

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM WING FROZEN TEARDROP

新機動戦記ガンダムW
フローズンティアドロップ

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1 RONDO OF REDEMPTION (Part.1)



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1 Rondo of Redemption (Part.1)



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Silent Prelude
Prologue File

MC-0022 NEXT WINTER

The biting wind howled as I raced towards Master Chang, my mission urgent and vital.

Even with terraforming's success, sea of Mars' Oceanus Borealis remained a frigid wasteland. The air, a punishing -20°C, birthed not snow but a furious tempest of diamond dust – microscopic ice crystals that scoured everything in their path. This white maelstrom lashed against the windows of our long-range hovercraft, the VOYAGE, as we hurtled across the frozen sea.

"Lieutenant Kathy," called out Captain Tael Hikotori, the helmsman, his voice a mixture of report and barely concealed frustration, "We're still five kilometers out from Preventer Base, but this storm... it'll be another two hours at least."

Beside him, Captain Sakai Masakazu glowered at the holographic navigation display. His eyes darted between it and the ever-shifting weather patterns on the sub-monitor, shoulders tense with irritation.

"We'll be about fifteen minutes behind schedule. Damn it all, I never expected the polar cap to be this treacherous."

"Understood. I apologize for the trouble," I managed to reply, my words barely more than a whisper. The bone-deep cold made my lips tremble and my jaw clench, the words feeling foreign in my mouth.

Yet, I reminded myself, this place once plummeted to a staggering -90°C. Who was I to complain?

"But we must hurry," I muttered, steeling my resolve. Time was of the essence. The spark that threatened to ignite our fragile world needed to be extinguished – and quickly.

I am Lieutenant Kathy Po, an agent of Preventer, the clandestine intelligence division operating under the direct authority of the Earth Sphere Unified Nation's President. We're known colloquially as the "Firefighters," tasked with maintaining peace and overseeing weapons dismantlement throughout the Earth Sphere.

The memory chip I carried contained a transmission from President Dorothy T. Catalonia herself. I strongly suspected it would activate Operation Mythos. I'd already forwarded this information to Preventer's Arctic base, but Master Chang had additional instructions. He ordered me to download three archaic files from the Earth Sphere's centralized History Bank database and bring them along.

"As a Preventer, you need to familiarize yourself with these files... Review them before you arrive," he'd said in his characteristically brusque manner.

I couldn't help but wonder what possible relevance these previous century records could have. They seemed utterly meaningless at first glance.

The three specified data files were chronologically ordered: summer and autumn of AC-195, followed by spring of AC-196. They varied wildly in language, authorship, storage location, and preservation method. Their connection seemed tenuous at best, with only one common thread: "Gundam Pilot."

These were the exceptional few who had piloted mobile suits crafted from Gundanium alloy – the legendary Gundams. Curiously, standard History Bank records omitted not only the pilots' names but even the term Gundam itself. The machines were referred to by sterile model numbers beginning with "XXXG." These figures, so pivotal in their time, had faded into obscurity, seemingly irrelevant to the grand narrative of Earth Sphere history.

Indeed, they give the impression of being entities unrelated to the main stage of history, which could rightly be called "sealed records."

AC-195 marked the apex of human conflict in the Earth Sphere. The earliest file, dated that fateful summer, was penned in German. It read less like a diary or biography and more akin to a letter or short essay. Peculiarly, it opened with a quotation of "Autumn," a poem by the Old World Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke. The seasonality felt oddly misplaced, but even more intriguing were the two lines added after the poem – only to be struck through by hand, as if in hesitation or regret.

The deeper meaning eluded me, but I knew this much: A Gundam pilot named Milliardo Peacecraft had been active during this era. And the author of this piece? Most likely Treize Khushrenada himself.

The file began as follows...

AC-195 SUMMER

*The leaves are falling, falling as if from far up,
as if orchards were dying high in space.
Each leaf falls as if it were motioning "no."
And tonight the heavy earth is falling
away from all other stars in the loneliness.*

*We're all falling. This hand here is falling.
And look at the other one. It's in them all.
And yet there is Someone, whose hands
infinitely calm, holding up all this falling.*

R. M. Rilke "Autumn" A.D. 1902

*That is my eternal friend,
Milliardo Peacecraft.*

*This era is shrouded in a desolate darkness.
In the long tapestry of human history, this period stands
isolated - a sorrowful and agonizing time, cut off from what came
before and after.*

*One might liken it to Earth, a lonely blue jewel adrift in the
vast, indifferent cosmos. Or perhaps it's more akin to a lost child,
wandering without direction or purpose.*

*Humanity took its first tentative steps into space in the latter
half of the previous century. It was then that we truly grasped our
cosmic solitude. Even our closest celestial neighbor, the Moon, lay
hundreds of thousands of kilometers away - an unfathomable
chasm.*

*We crafted artificial havens at the Lagrange points, those
tenuous gravitational balance points between Earth and Moon.
These space colonies became our "new world," heralded by the
After Colony calendar. Yet even now, nearly two centuries since
that momentous shift, humanity remains ensnared in an age of
darkness.*

*A few of this era's leaders, serving only their own conceited
desires in the name of justice, brought about wars in every corner
of the Earth Sphere. The almost meaningless contest for power
ultimately forced a vast majority of the masses to suffer poverty,
starvation, and bloodshed.*

*Perhaps we took flight before our wings were fully formed,
dooming us to this aimless wandering through the void. Or,
viewed from another angle, our proximity to the absolute hostility
of space - an environment that utterly rejects life - might be the
root of this immature, gnawing loneliness.*

*Regardless of the cause, humanity has spent nearly a century
waging war, seemingly oblivious to its own actions. Our zeal for
space exploration has stagnated, and with it, our progress as a
species.*

Stagnation inevitably gives way to a creeping decline. The powers that be might argue that war alone keeps us from that precipice, but their words ring hollow.

Tears of anguish flow ceaselessly from the eyes of the people. Have they truly given up hope?

History tells us that conflict is eternal, an inescapable facet of human nature. Perhaps by abandoning even the faintest whisper of "desire for peace," people maintain a fragile equilibrium. They perpetuate these habitual conflicts, chronically exhausted, until the extraordinary becomes mundane.

The sun blazes eternally above, yet they seem to have forgotten its very existence. They avert their eyes from its brilliance, content to remain cloistered within the tiny shell of the Earth Sphere.

Change is desperately needed.

In this age of darkness, a guiding light must emerge to illuminate the path forward. No matter how faint that light may be, no matter how blood-stained the actions required, someone must take the hand of these lost, weary children and lead them towards a righteous future.

But this guide cannot be a "victor."

Domination through victory only breeds new power struggles, perpetuating the cycle of war.

To change the course of history, it must be the "losers" who lead the way.

Sommer TK

The evidence pointing to Treize Khushrenada as the author is compelling. The document, penned in German and simply titled "Summer," bears the initials "TK" – a signature that aligns perfectly with Treize's name. Moreover, the fixation on the concept of "losers" resonates deeply with Treize's known philosophies.

However, historical records suggest that Treize and Milliardo had not yet crossed paths at this point in time. (Their first encounter is widely believed to have occurred during the EVE WARS.) Despite being contemporaries, it may be more prudent from a historical perspective to consider the possibility of a different author.

The next file in my possession is equally enigmatic, albeit in a different form. Rather than text, it's a preserved video recording.

The footage, dated to the start of the new school term in September, AC-195, captures a scene from a state gymnasium in colony R09935 of the L-4 cluster. A young man, introducing himself as "Duo Maxwell," stands before his new classmates. He's reciting what appears to be less of a simple essay and more of a scholarly treatise on the complex relationship between the colonies and Earth.

The camera, positioned at the very back of the classroom, doesn't provide a crystal-clear view of the speaker's face. Yet, if this truly is "Duo," we may be witnessing something extraordinary – the only known footage of a Gundam pilot in the flesh, free from the confines of their legendary machine.

Rumors from that era paint a fascinating picture. These pilots were said to be little more than boys, constantly transferring between schools as cover for their clandestine missions. However, if this practice was indeed true, the use of the name "Duo" seems oddly careless. Logic dictates that deep-cover operatives would rely on carefully crafted aliases.

The content of young Maxwell's presentation unfolds as follows:

AC-195 AUTUMN

"Earth: the planet in the solar system that miraculously gave birth to life. In the year After Colony 195 with the development of the colonies people now live in new surroundings thanks to plentiful natural resources and cultivated technological abilities.

However, this new world is nothing but an imitation of humankind's motherland, the Earth. But why were the colonies made in the first place? I hear the main purpose was technological development to improve the lives of humankind on Earth.

Did humankind start asking for too much from this imitation world?

The self-sustained way of life is more stable than life on Earth, especially since it lacks the risk of natural disasters. It appears that this unlimited growth would guarantee the eternal existence of humankind. Perhaps there was an age where people dreamed of the possibilities in outer space where they could start from scratch.

However, it's unthinkable that the colonies or that humankind will ever forget the Earth. What did technological development in the colonies bring to the Earth?

The kind of technology the Earth wants most: military power. Destruction is in human nature and can never be gotten rid of. And now, the colonies are developing a militaristic disposition.

The colonies cannot forget the Earth.

The Earth has great beauty.

The animals known as humans have acquired such strength that they even think about controlling this planet for themselves. From the point of view of a planet's life, the life of a living thing lasts no more than an instant. But in the end, humans can only think of themselves. Nothing changes. The time spent by humans in outer space has been a complete waste. In reality the ideal is just a dream: this false pacifism, this false living space. Outer space claims many lives. Although humankind has never been able to forget the sorrow caused by this, they have not stopped fighting. The blood and tears they shed are merely ceremonial.

One can't speak of history without referring to the wars in each era as important events. I'm sure the pale pep talks of fighting for peace have been repeated numerous times in the past. The colonies say they need armaments to maintain peace. It's no different than on Earth. I guess that they believe the bloodshed would lead to higher morale—"

Just as the boy calling himself "Duo" begins to finish his recitation, the teacher interrupts, directing him to take a seat at the very back of the classroom. The camera lingers on the report papers in the young man's hands, revealing a startling detail - the pages are completely blank, devoid of any written text.

This revelation suggests that the boy was extemporizing, weaving his thoughts into a seamless narrative on the spot. If true, his critique of the era's prevailing attitudes is all the more remarkable. That a youth, still bearing traces of childhood, could articulate such a broad and nuanced perspective is nothing short of astounding.

As the final page flutters in a sudden breeze, the camera catches a fleeting glimpse of what appears to be a conclusion. Freezing the frame reveals a few telling lines:

"So why do people fight, anyway? Perhaps the meaning of existence lies within their will to fight. People feel a sense of accomplishment through battle. And it's also a fact that the ones actually fighting are never perceived as being tainted."

While this is purely speculation on my part, I'm inclined to believe that this young man isn't truly "Duo Maxwell." The possibility exists that we're witnessing a different Gundam pilot altogether. Unfortunately, without further evidence, we can't confirm this theory.

Yet, I can't shake this persistent feeling.

As I began downloading the final file, a jolt of recognition struck me. I knew the person who had preserved this record.

The archivist's name: Sally Po.

My mother.

In AC-196, she too was a member of the Earth Sphere Unified Nation's Preventer organization. While the specifics of her duties remain unknown, the audio suggests she may have been assigned as a bodyguard to Relena Darlian during her tenure as Vice Foreign Minister.

The file contains neither images nor recordings of my mother's voice. The identity of Relena Darlian's conversation partner is equally shrouded in mystery. The visual feed is obscured by heavy static, leaving only the audio intact. Whether this is due to the subject's importance or the classified nature of the discussion is anyone's guess.

The exact location and precise date of this recording remain unknown. What we can discern is that an elderly man, likely of advanced years, is addressing Relena Darlian.

Within this file, both Relena and the old man mention a name familiar to us Preventers, even if it remains classified to the general public: Heero Yuy. This young man, codenamed after the legendary colonial leader, was indeed one of the Gundam pilots.

This file seems to touch upon the very heart of that matter.

It's worth noting that the spring of AC-196 was a time of relative peace between the colonies and Earth, occurring roughly eight months before Mariemaia's uprising.

The recording begins with the old man's voice...

AC-196 SPRING

"People's minds are afflicted by two major diseases. One is our tendency to pass the idea of revenge down through generations, and another is our tendency to want to classify people by groups and not as individuals."

"... "

"It's true that your ideal succeeded in temporarily bringing an end to the chain of hatred that spanned centuries. However, a group that preaches pacifism built upon those ideals will not yield any disagreement on the matter."

"... "

"I'm sure you're aware what sorts of things are going on as a result."

"... "

"We were talking about him, weren't we?"

"Yes..."

The old man's breathing, almost like a chuckle, could be heard.

"He was the best. He exceeded our expectations. No matter what obstacle he faced, he never gave up."

"... "

"His name... that's right... I came up with that name, didn't I?"

"Heero Yuy, you mean?"

"Yes, a pretty good name for an alias, don't you think?"

"Is the information correct that you gave Heero... him, a new mission?"

"Before I answer that question, would you mind answering mine?"

"Not at all..."

"Can the ideal of total pacifism really be obtained by throwing away weapons and confining soldiers?"

"So long as the concept of fighting doesn't disappear from the minds of the people, then true peace may be unobtainable."

"Do you really think man has matured that much?"

"Not yet, and from now on it'll be quite difficult."

Relena could be heard giving a deep sigh.

"But I believe that what people should be using all their strength for is not to fight opposing enemies, but to overcome the difficulties that stand in their way."

