

[Masu arc] [4] [Remorse] [8739]

Rev 2.2 (Last modified on May 3, 2020)

Related stories

[Sae arc] [1] [Mosaic Passion] [8711]

After being given an indefinite “vacation” by Yuiriel II, Masu followed Cecil’s advice and decided to visit Freedom colony.

They took a civilian class transport from Venus and simply went there. There was no public announcement; there was no formal preparations. They simply went there. They had no luggage; only their bodies went. It didn’t matter to them too much. Masu did not accumulate his wealth. He had no assets on Earth, either. He left accounting to Heather and all she did was saving credits in a joint account. He had little to no expenses and Heather herself did not use much money.

The end result was that they had near millions of credits, enough to lead a peaceful lifestyle.

When they arrived at the colony and was checking out, the officer who was checking Masu’s documents did not believe what he was seeing and thought he was just a man with a same name.

“This place hasn’t changed a bit, I see.”

Standing before the rundown building where Lila and the others used as a base of operation. He entered and realized that nothing had changed. The layout remained the same. The same staffs were still working there.

Nothing had changed indeed. It gave him a cozy feeling from inside. At the same time, however, it also reminded him of the dark times.

Masu took a deep breath to repel his darkness within. Heather was behind him, curiously looking around. She was fully aware of what had happened on Freedom colony. Thus, she remained silent, not trying to agitate him.

He eventually approached one of staffs behind a counter and even before he’d speak to the staff, the staff recognized him quickly.

“Is that you?” Covering her mouth, she pointed at him. “It’s Masu. I mean it’s you!”

Others around her turned their attention to them.

“Oh, my God, it’s really him!” The staff had tears almost in her eyes. “He’s come back! Everyone, he’s come back! Tell Lila right now!”

Nodding, another staff next to her touched a spot under her right ear.

Meanwhile, Masu beamed a smile at them. “Hello, everyone.”

Lila was tabbing her finger on her semi-transparent table. She was doing nothing else. Tabbing her finger, she was in deep thoughts. Her office was dreadfully silent when a faint beep resounded from her left ear.

Looking bored more than anything else, she replied lazily, "Yes, what is it."

Her voice was dull and unmotivated but that soon changed. Focus returned to her eyes at once as she stood up from her desk. "I will be there," She exclaimed. "I will be there in two seconds!"

She normally used elevators to move around. She wasn't a kind of ESP who used her powers unnecessarily, but this time she teleported right away without any sort of hesitation.

"Holy sweet nebula..." Lila blurted as soon as she teleported to the agency. "I will be damned." Yes, she was seeing Masu surrounded by the staffs. "It is really you."

She had a similar past as Masu. Her clan was strongly against her desire to marry her boyfriend. She was to be the next clan headman and they wanted someone of a better social status. Regardless, she pushed on and her boyfriend was brutally murdered by her own clan.

Enraged and saddened at the same time, she was locked up by her clan. It was also when she met Aedy Freedom. She never really got over the fact that her relationship was denied and was ended in a way it did. She could not understand why. What was wrong with trying to marry someone she loved?

What the fuck was wrong with that, she wondered. Why the fuck did her clan do what they did, she wondered.

She never got over. However, time eventually closed her wounds.

When Lila rushed to the scene where Affie was dead on Masu's knees, her wounds reopened. It was the same nightmare all over again. A part of her died when she saw the outcome. From her re-opened wounds, a daunting question emerged.

Why.

Why.

Why...

Masu suffered and so did Lila. Seeing him silently staring at his dead wife whose murky, dead, eyes were also staring back at him, it was just too much for her. It took her many years to get back on her feet unlike Masu who simply pushed on.

A hundred years passed and he came back and he was smiling. His smile was different from her own, Lila realized as soon as she saw him that, unlike her, Masu had gotten over.

And for that, she was happy. At least one of them was able to get over. At least one person was rescued from his own shadow.

Ah- Ah...

“Masu!” Lila called out. Masu as well as the staffs around him turned their attention to her. “Welcome back, you fucking bastard!”

Thank you, whoever you are.

Thank you for saving his poor soul ...

Lila eventually led Masu and Heather to her office where Minghua and Niak were waiting. There was also a new face for Masu. She looked only a pre-teen girl but she was wearing provocative clothes for her age. She was wearing a pink tank top, a pink mini skirt, and ankle leather boots.

“... Welcome.” Minghua and Niak were in sync. “Welcome back.”

The pre-teen girl waved brightly toward Masu. “Heya, daddy!”

