

## **[Shattered union arc] [8] [2nd Sol-Andromeda war] [9633]**

Rev 1.3 ( Last updated on 2022 May 30 )

This is the first part of three stories.

The next part of the story to this is: **[Kain and Suu arc] [6] [Admiral Kain] [9633]**

### **Prerequisite stories**

[Shattered union arc] [6] [Fraser's Regime] [9614]

[Kain and Suu arc] [5] [He who stands alone] [9616]

### **Related stories**

[Shattered union arc] [7] [Omen] [9619]

[Ashuta arc] [7] [Nano circulation unit] [9631]

Fraser was in a high profile political party on Earth. He was invited to it and he had no choice but to attend. He had noticed a steady increase of these parties. The purpose of such parties was essentially fundraising activities. Party hosts, who were Ark politicians, would meet with potential donors. The donors would listen to their promises and, in return, the donors give them credit.

Fraser was called in to add authenticity because a party which had the President of United Sol was more appealing than one without. His role in such parties was nothing more than a guest however.

He was simply killing time when Len rushed to him.

“Mr. President,” Len, in a whispering tone, urgently spoke to him who was getting tipsy from glasses he had emptied so far.

“It’s rare that you’d join me, Len. Would you like a glass?”

“Mr. President, this is urgent. Your ear please.”

Without thinking too much, Fraser allowed him to speak close to his ear.

“Uranus outpost reports that an invasion fleet of twenty-six thousand warships is approaching the border quickly.”

Fraser could feel blood withdrawing from his extremities at once.

“ETA to border is a week, sir.”

At once, Fraser and Len attempted to leave the party but was stopped by two party bouncers.

“Mr. President, please stay,” They warned him. Fraser did attempt leaving parties too early before which was why he was stopped by them.

“Step aside, this is emergency,” Fraser warned with Len staying behind him.

“Sir, please.” The bouncers nevertheless attempted to guide Fraser back to the party at which point, Fraser bellowed.

“We are being invaded! Cut the crap!”

The bouncers were skeptical and didn't even know what he really meant but his pale and urgent face indicated that whatever it was it must have been truly urgent and allowed him to leave.

As soon as they arrived at the Ark, he called for an emergency meeting. The Ark house was locked down and he called the senate instead. Fraser's actions made other Ark politicians to realize that it was some sort of a war which could only mean an invasion from Andromeda union. They had been hearing unconfirmed rumors from distances. Not many actually believed that the rumors had any truth however.

"I demand an answer," Fraser spoke from the speaker's desk in the senate chamber. "The only report of the invasion fleet has come from Uranus outpost. We do have other sources but only Uranus outpost reported. What is the meaning of this? What were they doing?"

The senate chamber was silent to Fraser's demand.

"Because you said Kain could not be trusted, we spent money in creating five other independent patrol fleets. Yet not one of them managed to make the report especially when it was their only job!"

Fraser shook his head with a disgusted look on his face. "Bau this, Bau that, useless...bunch of...," He whispered to himself before continuing. "Call Earth defense fleet. Gather all available ships," He ordered.

Panic clearly spread through the ranks at the Ark because twenty six thousand was a record size for a fleet. No one at the Ark expected that many ships. However, Fraser couldn't care less how they were faring.

As soon as he was back in his office. He was contacting Commodore Kain.

Kain's face popped up on a holographic screen above his desk.

"Mr. President," He responded with a salute.

"Commodore, I am sure you know why I am contacting you."

He responded with a nod. "Aye, sir."

"How is the situation over there?"

"We are all calm, sir. They are expecting Earth defense fleet as well as Jupiter fleet to show up and crash the invaders," He said stoically and quietly added, "Which of course is easier to be said than done."

Indeed, Fraser was highly doubtful that Emuel would cooperate easily.

"Perhaps." Fraser answered against his initial thought. "The situation is dire. Earth defense fleet alone cannot repel the invasion fleet. Jupiter administrator has to assist."

Kain did not answer but his facial expression clearly indicated that he was doubtful of Fraser's words. And he changed the subject. "What have you called me for, sir?"

Fraser was certainly unpleasant over Kain's reaction although he could not blame him for not being more positive. He had been receiving reports from Uranus outpost and he was fully aware of a fact that he had been going through hard times. He had known that he had been working extremely hard to just break even.

"I'd like to know the fleet composition," Said Fraser in faint hope that a large portion of the fleet may be of frigates.

"My apologies, we were in rush that we simply sent the overall number," Kain said on the screen. He looked down to access data and answered, "99.9% is cruisers."

Fraser closed his eyes slowly as he heard him. His first thought that came to his mind upon hearing the fleet composition was darkness. He felt the war was already lost even before it began.

Opening his eyes, he gave a firm nod to Kain, adding, "Very well. I thank you. Earth defense fleet is assembling and you will see us soon."

Kain saluted and that was the end of the communication. He called Len afterwards.

"Sir," Len said as he entered the office.

"Call back Magenta now."

"Sir?"

"Tell her, no, order her to leave the outpost."

