

This story was the first one as Two Clusters.

I had numerous stories prior this but they weren't officially under Two Clusters.

[Shattered union arc] [1] [Revolts] [9599]

Rev 3.1 (Last modified on Oct 19, 2019)

Year 9599, November 26.

A lone figure was in his office, standing behind a glass wall, he was staring somewhere down on the ground where there was a crowd.

His appearance was distinctive. He wore a deep dark red robe with silvery edge; he had a loose shoulder length hair with light brown eyes.

His pale skin combined with his slender physique, and a rather moderate height of 169cm, he looked rather feminine.

All of a sudden, a man rushed into the office. He was completely out of his breath after he dashed in without even knocking.

“Where are your manners? Knock first,” the man in the red robe said quietly.

“Sir...! This ... this is urgent!”

Turning around slowly, the man in the red robe patiently waited for him to continue.

“The president... the president..., he’s been assassinated!”

The sixth president Mirren of United Solar system Federation was confirmed dead along his vessel near planet Venus. He was presumed assassinated due to a fact that his ship was found destroyed. It was deep within the heart of United Sol. Therefore, those who were informed of the shocking news were clueless as to how it could have occurred.

Only few select top officials at the Ark were aware of this news. Cecil Klisis, the president’s top adviser was one of them. Cecil was basically the second in command and it was presumed that he would make the announcement and eventually take over former President Mirren’s seat.

However, to make the matter worse, the Ark was already chaotic enough due to a recent revolt by the Dietrich clan. They have been suppressing ENN (Earth News Network) but it was only a matter of time the news would get out that the revolt had taken over Mars.

Gair and Kisia entered the office shortly later. Gair was Cecil’s stepson and Kisia was a member of the Hammers, a group of people Cecil handpicked to serve him and him only.

“Sir, we’ve answered your call,” With slight bowing, Gair stated.

Cecil was at his desk. Crossing his fingers, he quietly informed them of Mirren's assassination.

"Oh, my word..." Gair uttered out, looking clearly shocked. Kisia also seemed mildly shocked.

"Things can't get worse now..., can it, sir?" Kisia responded with a careful tone.

Cecil beamed a cryptic grin. "I am hoping it'd get worse."

Inside of a busy studio, cameras were directed at a female anchor.

"This is live news straight from ENN main studio. We have just been informed that the president's first officer, Cecil Klisis, has visited our main headquarter and is headed to this station for an emergency announcement."

Regardless what others might say, it was a refreshing event for everyone as Cecil Klisis was not known to make announced public appearances. Therefore, the staffs at ENN was excited in a sense.

The anchor rolled her eyes down at a monitor on the desk. It displayed what she needed to know in real time.

"In the meantime," She continued, "it has been confirmed that Mars has been taken over by rebel forces as of today. We will be talking about this issue with Cecil soon enough."

She referred them as “rebel forces” but everyone knew it was the Dietrich. It wasn't atomic science because they would be the only ones capable of doing so on Mars.

And they would be the only ones on the planet who had the right to revolt.

Just as she finished her statement, a staff member outside of camera view gave her a hand signal.

The staffs in the studio stepped aside, making a clear path. When the path was clear, two people walked in. Cecil walked in and Gair followed right behind him.

Cecil was wearing a robe, colored in deep crimson color with silver linings.

The studio suddenly quieted down as the people in the station watched Cecil and Gair walking down to the studio. Everyone knew Cecil but only few knew Gair. In fact, it was his first, debut, public appearance.

As he walked over to sit beside the announcer, she stood up and bowed to Cecil at once. Light was soon adjusted since Cecil's skin was reflecting too much light.

The anchor cleared her throat as they sat down. "Welcome to ENN live news, Mr. Klisis," She greeted as cheerfully as she could. Cecil's stone-cold face didn't help the act however.

Cecil nodded slightly and said, "Hello, citizens."

"This is such an unexpected visit. May I assume that it is due to Mars being taken over by the rebels?"

Gair was standing right behind Cecil, guarding him. The camera men had to adjust their focus so that people won't see Gair well. They wanted to focus on Cecil Klisis and the anchor which was easier to be said than done since Gair was right behind him.

Cecil replied indifferently, "Oh, yes and we have a very sad announcement we have to make."

"Which is?"

"Approximately six hours ago, we confirmed that President Mirren was assassinated."

Although it was indeed serious news, he let it out as indifferent as possible; his voice was void of any emotions. He was so calm that some people thought he was joking.

The studio, for few seconds, were dead quiet and then it progressively became noisy. It was noisy enough that people could hear "What?", "Oh, my God" and such words.

Cecil added, "Currently a salvage team is collecting pieces of the president's personal spaceship. The pieces were found approximately three hours from Venus. We are hoping to locate the black box."

"Is it related to the rebel force on Mars?" The anchor asked. She was no longer looking constantly down. She simply asked what she wanted to ask.

"No, I do not believe so. However, there is not enough information to confirm anything for now. It could be just a coincidence. If not, they will pay for what they have done."

Because of the sudden news, the announcer didn't know what to ask next. The plans they had were just dumped out of the window.

Cecil seemed to have noticed what's going on in her mind. Having seen no point of being with her any longer, he stood up to leave.

Everyone at the studio believed that Cecil visited to make an announcement regarding Mars rebellion. When it was not so, the staffs at the studio was completely lost in what they had to do for the moment.

"Gair, escort me," Cecil whispered to him.

