

[Juron arc] [4] [The council] [9616]

Rev 1.2

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After the first successful invasion of United Sol, Juron received a hero's welcome. Andromedians had long felt sort of inferiority complex against United Sol. And Juron's successful invasion meant that they finally scored one against them.

Furthermore, Juron had met all of goals set by the council, and therefore he was subsequently promoted to a junior councilor.

It was year 9616. Juron was giving his speech in the council. Two years passed since the successful invasion, and he had been voicing up for the second invasion which he talked about numerous times previously.

When he presented his grand agenda to the council back in 9613, there were three planned invasions. And he vowed to conquer United Sol on the third invasion. Obviously, his plan was met with great resistances because he was an unproven man at that time. However, being a class S ESP enabled him to push for his plan because Andromeda council did not want to lose such a powerful ESP. Therefore, they took a gamble with Juron. Should he succeed with the first invasion, good, they'd employ him. If he failed, they would have a chance to tame the beast. It was seen as a win-win situation.

Andromeda council had politically a similar structure as United Sol's the Ark house chamber. There was also the high council which was more or less equivalent as United Sol's senate. However, the major difference between the Sol's political system and theirs was the lack of clan intervention. There was no supremely powerful clan in Andromeda cluster and clan powers were restricted from becoming too powerful.

Richard Bau, the self-proclaimed emperor, was a Bau exile who bothered to keep his last name but had no connection with the Bau at all. After taking the republic over from Acshell the liberator, he quickly established the high council and the council and then handpicked its members. Years later, an election system was implemented but Andromeda union was never full democracy.

The council had two hundred members and only few select council seats were electable. Most of seats were given to those the council felt worthy of. And the council never had a fixed number of seats. Sometimes, it'd go over the two hundred seats slightly. Sometimes, it'd go below the norm.

Juron was the council's 204th member when he was chosen in year 9614. And his value in the council rose swiftly in just few years due to his brilliance when it came to politics.

"I believe you've all read the reports I just circulated," Juron said in front of councilors.

The reports were regarding the status of United Sol economy.

"They are in over 150 trillion debt," He continued, "With deepening debt concerns. They have no way of lifting their debt ridden situation." Then he raised his voice. "Not that they are bothered by that even. It's the Bau we are talking about; the most delusional group of people in clusters."

Some weak laughs could be heard in the chamber amid silence.

Juron presented a 20-year plan that included cuts in spending for various areas while boosting the navy. By his own calculations, in 20 years, they would be well ready to launch a proper invasion on United Sol without taxing the citizens.

Wemer was reading through a copy of the plan brought by Sevn who attended the session.

"My word, he did think this through," He uttered a compliment.

"It pains me to admit that but, yes, he did think through," Sevn responded with a bitter face. "The citizens will not notice anything."

While Wemer was still reading the plan, he asked casually, "You sound as if you approve this."

"I'd never agree with waging wars. But the plan itself is solid. Our citizens will feel no pressure."

Wemer looked troubled. "Is it true that United Sol is in such a dire condition?"

"Yes, although, from what I've seen, the Bau doesn't seem to care one bit."

Wemer made a clicking sound with his tongue as he responded, "Doesn't surprise me. It's the Bau alright." And then a long sigh followed. "So, I assume the council will favor this."

Sevn nodded. "Yes, Juron isn't rushing this. He did think through."

“So..., year 9636 for the second invasion?”

“Give or take 2 years by his own words, sir, but yes.”

Wemer finally put down the datapad. “The guy is good. He pulled off some seemingly impossible stuff in a short while and even got away with Milky way incident.”

Milky way incident, to be more precise, it was Milky way to our home tragedy where majority of population from Smuggler’s Den chose to leave their homes and journey to Earth. 600 million perished and the Knights firmly believed Juron was at the heart of the whole incident. He also got away with murdering Lord Ankle. In both crucial incidents, Juron had excuses, good ones as well.

For murdering Lord Ankle, Juron claimed that he had gone insane since it was him who ordered the shooting which resulted in death of tens of thousands civilians. He claimed he was left with no choice but to kill him. The Knights knew that there was more and that Juron was manipulating him but they had no evidence to support such a claim. In the end, Wemer, the leader of the Knights, chose not to report anything.

Wemer also did not have any firm evidence that Juron was a part of Milky way incident. Therefore, he chose not to indict him.

In the end, Juron was able to get away completely cleanly and there was nothing the Knights could have done about it. Sevn was especially furious but he also knew that there was nothing Wemer could have done.

Juron was in his office. He had been given an office as a councilor and he had been spending most of his time in the office. Ever since taking over Lord Ankle’s fleet and subsequently becoming a member of the council, he had been drafting plans to invade United Sol. His part invasion was a total success for his own agenda. His aim was to weaken United Sol and he believed he did just that.