“I don’t think she will listen her. You’ve already attempted to call her back numerous times.”

Fraser stood up from his chair at once and pointed at Len with anger. “There is a good chance that Uranus outpost may not survive this war. I want her back here. If she refuses, send agents to bring her back by force!”

Understanding Fraser’s exigent tone, Len nodded firmly. “Aye, sir. I will send men.” He wasn’t even going to contact Magenta.

In a few days, Earth defense fleet, consisted of fourteen thousand cruisers, was mobilized and arrived at Earth orbit. While no one cared at this point, more than half of the fleet was the new light cruiser which had yet to see an actual fleet battle. The light cruiser design was a largely untested concept at the moment.

Even Fraser couldn’t care less about it at the moment however. Number was a far more important issue for moral. And, with the fleet’s arrival, it was time to declare the fleet commander which was an issue of its own.

In the past, one of available admirals would lead Earth defense fleet in time of need or the Ark would appoint someone of worthy. However, for the moment, there was no admirals in United Sol. After former President Mirren’s assassination and subsequent revolts from Admiral Jack and Rommel, the Ark was very reluctant to appoint new admirals.

Therefore, Fraser had no choice but to appoint someone among those available and there weren't a lot of choices for him. Moon administrator, Graeto, seemed to be the most suitable candidate; he had some experience leading a faction and his rank was high enough to lead a large fleet.

"Mr. President," Graeto, guided by Len, stated as he entered Fraser's office.

"Administrator." Fraser welcomed him with open arms.

Graeto walked toward him and then saluted at once, and Fraser explained the situation and notified him that he was placing him in charge of Earth defense fleet.

"I would be honored," Graeto declared. It wasn't as good as being an admiral but he was in fact being promoted to a temporary admiral. Who knows? If he performed well, he could become an admiral.

"Very good. Time is of essence. I need you to head over to the orbit, take charge of the fleet. Perform necessary fleet checks and depart ASAP."

"What would be my destination, Mr. President?"

Fraser had a short pause before answering him. "You are to reach Uranus outpost but leave Commodore Kain's fleet alone."

"Sir?"

Kain had two thousand strong fleet. While it wasn't much, an additional two thousand would certainly help in this case. But Fraser had a different idea. He had

a gut feeling that Earth defense fleet would lose and Uranus outpost would become the first line of defense. If Earth defense fleet was going to lose, it was imperative that the outpost had its fleet to hold and therefore delay the invaders while United Sol regrouped.

“Just leave him and his fleet alone.” He declined to explain however.

Graeto nodded and inquired, “And how about the Jupiter administrator, sir?”

Fraser had already sent a message to Jupiter, requesting Emuel to join Earth defense fleet. With his ten thousand strong fleet, United Sol stood a fair chance of repelling the invaders. That was a day ago and there had yet to be any form of reply which was bad news. On a positive side, Emuel did not decline, either.

“That will be my job. Your job is reach Uranus outpost.”

Graeto understood the tricky situation with Emuel the snake. But he believed Emuel would assist because not doing so would be treason in time of war.

With Graeto departed for Earth defense fleet, Fraser made a private travel arrangement to reach Jupiter in person. Len and few elite Bau guards were accompanying. Since Emuel did not reply, he was going to visit him in person which may have been deemed dangerous but he knew that, if Emuel do any harm to him, that would be the end of his career. Furthermore, he was more or less a puppet president. Holding him a hostage would not even make the Bau twitch.

Emuel hadn't had the easiest time ever since former President Gvew's assassination. He aimed to succeed him and become the next President but failed due to the accusations from the Milky way tragedy. How he handled captain Willste's case also had a part. With his reputation greatly tarnished, he chose to buckle up and isolated himself.

And there was Kain's completely unexpected rise in ranks. For Emuel, Kain was someone he could never work with due to how he had seemingly abandoned him to die. In fact, Emuel expected him along with few thousand ships to perish. He was nobody, and when Emuel was explained how he earned his promotion, he let out of few swearing vocabularies. Things just didn't go his way at that time, and his promotion made it worse. With him allying himself with the Maeka, Emuel became completely isolated.

Still, on a positive side, the Jupiter populace still supported him because he had not done anything wrong to them. It was his only reason for being able to retain his position for the time being.

Emuel was smoking shisha in an observation room. In space, smoking was strictly forbidden because air purity was vital to health in a limited area. However, being a leader, he could get away with smoking shisha especially when the room was designed for such a specific purpose. Indeed, the observation room was Emuel's one of private quarters and had a specially designed ventilation system.

He was popping smokes as his vague eyes stared into space. At one point, Aroa in her usual skin tight navy uniform rushed into the room.

“Honey,” She spoke with a level of urgency in her voice.

Continuing to pop smokes, Emuel lazily responded, “Didn’t I tell you that I wanted some private time.”

Regardless, she approached him at once and stopped him from inhaling shisha. Angered by her action, Emuel raised his voice. “What is the meaning of this, woman?”

“Honey, this is urgent. This is emergency.”

