

The Hammers' arc deals with stories of those who were handpicked by Cecil, well mostly. But there are other people involved in this arc as well. The stories in this arc are often independent to each other.

[The Hammers arc] [1] [The ENN incident] [9600]

Rev 2.1 (Last modified on Jan 12, 2020)

You must read Shattered union arc 1 "Revolts" prior reading this.

Yagi and Edith's team was working hard to get some news from Venus outpost.

They had not been having much luck. They did take tons of pictures of the Venus fleet but no story to support the pictures.

They were orbiting the Venus outpost for days.

On the bridge, Edith looked a little concerned. "Maybe we should go back now." Her concern was well founded as they had been warned numerous times to withdraw.

"We have to get something. We got some pictures of the Venusian fleet. All we need is a little bit of story and we will be golden."

Behind Yagi's vessel, ENN's second vessel was following.

"Signal coming in from Venus outpost," A computerized voice resounded on the bridge.

The vessel did not have video screens installed, so it was audio only.

"This is Commander Tyron speaking. I warn you again. Withdraw, else I will fire this time."

Yagi crossed his arms and laughed weakly. "We are both business men. Please let us allow to do our job."

Edith was sitting on the chair of helm station. She was resting her chin on her hands and her left arm slipped on the console and accidentally pushed a button which terminated the communication.

"Channel closed," the computer said accordingly.

He raised his eyebrow and turned back to stare at Edith. She realized he was staring at her. "What?" She wondered.

"You just closed the signal!" His voice was in flurry.

She looked down at the panel. She was looking down for a bit. "Well, I guess I did." And then she suddenly raised her head and said in a troubled voice. "Oh, no."

"Computer, get us out of here." He commended with haste.

As soon as he finished the command, the ship was jolted and turned upside down which wasn't a big issue in zero gravity. Awkward, yes, but nothing serious.

Apparently, Yagi's vessel collided with the ENN ship behind.

"Attitude system failure. Restarting the system." The ship circled several times before it settled down.

"Computer, get us out of here!" He shouted desperately.

"Proceeding...," said the computer.

"Hold on..! We are gonna get outta here."

Yagi's vessel and the other vessel were sailing away as fast as they could, attempting to get out of weapon range of Venus outpost.

No one in right mind would attack public vessels when communications went on properly and civil: that was the convention. However, Edith just closed the communication absurdly, meaning the Venus outpost had the right to attack the ENN vessels.

"Warning. Someone has locked on this vessel," said the computer.

But nothing happened on Yagi's vessel but weak vibration and slight shaking.

"Shock wave detected, activating thrusters," said the computer.

Yagi sweated. "Computer, contact the second ENN vessel."

The computer returned a negative sound. "Unable to comply, the object is not found."

Just as Edith looked at Yagi with very concerned eyes. Suddenly their vessel lost balance.

"Shields down to 81 percent," The computer reported in a very calm voice despite the situation.

"Computer, how long until we are out of range from the outpost?" Yagi was sweating hard. His life was at stake after all.

"System busy. Please wait."

Looking pissed, he stood up at once and picked up his bag.

"What are you doing?" Edith asked.

"Let's get into an escape pod or a shuttle. I don't think we can make it."

The ship were jolting constantly, meaning that shields were currently aborting damage. But then -

"Shields down. Direct damage to primary hull."

She began to download all the data to a disk. "Hold on. Give me a minute."

He reached a tactical station which was closest from him and opened a channel to the engine room.

"Hey guys, evacuate!"

"Roger, I was thinking about that." A crewman replied.

The bridge jolted badly. The damage appeared to be serious. The more the bridge jolted, the more balance it was losing. Yagi and Edith were running toward to a shuttle bay but suddenly the ship started to swirl out of control.

"We are going DOOOOWWWNNNNN!!!" Yagi shouted as he attempted to cling onto something in the absolute chaos.

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In the 'Great Rivers' region on Venus.

The region was a zone where majority of fresh water for the Fallen Crater was provided from. Population in this region was extensively controlled and some military installations were located here to protect water sources.

A crashed vessel was located at between two rivers. There were guards and paramedics around the vessel to salvage the vessel and rescue any survivors.

"I'd be surprised if I found any survivors here." A guard remarked while he was scanning the vessel. "I am getting a mixed reading here."

A ship was halfway into the ground. It was soot badly from entering Venus atmosphere unprepared. Approximately thirty guards were trying to dig a large vessel hull fragment out of ground.

"Man, this is impossible. We can't do much here." Another guard muttered, "We need some heavy equipment."

