

A lore file, named “The Ark”, is probably a good one to read before reading this story. It’s not mandatory and the story will explain some bits of the lore along the way but the lore file will explain fully. The Ark is the background is this little story.

[Cecil arc] [4] [Mirren] [8811]

Rev 1.5 (Last modified on Sep 23, 2019)

The Klisis and the Vues recovered fine after they relocated to Venus. While the O’ren did not openly bless their relocation other than releasing a public statement that their presence was “welcome”.

Over a hundred years of peaceful adaptation enabled the Klisis and the Vues firmly re-established on Venus. The O’ren’s influence was still strong however. Still, it wasn’t as dominant as the Bau and both clans were satisfied with lack of meddling from the O’ren.

One day, A.D. 8809, Cecil received words that Mikael passed away.

Mikael Klisis' body was in a special room, filled with some sort of strange incense. The incense was to prevent the body from decaying. Beatrice was sitting next to

Mikael's body when Cecil entered into the room. The body was properly dressed and on Mikael's face, there was a piece of white cloth which covered his entire face.

The room was restricted. Only elders and the headman were allowed to enter.

Cecil sat quietly next to Beatrice who was looking down on her deceased husband.

"He passed away while sleeping," She told him.

"I see."

"I believe he has lived a fine and long life."

The passage of time, Cecil hated it. Aside from his inability to die, he truly loathed passage of time. For countless times, he had to watch those around him wither away. For countless times, he had to adapt to new people and new environment.

There were people Cecil did not want to lose, those he cared and those he loved. They all fell to the passage of time without an exception.

Although Mikael wasn't really Cecil's father, he was well aware of a fact that he had been a very good father and husband. He wasn't someone he loved, but he was certainly someone he cared, cared enough to make him feel down and sorrow.

Closing his eyes slowly, he held Beatrice's hand.

High class ESPs were able to predict the exact date of their death especially when their death was close.

Mikael must have known that he would pass away. But he must have kept acting as normal right until his death. He must have not been sleeping, Cecil assumed. He probably pretended... to comfort Beatrice as much as possible.

Mikael and Beatrice were very close to each other. They were siblings in fact; yes, they inbred. But it wasn't all that strange for the Klisis clan. Because they were both born as class S ESPs, their parents decided that they must inbreed to retain the quality of blood.

They had three sons between them. Cecil was the eldest. Konrad was the second. Geert was the youngest.

Shortly after Mikael's death, Beatrice's health saw a sharp decline, and in a matter of weeks, she was found dead in her room as if she followed her husband.

Their deaths marked an end of an era for them. Their passing wasn't unexpected but, for Cecil, their passing created new problems.

The Klisis had three class S ESPs. That fact alone was a powerful asset to negotiations. It was also why the O'ren never bothered them. There was only so much Cecil alone could do if the O'ren made their move.

He expected problems in near future. For the time being however, the O'ren remained silent.

It was year 8811 when a man approached Cecil. His name was Mirren. He was with a woman named Avicenna who acted as his secretary for the time being.

“Greetings, Cecil Klisis. I am honored to meet you.” Mirren greeted Cecil in the clan family hall. Mikael and Beatrice would sit behind him, but they were no longer alive.

Mirren was an ambitious young politician at the Ark. His goal was to become the next president of United Sol and he had plans. But he needed a backing of a powerful clan. The Bau should have been an obvious choice but he decided to spice things up by choosing the O’ren as his primary support. He earned the support of the O’ren by marrying into the clan. His marriage wasn’t final but it was arranged. His soon-to-be bride was Illy O’ren.

He also wanted a spearhead figure by his side. And he felt no one was better for the job than Cecil.

Mirren expressed his desire to become the next president of United Sol and then he went on to explain his plans in detail and what Cecil’s role was.

The current president was old and his health was sharply declining. Therefore, those at the Ark expected an election soon. Mirren was one of those and his presidential bid was legitimate due to the O'ren's support. He indeed had a fair chance of becoming the next president because the Bau remained unstable under Yuiriel II's rule and they currently had no known candidate for the presidency.

Of course, there were other possible candidates from other political parties but having the support of the O'ren meant that Mirren already had sizable guaranteed votes while other candidates were simply trying their luck.

"The Bau is a little unstable right now," Mirren explained, "Even if I did somehow receive their support, I wouldn't feel comfortable with their promises. Their headman is a questionable person," He explained his reasoning for choosing the O'ren.

