

Kain and Suu arc is one of my favorite arcs. I have several reasons for this but one of major factors is that this arc is about ordinary people instead of ESPs and whatnot.

Kain is just a guy who's trying to get through his money issues. Suu, she has something to prove to the world. These two people have near opposite outlooks in life.

I'd like to mention that the year is fairly important in all of my stories. The year sets the background.

[Kain and Suu arc] [1] [Kain and Suu] [9610]

Rev 2.2 (Modified on Mar 12 2021)

With United Sol's recent economic crisis, Moon had been hit the hardest by it.

Moon relied on exports for majority of its income. Two of its major exports were Mars and Venus. Having both of the planets declaring independent and turning against United Sol meant that exports were no longer easy.

Many companies that relied on exports to make profits on Moon closed their doors soon after. The company Kain worked for was an entertainment e-book

company which exported e-books to other planets. Their major target audience was Venus, and independence of Venus meant they had just lost their major point of sales.

The company sought ways to resume exporting again, but then United Sol placed embargo on both Venus and Mars.

Critics argued boldly on media outlets that it was a stupid move because Venus and Mars together were very self-efficient. Mars had ACM and Venus had everything else. If anything, United Sol was missing huge chunks of trade profits over the embargo, they argued.

Regardless, the embargo stayed on, and Moon suffered the most from it.

The company Kain worked for wasn't completely defunct yet but it was meant to be soon. With an income projection of 85% less than its last year and with the company not having enough fund to tank the losses, it was going to be defunct.

For the moment, however, he was still employed. The company employees, fully knowing what was at stake, chose not to receive wages in hope of sustaining the losses and perhaps survive the crisis.

He had some balance left in his bank account but with the rent he had to pay for his small apartment, the balance wasn't going to last for long. Two seasons was the max he could last if he attempted to just barely get by. To save every possible credit, he had been visiting a night club had been serving beers and simple meals for free to all, respecting the unemployed people.

The bar would be almost always be crowded and full but the people inside weren't enjoying their time. Everyone was gloomy. No one was smiling, and Kain was no different.

He felt sad that he had to resort doing this just to save some credit but like everyone else in the bar, a choice wasn't a luxury he had at the moment.

He picked an empty table in a corner and sulked. No waitresses came by and he overheard a conversation from a nearby table. There were three guys around their table.

"The workplace that my wife works got closed today." The first guy said with a face that looked almost like bursting into tears. "I lost my job. My wife lost her job. And we've got two kids..." Eventual tears formed in his eyes. "Someone has got to fix this..."

Their table was also empty.

"Do you think they care?" The second guy aggressively talked back. "Why the embargo in the first place?! They know a lot of us earn our living with the exports!"

The third guy chimed in, "Right, they don't care. I bet our existence didn't cross their mind one bit when they decided to place embargo. Fucking politicians."

Fucking politicians indeed, Kain duly agreed.

The first guy covered his face with his hands, rubbing his eyes out of tiredness. He was resisting crying. "I don't know what to do... We can't afford to move away from Moon. What do I do?"

The other two guys could not answer him. They weren't in better situations, either.

Kain sighed deeply. He agreed with them. He had to find another way to make a living.

And then he overheard another conversation from another group.

"We have to play the lottery," One of them said.

Another snickered in response. "Dude, you've always been playing lottery for your entire life. What have you won anyway?"

"I've won plenty!" And his voice died down. "Just not big ones."

"Yeah, that's what happens with lottery. You don't win the big ones, jackass."

"What choice do we even have?"

None of his pals could answer to that.

Even for Kain, luck wasn't something he would have liked to rely upon. He wasn't a type of person who bought lottery tickets to begin with.

The conversations were going uglier and uglier. It was filled with anger, blames, whining toward the government and the politicians.

Kain felt it was time to leave and he slowly got up and left the bar behind. He didn't get to eat but he just didn't care.

It was evening at least by time and girls were picking on their "customers". But none of the girls was picking on Kain as his face clearly said, "I've got no money."

Those who were employed by the Bau was were living on Moon weren't affected by the recent recession, and it showed on streets. There were two distinct kind of people on streets where Kain was taking a walk.

Those who seemed content, thus merrily flattering with girls on streets, and those who lives were at risk, thus looking down and being avoided by girls.

Kain looked at on the dark sky of Moon where countless stars were glimmering.

Sighing, he uttered, "God damn... curse you."

Consumed by doom and gloom, he felt cranky and adventurous. And three women came to his view. Judging by their exquisite suits and purses, he assumed they were daughters of riches. They were chatting and seemed to be enjoying their time.

