

This is the final story of this arc.

[Masu arc] [9] [Demise of a servant] [9649]

Rev 4.4 (Last modified on May 3, 2020)

Prerequisite stories

All previous stories of Masu arc

[The black knight arc] [1] [Eran Gro] [9605]

[The black knight arc] [2] [Doubtless] [9609]

[Shell of Pluto] [1] [Shell] [9614]

Year of 9649, a big star was about to fall...

At Kamtaka, Mars.

Masu was on his death bed. He looked calm, but his breath was irregular. Roon had been nursing him, but she realized there was nothing that could be done for him. His life span was at its end.

He had been having minor health issues for several years. Kan wanted him to see a doctor but he refused, telling him that his time was coming.

His health gradually became worse and his time had come.

He slowly opened his eyes. He let out of a weak groan as if even opening his eyes was a labor. With labored breath, he spoke to Roon, "Call everyone... I have words to leave at them."

Roon replied with a firm nod, knowing what it would mean. A moment later, Kan, Shell, and Eran Gro were brought in.

"All of you, wait outside... except Eran," Masu said weakly.

Kan, Shell, and Roon left the room quietly at once.

Eran Gro approached the bed and kneeed down. "I am here, sir."

"Find Ssilen the gypsy... And give her this...", Masu handed a tiny black fragment to him. "She will make you one of kind blade that will last eternity." The black fragment was a legacy of Cezary's passing. It was a small crystallization of Cecil's blackfire. Masu didn't notice at first but it was in one of his pockets.

Eran Gro had always had problems with his blades. Because his physical raw strength was far too strong, his blades never lasted long enough, and it was not like he was rich. Masu finally felt it was the time to equip him with a unique blade.

"And I thank you for your service so far. I knew I could trust you the first time I met you."

"Thank you, sir."

“Kindly tell Roon to come in.”

He stood up and backed off, leaving the room at once.

The only window in the quarter began to rattle, making some noises in an already quiet room. Strong wind storm was forming outside which wasn't very unusual.

As soon as Eran left the room, Roon entered.

She kneeled down as she approached the bed. He held her hand tight as if how a father would hold her daughter's hand on his death bed.

“You've done well so far. Keep it up,” He said and then he lowered his voice. “I do have an advice for you. Avoid confronting Cecil at all cost.”

She nodded gently. She didn't know why he said so but nodded anyway, firmly believing that there must have been valid reasons.

“It's best not for you to know the reason,” Masu added.

“I understand.”

“Know that Mars must have an alliance with Venus. That is only way for Mars to remain independent,” he advised.

Roon gave him a firm nod.

“And make a good use of Eran Gro. He will become an irreplaceable member.”

She nodded again.

“That will be all. Let Kan enter.”

Sighing deeply, she stood up and quietly left the room and Kan entered right after.

"Sir..."

"Kan ..., come closer," Masu said with labored breath.

Kan looked visually disturbed and there was already faint tears gathered at bottom of his eyes.

As soon as he was at Masu's bed, he fell onto his knees at once.

"You've come a long way, lad," Masu remarked, "A damn long way... You must now stand alone."

Kan remained speechless and had his head dropped. For him, Masu was his father. Of course, he was fully aware that his biological parents were Marcus Dietrich and Kakari Ra, but that didn't really matter to him. From early childhood, Masu guided him. Therefore, he felt an unshakable bond toward him naturally.

"I don't really have an advice for you. You've surrounded yourself with good and earnest people. They will advise you what to do. Trust them, reward them, and you will go far."

Kan started to sob subtly and Masu would pat his head for a while. When he calmed down, he had something to ask. He asked whether or if there was a way to contact his mother, Kakari Ra.

"I am not sure whether she is alive, Kan," Masu replied calmly. "And contacting her at the moment would not be possible."

Kakari Ra... Masu used to bear deep hatred toward her. He wondered whether to let Kan know the truth or not.

