

This story doesn't actually have much to do with Juun. However, since the Knights do not have an arc of their own, the most relevant arc for them is Juun's arc.

It is based on [Juron arc] [5] [New enemies] [9633] and therefore the story must be read prior.

Additionally, in order to know more about the Knights, following story is recommended to be read before you read this.

[Juron Arc] [2] [The Knights] [9608]

## [The white knight arc] [4] [Conspiracy] [9634]

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A year passed since the second Sol-Andromeda war. Things had quieted down in Andromeda system and life was back to normal seasons ago.

Juron found himself an unexpected outcome from the council but he also found an unexpected sponsor in Garrik which sort of forced Juron to submit to him as his vassal. He still retained his councillorship however.

Meanwhile, Wemer had been looking into media records relating to the Emperor, Richard Bau. He went as far as two decades into the past.

*“When was the last time you saw the emperor?”*

Wemer knew Juron threw him a bait but he also knew it was a valid bait. Just briefly looking into the matter revealed that Richard Bau hadn't been seen for a while as in over a decade.

Apparently, his last confirmed appearance on public was made fourteen years ago. Sevn wasn't pleased to see Wemer devoting most of his recent time looking into the matter.

“He threw you a bone,” Sevn said to Wemer who was clearly focused on thousands of files in a folder which listed media files. “He wants you to do this, so you should do the opposite.”

“But he has a point. Richard Bau hasn’t been seen for over a decade.”

“So what?” Sevn argued. “What are you going to do? Confront the council that he hasn’t been seen and you want to confirm his well-being?”

“Come on. I am not that stupid.”

Confronting the council boldly would cost their lives. But there was a sneaky way of asking the council to gain an audience with the Emperor without causing them to become suspicious of Wemer’s motive.

The Knights, originally, was created to be the Richard Bau’s elite guards. Alas, once created and after Lord Arnkle had fun with it, the group became an elite police instead. It wasn’t Wemer’s fault obviously and he certainly had a right to inquire the council regarding the future of the Knights.

And along the way, he could perhaps kindly ask the council to grant an audience with Richard Bau. Sevn obviously did not like the idea but he was honest that he did not see a flaw in Wemer’s plan.

And so, for the first time, Wemer entered Andromeda council chamber with a right to speak. So far, he had been restricted to a guest seat.

The council chamber was a hall with wooden interior. Seats were positioned in front of an elevated speaker’s desk. Only few seats were filled as Wemer’s visit was a low priority matter to the council.

Mich-Don, the council speaker, waited for Wemer to stand on the speaker’s stage and then spoke.

“This is Wemer, the current leader of the Knights,” He declared, “He has arrived here to inquire us about the future of the Knights. Is this correct?”

Clearing throat, Wemer responded, “Yes, Speaker.”

A councillor spoke calmly, "Excuse my ignorance but I fail to see an issue. Please enlighten us, Wemer."

He went on to explain the situation. He stated that the Knights was supposed to be dedicated royal guards and that the current situation of the Knights wasn't ideal to the original concept. He made his point as polite as possible.

"I see what you are trying to say," Mich-Don replied promptly. "However, we currently do not see an issue with the way the Knights operate, and we do not foresee that the direction is going to change."

It was an indirect and formal way of saying "no" which Wemer expected as much. This wasn't what he was here for.

"I would like to hear what the Emperor has to say," He boldly stated and he was met with a silence. The whole council chamber fell into deep slumber momentarily. Mich-Don's steeled face indicated that he wasn't amused however and what Wemer was about to hear was unexpected.

"Very well. I suppose it is overdue."

Wemer blinked few times. His response wasn't what he expected.

*The hell?*

He soon gathered himself and responded, "You are granting my request, sir?"

"Of course, I don't see any problem. You do have a point, Wemer. You are the current leader of the Knights and you do deserve an audience with the Emperor."

Too easy, he felt. At the same time, I thought Juron might have been wrong and perhaps he did throw a bone just to jest. Either way, he had to go with the flow.