Indeed, Yuiriel II was not seen trustworthy by peers and his refusal to work with the Bau council and forcefully sending Masu into a hiding brought some unrest within the clan. He had been ruthlessly using his powers to suppress those against him.

Meanwhile, Cecil did have a genuine interest in Mirren's offer. However, choosing to work with Mirren meant that he would be absent at the clan which could open doors for the O'ren to exploit.

However, at the same time, he felt that the clan had to move on without him at some point. He considered passing the clan leadership to Konrad who already had numerous children with Clare Vues. None of his children were classified to be class S ESPs but all of them were class A ESPs.

There was only so much Cecil alone could do for the clan. The clan itself had to move on with or even without him in the worst case. If having at least one class S ESP is no longer an option for the clan, the next thing they needed was political powers. And that was what Cecil was aiming for.

Yes, Cecil himself was an immortal but he wasn't going to reveal that to the others. He prepared to vanish from the society at a certain age; He still had hundreds years left before that would happen, but he needed to prepare the foundation for the longevity of the clan.

"I am not expecting an answer right now," Mirren said, "But I do expect an answer fairly soon. The president may pass away at any day now and I do need someone powerful by my side."

"You may stay at the guest house," Cecil responded indifferently. "I will give you my answer by tomorrow morning. Is that satisfactory for you?"

Mirren nodded firmly and responded, "Yes, I appreciate it."

Cecil called Konrad immediately and informed him of the nature of his conversation with Mirren and informed him of his decision that he would work with him.

Konrad, as expected, looked shocked.

“Brother...!” His voice was shaking slightly. “You cannot leave here. The clan needs you. The O’ren has been sniffing ever since we’ve arrived here.”

Cecil understood his point. However, the clan had to prepare of days without him. He could not be with them forever. The clan would need to move on from his protection at some point in the future.

“Konrad, the clan needs to find other ways than relying on class S ESPs,” Cecil explain calmly. “I hate to admit this but the clan’s luck with having at least one class S ESP in each generation may have dried out.”

“Brother,” Konrad raised his voice. “You have not married. You are the class S ESP. One of your children will probably be the class S we are direly looking for.”

Probably. Yes, probably ...

However, Cecil was not really Cecil. Cecilia had taken over the body and the body had become infertile. Cecil wasn’t going to tell him that however.

“Konrad, I’ve always felt that the clan’s downfall was due to two factors. One was being under the influence of the Bau. The other was relying on class S ESPs for

protection and independence,” He explained. “I’ve led the clan out of the Bau’s influence and the clan has settled down well on Venus. Now it is time to seek another way to remain powerful, and that, I feel, is political influence.”

Konrad was highly skeptical, but he felt that Cecil had valid points. Even so, he was strongly against the idea.

“Brother, with all due respect, we are doing fine as is. Why do we have to venture into the unknown?”

Konrad was correct. Everything was going fine in his eyes. If Cecil married and procreated, his children had a much higher chance of becoming class S ESPs. As long as the clan had at least one class S ESP, the clan would retain its independence and thrive since they were no longer under the Bau’s influence.

The O’reen had been sniffing but none of their attempts was successful and Konrad was confident that the clan would be able to keep them out as long as Cecil was present.

But there was one aspect Konrad was wrong. It was that Cecil could not procreate, and therefore, the clan’s chance of having a new class S ESP in the next generation was slim to none. Which was why Cecil had been looking for a new way to consolidate the clan’s position.

But it seemed unlikely that he would be able to convince Konrad without letting him know partial truth.

Cecil remained silent while considering his options. Eventually, in the end, he decided to tell him what he wanted him to know.

“I am infertile. That is why I am pushing this idea,” He declared.

Konrad took Cecil’s statement well, perhaps too well. He sighed deeply as he replied, “I must admit...,” He spoke slowly, “I had some suspicious that you might be...”

He made a short pause before he’d continue.

“When someone like yourself who knows it all too well refuses to get married, I assumed there was only one reason. I suspected that you might be infertile but I wasn’t going to say it until you mention it. It all makes senses now though. You worked so hard to relocate the clan. I can see why now. If you didn’t, we would have been swallowed by the Bau once you are gone.”

There was no way for the Klisis clan to stand a chance against the Bau if they lost their class S ESPs.