"I may regret this... but there is something I should tell you," he said.

He told Kan about a woman.

"When I was young, I was married to a woman named Affie. But our marriage wasn't really welcomed because Affie's last name was Bau, and I was a son of a mere servant. Besides, I was a spy. Long story short, we eloped to the Freedom colony. We had good time there although it didn't last very long."

Kan was able to catch on quickly. Having never known that Masu married to begin with, he could only conclude that his mother had something to do with his happiness being taken away.

He gulped. "Did my mother kill your wife?"

Masu nodded. "And, at that time, she was pregnant."

Kan stood up at once, looking shell-shocked. But Masu had a tranquil grin on his face.

"It's all past, lad."

But Kan took none of it. His face became pale and he made fists that were trembling with emotions.

"It has been a thousand years since then. I don't hate your mother. She had to do what she had to just as I had to raise you."

Kan told him weakly, "I didn't know ..."

"You aren't supposed to know. The reason that your mother suddenly left Mars was for your own sake as well as hers. In fact, I was one who insisted that she left."

Indeed, Bau's armies had arrived at Mars at that time, and the Dietrich clan was falling apart. Kakari, as a member of the Ra, had to leave to unify the clan.

"That doesn't change the fact that...!" Kan was raising his voice but soon put a brake on himself.

"Kan, perhaps I do have an advice to give you now. Facts and truths are like salts. It's never good to know too much. I am sure you will want to dig into this and perhaps reopen old wounds but I advise you not to do that."

Kan had a bitter face.

Eventually, he left the room, and Shell entered. Shell was perhaps the only person who'd have the least affection toward Masu and it showed; she didn't seem too depressed or sad. She seemed content rather.

"Leave this planet, Shell. Go to Pluto. You know what to do."

She nodded in response. "Thank you for everything."

"I've taught you everything I know. Make good use of it."

She nodded again, firmly this time.

Once she left the room, Masu insisted that he wanted to be alone. Kan wished to stay but even he wasn't allowed.

“Cecil, you can come out now.”

And Cecil appeared out of thin air with a whoosh.

“So, what do you say? Do you think I’ve had a life to be proud of?” Having said so, Masu dragged himself out of the bed which Cecil supported by giving him a hand.

“Your life is not yours to judge and I am certainly not someone who should judge.”

“Hah.” Masu let out of a snicker. “You know, Cezary complained about you.”

“I am sure he did,” Cecil responded stoically.

“And one after one..., we all die.”

Cecil did not respond this time, for death wasn’t an option for him. Having had suspicions and loose assumptions, Masu had come to his own conclusions about Cecil and what he really was.

“You’d have to disappear at one point,” Masu said based on his assumption that death wasn’t an option for Cecil.

“I will at one point.” And Cecil’s reply confirmed his suspicions.

Masu attempted to comprehend Cecil’s ordeal. Having lived over a thousand years, mounting regrets was taking a toll on him. Quite frankly, he didn’t have any attachment left to his life. He was in fact glad that it was over. Now if death wasn’t an option, what would happen to the mounting regrets? How could one cope with the stress? He knew he wouldn’t get an answer to that. Therefore, he didn’t bother.

“I can only foresee Venus going downhill once you leave. And if Venus weakens, so will Mars.”

Cecil replied, “I cannot rule Venus forever. But I will make sure United Sol fall.”

“I see...”

They stared through the window where a fierce sand wind storm was raging outside. The window was rattling badly as a result. They could continue to stare and, at one point, Masu’s head dropped.

Fin – continue on though

I am looking down at a grave stone of Heather, my mother.

She passed away last night. She ... simply passed away. Autopsy result didn't come up with anything suspicious. She simply ... died. There was no other way to put it. It was “death by natural causes”. That was the best way to put it.

She had never told me who my father was, but considering how she named me, it was fairly obvious who my father was.

My name is Masu Jr.

