more effectively. Uzma was walking forward the main entrance; no one else was around except two guards outside of the entrance doors.

When Uzma passed a statue which was located nearby the corner that Ashuta was hiding, Ashuta jumped on her like a hawk. Even before she noticed, Ashuta quickly positioned himself behind her and covered her mouth with his right hand to prevent her from screaming. Uzma realized the situation and quickly attempted to teleport. But Ashuta's blade was already half way through her neck.

A short moment of silence passed.

Ashuta beheaded Uzma swiftly and, at the same time, his energy blade went through Uzma's heart. Her headless body fell to the floor hopelessly and her head also fell a second later.

He stared at the lifeless body and the head, trying to make sure he did finish the job. Then he quickly ran back into shadows. The two guards outside of the main entrance seemed to have noticed something was going on, and they came in to check to see if anything went wrong. They spotted a body and a head on the floor in a pool of blood.

One of the guards screamed with fear. The second guard also jumped backwards with a shock but he seemed to be under control unlike the other guard. The second guard pulled his scanner off his belt and scanned the body.

"It's Uzma. It's Miss. Uzma," uttered the second guard.

The first guard was on the floor, unable to stand up due to his legs shaking too hard. He eventually urinated on his pants. Suddenly, the two guards heard a whooshing sound from behind. They looked behind. Someone was there. The second guard tried to talk while resisting fear.

“Who are...”

Even before he finished his speaking, his head flew high.

The first guard screamed and cried out with fear. He was unable to move or do anything due to overwhelming fear dominating his entire body. The person who just killed the second guard was Cecil. He had a blade in his left hand. It was not an energy blade. It seemed to be a blade made out of a strange material and was weakly glowing in dark red. Cecil quickly slashed the first guard as well and the guard was cut in half, receiving instant death. And then he approached toward Uzma's head.

"Hello, Uzma," said Cecil. He tried to continue his conversation but five guards reached to the entrance.

They noticed the two dead guards and one unknown dead body.

Assuming that the person who was standing with a blade was the killer, the guards made an offensive formation.

"Hold on right there!" They shouted and then they realized who it was due to Cecil's distinctive appearance. “Mr. Klisis?!”

Cecil's blade changed its shape and became a whip, he whipped against the guards, battering them to death. Three guards were chopped to death instantly. The two remaining guards fired at Cecil in response, but the shots simply went

through him and blasted the entrance doors as a result. They saw Cecil jerk his left arm and that was the last of them as the whip sliced them into pieces.

He then again approached Uzma's head. Picking up her head, he vanished from the scene.

After an hour or so, the Ark went red alert. There were some guards investigating the mass-murder scene. A few groups of people were watching them from far. One of the groups was Nalen's.

Nalen, Ashuta, Chaths and Eder were whispering as they watched the guards.

"Ashuta, did you do this?" Nalen whispered to him.

Ashuta shook his head slightly but firmly. "No, I only did my job. They weren't even there when I did it."

Among the guards, there was a man who appeared to be of a much higher rank. He inspected around the dead guards and stared at the groups of people around.

"I don't know who did this but, if you are going to continue this conflict with this kind of attitude, count me out." He let out of his opinion and turned his back around to continue with his job.

Ashuta seemed to be focusing on something. Ashuta poked Chaths.

"What is it?" wondered Chaths.

"I can't locate Uzma's head," he whispered.

Nalen raised his eyebrows and looked at the mess. Narrowing his eyes, frowning at the same time looking at the mess, he searched for Uzma's head.

"I can't find it either," Nalen agreed. Meanwhile, Eder refused looking at the mess.

Chaths and Nalen both failed to locate the head.

"Could she have lived?" Chaths whispered.

Ashuta gave a negative look. Nalen was in deep thoughts meanwhile.

In the meantime, Chaths took Eder inside as he noticed that Eder wasn't taking it too well.

After Ashuta was sure that Chaths was gone, he whispered.

"You seem relieved."

Nalen also made sure no one else was too close to listen.

"Well, yes, I am rather relieved."

"I thought you were the one who wanted her gone."

Nalen was staring at the mess. So did other groups. The guards were dragging away the corpses in body bags. None of the corpses looked right. Condition of their corpses indicated that they did not stand a chance.

"Sometimes, one has to be a devil to keep up with followers' desire," Nalen said while having a bitter grin on his face.

"I don't understand."