While they were walking out of the studio, people surrounded them, asking questions. Some were even demanding explanations. They were completely surrounded by people and were unable to proceed to outside of the studio.

Feeling extremely insecure, Gair asked Cecil.

"Sir, with your permission, I'd like to teleport us away."

"Approved," As Cecil spoke, they faded out in front of the people.

Time, A.D. 9599 November 26, the sixth President of United Sol, Mirren, was assassinated. It was confirmed by the remains of the president's personal ship. It was not yet known how or what had destroyed the vessel.

There was an immediate need for someone to fill the seat as the temporary president. By the laws, the president's first adviser, as well as first officer, Cecil Klisis, had been assigned to take over until a new president would be elected.

No one had objections as Cecil had been doing very well with the president. Granted, he and Mirren had a breakup previously but that was just a past as far as everyone was concerned. However, Cecil had yet announced his intention to be the temporary president. As it stood at the moment, he was still the president's first adviser.

A group of top officials were gathered in a conference room at the Ark. The officials were consisted of admirals and administrator-class captains. In short, they were currently in charge of large parts of United Sol. The only exception was Gair who held no official rank. But as a stepson of Cecil, he was there on his behalf.

"It has been confirmed. The capital city of Mars, Kamtaka, has been conquered and small military installations are surrendering to the rebellion. Just a few minutes ago, the rebel leader Kan Dietrich made a demand to us," Gair declared stoically.

He then pulled out of a disk from a sealed envelope.

"Eh, the demand is as following." He inserted the data disk into a display device which was attached to an edge of the table. As he inserted the disk, a holographic image of a man rose above the device.

It was the image of Kan himself. It began to speak.

"Ahem, a few hours ago, we conquered Kamtaka. Smaller installations are beginning to surrender as we speak. We, here, have many of your agents in our hands. We are planning to execute them but there is one way to save...."

Jack smashed the table. "That bastard! Execution? What does he think they are? Brainless pirates?"

He was an admiral of the United Sol. To be exact, he was in charge of a defensive fleet and was in charge of patrolling the outer sol system which included Saturn, Uranus outpost, and lastly Pluto.

Kan's speech continued, "In order to save your people, I am demanding that you release an ESP, Masu. He is being held in a special purpose ESP prison on Earth.

I am giving you seven hours to decide. If I do not hear anything positive from you within that period, we will begin executing seven hundred agents."

The image then faded; it was the end of message.

"What should we do? We could just attack and get Mars back." Jack voiced his opinion loudly. "It shouldn't be hard," He assured.

"Please, calm down," Gair said.

Jack glared at Gair's face for a moment. "Fine," He responded with a big sigh.

"We should wait until Mr. Klisis arrives. He should be here at any moment." Gair spoke very calmly. The others quieted down as a result.

The silence was soon broken by a person entering the conference room.

"Oh, it's you, Rommel." Jack muttered. Although he wasn't practically a hot tempered person, he was having a hard time waiting for Cecil to take command of this situation.

Rommel was the current administrator of the Jupiter assault station, meaning he was in total command of the Jupiter and its surrounding facilities.

"Welcome, Admiral Rommel." Gair greeted him formally.

Rommel didn't seem to be interested in greeting, however, and he spoke straight away.

"I have a fleet of three thousand battleships in Earth's orbit, ready for the takeover of Mars right now."

Gair frowned slightly as he heard it.

Rommel continued regardless, "I believe Admiral Jack also has the same idea that I do." Jack gave him an approval with his thumb up.

Not really amused by the situation, Gair rolled his eyes with a slight shrug. He was indeed told by Cecil that they'd act such.

Quirino who has been silent and passive thus far made a decisive comment. "I agree with Rommel and Jack as well," He quickly added, "We must be decisive."

"If you say so, I would have to agree," Tibor spoke up also. Quirino and Tibor were the joint administrators of Moon defense military station. They weren't exactly admirals but they did have few thousand ships. They were a part of Earth defense fleet under direct command of the President however, meaning unlike Jack and Rommel, they were unable to act on their own.

Kalas nodded at the others as the sudden change of flow in the conference room.

The voices were getting progressively louder in the conference room. Gair attempted to cool them down but it appeared to be futile.

"And on whose authority are you planning to do this with?" Cecil asked as he entered the conference room.

He had a file of documents on his left hand. Everyone quieted suddenly as if they had just realized that they had completely forgotten about his existence for a brief moment.

He walked further into the room, standing in front of them. He nodded at Gair to signal him.

"Everyone, calm down please" Gair tried once again to get the control over the group. Then everyone including Cecil sat down. The room was quiet for a short moment. He displayed the message from Kan again. Everyone listened the message quietly.

Right after the message ended. Cecil rose his tone, not giving a chance for anyone to speak up.

"Any of admirals here know who we are dealing with? Do we know our enemy?"

The room was quiet until Rommel answered.

"We are dealing with the rebel leader, Kan Dietrich."

"Do we have any information regarding his forces? And his relationship with other forces?" asked Cecil.

"He probably has less than a few hundred cruisers, at best. I am telling you, it won't be hard to take Mars back if we strike now." Rommel raised his tone and pressed.

"If so, answer my question. Why didn't the Mars defense system even send a single distress call?"

"They... probably disabled the system." Rommel's tone dropped slightly since he had no clear answer to it.

"A planet's defense system cannot be taken down that easily; the system had redundancies. However, it did not send any sort of signals to us. It could mean many things."

"What are you trying to say?" Tibor inquired.

"I am saying we don't know anything about our enemy. Attacking them without proper information could cause a lot of damage on our side, or we could even lose the battle."