"So that's why you planned the Mars Terraforming project..."

"You can laugh if you want. But I sincerely believe this."

The old man's body could be heard shaking. He seemed to be getting quite a chuckle out of it.

"As you say..."

The creaking sound of a chair turning around was heard.

"Right now, Heero is on a mission to destroy a nearly-completed colony-type beam cannon for attacking Earth... So you see, there always needs to be a deterrent named 'Heero Yuy' in the shadows of the peace you created."

"... "

"That's true in any era, in any place--"

This file is classified at the highest level within Preventer, accessible only through special authorization from Branch Chief Master Chang. Its contents would have remained hidden from me without his explicit permission.

There are no official records of a colony-based beam cannon designed to attack Earth during this period. It's likely that the Gundam pilot codenamed "Heero Yuy" was tasked with destroying such a weapon. The mission's nature aligns closely with Preventer's current operations, making it puzzling why my mother wasn't involved. Perhaps the newly formed organization wasn't yet fully operational.

Attached to the audio file is additional data: blueprints and an operation manual for an "artificial hibernation cryogenic capsule." The designs bear only the signature "J," offering no clues to their creator's identity. It's possible that the elderly man speaking with Relena Darlian is this mysterious "J."

Of the three files, this one alone seems potentially relevant to President Dorothy's mission directive. Yet, I struggle to see how such archaic data could be crucial to our current operation.

"Lieutenant Kathy, we've arrived," Captain Hikotori announced, easing back on the VOYAGE's thrusters.

Captain Sakai added with a gentle smile, "Preventer Mars Branch, North Polar Cap Base. We've made it just in time."

"Thank you both. I'm grateful," I replied.

Outside, the white tempest had subsided. In the dim sky, Mars' second moon, Deimos, glimmered like a frozen teardrop beyond a shimmering aurora.

I rushed from the docking bay into the base. Master Chang was here alone. I navigated through layers of intense security protocols and DNA scans, racing towards the Mars Branch Director's office.

The planet's gravity, only a third of Earth's or the colonies', made my strides unexpectedly long and effortless.

As the final door slid open, Master Chang stood waiting, resplendent in his navy-blue Mandarin collar suit.

"Well done..." he began.

"Master Chang," I interjected, "Operation Mythos has been authorized. Please awaken 'Princess Aurora.'"

Our Sleeping Beauty lay sealed within the cryogenic hibernation capsule.

Suddenly, a voice from behind startled me.

"Damn, you're the spitting image of your mother."

I whirled around, instinctively drawing my weapon.

Before me stood an older man in a black priest's attire and a boy with a long, braided ponytail.

The priest had spoken.

"Who are you?" I demanded, my aim steady despite the tension.

Their sudden appearance without my noticing and their calm in the face of my drawn weapon spoke volumes about their capabilities.

"So, you're Sally's daughter," the priest mused as he and the boy casually walked past me towards Master Chang.

The boy glared at me, clearly annoyed at being held at gunpoint.

"How long you gonna keep that thing pointed at us?" he growled, his eyes flashing dangerously.

I could have sworn I heard him mutter, "...got a death wish or something?"

"I'm Father Maxwell," the priest introduced himself, maintaining a warm, inviting smile that contrasted sharply with his companion's hostility.

"Father Maxwell, who runs but never hides, and never lies. And this surly kid here is my son, Duo."

The boy snorted derisively, making no attempt at a polite greeting.

Master Chang silently motioned for me to lower my weapon. I complied, albeit reluctantly.

The boy immediately snapped, "Lucky you. Might live a bit longer now."

When I realized this insolent youth's name was "Duo Maxwell," I thought it must be some cruel joke. Why name him after one of the legendary Gundam pilots?

"By the way, you did bring those three files, right?" the priest asked, his tone serious despite his friendly demeanor.

"We'll need those three preludes to awaken our 'Princess Aurora.'"

Rondo of Redemption

Treize File 1

The celestial dance of the aurora is not Earth's exclusive spectacle; it graces the skies of most planets in our solar system, a cosmic ballet that knows no planetary bounds.

On this particular night, the Martian north polar cap lies serene, the tempests having retreated to leave a canvas of stars stretched across the heavens. In ages past, when the atmosphere was but a whisper, these celestial beacons would have shone with unwavering intensity. But now, in the wake of terraforming, Mars boasts an Earth-like atmosphere, lending the stars a familiar, twinkling charm.

In the absolute stillness, it begins—a mesmerizing descent of luminous curtains from the sky above. Like the flowing hem of a celestial being's cape, gossamer veils of light undulate with ethereal grace. Each ripple transmutes the hues from deep indigo to vibrant purple, then to verdant green, and occasionally, a passionate crimson. This is the aurora in all its Martian glory.

Though I'm acutely aware of the inadequacy of mortal words to capture such splendor, I dare to describe it thus: imagine the most exquisite curtains of light performing an elegant and majestic waltz across the firmament. What truly astounds is the translucence of these auroral veils, allowing the glimmer of distant stars to pierce through their luminous folds. As I watch, transfixed, the aurora before me shimmers and glides eastward, spanning thousands of kilometers until it transforms into a rich, emerald tapestry draped across the sky.

For a moment, it seems as if these undulating lights conceal a stairway to the heavens themselves. But nature's grand performance is far from over—new curtains of light descend, taking center stage in this cosmic theater.

Witnessing this perpetual cycle of celestial beauty, one cannot help but be moved by the grandeur of nature and the enigmatic wonders of the universe. If Mars can offer such a breathtaking display, one can only imagine the unparalleled majesty of the auroras that dance above Earth's polar regions.

Some may question the moniker "Princess Aurora" for the slumbering beauty of fairy tale fame. True, the original story's princess lacked a specific name, sometimes referred to as Princess Talia. However,

considering that the most renowned classical ballet composed by Tchaikovsky has lent its name to Operation Mythos, our current mission, it seems only fitting that we embrace the title "Princess Aurora" for our sleeping beauty.

"The awakening of Princess Aurora requires three preludes," the priest had said. I was tempted to point out that Tchaikovsky's ballet actually consisted of four parts in its prologue, leaving us one short. But sensing that such pedantry might be misplaced, I decided to focus on the crux of the matter.

"So, you're saying," I began, my face a mask of barely concealed frustration as I addressed the priest and Master Chang, "that this ancient data file is some sort of password necessary to activate the cryogenic capsule?"

"Precisely," Master Chang replied, his gaze fixed not on me, but on the microchip containing the converted data file I held. His eyes seemed to devour it hungrily.

No sooner had I offered it than he snatched it away, immediately scanning and verifying its contents. Master Chang booted up a separate program, conjuring a holographic monitor before us, and began inputting the password. It was derived from the file's year and the season recorded within.

"This will initiate the defrosting system for the cryogenic capsule," he stated matter-of-factly.

Unable to contain myself any longer, I voiced the niggling doubt that had been gnawing at me.

"But aren't four preludes necessary?"

"The fourth was brought by this man," Master Chang replied, gesturing towards the priest as he loaded the memory chip.

"My prelude is a masterpiece rivaling a symphony," Father Maxwell, the priest, declared with a hint of dubious grandiloquence. It seemed he had a penchant for extravagant claims.

"The real concern," the priest continued, his tone softening as if in consideration of my bewilderment, "is Princess Aurora's condition upon awakening from the cryogenic capsule."

Despite his questionable demeanor, he might be more agreeable than I'd initially thought.

"Based on previous artificial hibernation awakening patterns, there's an 80% chance of abnormal neuron secretion in the hippocampus. In other words, there's a possibility that stored memories could be reset."

"So that's why you need the old AC era memories..." I mused aloud.

"Exactly," he confirmed.



At this point, a boy named Duo interjected, "Hey, Father Crapswell, where's my partner?"

"Leave that to Doktor. T and Professor W," the priest replied dismissively.

Those names rang a bell.

"You wouldn't happen to mean 'Snow White' and 'Warlock', would you?" I ventured.

"Of course that's what I mean! Geez, do I need to spell everything out for you?" Duo snapped.

"Surely you don't mean this child is to be the pilot?" I asked, incredulous.

"Well, yes... We've trained him to rival Princess Aurora's skills," Father Maxwell explained.

So that's why they named him Duo Maxwell, after the Gundam pilot, I realized. It made some sense, but the idea of such a young boy piloting was still hard to swallow.

"Rival? Ha! I could pilot circles around your precious 'Princess' with both hands tied behind my back!" Duo boasted. "You really don't know anything, do you? Some genius you are, old fart."

"I apologize for his poor manners. It's my fault for raising him alone since his mother passed," the priest said sheepishly.

"A mistake in personnel selection," Master Chang muttered, his eyes still fixed on the holo-monitor. "Both for this 'Princess Aurora' and your son."

"Even so, we can't just leave things as they are, can we?" the priest countered.

Master Chang fell silent.

"Father, are you also a Preventer?" I inquired.

"Oh no, no. I have far better things to do with my time, you see," he replied with a mysteriously bright smile. "Let's just say we're old friends."

"I've never once considered you a friend," Master Chang retorted.

"Come on, we nearly died together at the lunar base, remember?"

"Hmph. If you had died then, the air here might be a bit more tolerable," Master Chang grumbled.

"You're too kind," the priest chuckled sarcastically.

I had never seen Master Chang so talkative before. Perhaps this priest, if not a friend, was something of a frenemy to him.

"I've downloaded the three files... All that's left is the one you prepared," Master Chang said.

"Here you go..." The priest tossed over a microchip.

Master Chang loaded it into the computer and began reading the data.

"You're loading such a massive amount?" he questioned.

"It's the bare minimum," the priest replied.

The conversation between the two would progress rapidly if either I or Duo didn't interject. While I didn't intend to play the role of a persistent questioner, my position in overseeing this operation's execution demanded it.

"It might go without saying, but the contents of that file are also from the old AC era, right?" I asked.

"That would be correct."

"The oldest record is from AC-130, I believe?"

"You're going to download such old memories into Princess Aurora?"

"If we were to awaken Princess Aurora as is, his body would be the same as before, but his mind could potentially be like that of a newborn," the priest explained.

"What about verifying the contents?" I pressed.

"Planning to censor it?" the priest challenged.

"The authority has been delegated to President Catalonia," I stated.

"Ha! Dorothy's come up in the world, hasn't she... Not that I've ever met her," the priest scoffed.

His casual disregard for the Earth Sphere's representative proved he wasn't a member of the Preventers.

"She's quite capable," Master Chang interjected. "If Relena were the Earth Sphere President, Operation Mythos would never have been initiated."

It seemed even within the Preventers, there were exceptions who referred to their direct superiors so casually.

"Regardless of what you say, I'll be reviewing your file just as I did the other three, Father," I insisted.

"It'll take quite some time," the priest warned.

"Huh?"

"It's more accurate to say you'll experience it rather than read it."

The priest twirled his sunglasses as he spoke. At first, I didn't understand, but then I realized those sunglasses were actually the latest virtual visor technology.

In other words, this file was recorded in three-dimensional imagery. It could be directly transmitted to the brain, allowing one to experience it as a "visitor" or "observer" in the virtual space.

"Princess Aurora's mind was noble," Master Chang mused. "Can it truly be reconstructed with just this file?"

He still seemed hesitant.

"It's a dangerous gamble... There's no guarantee things will go as we plan," he added.

"You mean he might turn against us, like you once did?" the priest prodded.

"You can't deny the possibility."

"It was a fluke that he became Princess Aurora in the first place... Since we're taking a risky bet anyway, let's go with the one we won't regret," the priest said with a small wink.

"Besides, I went through a lot of trouble to investigate this..."

"Ridiculous... How do you manage as a priest with that personality?" Master Chang scoffed.

"I don't want to hear that from a Preventer who's so unlike one," the priest retorted.

I copied the microchip Father Maxwell had brought and began to examine the problematic file. The holographic monitor displayed a list of dates and names, divided into several chapters.

"Father, what is this?" I asked.

"You could call it a history book, or a biography. Basically, it's all past events processed by a special program called 'ZERO' and stored in this chip."

"Why start from AC-130?"

"It would have been possible to include all of human history, but if we did that, Princess Aurora would become some kind of omniscient being. On the other hand, recent events alone would be useless. What's necessary for his personality formation is the AC calendar, not the Mars calendar..."

I glanced over at Duo. Perhaps finding our conversation terribly boring, he had sprawled out on the sofa in the back, his back turned to us, his long braided hair dangling to the floor.

For some reason, the priest gazed at Duo with a nostalgic look as he continued speaking.

"And it's not the sanitized version you'd find in textbooks. What matters is the underground history that we knew as kids."

"No matter how much you processed it with ZERO, you can't claim your personal biases aren't in there," Master Chang argued.

"Of course I can't claim that. But I tried to be as fair as possible," the priest insisted.

"Trying isn't enough when it's this dangerous."

"That's why I'm being humble... Don't you Easterners understand that concept?"

Despite their appearances, the two continued their conversation like squabbling children.

I focused on the file.



The first entry was about Treize Khushrenada. I could read the basic content on the holographic monitor, but what I saw diverged dramatically from my preconceived image of Treize.

For instance, in the Preventer records, Treize Khushrenada is described as follows:

"Treize Khushrenada (AC-171-195) - A high-ranking official of the Romefeller Foundation and the young leader overseeing the secret society OZ.

Born into the elite as the grandson of the Romefeller Foundation's chief, he amassed numerous supporters and devotees through his powerful charisma and exceptional political acumen. All his actions were underpinned by a unique philosophy and aesthetic, earning him unwavering trust from subordinates like Lady Une and those who called themselves the Treize Faction. He also harbored a profound sense of guilt regarding war, memorizing the names and numbers of all those who perished in the recent conflict.