“I care not,” He responded promptly and was about to inhale shisha.

“The President is here.”

His hand froze. It took him a moment to truly understand what was going on or even actually believe what she had just told him. Once he woke up from shisha dreams, he stood up at once and cleared his throat.

“Where is he,” He gravely asked.

“His fleet has just landed in the docking bay. You have about 15 minutes before he is ready to see you.”

“Fine, I will take a quick shower. Where is Aroan.”

“She is already greeting the President. She is earning time for you.”

Taking a deep breath, he rushed out of the observation room.

“Mr. President!” Emuel, who was flanked by Aroa, greeted Fraser with a powerful voice. Aroa was keeping vigilant eyes behind him.

By Fraser, there was Aroan in a beautiful dress.

“Administrator,” Fraser promptly greeted back. “It’s good to see you.” He was flanked by a group of elite Bau guards and Len.

The truth was that neither of them would like to see each other in person but it was a desperate time for both of them in different ways.

Fraser, Len, and his guards were quickly escorted out of the docking bay and led to a private cafeteria which resembled a luxury bar. Aroa quickly started to crack an ice cube and Aroan started to mix drinks behind a counter top. There were also few waitresses who served Fraser’s guards by tables.

Fraser and Emuel sat down on stools in front of the counter top where Aroa and Aroan were working on ice and drinks.

“Hah,” Fraser beamed a smile as he looked around the bar. “What a nice place. Admin, you live in a better place than I.”

Emuel fired back a smile as well in response. “Mr. President, you do have means. You simply chose not to.”

Indeed.

Fraser had long known what kind of a man Emuel was but this was actually the first time meeting him in person. He was actually impressed the structure he had built. The crews seemed very disciplined and the women were nice.

Speaking of which –

“Are they a twin?” Fraser inquired; he was talking about Aroa and Aroan who had identical faces.

“Aye, I took them in when they were young. They were orphans actually,” Emuel said.

Minding their own businesses, Aroa continued to crack an ice cube and Aroan was mixing drinks. Fraser could tell Emuel was running a tight ship and he had a firm grasp in controls.

“Admin, you must know why I am here.” Fraser decided to hit the topic straightforwardly because there was no time to waste.

Of course, he was no fool.

“Aye, sir. You have my full support. I shall follow your lead,” He responded firmly to Fraser’s doubt. He was known for someone who’d say one thing and act another. However, Fraser wasn’t blind enough to push any issues between them. He did say he’d support him and that was it for the time being.

With just casual chatters, they spent an hour drinking together. As if they knew the dangers of crossing the line, they never asked each other anything political. The conversation was strictly casual. Once the hour passed, Fraser stood up and

bid farewell and, in progress, indirectly ordered him to head to Uranus outpost, which Emuel complied.

Emuel, Aroa, and Aroan were seeing Fraser's fleet taking off a docking bay. Aroa and Aroan bowed toward the ships while Emuel saluted.

"Did you really mean what you said?" Aroa asked while still in a bowing pose.

"The guy is a bureaucrat," Emuel answered, "Unlike Gvew who was just a fool with a muscle brain. He knows how to deal with situations like this. I must comply."

"Shall I prepare the fleet?" Aroan asked softly.

"Mobilize the whole fleet," Emuel responded.

Meanwhile, Graeto and Earth defense fleet was passing by Saturn at which point he was greeted by Gaer, Saturn administrator.

"Saturn administrator on the channel, Admiral."

Gaerto beamed a happy smile upon being referred as "admiral". Granted, it was a temporary title but being an admiral was his life-long dream. He simply couldn't resist smiling.

"On screen," He merrily responded.

Gaer's face appeared on a holographic screen in front of a captain's chair.

"Greetings, Admiral."

Again, Gaeto couldn't resist smiling. "Admin Gaer. It has been some time."

Gaer beamed back a smile. "Aye, I see that your life-long dream has temporarily been achieved."

Gaeto laughed at last but said no more. He knew that, if he did well in this war, he could actually be promoted to an admiral. Granted, there was never a case where an administrator was promoted to an admiral in the history of United Sol, but there could be an exception, he thought.

And as if Gaer knew what was going through his mind, he reminded him, "An administrator is a dead-end rank but, you know, you could actually become an admiral. Otherwise, the President wouldn't have chosen you."

Gaeto nodded firmly with a confident smile. They went way back. In fact, they were related although their connection was faint. Regardless, they could call each other an ally without much hesitations. And for Gaer, Gaeto's possible promotion to the rank of Admiral was an advantage.

"Good luck to you, Admiral," Gaer said with a salute. "And my apologies that I cannot join you in the battle."

It was actually Fraser's order that Gaer stayed on Saturn. As a planet administrator, Gaer did have a small fleet of two thousands but the fleet was poorly financed due to Saturn's not-so-ideal economic situations. Only five

hundreds or so of the fleet was given green light to be fully functional and Fraser decided that it was better to leave Gaer's fleet out of Earth defense fleet.

"I shall come back victorious," Gareto swore.

