

[Kain and Suu arc] [6] [Admiral Kain] [9633]

Rev 1.6 (Last modified on Mar 11, 2021)

The second part of the story.

The first part is: **[Shattered union arc] [8] [2nd Sol-Andromeda war] [9633]**

The third, final, part is: **[Juron arc] [5] [New enemies] [9633]**

Prerequisite stories

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

And all previous stories in this (Kain and Suu) arc.

Related stories

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

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

[Juron arc] [4] [The council] [9616]

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

Kain, Ritsuki, Suu, Magenta, and Samuel had files of papers on a round desk in a closed quarter. Kain had a file of papers in his hands and was reading off a page.

“Okay, our annual loss has gone down to just 5 mil now. Considering we were in deep fucked up red, I’d say we are successful,” He said.

Uranus outpost had been going through a hellish period ever since Kain was appointed. Regardless, Kain’s popularity and his friendly methods meant that the outpost saw a huge boost in its local population. What was once only fifty thousand became two hundred thousand and the outpost saw two major expansions of its residential district.

Furthermore, the commercial deals with Freedom colony bore its fruits years after its inception. Initially, it was just random travelers who were merely passing by. As traveler traffic grew, Uranus outpost businesses benefited from them. More traffic meant more businesses started to establish themselves. More businesses meant more people settling down.

What was a simple and small trade hub was turning into a major hub. And high security around the station also played a part.

Kain played a part.

Rituski played a part.

Suu also played a part.

And Magenta played a part as well.

Magenta joined Kain and Co about a decade ago after revealing herself to Kain that she was originally sent to keep eyes on him. When Kain heard that he laughed his ass off.

“Does that mean I am an important person?” was his initial response when she revealed herself and her purpose.

He wasn't a bureaucrat by birth indeed. He wasn't taught the values and etiquette as a bureaucrat in his upbringing which meant that he couldn't care less about Magenta's purpose.

“I could get you into troubles,” She responded stoically in response to his rude laughter.

And his response was awkward, to her at least.

“Do I get to keep my cruiser in the worst case?”

Unsure of Kain's intention, she answered yes then he responded promptly.

“So be it. I guess I will sail the universe instead then.”

Magenta realized Kain couldn't really care less. He was simply doing what he had to do in his position. He had neither agenda nor ambition. He was simply doing what he was supposed to do; as an administrator of Uranus outpost, his job was to administrate the outpost and make the place prosper.

It was such an obvious fact but such obvious facts had eluded many administrators. To be more precise, such basic facts had completely eluded the

Bau administrators mostly. She had watched over many low to high ranking Bau officers embezzling every source of credit they could before they were either suspended from their posts or Magenta stopped them. She had seen so many of such cases that she automatically assumed Kain was the same.

But he was not. In some ways, Kain was just a simple man who was doing what he was supposed to do.

And there was something else; it was her hair which was magenta in color. It was an extraordinarily rare genetic mutation that caused her hair, all of her hair, to be in magenta in color. She was informed by a doctor that there had been only three cases with the last reported case being well over a thousand years ago. She was also told that her mutated hair color would unlikely be carried over to her offspring.

But such facts were none of her concern. She loathed her hair color because her unusual hair color oversexualized her. Almost every man she had spied, they usually attempted to hit on her. At one point of her life, she shaved her hair off used a wig which became tiresome. Therefore, she eventually went back to having her natural hair.

Then, again, Kain reacted differently to her unusual hair color. Men's marital status never really mattered in her case. Men usually came after her. But his first reaction to her unusual hair color was ...

“Hey, Riki, don't you ever dye hair like that.”

Ritsuki pouted in response, "I've dyed my hair a little but I wouldn't dye it with such a bold color."

He crossed his arms. "I am just saying. You did dye your hair red few seasons ago. Think about the mess. You don't usually clean, so I'd have to clean up such purple mess or goo?"

She raised her voice a little. "I thought you liked the red dye?"

"Looked good for a while. Freaked me out in the morning though. For God's sake, why do you always use cheap dyes that get onto your skin after a night?"

"Well, duh, sorry for trying to save some credit."

Then they started to argue in front of Magenta.

"It's not like we are short financially," Kain talked back rather fiercely. "It's just few credits more for better quality dyes."

In return, Ritsuki raised her voice further while looking annoyed. "Listen, I grew up while being educated to save every bit of credits if able. It's not like I am using your credit, so get off my butt."

He argued, "It is not like your wage is low. The amount you are trying to save is like a drop of water in a swimming pool. Every time you dye your hair, you leave your pillow the color of your dye. I bet you are losing more money on the pillow than what you save from the cheap dyes."

“Um,” Magenta attempted to meddle in by stating, “This is my natural hair color...”

But her statement fell onto deaf ears as Kain and Ritsuki’s argument became louder and louder. Samuel and Suu eventually had to separate the two.

“I am not letting you touch my boobs tonight!” Ritsuki yelled as Suu dragged her away.

“Well, fine! It’s not like your boob is big anyway! A pillow feels just as good!” Kain shouted as Samuel dragged him away.

Magenta watched the whole fight unfold before her eyes and, by time they were separated, there were faint tears in her eyes but, at the same time, a smile on her face.

This was her first time she wasn’t sexualized when a topic of her hair color was talked about. She vividly recalled the eyes of the men when they walked about her hair color. It certainly did not help that she had a glamorous body.

It was a comical scene, for her at least. She recalled she was wiping out tears off her eyes with a smile on her face while Samuel and Suu were desperately trying to separate the married couple away from each other. Recalling the moment made her smile.

“What are you grinning about?” Kain asked as he noticed her grin.

“Nothing,” She replied right away.

Magenta did play a part in Kain's success. She posed in ads which Uranus outpost displayed and, at one point, even before she realized, she had become "Miss Uranus outpost". Then there were gossips of her being Kain's mistress but she paid no attention to such rumors because it wasn't true. Kain didn't care. Ritsuki didn't care. Therefore, Magenta didn't care, either.