After OZ's coup against the Alliance, he openly opposed the Romefeller Foundation's policies, resulting in his downfall and imprisonment as a traitor. However, following Duke Dermail's death, he reclaimed his position as OZ's leader.

Subsequently, he inherited the position of head of state from Queen Relena of the World Nation and initiated a full-scale war against Milliardo Peacecraft, who had become the representative of the colonial revolutionary organization White Fang. In that battle, he sought to settle things through a duel using the massive battleship Libra, but Milliardo rejected this and fired the main cannon.

Consequently, the largest MS-versus-MS space battle in human history began at Treize's command. The battle devolved into chaos, and Treize's final opponent was the Gundam 05 pilot. After an intense fight, Treize was defeated and lost his life.

He died at the age of twenty-four."

This description should be accurate. However, the file Father brought painted a picture far removed from the tale of Treize Khushrenada as a rare hero.

He was indeed an enigmatic figure.

Why was he so fixated with losers?

When did he start memorizing the names of the dead and counting their numbers?

When did the somewhat melancholic and world-weary undercurrent in his ideology and philosophy first emerge? Such details were preserved here.

I borrowed the virtual visor from Father and connected it to the computer. As I put on the visor, the word "ZERO" appeared, and the computed past history began to stream directly into my brain.

The year was AC-170.

It began one year before Treize's birth.

AC-170 WINTER

Two lovers stood beneath the aurora.

Ein and Angelina.

In Yellowknife, a local city in the northernmost part of the North American continent, they stood in the vast snowy outskirts, gazing in awe at the fantastical aurora descending upon them.

The magnificent curtain of light shimmered in seven colors, constantly in motion.

They would later learn that even locals rarely witnessed such a spectacular display.

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to call it the ultimate beauty, a chance interplay between solar winds and Earth's magnetic field.

"The Earth is beautiful from space... I thought that was the most beautiful sight," Ein murmured, his eyes wide open, as if talking to himself.

"But standing here on Earth's soil, seeing this spectacle in person, I realize how much wonder and beauty overflows in this world."

"Ein..." Angelina whispered.

"Earth is beautiful... so incredibly beautiful..."

His voice was tinged with melancholy. Angelina sensed his feelings.

She could sense them, but couldn't find the words to comfort him.

On this beautiful Earth, wars raged on relentlessly, incongruent with its beauty.

And now, they were trying to bring these meaningless conflicts into space, beyond the aurora.

Ein pushed aside his sorrow and smiled. For now, he chose to express genuine joy at the beauty before them.

"But even more beautiful than this, you are the most stunning thing in this universe."

Embarrassed by his bold words, Angelina looked down shyly.

"Oh, stop it..."

Ein gently placed his finger under Angelina's chin, lifting her face towards his.

"Don't look at me. Look at the aurora."

"Huh?"

"I want to see the aurora reflected in your eyes... Nothing in all of outer space could surpass that beauty."

Their eyes met, and they shared a passionate kiss.

Ein Yuy was born in a space colony in AC-150. He was the nephew of Heero Yuy, the representative of the Colonial Affairs Consultative Organization.

Trusted by Heero, Ein, despite his young age of twenty, was tasked with bridging the gap between the colonies and Earth. This visit to Earth was to promote peace negotiations with the medical nation of Sanc Kingdom and the North American branch of the Romefeller Foundation.

Angelina Khushrenada, born in AC-152, was the only daughter of Duke Cinquante Khushrenada, the Romefeller Foundation's representative.

From childhood, she was doted on by her father and wanted for nothing. This time, she had accompanied her father to North America, merely participating in the conference ceremony and party between the colony and Earth representatives. Little did she know that this event would dramatically alter not only their fates but that of all humanity in the Earth Sphere.

Ein and Angelina met at the party, falling in love at first sight.

After countless secret meetings, they finally succeeded in this escapade to the Arctic Circle.

Whether they had marriage in mind at this point remains unclear, but there's no doubt that this aurora adventure solidified Angelina's feelings.

Now I have no regrets," Ein said softly.

"You're really leaving?" Angelina's voice trembled.

"Yes..."

"I love you, Ein."

"I love you too, Angelina... but I have a job I must do."

"Then I'll go to space with you!"

Ein shook his head weakly.

There was no way the esteemed daughter of the Khushrenada family would be permitted such a bold move as going to space.

Could Ein then break ties with Heero Yuy and remain on Earth?

That, too, seemed impossible.

Both options were beyond the reach of the young couple.
Yet, they agonized over it to the very end, desperately seeking a solution.

Such was the depth of their love and devotion to each other.
In the end, Ein departed for space, leaving Angelina behind.

Once a person has been captivated by ultimate beauty, they may react adversely to life in a tainted human society, sometimes bordering on madness in their actions.

It was a month after seeing that beautiful aurora that Angelina set off for space alone.

Ein was in the L-2 colony cluster, at V08744, persuading the anti-Alliance resistance fighters. He desperately tried to dissuade them from an armed uprising.

At that time, V08744 was the most radical anti-Alliance colony. Built in AC-87, it had been a melting pot of diverse races, plagued by constant unrest. Years of poverty had fueled discontent and hatred in this colony.

And that anger was directed at the United Earth Sphere Alliance.

Ein's persuasion was successful. He made them understand Heero Yuy's ideal of "creating an equal relationship between Earth and the colonies."

While Heero Yuy, the legendary leader of the colonies, is remembered in history for his excellent political skills, it could be said that the behind-the-scenes contributions of his nephew, Ein Yuy, in strengthening inter-colony cooperation, played an equally crucial role.

After persuading the resistance fighters, Angelina suddenly appeared before Ein.

"Ein!"

Angelina immediately embraced her beloved, kissing him for the first time in a month.

For a moment, Ein was conscious of the eyes around them, but then he embraced his beloved woman who had come to see him, casting aside everything, even disregarding the danger.

"Angelina..."

They exchanged marriage vows in a small church called Maxwell in the V08744 colony.

At the end of December in AC-170 (some say it was Christmas), these star-crossed lovers became the couple said to be the most well-matched in space.

Heero Yuy, as Ein's uncle, was present at the ceremony and gave a brief congratulatory speech:

"The future of these two is filled with blessings. We, the people of the colonies, did not venture into space to fight. I want you to believe that this universe exists for us to love and be loved."

This memorable little Maxwell Church where the two were wed no longer exists, not even a trace remains.

Eighteen years later, in AC-188, during an anti-Alliance coup by colony residents, it burned down along with over 240 lives.

This is known as the "Maxwell Church Tragedy."

If Heero or Ein had been alive and present at that time, perhaps that tragedy could have been avoided.

But in discussing history, such "what ifs" are futile.

In any case, Ein and Angelina began their newlywed life in the space colonies.

It seems to have been filled with happiness.

Ein threw himself into his work with even more vigor, serving as Heero Yuy's right hand and deepening inter-colony cooperation. This meant he couldn't stay in one place, leading to a life of moving from one inn to another, often the cheapest accommodations available.

Heero Yuy's political activities in the colonies relied solely on sincerity and integrity for persuasion, so they had no connection to support funds, political funds, or the wealth of prominent families.

Moreover, the Alliance Space Forces, hostile to the colonies, saw Heero Yuy's plans for space unification as a threat, and it was unclear when they might resort to extreme measures like assassination.

Ein was in a similar situation, forced to conduct his political activities in near secrecy.

It's hard to imagine that Angelina, once the daughter of the wealthy Khushrenada family, didn't have any complaints about this nomadic lifestyle. Yet, it's said she constantly expressed that just being with Ein was enough to make her happy.

It was in the summer of AC-171 when Angelina, living such a life, reunited with Heero Yuy in the L-3 colony...

AC-171 SUMMER

"It's been a long time, Uncle Heero," Angelina said respectfully.

At this time, Angelina was six months pregnant with Ein's child.

"Ah, Angelina... You've become even more beautiful," Heero replied warmly.

"You flatter me... There's no need for compliments to a woman six months heavy with child."

Heero Yuy stroked his characteristically fierce eyebrows as he laughed and said, "However, Angelina, if you want to safely give birth to that child, Earth would be better than space."

Hearing this, Angelina was surprised that even someone as progressive as Heero Yuy seemed to believe in the century-old superstition about the dangers of childbirth in space.

"Please don't worry. That issue has been resolved by the medical team from the Sanc Kingdom. Now, uterine abnormalities don't occur in space anymore."

Only the Winner family in the L-4 colony still encouraged births using DNA-manipulated test tubes.

"Of course, I know that. What I'm concerned about is your father, Duke Cinquante Khushrenada."

"My father? What about him?"

"I hear he's been quite dejected since you came here. And now that rumors of your pregnancy with Ein's child have reached him, he's said to be very worried."

Recently, there had been reports of people hired by the Khushrenada family trying to bring Angelina back to Earth.

It wouldn't be surprising if Cinquante Khushrenada, with his outdated sensibilities, feared the supposed dangers of space childbirth more than necessary.

In many parts of Earth, it was firmly believed that giving birth in space would result in the death of both mother and child. However, this was an intentionally spread false rumor, likely aimed at preventing further decline due to talented individuals leaving Earth.

"If you'd like, I could approach the Romefeller Foundation and—"

"Uncle, I must respectfully decline your offer," Angelina said firmly.

"Our child will have no connection to the Khushrenada family."

"But Angelina—"

Heero Yuy's words came from a place of concern for Angelina, but for a woman living for love, it seemed unnecessary worry.

"Please, uncle, don't trouble yourself about us... We'll manage somehow."

In turn, Angelina asked about something that had always concerned her.

"Uncle, won't you ever marry? I believe your bloodline should be the one to carry the future of Earth and the colonies."

"If there's someone who will carry on my will, it doesn't matter who they are. It wouldn't matter if the name Heero Yuy disappeared from history."

"But—"

Here, Heero Yuy said something that seemed to foresee the future.

"If anything were to happen to me, Ein could take over. Or..."

He gently touched Angelina's belly and smiled with utmost kindness.

"I'd be grateful if this child could carry on my legacy."

"Yes," Angelina replied softly.

This was the last conversation Heero Yuy and Angelina would ever have.

As this was transpiring, Ein was arranging a meeting with Major Septum of the Alliance Space Forces in the same colony.

However, this meeting would never come to fruition.

An urgent communication reached Ein.

"We've got trouble, Ein!"

It was the aide tasked with Angelina's protection.

Angelina had left their modest lodgings to go shopping when she was suddenly surrounded by several men, forced into a waiting car, and abducted.

Rather than blame the incompetence of the aide, Ein regretted his own leniency. He should have been more strict about Angelina's carefree behavior.

"I bet it was them..."

He immediately suspected they were hired by the Khushrenada family.

There was no other explanation.

He hadn't expected them to resort to such forceful measures. He had let his guard down, thinking that somewhere in their hearts, they had accepted the couple's marriage.

"I'm on my way!"

But even as the words left his lips, uncertainty gnawed at him.

The colony's security was managed by the Alliance Space Forces. and Ein was in no position to ask Major Septum, with whom he was supposed to meet, to search for Angelina. At best, he might be accused of kidnapping and detaining an important figure from Earth all this time. He was at his wit's end.

In this moment of paralyzing indecision, Ein's comm-device chirped. A message. Two lines that made his blood run cold:

"Goodbye. Considering your precarious position, perhaps this is for the best."

Angelina's words, undoubtedly typed in haste while her captors were distracted. Even now, in the midst of her own crisis, her thoughts were of him. It was so quintessentially Angelina that Ein felt his heart might burst.

"No," Ein growled, a newfound fire igniting in his eyes. "I won't let it end like this."

Ein was furious at the despicable Khushrenada family, and frustrated with his own weak, defeatist attitude.

"We can't be torn apart so easily!"

If he gave up now, he would lose the most beautiful woman in space.

Ein immediately contacted Quinze, an acquaintance in the resistance.

True to the saying "set a thief to catch a thief," they quickly discovered the whereabouts of the men hired by the Khushrenada family.

They seemed to be heading towards the spaceport.

"There's still time!"

Ein jumped into a car and rushed to the spaceport.

He learned that the shuttle was set to launch from Runway 13, which was also used by the Alliance Forces.

Upon arriving at the spaceport, Ein crashed his car through the wire fence and stood defiantly in front of the shuttle that was about to take off.

"ANGELINA!" The name tore from his throat, a primal cry of longing and defiance against the uncaring universe.

Within the shuttle, Angelina's tear-streaked face appeared at a window. Their eyes met across the impossible divide of reinforced glass and protocol.

"Ein!" she cried, her voice lost in the confines of the cabin but echoing in her heart.

Tears flowed freely down her cheeks.

Every fiber of her being yearned to rush to him, to leap from the shuttle and into his arms.

But—

The cruel hand of reality held her fast.

Ein found himself surrounded by a phalanx of Alliance Space Forces soldiers, their weapons trained on him with unwavering precision. Major

Septum emerges from the ranks, his voice cutting through the air like a sharpened blade.

"Ein, my boy, this behavior of yours is most troubling," Septum declares, his grip on his firearm tightening. "This area falls under the jurisdiction of the Alliance Space Forces. I must insist that all unauthorized personnel vacate the premises immediately."

Undeterred by Septum's authoritative tone, Ein moved with deliberate grace towards the shuttle, his steps echoing across the tarmac. The Major's voice rises, ricocheting off the surrounding structures of Runway 13.