The general mood within Earth defense fleet was positive, perhaps due to Gareto's mood itself. Regardless there was a genuine sense of willingness to defend the Solar system from crews. And when they received a word that Emuel's fleet of ten thousand cruisers were joining, they were absolutely positive that the battle would be won.

"Admiral, approaching Uranus outpost, and a hailing from Commodore Kain."

As soon as Kain's face showed on a screen, Gareto let out of a laughter.

"Fate does strange things," Gareto said, "Not in a million years did I think I'd see you in a place of Uranus outpost administrator." And he didn't say it but he also meant to say that he did not imagine to become a temporary admiral.

"Admiral Gareto, it's been a while," Kain responded with a grin.

"I heard you got married. How is the married life treating you?"

"I like touching boobs. They feel amazing," He answered earnestly.

Some of bridge crews snickered upon hearing Kain's gleeful reply.

"Good to hear, Kain. You can count on me for protecting the station."

"Aye, sir, I will be here if you need me."

“Any updates on their whereabouts?”

“The invasion fleet has actually stopped at the border. It’s an easy bet. They are waiting for you.”

*The test of my life*, Gareto thought.

“Alright, Commodore. I am waiting for Emuel to join up. Mind if me and my crews come down and enjoy some time off?”

“Feel free, sir. All docking bays have been unlocked and emptied.”

The outpost’s docking estate wasn’t enough for all ships to land simultaneously, and therefore, ships had to take turns. But most made do by using shuttles instead.

Gareto himself got down on the station as well to meet Kain in person. In response, Kain showed up with his wife, Ritsuki.

They had a gleeful handshake in a cafeteria which was quite full of crews from Earth defense fleet.

“Commodore.”

“Admiral.”

Gareto had to smile.

“The place is way too crowded. Let us go to a private bar,” Ritsuki suggested.

“Of Maeka, yes?” Gareto said as he had a brief look on her. He had heard that Kain married to a Maeka woman. If given a chance, he would have taken a Maeka woman, he thought. But Gaer never offered him a chance. He found it strange that Kain was given the chance instead of him. He didn’t think too much into it however and brushed off his thoughts as he was led out of the cafeteria by Kain and Ristuki.

Until Emuel’s fleet arrived, Gareto and his crews were treated like royals. And the first problem, or the first crack, appeared when Gareto ordered the fleets to depart as soon as Emuel’s fleet arrived. Emuel knew Gareto and his crews had spent almost a week playing around and demanded the same for his crews which Gareto denied.

“We don’t have time for this, Emuel.” Gareto and Emuel were mildly arguing on a channel.

“Yet you had time to have the fun.”

“We were waiting for you to arrive. It was not our fault that we spent some time off waiting for you,” Gareto raised his voice and added, “Again, now is not the time for this. We have an invasion fleet of twenty six thousand waiting for us at the border.”

Scoffing, Emuel declared boldly, “Indeed and you are not fit to lead the fleet. Hand over the command. I shall lead the fleet.”

Gareto narrowed his eyes. “Pardon?”

Emuel explained, "As a fleet leader in this crucial moment, you do not let your crews slack off like this. You are unfit as expected from a mere administrator who has no tactical training."

Gareto could feel his blood urging upwards. Emuel, too, was "a mere administrator". If anything, it was Emuel who had no military background. After all, Gareto was a navy captain for decades before reluctantly accepting a promotion to become Moon administrator. He stood up from his captain's chair and pointed at the screen.

"The President has placed me in charge of the fleet and I shall lead the fleet!" He exclaimed, "Do not cross the line, Jupiter admin!"

"Hah." Emuel responded by laughing off briefly. "He placed you in charge of Earth defense fleet. He certainly did not place you in charge of my fleet."

Which was in fact the truth. However, Fraser did temporarily promote Gareto to Admiral which was a higher rank than an administrator. Obviously, the rank difference wasn't bothering Emuel.

"Are you challenging my authority?!" Gareto was close to going berserk.

"Are you asking for a fight?" Undeterred, Emuel responded with a cold face.

Gareto shut the channel right after and was fuming in his chair. If this wasn't a war time, he might have actually battled Emuel's fleet. But then again, it wasn't the right time. He took few minutes cooling off and gave out an order.

"Set the course to the border. We are heading toward the invasion fleet."

"Admiral, what of the Jupiter fleet?"

“Give them no orders. They should know what to do regardless what I tell them.”

The crew responded reluctantly, “Aye, sir.”

It would be treason if Emuel didn't follow Earth defense fleet. Everyone knew that much, even Emuel himself. Therefore, when Earth defense fleet moved out, so did Emuel's fleet.

There would be no communication between the two fleets however.

“Invasion fleet on sensor, Admiral.”

Earth defense fleet passed Pluto a few days ago and they were approaching the solar system border which was basically nothingness in middle of nowhere. Only on space chart, it was shown clearly where the border was.

“It would appear the initial report was correct. The computer is reporting that the rough number is twenty six thousand, Admiral.”