"That is not possible and won't happen," Jack assured, "We may take some unexpected damages, but we'd never lose. I swear my life on that."

Other admirals and officers were inclined to agree with Jack although none of them voiced their agreement.

"Even if they had a far greater ground force than Mars had, they couldn't possibly have enough space vessels for planetary defense," Rommel added.

Cecil took the document he had with him and handed it over to Gair.

"According to this information... Gair, explain to them."

He began to read the document. "There", Gair cleared his throat and continued.

"There are approximately five hundred cruisers..."

Jack smashed the table again and laughed out loudly. "See? I told you, there are not enough vessels to defend...." He looked shell-shocked right after.

Gair continued. "However, Mars may have up to extra two thousands of ships that have offensive ability if they modify their mining ships slightly. It should take no more than one day to modify all mining ships on Mars with the amount of engineer crews they have."

Rommel narrowed his eyes and scratched his chin. He said as if talking to himself, "That means they can have two-third of ships we have ready, and considering the rebel force is in a defensive position, the chances for us to win the takeover is... hmm."

"I can't goddamn believe this!" Jack pushed his chair out and rushed out of the room.

"Excuse us," Rommel followed him.

"You are all dismissed. We will have another meeting soon. I suggest you stay on either Earth or Moon for now," Cecil informed those who were still in the conference room. They couldn't help but feel that the meeting ended absurdly. No resolution was made. Nothing was discussed.

"Gair," Cecil whispered.

Gair followed Cecil after he left the room.

While Cecil and Gair were walking in a passageway, Gair asked for permission to speak.

"Sir, may I?"

Cecil nodded slightly.

"I think you should take on the position of president. You are still the first advisor of the former president. You can't really strongly command the admirals with your current position."

"I am fully aware of that," Cecil answered indifferently.

"Sir?" Gair's tone was as if he was demanding for an explanation.

"My position is not important right now. Gair, I need you to go to Venus."

"Venus, sir? Now?"

"Head to Venus, confront Illy O'Ren and ask her for a fleet. Tell her you need as many ships as she can provide."

"Yes, sir."

"After you obtain a fleet, head to Mars border. You will know what to do from there."

"Understood, sir." Then Gair faded into shadows.

Cecil was left alone and continued walking again as if nothing happened.

In the meantime,

Rommel stopped Jack, who was headed to his ship.

"Where are you going?!" Rommel demanded.

"I am going to call my fleet. You are free to join me," Jack answered without turning his face to Rommel. He kept on walking.

"Stop, just stop a second. You are disobeying a direct order," Rommel couldn't stop Jack from walking. Instead, he was walking with him to keep up.

"Whose order? After all, he is only the president's first officer. I am not disobeying my direct superior officer. Even if I get punished for disobeying the first officer's order, the punishment wouldn't be dreadful."

Rommel reconsidered and groaned. "Hmm, your idea seems right. Cecil is only the first officer of president and the president is dead. We, the admirals, belong to no one now."

He reconsidered deeply again, feeling that something was not right with Jack's thoughts. He knew Cecil wouldn't be that foolish. But he just couldn't figure out the Cecil' intention. If it were Rommel, he would have stopped Jack by force or whatever was necessary or at least take the temporary position as the president. Cecil did none of either.

They were almost at the entrance to Jack's command ship.

"I think you can do this. I just had some thoughts regarding this. There aren't any laws that could be used against us in this situation," Rommel told Jack firmly.

Jack smiled. "Are you coming with me then?"

"Where are you going?"

"To Mars, I am going to bombard Mars."

"What about the hundreds of millions of citizens on Mars?!"

"I am not going to bomb the whole planet, just going to bomb the floating castle."

Jack and Rommel were at the end of a tunnel. There was a metal door with a panel on it.

Jack pushed a green button on the panel and spoke. "This is the captain."

After a short while, a voice sounded from the panel. "Roger."

The door slid open sideways. "Are you coming?" Jack was about to enter his ship.

Rommel hesitated for good reasons. He could ruin his entire career by following Jack. He felt Cecil wouldn't be foolish enough to let things go out of control like this. He felt something was clearly amiss. He just couldn't figure out what.

"Are you coming?" Jack repeated.

"... Fine, let's do this."

“Gair! It’s been many years!”

Illy O’ren, the administrator of Venus, gave him a warm hug on Venus outpost. She had long, slightly curly, blond hair, deep blue eyes, and was fairly glamorous. She was wearing an elegant, but not revealing, dark green dress.

Despite of being the administrator of Venus and having a bigger fleet than everyone else in Sol, she wasn’t invited to the conference meeting set up by Cecil. One of reasons was the suspicion being placed upon her for Mirren’s assassination which she didn’t mind, for she knew what Cecil was up to.

“I am terribly sorry about your late husband, Mrs. O’ren.”

Gair was talking about Mirren.

“Hah!” She laughed out loud. “I don’t care about him!”

They were separated for many years. Still, it wasn’t a reaction he expected. She really didn’t seem to be taken back by his death.

“By the way, Gair, you being here means Cecil wants a fleet.”

Narrowing eyes and twisting his head, Gair had to ask, “You knew?”

“I’ve known Cecil for what, hundreds of years. I know what’s going through his head right now.”

“Would you mind telling me what is going through his head, ma’am? Because I don’t know what he wants to accomplish. He should have become the temporary president.”

“Why would he want to become the President of United Sol?”

“Why not?”

“He resents United Sol. He’d never become the President no matter what.”