Someone knocked the door while Juron was casually reading through various news sites on a holographic monitor behind his desk.

“Come in,” He said and a man entered. Immediately recognizing the face, Juron gave him a stoic welcome.

“About time you are back. Are you done with the reports?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Approach and speak then.”

The man approached his desk at once and placed his hands on his back. Clearing his throat, he spoke with a firm voice.

“The current situation of United Sol is mostly just as you predicted but there has been an unexpected development.”

Juron wasn't pleased to hear that. “Unexpected development? Explain.”

He told Juron about Commodore Kain who unexpectedly earned a shocking promotion to become the administrator of Uranus outpost.

“My main concern of this man is he is a non-Bau and, from what I've observed so far, he is not corrupted.” He quickly added after a brief moment of silence. “Yet.”

Juron took a deep breath. He eliminated John and Eder in order to reduce chances of unexpected ripples. Although it was a small wave of ripples, he still did not like an unexpected variable.

“We need to get rid of him,” He said gravely. “Do what you can do either kill or unseat him. I need an idiot Bau to rule the outpost.”

“I will do what I can, sir.”

“Very well, make it happen in five years.”

Nodding, he saluted with a response, “Understood.”

“Dismissed.”

Turning around, he exited at once.

Juron, alone again in his office, digested the unexpected ripple. Uranus outpost used to be a completely useless piece of military strategic point until Andromeda rebellion became a success. Since then, on paper at least, Uranus outpost became the first defense against external invasions. However, United Sol never expected an invasion, and thus, the outpost had been mostly ignored. Even after Juron launched the first invasion, United Sol still did not view the outpost as an important military strategic point.

From Juron's understanding, the reason was down to the Bau's blindness which was in an illusion that they were the most powerful faction.

He clicked few buttons to bring up a report detailing United Sol's military might. They had been reinforcing their fleet which was what Juron expected. What he didn't expect was they had been building the Mice, a light cruiser. It clearly meant that United Sol was running on debt and needed to reduce spending. He felt that the primary reason they were running on debt was their refusal to reconstruct their system after Venus and Mars went independent. For United

Sol, Venus and Mars were their main source of cash flow. Mars had the A.C.M. and Venus had the raw cash in taxes. He believed that any sensible government would have quickly restructured their spending plans and make necessary cuts.

And he firmly believed that the Ark, led by the Bau, was not a sensible government.

“A deluded clan running a big nation like United Sol is a recipe for disaster,” He said to himself as he skimmed through the report. “Bad for them, good for me.”

At this point, someone knocked the door, and he wasn't expecting anyone anymore.

“Yes?”

When the door opened, a junior councilor entered. His name was Peter-Darlton. The hyphen was a clever usage of attempting to add a last name to a name. Such a practice was seen only from Andromedians.

“Councilor Peter.” Juron stood up from his desk as he welcomed the councilor.

“At ease,” He responded with a grin. “I am here to ask you whether you attend a party. It's going to be held tonight.”

A party among councilors would mean a high profile one which Juron could hardly pass due to political reasons.

“Of course, I'd be honored to join.” Juron beamed a fake smile as he said so. In fact, he had installed an entirely new personality when he became a councilor as his true personality was too rough to blend in; he was rational enough to realize such. It wasn't something he was pleased to do so, rather he was forced to in order to maintain his career as a councilor.

He was a reckless and ruthless class S ESP who firmly believed in his abilities. He knew almost nothing was impossible for him if he put his mind to it. He even believed that he was the strongest ESP.

His firm belief crumbled when he sensed Cecil's aura back on Pluto during the first invasion. He had read Cecil's tales which were mostly unbelievable stories. He felt most of stories were rather exaggerated because it didn't make any sense why the Bau would just sit back and watch him obliterate their city. It didn't make sense why the O'ren simply watched him to obliterate their home city and killed few millions.

In addition, how he escaped countless ill deeds was simply beyond logical understanding. Unless, of course, he was so powerful that no one could stop him. Unless he was so powerful that he could stand above the laws.

When he sensed Cecil's aura, he knew in an instant that he would not stand a chance. He reckoned he could stay alive against him for perhaps up to five seconds at best; that was the answer that came up in his mind a lightning moment after he felt Cecil's aura.

And to his shock, Juun stood well against him. Granted, he was also a class S hyper human but Juron firmly believed he was stronger than Juun.

And then he realized that he would not be able to force his way through the ladder of the command within Andromeda union. In other words, he ate a humble pie and decided to alter his approach. Being a class S ESP, he quickly shaped and matured a second personality within him and installed the second personality as primary in order to reduce mental stress for his original personality. It was certainly easier to be said than done as most ESPs would have a very hard time doing so. As a class S ESP, however, it was possible for Juron and even act as if nothing was happening.