He assumed they were from Earth and perhaps came here to shop or whatnot. They could have a lot of cash cards in one of those purses.

And then he grew an urge.

He wanted to steal one of those purses. He didn't have much to lose even if he got caught. In fact, he might save some on food expenses if he was jailed.

He gulped. His other consciousness was telling him not to execute what he was about to do but he was tired and pissed off. He just ... had to do something.

He suddenly began to run toward the girls. He bumped into one of the girls roughly and quickly took her purse. Without looking back, he began to run at all cost.

The other two girls started yelling at him who was dashing away.

"Thief! Thief!" They yelled. However, the girl whose purse was stolen remained silent and was looking at him with shocked eyes.

Several people were chasing Kain. He was, without looking back, running at all cost. He was thinking absolutely nothing and kept on running. He quickly took a turn into a narrow alley between buildings.

It was dark and wet. He ran deeper and deeper and soon disappeared into darkness.

How long had he been running, He had absolutely no idea.

When he came to himself, he was on a wet ground. He made turns God knows how many times, so he really had not the slightest idea of where he actually was.

Heavily panting, he uttered loudly, "What ... the ... fuck ..." He coughed few times. "Have I done ..., bullshit..."

The area was completely silent except for his heavy breathing which eventually quieted down.

Water drops from somewhere above dropped onto his cheek. His eyes regained its focus eventually. He slowly stood up and finally realized what he had done, stealing.

"Ha... ha...", He laughed vacantly. "I am a criminal now... Ha.. ha.."

It wasn't a big crime, but for someone who hadn't done anything illegal in his whole life, it was a big deal.

He leaned his back against a dark, wet and dirty wall of a building and sighed, dropping the purse on the ground.

"What the hell have I done?!" He grabbed his hair with both of his hands.

He noticed the purse was open and what appeared to be an ID card came out. He slowly picked up the card. It was indeed an ID card.

On the ID card, there was the picture of the girl Kain had stolen the purse from. She had a short black bob hair. Her eyes were light gray and she had a rather round face, making her look a lot younger than she actually was. The ID displayed her age as 27.

He was staring at the picture of the girl. Then his attention moved to the name box.

{Suu Bau} was displaying on the name box.

"Suu....," He, very slowly, pronounced the name.

9 years later; year 9610

At Jupiter Navy recruit office.

After losing his job roughly 7 years ago, Kain had been a poor freelancer until now. He's been taking part time jobs here and there from time to time to get barely by. He was ready to give up on his current profession and decided to join the navy. It was his last resolution to his financial problems, or it was a great way to run away from his financial problems since, as long as one was employed by United Sol navy, food and basic clothing were provided for free of charge.

Kain wasn't the only one who thought of joining the navy as a solution. Many others had similar thoughts in deep economy recession that showed no end.

The recession started from Moon where Kain resided. It spread further throughout Sol system. It was getting worse and there seemed to be no light at the end of the tunnel. At least, Kain did not see an end to the recession and chose to enlist.

He entered the navy office. It was not crowded but certainly was busy. He didn't have any knowledge about the navy. Therefore, he decided to get to know what he was getting himself into before signing up. He spotted several women in a rather tight uniform wandering around. He figured those women were helpers.

"Excuse me, ma'am. Can I ask you few questions?"

The woman in a uniform turned around and smiled at Kain. "What can I do for you?"

He wanted to be a captain of a ship, so he asked how it would be done.

The woman gave Kain a lot of information that he could not understand all at once. It even made him dizzy. She was unnecessarily talkative in addition.

Thanking her regardless anyway, Kain hurried himself to a counter where an officer was taking application forms.

"Could I have an application form?" Kain asked formally.

"Level one form or Level two form?"

Kain did not exactly know what he was talking about, so he simply guessed.

"Pardon?"

She looked at him strangely for a moment. She eventually simply gave him two forms of each to compare. An application form in Two Clusters were either old-fashioned paper form or electronic holographic form. Processing holographic forms required a certain degree of infrastructure, so it wasn't common on under developed planets like Pluto and Freebie.

Clicking a question mark on top right side of each form with a finger popped up an additional vertical holographic window that explained what the form was for.

Level one application form was for those who wished to apply for non-critical positions, such as repairman, maintenance crew, general crew, engineer, and such.

Level two application form was for those who wished not to care about being placed in positions that required responsibilities. The reason for level one form

was simple. There were those who simply wanted an easier life. There was little risk in careers of level one applicants unless, of course, they somehow screwed up badly.

Level two applicants' career carried risks. They would eventually become captains, first officers, chiefs of departments where they needed to take on responsibilities of their actions far more than level one applicants did.