A fairly easy guess on my biological father and the members of Freedom colony confirmed my guess. Lila, Niak, and Minghua confirmed that Masu, the sage, was indeed my father. They would, however, not tell me what kind of person he was, which was what I wanted to know. They told me that only my mother had such a right to tell.

And she died. Coincidence or not, I was also informed that Masu the sage passed away two days ago.

I did my share of researches in order to find out what kind of person my father was. The net had very extensive records of his accomplishments, but none of sites had any kind of information about his personal life. There was also no record of his marriage, meaning I could well be a bastard.

I kept on bowing to people who were visiting her grave. Her will stated that she was to be buried right away without any sort of funeral when she dies. For so, her funeral was skipped absurdly.

Some of her friends were visiting her grave instead her funeral, and I was in charge of greeting the visitors.

Lady Lila came earlier and told me that there might be someone who would be willing to tell me what I wanted to know.

Then it occurred to me that she might know about my father more than I originally suspected. For some reasons, it seemed those who did know my father were keeping their mouths shut. I wondered why. Though I didn't let that bother me too much. It was simply a curiosity.

"Find Sae. She will tell you what you desire to know," was what lady Lila told me.

I just couldn't understand why she wouldn't just tell me. I simply couldn't.

I thought getting a hold of Sae was easy. Apparently, however, it isn't. I was told that she had been away for some sort of mission for two seasons (six months) straight. I had no idea what kind of mission would take two seasons, but I had no choice but to wait.

I've known Sae for a long time. Actually, I remember her playing with me when I was a toddler. As I've gotten older, I started to see her progressively less. I haven't seen her for a while. By "for a while", I mean I haven't seen her for a whole year or more probably.

Let me introduce myself a little bit. As I said, I am Masu Jr. It seems I was born from Masu, the sage, and Heather. I have found that my mother was actually a member of the Bau. So, her full name would be Heather Bau. Not once had she spoken her full name though. Maybe, she wasn't an insider. Who knows.

I work as an officer at Freedom colony. I am not a high ranking officer, but I am not the lowest ranked, either. I am an overseer for a very small information division. The primary task of my division is to collect any information that might pose any danger to the colony. Though, for some odd reasons, that has not been what my division has been doing. Well, let's just say my men have been busy answering calls from colony citizens.

I graduated from a small military institution that taught basic hand-to-hand combat and tactics. It was the only military institution on the colony, so I had no choice regarding my education course.

Well, enough with that, I suppose.

After half a season, I received information that Sae arrived and that she wanted to see me right away. I met her at the clarity park.

The clarity park was a gathering place for ESPs and the likes. The park had a very weird atmosphere all the time. It wasn't anything sinister, but it wasn't comfortable for normal humans, either. Besides, there was usually thick fog covering the park strangely. When I was told to meet her at the park, I knew where to go. I used to play with her at the park when I was a kid and I knew the park fairly well.

Sae was an elder. She wasn't just a normal elder. Her age was almost one thousand years old. Only one other person was older than her in the whole known universe. That was the Crimson wizard.

Despite of her alarming age, her height was that of a pre-teen. She was sitting on a bench when I arrived at the park, looking at me with cheerful and curious eyes. I approached her cautiously.

"People always dream of something. They always persistently dream even when it is vividly clear that their dreams will not come ever." Then, she shrugged. "He was a fool," Sae scoffed. "He was a fool..."

Her cryptic statements confused me at first, then I realized she was talking about my father.

"He was a smart fool ..., a wise fool ... He was probably the wisest fool ever..."

She was ... dropping tears. I did not know why, but she was crying. Crystal tears from her small eyes fell through her delicate pinkish cheek.

"It's been a long time, ma'am," I greeted her despite of her sudden tears.

"Hah, yeah, I guess." Despite that she was dropping tears, her voice was calm.

"You know what?" She asked me suddenly.

"P, pardon?"

It was so sudden that I did not know what I was expecting.

"A fool, he was. A fool, she was. Damned fools."