Gair was silent for a moment, he had a lot of thoughts in his head. What came up top of his head was ...

“Is he trying to destroy United Sol?”

Illy took Gair’s hand and pointed him to the direction of Earth. Venus outpost had an amazing space view. They were in the reception floor and the entire floor had 1600mm reinforced glass walls. Giving visitors of the floor feel like they were in space itself.

“Do you know what Cecil calls Earth?”

“No, ma’am.”

“He calls Earth ‘the mother whore’.”

He narrowed his eyes. He had a hard time believing Cecil actually said so although he felt Illy would have no reason to lie.

She continued, “I am calling Nikki Sweetheart. She has the fleet. You are going with her to Mars.”

A high-tech research facility stood alone in middle of nowhere on a desert.

But it was a prison, specially developed to confine criminal ESPs. The prison didn't really have the atmosphere of a prison however.

There was a shuttle landing on the top of building.

Two hyper human guards approached and saluted deeply to the person who was walking down from the shuttle.

It was Cecil.

"Sir!" The two guards saluted Cecil.

"Mm," Cecil nodded at them slightly.

The two guards quickly escorted Cecil to their command center. There was a wealthy looking guard who appeared to be the commander of the facility.

"Are you in charge?" asked Cecil.

"Yes, sir. What can I do for you?"

"I am looking for a prisoner. His name is Masu."

The warden quickly searched through the main computer.

"His prisoner number is two-zero-nine. Would you like me to summon him to a sealed room?"

"No, I will go confront him personally."

The warden frowned. "I cannot do that, sir. You must bring at least five guards with you. He's classified as extremely dangerous."

"No need. I am going to release him."

The warden seemed confused. "Release him? We need a formal warrant for release of any prisoners here, sir."

Seemingly unfazed by the statement, Cecil stated, "This is a direct order."

The warden slowly stood up from his chair and had his hand on a baton on his belt. "With all due respect, sir, it does not matter who you are. We need a warrant to release a prisoner, sir."

The two guards behind Cecil also posed to arm themselves.

"Time to die then."

"Guards! Fire!"

Before they could take any action, however, their heads were rolling on the ground. It took good two seconds before blood would start to spatter out.

Cecil casually walked pasted the warden's body and entered few commands at a console and proceeded deeper into the facility.

Meanwhile, back at Venus outpost.

A fleet of two thousand had just arrived at the outpost and they were going through a quick system diagnosis.

"Captain, half of the fleet has been checked and passed. ETA is five minutes." A helm officer reported.

"Get it done as fast as we can." Nikki Sweetheart stated in her captain's chair as she greeted Gair who had just entered her bridge. "Long time no see, Gair."

"Yes, Miss. Sweetheart. I think it's been"

She finished his sentence for him. "Six years."

"Yes."

"Where are the others? There are seven more of you guys, no?"

She was talking about the Hammers.

"I don't know actually."

He was speaking truth. He actually didn't know where the other members were.

He did send a message to them to gather at Venus however.

"Captain, I am receiving a signal from the President," An officer informed. "Should I play it here?"

While Illy O'ren's official rank was "an administrator" of Venus chosen by the late President Mirren, Venusians referred her as the President of the planet.

"Of course."

The main screen flashed and an image of Illy gradually appeared.

"Nikki, you are heading to Mars now."

"Are we taking Mars over?"

Illy shook her head firmly in response. "No, we will be assisting the Martians."

Nikki, without being seemingly confused, replied right away.

"Are we revolting, ma'am?"

Gair's eyes widened. "Revolt"..., yes, why hadn't he thought of that, he wondered.

A dead president, a decentralized government, admirals running loose...

He realized Cecil's intention.

"Yes, we are," Illy O'ren declared, "Venus is declaring independence."

The bridge crews were at loss of words but Nikki seemed to have no problem.

"Understood, ma'am. We are going to Mars and assist our new ally."

Beaming a smile at Nikki, Illy responded. "You've got it right."

In the meantime,

Gair and the others were not the only ones who felt something was going on.

People in ENN, Earth News Network, had been trying to contact the Ark for some time.

However, the Ark was locked down completely and had been ignoring any contacts. The government intelligence had been taken down also.

"Something fishy is going on up there," Giovanni muttered. "The admirals are nowhere to be found. The president is dead. The president's first officer is also nowhere to be found. The government is completely locked down. It feels like peace before storm."

Yagi coughed to gain attention. "I have been trying to track Cecil. He was in the government building, the Ark, a few hours ago. But I think he left the building. My men saw a shuttle leaving the building."

"That's a guess. It doesn't help much," Giovanni tried to make a call somewhere. He tapped on a panel on his desk.

"Sir, I've got big news," A reporter rushed into the room. "You were right. Something is definitely going on."

"What is it?" Giovanni dropped the call.

"Here, read this," The reporter handed over a paper to Giovanni.

Giovanni began to read the paper. Yagi seemed very curious about it.

"Nikki Sweetheart?" Giovanni laughed slightly. "That name is too cute to be a commander."

"What going on?" Yagi wanted the paper. But Giovanni moved it out of his reach and continued reading.

"A fleet left Venus Outpost about an hour ago. The fleet captain is Nikki Sweetheart. They seem to be heading to Mars."

"Ah, I have heard of her. She is the fleet commander of Venus and Illy O'ren's finest captain." Yagi took the paper off Giovanni finally.

"No kidding? The best?" Giovanni was surprised. "Why haven't I heard of her then?"