“You can have the headman-ship if you’d like. I have no attachment to the title,” Cecil said.

“No,” Konrad refused firmly. “The clan needs you still. No one doubts your leadership. I can’t say the same for me.”

“If I leave for Earth, someone will need to look after the clan and he will need a proper title to go with. You should inherit the headman position.”

“No, brother. You are the headman. I am willing to be a deputy headman if you insist.”

Cecil wasn't going to push the matter since he felt it wasn't important enough. Deputy headman was good enough for the purpose, he felt.

"Very well, so be it." Having said so, he was about to stand up and leave the family hall but Konrad had a favor to ask. He wanted a lesson from Cecil.

Konrad explained, "I must say you are a great strategist. It's painful for me to admit that I am nowhere close to your level. Please teach me a lesson. I fear I won't be good enough to lead the clan in your place."

Cecil felt Konrad's concern was genuine. Konrad was taught by Mikael and Beatrice but, in Cecil's eyes, neither of them was gifted in tactics.

"Of course," He responded while slowly closing his eyes to organize his thoughts. "Let me see..." He mumbled.

Opening his eyes at once, Cecil started his speech.

"You must know where you stand. That is the first step of everything. Are you in a position to demand? Or are you in a position to be demanded? Do you push? Or do you pull?"

He made a pause before resuming.

"Master the art of retreating. It's what many neglect but it is the most important aspect of a battle or a negotiation. When you are in a winning position, you can make mistakes and still get away with it. However, when you are losing and have

to retreat, a single mistake can lead to disastrous consequences. Of course, it's never good news that you have to retreat but it will happen, and when you do, retreat masterfully, reduce your losses and plan for another day."

He made yet another pause before resuming.

"Never do your best. By doing your best all the time, you become too predictable. Like I stated a moment ago, do you push or do you pull? Or you can do nothing. Let your opponents know that you are capable of unthinkable. It makes them fear you, and when your opponents fear you, you will have an advantage."

Listening to Cecil words, Konrad reflected what he had done to the clan. It all fitted what he told him. He wondered if he was capable of following the same path. He felt that one of the reasons Cecil had been largely successful was due to his ESP rank which enabled to do "unthinkable".

Cecil added, "I wish I could spend some time teaching you but unfortunately time is not on my side. Mirren seeks to go back to the Ark ASAP."

Konrad bowed to him in his seated position. "Of course, thank you. I shall keep your words in my mind."

Mirren was a house member at the Ark and so was Avicenna. Cecil wasn't a politician. However, a special law allowed an established clan to have a free seat in the house on demand. What that meant that the Klisis clan had a free seat in the

house, meaning Cecil didn't need to go through an election to acquire a seat. For a gigantic clan like Bau, the free seat meant nothing. But for smaller clans that had hard time getting involved in politics at the Ark, these free seats were precious.

After registering himself to be a house member, Cecil quickly joined Mirren's political faction which was named "Newfound hope of Sol" or NHoS. Mirren sought to continue Gawain Klisis' legacy which was exploration of Andromeda cluster as well as further colonization of the stars.

In that sense, Cecil's presence was absolutely vital for Mirren's campaign. He was Gawain's direct descendant and his presence alongside Mirren meant his cry for continuing Gawain's legacy was genuine.

Mirren led Cecil to his party HQ at the Ark which was a hall with capacity of five hundreds of people. The hall was nearly full when they arrived and Cecil received an ovation.

While Mirren smiled and waved at his fellow members, Cecil's face remained uninterested.

NHoS had support of slightly over 500 house members. Mirren expected further boost in the support with Cecil by his side. With over 500 members, his party was one of the largest non-clan aligned political parties.

While the Bau retained over a thousand seats, due to how Yuiriel II had been ruling the clan, the Bau house members were largely dysfunctional. Therefore, tens of Bau house members were present in Mirren's party as evidence.

With his expected marriage with Illy O'ren, Mirren was to receive additional 800 members of the O'ren in the house which effectively would outrank the Bau.

Shortly after it became known that Cecil joined Mirren, NHoS gained nearly a hundred additional members, effectively boosting his party number to 1400-strong in the house of 4002 seats.

Mirren had his feet on his desk and was enjoying a glass of champagne in his private office at the Ark. His bright smile indicated that he was overwhelmingly happy.

"This is a good feeling," He said out loud. Avicenna and Cecil were present in the office as well. "After you joined a hundred chose to support my party."