The Great rivers region was a protected area. No heavy equipment that could be sources of external pollution was allowed.

“You know we can’t bring in heavy equipment. I am going to call HQ and see if we have any good hyper human or ESP.”

“Our Admiral is a hyper human but I doubt she’d bother coming down here.”

Venusians referred Nikki Sweetheart as an admiral but she was technically not one; she was a commodore. At the same time, she was the highest ranking navy officer on Venus. Thus, she might as well be referred as an admiral.

They were trying to move a large fragment which was currently blocking the only entrance they could find. There were other hatches but they were either buried deep into the ground or melted stuck.

Eventually, they managed to cut the large fragment and gained an access to interior.

An engineer quickly ran toward a console. “The main frame has completely shut down. This thing has no backup frame.”

Two guards casually entered afterwards with flash light drones floating around them. “This is a civilian class vessel, so I am not surprised that it has no redundancy.”

After a while, they found approximately four dead and charred bodies in an engine room.

And a lone survivor was found on the bridge. "Hey, I found a survivor!" A paramedic shouted, "Give me a hand here!"

Two paramedics carefully carried the survivor out of the vessel. "Let me scan his DNA." The survivor's skin was so badly charred that his skin was completely black and a disgusting scent indicated that even his flesh was burnt.

A guard began to scan the survivor. "Eh..., it's a female. Her name is Edith."

"Most of her skin is burnt beyond recognition and there seems to be internal bleeding. We got to get her to a hospital."

VNN breaking news: Two ENN vessels downed by Venus outpost.

The first vessel was destroyed in space, leaving no survivors, and the second ENN vessel performed an emergency landing on Venus. Unfortunately, it has crashed in Great rivers region where entry is restricted. Our experts say that there won't likely be any survivors. The man in charge of this incident was Commander Tryon.

Soon after VNN news aired, he was summoned to Illy O'ren office.

Cecil was also present in the office. He was standing by Illy O'ren as her advisor at the moment. Tryon had his hands on his back and was standing firm.

Illy was holding a sheet, apparently it was a written report of the incident blaming Tryon for full responsibility.

"I can't believe that you actually fired upon civilian vessels. What's your excuse?" she demanded.

"I have warned them several times during four days. They were spying on us," Tryon explained at once. "They were abusing their rights as civilians. They knew they wouldn't be fired upon."

"But they were fired upon!" She raised her voice, "By you!" She was too angry that she had to smash her desk. She breathed hard and attempted to calm down. She said eventually after a moment, "They were citizens, they were journalists. They were unarmed."

"They closed my direct contact, Ma'am. I believe I had the right."

His stance on the situation was firm. While he did admit that the outcome wasn't his intention, it was hard to deny that he could have easily prevented the outcome which was the point the media had been making.

She massaged her eyes from tiredness. "Yes, you had the right but firing upon unarmed civilian vessels is not the right thing to do even when you have the right."

At this point, Nikki inquired if she could come into the office and she was given permission.

"Ma'am, they have located the crashed vessel in Great rivers region. I have sent a team of guards and paramedics already.

She nodded in response. "Ok, well done, Nikki. Let's hope there will be survivors."

In the end, there was only one survivor. Her name was Edith whose skin was burnt beyond a possibility of repair. She was carried to a hospital, but her skins couldn't be healed. She was expected to die soon.

As soon as Illy received a confirmation regarding the only survivor's status, she summoned Tryon again.

Nikki had brought Tryon into her office. There was a moment of uncomfortable silence in the office.

She was reading through a new report for Tryon to hear. It was regarding the status of the only survivor. "Tyron, you are suspended until further notice," she declared afterwards.

He turned around at once and left the office at once.

"Excuse me," Nikki followed Tryon.

After Tryon and Nikki were out, Illy sighed deeply.

"You know, Cecil, say something, will you?"

However, he remained silent.

She struck her back deeply into her chair and closed her eyes. She remained quiet then until Cecil spoke.

"Illy, it's time for you to let Nikki go on with her life," He spoke, eventually.

She suddenly opened her eyes and stood up, the chair tumbled. She then turned toward Cecil fiercely.

"What would you know about my pain!" Startled by her own words, she covered her mouth hastily. "I am sorry. I got a little carried away."

"I will leave you alone, excuse me." Cecil walked toward an exit having said so.

"Computer, lock this room with maximum security," She spoke.

With few mechanical clicking sound, the room became completely isolated from outside; two windows behind Illy shut itself four times in rapid succession. The only door to outside was covered by a thick metal sheet that slid down from ceiling.

