

Karveel makes his second appearance in the story. His first appearance was in [Shattered union arc] [6] [Fraser's Regime] [9614]. He isn't a guy who has a bigger role at this point however...

Related story : [Kain and Suu arc] [7] [Valid concern] [9636]

[Hermit arc] [3] [Moon refugees] [9637]

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Ever since Ssilen became the leader of the Gypsies, there was one aspect that changed clearly for the better.

The safe house.

She spent a lot of efforts to create a subspace where no one could enter but those she allowed. No one could spy on her. No one could bother her. Originally, she created the isolated space to cry and sulk after her mother brutally rejected her. As time flew by though, she saw a need for a secured HQ for the Gypsies guild.

Hence, her subspace.

One of major issues at the Gypsies guild was leakage of vital information. Ed did his best but he couldn't do much. With Ssilen's subspace, however, things changed. They finally had a place where they could exchange information securely.

As years went by, it became de facto place for gypsies to gather.

“Lass.”

Ed called out Ssilen who was slacking in a throne made of magazines. While 99% of magazines were e-magazines, there were still printed magazines. Gypsies gathered them per her order and brought them into her subspace along with other paper materials such as newspapers.

“Ed, hello. What brings you here?” Lazily, Ssilen spoke to him.

“Lass, I am sure you are aware of the situation on Moon now.”

Ssilen had her head slightly twisted and supported by her index finger on her cheek and thumb on chin. She was silent for a moment as if she was wondering what Ed was talking about and replied, “They brought that on by themselves, no? Why would anyone sane place embargo?”

The infamous embargo was placed on Venus and Mars when the two planets declared independence back on year 9599, and Moon suffered the most from the embargo as the planet relied heavily on exports to the two planets. ENN criticized heavily on the embargo and publically asked the Ark to lift it.

Alas, that never happened and nearly 40 years passed ever since.

Ed told her gravely, “If the Bau was sane, United Sol wouldn’t be in this situation.”

She rolled her eyes and sighed deeply once. “Fine, I see your point. What brings you here though?”

He sighed and told her with a look of depression, “When they are poorer than us, that’s something to be alarmed of. Some of them contacted us for smuggling.”

Seemingly unconcerned, she replied, “To?”

“To Uranus outpost where there is someone who actually cares about lowly people like us.”

Admiral Kain...

“Who is this Kain guy anyway?” Ssilen argued. “We don’t really know who he is.”

Ed made a fist and placed it on his chest. “I swear my life that he is a lot better than anyone else in United Sol right now.”

He wasn’t someone who’d swear. But he did, which meant he was deadly serious.

“You sure?”

“Lass, I am sure. I bet my life on it.”

She shrugged but with a smile on her face, “Very well..., I will not stop you, sir. Feel free to use my subspace.” She added quickly, “However, only ten at once and do not let them venture too deep. They risk their lives in doing so.”

“I thank you.”

That opened the flood gate so to speak. Even only ten at once, constant flow of refugees saw hundreds pass by two weeks and the number exceed two thousand in a season.

Although United Sol did not investigate this at first, they started to pay attention when a sizable amount of citizens went missing from Moon without any records of them acquiring permits. They considered it as a security breach and began to investigate.

Moon administrator Karveel was on line with President Fraser of United Sol. He was appointed as the next Moon administrator after the previous administrator, Graeto, perished in the second invasion from Juron. He originally rejected the promotion back on year 9614. But with Kain becoming a new admiral, Karveel decided to accept the role when Fraser appointed him the second time.

“Mr. President, have you read the report I sent you, sir?”

“Yes, I read through. Over ten thousand have apparently disappeared and none of them seemed to have acquire permits to leave, yes?”

Karveel nodded.

Fraser let out a faint sign and asked him, “What is your take on this, Administrator?”

Crossing fingers, Karveel explained, "I spent some time investigating the matter, sir. We suspected an ESP's role into this but found no evidence of one. We still think an ESP is related. We just don't know how at this point."

Fraser let out of a sigh again. This time, however, his sigh was more visible.

"Administrator, may I be honest with you?"

Karveel nodded in response. "Yes, sir," He added.

"Ever since the second invasion, things have been quite chaotic here on the Ark. To be brutally honest, I don't have time to think about Moon right now."

He nodded slowly this time repeatedly. "I see, sir. So, you'd like to leave this matter to me entirely."

"Precisely."

"Very well. I will take care of it myself."