It eventually became too comfortable for her to leave Kain's side, and eventually when Fraser wanted her to leave, she simply chose not to. What would be the point of going back to her uncle? If she went back, she'd go back to spying on others and the same pattern would emerge again.

"There is one pending deal I really dislike," Suu remarked, "It's the IMG deal."

"The porn channel from Freedom colony?" Ritsuki responded as she seemingly picked up a random paper from a file.

"It pays the most though," Kain said. "All they are asking is few cover pictures."

Suu pointed at herself and then at Magenta. "Half naked pictures of me and Magenta. Surely, you can't approve this deal?"

"I don't mind," Magenta responded, and Suu glanced sideways at her with a frown.

"Fine, she may not mind but I do," Suu insisted. "I did not enter the navy to pose half-naked in a porn ad."

“Pretty please?” With puppy eyes, Kain casually begged.

“No means no. I am not posing for a porn channel.”

In the end, the deal stood because Magenta agreed to pose fully naked. This was a full frontal naked picture that she agreed.

“You don’t mind?” Suu inquired when Magenta suggested going for full frontal naked pictures only for her to make the deal stand. “Don’t you have any pride?”

Magenta replied, “I do have pride but a different kind of pride. They want to see my body which is a form of compliment.”

Suu looked obviously displeased, and Magenta added, “As long as no man’s junk is entering me, I don’t mind.”

“Ladies...,” Samuel cleared his throat as he made his point.

“What?” Magenta shrugged. “It’s not like we are underage kids here. We are all adults.”

Indeed, but posing in full nude for everyone to see wasn’t something anyone could do. In this case, Magenta wasn’t even being paid. Well, a payment would go to Uranus outpost instead.

“A charity work,” She concluded the argument.

The meeting of crunching numbers was concluded shortly after.

Magenta also had connections which helped Kain’s cause from time to time. In one case where the outpost was cutting down fleet maintenance so deep that

they were lacking some of its supplies, it was her connection that allowed some emergency loans from other wealthy Bau officers.

“A loan?” Kain was puzzled when a mysterious supply freight came into docking bay and claimed that it was for Magenta.

“Or blackmailing. Whichever suits you better,” She explained with a sarcastic shrug.

“Huh?”

Magenta, on an order from the Bau council, had spied on a lot of Bau officers. She had the authority to even kill them if required. In some cases, she let them go and let them owe her favors. She kept evidence and, in this case, blackmailed them for a favor.

“This freight carries cargo that’s worth well over 10 mil,” Kain read through a datapad which was showing its cargo content. “It is what we exactly need right now though.”

“So, will you take it then?”

“Do I need to pay back?”

“Nope.”

He smiled. “Good, I will take whatever I can get.”

Magenta also liked the fact that Kain was very flexible. He wasn’t a man who was willingly crossing the line but, if pushed, he’d cross the line and wouldn’t feel moral dilemmas. She loathed hypocrites, and Kain wasn’t a hypocrite. He said he’d

take whatever he could get and he duly meant it even if the sources were shady. He wasn't also someone who spoke of high moral values on surface and did something completely opposite in shadow.

She wasn't merely assisting Kain just because of his qualities. Len had been regularly contacting her, asking her how she was doing and whatnot. At the same time, he also updated her on national issues. Magenta and Len went way back as they were childhood friends and they were quite close although they were just friends. At least, to Magenta, Len was just a childhood friend. His progressively darkening tones alerted her that things could get really hairy one point which was why she was helping Kain in any way she could.

After all, Uranus outpost would be the first line of defense in case of invasion.

A lot of Bau members did not take the danger of invasion seriously. They truly firmly believed that "colonists" weren't capable of such.

Of course, they were in fact invaded few decades ago on year 9614 but the invasion fleet was repelled and there wasn't any serious damage inflicted from it which further fueled them to believe that a real invasion was nothing but a fiction created by schemers.

Magenta, too, did not take the possibility of invasion seriously at first. However, staying away from Inner sol enabled her to learn more about the true situation.

It was year 9622. She hadn't joined Kain and Co at that time and was just killing time in the outpost. It was a pure coincidence that she ran into a group of people who appeared to be scheming something against Kain. She spotted them in a bar and they were exchanging information via texts on datapads. At any other night, she would have probably ignored them. But at that particular night, they bothered her. She shadowed one of them after they left the bar and managed to knock him down in an alley.

The datapad he was carrying contained a plan to carry out spreading false rumors about Kain in an attempt to unseat him. The datapad also carried a plan B which was Kain's assassination. Long story short, Magenta wiped them out the next day and joined Kain and Co soon after.

The fact that someone was actually trying to get rid of him proved that something sinister was going on. She thought it could have been the Bau council but realized that it wasn't them after an investigation. She couldn't find out who ordered them but it was definitely someone outside of Sol system.

Kain was a lucky man. If Magenta hadn't stopped the schemers, he would have faced troubles.

When year turned 9633 Season 2 87th day, one of Suu's patrol fleets had spotted a massive incoming fleet. Uranus outpost wasn't supposed to patrol that far but Suu had been sweeping Outer Sol clean of pirates.

“A fleet of twenty six thousand ships?!” Suu literally jumped out of her captain’s chair when she received the reports.

“There is no doubt, ma’am.”

She had a lot going on in her mind, trying to come up with a solution. Granted, there was nothing she could do at this point. Still, she spun her brain as fast as she could. There was nothing.

“Call back all patrol fleets at once. We are returning to the outpost,” She commanded.

Kain acted similarly when he received the report from Suu. He almost jumped out of his chair.

“T, Twenty six...” He mumbled and then he nervously smiled. “This is so fucked up and I am finding this funny,” He said with a crooked smile.