Avicenna had a holographic data sheet in her hand. "Our number is effectively 1412 out of 4002. It is still not enough but we are the most powerful party."

There were two kinds of presidential election in United Sol. The first kind was the general election of the president which all citizens of United Sol would vote. The second kind was called the Ark election where house members voted the president.

The general election was chosen if the house votes were too divided to make a decision. Mirren wanted to avoid the general election rightfully so. And for that, he needed 56% of YES in the house.

United Sol politics dictated that a win at the house level required 56% of YES vote instead of 51%, meaning any legislation having between from 45% to 55% was considered a tie, and a tie or worse meant the general election.

“We need 2242 votes, Mirren. 2242,” Avicenna pointed out. “It’s 830 extra votes. I don’t see how we could acquire that amount of additional votes.”

“You may need more than 830 votes, I reckon,” Cecil added, “Just to be safer.”

Mirren’s bright smile slowly withdraw from his face. He muttered, “Not letting me enjoy this moment of victory, are you?”

“I’ve joined you because you made it sound as if you could avoid the general election. I see now that you’ve lied,” Cecil said indifferently. He was simply pointing out the truth and didn’t feel betrayed or anything.

Mirren quickly took his feet off his desk. “I did not lie,” He assured. “It’s only 830 votes. Your presence alone has earned the party a hundred members.”

“It may still be possible to get more members from the Bau. They are disjoint right now due to their ruthless and unstable clan leader,” Avicenna explained which lighted a light bulb inside of Mirren’s head.

“Where is Masu right now?” He asked. “If he could get him join my cause, we will get much of the Bau’s support.”

“No.” Cecil raised his voice. “Masu should not get involved in this. Trust me on this. If you involve him into this, you will lose your current support from select Bau members.”

It was rare that Cecil raised his voice which of course neither Mirren nor Avicenna was aware. Mirren was skeptical of Cecil’s words but decided to trust on the matter.

“I see. In that case, I will leave him out of this,” He concluded.

If Masu did arrive back on Earth, there was going to be only conflicts within the Bau. Yuiriel II still had a firm grasp on the clan, and therefore, Cecil felt it wasn’t the right time for him to come back.

NHoS still needed sizable extra supports but Mirren was satisfied with the current support level. His confidence was based on a firm belief that, in time of crisis as such the current president’s passing, the flow would come to him and he would gain the needed support to avoid the general election.

Pretty much all factions wanted to avoid the general elections mostly due to the fact that astronomical amount of money was required for solar system wide campaigns. Even the Bau would hesitate to host such a campaign. Proceeding with the general election for the presidency meant whoever was willing to invest the most money would likely win which was frowned upon by the Ark congress.

Therefore, as long as NHoS had a certain level of base support, other parties were likely to give up and support Mirren's party instead in exchange of some privileges. At the same time, NHoS wasn't the only party with large support, meaning nothing was guaranteed for NHoS. Although disjointed, the Bau still have a similar level of support as NHoS did. Still, the Bau did not currently have a candidate whereas NHoS clearly did.

On a bright sunny day, a fleet arrived in Earth's orbit. It was an approved fleet approach, thus nobody panicked. A group of shuttles launched from the fleet and descended down toward the Ark.

Mirren was standing a short distance away from a shuttle landing pad while Avicenna and Cecil were further away.

Only one shuttle made its landing on the pad while the rest of shuttles remained in air. A young woman with bright blond long hair exited the shuttle.

"So, there she is," Avicenna said.

"Who might that be?" Cecil inquired.

"Illy O'ren, Mirren's fiancée."

Mirren carefully took Illy's hand and they exchanged a gentle hug. And then he signaled Avicenna and Cecil to approach.

“Illy, these are my closest staffs,” He introduced them to her. “Avicenna on left, Cecil on right.”

“Cecil?” Illy O’ren light blue eyes were filled with curiosity. “Of the Klisis clan?”

Mirren nodded. “Aye, the one and the same.”

“The mighty wizard!” Illy exclaimed with joy. “I’ve heard a lot about you, sir!”

Despite of Illy’s excitement, Cecil remained uninterested and answered her indifferently. “I see. Thank you, I guess?”

Avicenna beamed a smile.

Illy’s arrival at the Ark was a signal for O’ren house members to fully support NHoS. They did agree to support NHoS verbally prior but it wasn’t guaranteed. However, with Illy’s arrival, it was guaranteed.