"I'd be grateful, sir," He responded calmly.

The next thing he knew, he was on a shuttle with Mich-Don himself. In fact, Mich-Don was piloting the shuttle himself. Wemer couldn't help but feel strange. Something seemed amiss. He expected paper works and other procedures that

would eat time. He expected at least a season to be able to granted an audience. It was just too suspicious that the house speaker would take him to Richard Bau just like this.

“Do you find it strange?” Glancing back, Mich-Don said to Wemer who was in thoughts.

“Quite frankly, yes.” Wemer replied earnestly because he felt there was no reason to lie. There was a short moment of silence between them until Mich-Don spoke.

“He is old, you know,” He said eventually, “Nobody beats the flow of time.”

“Is he ill?”

“Physically, he is still healthy as a horse. Mentally, it’s questionable.” Mich-Don explained further that Richard Bau had been experiencing occasional mental blackouts which was the known sign of impending spiritual death.

Wemer considered Richard’s age. The public record said he was born on year 9000 Season 2 78th day which would make him well over six hundred years old.

“Isn’t he a class B hyper human?” Wemer questioned, “630 years of age doesn’t seem too old for me for a class B.”

Mich-Don let out of a hollow snicker. Wemer wasn’t sure the intention of it. “He is actually a class D hyper human. In the database, it’s recorded as B in order to deter assassination attempts though.”

Being a class D meant Richard Bau was pretty much an average human being with expected lifespan of about 400 years. If true, he was well past his lifespan which would explain his “occasional mental blackouts”. Wemer felt it was a very sensitive piece of information.

Which logically brought him next question.

“Sir, why are you telling me this?”

Mich-Don’s answer was prompt. “All core councillors are already aware of Richard Bau’s condition. While you are not a council member, you are the leader of the

Knights. I thought you should know. I do trust that your lips are sealed on the matter, yes?”

“Of course, sir, your trust is not misplaced,” Wemer replied firmly. He felt he was being trusted which made him satisfied.

The shuttle made its landing in a very seclusive area. It was a dense forest. The area was obviously cut off from outside. And Wemer could clearly see tens of surface to air turrets around the zone. As soon as Mich-Don and he exited the shuttle, two heavily armed guards approached them and quickly saluted at Mich-Don.

“At ease,” Mich-Don told them.

“Nothing to report, sir,” One of them guards reported.

Nodding at them, Mich-Don walked past them and Wemer followed. They were soon in what Wemer could describe as an underground palace. The whole place was sparkling in faded yellow.

“This place is made of gold, real gold,” Mich-Don remarked.

The walls were pure gold while the floor was gold alloy. There was also a narrow water way in middle. Wemer wasn’t certainly pleased with what he saw. Having born and grown up in a middle class household, such a lavish lifestyle was something he frowned upon but he was fully aware of that his opinion did not matter. Thus, he kept his mouth shut and put on a fake grin with a nod.

While Mich-Don led the way to Richard Bau, Wemer saw a glimpse of how the palace was. There were occasional maids, janitors, and guards. Overall, the place appeared to be mostly empty and lifeless.

And finally they stood before grand doors where there were two alert guards. They glanced at Mich-Don and Wemer and nodded promptly, granting their entrance.

“Let me do the talking,” Mich-Don whispered as they proceeded.

It was a grand hall where there was a golden throne at the furthest end. There was a man in the throne along with two half-naked women. One woman was on top of his knees and another was sitting on one of the throne's arm and was softly caressing the man's cheek.

Once approached, Mich-Don swiftly went down on one knee and dropped his head, which Wemer mimicked at once.

"Sir!" Mich-Don bellowed.

The man, who was whispering romantically with a woman, slowly turned his head toward them.

"Mich, it's been a while." His attention, then, moved further to Wemer. "And who might that be?"

Mich-Don replied promptly, "Sir, this is Wemer, the current leader of the Knights."