Moon had been neglected for some time by the Ark. Gareto knew it. Karveel found out soon enough when he arrived on Moon. The situation was quiet dire on the planet, and he did attempt to bring this to Fraser's attention a few times with no luck.

Taking a deep breath and then letting out a long sigh, Karveel stood up from his chair and walked around in his office slowly. He did not, or rather could not, blame the President for Moon being neglected. The situation back on the Ark or United Sol itself had been quite dire for some years.

It was mostly budget related issues which brought political unrest. The Ark had to rebuild entire Earth defense fleet and money had to come from somewhere. Tax was increased first by few percent. However, the first tax collection after the increase proved that United Sol simply did not have enough population. In other words, a small tax increase wasn't enough.

The Bau council eventually imposed additional tax on Earth which literally opened a can of worms. All in all, the current situation on the Ark was a mess and Karveel was glad that he wasn't involved in any of it.

“Not my business,” Karveel told himself after an array of thoughts went through his head regarding the situation on the Ark.

He was indeed correct. The President couldn't be bothered about Moon. Why should Karveel care about Earth, or even United Sol as whole? He was just a small fish. Besides, his hands were fully enough already. When Earth defense fleet was destroyed, so was Moon fleet.

The reality was that Moon had only 40 ships total. Before the second invasion, there were a thousand. Karveel attempted to produce more ships but the resources just weren't there. Additionally, he tried to help out those in need. Again, the resources just weren't there.

Nothing was there.

Coming around his desk, he clicked a communication button.

“This is Karveel. I need to assemble few patrol groups.”

Ed along with three other men in hooded rags guided ten Moon inhabitants into an alley under darkness. Nobody spoke a word during the progress and it was swift. There was a magically swirling portal at the end of the alley where the Moon inhabitants cautiously walked into it one after one. Once they were gone, the three who were accompanying Ed walked in as well but Ed himself did not and watched the portal to close. He sat in a corner afterwards and sulked seemingly.

Meanwhile, Karveel was leading a small group to investigate the streets. He had eight other groups with him and they were on the same communication link to update each other.

“Do not inquire the citizens. Check alleys and report anything that is unusual,” Karveel talked over the comm.

They found nothing, absolutely nothing. Nothing seemed amiss and there weren't any indications that any sign of human smuggling was occurring. Karveel already personally inspected Moon shuttleport and there seemed to be nothing amiss as well.

Therefore, his next line of thoughts moved onto possibility of ESPs teleporting inhabitants away which he already suspected. The problem was, though, that he found it hard to believe that ESPs were involved. The reason was simple; teleporting such a large amount of people consistently was no easy task.

“Not worth the time and effort,” Karveel concluded and decided to take his hands off it. The budget was already running out and he had still a season to go. It was best not to waste any further resources. The Moon administration made healthy profit over issuing permits and ten thousand permits would have helped the outfit but not by much. It wasn't worth it, he concluded.

And another night came, and another batch of people entered a dark alley guided by three gypsies. Ed was waiting at the portal that was swirling and glimmering magically on a wall.

“All clear?” Ed inquired to which the three gypsies nodded at once. “Alright, I am tagging along this time. Everyone, follow me into the portal.”

Ed was tagging along to their destination for a matter that needed his attention. Apparently, Uranus outpost officials weren't pleased with how “human trafficking” was occurring and wanted to put an end. He was heading over to the outpost and explain to iron out the misunderstanding.

The Moon inhabitants murmured once they entered the portal due to its alien nature. They were in a passage way that looked like any ordinary alley but it felt different. Ssilen's subspace was her space. She was literally the God inside of the area. She made rules and she could even defy physics. It was surreally quiet and, at times, it felt like someone was watching them.

“It’s nothing to be alarmed about,” Ed informed them. “Continue following me and you will be out of here in no time.”

It was a nervous fifteen minutes of walking when a portal was seen further away.

“We are almost there,” Ed said.

Ssilen’s subspace was able to connect to virtually any place as long as she was willing to. A mere 15-minute walk would connect Uranus outpost from Moon. When Ed exited the portal, there was a group of guards waiting outside. Some gypsies guarding the portal had already been seized on ground by them. It was an alley in a business block of Uranus outpost where it was zero gravity.

He quickly assessed the situation and walked toward the guards who aimed their guns at him. By which moment, the refugees walked out of the portal.

A woman stepped forward among them. She had very distinctive features, having magenta color hair and was wearing a mini skirt in zero gravity, not to mention her glamorous body features.

“Hold right there,” She warned Ed and others behind him.

Ed stepped forward as well. “Miss, we mean you no harm.”