The reward? The reward was glory and fame. Only level two applicants had a chance to become captains and higher positions. At the same time, a wrong decision at a wrong moment could jeopardize one's career easily.

For Kain, the choice was no brainer. He chose level 2 applicant form.

Although there were a lot of questions that he need to write an answer on, most of which was confusing at best, he managed to fill out his form and submitted.

That was all he needed to do for the day.

He had been at Jupiter station for few years. Leaving Moon left a bad taste in his mouth, but he had to do what he had to do. He was going to starve to death if he chose to stay put.

He had been writing bits of materials for a local online magazine. "Bits" because the magazine company bought the materials as their own. Kain's name wasn't published. In return, he was paid slightly more per bit. The pay wasn't just good enough for a stable life, thus he was joining the navy. He never thought he'd end

up joining the navy, but he figured he'd go for it and see where this new career would take him to.

Jupiter living quarters, AKA Jupiter outpost, was where majority of non-military personnel was residing. It was a completely separated outpost from well-known Jupiter Assault outpost. The living quarter outpost was connected to Jupiter shipyard where majority of civilians were employed.

The first impression of the outpost when he had just arrived was a tropical vacation destination of some sort. Shop decorations were bright and lively and artificial sky was clear blue with very little clouds. It gave overall very bright and warm impression.

Of course, first impression wasn't everything. People were fairly friendly compared to how cranky Moon inhabitants could get. Everything on Moon was dark and gloomy. In contrast, everything on Jupiter outpost was bright and lively.

Kain settled down well in the outpost. He had little complaints except for his low income. Because of his non-military education background, he couldn't take on being an engineer which was a lucrative job. Therefore, instead, he chose to an officer. They still needed some knowledge in engineering but not as deep.

Returning to his quarter which was a one-room apartment with basic utilities, he laid down on his bed and turned TV on. A holographic TV appeared on ceiling he was staring at.

A finely dressed beautiful announcer appeared on screen.

“Hello, fellow Jupitians!” She spoke in a bright and charming tone. “How are you today? Today is Year 9610 Season 3 27th day.”

“Year 9610...” Kain mumbled. “Time sure flies fast...”

Beaming a smile, she spoke, “First news for today is about pirate activities around Uranus. A patrol group has identified pirate activities around trade routes around Uranus....”

Jupiter was in charge of securities in Outer Sol. It was simply because Jupiter assault station had the men power and ships.

She continued, “Fortunately, our patrol teams were able to draw them away. Administrator Emuel has voiced his concerns of increasing pirate activities in the area.

Emuel was appointed to replace former Administrator Rommel who had seemingly disappeared from the face of universe one day. His disappearance left no trace and whatsoever that it became a mystery. There were rumors that he fled Sol system with an expedition fleet that was dispatched some years ago. Why he’d choose to disappear like that remained mystery.

Long story short, President Gvew appointed Emuel to place Rommel. It was well known that Gvew and Emuel never got along well. Those two men were seen as rivals instead of friends. For Kain, he couldn’t care less.

The next day, Kain was summoned to the office and was told to submit his ID while training in order to upgrade the security level on the ID. He was also told that background checks would be done meanwhile, none of which he had problems with.

He had no criminal records. He had nothing to hide.

He, then, was taken to a classroom where there were thirty people inside.

Kain noticed a familiar face. He couldn't recognize the face immediately. It was Suu who Kain once stole her purse a long time ago out of desperation. He blushed, suddenly feeling the guilt. Regardless, Suu did not seem to recognize Kain at all as she barely saw his face when he stole her purse.

The first few days of training were basic instructions; it was easy. Kain got to know few people in the class in progress, but he avoided Suu.

As far as he remembered, Suu was from the Bau. He couldn't imagine why such a woman like her would want to join the navy. Level one, he could understand, but everyone in the class was intended for level two applicants.

Meanwhile, after few days of the class, Kain was informed that his background checks resulted no ill records, and therefore, his application was accepted fully and he was given a rank of trainee.

The training became progressively complicated, and by time the class was near its conclusion, they were being taught basic engineering and understanding of a space ship for their upcoming field test.

"You will have to form a group of five. I suggest you group up with people you are friendly with," Their instructor informed them at the end of their class. "Each group will be given a basic training frigate class vessel. Five people can operate the vessel with ease.

Communication is allowed only until you leave docking bay. Once you are outside, comm. is receive-only. Breaking this rule will disqualify you from this course. Your task is simple. Race to a given waypoint."

He paused and looked at the class for any reactions or questions. Then he continued.