Ritsuki, Suu, Magenta, and Samuel were in the office along with Kain. None of them responded to his joke. The situation was dire.

“Well, send the report to Earth. I don’t think we will be involved in this because this is way out of our league,” He said.

“Should we inform the public?” It was Suu who asked.

“Yes, inform them now. Tell them to leave if they need,” He responded with a long sigh. However, Magenta voiced her concern.

“Telling them now will cause only chaos. They will find out soon enough on their own. We don’t need to tell them now,” She argued.

“No.” He refused. “Tell them now and empty docking bays in case Earth defense fleet wants to use it.”

“Aye, sir,” Samuel responded and left the office.

“Riki,” He called out.

And she replied casually, “Yeah?”

“Perform the repairs we’ve been progressively doing. Do them now and reinforce the weak points Maeka engineers pointed out.”

She responded with a firm nod, “Got it.”

“And Suu.”

“Yes?”

“Get all ships and perform checkups. I know we’ve been delaying some minor repairs but do them now. I want all of the ships in prime conditions.”

Suu gave a firm nod.

“And...” He looked at Magenta. He didn’t have any orders for her actually.

“I will stay by your side,” Magenta said before Kain could say further.

“If you say so.”

Once the others left to carry out Kain’s orders, Magenta explained, “Kain, you need a bodyguard, so that is why I am staying by your side.”

“A bodyguard? Since when have I become important enough for assassination?”

He smiled with a shrug.

“You are important, Kain,” She said, adding, “Whether you realize or not, you are in charge of the first defense of Sol system.” She knew Kain was a target for assassination but she wasn’t going to tell him that someone actually tried to unseat and assassinate him.

“I am not going to argue with you,” He responded, “So do as you like.”

When Uranus outpost inhabitants were informed that a massive invasion from Andromeda union was coming, there was a brief moment of panic and chaos. A small number of inhabitants as well as businessmen rushed to leave. Their number was barely a thousand in total. Majority of the inhabitants did not wish to leave the outpost, for they did not want to restart their lives anew elsewhere. Kain’s fair administration certainly had a good part in their decision to stay put. And they did more than just staying put. Many local inhabitants volunteered to assist Maeka engineers in reinforcing the station interiors.

The shield technology did exist for space stations but their immense size meant that shields were virtually useless because it’d required so much powers to keep the shields on. In non-combat situations, shields were off to save powers. In combat situations, shields would be turned on but it was weak due to the large surface it had to cover.

Therefore, it came down to armor plating to protect station hull frames. Ever since the Maeka engineers came along, they had studied the station structures and pointed numerous weak points.

Kain did acknowledge the issues but, with the financial situations, he was unable to approve the renovations which also the Maeka fully acknowledged and therefore did not push the issue. Now that a full blown war was upcoming, he gave green light to all previously suggested renovations.

There was no sense of doom and gloom and everyone was busy doing their given tasks, and few days later, they received words that Earth defense fleet led by Moon administrator Gareto had departed and was on their way.

Normally, they'd be overjoyed to hear the news, but Kain along with others' reactions weren't too positive. Earth defense fleet alone wasn't enough. Jupiter administrator Emuel would have to join. And Emuel himself was bad news. They couldn't quite be sure but deep down they had a gut feeling that it would be down to them who would have to battle the invasion fleet.

Therefore, they worked hard on the renovations and ship repairs.

Time flew fast and Earth defense fleet was within visual range from Uranus outpost.

Kain, Suu, and Magenta were on the station bridge. Ritsuki was preoccupied with renovations at the moment.

“Sir, the fleet is in visual range.”

Kain nodded. “Alright, open a channel to them.”

“Aye, sir.”

Suu and Magenta were standing left and right from Kain’s chair.

As soon as Gareto’s face appeared on a holographic screen, he immediately let out of a laughter.

“Fate does strange things,” He said, “Not in a million years did I think I’d see you in a place of Uranus outpost administrator.”

“Is that a compliment or else?” Magenta whispered with a shrug. From Gareto’s side, Suu and Magenta weren’t seen.

“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.

Sighing, Suu shook her head. In contrast, Magenta grinned and whispered, “My boobs are much bigger though.”

“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.”

“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.”

Grateo smiled mysteriously.

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

Taking a brief look up and down on Ritsuki, Gareto inquired her, “Of Maeka, yes?”

“Yes,” She replied as Kain and she led him out of the crowded cafeteria.

When Gareto was led to a private bar which was a part of Kain’s private quarter, there were Suu and Magenta. Suu was in her usual navy wardrobe while Magenta

was in her usual outfit which was basically a gray leather jacket and a dark flippy mini skirt. Gareto had to whistle as he saw the two extra women in the bar.

“Who are the fine ladies?”

Suu saluted. “I am Captain Suu, Admiral.”

As for Magenta, she casually introduced herself, “My name is Magenta. I am just an agent working under the Commodore.”

“Oh, really.” Gareto was mildly disappointed. He thought they were hookers, and Magenta caught on.

“You look disappointed, Admiral. Did you think we were hookers?”

Suu looked shocked at Magenta’s statement while Gareto shrugged. “My apologies.”

Rituski stood behind a counter and started to mix drinks. Magenta was cracking an ice cube and Suu sat down on a stool next to Gareto along with Kain.

“Commodore, I must say I am quite jealous. Look at the ladies you have around you. You live in paradise,” Gareto stated.

“They are my co-workers, sir,” Kain responded casually. “We have mutual respects to each other. They just happen to be females. Of course, I sleep with one of them obviously.”

Chuckling, Magenta added, “And enjoy touching her boobs.”

“So what?” Kain talked back half-jokingly. “A husband can’t touch his wife’s boobs?”

“You are obsessed with playing boobs,” Ritsuki added.

Suu remained quiet and was simply drinking shots.