She was obviously fooling around.

When Masu looked at her, he could not believe what he was feeling at first. Her appearance was that of a pre-teen but her aura was profound and dark as if she went through the Hell. Yet, he felt her darkness was pure. He had sensed a similar aura previously.

“Young miss,” He carefully addressed the girl. “What is your relationship with the Crimson wizard?”

The girl's eyes were widely open for a moment. She soon brightly smiled and told him with respect, "Welcome, Masu the sage. My name is Sae. The Crimson wizard was my mentor. Your reputation precedes you, sir."

Lila, Minghua and Niak were surprised. They had known Sae for a while but they had never seen her speak so earnestly. She was always either joking or changed subjects. Lila employed her only because of her skills and powers.

And for Sae, Masu was the first person ever to see her true face at the first glance.

Masu introduced Heather to the others along with two facts that she was Affie's older sister and that she was his current wife.

Not surprisingly, everyone was shocked to know that Heather was married to him and that she was Affie's older sister. Perhaps, it was only Sae who wasn't surprised who responded with excitement, "Nice~."

Lila told him, "The apartment, it's still there. It is how you left it. All the belongings, it's all still there."

"Is that so?" A remorseful smile emerged from his face which quickly faded. "I guess I should check the place out then."

"You don't have to. I mean, I am not trying to push you into this," Lila said. Masu never requested the apartment to be left alone. In fact, he mentioned nothing

about it. It was Lila's own volition to leave the place as it were. It was the symbol of her scar, regret, and failure.

"It's fine. We will check it out soon."

We

Lila beamed a smile. "Yeah...?"

Masu and Heather were in the apartment. It was once the home for Masu and Affie. Due to the passage of time, a thick layer of dust had settled down but that was no problem for Masu. He used his ESP to simply teleport dust out of the apartment. Once that was done, the place looked as clean as new.

He ignored everything else and went straight to the balcony while Heather was looking around with curiosity. She eventually found a pregnancy tool in a bathroom. The tool indicated that Affie was pregnant which shocked her to bones.

She knew Affie was assassinated. However, she did not know that Affie was pregnant at that time. At the same time, she realized what kind of ordeals Masu had to go through to be where he was now. And the reactions of those who welcomed him ... showed that Masu and Affie were happy while they were here.

And that they were more like a big family.

“Want to stay here?”

Heather asked Masu who was vacantly staring outside from the balcony.

“Here?” Masu looked back. She was walking toward the balcony.

“Yeah, why don’t we settle down here?”

“You do know I am the head councilor for the Bau.”

“You are not planning to go back there, are you?”

It was something he couldn’t answer for the moment. He may or he may not.

“I am not sure,” He answered honestly. “If he needs my help again, I will likely have to respond.”

“Is it because of me?” She said promptly.

It was unexpected. “Pardon? Because of you?”

“Are you inclined to help him because of me?” She quickly added, “They killed Affie. I am sure they will come after me as well if you don’t behave. Is that what you are concerned of?”

That was a possibility, certainly.

“That is a possibility but unlikely,” Masu replied honestly. He felt she deserved to know what he was really thinking. Whether like or not, they had been married for over a hundred years. “The day they lay a finger on you, that day will be that the Bau will disappear from the face of Earth.”

It was a very bold statement. At the same time, it showed Masu’s determination to stop the history from repeating. He did mean what he said it will be the last of the Bau. He meant it. If Yuiriel II or the Bau killed Heather, he was willing to risk everything to destroy the Bau.

Not because he loved her.

But because he felt that was a suitable punishment for the Bau.

He’d risk everything even if it meant selling his soul to a devil. He’d beg Cecil if he had to. That was how far he was willing to go.

But Heather understood it differently. It wasn’t rocket science for her. When a husband had never slept with his wife, there was only one likely answer. At least, she had only one answer at first.

As years went on, she became confused. When she realized the depth of affection he had toward Affie, she realized it was complicated. She was to fill her shoes instead of becoming a wife of her own. It was different and awkward situation for her as well as Masu himself.

Over the years, she came to a conclusion that winning true affection from Masu was not possible. Thus, she chose to become a good friend instead. She stopped her nagging and started to treat him rather platonically. It worked to some degree because he opened up more to her but he'd never cross a certain line.

The man was a fortress.

She considered giving up. She considered numerous times.

"I am staying here on Freedom colony," She declared. "I am not going back to Earth."

Masu took her decision well. "If that is how you feel, that is fine."