Earth defense fleet was fourteen thousand. Emuel's fleet was ten thousand. All in all, it was twenty four thousand versus twenty six. Andromeda invasion fleet had an upper hand in numbers but it was only a slight numeral advantage.

“Open a channel to the fleets. Voice only.”

“Opened, voice only.”

Clearing throat, Gareto began his speech.

“This is Admiral Gareto. We are approaching the invasion fleet. We have a very slight numeral disadvantage but that means nothing. We are at home and we should win. Just take it like any other training sessions and we will go home with a victory in the bag, Graeto out.”

He didn't have too much doubts except for Emuel. While his fleet was complying and was in formation with Earth defense fleet, he wasn't sure what he'd do when the actual battle commenced. However, there wasn't much for him to do at this point and he believed that a victory would also be the best in Emuel's interest.

The invasion fleet, or Andromeda fleet led by Juron, was patiently waiting at border when Earth defense fleet appeared in visual range. A greeting channel was kindly opened by both side for a mutual conversation.

“I am Andromeda councilor Juron and also the fleet commander of this fleet.”

“I am Admiral Gareto in charge of Earth defense fleet.”

After exchanging their names, it was Gareto who talked first.

“You are an honorable man. Not many would wait at border.”

For Juron's credit, he promised the council “a fair and square victory”. Therefore, he had to act honorable and had to wait at border for United Sol to respond. It wasn't his intention but he took the credit regardless.

“As a councilor of Andromedian people, I shall be honorable,” Juron responded firmly, “Therefore, I shall give you a chance to surrender.”

Gareto did not take the demand for surrender seriously. After all, it was even written in navy etiquette books that demanding surrender was one of the routine lines to speak during conversations prior battles. It was a part of being honorable; giving an opponent a chance to surrender, thus avoiding bloodshed.

“I respectfully refuse,” Gareto responded also firmly and then saluted. “Best of luck.”

Juron saluted back and the channel was closed.

“To all ships,” He commanded, “Engage your targets of opportunity at will. Withdraw from front line if severely damaged. Surrender is not accepted.”

And just like that, one of largest space battles in the history of space age commenced.

The battle was, in some ways, dull. It was basically a textbook battle scene. Within minutes of the battle, few unfortunate ships were destroyed and then it was an even battle from both sides. Front lines took the beating and they were literally duking it out. Casualties remained identical for both sides as the battles went on for few hours.

The battle was hitting four hours mark and casualties for Gareto’s Earth defense fleet was about two hundred ships which were a small amount of damage considering the size of the battle. Reason being was that ships had too many

targets and both fleet commanders refused to order focus fire. Focus fire wasn't very effective in large battles. Therefore, it was understandable.

This was when a report came in.

"Admiral, a cruiser is reporting that they are having reactor failures." Twisting his head, a crew reported while reading a text comm.

"Reactor failures?" Gareto wasn't sure, either. ACM reactors had virtually zero failure rate unless it was overloaded.

The crew who had spoken the report was looking through a datapad. Soon, he added, "Sir, it's the Mice, one that has five plasma reactors."

He frowned slightly. Reactor failure was a serious matter. A reactor was what provided cruisers with all of its powers. Without it, it'd have to run on batteries which wouldn't last five minutes under battle situations. But it was just one ship and he didn't think too far.

"Withdraw the ship then. Permission to withdraw granted," He said.

"Aye, sir."

However, shortly after the initial report, reactor failures from other ships started to flock in. And they were all from the light cruisers, AKA Mice.

More than half of Mice cruisers were having reactors issues. Apparently, it appeared to be a design issue. And more than half of Earth defense fleet was the light cruisers. To be more precise, six thousand cruisers in Earth defense fleet was the newly designed light cruisers. The exact number was hard to pin down but a

crew reported that more than three thousand light cruisers were having issues with their reactors.

Gareto was speechless for a short moment; he wasn't sure what to do. Eventually deciding that they would be of no use, he ordered those that were experiencing issues to withdraw to backline and hoped to hide the issue from the invasion fleet. However, when a few light cruisers exploded while attempting to withdraw made him to realize that the issue was far direr than he initially thought.

The light cruiser, AKA the Mice, was the Ark's answer to their financial problems. After the 1st Earthian-Venusian war, Earth defense fleet was battered and the Ark simply did not have the fund to restore the fleet. Therefore, some select Bau engineers designed a new type of cruiser that required far less materials and removed ACM reactor. The price tag of the Mice was half of a cruiser. That advantage alone was too sweet for the Ark to pass.

The Mice carried the same amount of turrets but had virtually no armor, and removal of ACM engine meant that it needed something of equivalent; five plasma reactors. Five reactors meant far less stability and the light cruiser needed twice more active engineers to keep reactors stable.

Because the light cruiser was never tested in a live battle where it would fire its lasers for hours as well as other factors, the design flaw was unseen.

Until this moment.

For Gareto, this accident meant that he was losing one fourth of Earth defense fleet. And the other light cruisers were basically ticking time bombs. To his credit, meanwhile, he did best to hide the issue.