Mirren’s marriage to Illy O’ren was maternal, meaning he was marrying into the O’ren clan. It was the primary reason why the O’ren chose to support him in the first place. For the O’ren, it would be the first time that they would dominate the house and take presidency for themselves for the first time in their clan’s history, should Mirren succeed.

Illy O’ren herself was going to be ruling Venus on behalf of the O’ren. She was seen as the second choice for their next headman. Their first choice was Azazzel O’ren. She was at this time only twenty one years old. She was also certified to be a class A ESP.

She was an emerging talent among the O'ren elites. Being born in a prominent insider family, she had a firm background and elders were pleased to have a possible successor to Azazzel.

Illy had heard a lot of the Crimson wizard. Many recent O'ren youngsters were taught to look up to the Crimson wizard for what he could do and how he could stand above the laws. Standing above laws were the dream of many clans. While the Bau achieved it, no other clan had. Having heard so much about the Crimson wizard, she was genuinely curious and the first thing she said to Cecil when they were back at Mirren's office was –

“You don't look like a guy,” was what she said. “I mean you look as pretty as me in a different way.”

What Illy stated was correct. Cecilia wasn't a bad looking woman to start with and the immortality had transformed Cecilia's beauty to a new level which was directly reflected to Cecil's appearance. Of course, as beautiful as Cecil was, his unpredictable behavior and strong tendency to harm others prevented others to see the beauty on surface. And those who were aware wouldn't dare speaking about it for the sake of their lives.

But Illy was young. She was cheerful and she was restless. Most importantly, she had nothing to fear in her life and thus she was direct.

Avicenna looked at Cecil nervously, hoping that nothing would happen from Illy's remark. And just as she hoped, he put on a professional smile and responded, "Thank you for the compliment."

Mirren and Avicenna both were quite nervous when Illy boldly asked him. Cecil, to others eyes, was a ticking time bomb with a malfunctioning timer. They felt he could go off at any moment and start slaughtering others. Regardless, Cecil had no intention to ruin his Ark career just yet although truthfully he wasn't offended by Illy's remark because he wasn't a kind of person who punished honest people. It took guts to be honest, he always felt.

"What's your secret?" She continued to ask Cecil. "I'd love to know."

Mirren signaled Avicenna with his eyes and Avicenna quickly approached Illy.

"Miss, the O'ren members would like to speak to you."

Frowning, she responded with an annoyed voice, "What? Can't they wait?"

"Ma'am," Avicenna quietly raised her tone. "Please remember your duty."

The annoyed look on her face gradually faded away. "Fine," She answered firmly.

"I will go see them." And Avicenna took her away to NHoS hall.

"Phew, sorry, Cecil," Mirren was quick to speak as soon as Avicenna drove Illy out of his office. "I've met her only twice and I didn't think she'd act like that."

"It shouldn't concern you," Cecil responded indifferently. "She's young. She's cheerful. I wouldn't blame her for her behavior."

Between Mirren and Illy, they had exactly 50 years of age difference which wasn't that big of a gap by the era's standards. It was a 71 years old marrying 21 years old. Cecil himself was nearing 350 years old. Masu was turning 200 years old soon at this point as well. Anyone below three hundred years old was considered young.

With Mirren's NHoS doing well, the Ark house was debating on a tax increase bill. The bill was proposed by the O'ren members and its proposal was to increase tax from the Andromeda colony to 6% from existing 3%.

When Andromeda cluster was discovered and a colony was established during Gawain Klisis' regime, the colony was tax free initially in order to encourage people to immigrate. During Gawain's regime, there was no tax at all for the colony. However, soon after his passing, a tax law was swiftly proposed and approved, giving the colony a tax rate of 3%. The tax law was accepted fairly easily since many colonists saw it coming. Since the introduction of the tax law, there hadn't been a tax increase for a thousand years.

The O'ren wanted to test their new dominance at the house level and was seeking which proposal would easily pass without too much disturbances, and their answer was the tax increase. Since there hadn't been a tax increase for such a

long period, the O'ren felt a tax increase was warranted, considering 3% was too low.

Illy O'ren, as the representative of the O'ren house members, made her speech in front of 4002 Ark house members.

"The O'ren is proposing a tax increase for the Andromeda colony. You should be receiving the proposal from your holo device right now," She stated. It was her debut as an Ark politician and she took her debut cool as a cucumber.