"Halt!" Septum's command reverberates through the air. "If you refuse to comply, I'll have no choice but to open fire!"

Ein's resolve remained unshaken, his stride unbroken. Septum, embodying the zealous spirit of a young colony overseer, attempts one final plea.

"This is no idle threat, Ein. Any further defiance will only serve to jeopardize your position!"

But Ein's determination stands firm against Septum's warnings. In a heartbeat, the crack of gunfire shatters the tense silence. A bullet tears through Ein's left shoulder, eliciting not a cry of pain, but a name spoken with raw emotion.

"Angelina!"

The name of his beloved wife escapes his lips like a prayer. Undeterred, Septum fires again. The second shot grazes Ein's right leg, gouging flesh and rendering further movement a Herculean task.

"Angelina!!" Ein's voice rings out once more, a heart-wrenching plea to the heavens.

His body, now betraying his will, lurches to the left. He collapses, his form sprawled across the stark white "13" painted on the runway.

"Ein!" Angelina's voice pierces the air, thick with anguish.

Her eyes, wide with horror, take in the gruesome tableau before her. The pristine white "13" slowly stains crimson as Ein, even in his fallen state, continues to call out her name. The sight burns itself into her memory, a nightmarish vision she knows she'll never forget.

"Ein Yuy... my beloved," she whispers, her voice trembling with emotion.

As if mirroring the coldness of the moment, Angelina's tears freeze upon her cheeks. In this instant, a steely resolve crystallizes within her heart.

'I will never forget this moment,' she vows silently. 'My love, who has forsaken everything, continues to call out my name.'

Her voice, barely audible yet filled with unwavering devotion, carries.

"I love you, Ein..."

"An... ge... lina!"

Ein's voice, a ragged whisper, clawed its way through the haze of his fading consciousness. His unwavering devotion to his wife's name sent a chill down Septum's spine, fear and murderous intent warring within him.

'Those who defy my orders,' Septum thought, his grip tightening on his weapon, 'deserve nothing but death.'

With cold calculation, he aimed his gun at Ein's head. But fate, it seemed, had other plans.

In that crucial moment, the shuttle's engines roared to life, having found a narrow path through the chaos on the runway. It began to inch forward, a metallic behemoth awakening.

The soldiers, sensing the futility of their stand, parted like a sea before the advancing craft.

Septum, stubborn to the last, held his ground until the shuttle's scorching exhaust overwhelmed him, forcing him to retreat. Within seconds, the shuttle vanished into the inky void of space.

Ein Yuy, branded a trespasser and traitor, found himself in the iron grip of the Security Maintenance Bureau. Yet, even as he endured weeks of incarceration, a single flame of hope burned bright in his heart.

'Someday, I will see Angelina again.'

This unwavering belief sustained him through his confinement. Upon his release, Ein threw himself back into the political arena, championing the cause of colonial cooperation with renewed vigor.

No longer did tears fall from his eyes; like Angelina's, they had frozen, crystallizing into resolve.

'I will tear down the barriers between Earth and the colonies,' he vowed silently. 'Only then can I hope to see Angelina once more. The absolute vacuum of space and the vast physical distance may separate us, but they are no match for the connection of human hearts.'

His determination burned bright, a beacon in the darkness of their separation.

Yet, cruel fate had other designs.

Not only would the lovers never reunite, but an even harsher destiny lay in wait for them both in the days to come.

AC—171 AUTUMN

Three months later, in the heart of Luxembourg, Europe, Angelina gave birth to a healthy baby boy. She named him "Treize," French for the number "13" - an indelible reminder of that blood-stained runway where love had triumphed over all.

For Angelina, that harrowing scene wasn't a nightmare, but a testament to true love's power. Even as a newborn, Treize's features hinted at his lineage - his brow reminiscent of Heero Yuy, his eyes a mirror of Ein's. With every glance at her son, Angelina's heart soared towards the stars, yearning for the vastness of space.

Officially, he was registered as "Treize Khushrenada," with no father's name on record - a blank space pregnant with unspoken truths.

Before Treize could form his first memories, fate dealt another cruel hand. Angelina was thrust into a political marriage with Hundert, the some twenty years older son of Dermal Catalonia, a titan of the Romefeller Foundation. The lavish ceremony belied the loveless union, yet Angelina faced this new chapter with a mask of stoic acceptance.

Her father, the aging Duke Cinquante, viewed her past rebellions as youthful indiscretions. He hoped this marriage would tame her spirit and secure the Khushrenada legacy through Treize. Perhaps it was this misplaced sense of relief that hastened Cinquante's departure from this world.

In the dawn of AC-172, Duke Cinquante Khushrenada, the pillar of the Romefeller Foundation, breathed his last.

He entrusted the future of both the Foundation and the Khushrenada name to the infant Treize. Dermal Catalonia stepped in as interim leader, but his lack of charisma left the Foundation rudderless for years to come.

Yet, Angelina's fire had not been extinguished. Deep within, she nurtured a secret resolve to support the ideals of colonial independence and cosmic peace that Heero and Ein had championed. This political marriage was but a stepping stone, a foundation upon which she could build a future where Treize would inherit Ein's vision. It was her penance for past impulsive actions.

Meanwhile, in the cold expanse of space, Heero Yuy proclaimed the "Complete Unification of the Colonies," a declaration that seemed to

level the playing field between Earth and its celestial offspring. Angelina's heart soared with hope at this news, seeing it as a stride towards their shared dream.

But Earth's machinations ran deep. The proclamation became a tool for further exploitation. Evidence of this deception quickly surfaced. The United Earth Sphere Alliance rapidly expanded their space military bases, while substantially increasing the colonies' share of military maintenance costs. Earth took the lead in raising inter-colonial export tariffs, and a series of treaties disadvantageous to the colonies were swiftly enacted.

Though the people of the colonies wished to protest, they found themselves powerless against Earth's military might. Their diplomacy, devoid of any real strength, proved worse than useless - it was a cruel reminder of their powerlessness in the face of Earth's domination.

In quiet moments, Angelina whispered truths to young Treize: "This world's suffering stems from your grandfather tearing your father and me apart. True reform requires uniting the will of space with Earth's ambitions. Only you can achieve this, my son. This is your destiny."

Hundert observed these exchanges with a gentle smile, never intervening. Whether he dismissed her words or respected her convictions remained a mystery. Yet, his love for the young, beautiful Angelina was undeniable. He approached their unusual dynamic with magnanimity, unbothered by her distant gaze and treating Treize as his own flesh and blood.

While some nobles sneered at Hundert's perceived naivety, he remained unperturbed. The true depth of his character would only become clear the following year, with the birth of their two sons.

AC-173 SPRING

Angelina and Hundert welcomed another son into the world - Vingt Khushrenada, two years younger than Treize.

Vingt's delicate features mirrored Angelina's, prompting many to remark on his almost feminine beauty. In stark contrast to Treize's fierce brow, Vingt exuded an angelic aura that captivated all who saw him.

As the true heir of both Khushrenada and Catalonia bloodlines, Vingt seemed the more fitting successor to the Foundation and noble titles than Treize. This fact likely lurked in Hundert's mind, perhaps motivating his unconditional love for Angelina and Treize - a strategy to maintain their affection. The Foundation naturally celebrated Vingt's birth, hailing him as Cinquante's spiritual successor.

While the adult Treize would eventually accept this reality, choosing a military path and entrusting the family legacy to Vingt, the young Treize now simply delighted in his baby brother's arrival.

Meanwhile, in space, Heero Yuy proclaimed colonial independence through non-violence and disarmament - the famous "Heart of Space" declaration. This would later inspire the Sanc Kingdom's pacifism and, decades later, Queen Relena's vision of a unified world.

Angelina watched Heero's broadcast with Treize and newborn Vingt. Tears, once frozen by resolve, now flowed freely down her cheeks. On the screen, she glimpsed Ein beside Heero - limping from old wounds, but finally center stage in the colonial struggle.

Yet, unease crept into Angelina's heart. The presence of former anti-Alliance resistance member Quinze and the rumored half the colonies wealthy industrialist Dekim Barton at Heero's side stirred a nameless dread within her. This declaration of independence, while welcomed by the colonies, felt perilously close to an outright rejection of Alliance authority.

"They'll be killed," she whispered, fear gripping her heart.

Alliance Space Forces Major Septum's personal vendetta against Ein Yuy had evolved into a systemic fear of Heero Yuy's influence. Desperate to maintain colonial control, Septum covertly reached out to a sniper from the Alliance Forces Special Operations Unit - precursor to the secret society OZ - to assassinate Heero Yuy.

This decision, while extreme, wasn't entirely unexpected given the circumstances. However, the situation was complex. The Special Operations Unit was under the jurisdiction of Alliance Headquarters, putting it beyond the authority of a mere Space Forces major like Septum.

To circumvent this, Septum framed his directive as a "request" rather than an order. He arranged for the assassin's fee to be paid from the Space Forces' budget, effectively outsourcing the operation while maintaining plausible deniability.

The sniper who accepted Septum's request was a man named Odin Lowe. However, delving into Lowe's background and significance would be premature at this point in the narrative. For now, it's sufficient to simply note his name, one that would gain significance only in the years to come.

AC-175 APRIL 07

Four-year-old Treize would forever remember this day - his first truly vivid memory.

Angelina had taken Treize and Vingt on a journey to Scandinavia, without Hundert. Her intention was to show her young sons the aurora borealis. They were enjoying a ship voyage towards the Norwegian Sea, admiring the beautiful fjords, with plans to witness the aurora on Greenland's snowy plains.

The previous day had brought a fierce, snowy storm. Despite it being April, massive ice floes drifted from the Arctic Ocean. The storm caused these white giants to collide violently - some rising above the sea, others sinking below. This turbulent white sea evoked images of warring ice.

The floes' sharp edges clashed, carving each other into even fiercer blades. Treize, watching from the ship, felt an unusual excitement. This battle had no ideology, no justice or evil, no allies or enemies - a "thoroughly meaningless and futile war." Rationally, it was merely a natural phenomenon. Yet Treize possessed the sensitivity to find beauty in it.

The next morning dawned clear and cloudless. It was then that Angelina and her sons learned of Heero Yuy's assassination. They watched, wide-eyed, as the news broadcast showed the legendary leader being gunned down. Angelina was momentarily speechless.

Simultaneously, news broke of a terrorist bombing at the same venue, reporting Ein Yuy's death. Angelina remained silent throughout. Whether she thought "It can't be" or "So my fears have come true" remains unclear. However, she didn't cry out or lose composure.

Without shedding a tear, she stroked Treize and Vingt's heads, saying, "The wheels of history have gone astray... The world is heading down the wrong path..."

At their mother's urging, Treize and Vingt left the cabin to view the sea of ice floes. The sight that greeted them would remain etched in their memories forever.

Finely carved, sharply pointed transparent ice shards, with their cores of frozen blue seawater, reflected the newly risen sun. They sparkled brilliantly, spreading a jewel-like radiance of silver-blue, gold, and prismatic colors across the entire sea.

It was a vision of pure beauty - a majestic, perfect beauty emerging in the wake of a meaningless war.

Treize might have wanted to express it in such poetic terms, but he didn't yet possess that level of articulation. Nevertheless, both Treize and Vingt were truly captivated by this beauty.

"It's beautiful, isn't it, brother?" Vingt said.

"Yes..." Treize replied.

"You two should remember this sight," Angelina whispered, having silently appeared behind them. "Someday, it might prove useful."

"Mother..." Treize began.

"Ein, I love you," Angelina murmured. She then pressed her lips to young Treize's, a gesture far too intimate for a mother and child. Seeing Ein's likeness in Treize, she kissed him as she would a lover.

For the first time in his life, Treize shed tears. He understood his mother's sorrow with painful clarity. Though young Vingt undoubtedly witnessed this scene, he never spoke of it later. Perhaps he didn't remember, or perhaps it sank deep into his subconscious as a primal scene.

After this, Treize Khushrenada never cried again. Like his father and mother before him, he may have frozen his tears.

The young Treize sensed, albeit vaguely, that the world was changing irrevocably. Earth was falling, and space's paradise was withering.

There was no going back.

Twenty years later (AC-195), Treize would write a short piece quoting Rilke's "Autumn." Even earlier, in AC-187, he composed a strikingly similar poem. Both likely stemmed from this experience of the ice floes.

The day after this event, Angelina returned to Luxembourg without seeing the aurora. She then donned black mourning clothes, secluded herself indoors, and never traveled again. Neither Treize nor Vingt seemed to experience any profound emotions or natural wonders afterward.

While speculative, April 7, AC-175, was likely a day of destiny for Angelina, Treize, and Vingt. Undoubtedly, it changed the fate of all people in the Earth Sphere. The coincidence of this fateful day with the vision of that beautiful spectacle undeniably had a profound impact on Treize's psychological development.

This German poem, titled "Dazzling Light," indeed offers insight into Treize Khushrenada's sensibilities:

Dazzling Light

Beyond the darkness, I saw a point of light
Towards that light, I ran
Simply, earnestly ran
Ran in a frenzy

As I kept running
As if emerging from a tunnel
I plunged into a world of dazzling light
It was a world filled with fulfillment

Is this what I seek?
What I had been seeking?

No, that's not it!
I wasn't seeking rest
This wasn't the heart I wanted

I look back
There is the exit
Of the dark tunnel I passed through

What I sought wasn't the result
The process itself was important

If so
My salvation
Was within that pitch-black darkness
The meaning was in the continuous running

So I ask myself
Why
Did I keep running?