Yagi ignored Giovanni's question and the reporter asked, "So, what are we going to do?"

Giovanni and Yagi suddenly remembered she was there.

"Um, did I say something wrong?"

"Ah, what's your name?" Giovanni asked the reporter.

"My name is Edith."

Edith was a tall slender woman who could easily be mistaken for a feminine guy due to the way she dressed and lack of volume on her chest area. She was a fairly new employee who had been doing chores for more senior editors and reporters. Her current direct superior officer was Yagi who had ordered her to sniff around the Ark.

"Ok, Edith. I am assigning two ENN vessels to collect news material. Yagi and Edith, you two take the first ship.

I will assign others to take the second ship."

"Wouldn't it be dangerous?" Edith looked concerned. Yagi placed his hand on Edith's shoulder as he passed by.

"Danger is always with this job. You just have to learn how to enjoy these dangers. Besides, this is an opportunity you shouldn't miss."

"Umm, okay," Edith answered doubtfully but had no further objections.

"Hey, get to work," Giovanni resumed making the call while Yagi and Edith left the room.

Giovanni was the current CEO of ENN. He was also infamous for being a womanizer who enjoyed "conquering" women and abandon them soon after. Despite of his personal issues, he had been a fine CEO and no one could throw

him off his CEO position. He and Yagi went way back and were good friends to each other.

Yagi and Edith were in a large hall where a lot of reporters and announcers were preparing materials for shows and news. It was a chaotic place where one could easily get lost if he didn't pay attention.

Yagi headed for his desk and began to pack stuff. He noticed Edith was standing behind him and waiting.

"Hey, aren't you going to pack?"

"Actually, this is my first outdoor job. I am not quite sure what to pack..."

He kept on packing. "A gun and a few energy shells for the gun, scanners, papers and pens, recorders, a simple communication device and so on."

"A gun?" Edith looked concerned again.

"Yeah, a gun. We always live with danger. We have to protect ourselves. It's for our own safety."

"Ok, thanks." She headed to her desk at once, which was quite far from Yagi's desk. Still, she somehow packed faster than Yagi and he was at Yagi's desk before he finished packing.

Having nothing to do, she happened to look at the papers on Yagi's desk.

"These documents are all about Cecil," She said to herself as she looked over.

"Yeah, I have been tracking and collecting Cecil' information although I haven't been able to find much useful information." Having said so, he finally finished packing.

She picked up a few of the documents and read them by one by one.

"Hey, we've got to go." Yagi was leaving the hall.

"Ah ok, wait up," She placed the documents back to where they were and followed him out of the busy hall.

As they reached top floor, they noticed a few space frigates docked right below roof. The roof was acting as a sealing door.

"Wow." Edith was in awe. "My first time seeing a space ship so close."

"These are frigates. ENN purchased few from the navy and extensively modified it," Yagi explained as they walked toward the vessels. He knew the code and they went into one of the ships.

The air inside of the ship felt stagnant. It was partially due to a fact that life support hadn't been turned on yet. Thus, there had been no air circulation for God knows how long. Yagi went to the bridge directly and pressed a button on a console to boot the ship's mainframe.

"Are we, two, going the only crew?" Edith looked around the bridge. No one was there.

"For the bridge, yes. We are the only crew. There will be like ten more people in engine room and other places pretty soon."

"I thought operating a ship would require much more knowledge," Edith sat back in the captain's chair and span the chair around.

"Well, it is but since the ship was modded for public use, everything has been automated. Most of commands are run by voice. All we do here is activate the main computer." He dropped his pack right next to the chair. "Stop spinning the damn chair," He warned.

When booting reached a certain stage, a voice sounded in the bridge.

"Authorization required," A computerized voice demanded.

"Yagi Goodman," He spoke up.

"Voice accepted. Scanning your body for DNA match. DNA scan passed. Accessing the control tower for permission update..."

A few seconds later.

"Permission approved. Welcome Captain Yagi." And the computer continued,

"Running system diagnostic..."

"Diagnostic completed."

"Command required."

He was at a comm. station in the bridge. It was located slightly further ahead from the captain's throne.

"Bridge to engine room. Are you guys ready to go?"

A few seconds later a voice responded from a comm. panel. "Yes, we are."

"Computer, open a channel to the ENN flight control."

"Channel opened."

"This is Yagi Goodman. I request a clearance for undocking."

The roof was opening as Yagi spoke.

"Hey, Edith, this may get a little shaky. So hold tight."

She nodded as she held tight.

"Computer, activate engine. Get us to Earth orbit."

"Proceeding..."

The vessel took off from the dock and flew up high...

The violent shaking didn't last long and Edith felt very light, meaning zero gravity.

"Arrived at the destination," The main computer informed Yagi and Edith.

"Activating artificial gravity...", the computer informed.

Their floating clothes quickly dropped downwards and their boots attached themselves to the floor.

[Refer to Gravity lore file]

"Command required."

Edith seemed nervous about the artificial gravity; it was her first time experiencing after all.

"It's going to be okay. You will adapt," Yagi told her.

"Computer, head to Venus outpost please," He commanded. "ETA?"

"Six days."

Edith stood up from the chair. "What do we do now?" She walked around to get a feel on the artificial gravity. She was waking awkwardly for the time being.

"Well, do whatever you want until we get to the outpost. There are few empty rooms. Pick one and take a nap or something."

Again, meanwhile...

There were two individuals sitting in a very small room. It was dark. It was wet. And it was gloomy. There was a line of sunshine coming through a small hole, a window actually, at top of a wall.