Gareto watched the three having casual chatters and he was quite indeed envious of Kain’s harem although he wasn’t certain he would be able to maintain relationships with three such fine women at once.

“Oh, my word, ladies...” Samuel uttered when he entered the bar. “Will you ladies ever stop talking about lewd topics?”

“Hey, don’t include me,” Suu replied stoically.

“Samuel!” Kain, a little tipsy at this point, welcomed him with open arms. “Come on over. This is Admiral Gareto. Sir, this is Samuel who used to be my first officer.”

“Sir!” Samuel saluted at once.

“He now runs things around here when I am not around,” Kain added.

It was strange but Gareto felt like being at a cozy home. There was a mildly crazy character in Magenta and there was a strict character in Suu. Ritsuki appeared to be in between of the two. Samuel was a disciplinarian like Suu, and finally there was Kain who held them all together.

He found hard to believe that none of the relationships was sexual. Even his relationship to his wife didn’t appear to be romantic. The relationships appeared

to be completely mutual. In other words, they were there with Kain because they desired so. They weren't seeking some form of payment or reward from him.

Graeto eventually left to command his fleet when Emuel arrived some days later. Before Emuel arrived, he spent most of time partying in Uranus outpost red district.

Seeing off the two fleets, Suu remarked.

"I don't have a good feeling about the upcoming battle."

Kain and Magenta were also there in an observation deck. Ritsuki had gone back to help her fellow Maeka engineers.

"How so?" Kain inquired.

"The guy spent the whole time partying and stuff. He doesn't strike me as a good one," Suu stated. And although Magenta refused to chip in her comment, she agreed in silence. To Magenta, Gareto was one of the typical bureaucrat types she encountered so many times.

They always wanted women.

They always wanted something that he didn't, or couldn't, have.

She certainly noticed Gareto's passive eyes of enviousness; he wanted Kain's women. He wanted Kain's influence.

Meaning, to her he was a small man with small potentials.

For Suu, his loose attitude prior one of the most important battles bothered her. If it were her, she wouldn't have left her ship. She would have stayed with her fleet and would have installed further discipline into her crews. She would have made sure that her crews were more than willing to die for the cause.

For her, that was what it was like to be an admiral. At this point, although she could not foresee how, she had gut feelings that Gareto would lose the battle and that Uranus outpost would be under heavy duress.

She recalled the very moment she received the report of the invasion fleet. She almost jumped out of her chair. It was twenty six thousand. No matter how hard she tried to think, she simply saw no way to combat them with what Kain had.

However, for her, that did not mean defeat. For her, if a battle was impossible to win, then she would do her best to hold the line and perish. That was her ways of a fight.

That was what her father would have done.

Sighing, she turned around at once and walked away from the glass wall.

"Where are you going?" Kain casually asked.

"I am going to check every ship we have and train the crews," She replied while walking away.

"But we already checked the ships."

Without answering Kain, she simply left the observation deck.

“Whatever floats your goat,” He joked with a shrug.

“Goat? Shouldn’t it be boat?” Magenta questioned.

“I think it’s a goat in this case,” He replied with a chuckle.

She crossed her arms. “Regardless, she has a point. She is foreseeing that Gareto is going to lose.”

“Well..., he thought you and Suu were hookers. That tells much about him. I can see how he could have seen you as a hooker but Suu?”

“Hey.” Magenta pouted. “No offense taken though.”

“And no offense meant. I thought your dressing code leaves much to be desired though. You shouldn’t wear a mini skirt in low and zero gravity.”

“Believe or not, I hate pants. Whenever I wear pants, I kind of feel heat accumulating. So, I decided to expose my legs instead of showing belly by wearing a tank top or something.”

Kain rolled his eyes and gave what she said a thought. “In that case, it’s probably better to expose legs then.”

“See?”

“Simply because I prefer looking at legs than belly,” Kain joked.

She shrugged, “Hey, dude, whatever floats your goat.”

They laughed.

He asked casually, “By the by, do you know what a goat is?”

The moral of the outpost was low. Ever since Earth defense fleet and Jupiter fleet left, everyone was progressively becoming anxious about the outcome of the upcoming battle. Should Earth defense fleet emerge victorious, their lives would resume as before.

If they lost, however... That was the big question mark for everyone. Those who wanted to flee had already done so when Kain and Co informed the inhabitants. In other words, whoever was staying at the outpost was staying by their own accord and they knew the risks. Still, that didn't make them feel any better.

Some days later, Kain received an urgent message from Gareto; he asked Kain to assemble his fleet and come to his aid which Kain complied, or at least tried to. Even before he could get to his ship, Gareto's order was canceled. He was told to stay put and that was the end of the message. Everyone on the station bridge realized that the battle was lost at this point.

And this was when Magenta ran into a group of men in black. The men caught her while she was away from Kain.

"Madam," One of them gently told her. "You need to come with us."

They had surrounded her already. Placing her hands on her waist, she responded.

“I suppose Mr. President sent you, huh.”

“Correct, ma’am. We mean you no harm, he simply wants you back.”

Without further ado, she simply pulled out her energy blade and activated it at once. She knew that talking to them wasn’t going to work. A fight broke out and it happened to be Samuel who noticed the fight on an empty street.

He called guards swiftly, and, not wanting any troubles, the men in black withdrew.

“Good job, Mr. Samuel,” Magenta remarked. “I didn’t think anyone would be walking around here.”

Samuel explained as he ran up to her, “Who were they?!”

“They aren’t harmful. They were simply doing their job.”

“Which is?!”

“Well, it’s nothing really. I will make sure it won’t happen.”

Samuel was clearly skeptical and was even suspicious of what was going on. However, with the battle lost, he wasn’t in state of mind to personally meddle into someone’s problems.