AC187 sommer TK

AC-176 AUTUMN

The assassination of Heero Yuy left an indelible scar on the Earth Sphere, particularly among those who yearned for peace. Its ripples echoed across the globe, reshaping the course of history.

In the heart of the Mediterranean, on the island of Corsica, an Alliance Forces base buzzed with activity. Here, the future of warfare was being forged in the form of humanoid weapons known as mobile suits. But in a twist of fate that sent shockwaves through the project, five brilliant minds—colony-dispatched scientists at the pinnacle of their fields—vanished into thin air, severing all technological cooperation in the wake of Yuy's death.

The sudden exodus left the mobile suit development in the capable, if opportunistic, hands of OZ's Chief Engineer Seis Clark and Technical Officer Tubarov Bilmon. Under their guidance, the project's focus shifted dramatically, emphasizing cost-effective mass production over cutting-edge innovation.

Summer's heat had barely faded when the first prototype ground-combat mobile suit, the Leo, rolled out of the hangar in August. By mid-October, these mechanical titans were already stomping across real battlefields, their very presence rewriting the rules of engagement.

Not to be outdone, Tubarov unveiled his brainchild: the Tragos. Designed for mid-range support and indirect assaults, this behemoth was ready for mass production before the year's end.

Seis, ever the visionary, pushed the boundaries further. Taking the Leo as his canvas, he crafted the Aries, a mobile suit that danced through the skies with deadly grace. As cherry blossoms bloomed the following April, so too did this aerial predator spread its wings.

This triumvirate of mechanical marvels—Leo, Tragos, and Aries—marked the dawn of the first generation mobile suits, a watershed moment in military technology that would echo through the annals of history.

Yet, as these machines of war took shape, the world continued to shift. The medical utopia of the Sanc Kingdom, nestled in the Scandinavian Peninsula, underwent a metamorphosis. Abandoning its purely humanitarian stance, it embraced a unique philosophy of peace, laying the foundation for a new kingdom built on ideals as lofty as its fjords.

Meanwhile, tensions in the colonies reached a boiling point. L-5 A00206 Colony raised its voice in defiance against the Alliance's military interventions, igniting a powder keg of resentment that had long smoldered in the vacuum of space.

The floodgates had opened. The tenuous peace that Heero and Ein had maintained crumbled like sand castles before a tsunami. Other colonies, emboldened by L-5's audacity, erupted in armed uprisings. It was as if a great dam had burst, releasing years of pent-up frustration and rage.

The Alliance, its mask of benevolence slipping, responded with an iron fist. Under the guise of peacekeeping, they launched military operations to quell the rebellions. But each act of suppression only fanned the flames of hatred, forging the first links in a chain of vengeance that threatened to stretch into eternity.

Thus began an era of seemingly endless conflict, its opening act written in fire across the stars.

(It's worth noting that the first-ever mobile suit battle in human history took place in this very L-5 A00206 Colony. However, as it's only tangentially related to our current focus, we'll have to shelve that tale for another time.)

There's a peculiar phenomenon that occurs when one glimpses ultimate beauty—be it in art, nature, or an abstract concept. Those touched by such transcendence often find themselves unable to readjust to the grime and grit of everyday human existence. In extreme cases, this disconnect can manifest as behavior bordering on madness.

The same principle, it seems, applies to the exquisite notion of "peace." Those who have tasted its sweetness, even fleetingly, are forever changed. When that tranquility is shattered, they're plunged into an abyss of anxiety, desperately clawing to reclaim what they've lost.

In their fervor to restore that idyllic state, these peace-seekers can paradoxically transform into the very antithesis of their goal. History has shown us, time and again, how quickly the most ardent pacifists can don the mantle of bloodthirsty warriors, their minds consumed by a manic desire to carve out their vision of peace—even if it means leaving a trail of corpses in their wake.

As the world outside crumbled, Angelina Khushrenada's inner world began to fracture. In the wake of Ein's death, her will to live seemed to wither, her psyche spiraling into a dark abyss.

Sleepless nights stretched into an endless blur. Tears would fall unbidden from her eyes, even in moments devoid of sadness. That once-radiant face, a canvas of subtle emotions, slowly became a mask of emptiness.

Her behavior grew erratic, bordering on the bizarre. One day, she shed her mourning blacks, wandering the mansion in nature's garb - a ghostly apparition of her former self.

For young Treize, watching his gentle, elegant mother - once the epitome of beauty and refinement - succumb to madness was a silent torment. Yet, not a single tear graced his cheeks.

With a maturity far beyond his years, Treize never uttered a word of complaint about Angelina's condition.

Instead, he'd simply say, "Mother, just having you here makes me happy."

He refrained from seeking comfort, shouldering a burden no child should bear.

Vingt, barely more than a toddler, mirrored his brother's strength.

Long ago, Angelina had spoken similar words to Ein. But could children so young - five and three - truly possess such unwavering devotion?

The Khushrenada estate grew eerily quiet. Hundert, the supposed patriarch, became a rare sight within its walls. He claimed the Foundation's affairs consumed his time, but both Treize and Vingt saw through the facade - it was a coward's retreat from Angelina's decline.

Had Hundert showered his wife with devoted care in those crucial moments, perhaps Angelina's mental state might not have deteriorated so severely.

Ultimately, for her "stability and treatment," Angelina was admitted to the royal hospital in the Sanc Kingdom. Hundert pitched it to the boys as access to cutting-edge medical care, but the truth was clear - it was to preserve the family's aristocratic image.

Treize and Vingt visited faithfully. Hundert managed a single, perfunctory appearance - a damning testament to the loveless nature of their marriage.

On one such visit, he waited in the car, refusing to enter the hospital grounds.

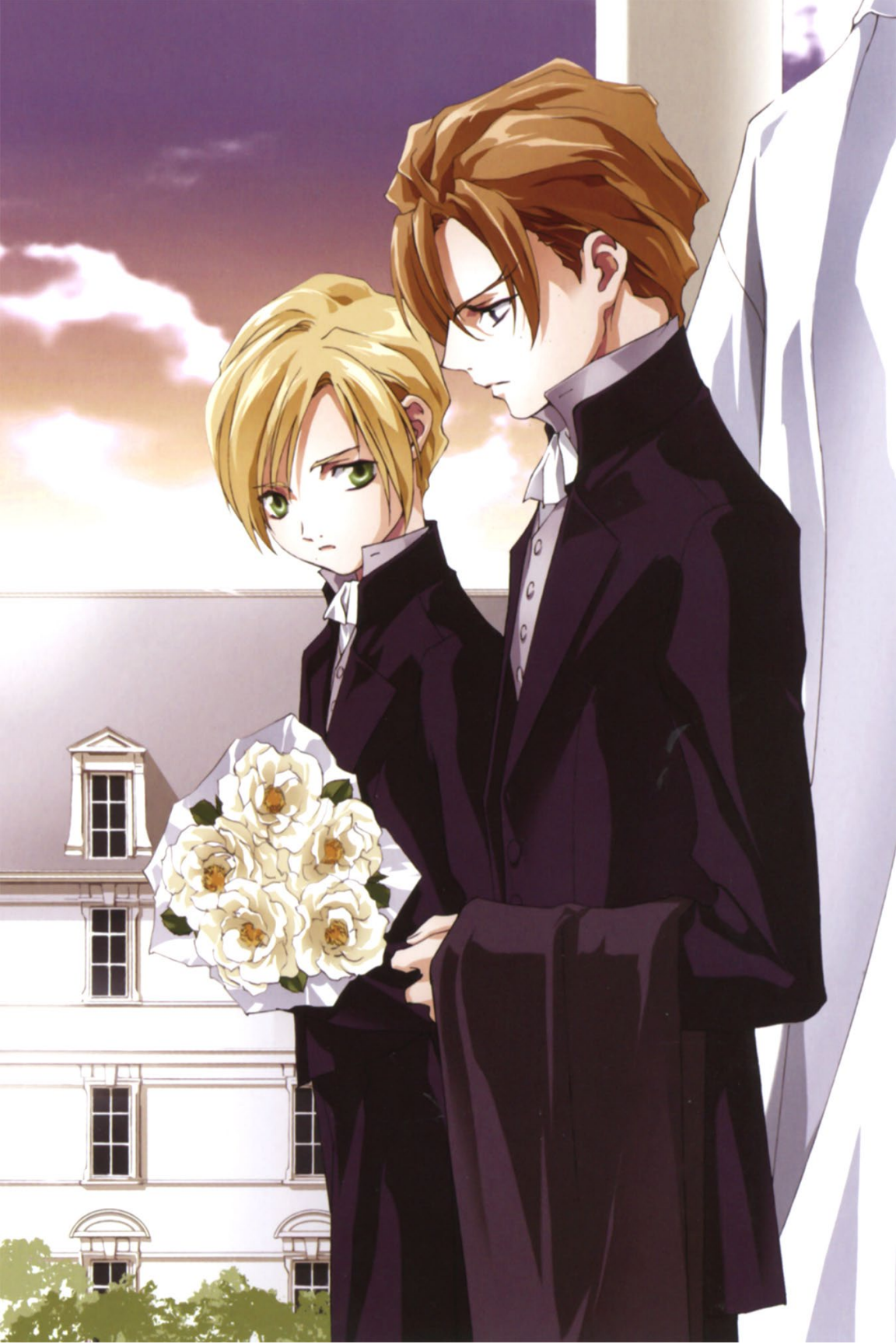
The lobby bustled with excitement - news of an heir born to the Peacecraft royal family. Prince Milliardo, they called him.

Treize Khushrenada and Milliardo Peacecraft - two names destined to shape history.

They would forge the OZ Specials and later ignite the flames of all-out war between Earth and space. Yet, in that moment, no one could have foreseen the weight of destiny that would soon rest upon their shoulders.

AC-180 APRIL 08

Four years had slipped away like sand through an hourglass. Throughout this time, Angelina remained within the hospital's sterile embrace, never once returning home.



Treize had now seen nine summers, while Vingt counted seven. Both boys excelled in their studies, naturally gravitating towards leadership roles with an almost magnetic charisma. Yet, their paths diverged in physical prowess.

Vingt's constitution was delicate from birth, while Treize seemed to master every sport he touched - from the precision of fencing to the grace of equestrian arts.

Without fail, each holiday found the brothers making their pilgrimage to their mother's side. On one such visit, as their footsteps echoed softly through the hushed hospital corridors, Vingt finally voiced a question that had long lurked in the shadows of his young mind.

Just before entering Angelina's room, he turned to his elder brother.
"Treize, do you... love Mother?"

Treize, ever composed, didn't deflect the innocent query. Yet, his response came not as a direct answer, but another question.

"What about you, Vingt?"

"Of course I do," Vingt replied without hesitation.

A gentle smile graced Treize's features, tinged with an emotion Vingt couldn't quite name.

"Well then," Treize mused, "isn't that enough?"

Something in his brother's smile struck Vingt as profoundly melancholic. Perhaps it was this unspoken sadness that kept Vingt from ever broaching the subject again.

As they entered the hospital room, Angelina's vacant gaze was fixed on the world beyond the window. Her eyes, devoid of their former spark, made one wonder if she even drew breath - so fragile was her hold on life.

The boys recounted their day - school adventures, the antics of their cat. Though seemingly trivial, they poured their hearts into these tales, especially young Vingt.

At first, Angelina merely nodded. But the moment her eyes met Treize's, a fleeting light kindled within them. Without fail, she'd utter the same haunting words:

"Seize the world, Treize... Become the ruler of Earth and space."

Treize, wise beyond his years, didn't take these words at face value. Vingt, however, absorbed every syllable. In his young mind, Treize was destined to bring peace to Earth and space - a sacred mission bestowed by their mother.

It was around this time that the Sanc Kingdom's King Peacecraft raised the banner of "Total Pacifism," coinciding with the birth of Princess Relena.

Reflecting on the Sanc Kingdom's history reveals a land once plagued by conflict. Geopolitically, it stood as far from peace as one could imagine. Resource-poor and militarily weak, the Kingdom was a perpetual victim, tossed about by the whims of European powers.

In a desperate bid for change, the Kingdom briefly transformed into an aggressive military state, even attempting conquest. The world's armies responded with merciless retribution, leaving the nation utterly broken and drowning in war debts.

Enter the current King Peacecraft. He boldly redirected all military spending into medical research, propelling the Sanc Kingdom to the forefront of global healthcare. A third of the population was trained in medicine, either as doctors or nurses, and the Kingdom's medical innovations dramatically reduced wartime casualties worldwide.

Within years, they repaid its enormous reparations in full. The kingdom then dispatched elite medical teams to conflict zones, offering free treatment and slowly erasing its warmongering reputation. The Kingdom effectively became a nation-sized hospital - attacking it would be as unthinkable as bombing a medical facility.

Emboldened, they began advocating for global peace. Its medical expertise even solved challenges of space colonization and childbirth.

This history explains the frequent meetings between Heero Yuy and King Peacecraft. But Yuy's assassination in AC-175 left the Sanc Kingdom isolated in its pacifist stance.

Undeterred, King Peacecraft refocused on earthly peace, garnering some international support. This culminated in the declaration of "Total Pacifism" - complete disarmament, non-violence, and condemnation of war.

Little did four-year-old Prince Milliardo or newborn Princess Relena know that this idealistic proclamation would soon invite catastrophe.

Twenty months later, in AC-182, fearing the spread of pacifism, General Daigo Onegell of the United Earth Sphere Alliance attacked. The Sanc Kingdom fell.