The woman glared at Ed as well as others behind him.

“Who are you?” She demanded.

“I am Ed of the Gypsies guild. The people behind me are from Moon which I am you are aware of.”

The woman placed her left hand on her waist. “Yes, which is why I am here. Recent refugees did not have any sort of permits to travel. Yet they got here somehow. I now see why. That portal, is it your creation?”

“No, Miss. It is our leader’s creation.”

“And who is your leader?”

Ed, at this moment, was conflicted. Sslien was virtually unknown figure to United Sol. He wanted her identity to remain unknown.

“I would rather not say.”

Unexpectedly, the woman took his answer well.

“Fine, I don’t think United Sol is aware of the Gypsies and their internal affairs. I suppose you don’t want to expose your leader’s identity.”

Ed was pleasantly surprised.

“Your name, Miss?”

“My name is Magenta.”

What a fitting name, he thought.

“And do you work for Admiral Kain?”

“I am his first officer, Mister.”

Ed did not sense any hostility from Magenta. Yes, she took down the gypsies guarding the portal, but she wasn’t radiating any hostility.

“What do you want from us? I don’t feel that you are here to take us down.” He inquired cautiously.

“The Ark is slowly beginning to pay attention to your little smuggling operation. They need permits. You can teleport them the way you are doing now but they want their money, the permits. As long as they get the money, they won’t pay attention.”

Ed argued, “Miss, you do realize that they cannot afford the permits.”

“Yes, I do realize that which is why I am giving you this.”

Magenta approached him and handed over a disk to Ed.

“It is an authentic permit issuing software. I take that your guild have the capacity to find a fitting hardware to use it.”

Her action was a huge security breach and she was fully aware of the magnitude of her action.

“Of course, I trust that you will not abuse this software,” She added.

“You have my word, Miss,” Ed replied her promptly with a firm voice. “I shall use this software for only Moon refugees.”

“Fair enough.”

Having said so, Magenta signaled men behind her and they released the gypsies.

“Alright, men. We are done here. Withdraw at once.”

Showing absolutely no objection, the men saluted at her at once and swiftly moved out of the area.

The moon refugees let out of relived sighs. Magenta would look at the refugees for a brief moment before walking away from the scene.

“It’s safe. Now go,” Ed signaled the refugees behind him. “Best of luck for you in your future endeavors.”

After seeing them off, Ed instructed the guardian gypsies to withdraw for time being and they all went back to Sslien’s subspace.

And Ed was going to make a progress report to Sslien who was chuckling as she was reading a fashion magazine that was over ten years old.

Noticing his approach, she casually asked as she closed the magazine and threw it backwards. “How is the operation going, Ed?”

“Very well. We ran into an obstacle but the matter has been ironed out.”

Sslien had a faint grin on her face. “Ed, I found out something interesting while you were away.”

“Oh?”

“About the admiral, did you know that his top two officers are from the Bau? One of them is even an insider.”

Ed narrowed his eyes at once. “Surely, you jest.”

“I kid you not.” Sslien giggled. She was clearly enjoying the moment. “Admiral Kain has two top officers in Suu Bau and Magenta Bau. It’s funny, isn’t it. Surely he has the Bau’s support?”

He had an encounter with Magenta just a moment ago.

“Not all Baus would be the same,” Ed ironically had to defend the Bau. “And I know you are enjoying this.”

Sslien smiled brightly. “Yep, I am enjoying it. Seeing you defending the Bau is priceless.”

Ed, on the other hand, was clearly not enjoying the moment.

“Fine, fine.” She shrugged but still with a grin. “I am sorry. But I did not make it up. The admiral is indeed surrounded by the Bau. Whether the two Bau women have any connections to the Bau council is entirely a different matter though.”

“It is very unlikely that the admiral has any form of support from the Bau,” Ed said. “The second invasion by Andromeda union proves that. He stood alone.”

Sslien argued, “But that was before he became what he is now. He was underestimated back then. Now that he is an admiral, the Bau can’t simply ignore him especially when he has got two Bau women in his arms.”

Ed once again narrowed his eyes. “Are you saying he is sleeping with them?”

“With at least one of them, yes. Magenta Bau is apparently pretty tight with Admiral Kain, it seems.”

He was clearly not pleased by the news but he did feel there was nothing to be concerned about. He met Magenta and felt she was a good character. Whether she was a Bau or not didn’t ultimately matter. It wasn’t like being born to a clan was a selectable choice.

“I am not concerned,” He claimed. “My high opinion regarding the admiral hasn’t changed.”