And Cecil was standing right in front of the door. He slowly turned around, looking not amused. In truth, it was meaningless for him but it was the intention that mattered in this case. She approached him from behind and hugged him gently.

"Are you out of your mind?" Cecil said, stoically making his speech rather meaningless.

She turned him around and then looked directly into his eyes. She became even closer to his face. Her fingers reached his eyes, two eyes of vivid brown color.

"Your eyes are the same as Marat's," She whispered.

She was so close that Cecil could feel her breath. Eventually, she started to slowly attempt to make a kiss.

"You are out of your mind, mother in law."

Having said so, Cecil vanished from the scene.

When Gair was about to enter Venus government building, he noticed Tryon and Nikki heading toward the main entrance from the lobby. He proceeded and was passing them by. He intentionally slowed his walking pace and overheard their conversation.

"Are you really going, Tryon?" Nikki said with a concerned voice.

"Yeah, I am sick of all the rules."

That was all he could hear as he passed them by. He was looking behind at them while walking forward. He eventually bumped into someone, it was Cecil.

Gair almost screamed. "You scared hell out of me."

"How is the Hammers doing?" Cecil asked while him was taking few steps back.

"I've confirmed that all of them have arrived at Venus. Their precise locations elude me however. I am sure they will come if you call them out." He added, "Is something wrong, sir?"

"No," Cecil shook his head. "Gair, come with me."

They went for a nearby park.

"Venus is very peaceful place." Gair said earnestly, looking at the park and people in it who were enjoying their peaceful time. There were small ponds, grasses, trees and benches, they were decorated and were looked after very well, creating a very comfortable atmosphere for people to get away from their ordinary daily lives.

"I take that you like Venus?"

"I've been here before, sir."

Indeed, he literally grew up with Nikki Sweetheart on Venus under Illy O'ren's care.

"Yes, but this planet is going to change," Cecil stated. "Whether it will be for the better or for worse, I am not sure yet."

Gair replied, "Venus has declared its independence, sir, but there is chronic lack of any actions from Earth."

"Why would they care? Venus independence is the last thing on their mind right now. They don't even have their president yet."

"Still, I'd figure they'd act."

“They can’t and they won’t,” Cecil assured, “I know the system too well.”

“If you say so, sir,” Gair said, knowing there was no point in arguing with someone who knew far more than he did.

“Call the Hammers.”

In the next morning, as ordered, the Hammers including Gair gathered in a small conference room at Venus parliament building.

In the room, there were Gair, Kisia, Kasper, Maeve, Vakha, Tuhina, and Dante. They were the current members of the Hammers. Karl was on a mission and was unable to make it.

"It's been quite a long time since we were ordered for a meeting." Tuhina said with excitement. “How long has it been since we were gathered together?”

Vakha started to count his fingers. “One, two, three, four, five, six... I have no idea.”

Maeve answered, “It’s been only two years.”

“Yeah? Still it feels like it’s been an eternity,” Tuhina said, looking around.

"Time for some real action, I reckon," Vakha responded while cracking his fingers.

"Time for some excitement."

When Cecil entered the room, they quieted down at once.

He took his seat and began. "Okay, I see everyone is here." He placed his chin on his crossed fingers. "For a long time, I have taught you knowledge and skills. At the same time, I've forced you to remain in shadow. That time is now over. It is time for all of you to step into light."

They nodded at once. They seemed to know what Cecil was saying.

"I shall take over Venus, and Illy O'ren will retire. After I take over the Venus presidency which will happen soon, I will dissolve Venus government."

Kasper raised his hand. Cecil nodded, giving him permission to speak up.

"Can we stand against United Sol?"

Cecil nodded at once. "Do you think I, Cecil Klisis, will lose?" His answer was short and rather illogical but it just made sense. It simply did.

He continued, "We will have a long and harsh path ahead of us. But know that I am here. You may fail but fear not. I am here. I want you to stand against the world and spread your names. It is time for you to step out of my shadow and show the world what you are made of. You will be the spearheads of Venus. Live and prosper."

The Hammers nodded firmly.

Few days later, Cecil visited Illy O'ren who was taking a break in her villa just outside of the Fallen crater.

She was in backyard which was her usual place to be whenever she was off work. This same backyard was also a playground for Gair and Nikki Sweetheart as well as Illy's daughter Marat O'ren.

"I wish there was sunshine on Venus," Illy said when she felt presence of Cecil.

The sky of Venus was frequently clouded, making it quite hard to see sunshine if at all.

Cecil quietly approached her and stood next to her chair.