He did make a mistake of revealing his true nature to the Knights but he knew that Wemer and his dogs were rather isolated within the union. Besides, whatever Wemer and Sevn could claim to the council, he was positive that he could counter their statements.

"Very good," Peter-Darlington made a firm face with a nod. "Do you have a woman with you to bring over?"

Typical, Juron thought. High profile political parties had a strong tendency of showcasing females, or rather their curves and racks.

"No, sir." Regardless, Juron answered earnestly. "Should I bring one?"

Actually, he wanted to say "*Must I?*" but quickly scrapped the urge.

"You don't have to but you should."

Indeed, he should but certainly didn't feel an urge to do so. There was a limit he could take and bringing a bitch wasn't a likely option for him. In many ways, Juron was a sexist who looked down on females but his sexist view was limited to those women who struggled to make an impact.

In other words, he did respect women he found formidable but looked down on those who he felt worthless and weak.

"I will try to find someone, sir." He made an excuse which Peter sort of saw through but didn't mind. After all, it was his own choice whether he brought a woman or not. It wasn't a big deal.

"I see. I will send you the details, but the time is 11 in evening. See you soon."

As soon as Peter left the room, Juron growled with few swearing vocabularies.

“Fucking useless imbeciles,” He swore in a whispering tone. “99.9% politicians are good-for-nothing. Partying? Are you fucking kidding me? I bet he uses the public money to pay for it also.”

He actually couldn't care less whether Peter used public money. What he was bothered was that he wanted the council to conserve funding since he submitted a 20-year plan for an invasion. Every saving counted and it irked him to see a needless spending.

Sighing and shaking his head in disgust, he sat down in front of his desk and considered whether there was any, female, to bring with. And he quickly realized that there was no one. In fact, he didn't have any friends because Juron was an asocial person. He didn't see any points in social activities. He viewed it as a waste of time.

He sighed. He knew he should bring a woman with him and the woman couldn't just be anyone. She would need to have a background that was recognizable by other councilors. He was tapping his fingers on his desk when an awkward but plausible idea came to him.

“Excuse me?”

Wemer was on a communication channel. His clearly shocked face pleased him for some reasons.

“Let me repeat myself,” Juron told him calmly. “I need to borrow your sister.”

“Tell me that you are joking, and I tell you that it is a bad joke.”

Another man's voice was heard from a distance. It was Sevn's. “A very bad joke!”

“Let us put the past aside us,” Juron attempted to reason with him logically. “You do realize that it could be a good opportunity for her, do you not?”

“Nope.” It was an instant and firm response from Wemer who looked clearly not pleased to hear Juron's request.

Juron expected such a firm stance from Wemer or rather the Knights. He also did not want to bring the topic to him to begin with but his sister was the only eligible one who was within his reach. Since the matter wasn't something he'd be able to use his political influence to make it happen, nor would he be able to force his way through as he love to do, logically he chose to take the low road.

“Please?”

Wemer's face became mangled on screen. "What the...," He mumbled although Juron could clearly hear it. "My sister can't be the only woman you can find, surely."

Juron gave it a thought again and there was none. "Nope," And he answered accordingly and added, "I am not asking you much here. It's not like I am asking you to give me your sister. I am merely asking her to accompany me to a high profile political party which may be good for her even."

Wemer groaned because Juron had a point and he also understood why he was looking for a woman to accompany him. He had also attended few political parties and it was apparent to him that he should have brought a female partner.

Juron frowned weakly as Wemer still hesitated. He decided to use a hidden card.

"I did save your life once. Perhaps now is time to repay," He said. It wasn't something he liked to mention but he saw no other, faster, way.

Wemer sighed deeply. "I was hoping you wouldn't bring that up."

"You played hard-to-get. You left me with no choice."

"Fine. I will talk to my sister. However, if she refuses, that is it. Do you accept that?"

"Of course."

And Wemer's sister, Anne, accepted the invitation. She showed up in a black dress with deep V on back at the designated location Juron told Wemer. It was the party hall where there were numerous cars going in and out after unloading its passengers. There were also plenty of security guards who kept watchful eyes of anyone who acted suspicious.

Juron was able to immediately recognize Wemer's sister and offered a hand formally.

"Anne?"

Taking Juron's hand, she beamed a smile with a short response, "Yes."

At this moment, Juron was dressed finely in a tuxedo. It was something he never had to wear before and he was feeling uncomfortable in it.

"Alright then. Let us enter."

The hall was fairly crowded with men dressed in fine formal attire and women dressed in revealing dresses. They were mostly chatting with drinks of liquor in their hands. Soon enough, Peter-Darlington noticed and dashed toward the pair. He, who wasn't wearing tuxedo but was wearing a similar formal suit, welcomed the couple warmly.