The two people were sitting, facing each other, and between them, there was a bottle of wine.

One of them was Cecil. And the other was Masu. Masu was also wearing a robe like Cecil but unlike Cecil's refined robe, Masu's brown robe was worn out and ragged. A monk's robe was the perfect description.

"What a place to drink." Masu on the left muttered although he was smiling.

Cecil replied, "This was the only place I could think of, the only place where no one could interfere."

They didn't have a cup or anything. Instead, they drank the bottle itself in turns.

"I guess there is good news for me since you have come to visit me," Masu on the left placed his left shoulder against a wet wall. "And I smell the odor of blood and flesh."

Cecil didn't respond. Instead, he took his turn and drank the bottle a bit.

Masu asked despite having a good idea what was happening, "So what brought you here?"

"Have I said that the world was getting boring?"

"Yeah, you did. Quite frankly, I wouldn't blame you for feeling that the universe is boring after all you do whatever you want and even get away with it." He responded while vacantly staring at a dark ceiling. "Any news on Marat?"

Ignoring Masu's inquiry, Cecil changed the subject. "I came here to say goodbye. You will be released and be transported to Mars."

He seemed surprised and shocked at first but soon a warm smile surfaced on his face. "I guess that would mean the Dietrich was successful in revolting."

Cecil nodded.

Taking the wine bottle, Masu slowly stood up. "May I take this?"

"Of course."

"Is the way clear?"

"No one's alive in this facility. Not even prisoners."

Back at Venus outpost...

"Captain, two frigate class vessels detected on long range sensor," An officer reported.

"Hail them."

The officer attempted a contact. But the system returned a negative sound.

"It's out of range, Captain."

"What's their destination?"

"Appears to be Venus outpost, ma'am."

A tactical officer advised. "May I suggest that we launch a group of fighters to intercept the vessels?"

"No. That won't be necessary," Nikki shook her head. "Our orders are to go directly to Mars border."

"If you say so, Captain."

In the meantime, Gair was in Nikki's room AKA the captain's room. Since Gair wasn't an original member of the fleet, he had no designated quarter to stay in. There were guest quarters, but Gair was deemed too important of a guest to use

the guest's area where security was weaker. Therefore, Nikki let Gair use the captain's room which was located within the bridge.

While he was casually looking around the quarter, he noticed a group of pictures on a wall.

The first picture he faced seemed to have only Nikki in it. The background was a green mountain which was only available on Earth, meaning the picture was probably taken on Earth unless it was a digitally manipulated photo.

He passed the first picture and faced the second, which was about twenty centimeters to the left.

The second picture surprised him. The picture had two people in it. The background seemed to be a small garden. There was Cecil holding an energy blade in his left hand and Nikki was holding another energy blade against Cecil's blade. He, at the moment, couldn't believe his own eyes. Cecil had a grin, it was faint but a clear grin. Gair himself had never seen Cecil smile during his entire life. His grin was rare. But he had to trust what he was seeing. He was indeed grinning. He also realized there were two people behind them watching them train.

It was far away so they weren't much noticeable but there was a brown table which appeared to be wooden with two people having some sort of drink, tea perhaps or even coffee.

He stepped closer for a better look. One of the people was Illy O'Ren, the current Venus President. He didn't recognize the other person. He moved his eyes off the picture and gazed into the air. He decided to proceed to the third picture eventually.

The third picture contained Nikki and Illy O'Ren, posed happily like a daughter and a mother.

Suddenly, the light turned dark and then emergency red lights came on.

He ran out of the room with haste.

"Captain, sensor is detecting two large fleets. They have not engaged yet," An officer reported.

Gair ran into the bridge. "Are we there?"

"We are close, sir," A tactical officer answered Gair.

"Open a channel to our ships," Nikki commanded.

"Channel opened."

"This is the commander. We've arrived at Mars. We are to assist the Martians. I repeat we are to assist the Martians"

While Nikki's fleet was getting closer, Jack's and Roon Dietrich's fleet were about to engage. Roon was Kan Dietrich's daughter.

From the look of it, Jack's fleet was well-equipped while Roon's fleet was not. It seemed that more than half of Roon's fleet was filled with modified mining ships. Roon's fleet was slightly larger, but it clearly showed that Jack's fleet would have upper hand if a battle broke out.

"Captain, Admiral Jack is hailing us," An officer reported.

"Put it through."

"Oh, I am glad the Venus administrator understands me here!" Jack's face appeared on the main screen on the bridge. And then he noticed Gair standing next to Nikki.

"What is Cecil' dog doing there?" He raised his tone in anger.

"I am here to assist with your arrest," Gair stepped forward a bit, confronting Admiral Jack.

One could clearly see how angry Jack was just by looking at how red his face was.

With his face turning deep red, Jack closed the channel.

Then Nikki's ship jolted.

"Captain, Admiral Jack's fleet is attacking."

The ship jolted harder this time.

"Open a channel to the Mars fleet. Get their commander online," Nikki commanded calmly.

"Channel opened. Their commander is online with us."

The main screen on the bridge flashed. Soon an image of a woman appeared on the screen.

"My name is Roon Dietrich. I am currently in charge of this fleet. What is your intention?"

Roon's voice filled the bridge. Her voice was pure and had a strange charm that one couldn't dislike.

Nikki looked at Gair who was next to her. "I think I will let you do this, Gair."

Nodding, he cleared his throat. "We am not here to fight you. As a matter of fact, I am here to assist you."