"Illy, it's time," He said.

She had her eyes closed and was looking up in her wooden chair. She would remain so for a while as if she was sleeping. When she finally opened her eyes, the sky was getting darker.

"Am I to retire?"

He gave her a nod.

"But I am too young to retire. Why can't I work with you?"

"You are reaching an eight hundreds year old mark. You are not young."

"But you are much older than me and still kicking."

"Everyone's different. Your time, alas, has come."

"Bullshit," She exclaimed. "I've done a lot for you and this is what I get?"

Cecil remain silent. Frustrated by his silence, she stood up and pointed at him. "I have questions for you and I want you to answer me."

There was no reaction from him but Illy continued anyway.

“Did you kill my husband?”

He answered promptly, “No.”

“Did you kill my daughter?”

He again answered promptly, “No.”

“Do you love me?”

“No.” His answer was still prompt.

Sighing deeply, she seemed as if she didn’t know where to look. Eventually, she turned around from Cecil and walked a short distance away from him.

“You want me to be gone, right?”

“Your presence won’t help dissolving Venus parliament.”

She looked up at the clouded sky, hoping for a sign of some sort. A ray of sunshine she wanted. Alas, it never happened on that moment.

Approximately 300 days after the vessel crash...

"How are you doing?"

It was Masu who asked.

"I am fine. I didn't really have to be in here," Kosoku smiled.

She was in a hospital. She was carried here from Mars because she had a little contraction. Mars didn't have any advanced medical equipment, therefore Masu teleported her to Venus in a blink of an eye.

"Better be safe than be sorry, lass."

Kosoku sighed. "I understand. Where is Roon?" She changed the subject.

He looked behind as if she was supposed to be there. "I guess she went elsewhere." He looked around again. He seemed to be inspecting the room. "Nice equipment here, so unlike Mars."

She beamed a grin. "In almost every aspect, Venus is far superior than Earth."

"Yes, of course," He said and thought at the same time. *'Considering who has been building Venus....'*

"Excuse me," A weak famine voice sounded from an exit.

"Oh, it's you," She seemed to know her, but Masu didn't.

There was a woman at the door. Her full figure was bandaged so he couldn't even see her face.

"This is Edith," She introduced the woman in full body bandage.

He nodded slightly. "Greetings."

Edith was walking hardly against a wall. Her fragile fingers were shaking. Her arms were shaking. Her whole body was shaking. She simply looked very unstable to be even walking outside.

"Is she all right?" Masu whispered to Kosoku after seeing how she was walking.

"Yes, she's all right."

Edith had level four burn on most of her skin. There was a regeneration option available, but such expensive medical technology was only available to select few. Even normal treatment was insanely expensive for a normal citizen like Edith.

Thanks to Cecil Klisis, he had paid all the cost for the normal treatment which had no guarantee on when she would be fully recovered.

After nearly a year, her skin was not still recovered fully, but she was able to walk and do things one would do in their normal life. She still had to be in a massive amount of bandages, but her doctor said that he would remove head, hand and foot bandage within 30 days, which was a huge step of a positive progress for her.

Not too long ago, an agent from Venus government visited her. She introduced herself as Kisia and what she asked Edith was unexpected.

"What are you going to do after you are recovered?"

Edith didn't have a moment to think of her future. She had always been pain and crossed the border of life and death numerous times. When her condition became better, her next worry was the face. There was a good chance that her face would not be the way it was. There was also a good chance that her face might have been messed up and deformed beyond imaginations. With these concerns in her mind, she had been unable to sleep well.

Then two days ago, a woman was carried to the hospital that Edith was in. She was a pregnant woman. She was accompanied by an elderly man with a strange aura. His appearance was elderly but his aura was not. It was a strong, clean, and powerful aura. It was something she had never felt before. Her curiosity led her to meet the pregnant woman. She ended up visiting her every day.

One day, Edith visited again and there was the elderly man who initially left a very strong impression.

"I didn't know you had a visitor," She said bitterly.

"It's fine. Come on in."

"Uh...," She glanced at the old man. The more she looked at him, the more she became assured that she had seen him somewhere before.

As she kept walking while leaning a wall to retain balance, she felt intense, smouldering, pain in back. Groaning quietly as she endured the pain, she beamed a childish smile at them.

"I am sure you want to talk to your father."

That was her assumption. Although she and the old man had no similarities in their appearance, the air between them seemed to be warm.

Kosoku smiled after hearing what she said. "He's not my father. He is pretty much so though."

She did not pay attention to her well at the moment due to the pain.