Later that day, Uranus outpost administration released the news that the battle was lost, and that the invasion fleet of roughly twenty thousand ships were coming directly toward the outpost.

And as expected, there was a strong sense of doom and gloom among crews as well as civilians.

Meanwhile, Kain called for an emergency meeting. Rituski, Suu, Magenta, and Samuel attended.

“They are coming here.” Kain wasted no time and went straight to the topic at hand. “No doubt about it.”

“We fight,” Suu said.

“Do we even have a chance? My brain says no,” Samuel remarked.

“We don’t have a choice, do we? We fight,” Suu urged.

“Soooo-” With a long drawn-out start, Kain responded, “I guess we fight.”

Samuel exclaimed, “Commodore, you can’t be serious!”

“Do you have any better idea, Samuel?”

“We can surrender!”

Everyone’s attention moved to Samuel.

“We can surrender!” He repeated. “I mean no one will blame you for surrendering?!”

With narrowed eyes, Magenta glanced at Kain. She was going to kill him if he agreed with Samuel. She had her hands already at her blade, ready to pull out.

“I’d rather commit suicide than surrender,” He replied with a firm voice. His steadfast face and eyes indicated that he did mean what he said.

A faint smile emerged on Magenta's face. "Sorry for doubting you," She whispered to herself.

"But Commodore!"

"Samuel," Kain called out quietly but firmly. "I understand you perfectly. And for what is worth, if you wish to leave, you may do so now. Whether you stay or not though, hear me out."

He made a short pause before he continued.

"I recall when I was applying for the navy. I was poor and I had..." He scoffed. "I had two digit credits in my bank account." Looking around aimlessly, he let out of a hollow laugh. "It's very funny when I recall that moment. I mean what was I thinking? What was I trying to do? Well? I was trying to feed myself by joining the navy. I met Suu from a training class, right?"

Suu nodded but said no word.

Kain continued, "And then I met you when I was granted my frigate, Samuel."

Samuel also nodded but again said no word.

"The memories, the wonderful memories," He continued with a bright smile.

"From my humble frigate to my first cruiser and somehow I couldn't get away from Suu."

Suu frowned as she never understood why Kain kept a distance from her during their early days.

“Then I almost died and ended up at this outpost, got married in progress, and somehow a crazy lady is tagging along with me now.”

Magenta shrugged but with a grin.

Kain opened his arms. “All of you, every one of you, present a part of my fond memories. And I strongly feel that, if I surrender, my fond memories will be tainted.” Then he dropped his left arm and made a fist with his right arm. With his right fist afloat, he proclaimed, “And I’d rather die than letting my fond memories become tainted. My memories are what makes me. My memories are my strength. I’d rather fucking die than become a tainted man. Hear me, Samuel? Surrender may be an option to you and many others, but not to me. Surrender is not an option!”

It was a rare occasion that Suu smiled. In fact, the ladies all smiled. Samuel looked disappointed however. Clearly noticing Samuel’s state of mind, Kain emphasized, “Surrender may be an option for you. And you are free to leave.”

“I am sorry, Kain,” Samuel apologized, adding quickly, “But I shall take my leave. I am sorry.”

Nodding he responded gently, “Very well. You are dismissed from your post.”

With his eyes downcast, Samuel rushed out of the conference room.

“Does he even have balls?” Magenta remarked. “I don’t even have balls but it looks like I have more balls than him.”

“Well, you do have huge balls on your chest,” Kain responded with a chuckle.

She shrugged with a grin, “Point taken, Commodore.”

“Joking aside, I do understand where he is coming from, and you cannot blame him for wanting to live,” Kain explained, “So, don’t blame those wanting to survive.” Taking a deep breath, he continued, “Now ... is the hard part... Any ideas, ladies?”

Ritsuki was the first one to speak.

“There is no time to waste. I shall go back to my engineers and continue working on the station.”

“Yeah, do that.”

She dashed out of the conference room.

Suu was the second one to voice her idea, “Our only chance is form a sphere formation around the station. Let the station soak up the shots while we fire back. The station does have some turrets, so we will use those as well.”

Kain nodded and then Suu saluted, “I shall go out there and inform the crews, Commodore.”

“Good luck, Captain.” And she dashed out.

Magenta was forced to speak since she was the only one left.

“Sorry, Commodore, but I don’t have any means to assist you in this situation.”

“You’ve done much though, in form of financial assistance.”

“Either way, I am very glad to have served you, sir,” Magenta stated.

“Oh, by the way, a promotion is in order for you.”

“Oh?”

“With Samuel gone, my first officer slot is open. It’s all yours. Congrats, you are now the vice administrator of Uranus outpost.”

“I’ve never took the navy training course though. I am not even with the navy.”

“Does that matter?”

“Well..., if you think it doesn’t, then I guess that’s fine.”

Meanwhile, Lila from Freedom colony called for an emergency meeting.

“That bastard, Juron, has defeated Earth defense fleet,” She announced, “And current Andromeda fleet is on course to Uranus outpost.”

Sae whistled, “Gotta congratulate him for that.”

Ignoring her reaction, she continued, “As Freedom colony, our policy is to sit in the gray zone and remain a neutral side. However, if Andromeda union destroys United Sol, the balance of the clusters will be destroyed.”

Ashuta responded, “Ma’am, are you saying we assist United Sol?”

“I didn’t think you’d suggest this, Lila,” Reed added. “You are proposing to attack.”

Lila had always been someone who preferred defensive strategies and policies.

“While it may appear that we will assist United Sol, we do have a proper excuse,” She pointed out, “Uranus outpost has been emerging as one of our best and more

reliable trade partners. Should the station fall or be damaged severely, I expect 5% loss overall profit. And that is just immediate loss. I am not even accounting other negative impacts on ferries and whatnot.”

Ashuta responded, “But it’s Juron. He is a ruthless man. I don’t think he’d let this go if we do attack him?”