King Peacecraft perished, and his children vanished without a trace.

AC-183 WINTER

Angelina had been transferred from the Sanc Kingdom's hospital before its fall. This move was likely orchestrated by Hundert, who seemed to have caught wind of the Alliance's plans through his

connections. Rather than keeping her in the increasingly volatile European sphere, she was relocated to a specialized medical facility in the L-1 colony cluster.

One could speculate that either the Khushrenada family or the Romefeller Foundation sought to distance Angelina from her promising sons, Treize and Vingt. Perhaps they feared her influence on the boys' futures, or maybe they simply believed the advanced facilities in space could better treat her condition.

Interestingly, Treize didn't seem to harbor much resentment towards his stepfather, Hundert. The man had shown a surprising level of empathy towards the boys' motherless situation, always treating them with unexpected kindness. This behavior seemed less the result of genuine affection born from years of cohabitation, and more an attempt at atonement for his past negligence. For a man who had navigated the treacherous waters of aristocratic society, even this level of conscience was remarkably rare.

Young Vingt idolized his older brother, seeing it as his life's mission to support Treize in his destined role as the future leader of the Romefeller Foundation. However, as Treize transitioned from boyhood to young adulthood, he showed a startling lack of interest in the political machinations of foundations and royalty.

In a move that shocked many, eleven-year-old Treize rejected his predetermined place within the Romefeller hierarchy. Instead, he enrolled in the United Earth Sphere Alliance's Military Academy. This decision might have stemmed from a deep-seated disgust with the exclusionary nature of the aristocracy. Or perhaps, having witnessed the tragic fates of idealists like Heero Yuy and the Sanc Kingdom, Treize recognized that even the noblest pacifist philosophies crumble in the face of superior force.

Whatever his reasons, young Treize Khushrenada set out to forge his own path. His unique eyes, filled with a melancholic wisdom beyond his years, seemed to constantly search for something greater.

At the military academy, Treize's brilliance shone as brightly as ever, consistently holding the top rank among his peers. His primary instructor was the enigmatic Colonel Chilias Catalonia, a man whispered to be an eccentric within the Romefeller Foundation. Chilias was not only the youngest son of Duke Demail, the Foundation's acting representative, but also Hundert Khushrenada's much younger brother.

Chilias had a precocious two-year-old daughter named Dorothy, who often visited the academy grounds. This distant relative of Treize was a

remarkably sharp child, known for her distinctive smile that seemed to hold secrets beyond her years.

"When I grow up, I'm going to be Mr. Treize's bride," she would declare with childish conviction, eliciting chuckles from those around her. Yet, there was a seriousness in her eyes that suggested this wasn't merely a game to her.

Dorothy looked up to Treize as an older brother figure, and he, in turn, doted on her as if she were his own sister. Their bond was a rare spot of warmth in the often cold world of military and aristocratic politics.

Colonel Chalias, for his part, viewed Treize less as a nephew and more as an exceptionally gifted student. He took a keen interest in nurturing Treize's potential, particularly in the realms of advanced mobile suit piloting and the intricacies of military strategy and tactics.

At that time, the prevailing opinion within military circles was that mobile suits were little more than cumbersome relics on the modern battlefield. Their effectiveness had yet to be proven in actual combat, leading many to dismiss them as impractical fantasies.

Treize, steeped in this conventional wisdom, initially shared the common view that mobile suits held limited tactical value. However, fate had a way of shattering such preconceptions.

During a field trip to the Corsica Base, part of Colonel Chalias's curriculum, Treize encountered something that would forever alter his perspective. There, abandoned and incomplete, stood a mobile suit unlike any other: the Tallgeese.

Treize's first impression of the Tallgeese was far from favorable. Its camouflage paint scheme screamed "weapon," a far cry from the elegant designs he'd come to appreciate.

The machine stood headless, clutching its own severed cranium like some macabre, mechanical Headless Horseman from North American folklore.

Even its name, "Tallgeese," struck Treize as peculiar. How could a moniker meaning "necromancer" or "miracle worker" be fitting for a war machine? It seemed a cruel joke, a twisted baptism for an instrument of destruction.

Among the scientists who had birthed this metal beast, one still lingered at the base as a technical advisor. Treize approached the man, taking in his comically unprofessional attire – an garish Hawaiian shirt and sunglasses, sprawled in a beach chair as if on vacation rather than at a military installation.

"I am Treize Khushrenada," he announced, crisp and formal. "I have questions for the technical advisor."

The sunglassesed man barely acknowledged Treize, turning his back and scratching his rear with exaggerated nonchalance.

Undeterred, Treize pressed on.

"In my assessment, this unit's performance renders it ineffective on the battlefield." He launched into a detailed critique – its high mobility coupled with heavy armor resulted in poor maneuverability. It seemed ill-suited for both mid-range support and front-line disruption tactics.

"Wouldn't the Aries, Leo, or Tragos be far more practical?" Treize concluded, a hint of challenge in his voice.

Howard, the dismissive advisor, snorted derisively.

"That's thinking of mobile suits as just another cog in a military machine."

Treize's brow furrowed, uncomprehending. If not integrated into units or divisions, how else could such a weapon be utilized?

"This Tallgeese," Howard drawled, "is meant to face thousands of enemies single-handedly. That's the true potential of mobile suits – one machine, one pilot, changing the course of battle."

Realization dawned on Treize. Throughout military history, numerical superiority had been the cornerstone of victory. "Elite forces" were praised, but overwhelming numbers remained the surest path to triumph. Yet here were designers proposing the antithesis of conventional wisdom.

Still, Treize remained skeptical. This seemed more akin to fairy tale heroics than practical warfare.

"A game-changing superweapon... a mobile fortress with unparalleled agility," he mused silently, unconvinced.

As Treize contemplated the improbable Tallgeese, his mind raced with possibilities. "Even if such a machine were completed," he mused, "what pilot could possibly master it?" Then, a spark of ambition flickered in his eyes. "Unless... perhaps I could be that pilot."

His thoughts, ever in motion, pivoted.

"It's not impossible," he realized, showcasing the relentless analytical prowess that set him apart from his peers.

A revolutionary idea began to crystallize.

"What if battlefields didn't need unwieldy armies prone to dysfunction, but instead just one hero?"

The implications were staggering – fewer casualties, less senseless sacrifice.

"What an idealistic weapon," Treize whispered, almost reverently.

"How elegant," he murmured, loud enough for Howard to hear.

"Hmm?" The eccentric technician perked up, intrigued by the young cadet's unexpected response.

Treize's eyes shone with newfound purpose. "I have a request, sir. Someday, I wish to pilot this Tallgeese."

"Oh?" Howard's interest was fully piqued now.

"But this camouflage... it's unworthy. Surely a hero's machine deserves a more fitting color?"

Howard nodded, a hint of approval in his voice. "I've thought the same. What color would you suggest, young man?"

"Something elegant."

"Eh?"

"Make it elegant," Treize declared, his tone leaving no room for argument.

Years later, Howard would indeed repaint the Tallgeese a brilliant white. However, it would be Colonel Zechs Merquise, the "Lightning Count," who ultimately piloted the machine to legendary status.

Twelve years after that fateful encounter, Treize would reunite with the Tallgeese in Luxembourg. To Lady Une, he feigned ignorance: "So that's the Tallgeese... Indeed, no ordinary mobile suit. No wonder only Zechs can handle it."

This carefully crafted facade wasn't merely habit, but a calculated move. Lady Une, despite her position, had not yet fully grasped the intricacies of OZ. Treize, ever the strategist, chose to conceal his true knowledge and feelings about the Tallgeese. He wouldn't reveal his authentic self to Une until she had proven her complete understanding of OZ and its complexities.

This guarded demeanor, this reluctance to bare his soul, had been a cornerstone of Treize's interactions since his cadet days. He maintained a measured distance from nearly everyone, revealing only what served his greater purpose.

At this point in his life, Treize had yet to develop the revolutionary mobile suit combat tactics that would reshape warfare. But the seeds planted that day would blossom into the creation of OZ and its elite Specials unit. He would go on to mastermind Operation Daybreak, a coup d'état that seized control of the United Earth Sphere Alliance in a matter of days.

Treize's impact on mobile suit development cannot be overstated. Without his vision, these mechanical titans might have faded into

obscurity. He personally oversaw the design and manufacture of the Tallgeese II and III, culminating in the creation of the Gundam Epyon – a machine that fully realized Howard's original design philosophy, becoming perhaps the most formidable mobile suit in history.

MC-0022 WINTER

The silence shattered as a piercing alarm erupted, its shrill cry echoing through the chamber.

I jerked upright, yanking off my virtual visor, my heart pounding in my chest.

The source?

Master Chang had activated a mysterious device, setting our carefully orchestrated plan into motion.

Beneath the pulsing crimson glow of warning lights, the far wall began to part like a mechanical curtain. A rush of arctic air billowed forth, carrying with it an otherworldly mist. From this ethereal fog emerged our prize: an artificial hibernation capsule, gliding forward on automated rails.

The sight before us was nothing short of awe-inspiring.

The capsule resembled a colossal teardrop frozen in time, its surface gleaming with an unearthly sheen. As the frigid haze dissipated, the full majesty of the device revealed itself.

Stretching over three meters in length, it took the form of a sleeping beauty, Princess Aurora, with angelic wings folded in peaceful repose. Her face, hauntingly beautiful, tugged at the edges of my memory. A phantom familiarity I couldn't quite place.

"Awaken Princess Aurora," Master Chang intoned, his wizened fingers dancing across the control panel.

A soft chime rang out, and the mechanical wings unfurled with breathtaking grace. As the icy air mingled with the room's warmth, I realized the capsule's outer shell was translucent. Countless droplets clung to its surface, refracting the emergency lights and creating a dazzling light show. It was as if the Aurora Borealis itself had been captured within, its seven-hued radiance reminiscent of glacial ice caught in the first blush of a thaw.

"Initiating defrost sequence," Chang announced, his voice steady despite the momentous occasion.

Cradled within Princess Aurora's embrace lay the true hibernation chamber. The way it was held evoked an image of eternal tenderness, as if the mechanical angel would guard its precious cargo for all time.

"Now, we wait," the priest sighed, resignation evident in the slump of his shoulders.

Rivulets of condensation began to form on the inner capsule's viewing port, obscuring our view of the occupant within. Slowly, tantalizingly, a face began to materialize through the mist.

"Done already?" Duo's voice startled me as he peered over my shoulder. "That was quick."

"Not yet," I replied, a hint of exasperation creeping into my tone. "Weren't you supposed to be asleep?"

"Too damn boring to sleep through this," he quipped.

"Can't you sit still for five minutes?" I chided, though my own restlessness betrayed me. I found myself glancing back and forth between Princess Aurora and the holographic files, unable to focus. Duo's fidgeting suggested he felt the same anxious anticipation.

As the fog within the capsule continued to clear, the features of its occupant came into sharp focus. A boy. Not just any boy, but one who bore the name of a legendary colonial leader.

"Heero Yuy."

This was the child who had inherited that weighty codename, the boy who had piloted a Gundam and fought tirelessly for a cause greater than himself.

Rondo of Redemption

Treize File 2

As I peered into the cryogenic capsule's viewing window, a jolt of recognition struck me. The young face within was hauntingly familiar.

Then it hit me. This boy bore an uncanny resemblance to the one who had called himself "Duo" in the "AC-195 AUTUMN" file, eloquently reciting his essay. No, more than a resemblance - they were likely one and the same.

Seeking clarity, I turned to Master Chang.

"I was under the impression that Princess Aurora was Heero Yuy."

"It *is* Heero Yuy," he confirmed bluntly.

"But in the footage I saw earlier..."

Father Maxwell interjected, his brow furrowing.

"No wonder you're confused, kid. This guy," he jerked a thumb towards the capsule, "used my name when he transferred to that colony gymnasium."

My bewilderment deepened. Did he mean Heero Yuy?

"So... you're Duo Maxwell? The Gundam pilot?" I asked, struggling to process this revelation.

"Yeah, forgot to mention that," he grinned. "By the way, Master Chang here was one too."

"Spare us the unnecessary details," Chang growled.

"You can't be serious..."

"Oh, he used to proudly declare, 'My name is Chang WuFei,' back in the day."

I stood there, speechless and wide-eyed. Three of the legendary Gundam pilots, whose very existence had been sealed away in Earth Sphere's History Banks, were gathered here and now.

I tried to make sense of the scene before me:

The boy about to awaken in the cryogenic capsule was Heero Yuy.

The oddly affable, aging priest was Duo Maxwell.

His impudent, braided son also bore the name Duo Maxwell.

And my perpetually irritable superior, Preventer Mars Branch Chief Master Chang, was none other than Chang WuFei.

"Master Chang, why didn't you tell me any of this?" I finally managed to ask.

"There was no need," he replied, his scowl deepening. "Your knowing wouldn't change anything."

"Perhaps, but still..."

Father Maxwell leaned in close, whispering conspiratorially, "Just so you know... he talked like that even as a kid."

I struggled to stifle a laugh. While his brusque manner suited him now, imagining a young boy affecting such an attitude was almost comical.

I wondered how my mother, Sally, had interacted with Chang during their early days as Preventer colleagues. It was beyond my ability to picture.

Yet, this file might reveal glimpses of Chang's youth. After all, I'd already caught a fleeting image of Dorothy T. Catalonia, the current Earth Sphere President known as the "Neo-Titanium Woman," at just two years old.

"Lieutenant Kathy, have you finished reviewing those files?" Chang's sharp voice cut through my musings.