Cecil read through a long holographic page of the proposal. It was literally an essay with a lot of unnecessary reading materials. The bottom line was that the O'ren wanted the tax increased to 6% from 3% for the Andromeda colony. The reasoning for the proposal was simple; they wanted fairness among Sol citizens and the colonists. The O'ren claimed that the colonists had many years to grow their wealth and it was time for them to contribute to the society.

It was a point that was hard to debate. After all, the colonists had nearly two thousand years of low tax. However, for the Bau, they had to reject the proposal because it was presented by the O'ren who was their arch rival.

The O'ren required 2242 votes for 56% of YES. There were 800 O'ren members, and most of NHoS members were going to vote YES since they were allied with the O'ren. Few members of NHoS were Bau members who had to say NO. In the end, the O'ren had nearly 1300 votes guaranteed.

Although all Bau members voted NO, other house members saw the bill justifiable and the bill received over 2500 votes of YES. Cecil himself voted YES as well. It was his first vote as an Ark politician.

The result was a clear indication of the Bau's decline and the rise of the O'ren. However, Mirren brought up a concern.

"The Bau can't be happy about this," He said in his office where Avicenna and Cecil were also present.

Cecil agreed but told him, "True, the Bau members won't be happy but their headman, Yuiriel II, will not care."

"Why won't he care? You've met him in person before, so you must know more than me."

Cecil recalled the meeting where he met Yuiriel II and Masu. "He seeks to rule his clan with an iron fist. Having a Bau supported United Sol president will only mean an obstacle to his absolute rule."

"Hmm, if you put it that way, it makes sense as to why he hasn't bothered reinforcing the Bau house members," Avicenna said with her arms crossed, "But shouldn't he be using the Ark?"

"The Bau maintains guaranteed seats of at least 1,100 in the house. They will always maintain the foundation. As long as they maintain that solid foundation, Yuiriel II won't really care," Cecil explained. "He can focus on regaining the house whenever he wants."

“Which does not bode well for me and NHoS,” Mirren added. “The tide is on our side for now and I am confident that I will win the presidency when the time comes, but I fear what might happen next. If I lose the house, I will be a puppet president.”

“You also maintain a similar level of seats,” Cecil answered, “Although you have far less guaranteed support.”

“Precisely,” Mirren added.

Avicenna felt that what NHoS needed was support from the Dietrich. An additional 500 guaranteed support votes would make a world of difference.

“The Dietrich,” Avicenna mentioned and Mirren nodded in agreement.

“Yes, the Dietrich,” Mirren repeated.

“Marcus Dietrich is a weakling. He does not command his clan,” Cecil explained, “They’ve been having constant internal conflicts. I fear the Dietrich is not united at the moment.”

Mirren scratched his head in frustration. He wanted guaranteed dominance over the house.

Reading his mind, Cecil told him, “The only way for you to ensure total dominance over the house is to gain support from the Bau which is not possible since you are marrying into the O’ren. But know this. Gawain Klisis and his party never had dominance over the house, but he was a good ruler and commanded respect from others. You should thrive to be a good ruler and results will come.”

“Easier to be said than done,” Mirren responded fiercely. “Gawain Klisis was a legend. He was the best president in the history.”

Cecil cited indifferently, “Records are there to be broken.” And he quickly added, “Besides, you claim to follow his path.”

Avicenna laughed weakly. “It looks like he has gunned you down, sir.”

“Well, he’s got a silver tongue,” Mirren responded jokingly.

He used Gawain as a focus of his campaign but never had any intention of actually following his footsteps because he felt it was not possible. Avicenna knew this since she was the starting member of NHoS.

Mirren married Illy O’ren on 8813 October 14th. And a year later a daughter was born who shared the same blue eyes from her mother but had his father’s dark brown hair.

Marat O’ren was born between Mirren and Illy O’ren on 8814 July 30th. The moment she was born, she was classified as a class S ESP.

A class S ESP born from the O’ren..., that single fact changed everything on Venus. It was clear to everyone that the O’ren was on the rise and with an addition of a class S ESP, the O’ren felt they could even take on the Bau.

Konrad panicked upon hearing news of a class S ESP being born within the O'ren ranks. The key card for the Klisis has been the presence of Cecil who was also a class S and that, with Cecil, the Klisis could take on the O'ren head on.