“We’ve had a sizable fleet for decades. We simply have not mobilized them. I am sure Juron is aware of that we can protect ourselves. This is perhaps the right time to remind him that we do exist. If he wants to attack us, so be it,” Lila said.

“What a bold statement,” Reed remarked with a crooked grin. “I love it though.”

“Reed, I put you in charge of the fleet. Mobilize them for the first time and show Juron that he hasn’t conquered the clusters yet. Teach him a lesson.”

“Aye, ma’am.”

“And Sae, I want you to contact Nebula pirates.”

Sae was pleasantly surprised. “Me thought we were done with them?”

Lila explained, “Our tie has been severely damaged from the Milky Way incident, yes, but they will still heed our call.”

“U sure?”

Lila nodded firmly. “I am sure but it won’t be easy which is precisely why you are going.”

Sae giggled, “I can’t sleep with all of them, you know.”

“Just ... do your thing.”

Sae jumped around with glee. “Yayyyy! I get to go out. It’s been a while!”

Indeed, she had been keeping Sae in the colony ever since Juron invaded.

Kain was on the station bridge when the invasion fleet entered visual range. Magenta was also on the bridge. This time, she was wearing a navy uniform. However, it was a skirt version which was usually used by navy members working on planet grounds where there was proper gravity to hold the skirt down. A workaround was thin iron plates underneath the skirt.

“The invasion fleet in visual range, Commodore,” Magenta reported, “The exact number is 19,283 ships.”

Suu had already formed a sphere formation around the station. She had 1998 ships.

“Commodore,” She continued, “Your wife is reporting that the station renovation has been completed.”

“Right on time...,” Kain whispered and then spoke, “Don’t bother opening a channel unless they open first.” He stood up from his elevated chair and walked down. “Listen, everyone.”

Crews’ attentions were fixed at Kain.

“Make no mistake. This will be hard. And that is probably a huge understatement, but know that we are not fighting for United Sol and their idiotic bureaucrats back on Earth.” He raised his voice. “We are fighting to protect our home! We are fighting to protect our families!

The bridge was dead silent.

“My wife is here and I know a lot of you got married here as well. So, we are protecting our home!” Just before Kain would continue his speech, Magenta alerted.

“A hailing from the invasion fleet, Kain.”

“Fine, let’s see what the motherfucker looks like. Put it on.”

Juron appeared on the main screen and Kain seated in the captain’s chair. They both would stared at each other for a second or two and it was Juron who was about to begin. As soon as he opened his mouth, Kain put up a middle finger for everyone to see and blurted, “Well, you do look like a motherfucker. Cut the channel!”

The main screen died absurdly and then Kain bellowed, “ATTACK!!!”

The battle was, at first glance, a one-sided battle. Andromeda invasion fleet had a vast advantage in numbers and it looked like Uranus outpost wouldn’t stand a chance. However, as the battle went on, it turned to be not so one-sided fight.

Uranus outpost and its ships endured the invasion fleet's hammering by rotating ships and also by using the station itself as a shield. The station's shields had gone down hours ago but its heavy armors enabled it to continue to soak up the damage while Suu's fleet in sphere formation survived.

The station bridge was chaotic with many voices. Crews were reporting damages as well as dealing with the situation.

"Deck 712, damaged," A crew reported.

"Repair crew onto deck 712," Another responded.

"Deck 488, hull breach reported. Sealing the deck," Another reported.

"Wait, there are seven people on deck 488!"

"Too late, sorry. We must seal the deck."

"Fire and explosion reported in deck 112."

Although chaotic, the crews were exactly doing what they were supposed to do. They were working like clockwork. Magenta was impressed. She had never seen crews working like this under extremely heavy duress. If these were Bau officers, they'd freak and even pass out, she felt.

However, as much as they were working like clockwork, there were only so much they could do when they were outnumbered one to ten. Slowly but surely, the ships and the station were going down.

"Deck 643, lost!" A crew exclaimed.

"Deck 712, lost!" Another exclaimed as well.

“Deck 112, lost!”

“Hull breaches reported on deck 21x to 25x! Evacuating everyone before sealing the area!”

“The residential district is reporting multiple damages across the area,” A crew reported urgently. “I am sending down teams to handle the issues. So far, no incident in the district is critical.”

“Deck 98, lost!”

Magenta approached Kain who was overseeing the operation from his elevated captain’s chair. She whispered to him, “I believe that the station can endure for maybe five more hours of abuse. Realistically, we will start to lose controls in an hour or so.”

“Plant the bombs,” Kain ordered.

“Got it.”

The station by design wasn’t meant to separate decks. Therefore, precision bombs were required to cleanly cut off decks. Kain and Magenta agreed on a plan to separate the residential block off the station if the station was going to lose controls. This was to save civilians. However, without a power source, the block would have only few days before air would run out, meaning it was up to the invasion fleet whether they saved the civilians or not.

As the station became more and more damaged, Suu’s fleet started to take losses. She simply just couldn’t continue to use the station as a shield.

“The whole floor, deck 2xx, has been lost!” A crew exclaimed.

“Turret #71 lost!”

“Docking bay 2, lost!”

“Docking bay 1, damaged!”

“Deck 21, fire reported!”

Deck 1 was the station bridge.

“The station is losing balance control!”

Kain gestured to call Magenta and she dashed to him. He whispered, “Detonate the bombs on my mark.”

She nodded. She was more than just impressed. From Kain to the crews, they were still working like clockwork. No one was panicking. She went back to her console and waited for Kain to gesture so that she would detonate the bombs.

“Sir, I am detecting a small fleet. I believe it’s coming from Saturn!”

The crew’s shout silenced all others momentarily.

“Saturn?” Kain raised his voice. “Gaer? Why is he coming? He can’t really help us!”