"Not yet, sir."

"Hurry up! Your ignorance is dangerous. I might have to remove you from this operation at this rate!"

WuFei's admonishment was justified. To execute Operation Mythos effectively, I needed knowledge at least on par with "Heero Yuy," our Princess Aurora.

I hastily donned my virtual visor, eager to delve back into the files. In mere seconds, I was thrust back into the role of a silent observer to history.

After the "ZERO" display faded, the footage jumped forward two years to AC-185.

Treize Khushrenada was now fourteen years old.

AC-185 AUTUMN

Treize's performance at the military academy was nothing short of phenomenal. At just fourteen, he had already surpassed the strategic and tactical theories taught by Colonel Chillas Catalonia (recently promoted to Brigadier General the year prior) during his time as an instructor. His mastery of mobile suit combat and weaponry techniques was equally impressive.

In a mere two and a half years, Treize completed the UESA Military Academy's curriculum, acing the instructor certification exam with top marks. Brigadier General Catalonia, recognizing his potential, assigned him to the newly established OZ Officer Training School at Lake Victoria Base in central Africa.

While Africa was still considered a backwater in this era, this wasn't a demotion. Rather, it was Catalonia's shrewd move to shield the young prodigy from the resentment of veteran officers who still held sway in Europe. A fourteen-year-old instructor would only further that.

As the inaugural instructor at Lake Victoria, Treize's talents flourished. The cadets under his tutelage, groomed to be the future of OZ, not only outperformed other Alliance officer candidates but ranked among the world's intellectual elite.

Although military aptitude can't be measured by academic achievements alone, the subsequent success of Treize's students - many becoming exceptional mobile suit pilots in OZ's Specials - was a testament to his brilliance as an instructor.

Yet, seasoned Alliance veterans questioned what a young, inexperienced officer like Treize could possibly teach about the realities of war.

"Sure, he's brilliant! But can he kill?" they sneered, dismissing his accomplishments as mere theoretical exercises.

Their skepticism wasn't entirely unfounded. In the military's rigid hierarchy, where practical experience was paramount, the only person who truly recognized Treize's worth was Brigadier General Catalonia himself.

"Treize is a genius of warfare," she often remarked to her five-year-old daughter, Dorothy. "On the battlefield, he'll likely vanquish his enemies with the grace and elegance of a waltz."

Dorothy's eyes would sparkle with admiration. "Really? Oh, I'd love to see Mr. Treize in battle!"

"No, Dorothy," Catalonia would gently admonish. "The battlefield is no place for children."

"But isn't Mr. Treize still a child himself?" the precocious girl would counter, already displaying her knack for penetrating observations.

"Well, yes, but..." Catalonia would find himself at a loss for words.

"You really do adore Treize, don't you, Dorothy?"

"Oh yes, very much! But please, keep it our secret. It's just between Father and me," she'd reply with her characteristic, endearing smile.

At Lake Victoria, Treize focused on his long-standing goal: developing efficient combat deployment strategies for mobile suits.

The true strength of mobile suits lay in their mobility. Yet, the Alliance's current doctrine primarily used them for infantry support, rear-echelon communications, and fixed base defense.

To fully grasp the significance of Treize's innovations, we must first delve into the history of these humanoid war machines known as mobile suits.



Originally, mobile suits were large, piloted manipulator devices designed for space station and colony construction. Their versatility allowed a single unit to perform most construction tasks by simply switching tools.

Ironically, it wasn't the Alliance that first envisioned their military potential, but the anti-Alliance resistance groups within the colonies. These poorly armed rebels found unexpected effectiveness in repurposing the suits' drills, wrenches, and hammers against the Alliance's overwhelming firepower.

This innovation caught the eye of Alliance engineers, particularly those in OZ, who began developing dedicated combat mobile suits.

Progress stalled in AC-175 when five key engineers working on the Tallgeese project defected. However, Chief Engineer Seis Clark salvaged the project, using Tallgeese as a template to develop the mass-produced Leo and the flight-capable Aries.

Seis's younger brother, Technical Lieutenant Trant Clark, would later show a similar obsession with the ZERO System-equipped Wing Gundam Zero in AC-195. This fascination with mobile suit technology seemed to run in the family.

Meanwhile, Engineer Tubarov, inspired by Tallgeese's destructive capabilities, developed the Tragos.

Initially, these three mobile suit types were so scarce that divisions were lucky to have one each. Perhaps due to this scarcity, most Alliance leadership failed to grasp their true potential.

Trapped in outdated military doctrines, they relegated mobile suits to supporting roles in infantry, naval, and air force operations. This misuse led some to label mobile suits as "useless contraptions."

With maintaining and defending the front lines as the main mission, the intentions of developers like Seis and Tubarov were not reflected at all. The aging Alliance leadership, whose rigid thinking created a stark disconnect between design and deployment.

The heavily-armed Leo saw the most use, while the artillery-focused Tragos was treated as little more than a mobile gun emplacement. Its mobility, paradoxically, often resulted in poor accuracy due to unstable firing positions.

In this case, highly mobile tanks were far superior.

What if Tragos were sent to the front lines and used like tanks? It was clear without trying that its size would make it an ideal target for enemy infantry's armor-piercing rounds, turning it into a honeycomb.

The flight-capable Aries, despite its potential, was mostly used for diversionary tactics in airborne operations. Its imposing size made it too conspicuous for the surprise attacks favored by paratrooper units.

Treize concluded that this entire approach was fundamentally flawed. He proposed integrating all three mobile suit types - Leo, Aries, and Tragos - into dedicated mobile suit units.

His strategy was revolutionary, executing three combat waves:

Aries units would conduct reconnaissance and launch surprise attacks to disrupt enemy frontlines.

Using this intel, Tragos units would provide covering fire while Leo units spearheaded the main assault.

Finally, all forces would converge to surround and eliminate the enemy's primary force.

This echoed Napoleon Bonaparte's cavalry tactics, using light cavalry, dragoons, and heavy cavalry in concert, or Adolf Hitler's Panzer divisions that shook Europe with their mobility and firepower.

While one could argue that Treize merely adapted historical tactics to mobile suit warfare, such insight was unprecedented in his era. His approach was truly revolutionary. Moreover, his strategy could be seen as reuniting the diverse capabilities of the Tallgeese, which had been split among the three production models.

Undoubtedly, witnessing the Tallgeese at Corsica Base sparked Treize's innovative thinking. However, the Tallgeese's true potential lay in mobile suit combat, its capabilities excessive for engaging conventional tanks or bombers. To fully utilize its prowess, vast battlefields were necessary.

Yet, despite the existence of expansive theaters like oceans, the Mongolian steppes, or the Sahara, the global landscape was dominated by localized conflicts - terrorism and insurrections that made urban areas the primary battlegrounds. The grand notions of decisive battles on land and sea had faded into distant memory.

The Alliance's top brass, their thinking calcified by decades of post-Cold War conflicts waged by non-state actors, failed to adapt. In the annals of subsequent history, there was never again a "total war" between nation-states.

Modern warfare had decisively rejected the notion of war as an extension of dueling. Instead, it emphasized the importance of coordination and systems management - the "software" of war - over the hardware of new weaponry.

Treize's genius lay in his ability to synthesize these seemingly contradictory elements: the grand strategies of bygone eras and the systematic approach of modern warfare. He forged a new tactical doctrine that bridged this divide.

The true test of Treize's revolutionary ideas would come with a pivotal incident at the dawn of AC-186...

AC-185 WINTER

Rebellion erupted in the eastern African city of Mogadishu. The United Earth Sphere Alliance, embroiled in European conflicts, had no army or air force units readily available for deployment.

Their sole asset was a naval fleet in the Indian Ocean, capable only of a sea blockade - far from sufficient to quell the urban insurgency. Inaction, however, risked the rebels establishing a provisional government and breaking away as an independent state.

As Alliance Forces leadership grappled with this crisis by convening an emergency meeting, Brigadier General Chilias Catalonia broke the tense silence.

"Lake Victoria Base could respond immediately. They have the latest Specials mobile suits."

"Nonsense," Lieutenant General Venti, the Army's Commander-in-Chief, retorted. "What can those children possibly accomplish?"

"Children?" A young observer from the Romefeller Foundation, representing Duke Dermail, interjected. This was Vingt Khushrenada, merely thirteen yet already commanding respect as the Foundation's heir apparent. His razor-sharp intellect was legendary.

"General Venti, did you just imply that children are powerless?" Vingt's eyes glinted dangerously.

"I wasn't referring to you, young Vingt," Venti backpedaled.

"Of course not," Vingt nodded, continuing, "On today's battlefields, 'child' has become synonymous with 'soldier'. Isn't it these very 'children' keeping your main forces pinned down in Europe?"

Venti fell silent, aware that further argument would only expose his incompetence.

General Noventa attempted a gentler approach:

"But Mr. Vingt, Lake Victoria houses only trainees, none with combat experience."

"This isn't a game," Venti muttered.

Vingt's lips curled into a smirk. "A game? Like sport, perhaps? The late AD historian van Creveld argued in 'The Transformation of War' that war is closer to sport than politics."

Like Treize, Vingt was well-versed in military history and strategy.

"While I disagree, I won't challenge General Venti if he concurs with van Creveld."

Dismissing Venti with a derisive snort, Vingt turned to Noventa. "Everyone lacks combat experience initially. Even you had a first battle, General Noventa."

Vingt was maneuvering to gain recognition for his respected brother's inaugural mission.

"Moreover, what better opportunity to test the potential of mobile suit units?"

"I agree with Mr. Van's opinion. If it's my star pupil, Captain Treize Khushrenada, he will surely accomplish this," Chilias added.

Noventa relented: "If you insist, we'll authorize OZ Specials' deployment. However--"

Vingt cut him off. "Uncle Chilias and I will take full responsibility. Please, don't worry."

From that moment, Vingt's role shifted from observer to central figure in Alliance military deliberations.

"Let's see how far this toy army can go," Venti muttered sarcastically.

"We'll show you the power of these 'toys,'" Vingt's piercing gaze locked onto the general decades his senior. His intellect, demeanor, and speech were nothing short of diabolical for one so young.

The order was immediately dispatched to Treize at Lake Victoria Base.

"Understood," Treize responded, brimming with confidence.

Chilias's face on the monitor betrayed concern: "Don't push yourself, Treize."

"I don't train my students to overexert themselves. We'll achieve victory through calculated action."

"The Alliance Navy offered support--"

"Unnecessary. Please inform them that we can handle this entirely on our own."

Vingt interrupted: "Brother, the Alliance bigwigs mockingly called our mobile suit unit a 'toy army'."

"How clever of them," Treize smirked.

"Please, show them your usual prowess."

"Vingt Khushrenada, I'll strive to meet your lofty expectations."

"I won't wish you luck. Victory is assured."

Treize nodded calmly, a confident smile playing on his lips.

Treize swiftly selected five officer candidates for the mission:

Zechs Merquise (10)

Lucrezia Noin (10)

Izumi Tarnov (14)

Solac Delbrück (12)

Elv Ongell (13)

Though barely past their tenth birthdays, these young cadets had demonstrated exceptional skills, particularly excelling in Mobile Suit simulations.

Official records would later claim that Treize Khushrenada and Zechs Merquise's first deployment was during the AC-191 JAP Point rebellion suppression. The truth, however, was different – a discrepancy that would be explained in due time.

Treize outlined the operation, gesturing at a digital map of Mogadishu.

"We launch at 1800 hours, with sunset. Cadet Zechs and I will lead in Arius units. Cadets Lucrezia and Izumi, provide indirect support with Tragos units. We'll relay precise coordinates for your barrage."

"A full barrage?" Izumi questioned, ever analytical. "Wouldn't that risk hitting you and Zechs?"

"We won't be hit," Zechs declared confidently. "We'll dodge everything. Fire at will."

"Understood. We'll show no mercy," Lucrezia affirmed without hesitation.

Treize smiled, continuing, "Cadets Solac and Elv, breach enemy lines in Leo units. Focus on their headquarters. We'll cover you, so disregard your surroundings."

"Sir, yes sir!" the two aggressive cadets responded eagerly.

"Note: The enemy has been informed of our operation's start time to minimize civilian casualties. Do not engage unarmed rebels. And remember, as mobile suit pilots, we do not kill in self-defense. Understood?"

Treize then rallied his young pilots.

"This operation will be decided in an instant! Defeat is not an option! Show them the true power of this 'toy army!'"

As night fell over Mogadishu, the city had become a fortress. Rebel soldiers maintained vigilant watch, searchlights cutting through the darkness, heavy machine guns ready to annihilate any approach.

Far above, an OZ transport was maintaining an altitude beyond the range of detection. In its hold waited two white Aries mobile suits.

Treize had standardized white for all Specials units, a preference that would persist throughout his career. From white Leos to the white Taurus (later given to Noin), this fixation extended even to his final mobile suit, the Tallgeese II. The Serpent Custom units of Mariemaia's army, claiming to carry on Treize's will, would also be white.

This choice of color for mobile suits was highly unconventional. White stood out starkly on the battlefield, almost daring the enemy to target them. It could be seen as a display of chivalry or perhaps overconfidence.

Treize never explicitly stated his reasons for this preference. Perhaps the image of that beautiful ice floe remained seared in his memory, influencing his aesthetic choices even in matters of war.

"Let's go, Zechs," Treize commanded.

"Yes, sir," came the crisp reply.

Both were already nestled in their Aries cockpits when Izumi, tasked with indirect support, radioed in.