Nalen patted Ashuta's shoulder and turned around, heading inside.

The guards were still inspecting the bodies. The chief guard, who was the one who shouted at the others earlier, asked the inspecting guards.

"Found anything?"

One of the guards shook his head. "No evidence at all," He said.

"I bet these guys got killed instantly," Another guard said.

"They did not stand a chance for sure," The chief guard confirmed.

From one of the groups, someone walked down to the mess and approached the chief guard casually. Everyone in the Ark was politicians, and thus the guards did not bother stopping him.

"Hey," He greeted casually.

The chief guard hailed back also casually. "Hey."

The guy sniffed his nose slightly then asked, "Any idea who did this?"

"No," He replied, "But they didn't stand a chance."

"Were the guards hyper human?"

The chief guard shook his head.

"Some of them were. The first two guards were average humans. Rest was class B hyper humans."

The guy seemed satisfied with the answer.

"Hey, Gvew, come to us if you need anyth..."

The chief guard, Gvew, cut his words.

"I said count me out of it," Gvew narrowed his eyes and said gravely.

He shrugged and casually went back to his group.

Gvew whispered to himself, "Bunch of cowards."

After a few days, the case of seven murdered guards had to be closed due to lack of evidences. Gvew seemed really upset about the case but there was no way to track any suspects, so he was left with no choice.

In the meantime, Gabrio's fleet was orbiting Earth whereas Rommel's fleet was standing by Moon. The tension was growing as smaller factions demanded Nalen to withdraw Gabrio from the orbit. They called Nalen unfair. Some even suspected that Nalen was behind Uzma's assassination.

With no solid proof, however, it remained to be only a speculation.

The overall tension was growing for worse as the Bau continued to refrain from supporting any particular candidate. In the past the Bau supported the previous president, Mirren, for a moment. Support from the Bau would mean guaranteed votes of over a billion.

However, even without the Bau's support, Nalen's party was heading for a victory with Uzma out of the picture. Nalen considered it was only a matter of time before his position was solidified.

However, with everyone's surprise, it was Gvew's force that initiated the final countdown. It was irony since Gvew had always cried out for peace. His force ambushed Nalen. It was a well-planned preemptive strike. Nalen didn't expect to be attacked at all and his group was instantly confused and became vulnerable.

A brutal fight was occurring in Nalen's headquarter in the Ark. Politicians were being killed left and right by Gvew's security forces.

"Chaths!" Nalen shouted in chaos. "Chaths! Ashuta!"

"I am here!" Ashuta replied.

"Where is Chaths?"

Ashuta shook his head. "No idea where he is. We seem to be surrounded right now though."

"Get out of my way!" Gvew was making his way toward Nalen. He was slashing on anyone who was in his way.

He spotted Nalen and walked toward him aggressively. Sensing Gvew's approach, Ashuta stood between Nalen and Gvew.

"Get out of my way," Gvew warned.

"I have a job to do."

Without further conversation, Gvew quickly slashed his blade upon Ashuta. For Ashuta, evading wasn't much of an option since he had to protect Nalen. Therefore, he attempted to parry Gvew's blade.

"Hmm -," Ashuta groaned as he blocked Gvew's slash. It was a powerful slash. He continued to block Gvew's slashes.

Eventually, he let out of a loud painful groan. He sensed that his arm bones were cracking under constant pressure and force.

"Shit...!" Ashuta uttered in a labored breath. Gvew saw his chance and he sped up his slashing. Ashuta had to step back eventually and his back met Nalen's back at one point. It was when Nalen noticed that Ashuta wasn't holding.

Eder rushed to the scene for assistance.

"Nalen!" She yelled.

'We are losing, Nalen,' Noticing Gvew's presence, she spoke to his mind directly.

Out of desperation, Nalen shouted, "Gvew! What's the meaning of this?!"

Gvew sneered in return and responded, "I am taking the matter into my own hands. Is there a problem?"

"We are under grace period! You can't do this!"

"Nothing!" Gvew shouted and then lowered his voice right after. "Nothing in this grace period seems right. So! To the hell with it!"

Nalen growled as there was no way to convince Gvew out of this.

"Ashuta, can we get out of here?" Nalen asked.

"Not when this guy's on me," He tried to whisper but Gvew overheard their conversation.

"You are not going anywhere," Gvew said.