However, with Marat being born, that no longer was a negotiation tool. He immediately contacted Cecil for advice.

"Nothing. As long as I remain with Mirren, no harm shall be done," was Cecil's answer. In truth, however, Cecil foresaw only darkness in the future of the Klisis. For the time being, he chose to simply observe.

As a class S ESP, Marat matured quickly. By time, she turned 5, her IQ and maturity were already that of an adult. At a similar time, her specialization was revealed. She had a unique ability called "Clarity". It was a passive ability that boosted ESP powers around her in radius of approximately 30 meters. Her ESP abilities themselves were somewhere between class A and S. Therefore, technically she was more a class A+ ESP. However, on paper, she was classified as class S due to her being too young, thus having enough potential to grow.

Originally, when Marat was born and was classified as a class S ESP, the O'ren elders were going to declare a war on the Klisis when she matured. However, seeing her abilities weren't going to be on par with Cecil whose ESP scores were simply off the chart, they came up with another idea.

It was to get Cecil and her married and take on the Bau.

Being on rise meant that the O'ren cared less about the tiny menace AKA the Klisis. Thus, they had set their eyes higher and chose to take on the Bau instead. Through the marriage, the O'ren would gain a formidable ally in Cecil and with two class S ESPs, taking on the Bau sounded more than plausible.

Mirren was completely unaware of this movement until much later. He was rightfully livid that he wasn't at all informed of the plan especially when it involved his own child. He demanded more respect from the elders and vowed to block the decision. He did not, however, rule out a marriage between them if both of them were attracted each other.

He had a reason to make such a statement because Marat got along really well with Cecil from early age.

It wasn't hard for Mirren or anyone around him to see that Cecil always kept a safe distance from everyone. He was neither friendly nor hostile. He never spoke unless spoken to. And he seemed to have a knack for being idle for hours without blinking eyes.

Avicenna once joked with Mirren that Cecil was like a pretty doll that had bloody claws hidden which wasn't too far from the truth.

For Cecil, Marat's clarity had a strange effect on him. As long as he was under the clarity effect, he was able to sleep. In other words, he was finally able to die for short moments. His ever-continuous consciousness for thousand years was able to have breaks. And being able to have breaks finally started to bring more emotions to his usual cold self.

One day, In Mirren's office, Cecil and Marat were playing a chess. Marat was very fond of Cecil from early age and she stayed with Cecil almost daily after she learned to talk. She often claimed that conversation with him was intriguing.

Mirren wasn't present in the office, but Avicenna was taking care of paper works on another desk. She saw Cecil grin for the first time ever since she worked with him. His grin was tranquil and, for a moment, she thought she was seeing an angel. She was momentarily memorized by the grin. Shaking her head and blinking her eyes, she was able to get back to herself.

"Cecil," Avicenna quietly called out.

"Yeah?" He responded casually without looking back.

"N... nothing."

Yeah, he said. He had never used such informal language before. He had always acted as formal as possible and "yeah" wasn't one of vocabularies he used. As far as she could recall, it had always been "yes".

And on 8823, the president of United Sol passed away in his sleep. The time had arrived for Mirren at last.

An emergency house session was called and all 4002 house members were gathered in the chamber at the Ark.

Mirren did not say anything to his party members, for he believed everyone knew what to do. Truthfully, there wasn't much for any of them to do other than pressing YES when Mirren came up as a candidate for the presidency.

Unexpectedly, the Bau also presented a candidate.

Anyone in congress was allowed to become a presidential candidate. The problem was whether he or she would get 56% of YES in the house. The tie rule still applied to presidential votes but if tied, it meant the bid failed. It'd be a general election then.

The Bau seemingly picked random house member and presented him as a presidential candidate who received only 990 votes of YES. He received no votes from any outsiders and failed to receive full support from his own clan. In short, he failed.

One needed 2242 votes to be successful.

And then Mirren stepped up. No one was allowed to speak at all during presidential bids. Anyone who would even whisper was kicked out of the chamber. He stood up and silently waited for the result.

He had a chance even if it went to the general election but it would cost the O'ren too much money and he'd owe a great debt to the O'ren. He feared he could become the O'ren's puppet if it went to the general election. Therefore, he wanted to win his presidency through the house vote.

After nail-biting moment of wait that lasted roughly only a minute, final vote count was displayed on everyone's holographic monitor in front of their seats.