But Gaer was coming. He had gathered every ship he could and was coming to aid Kain. Saturn fleet was seventeen hundred ships but many of ships were missing some turrets and armor plates.

“A voice message from Saturn administrator, sir, putting through.”

Gaer's voice sounded on the bridge. "Commodore, I am coming to your aid. The whole Maeka clan worked days non-stop in order to bring as many ships operational as possible. Some ships are missing pieces but we are coming to your aid!"

However, Kain was not pleased. There was no need for Gaer to risk or even sacrifice his life.

"Administrator, go back. There is no point in wasting your life!"

Gaer responded promptly, "You are of Maeka clan! Hundreds of Maeka engineers are in the station as well! Of all years, I may have refused to mobilize the fleet but now is the time to mobilize them!"

Station crews cheered although Saturn fleet didn't change the overall flow of the battle. It was still 3.000 vs 16.000. However, Gaer's assistance meant that Kain delayed separating the residential block.

In addition, the station was no longer acting as a shield. Instead, at this point, the ships were shielding the station from taking further damage.

Suu was overseeing the fleet from her bridge. Her cruiser was right by the station and the ship was parked in a safe spot from the enemy fleet.

"Cover the station!" She exclaimed as she ordered, "If we lose the station, all will be over!"

"Yes, sir!"

Having endured heavy pressure for four hours, most of ships in her fleet was damaged to some degree. And no longer having the station as a shield meant the ships were going down.

“Ship down!” A crew exclaimed.

“Another down!”

“Another!”

Gaer’s fleet joined in to cover the station.

“Fire!” Suu shouted. “Pour everything we have! Release fighters and everything!”

She had already granted permission to use missiles and most of ships were already out of missiles.

“Captain, Capt. Margaret wants to talk to you.”

“Put her on.”

Margaret’s face appeared on screen.

“What can I do for you, Margaret?”

Margaret had a bitter, yet determined, expression on her face. “I have a proposal to make,” She said.

She had apparently gathered about ten ships who agreed with her on her plan. It was a suicidal attack on the invasion fleet. They’d charge into the enemy fleet while overloading the ACM reactors and self-destruct as they force their way through the enemy fleet. She made clear that it would not cause much damage to the fleet of such a size but still she was confident that it would damage few

hundreds at least and severely disturb their formation, thus earning them some extra time for a breather or two.

“Are ... you sure?” Suu asked, with a grave voice.

With some tears in her eyes, Margaret responded, “Dying was never my goal when I joined the navy... But look at our Commodore. He is doing everything he could to hold the line. I feel...” She stopped for a moment. “I feel I think I could sacrifice my life for the cause.” She then sobbed for a brief moment. “If we are all going to die, I’d rather do something big in my life once.”

Suu did think the idea was acceptable. It’d create huge shockwaves which would damage a lot of enemy ships or even destroy some. There was a good chance that the invasion fleet might break off the engagement for a brief moment which would be a godsend to the ships and station. Therefore, she did not stop her. Instead, she got off her chair, stood firm, and bowed deeply toward her instead of saluting.

“Sir, some ships, I think nine? Nine cruisers are breaking apart of Capt. Suu’s fleet,” A crew reported.

“What does that mean?” Kain narrowed his eyes. “What are they doing?”

Magenta reported, “The ships are accelerating toward the enemy fleet. Sensors indicate that their reactors are overloaded at 400%!”

“Oh, no.” Realizing what they were trying to do, he got off his chair at once and exclaimed, “Who are the captains?! Tell them to stop!”

“It’s being led by ... Captain Margaret, Kain, and they aren’t responding to the call.”

“No! No!” He shouted.

“Their reactors overloaded at 600%! They are about to blow at any moment!”

The enemy fleet realized what the group was up to and attempted to move away but there was no escaping from the nine ships that had their reactors ridiculously overloaded. When the ships blew, each ship made a series of extraordinarily strong shockwaves that wiped out ships in its immediate vicinity. The damage wasn’t anything too major. The invasion fleet lost approximately 50 ships from the blast but over 900 ships were damaged. While the damages were minor, Margaret’s sacrifice earned them an hour as formation of the invasion fleet was so disturbed that they withdrew for a moment in order to reform their formation and inspect damages.

“Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!” Kain swore. He looked visibly sad and angry. “Fuck! FUCK!!!” He then bellowed his lungs out. “FUCK!!!” He panted as he calmed down on his own.

“Let’s... Let’s survive this shit so that we can remember them...,” He said weakly.

“Let’s remember them.... That’s all we can do...”

Magenta was receiving a call from Gaer but it wasn’t for Kain. It was for her. It was a text message.

It read: Can you get Kain and Rituski out of the station?

She hesitated to reply the text and another was received.

It read: Suu has already agreed to stay behind.

She bit her lips. It spoke volumes that someone like Suu was accepting to be sacrificed. She finally replied: I will do what I can. I will contact you soon.

When Magenta approached Kain, he glanced at her and said, "Did Gaer text you?"

She startled. She didn't think he'd have noticed. He laughed weakly and responded, "Gaer doesn't strike me as someone who'd actually join me and die together. I figured he came here to get me and Riki out of here." Sighing, he added, "Not that I am blaming him or anything. His aim is Maeka's glory."

She carefully asked, "Are you coming then?"

"No."

She wasn't too surprised.

"You said you didn't train for the navy, so you probably don't know this but the first e-textbook we get to read start with a single statement." He cited, "A captain goes down with his ship."

"But you are not a captain."

He snickered. "You have a point there although I am sure you grasp the meaning behind the statement."

Indeed.

He added, "I am neither surrendering nor fleeing. I am going down with my men."

She regretfully closed her eyes. "So be it," She said.

The battle went on for further few hours. Unexpectedly ...

"Sir, the invasion fleet is hailing us. Voice only."

He twisted his head lazily. "Now?"

Even Magenta was surprised.