The man twisted his head lazily and rolled his eyes as if he had no idea what Mich-Don was talking about. It took some seconds but he finally acknowledged.

"Ah, the Knights." After letting out a snicker, he continued, "Didn't know it actually took off. Wemer, raise your head."

"Do it," Mich-Don whispered.

Wemer slowly raised his head and, when their eyes met, the man declared, "I am Richard Bau, the emperor of Andromeda union. What brings you to my humble home?"

*Humble my butt.*

"I am sure the council speaker should speak on the matter." He dodged and passed the baton to Mich.

"Mich, explain then."

Mich-Don explained the purpose of their visit. After hearing him out, Richard supported his head with his index and middle fingers.

“I wonder why you never informed him in the first place,” He muttered, “I suppose you want me to say it.”

Mich-Don remained silent over Richard’s little complain. Sighing, Richard waved the women away; the women gracefully moved away and stood by the throne.

“I was the one who brought up the idea of the Knights. It was a conversation between I, Mich, and few others. I never talked about it since and was never informed that the Knights actually took off.”

In other words, Richard had nothing to do with any of decisions made for the Knights. Meaning Wemer’s initial demand wanting to know the emperor’s will was moot. And his mental health condition explained lack of his public appearances.

“Thank you, sire,” Wemer said. He did mean so and was grateful to have clouds of doubts wiped out from his mind.

“Yes, well, I-” Richard froze on spot seemingly. Confused, Wemer stared at Richard who seemed to have paused completely. His eyes weren’t blinking at all and it really looked like time had completely shut down around him.

“... Sir?”

It was this moment the women who were standing by the throne dashed in front of him, blocking the view. And Mich stood up at once, turned around to look at Wemer and pointed to the exit.

“Leave now, Wemer. It’s a medical emergency.”

Due to the nature of the situation, he was unable to talk back and was forced to leave the grand hall. The guards escorted him out promptly afterwards, shoved him into a shuttle and sent him away back to the council.

And by end of the day, he was back at the Knights HQ.

In his office, he was in his seat with his arms crossed. He was slowly circling his leather seat while he was in deep thoughts. The whole event happened suddenly and he was literally kicked out but he knew what he saw. Richard Bau froze on

spot. If it was a mental blackout, he would have collapsed instead. What it ultimately meant, he wasn't sure at this point.

But he had a gut feeling that something was going on.

"How did the meeting go?"

Wemer jumped out of his chair and fell onto the floor. "Holy Nebula! You scared the beep out of me! Don't you know manners?! Knock first!"

It was Sevn who entered his office.

"I did knock, for a minute at least."

Panting hardly, Wemer stood up with a grunt and dusted off his suit.

"So?" Sevn pressed. "How did the meeting go?"

"I got a lot more than I bargained for. Let's just put it that way." And then he exclaimed, "Secure the room."

A computerized voice sounded promptly. "Room secured."

Sevn caught on quickly and narrowed his eyes. "What have you found out?"

He explained what happened at the council and how he was subsequently taken to Richard Bau's underground palace, met him, and was kicked out literally. By time Wemer was done telling him, his face was grim.

"Your story is objective, yes?" He wanted to make sure before making any, potentially dangerous, conclusions.

Wemer gave him a firm nod. "I told you what occurred. Nothing else."

Sevn groaned with a troubled face. Eventually, he told him, "Yes, you did get far more than you bargained for. If what you saw was indeed true, the emperor you met may have not been a human."

Wemer guessed, "An android?"

“Maybe, it is a possibility. And by the look of it, the house speaker knew that. What I am concerned right now is what Mich-Don will do against you.”

Both of them agreed that it was too premature to think anything else and decided to wait for Mich-Don’s reaction.

And just as they expected, Wemer was summoned by Mich-Don few days later. However, the trouble was that he wasn’t called to the council. He was called to a private bar.

“It’s a trap,” Sevn insisted, “You go there and you will be assassinated.”