Roon shook her head. "It is very hard to trust you. While Admiral Jack's fleet is indeed attacking you, it could be an act to lower our guard."

"Masu has been released and is being transported to Mars right now." At that moment, he had to guess what he had in mind. It was a gamble, but he couldn't let Roon turn on Nikki's fleet. It would be a dreadful situation if she did.

"Are you telling the truth?" Roon asked with narrowed eyes. She was clearly suspicious.

"Yes, I am," Gair nodded and looked right into her eyes on the screen.

The screen went blank without a warning soon after. "They closed the channel."

"Captain, Mars fleet is engaging Jack's fleet."

Nikki let out of a relived breath. "Alright, the fight is on."

Admiral Jack's fleet was fifteen hundred. Nikki's fleet was two thousand. The Marian fleet was twelve hundred.

Even by just numbers only, Admiral Jack had a clear disadvantage. However, there was an aspect Gair was afraid of. It was that Admiral Rommel wasn't here yet. He

had a fleet of six thousand in addition to three thousand in Earth's orbit. It was big enough number to change the tide of the battle. It was unlikely that he'd bring his entire fleet but it was certain that he'd bring enough to alter the tide of the battle.

"Nikki, we need to push hard and finish this battle before Admiral Rommel arrives here."

"How big is his fleet?"

"As far as I know Jupiter assault station has a fleet of nine thousand. How much of that is he going to bring here is unknown, but I am sure his fleet will change the tide of this battle. I am not sure why he is not here yet however."

"I see your point. We need to be aggressive."

The front line of Nikki's fleet had already engaged Jack's fleet and a pretty deadly battle was going on.

There were already numerous debris of destroyed vessels. Fighters were maneuvering between ships like bees. The shock waves and explosions were filling in the space.

Unexpectedly, the modified mining ships were better than they appeared. Or maybe it was the experienced miners. Those modified mining vessels were fast and maneuverable. Jack's fleet was being seized gradually.

"Have we identified Admiral's vessel?" Nikki asked.

“No clear lock, ma’am, but given the formation of his fleet, we can loosely guess its location,” An officer responded.

“We need to finish him. Get us close to the location you think.”

“Aye, captain.”

A moment later, an officer almost shouted. “C, captain! I have a big fleet on long range sensor! There are too much interference to make out their numbers but they are closing in fast!”

Gair warned, “It must be Admiral Rommel’s fleet.”

Nikki crossed her arms and let out of a groan. “Mmm..., Retreat?”

No one answered her but Gair.

“We must stay on. We cannot betray Martians right now.”

“I don’t think we will stand a chance when that fleet joins the battle.”

“I am sure Cecil had something in my mind. He told me to come here.”

“He did, huh... I suppose we will stay here then.”

Mars fleet was obviously aware of the incoming fleet. Still, they showed no sign of retreat as well.

The unidentified fleet took 15 minutes to arrive but it felt like an eternity for Nikki, Gair, and Roon.

“Captain...!” An officer reported urgently. “The fleet signature reads JAS!”

JAS stood for Jupiter Assault Station

"Crap," Nikki blurted.

However.

"The fleet has opened a public channel, voice only, captain!"

It was Cecil's voice.

"I hereby officially declare that Admiral Jack has been relieved from his position and those who assist him will equally be charged."

Gair and Nikki faced each other and said the same thing. "What the hell?"

"However, considering the current situation, I suppose that Jack's fleet had no choice but to obey him.

Considering that, I have a proposition for you. Surrender and your charges will be dismissed and I assure you that you will be back to your work within one week. Seize fire and take your hands off your stations. Then I shall spare your future and your families."

Following the message, Jack's fleet began to cease firing gradually and some of vessels were even breaking away from Jack's fleet.

"Captain, Jack's fleet is dissolving. Ships from his fleet are surrendering."

However, a lone ship was actively moving toward Nikki's fleet.

"A ship is approaching here fast. Scanning the ship now.... It's Admiral Jack's ship!"

Jack's ship approached Nikki's swiftly and started to focus fire. Nikki's ship along with other ships around her attempted to fight off Jack. Jack's ship was going down but wasn't fast enough.

"God damn, that's one tough ship," Nikki uttered as she hung onto her captain's chair. Gair himself was leaning to a wall to keep his balance.

"Admiral Jack's ship's taking direct damage but it's holding on strongly, Captain!"

"Hang in there. It is only a matter of time before his ship crumbles!" Nikki exclaimed with a grunt.

Naturally, Jack's ship was going down. However, at one point, a close dog fight occurred between his and hers.

Their ships were maneuvering in very tight circles, firing at each other with all the weapons they had. Because they were so close to each other, nearby ships ceased firing in fear of friendly fire.

Several explosions occurred on the bridge.

"Captain, our fleet is reporting that they can't attack Admiral Jack in fear of friendly fire!"

Their ships came very close to colliding numerous times.

"Woah, woah- woah!" A bridge crew screamed.

"I think we are gonna collide!" Another crew shouted.

"Brace for impact!" Nikki bellowed as everything turned upside down.

Bow of Jack's ship collided into middle of Nikki's ship. Jack's ship went through Nikki's ship, literally breaking her ship into two pieces. As bow of Jack's ship was crashed and exploded, his ship lost balance and collided with the disjointed stern of Nikki's vessel.

"Shit, give me a damage report!" Nikki shouted while trying to get hold of herself in her chair.

"I've lost contact to the engine room! I can't contact anyone!" A bridge crew shouted back. The bridge was a mess with explosions occurring here and there.