"Fine, put it through."

Juron's voice sounded on the bridge. "Do you feel like surrendering now?"

Kain responded promptly, "Have my men acted like those who are about to surrender?"

The crews could hear Juron's faint growling and then the channel was cut.

"What was that about?" He wondered with a shrug.

A crew exclaimed with a doubtful voice, "Sir...?! They are withdrawing."

"The hell?" He blurted and Magenta looked down on her console to confirm.

"They are indeed withdrawing," She confirmed.

"What the freak is going on here?!" He exclaimed but no one had an answer.

However, one thing was clear; the invasion fleet was withdrawing in rush as if they were fearing something. Within an hour, the invasion fleet was already out of visual range.

“They were heading toward Freedom colony. That is all I can tell,” Magenta explained. “Maybe..., Freedom colony decided to attack them?”

“Why would they do that?” Kain asked.

“Freedom colony probably wants United Sol to stay intact,” She explained. “The last thing they want is the clusters unifying under Andromeda union.”

“But attacking the enemy fleet? Even I think that is going too far,” He said.

“Uranus outpost does have a fair amount of business with them,” She explained, “And the business has been on a steady increase. That could also be a factor although I am not really sure at this point.”

“Whatever you say...” He looked completely exhausted in his chair. “I am beat... I think I am gonna take a nap...” Then he started to snore while other bridge crews hugged each other and cried of joy; they made it somehow.

They later learned why the invasion fleet had to withdraw. Apparently, Freedom colony had a fleet of 7,000 ships and additionally called in Nebula pirates. What was truly shocking that Sae managed to assemble 200,000 nebula pirate fighters under her command. Nebula pirate fighter was classified as fighter crafts because it was one-manned. However, it was half size of a frigate and was very capable of dealing with cruisers. 200,000 meant that, firepower wise, they exceeded Juron’s fleet, and by a lot. Juron had to withdraw at that point to face his new unexpected enemy.

Four engineers carried a body into the bridge; the body was Ritsuki who had over half of her body badly burnt. From her head to belly, it was badly burnt. Her hair was completely gone and what was left was just a charred reddish black body that was releasing foul odor.

“Sir...,” One of the engineers explained what happened. A huge explosion engulfed a part of the room she was in. She couldn’t avoid it.

Looking severely dejected, Kain vacantly walked toward the body.

“Riki?” He vacantly called out. “This is a sick joke. It’s not funny, guys.” Looking around, he laughed nervously, hoping that it was just a bad dream.

Engineers who had carried her all dropped their heads, two of them sobbing even.

Kain fell onto his knees by the charred body. His shaking hands touched charred skin of Rituski’s cheek.

“Fuck...,” He mumbled and then ... he shouted, “FUCK! FUCK! FUCK! FUCK!”

The engineers attempted to treat her but her wounds were too severe. Her last words were: “Aw, crap.”

Upon hearing her last words, Kain started to laugh hysterically with drops of tears dropping through his cheek.

He continued to laugh hysterically ... The crews around him could not say a word.

The Bau council and the Ark were relieved to have avoided the worst case scenario and they had already approved double promotions for Kain who'd become the first admiral since year 9599.

And it fell onto Fraser to congratulate Kain who had somewhat emerged victorious and, in progress, saved United Sol.

The battle report was that Kain's 2,000 ships and Gaer's 1,700 ships battled Andromeda union's 19,000 ships. The end result was that Kain had 900 ships left, Gaer had 300 left and the invasion fleet was at 12,000 ships before they withdrew. On paper, Kain played defensively and he did well.

In his office, Kain's face popped up on a screen above his desk.

"Commodore," Fraser called out softly, "The nation owes you a huge favor. On behalf of everyone, I thank you."

Unexpectedly, Kain's response was unique.

"Fuck. you."

Fraser was startled by his unexpected response, but he didn't get angry. He already had reports of casualties from the outpost; he knew that his wife, Ritsuki Maeka, had perished from the battle.

Dropping his head, Fraser apologized instead, "I am sorry, Commodore. If it makes you feel any better, you will receive promotions. In fact, you will become an adm-"

"WHO THE FUCK CARES, YOU MOTHERUCKER!!!" Kain bellowed violently.

"Kain!" A feminine voice meddled in, covering his mouth. But Kain took her hand off his mouth aggressively and repeated, "Who the fuck cares, you stupid motherfucker! Do you have any fucking idea how many men died in this war?!"

Fraser had no excuses. Kain was swearing at him and he didn't feel offended at all, for he felt he duly deserved whatever cursing he threw at him.

"I am sorry," He repeated with a desperate voice. "I am sorry that this is all I can do for you. I am sorry."

Kain was dropping tears on the screen which Fraser couldn't notice at first because he was looking down. It was Len who pointed that out for him.

"YOU CALL YOURSELF A FUCKING PRESIDENT OF A NATION?! What the fuck were you even doing?!" Kain continued to shout. With veins popped out on his forehead and blood shot eyes, one could easily tell that he was meaning every word he was throwing out.

"I STOOD ALONE, YOU STUPID FUCKING ASS! I STOOD ALL ALONE IN THE VAST SEA OF NOTHINGNESS. I BIT MY TONGUE AND FOUGHT BACK. WHAT FOR?! WHAT FOR, YOU FUCKING BASTARD! I LOST MY WIFE, I LOST MY COMRADES, I LOST CIVILIANS! THEY WERE JUST TRYING TO MAKE A LIVING, YOU FUCK! AND WHAT WERE YOU DOING?! WHAT THE FUCK WERE YOU DOING !!!"

Additionally, he was perceived as a national hero who single-handedly stopped the second invasion. However, despite ENN's numerous calls for exclusive interviews, he refused all.

For him, the glory mattered not, for it became personal.

To be continued in the next part, **[Juron arc] [5] [New enemies] [9633]**