“And if I refuse to go, that’s the same as forfeiting my life,” Wemer argued. “Besides, we don’t know what really happened. He may be calling me for an explanation of the event for all we know.”

Sevn was mostly in agreement but he couldn’t shake off the bad thoughts off his head.

“Take Juun with you at least,” He suggested in the end.

Wemer rejected his proposal adamantly. “No, if I take a bodyguard with me, that’s saying I am suspicious.”

In the end, he chose to go alone. It was a private bar meant for the riches and there were two clearly armed guards at its entrance who glared at his approach but let him pass without any interference.

“Mr. Wemer, here, come on.”

Mich-Don called out as soon as he entered. There were a bartender and Mich divided by a bar table. The bartender was busy preparing drinks and Mich-Don was enjoying a drink. The overall mood was peaceful and there was no indication of any sinister plot at work.

“Sir.” Wemer said with a low tone as he bowed toward Mich before taking a stool and Mich slid a full glass toward him.

“Thank you, sir.”

“You don’t visit this kind of place often, do you?”

“No, sir.”

In fact, not at all. Wemer was born and grown in a middle class household. He never had a lavish lifestyle and had no desire for one, either.

The two men had drinks for a bit while chitchatting and, at one point, Mich-Don brought the main topic.

“About what happened at the palace...”

Wemer quickly improvised a lie. “Yes, sir, I was surprised. He stared at me and froze. I must have made him remind of someone he knew.”

It was a very good excuse, he thought. It just came to him right at the moment he needed to answer. And Mich-Don bought it.

“Yes, he, uh, told me that you reminded him of Acshell the liberator.”

Wemer laughed pleasantly. “Thank you very much for the compliment. I am honored. No wonder he froze up like so.”

Mich replied, “I overreacted; I thought he was having one of those mental blackouts and kicked you out in rush. My apologies.”

“No need for apologies. His health must come first and foremost. As the leader of the Knights, I am glad you did so.”

Mich seemed clearly pleased with Wemer’s answer.

“I suppose the council has overlooked the Knights a little as of late.” He took a slurp and continued, “I promise you that it was never my intention. Budget is never easy to work with.”

“We are fine with the way the things are,” Wemer replied promptly, “Though, yes, some improvements would be welcome.”

Mich laughed out loudly and then told him, "You make a fine negotiator, not letting an opportunity pass, don't you. Very well, speak of one improvement and I shall grant it in the next council session."

There were a lot of things which he wanted to be improved but he knew he couldn't get greedy and more importantly he needed to be careful.

"Thank you for your offer, sir, but I will submit any requests to the council if the need arises."

Mich insisted but Wemer kept on downplaying. In the end, they shared a warm handshake and Wemer was finally let go.

When he left the bar, he found a familiar figure was waiting for him. It was easy to identify him in his white suit.

"Sevn sent you, I assume?"

"Yes."

"I am fine as you can see."

"Too drunk to drive though."

"True that."

Juun pointed backwards with his thumb. "I've got my car parked over there. Let's go."

The next afternoon, when Wemer made it to work, he and Sevn held a meeting in the office. Wemer explained how it went and Sevn was amused mildly.

"That was weird," Sevn remarked with an amused expression.

Wemer replied, "Yes, it was weird and what's weirder is that it actually makes sense."

His improvised lie to Mich-Don and Mich's excuse, it actually fit so well that it sounded pleasurable. He also recalled scant guards at the bar. He actually saw

only two guards by the entrance when he was going in and that was it as far as he could tell. If Mich called him out to assassinate him, there would have been more.

“Maybe, that really was what it was,” Wemer stated with a doubt. It happened very fast back at the palace. He could have been mistaken.

Groaning, Sevn crossed his arms and walked in a circle. He also reluctantly agreed with Wemer that perhaps it was too soon to reach any potentially dangerous conclusions.

And, therefore, for the time being they decided not to have solid doubts.

**Fin**