Her tears had paused as if she had complete control over her tears. Her attitude suddenly changed one hundred eighty degree. Crossing her legs, she supported her arms widely over bench top.

"Why, do you ask?" Sae started to laugh sorrowfully. "Because he was a fool ! A damned fool! A damned fool ..."

Then she seemed to have been overtaken by emotions again. While I did not wish to disturb her, getting a hold of her was hard enough. I wanted answers.

"I would like to know about my father," I asked her indifferently.

She sneered. "I told you. He was a fool."

"That... doesn't tell me anything."

She rolled her eyes and looked around as if she was becoming impatient. "I guess you have a point. The thing is, though, I know too much about him. You have to be more specific."

Sae was an interesting character. She acted immature at times but I could see that her underlying character was firm and sound. I agreed with her that my initial question was too broad. Therefore, I decided to ask specific questions as she requested.

"Did Masu marry Heather?" was my first question. I wondered it because it was unknown whether he was ever married.

"No, your mother was not married to him. Masu was married to Affie though."

"And Affie is ...?"

"Affie is Heather's younger sister. She would be your aunt...?" Sae shrugged and let out of a weak laugh. "If Affie wasn't assassinated, you wouldn't have born, I guess."

She told me that Masu and Affie eloped to Freedom colony, and Affie was assassinated soon after while being pregnant.

"Masu never married since then. Your mother demanded to sleep with her just once to conceive you."

I frowned. To me, the whole affair sounded like a nightmare. First of all, two sisters loving the same man was awkward enough.

"Your father did not love your mother though. It was one-sided affection which your mother was fully aware of."

I sighed, I had to. Perhaps, I was digging too much; it was getting way too personal. I felt like I asked a question that I should have never asked. I decided to change the subject and ask another question.

"I assume that they eloped because their marriage was disapproved by the Bau, but then how did he ever become the Bau adviser?"

She beamed a grin at me. "A long story..." And she began.

She talked for two hours none stop. Her story started from Masu being a spy sent by the Dietrich. She would tell me how he met Affie and my mother. How they eloped and how Affie was assassinated by Kan Dietrich's mother.

At this point, I had to interfere.

"Wait a moment... Isn't Kan Dietrich..."

Sae gave me a nod. "Yes, Kan was Masu's master in the clan at that time."

"But Masu had the nickname of 'the servant of Mars', and he worked for Kan Dietrich in his last years."

"He got over his hatred many moons ago, kid. It's not always black and white," She said rather aggressively for some reason.

Still, it was hard to swallow. However, I started to understand Masu's character a little bit.

"You do resemble him a lot. In fact, you look exactly like when he was of your age." Sae snickered. "I could go for you now even."

I did not want to think that she meant she wanted to have sex with me. By the Nebula, no. While Sae looked cute on surface, she was a nearly one thousand year old person. Not to mention that I wasn't into pedo stuff.

I decided to move onto my next question.

"He was an ESP, wasn't he? How powerful wasn't he?"

Sae, for a moment, seemed to be confused by my question. "You searched for his records, didn't you? You would know his class. Why ask?"

"It's hard to tell how powerful an ESP is by just knowing his class. I did find out that he was class A though."

"Hah," She laughed weakly. "He wasn't class A. He was class S."

"But on the net, it said..."

"It's easy to fool the stupid ESP class determination tests, and I think he deliberately underclassed himself."

Understandable, I figured.

"Why do you think he was powerful?" She asked me innocently.

And I answered her right away with what I knew. "Abilities of ESP are born from the beginning. It's just a matter of developing the talents."

"No!" She screamed out loud. "It's pain! Suffering! And darkness!"

Her sharp, high pitched, scream ringed my ears painfully. It was no ordinary scream.

“Because he had a sorrowful life, and because he fell deeply into despair but eventually managed to drag himself out of it. His abilities were normal at best, but overcoming and embracing his sorrow and darkness sharpened his abilities beyond his natural limit.”