“Glad you made it, Councilor Juron.” His attention quickly moved to Anne. “And who is the fine lady?”

“Anne,” Juron declared, “The younger sister of Wemer.”

“Of the Knights?”

Anne answered while curtsying, “Yes.”

“Oh! I had no idea he had a sister. Welcome, Lady Anne.”

This reaction was exactly what Juron wanted. He needed a woman whose root was recognized in an instant.

And so the party began, at least for Anne who seemed to be enjoying the event. For Juron, however, it was gruesome. Having to talk to people necessarily was a torture itself. And, in just an hour, he found himself on an ottoman seat with his head down, exhausted. He had shielded his mind with his ESP to reduce stress his mind would receive but it didn't seem to work too well.

“I take that you did not want to be here.” It was Anne who eventually found Juron visually KOed.

Glancing at her, Juron responded, “And it seems you like to be here.”

“Who wouldn't?” But she realized Juron obviously wouldn't. She cleared her throat and continued, “You don't get many chances like this, especially for someone who was nobody some years ago.”

“What did your brother tell you about me?”

She leaned her back against a wall, standing next to Juron. “He didn't tell me much. Just told me to behave. But I am not a fool. Juron is a name you hear quite often in politics recently.”

She glanced at Juron and continued, “Although... you aren't exactly how I pictured you to be. From the way the media spoke of you, I thought you were a very ruthless man.”

Juron chuckled in response. He was in fact a ruthless man but he couldn't just push his ways all the time. At least, he couldn't as a new councilor. He lacked the authority as well as seniority. He felt no point in explaining such to her and chuckling was his answer.

Noticing that Juron had no intention to tell her anything, she went back to the party and that was the last time he saw her. He didn't take her home and Wemer didn't complain. As far as Juron was concerned, he went to the party and that was the only thing that mattered to him.

And the next day, Juron found out exactly why Peter invited him to the party. He had apparently brought forth a legislation that could make Freebie outpost as an independent entity.

Freebie trade outpost received most of its funding from Freebie administration. However, ever since Milky way tragedy, the outpost had been receiving funds from the council because Freebie was basically defunct due to mass exodus of its local populace. There were reportedly less than a thousand population left on the planet.

The legislation sought to legalize the funding of the trade outpost which would effectively cut its tie with planet Freebie.

Peter began his speech in front of councilors.

“Greetings, everyone, currently Freebie trade outpost is being funded by the council due to the recent mass exodus of residents from Smuggler’s Den. The outpost being funded by the council is fine as it is an important asset for our nation. However, at the moment, the funding is currently marked as emergency funding and, therefore, no full detail of the bills is available.”

Juron saw what Peter was trying to say. Emergency funding never had full records of what was spent where. Therefore, it was fairly easy to exploit the vagueness; embezzlement in other words.

Peter continued, “By passing this law, Freebie colony funding will be marked properly and full accounting details will be available for review.”

The council was fine with the way it was for a few years. Juron felt there was a reason Peter was bringing this into council at this moment. He glanced down and quickly read through the proposed legislation.

“Fuck,” He uttered and everyone’s attention turned to him. Realizing he swore a little too loudly, he cleared his throat and acted as if nothing happened. The proposed legislation had few conflicts with his own bill which he presented a day earlier. Mainly, Peter’s bill conflicted because his bill would increase spending in administration by at least six billion annually. There was also a possible jurisdiction conflict but it wasn’t Juron’s concern.

He watched Peter finishing up his speech and left the chamber as soon as it was over.

Juron was angrily walking down in a hallway where Peter dashed out and called him.

“Councilor Juron.”

Gritting his teeth, he turned back to confront Peter. Still, he responded formally, “Yes, councilor?”

“I do understand that it conflicts with yours,” Peter said, “But this needs to be done.”

“Don’t mind me, sir. I am just a junior councilor. Excuse me.” There was sarcasm in his voice.

“Juron, this is politics,” Peter attempted to calm him down. “There will always be obstacles.”

True, but why he had to pick this precise moment irked him. It wasn’t a big obstacle for Juron as he could still adjust his own bill to make the war occur within 20 years but he felt it was an unnecessary resistance from Peter.

“Indeed, sir,” Regardless what was going inside of his mind, Juron spoke to him calmly. “There will always be obstacles.”

Peter-Darlton belonged to a group of council members who did not fully trust Juron and his intentions. But Juron being a class S ESP, they did agree to keep him close while letting him retain his council seat. They were also involved in anti-war movement.

Once Juron was done glaring at Peter, he turned away from him and continued his way down in the hallway. He never expected it to be easy and he had encountered his first opponent. If he wasn’t a councilor, Juron simply would have blown him to smithereens and be done with it. Alas, this wasn’t about raw strength.

This was politics.

With a crooked smile, Juron whispered to himself, “Bring it on.”

Fin