Unaware of what Edith was going through, Kosoku innocently told her, "Have you ever heard of the servant of Mars?"

The servant of Mars, that term cleared her hazed mind. She remembered.

"The savant of Mars, Masu," She said out loudly unintentionally. "The servant of..."

The elderly man seemed to be surprised of her reaction and asked her, "What is your name?"

Without thinking anything, she simply answered, "Edith."

"You were definitely in a big ancient. When was it, if may I?"

"Um...," She had to count the weeks with her fingers. It was something she didn't really think of. "I think it was about 300 days? I am unsure."

The elderly man seemed to fall into thoughts and asked her soon after.

"Are you the survivor of the ENN vessel incident?"

Edith was surprised. There were very little coverage about it at that time. ENN did not even report the incident.

"Are you really Masu?"

It was hard to believe that such a famed man was standing right in front of her right at this moment. The servant of Mars, he was nicknamed. He was also addressed as Masu the sage sometimes. His other titles included the hero of the Bau, the savior of the Bau.

The elderly man grinned at me. "You are right,"

Her legs started to shake. She couldn't stand properly. It was her first time in her entire life of seeing a sage. The honor and the joy overtook her.

He was right in front of her, only a few meters away.

"Wow....," that was all she could say.

After knowing who the elderly man was, she became curious of who Kosoku really was.

Then again, she felt pain all over body. She bit my lips and tried to overcome the pain as usual.

"You must have been going through a hard time there," Masu approached her and gave her a hand.

"I am ... all right, sir."

She *smiled*, she thought.

She sensed Kosoku's attention and felt sympathy from her eyes. That was when she realized she was not smiling. Masu approached Edith and supported her so that she could slowly get down on the floor without slipping due to bandage.

Her time limit had already exceeded. She needed to go to the confinement room of hers again. The confined, air-controlled, pure white room where no one would ever visit... In fact, she hadn't had a human contact until she ran into Kosoku recently.

Avoiding Masu's deep brown eyes, she tried to stand up and leave. However, he stopped her.

"Look into my eyes," He gently ordered her.

"Ex...cuse me?"

He didn't repeat. And she was forced to look into his eyes. No, she wasn't forced. She was my own will.

His eyes...., they were brown. It actually did not matter what color his eyes were. She was driven into something deeper, something more spiritual..., something more ...liver.

His eyes... were Mars itself. The dark brown planet with never ending sand storms.

Her skin began to tingle which brought her even more pain. She could not see the bottom of his eyes or his mind. Drops of tears which were not intended dropped from her eyes. She was unable to resist the tears. They just kept on coming. She was neither crying nor sobbing. The tears... just kept on dropping.

He tapped on her shoulder gently which was covered with thick bandages and he said in a slow and charming tone. "It's all right. You've done a good job. You are alright."

It was not something she wanted to hear from anyone. But while she was being treated, no one ever visited her. Only few regular visits from someone named Kisia to check on her recovery status.

She was lonely and, most of all, she felt abandoned. Her feeling of abandonment and loneliness crystallized into tears. At some point, she felt extremely exhausted and collapsed.

When she woke up, she realized she was moved to her confinement room again. The regular beep sounds from machines around her welcomed home, her lonely home.

"I somehow feel" She felt released. Something hard that she had been choking was gone. She felt lighter. She recalled that she met Masu and cried in front of him.

Her healing process became much faster from that day, after few weeks, she was released from the thick bandages. She was even allowed to move to a normal but still high priority room. She was given casual clothes which she wanted to wear so much. And the food had gotten a lot better and came in variety. It was as if they were preparing her to release her.

In the meantime, she no longer could see Kosoku. She figured that she must have given birth to a baby and left here along with Masu the sage.

Either way, she was very glad that she had a chance to get to know her even if it was only for few days. Thanks to her, she met the servant of Mars.

After a month, she fully recovered and was released. When she was packing up few belongings in the hospital locker room, the agent, Kisia, visited her again and showed her an immigration form. She also told her it had cost six billion credits to heal her.

“Am I ... in debt?” She asked reluctantly, fearing Kisia’s answer.

But the debt was not asked to be repaid. All Kisia asked was sign the immigration form. There was nothing to hesitate. Earth had already released her death certificate soon after the vessel crushed. She did not want to go back to Earth. Earth abandoned her.

She gladly signed the form and she introduced me to a small apartment and a bank account with six thousand credit to start over. She was also given a part time job at VNN.

She had to start over but...

“Not many are given a proper second chance. For that, I am blessed,” She said as she left the hospital behind.

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