"The frigate has two projectile turrets on sides and each of the turrets has one thousand ammo loaded. The ammo payload has been reduced that it will do only ten percentage of its original damage. You may fire on other teams and disable their frigates, but do not, I repeat, do not destroy opponents. If you do, you will be kicked out of this course and will be charged with first-degree murder.

The mission will begin tomorrow morning. I suggest you find yourself a group as soon as you can. Those who are unable to find a group will automatically be kicked out of this course. Any questions?"

There was no questions.

"Very well, see you tomorrow."

There were thirty applicants and quickly they were divided into six groups.

Kain hailed his group.

"Hey, guys. My name is Kain."

His four members nodded and none of them chose to introduce themselves.

Smiling slightly nervously, Kain told them. "Your names, guys? We will be working together after all?"

"Not for long," A guy said. "But, why not I guess. I am Anderson."

After Anderson, another guy introduced himself. "Derek here."

"Paco here."

"... Todd," The final guy said shyly.

"Okay, see you tomorrow, I guess," Kain told them and they left at once. There was no team spirit or whatsoever. He had to sigh.

In the next day morning, Kain and his group were staring at the training frigate vacantly.

"This is ... our vessel?" Todd uttered.

Anderson was in agreement. "This ship belongs to a junkyard," He said.

"Well, it's a training frigate, remember? Let's get on with it," Kain said.

It basically looked like a square box with an engine attached on its back and two turrets attached on sides. It had a narrow but wide thick window on each side which allowed direct view.

Internally, it had one fusion reactor on its back, cockpit with old fashioned LED monitors on front, and manual controls for the turrets on sides. It had a toilet room on its back alongside the fusion reactor. The ship was as basic as it could get and it had a name; USF Junker 5.

Kain took the cockpit seat while others stationed themselves.

Kain said over the comm., "Let's get this over with guys. Others might be waiting outside. System all green, we are ready to take off, control tower."

"Permission granted. Good luck." It was the instructor's voice.

There were already five other frigates in space already and they had lined up. USF Junker 5 quickly joined the line.

The instructor made a quick briefing.

“Alright, everyone. Don’t feel pressured. This is a friendly race. Whether you use your weapons will be completely up to you. You should now see a marker on your nav LED panel. Your job is to get there as soon as possible. I must also remind you that you must not use your comm. to communicate with other groups. You may, however, opt to use it to communicate with me in emergency. Everyone ready? You may answer this one.”

“Aye, sir,” Kain responded.

“Alright, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1..., go!”

The frigates were slow as turtle and every frigates were going evenly. No frigate was overcoming or another.

“What the, this isn’t a race. It’s just smooth sailing,” Kain remarked.

For first half an hour, the so-called race was smooth. No one was overcoming another and there was nothing to rave about the race.

“Uh, oh,” Todd blurted suddenly. “Uh, oh!”

“What!” Kain exclaimed.

“The reactor, its output is dropping.”

“What? What do you mean?”

Todd explained, "It's going to slow down."

Just as Todd explained, USF Junker 5 was slowing down and the other five frigates were going ahead of them.

Kain jumped off cockpit chair and ran to the reactor which Todd was tinkering with. Anderson was looking through a window.

"Well, fix it fast. We are the only one who's going behind!" Kain demanded.

"I am not sure what's wrong," Todd responded as he tinkered with reactor control panel. Paco was idly watching and Derek ran to a turret.

"If we are slowing down, we might as well take them down with us!" Derek shouted as he aimed a turret at the closest frigate.

No one had any authority over others. Kain knew this but still he attempted to stop Derek.

"No, stop!" Kain exclaimed and ran toward Derek who was about to pull a trigger. They struggled a bit before Derek threw Kain off his back and started to fire. USF Junker 3's engine blew off from continuous shots from USF Junker 5 and USF Junker 3 started to fire on other frigates soon after.

In less than ten minutes of gun blazing, none of the frigates was capable of racing. All of them had their engines blown and the race could not be completed. However, the instructor had other ideas.

"All of you are to finish the race," He spoke over the comm. "Repair the engine if you must."

Todd was checking the engine and he shook his head to the others. "I have no idea how I could repair this. Everything is in bits."

"Let me take a look," Kain said and Todd moved away. Everything was indeed in bits and the frigate had no spare parts on anything. "Damn," He uttered. "We are stuck for sure."

Derek said with a pleasant laugh, "At least everyone else should be stuck also!"

Kain walked over a window and saw outside where a nearby frigate was idly floating around. He could see that the crew inside was arguing through their window.

"Some way... There must be some way...," He mumbled. Then, an idea popped in his head. "Can we use our thrusters as our main propulsion source?" He asked the others but no one answered him. "Does anyone know?"