Ashuta bit his lips and quickly retreated sideways to make some sort of distance from Gvew. He exhaled deeply and posed to charge. Before Gvew could realize what he was trying to do, Ashuta was in action. He dashed toward Gvew as fast as he could. Gvew, in quick response, posed to defend.

"Arhhhhhh - "

Ashuta howled and slashed as hard as he could. However, Gvew simply dodged his powerful slash.

"Powerful slashes are slow, you've got to remember that," Gvew snickered.

Ashuta responded Gvew with a grin. "Whatever you say," He replied.

Gvew narrowed his eyes and soon started and looked around. Nalen was nowhere to be seen. Growling, he decided to finish Ashuta. At the same time, Eder appeared behind Ashuta and teleported him away.

Ashuta and Eder reappeared outside of the Ark.

He was sweating cold. "I thought I was going to die," He let his breath out and collapsed.

Nalen's team had completely lost their battle with Gvew. He and all other key members managed to escape, but their number was reduced so greatly that they

were no longer a major party. Not that... it mattered either way. Gvew was effectively taking over the Ark.

Gvew and his men were finishing off Nalen's remaining men on the scene. He showed no mercy. He did, however, arrest those who surrendered.

“What you’ve done today is unacceptable!” A Nalen supporter shouted in disgust. He was confronted by two of Gvew’s guards who were about to kill him.

Gvew scoffed at him. “I am bringing order to the Ark. Unlike you frogs who seem to bring conflicts to this place.”

When Ashuta regained consciousness, his head was on Eder's knees. Eder was healing Ashuta's wounds with her ESP powers.

She noticed that he was awake and beamed a grin at him.

"We are separated from the group. We should go back." He said while slowly getting up.

Eder shook her head. "You are not going back," She said.

"Excuse me?"

"You are not going back," She repeated.

"What are talking about?"

Eder stood up and dusted off her clothes.

"I think you should leave here. You are not going to survive from another attack."

Ashuta raised his eyebrow.

"But I have been the one who has been holding Gvew. If I leave now, the group will be too vulnerable for his further attacks."

"The cause is lost," She smiled bitterly. "I doubt you or anyone can save this group."

"I don't believe this. You guys hired me and got me involved this far and you are now firing me?"

Ashuta was a bodyguard hired by Nalen. He was paid nearly a million for his services.

"Nalen now has little chances for his goal. I believe he will flee. You should leave Sol system as well while you can."

Ashuta stood up and searched his waist for his blade but soon realized that his blade was missing. He was intending to go back to the Ark.

Eder handed a disk over to Ashuta.

"The disk contains locations of several pubs and bars that sell information. You should be able to find a vendor for your new blade for a cheap price with good quality."

Twitching his face slightly, Ashuta sighed. He raised his upper body and got off from Eder's knee. He looked up at sky. It was blue. It was Earth's sky. It came to his mind that he won't probably be seeing true blue sky for perhaps forever. Following him, Eder stared at the blue sky also for a while.

Knowing what was going through his mind, she told him, "I will miss this sky."

"Why are you guys doing this? You guys are dying for nothing. Nalen did all that for... what? Nothing in the end."

"No politician dies for nothing. They live for their ideals and die for their ideals although it may not look that way, any true politicians live this way." Eder made a pause before she continued. "Though political power is dangerous; it's like drugs."

Ashuta put the disk into his belt and sighed again, shaking his head in utter disappointment as well as resentment.

"I guess I am too young to understand. I guess this is it."

Eder beamed a smile at him and said, "If you are willing, pay a visit to a bar known as 'Sand Giant' on Mars. A good friend of mine runs the bar," She said. Then she turned around and walked toward the Ark casually.

Nalen and others were waiting for escape shuttles on roof of the Ark. They noticed that a person had just teleported to the roof. They posed to attack but soon stood down, realizing that it was Eder.

"Where is Ashuta?" Nalen asked.

Eder shook her head.

"He's dead. I tried to save him, but his wounds were too grave."

"I see...," Nalen sighed. "I am afraid to say we've lost. It is ... time to escape."

"Where to?" Eder asked.

Nalen took some time to answer her.

"I think the Nebula. I cannot think of any other places..."

By end of the day, Gvew controlled the whole Ark, and in a few days, he earned a momentary support from the Bau, effectively making himself the only candidate for the presidency. In a week, Gvew was appointed to be the new president of United Sol.

- Fln