“Yeah, well.” She shrugged. “I had a short moment of fun picking on you. Now, let us be serious.” Her casual face turned grave. “How many are there left to transport?”

It took Ed a moment to answer. "There are more and more people coming as words are spread out. Honestly, I don't know at this point."

Sslien crossed her arms. "The thing is you can't keep doing this. Exposing entries to my subspace for a prolonged period is dangerous."

Ed informed her that he acquired authentic permit issuing software and that, even if Sslien's subspace could no longer be used, the Gypsies could still smuggle people the normal way."

"Well, Ed, I will not stop you from doing that. But subspace smuggling is over," She stated. Then she stuck her back deeper into the paper throne. After a moment of silence, she replied, "But I will go out with a bang."

He didn't quite grasp her idea. "What are you suggesting?"

Karveel received reports of a very large crowd gathering on a public park. What were especially unusual was that there was a fair amount of beggars among them. Upon skimming through the report, he immediately assumed that they were the ones responsible for the smuggling.

Pressing a button for communication, he gave out an order to gather able men.

"Status report!" Karveel demanded as he took off an armored transport near the park.

Saluting, an armored soldier reported, "There are approximately seventeen hundred people gathered at the park, sir. They've refused to dissolve."

"Who's leading them?"

"There appears to be a young woman who seems to be giving the beggars orders."

"A woman giving orders to beggars?" Karveel was confused for a second and then realized. "The Gypsies guild?"

There was very little intel on the Gypsies guild. He knew they existed all over the Sol and that was as far as his knowledge went.

“Very well, follow me everyone!”

“Lass,” Ed called out Sslien who was meditating on a grass ground. “I believe everyone made it.”

She opened her eyes slowly and stood up. “Gather them as tight as possible. This will be swift but loud.”

What Sslien suggested was mass teleportation by cleverly utilizing her subspace. It'd be done only once to catch Moon administration off guard. Once done, her subspace would no longer be used. Ed would continue the smuggling but via a normal route with proper permits.

“Those who can't make it today are meant to be stuck here,” She said while she and Ed organized those around them.

“Ma'am, guards from Moon administration are approaching fast!” A beggar shouted.

Ed shouted promptly, “Gather tight! Everyone, gather tight around us!”

Taking a gradual deep breath, Sslien looked up as she spread her arms. A large swirling portal with a diameter of at least a hundred meters appeared out of nowhere 20 meters above her. It emitted a very unpleasant eerie sound as it slowly descended down.

“What the fuck is that?!” Karveel uttered as he saw the swirling portal from afar. Understandably, nobody answered him.

“Can anyone tell me what that is?!” He repeated his question but again there was no answer.

Growling, he ordered men to proceed.

“Freeze!” One of Karveel’s men shouted as the men aimed their stun guns at the civilians. Comically, the people gathered at ark were not moving at all, so ordering them to freeze was moot.

“Hands up!” The guard still continued to bark orders nevertheless, and the people complied and held their hands up. By this point, the swirling portal was only few meters away from them.

“Stop whatever you are doing!” The guard demanded. “Stop! I am going to shoot!”

The people looked at him with strange eyes. There was nothing they could do to stop it even if they wanted to.

Out of frustration as well as desperation, the guard shot few down at which point he was violently blown away from where he stood. He was blown a far and crashed violently into a building where he was struck deep into concrete. He was killed as soon as he was violently crashed into the building with his blood and flesh spattering in every direction.

“Doesn’t he have any common sense...” Sslien muttered as she used her ESP to blow him away and kill. Other guards were surrounding them but was staying a clear distance from them, fearing the descending portal.

Ed was surprised to see just how powerful the blow was and she was still manipulating the portal in addition to the powerful blow. He knew he couldn’t have done the blow. It was the difference between class S and class A.

“It’s going to feel strange but do not run away!” Sslien warned others. The soon-to-be refugees murmured in fear and some of them embraced each other as if their doom was coming. The portal was just above their heads when Karveel reached the park. He’d just stare the portal swallow the hundreds of people from head to feet at which point, the portal faded away.

And no one was in the park anymore.

“The Gypsies guild... has a class S ESP??” Karveel asked the question to himself. Everyone else seemed to have a class S ESP with them. Venus did. Mars did. Freedom colony did. Andromeda union did. Only United Sol lacked one.

Sighing and shaking head, Karveel ordered men to retreat.

“Nothing to see here anymore, let’s just go home,” He told his men.

He did not even file a report of the incident to the Ark. Why bother, he felt strongly.

Fin