They had no idea. He was about to hit comm. to ask others how but realized that it wasn't allowed. He knew Morse code however. Grabbed a flash light found in the cockpit, he ran to a window and initiated transmitting Morse code.

"What are you doing?" Derek asked.

"I am sending Morse code. I need to ask something," Kain replied.

"What's mooure code?"

"Not mooure, Morse. It's an ancient on-off signal code. Handy when everything goes down and all you have is a light source."

However, no one seemed to know how to respond to his Morse code. He tried other window and sent a message again. This time, there was an answer. To his surprise, it was Suu who answered.

Kain's question was simple: "Can we use our thrusters as main propulsion source?"

Suu's answer was: "No."

She wasn't about to explain because it'd take too long.

"Some other way...," Kain mumbled while looking around for a clue. "There must be ..." His eyes went over empty shells of ammo that were scattered around the floor and he recalled each turret held one thousand ammunitions.

He ran to a turret Derek used and checked its ammo. There were still hundreds left. The other turret wasn't used.

"Todd, do you think we can use this turret to generate enough momentum to move forward?" He asked Todd because he seemed to know more than others when it came to engineering. Todd walked to the turret and got down to check empty shells.

"It could work but we will have to disable auto-balance and turn thrusters off completely. I am not sure whether the system allows that," He said.

Kain quickly dashed over to the cockpit and checked through menu. "I see an option to disable auto-balance. I don't see anything about turning off thrusters though."

Todd also came over to the cockpit. "Turning off auto-balance will probably turn them off."

After turning off auto-balance, they rotated their ship sideways at which point they started to fire a turret. Because it was a projectile turret using old-fashioned gun power shells, it created enough and consistent recoil to push the ship to a direction they wanted. They fired two hundred shots to create enough momentum for 5km /h. If the frigate had auto-balance on, its thrusters would have kicked in and attempted to balance the ship.

And once others saw, they followed the same, shifting their ship sideways and firing their turret after disabling auto-balance.

It took them ten hours but they managed to complete the race. The frigates were towed by a cruiser soon after.

In a docking bay, the instructor was giving out his speech to the thirty students.

"Good job, everyone." He clapped few times as he said. "I was expecting the chaos to occur. It has happened almost every time." Smiling, he continued, "Anyway, the field test is over and we will notify you your overall result later on."

Loosening his shoulders, Kain exhaled deeply. It was a long day for him. They were dismissed and were free to roam but having spent more than 10 stressful hours, he was hungry and tired. He visited a cafeteria and there was Suu on counter who noticed him.

“Hello,” Suu greeted Kain.

“Hello,” He greeted back carefully while avoiding any eye contact. He went straight for a bartender and asked for a menu.

“I was surprised that you knew Morse code,” Suu said. She noticed that Kain was avoiding eye contact.

“Well, I was ... a journalist and a freelancer... I wrote an article or two about Morse code. That’s how I learned it,” He replied while looking for menu.

He talked while Suu was looking at him. He did his best to focus on the menu. He was sweating, well almost. Suu felt something was amiss about his behavior but there wasn’t anything she could do.

“I see. Well, hopefully we will see each other again.” Having said so, she left the counter and picked a table.

“Phew,” Kain let out of a long sigh of relief. “Omurice please.”

“Coming right up,” The bartender responded promptly.

A week later, Kain was summoned to a facility. The instructor was present in a room he was told to go.

“Hello, Mr. Kain. Have a seat.”

The instructor had a report paper with him which was laid down on table between them.

“Congratulations, you’ve passed,” He told Kain indifferently. “In fact, I’d say you were the hero of the race. It was you who came up with the idea of using a turret to propel the frigates, yes?”

Kain nodded carefully.

The instructor continued, “You may have not noticed, but we had video feed and were watching. You are a leadership material and you will start as a captain of a patrol frigate soon.”

“Captain, me? Already?”

The instructor smiled and said, “Captain, yes, but of a frigate. There is a sky of difference between a captain of a frigate and a captain of a cruiser.”

“I see. Yes, you have a point there.”

And then the instructor placed down his new ID. What Kain had before was a civilian grade ID. What he placed down on the table was a navy grade ID with increased security level.

“You are now a cadet and your security level has increased. You no longer need permits to visit others planets. This privilege is required for navy captains, so there you have it.”

The instructor stood up, telling him, “My job is now done. Further detail will be sent to you via e-mail. For now though, you are free, so enjoy your time.” Then he offered a handshake. “By the by, my name is Graeto.”

Taking the handshake, Kain told Graeto, “Thanks, I hope to see you around.”

- Fin