Coming to Freedom colony only made her realize even more that she was always going to be eclipsed by shadow of her deceased sister. Therefore, she accepted her fate finally. She did not accept her defeat; she simply accepted that she was always going to be overshadowed by her sister. At the same time, she felt there was one thing she could do for Masu and perhaps for her deceased sister.

The child who never saw the light.

The child that Affie failed to give a birth to. Heather decided to get pregnant somehow and wanted to give Masu the child. She wasn't plotting to win his favor or anything but she felt obligated to give him back what was rightfully his.

Her own violation. Her own will. Those were born from her remorse.

When Masu informed Heather's decision to Lila, she was genuinely shocked. In fact, she was shell-shocked. With widened eyes, she'd stare at him for a moment before she finally managed to get words out.

"Holy sweet nebula," She said with an amused face along with a crooked smile, "Masu, women you hang out with are weird."

He had a casual laugh, adding, "She wants the same place, the apartment."

Lila's shocked face gradually subsided. "And you?"

"I will stay here for the time being. But I will eventually go back to Earth."

"And she will stay here even then?"

Instead of answering, he nodded.

"I see." Lila's eyes were downcast for a moment. "Masu," She said as she looked into his eyes. "I swear to you that it will not happen again."

Again, instead of answering, he beamed a vague smile at her.

"The history," She weakly raised her tone. "Will not repeat again. I swear my life on it."

A second chance.

A second chance to amend what had gone wrong before.

It was subtle but there were tears in her eyes. She repeated, "I swear to you that it will not happen again."

It wasn't entirely for Masu himself. It was for herself. It was her second chance. She felt her blood flowing backwards as she proclaimed. She had to say it. She had to proclaim. The part of her that died with her when Affie died, the rotten part of her whispered her dark words for many, many, years. She had been resisting her dark urges but this was a chance to put the rotten part of her away for good.

And so, Masu and Heather stayed on Freedom colony for the time being. They had a rather uneventful life for years. He could occasionally hear how ruthlessly Yuiriel II acted but he paid no attention to the news and continued on his life as a hermit in peace.

One day, someone rang doorbell at Masu's place and he with an apron came to the door to see who it was. It was Sae. With her usual bright grinning face, she waved at Masu.

"Hey, daddy."

"Hey, darling." He played along.

Sae was actually sent by Lila to bring Masu to HQ but she continued to play along since he responded in her favor.

"What's for dinner?"

"Fish and chips, come on in."

"Yay!" Jumping up and down, She ran inside like an over-excited child. "It smells awesome!" She exclaimed. "Hey, mommy!"

It wasn't the first time Heather encountered Sae acting this way and she had gotten used to her behaviors.

"Hello, honey," She also played along who was cooking french fries. Masu was in charge of the fish.

"French fries! Awesome!"

Sae would run around a bit and then calm herself down on a dinner chair.

Heather was putting down dishes and Masu was finishing up the fish. They had to make extra for Sae.

"Fish and chips! Fish and chips!" Sae chanted as she held two forks in her hands.

And they ate.

They ate together.

For Sae, never in her life had she eaten any meal with anyone in a friendly manner. As an immortal, she did not have to eat. She did, however, occasionally ate just to kill time and taste food. When she did eat, she mostly ate alone.

Ever since she left Cecil's villa back on Earth, she roamed the clusters. She spent time on Moon, Jupiter, Saturn, and other planets in Andromeda cluster before ending up here. She saw and experienced the world but it was never the same as an immortal. She was always treated as either a sexual object or a clueless kid. The discriminations didn't bother her at first but it eventually caught up with her and she vented her anger by mercilessly killing some people. She became wanted and that was how she ended up on Freedom colony.

"It's yummy!" She cried out. She really cried out; tears were flowing through her cheeks.

Heather was shocked to see her like that and was about to ask her what was going on but she was stopped by Masu who silently stopped her by his hand.

"It's yummy..., mom and dad..."

What was normal for everyone wasn't for Sae. Being frozen in time and being unable to procreate, she was stuck how she was when she was once killed.

Nothing had changed for her for hundreds of years. While everyone was moving on with their lives around her, she stood still and alone.

At first, she did not mind. At first, she told herself that everything was alright. However, there were only so much she could ignore as time flew by.

Eventually, she sought ways to kill herself. She blew her brain out. She set fire on herself. She stayed out in space for days, weeks, and seasons. Nothing she did could kill her.

It wasn't just despair that dominated her mind. It was an endless downward spiral of doom and she had been falling for as far as she could remember. Her overly childish behaviors stemmed from a fact that she wanted to be a part of a warm family and having a pre-teen's appearance meant that she was better off acting like a children than an adult.