Before I had a chance to speak, she continued.

“Mark my words. It’s not strength of ESP power that counts. It’s purity of ESP power that counts.”

I wasn’t sure what exactly she was talking about. I decided to move onto my next question therefore.

“Does my aunt have a grave here?”

“Oh, right-” She seemed to have realized something. “Yep, it’s not even far from your mom’s.”

And it wasn’t really far. In fact, her grave was only two graves apart of my mother’s.

“Here.”

Sae proudly stood by a grave stone that said “Anderson”. The grave didn’t stand out at all.

“Anderson’s grave?” I questioned.

“This is Affie’s grave. We just couldn’t put a real grave stone for her because we feared that the Bau might do something to her grave.”

When I was told how Masu's wife was assassinated all, it didn't quite strike me how serious the whole situation was. It did sound bad, sure, but I knew how capable the staffs were here. But, seeing they had to disguise even her grave stone, I came to realize that they were opposed by strong enemies.

I could also sense that the staffs at the colony must have cared for them a lot, seeing they went all the troubles to protect even the grave.

She stood rather proudly by the grave stone for reasons unknown to me and I noticed that she was gazing into air.

"The guy never came to visit this grave. Not once. Not a damn visit. He wasn't even here when she was being buried. He probably never knew where her grave was."

I paid my respect toward the grave.

"She was few years younger than your mom. They weren't a twin but they looked like a twin, well almost."

Looking suddenly confused, she blurted, "Hang on. Maybe, she was older."

Looking more confused, she eventually came to a laugh and told me. "Well, they weren't the same age."

I asked, "Do you think it was a coincidence that my mother died two days later he died?"

"It's never a coincidence, boy. Do you know Detur, the poet?"

"You mean Betur, right?"

"Ah, yes, Betur."

“I’ve heard of him. I never understood why his poems are popular among certain people.”

Betur was a somewhat known poet living in somewhere in Andromeda cluster. I believed he resided on Creg’s. His most famous poem was titled “Wills”.

Sae cited, “

When wishes are consist of wills,

When hopes are consist of wills,

When they think of the very same thing,

When wills gather,

They can make a change .”

And then she added, “And that would be the cause of your mom’s death.”

“Pardon? What does that have to do with my mother’s death?”

“She willed death, if that makes any sense to you.”

I was in thoughts for a sec. I sort of understood the basic concept although I failed to understand the logic behind it.

“I know what you are thinkin’. Let’s just say you are too young to understand.”

I was inclined to agree for the moment. I wasn’t going to argue with a thousand year old ESP/Hyper-hyman hybrid about wisdom.

“So, kiddo, wanna fuck me?”

Sae was very well known to be unpredictable. I was fully aware, but I never saw that coming.

“Ah?” was all I could say after she said that.

“Come on, man. I never got to fuck Masu. He was like a guy with a chastity belt, so I will go after you instead. The same genes, well almost.”

And I didn't think she was joking. And seeing I was clearly going to reject, she posed to attack me. “I am gonna have to kidnap you then. You are old enough to fuck a girl.”

If she did really mean that, there was no way I would be able to run away. I am talking about someone who can run at near the speed of light and can lift a whole cruiser on her own. As she approached me with a battle stance, I took steps back. When I feared the worst, she suddenly dropped her battle stance and turned her head back and yelled.

“Oh, geez, I got it, I hear you, you two!”

But there was no one.

Sighing, she placed her hands on waist and spoke to me with a frustrated face.

“Lucky for you, kiddo. Your mom and auntie would not let me do that.” Sighing deeply again, she muttered. “All good men are always taken.”

And pleasantly whistling, she turned away from me and walked out during which she patted my aunt's gravestone on her way out and casually said, "See you, Anderson."

Was that grave really my aunt's or was it really for someone named "Anderson"?

Alas, I wasn't going to risk anything by asking.

Fin