“Open a channel to my fleet. Don’t let Emuel hear this. Voice only,” He ordered with urgency in his voice. In response, a crew nodded sincerely.

“Opened, sir. Secured channel.”

“This is Admiral Grateo. Currently we are having some issues with the Mice. Fear not, the issue is minor and we are dealing with it. But I want those with the Mice to immediately withdraw from the front line. Even if your ship is fine, I want you to withdraw. Stay in middle and watch out for your reactor. Gareto out.”

And then he gave out another order right after.

“Contact Commodore Kain. Tell him that I need his fleet here.”

Gareto was ordered to leave Kain’s fleet alone but seeing his fleet was losing one fourth of firepower, he felt he needed to make a decision.

On Emuel’s bridge, there were only three people. There was Emuel himself who was sitting casually on a sofa-like captain’s chair, and there were Aroa and Aroan who had taken a console each in front.

When a light cruiser exploded, it was hidden from visual to other ships blocking the view but sensors certainly picked it up.

“One of Earth defense fleet cruiser exploded and that ship wasn’t even being hit,” Aroa reported. “A lot of plasma is detected.”

Aroan added, “Which isn’t too surprising since the Mice carries few plasma reactors but the loose plasma is overcharged.”

Emuel said, “Meaning?”

“The ship probably had some issues with reactors and blew up as a result,” Aroan explained.

“Pitiful.” Emuel scoffed. “How can they call themselves engineers when they can’t even tame plasma reactors? That’s old tech which is thousands years old.”

“I am not defending them but,” Aroa said, “Controlling five plasma reactors simultaneously isn’t an easy task. You’d need a well-gelled engineers to effectively keep them stable all together. I will never understand why they designed it that way.”

“To save money,” Aroan answered.

“They’d save money initially,” Aroan talked back, “But in long term, I don’t think they’d save money.”

Emuel laughed weakly. “If they were thinking long term, we wouldn’t be having this war.”

Aroa and Aroan fell silent. Then sensors picked up another cruiser exploding.

“Another exploded,” Aroa reported. “It think the Mice may have a design flaw.”

His gleeful face soon vanished. He vacantly stared in the air for a moment.

“Track Earth defense fleet’s movement, track every single cruisers,” Emuel ordered.

“Some ships are falling back, all of them are the Mice,” Aroa reported.

His fleet had no light cruisers. He was certainly invited to employ them but Aroa was strongly against the idea. She did not like the design.

A vicious grin emerged on his face. “Open a channel to the fleet commander. Kindly make it public channel. Voice only.”

“Opened,” Aroan replied.

“Emuel?” Gareto’s voice sounded in the bridge. “Do you realize this is a public channel?”

Regardless, he spoke, “Are you having problems with the Mice?”

And then the channel was shut off.

Gareto was fuming and started to curse.

“That fucking bastard! This is an act of treason!”

He tried to mask the damage but his public message exposed it.

“Uh oh,” A crew blurted. “Admiral, Jupiter fleet is... withdrawing?!”

“WHAT?!” Gareto screamed as he dashed off his chair. “Open a channel right now!”

“Open, sir, voice only.”

Emuel’s voice lazily sounded in the bridge. “Fleet commander, may I help you with something?”

“Why are you withdrawing?! Explain yourself!” Grateo demanded urgently.

“I am withdrawing for the sake of United Sol. This battle is lost. Your fleet is lost.”

“What the f” Before he could even finish, the channel was shut off.

The battle, after Emuel started to withdraw, became one-sided fight. Gareto remained in the battle despite the fact that his active ships were less than eleven thousand ships. Once the invasion fleet became fully aware of what was occurring, they pressed and Earth defense fleet was being ripped apart.

Looking utterly dejected, Gareto was in his captain’s chair. He was seeing his front line being penetrated and his formation destroyed. The already fragile light cruisers went down at the first sign of duress. Having no armor, penetration of shields meant critical damage to ships’ hull structures. He knew that the old cruiser would withstand significant amount of punishment before going down.

“Admiral! Our front line is shattered and they are coming at us!” A crew reported urgently.

And another crew exclaimed in response, “We will be wiped out at this rate. We must withdraw.”

But Grateo did not respond but instead he lazily crossed his legs. What would he happen to him if he went back? The short story was that he failed. He failed to control Emuel and he failed to repel the invasion fleet.

“I was so... so close...,” He whispered to himself in resentment.

“Admiral!” Frustrated by lack of response, a crew exclaimed at him. This time, Gareto showed a reaction and he slowly stood up from his captain’s chair.

“Send a message to Kain. Tell him to go back and buckle up,” He continued, “And charge.”

Crews looked at each other.

“I beg your pardon?”

“Our job now is to damage them as much as we can,” He explained, “This is about doing our duty.”

The crews weren’t convinced. Rather they weren’t willing to die for the cause.

Gareto was different. For him, his dream of becoming an admiral was over.

However, there was still a way for him to become an admiral.

It was to perish in a battle while he was still an admiral. The history book at least would record him as an admiral died in action.