Masu did not know her past. What he did feel was that she had a strong link to Cecil and that she was deeply suffering from inside. He felt that Sae's childish behavior was masking her dark side. Whatever it truly was, he knew how to react because he was there once. What he did not know was that she could never reach an end of her life.

Crying, Sae eventually finished up her dish and fell asleep right on the plate.

Masu checked up on her and she did seem as if she was sleeping.

"I think she is sleeping, soundly might I add," He said.

Heather quietly stood up and started to gather her and Masu's plates. "What was up with that... I was shocked."

"She may have an appearance of a child, but that is someone who went through a lot. I think she's even older than us."

"For real?"

He responded with a nod.

The dark aura he felt from her, it was not something a person could conjure all of a sudden in a moment. It was accumulated despair for God knows how many years. However, as dark as it was, it was also clean and pure.

Heather eventually went out for shopping while Masu was watching over Sae who seemed to be asleep on a plate.

"Are you done playing yet?" He said to Sae who twitched slightly as she heard.

"You noticed?" She said while still having her face on a dish plate.

"It wasn't hard. Let's just put it that way."

She slowly rose her head. There was a giggle on her face. "I screwed up, I must admit," She claimed.

"You said the Crimson wizard was your mentor?"

She nodded innocently.

"What did he teach you?"

He was genuinely curious. He had never heard of Cecil willing to teach anyone. If anything, he was always willing to force his ways and in progress kill. He honestly did not think Cecil was a teaching type of person.

“I didn’t stay with him for too long. He freed me from my own darkness and sent me away.”

Darkness..., everyone had their own darkness. It was just a matter of how much although, in Sae’s case, it wasn’t a matter of how much. She was full of darkness. He felt something was horribly amiss from her aura. But he couldn’t pinpoint what it was.

He continued to ask Sae, “What is your opinion about him?”

She responded with a pout as if she was displeased with his question. “Doh, why do you even ask? Are you a gay?”

“What? No.”

“Oh, come on. I’ve seen plenty of married guys who turned out to be fucking gays. You can be straight with me.” She was giggling. She was having fun picking on him.

Realizing that she wasn’t going to answer, he changed the subject. “Forget it. Why are you even here?”

“Ah...!” She looked shocked as if she remembered something. “Crap, I really screwed up. I came here to bring you to Lila... How much time have I been here?”

“It’s been roughly 2 hours.”

She got up in a rush. “Crapppppp!” She exclaimed, “I am sooo dead. Come with me now!”

And, as she expected, Lila was rightfully pissed when Sae rushed to her office with Masu.

“Hey, kid...,” She growled literally. “I sent you to pick him up... It should have been a 10-minute task and you show up here after 2 hours...”

“I am so sorry!” Laughing, she scratched her head. “He was such a stud.”

Lila’s face became doubtful and she looked at Masu. “You didn’t..., did you?”

“What? Of course, not! She’s just playing with you!”

“Yes, I trust you. I just had to make sure because that bitch has slept with clients before!” Lila shook her head in deep frustration while Sae was looking pleased.

“You could have contacted me earlier if you wanted ~,” Sae said and she had a point.

Lila’s visible ire on her face quickly disappeared from her face. “This isn’t anything remotely urgent, so I had no need to rush you.”

“Should have just let us be humpy bum-”

Cutting off Sae's cheerful voice, Lila spoke to him. "Masu, you are going to stay here for a while, so why don't you take some missions? I've been entrusting dangerous missions to that bitch over there, but we are lacking in diplomats."

Life would be boring without any work to do. Therefore, he figured why not. However...

"Are you sure? I am the head councilor of the Bau, you know."

"You don't have to reveal your name and I will let you handle missions in Andromeda cluster only. No one should recognize you over there."

"If you insist, I don't see why not. I'd rather work than slack like a bum."

"And about Heather... Should I ask her directly or can I talk to you?"

"You should talk to her but she has the same certificates as Affie."

"I see. I will talk to her later then."

"Is that all?"

"Yes. You will be contacted by the HQ when there are suitable tasks available for you."

"I see."

Masu was turning around and saw Sae sticking out her hand.

"Daddy!" She exclaimed, "Take me to a park!"

He took her hand and they were on their way out.

“Don’t sleep with your daughter now,” Lila told him jokingly and he returned a casual laugh.

He would enjoy peaceful years for a while until a storm would take him back to Earth.

Fin