YES: 2736

It was well over the minimum 2242.

Mirren, having tears in his eyes, rose his clenched fist up in the air in total silence.

He had won.

He became the next president of United Sol in a clean sweep.

Mirren was standing in front of NHoS members at the hall. Illy O'ren was next to him. Mirren had his arm around her waist. Marat was also next to him, hugging him.

After a long ovation ended, he made his speech.

“I thank you, everyone. I thank you for your support. With your dedication, I’ve successfully become the next president of United Sol.”

The crowd cheered briefly in response.

“But I do not see this as the O’ren vs. the Bau,” He declared, “I plan to work with the Bau to make my regime sail as smooth as possible.”

Illy wasn’t practically happy about his declaration but she let him have his moment in glory. To her, it had always been the O’ren versus the Bau.

“Daddy, you’ve done it!” Marat’s cheerful voice rang through the hall at which point he picked her up and placed her on his shoulder.

“Yeah, I’ve done it! It’s party night tonight!” He roared. “It’s parrtttyyyy!”

Avicenna and Cecil were a distance away from them, idly watching them have their party.

“Why don’t you go join them?” Avicenna told Cecil who was standing next to her. Both of them were far away from the Mirren family who was being greeted by other house members. A party was being held in NHoS hall and other house members visited the party to either congratulate or get to know Mirren.

“I have done nothing,” Cecil answered, “I don’t deserve to be there. It is you who should go there.”

Avicenna smiled. "You've done a lot, passively. Mirren's campaign focus has been continuing Gawain Klisis' legacy which..." She shrugged. "I am sure you know by now that he doesn't really mean it."

"Different men have different visions," Cecil said, "His vision was going to be obviously different. I take no offense that he used Gawain's vision to boost his popularity."

Avicenna let out of a brief laugh and answered, "If you say so."

"It is you who have done a lot," Cecil continued, "It has been you who has been doing pretty much all paper works in shadow."

Avicenna smiled but said no further.

After Mirren was formally declared to be the next president of Unites Solar system Federation, Avicenna became the next leader for NHoS and Cecil became Mirren's top advisor. Cecil's position was more less a vice president without actual decision powers.

The Bau reacted well to Mirren's appointment. They released a public statement to congratulate him and specifically stated to "work with him in the future".

With Mirren's success, NHoS saw a large increase in member number as well. Their number increased to 812 members and with the O'ren's support, NHoS held a firm grip on the house.

By a firm grip, it meant that NHoS had an ability to tie everything at the house level. Even if everybody else was against a bill, NHoS had an ability to make it a tie provided that the O'ren supported them, thus passing it into the senate where Mirren could throw a tie breaker vote.

The senate was reconstructed soon after Mirren was elected and NHoS and the O'ren enjoyed 244 senate seats together, meaning it they had an ability to draw tie on everything. Mirren then would throw his vote as a tie breaker.

The first actions Mirren took as the president of United Sol was issuing an exclusive order to resume further exploration of Andromeda cluster and he asked Avicenna to pass a bill to support the funding. Since his request was in line with his promise to pursue Gawain's legacy, the bill passed with over 3500 votes of YES.

Avicenna also proposed another bill to open up more supply depots for Liberty captains which also passed with overwhelming votes.

"So far so good," Mirren said pleasantly in his exquisite leather chair. Cecil and Illy O'ren stood in front of his presidential desk.

“It will be easy for you to maintain high support level in early stage of your presidency,” Cecil noted. “As years pass on, it will be harder for you.”

“Way to ruin good mood, Cecil,” Mirren remarked, sighing.

Regardless, he went on. “Ending is far more important than beginning. You must remember that.”

“Yes, yes, I am fully aware. The history has plenty of examples,” Mirren answered while putting down his signature on the latest bill which the house passed. “Any advice on my next move?”

“I need to speak to you,” Illy O’ren said, quickly adding, “In private.”

“Sure, go ahead,” Mirren didn’t take her seriously and replied casually to which Illy spoke aggressively.

“The matter concerns the O’ren.”

Meaning Cecil shouldn’t hear what she was about to say. However, Mirren insisted. “Cecil is my advisor. He should know everything that goes on around here.”

Illy was clearly reluctant to speak any further and kept her mouth shut.

“Very well, I shall take my leave,” Cecil left the presidential office once having said so.

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