He continued, “We must damage them as much as we can so that others may have a chance of repelling them.” Then he exclaimed, “Therefore, charge!”

Fraser had been eagerly waiting for an update from Earth defense fleet. While he was reasonably confident that the defense fleet would be able to repel the invasion fleet, nothing was guaranteed and he was eager for an update.

The last update from the fleet was that they departed Uranus outpost “in good spirit”.

Knocking, Len quietly entered his office with a grim face.

“Mr. President.”

“So, they lost.” Fraser wasn’t too shocked. Given Emuel was a part of the fleet, anything could have happened although he expected them to be victorious.

“Sir, not only did they lose, Earth defense fleet is no more.”

This time, Fraser’s eyes widened and he burst up from his chair. “Explain.”

Len explained that the trouble started for the defense fleet when the light cruiser, the Mice, started to have issues with its reactors. Emuel left the fleet shortly afterwards, and Admiral Gareto charged into the invasion fleet.

“Admiral Gareto did manage to inflict some damage to them and the invasion fleet is down to nineteen thousand but the defense fleet is no more. Whoever was left surrendered, I believe.”

Fraser became dead-pale and almost collapsed at which point Len dashed and grabbed him.

“Sir,” Len said gravely. “I understand how you must be feeling but I must inform you of my thoughts.”

With his eyes closed, Fraser groaned as Len got him down gradually into his chair.

“What is concerning you, Len.”

“It’s Emuel. His fleet is currently on course back to Jupiter but there is a chance that he is coming here.”

Fraser immediately opened his eyes. He felt dizzy and spent but that was the least of his worries at this point because Len had a point. Emuel had the fleet to claim United Sol. As much as he hated to admit so, it was the truth.

“Do we have any ships?”

“Some ships might return from the defense fleet but the Ark has no ships at this point.”

“Any other ships?”

“Let me get the data for you, sir.”

Len quickly returned with a datapad displaying ship availability. Moon had a hundred cruisers to keep the vicinity secured. Saturn had two thousand ships but only five hundreds were reported fully functional. Uranus outpost had two thousand fully function ships.

“Send an order to Gaer to mobilize whatever ships he has and assist the Commodore. If Uranus outpost falls, United Sol will be on verge of a total collapse,” Fraser said gravely.

“How should we deal with Emuel, sir? And what if he is coming here?”

Fraser didn’t respond right away because he had no answer.

“Sir, if you don’t mind, I have a very ... controversial proposal,” Len reluctantly said.

In spite of Len’s mention of a controversial proposal, Fraser didn’t give it much thoughts and responded, “Well, things are looking very grim. Let’s hear what you have in your mind.”

“Sir, we should contact Venus and ask them for an assistance.”

“Non-sense,” Fraser immediately responded and repeated with a louder voice, “Absolutely non-sense.”

Len, however, urged, “Sir, Venus is the only one with a fleet capacity to fight Emuel or even in the worst case the invasion fleet.”

“Gods, how far have we fallen,” Fraser uttered. “The Bau council would never allow it.”

“You are the President, sir.”

But he was a puppet president. Contacting Cecil without the Bau council’s approval could seriously jeopardize his position. However, he did feel Len had a point despite his initial strong disapproval.

Taking a deep breath, Fraser stated, “Do you have anything that I can use as an excuse for contacting Venus?”

Len dropped his head slightly and started to scratch his chin. It took a moment but he came up with a daring idea.

“Sir, perhaps we could use Gareto.”

“But he perished.”

“Yes and exactly. I feel bad for the man who did his best but perhaps you could claim that it was Gareto who contacted Venus.”

Fraser looked mildly shocked. “Len, I never knew you had this sort of quality in you. I thought you were a quiet and straight man.”

He beamed a weak grin. “Sir, I don’t tend to speak out my thoughts, for that is not my job. But this is desperate time, sir.”

It spoke volumes that Len, who hardly ever spoke of his own thoughts, was pushing for a very controversial proposal. Therefore, Fraser had to give in not just because the time was desperate but because he also believed Venus was the only one capable of stopping Emuel’s fleet. Failure to stop Emuel’s fleet would really mean the end of United Sol.

It was that desperate.

Fraser quickly called in his private cruiser and left Earth because contacting Venus from his office was as good as hanging himself. Furthermore, in order to make Gareto a scapegoat, he needed to make the contact in space where a source of transmission was much harder to track. As long as the transmission was made in space, it would be easier to convince others that it was Gareto who made the contact.

His private cruiser sailed away at once from Earth’s orbit and headed toward Venus. When he was days away from Earth, he along with Len on the bridge

opened a secured channel to Venus. He and Len were the only crews in the cruiser.

A secured channel would not guarantee complete anonymity. Therefore, in order to ensure that no one would leech a channel, they traveled close to Venus in order to establish a clear-path channel that would not go anywhere but to Venus.

On screen, a young female receptionist finely dressed in a business attire answered the secured call.

“Hello, you’ve called Fallen Crater city hall. I see that you are on a secure channel. May I ask for your identity?”

“My name is Fraser Bau. I’d like to speak with the Venusian president.”