Gair shouted, "What the hell happened?! Can you get the attitude system back online?"

A crew bellowed, "Negative! I just lost control of over half of thrusters!"

Then several larger explosions occurred in the bridge.

"Captain, the primary system is going down. I am switching to a backup system!"

"Can I at least have a status on ACM?!" Nikki demanded. "And put that fire out!"

"Negative, captain! We lost connection to the whole deck, I believe!"

Few able crews rushed to put down the fire with fire extinguishers.

Meanwhile, on the bridge of Jack's ship.

No one was standing. Most of its bridge crews appeared to be dead either by explosions or by fire. Normal light was completely out and only emergency red light was on.

Admiral Jack was collapsed at feet of his captain's chair. Several metal sticks were pierced into Jack's abdomen from back. Amid the chaos, someone appeared on the bridge out of nowhere. It was teleportation.

It was Cecil. He walked closer to Jack, who was dying slowly.

"Who's there...?" Jack spoke with a heavy breath. He appeared to be in great pain. Cecil stood at his feet, gazing down at Jack.

"You.... hah... ha...," He tried to say something but his laugh covered it.

Cecil said nothing in return.

"You are too cruel. Too cruel, indeed...," He muttered hopelessly. He coughed out a chunk of dark reddish blood. He was poisoned by A.C.M. It was probably the metal sticks with traces of A.C.M. that poisoned him.

After a moment of silence, he spoke, "Or maybe you didn't know which I am doubtful of. Did you send Nikki here intentionally?"

Cecil said nothing but only stared down at him.

"Answer me... for fuck's sake."

Cecil opened his mouth at last.

"It was one hundred twenty-five years ago. An explosion occurred at the Earth special purpose Hyper human school."

He continued on after making a pause, watching Jack blinking few times in shock.

"We rescued several young students from the building, your daughter was among them. Your daughter had a severe brain damage. As matter of a fact, eighty percent of her brain was taken out. There was no way that she could live, even with the medical technology we had."

Jack listened quietly, coughing blood on occasion.

"Your daughter was considered to be dead. Illy O'ren took her body to Venus. She then asked me to use my powers to restore her lost brain. And I did."

For some reasons, Jack's eyes became teary. Blood was dropping from his eyes instead of tears however.

"Illy O'ren named her Nikki Sweetheart and she raised her. And I taught her fighting skills and tactics as a captain."

Cecil made a pause again and continued.

"Nikki does not recognize you. Most likely, she cannot remember who you are or who you were. Her original memories are all gone."

"Let me.. ask you.. just one thing," He stammered in a labored breath.

Cecil answered promptly, "Go ahead."

"Would... you.. would you have been able to restore her memories as well... if someone requested at the moment?"

Cecil answered while gazing right into Jack's eyes.

"I may be a powerful ESP but there is one area I am lacking. It is healing. I did not exactly heal your daughter's brain. I simply reversed time on her brain. Therefore, her original memories were intact at the time. I was forced to erase it for her to start anew."

His face was turning into black rapidly. He was dying ... fast.

Cecil continued, "She may be able to recall some of her memories if given enough time but recovering her full memory won't be possible. Being able to recall that you are her biological father is a possibility."

Jack coughed hard and this time he didn't just cough blood. He threw out blood. Panting heavily, he pressed very hard to speak.

"I was ... informed that she was killed in the explosion. However, sometime later, Illy O'ren contacted me and told me that ... she had my daughter. She also told me that she had no past memories and therefore a new person..."

"Did you believe her?"

"She had ... no reason to lie, didn't she?"

"Indeed."

"... I did request to see my daughter ... and she did allow me to watch her from a distance..., apparently training with you... Fucking hell..."

Jack closed his eyes. Bloody tears would continue to drop from his closed eyes. He took his energy blade off his waist. There was blood all over the handle of the blade.

"Keep this blade for me... and give it to her one day..."

As Cecil accepted the blade, Jack began to lose his consciousness.

"Damn you..., Cecil.... Fuck... you..."

Jack stopped breathing, dropping his head, remaining bloody tears from his closed eyelids continued to drop.

Several days passed. Many things had been settled since the battle.

Nikki and her crew were rescued and transported to Venus. Jack was found dead on his bridge.

In a court. Cecil was sitting where a judge would be. There were eight additional people in the court which were the Hammers.

Soon after, two guards brought Admiral Rommel to the court. Rommel's both hands were seized. The guards left once Rommel was delivered.

Cecil looked down at Rommel and threw a greeting.

"Hello, Rommel."

Rommel seemed to be weakened. "What... are you going to do to me?" His voice was shaking. He was afraid of death.

"Good for you, I am not going to punish you." Cecil glared at Rommel. "These documents in front of me are the evidences that you assisted Jack."

He gulped even when Cecil said he wasn't going to be punished.

"I am going to delete these evidence under one condition."

He hesitated a bit but soon realized he had no choice. He slowly nodded at Cecil.

"Swear alliance to me. No one will know about this alliance but you and me."

Rommel was surprised and looked around. There were eight people in the court.

"Don't worry about them. They are the Hammers under my direct command."

Rommel swore an alliance to Cecil. As he heard it, he gathered the documents on the desk and burned them into ashes with his powers. His hands were freed soon after.

"You are dismissed."

He bowed deeply and rushed out of the court.

Cecil gave a hand signal to one of the Hammers. "Karl, I want you to spy on Rommel until further notice."

"Yes, sir."

- *Fin*