The receptionist replied promptly, “Thank you. Sir, again, thank you for contacting Fallen Crater city hall. However, you cannot simply make a call and demand to speak to the President.”

She knew Fraser Bau was the president of United Sol. However, she did not believe this “Fraser Bau” was the same person. She continued, “Please, if you do mean to contact the President, you will have to go through proper steps.”

“Wait, Miss. I’d really like to speak to the President,” Fraser insisted.

She answered promptly, “The imperial master cannot be contacted online. I will have to redirect your call to another department. They will let you know what steps need to be taken in order to...”

“Listen, Miss. I am the President of United Sol, and I demand to speak to Cecil.”

The receptionist looked briefly memorized. Her eyes looked elsewhere as if checking something. “Fraser... Bau, yes?” She vacantly inquired.

Fraser explained, “I am not a man with just the same name. I am sure you can check where the signal is coming from. I am here for a very urgent diplomatic talk.”

The screen blanked few times and a man appeared on screen. He was dressed in a usual man’s business attire.

“Greetings, I am Gair, the vice President of Venus.”

Truthfully, Fraser never heard of Gair. He wasn’t interested in Venus politics. All he knew was that Cecil was the head of Venus.

Gair added, “I am the step son of Cecil. The receptionist was correct that Cecil cannot be contacted online.”

He didn’t know Cecil had a stepson also.

Clearing throat, Fraser spoke, “Greetings, I am the President of United Sol.”

Gair nodded as he replied, “Yes, Cecil told me you might contact.”

“He did?”

“Yes, and he also told me what to tell you.”

Fraser glanced sideways to Len who, in response, shrugged. “Trust me, sir. I’ve not contacted Venus,” He added.

Gair beamed a smile. "You may find this hard to believe but I believe I know what you've called us for. If Cecil was correct, you've called Venus to request a fleet assistance, yes?"

Fraser nodded slowly and answered, "Yes... and Cecil has told you this?"

"Yes. In fact, two years ago."

Fraser repeated after him. "Two years ago?"

"Aye. I am finding this hard to believe also. His vision goes far, it seems..."

Not only that, it was a correct vision. Both Gair and Fraser had goosebumps all over their bodies.

Sighing deeply, Gair continued, "Let's see if his vision was correct. Andromeda invaded, you sent Earth defense fleet along with Emuel and the defense fleet was wiped out while Emuel escaped. Now you fear that Emuel might be coming to Earth, aye?"

Fraser nodded, adding quickly, "Completely, utterly, brilliantly correct."

"Cecil also told me that the downfall of Earth defense fleet would be down to two factors. One, the newly developed light cruiser. Two, Emuel."

Fraser had goosebumps all over again. Cecil was precisely correct.

"... And he told you all this 2 years ago."

"Correct."

This time, Len was looking at Fraser who was shell-shocked.

Fraser, still looking shell-shocked, inquired, "Then ... I assume you know what is going to happen next?"

"Probably. Cecil said you do not need to worry about Emuel because he doesn't have the guts to claim United Sol."

"W, what of... the invasion fleet?" Fraser was actually afraid of asking this question for reasons currently unknown to him.

"The invasion fleet, you don't need to worry about also because it won't be able to get past Uranus outpost. Or so he said."

Fraser argued as if wanting to prove Cecil, or Gair, wrong, "But the outpost has only two thousand! The invasion fleet is almost twenty thousand strong! There is absolutely no chance!"

Gair shrugged on screen. "Indeed, I also believe the outpost has no chance but Cecil said Commodore Kain would be able to repel the invasion fleet because he has established something the Bau has been refusing to establish."

Fraser exclaimed in frustration, "And what would that be?!"

"Friendships, he told me."

Fraser and Len were heading back to Earth. Both of them were unsure of how they were feeling. And both of them were unsure of what had just occurred. Or rather they were unsure what to make of it.

“Am I to blindly believe the Crimson wizard and do nothing?” Fraser asked himself or perhaps Len. Then he just continued, “And he saw it two years ago?” He exclaimed right after, “Two fucking years ago!”

The huge gap of the class angered Fraser. He was dying to find a solution so that he could keep his nation together. Yet, someone had answers already all along.

And he foresaw it years ago.

“Sir,” Len eventually spoke, “I am reasonably confident that we can count on Cecil’s predictions...”

Friendship, Cecil claimed. Yet Fraser believed Kain stood all alone. Magenta did inform him numerous times that Kain was working hard to establish commercial deals with others including Freedom colony. But such were commercial deals. Military assistance would totally be different things, especially when it came to such a grand battle like this one.

But nevertheless Cecil claimed and Fraser had to believe. He didn’t have a choice. There was no other solution. He could not think of any and neither could Len. And consulting the Bau council would be a waste of time Fraser felt. What could the council do at this point? Magically summon tens of thousands of ships?

“Fine, let’s go back and see how Kain stops them,” Fraser said to himself.

*To be continued in [Kain and Suu arc] [6] [Admiral Kain] [9633]*