"Instructor Treize, shouldn't we deploy anti-radar chaff?"

"Unnecessary. We'll challenge them with honor," Treize responded confidently.

"With honor?" Zechs echoed, mulling over the words skeptically. "Is that what battle is about?"

"A warrior must never hesitate. Our first step must always be taken with poise," Treize lectured as the transport's rear hatch yawned open.

Treize's unit slid out, plummeting in free fall without igniting its verniers. "For that is the path to glory!"

Zechs followed suit, his machine trailing Treize's. "Even if it's a path stained with blood!"

The white Aries units plunged earthward. Even at this early stage, Treize and Zechs' philosophies were diverging. Though they fell along the same trajectory, their hearts pulled in vastly different directions.

As the sharp whistle of rushing air filled their ears, both pilots surveyed Mogadishu sprawling beneath them.

Years later, Zechs Merquise would once again launch a surprise attack on Mogadishu. In AC-195, after Operation Daybreak toppled the Alliance, its remnants holed up in Mogadishu Fortress. OZ's 33rd Autonomous Corps Somalia Front was tasked with crushing this last bastion, with Zechs piloting the white Tallgeese.

The enemy command center's radar locked onto the two free-falling Aries.

"Two objects detected! 10,000 meters directly above the city!"

Assuming a bombing run, they opened fire. But the moment anti-aircraft guns roared to life, these "meteors" changed course with a deafening boom.

The white Aries ignited their verniers, splitting apart. Anti-aircraft fire couldn't keep pace.

Treize's unit danced along the city's perimeter, methodically destroying enemy positions with balletic grace. Meanwhile, Zechs hovered above the city center, pinpointing the command center and key fortifications for Lucrezia and Izumi.

Almost instantly, a hail of long-range shells erupted from the white Tragos units. Their aim was impeccable.

Neither Treize nor Zechs' units took a hit. Their superhuman senses allowed them to detect and evade incoming fire with uncanny speed.

This sixth sense bordered on intuition. They processed everything – explosions, shockwaves, moments of eerie calm, air currents, ground tremors, rustling foliage – all while evading and engaging in combat.

In the heat of battle, human senses sharpen to preternatural levels, especially in youth. The "hesitation" Treize warned against could transform this heightened awareness into paralyzing fear.

By placing their entire being on the razor's edge between life and death, focusing intently on their objective, their actions became pinpoint accurate.

As the white Tragos' barrage engulfed the city in dust and smoke, two white Leo units breached the city walls and charged in.

The rebels were thrown into utter chaos. Most of their weapons lay in ruins before they could mount a counterattack.

Solac and Elve's Leos reached the central command with minimal resistance. To the human defenders, these white, god-like war machines inspired nothing but terror.

By the time the Tragos units arrived in hover mode as logistic support, the rebels had already raised the white flag. The battle was over in an instant, just as Treize had predicted.

In the Alliance Headquarters' conference room, a messenger burst in with news from Mogadishu.

Lieutenant General Venti, glancing at his watch, smirked. "I suppose the mobile suit team has requested naval support?"

"No, sir. The Mogadishu operation is complete. Mission accomplished. Zero allied casualties, zero enemy casualties, zero civilian casualties. All rebels have surrendered."

"What?!" Venti rose, incredulous.

General Noventa, more composed, inquired, "What was our mobile suit force strength? By my estimate, even sixty units would be impressive. Did Lake Victoria have such numbers?"

Vingt Khushrenada's lips curled into a triumphant smile.

"According to Instructor Treize Khushrenada's report, it was a mere six-unit mobile suit squad. Naturally, piloted by just six 'children'."

"All of them combat novices," Brigadier General Catalonia added, satisfaction evident in his voice.

As dawn broke over Mogadishu, Treize and Zechs dismounted their Aries units. The Indian Ocean breeze carried a hint of winter, even this close to the equator.

"A new day dawns," Treize mused.

"Indeed," Zechs replied.

"Should we welcome it?"

Zechs gazed up at the white mobile suits.

"If you mean as the dawn of a new era of warfare... I cannot."

The other pilots were descending from the Leo and Tragos units. Treize reflected, "Perhaps we've won too thoroughly, for the sake of our students."

"I'm your student too, instructor."

"Heh, you're different, Zechs..."

He looked straight into Zechs' eyes and said, "You're my friend, Milliardo."

Zechs froze. For four years, he'd hidden his identity, swearing vengeance against the Alliance. He thought no one had discovered he was Milliardo Peacecraft, prince of the fallen Sanc Kingdom.

"How long have you known?"

"Since you arrived at Lake Victoria last year."

"How?"

"Perhaps... because I saw how quickly your young face had learned to freeze its tears."

Indeed, Zechs hadn't shed a tear since that fateful day four years ago.

"Are you cut from the same cloth, Instructor Treize?"

Treize didn't answer directly. He couldn't sympathize with the idea of revenge. Watching the approaching cadets, he mused, "No... perhaps the poor Cadet Lucrezia Noin is closer to my heart."

"Lucrezia..."



While the other cadets beamed with victory, only Lucrezia's eyes glistened with tears.

Zechs, puzzled, asked, "What's wrong? Are you injured?"

"No, it's not that," she replied.

The ever-cheerful Solac teased, "Relieved the instructor and Zechs are safe, eh?"

"That's not it either. I..." Lucrezia wiped her eyes, lifting her face with resolve and pride.

"I hate war."

In the aftermath, the UESA transformed Mogadishu into a fortified nexus between Eurasia and Africa, installing the massive Noventa Cannon beam weapon. This gesture, naming such a powerful asset after General Noventa, revealed the lingering reluctance of Alliance leadership to acknowledge OZ Specials' achievement.

Regardless, the inaugural mission of this "toy army" proved so successful that it revolutionized the Alliance's command structure, weapons deployment strategies (including mobile suits), and the entire logistics and support system.

Perhaps it was too successful. For this very triumph could be seen as the catalyst for the "dawn of a new era of warfare" that Treize and Zechs had pondered...

AC-186 SPRING

In the wake of the Mogadishu offensive, the Alliance Forces decision to embrace mobile suits as their primary weapon was an inevitable progression, driven by the upper echelons' commitment to safeguarding the lives of frontline soldiers. However, the ripples of this tactical shift spread far beyond their ranks.

The rebel forces, quick to recognize the game-changing potential of these mechanical marvels, pounced on the opportunity. In a mere matter of months, the theater of war transformed globally, with mobile suit battles erupting across every conceivable battlefield.

This exponential surge in demand for mobile suits became a veritable gold mine for the Romefeller Foundation. At the heart of their operations lay the Marius Plant, nestled within the "Sea of Storms" on the lunar surface. This cutting-edge facility was a crucible of innovation, birthing groundbreaking weaponry and pushing the boundaries of fusion reactor miniaturization.

From this lunar forge emerged the likes of the Leo, Aries, and Tragos mobile suits. For months on end, the plant's gears turned ceaselessly, churning out these metal behemoths at a feverish pace. Yet, even as production soared, the torrent of orders showed no signs of abating.

The clamor for advancement echoed through military circles. The Navy yearned for the Pisces, a new aquatic mobile suit designed for undersea warfare. Meanwhile, the Space Forces pressed for the swift completion of the Chimera, an early space-faring variant of the Leo II, intended to safeguard material transport vessels.

On paper, the Alliance Forces mobile suit deployment should have been nearing completion. Reality, however, painted a starkly different picture. Rebel sympathizers within the Alliance's ranks were siphoning off mobile suits in alarming numbers. To compound matters, brazen acts of piracy were becoming commonplace. In one particularly audacious incident, a single Chimera managed to overwhelm and capture an entire transport ship laden with hundreds of mobile suits bound for Earth.

These unforeseen complications left the Marius Plant in a perpetual state of catch-up, its production lines humming around the clock yet still unable to bridge the ever-widening supply gap. In response, the lunar facility expanded, both in number and scale, its sprawling factories stretching ever further across the moon's pockmarked surface.

In this crucible of conflict and commerce, the economy of the Earth Sphere found itself inexorably tied to the production of mobile suits and their associated weaponry. The Romefeller Foundation, positioned at the nexus of this new paradigm, amassed wealth beyond measure.

Within the Foundation, plaudits rained down upon the Khushrenada brothers, architects of this unprecedented success. Treize, the elder, had laid the groundwork, but it was Vingt, the younger sibling, who truly revolutionized operations at the lunar plant. His reforms - aggressive automation, reduced work hours, and a massive influx of shift workers - catapulted productivity to dizzying new heights.

Vingt's meteoric rise was nothing short of extraordinary. At the tender age of thirteen, he ascended to the ambiguously titled position of Vice Director and Acting Representative of the Foundation. Armed with the organization's staggering financial might, Vingt set about reshaping the political landscape. He systematically dismantled outdated customs, stripped away the privileges of the aristocracy, and launched a merciless crusade against political corruption and graft.

By this time, Hundert Khushrenada, the once-mighty patriarch of the Khushrenada dynasty, found himself besieged by a parade of disgraced nobles. These fallen aristocrats, their privileges stripped away by Vingt's ruthless reforms, sought refuge in the fading influence of the elder Khushrenada.

"For old times' sake," they would plead, their voices tinged with desperation. "Surely you can do something?"

But their appeals fell on deaf ears. Vingt, driven by his vision of a new order, dismissed his father's half-hearted intercessions with cold efficiency. To the young reformer, these vestiges of the old guard were nothing more than relics to be discarded.

Hundert himself harbored no love for these nobles who now came crawling back. The bitter taste of their past condescension still lingered on his tongue. Yet, as the stream of supplicants showed no sign of abating, the aging Khushrenada found himself overwhelmed by the constant barrage of requests and recriminations.

Weary and disillusioned, Hundert made a decision that spoke volumes about his character. He abdicated all responsibility, handing the reins of power entirely to Treize and Vingt.

Without a backward glance, he retreated to a medical colony nestled within the L-1 cluster, seeking refuge from the turbulent world he once commanded.

The irony was not lost on those who knew the family's history. While Hundert sequestered himself in a specialized facility for the elderly, his wife Angelina languished in a separate wing of the same colony, undergoing treatment. Yet, in a final, damning indictment of the man's nature, Hundert never once crossed the threshold to visit her.

Vingt's reformist zeal didn't stop at the Foundation's doorstep. He turned his attention to the Alliance Forces Headquarters, initiating a similar purge of the old guard - those often derided as "arteriosclerotic veterans" mired in bureaucratic inertia. In their place, he installed fresh blood: Field Marshal Chalias Catalonia as Supreme Commander of the Alliance Forces, and granted unprecedented autonomy to the OZ Specials, allowing them to operate independently on the battlefield at their discretion. While Chalias nominally headed the Specials, it was an open secret that Treize Khushrenada was the true power behind the throne.

Vingt's youth, far from being a liability, proved to be his greatest asset. Unencumbered by the weight of tradition and entrenched interests, he was able to implement sweeping reforms that would have been unthinkable for a more seasoned leader. He redistributed the

Foundation's vast wealth with remarkable equity, forging stronger internal bonds within the organization. The sole exception to this egalitarian approach was OZ, which continued to receive lavish funding - a decision that went unchallenged, given OZ's pivotal role in mastering the mobile suits that were the lifeblood of their economic engine.

Within six months, the majority of Vingt's reforms had taken root. While some voices cautioned against the breakneck pace of change, the Khushrenada family's influence within the Romefeller Foundation had become nigh-unassailable. A ruthlessly efficient system had emerged, where even the slightest hint of dissent could result in demotion to sinecures or outright expulsion.

The true purpose behind Vingt Khushrenada's radical restructuring remained a mystery to most.

Treize had likewise orchestrated a masterful transformation, though perhaps unknowingly laying the groundwork for a new paradigm of warfare.

Until the fateful clash of mobile suit squadrons, the Alliance's military supremacy stood unchallenged, a colossus bestriding the world stage. Treize's tactical innovations in mobile suit deployment had become doctrine, allowing conflicts and insurrections to be quelled with ruthless efficiency, often decided in the opening salvos.

Yet, as the rebels too embraced the power of mobile suits, the theater of war evolved. What was once a straightforward equation of overwhelming force became a complex dance of strategy and counterstrategy. The battlefield metamorphosed into a chessboard of incredible intricacy.

Treize, ever the visionary, rose to meet this new challenge. With each engagement, he crafted novel tactics, sharing them freely with the Alliance's strategists. Like an alchemist transmuting raw data into strategic gold, he continuously refined and revolutionized mobile suit warfare.

At Lake Victoria, where the seeds of future conflicts germinated, Treize assumed the mantle of instructor. Here, he didn't merely impart tactics; he kindled the fires of innovation in his students' minds. Through rigorous simulations that blurred the line between practice and reality, he forged a new breed of soldier - one capable of independent thought and decisive action.

The crucible of this training ground tempered raw recruits into battle-hardened veterans, their minds as sharp as their mobile suits' edges.

They accumulated a wealth of pseudo-combat experience that rivaled any real-world campaign.

Two mantras echoed through the halls of Lake Victoria, becoming the twin pillars of Treize's philosophy:

"Act on your own judgment!"

"For the soldiers who follow!"

These weren't mere slogans, but a creed etched into the very souls of his disciples. Even luminaries like Zeche Merquise and the future instructor Lucrezia Noin absorbed these tenets, recognizing them as the most profound wisdom of their age.

This fundamental difference in ethos – this emphasis on individual initiative and forward-thinking strategy – would prove to be the defining characteristic that set OZ Specials apart from the rank-and-file Alliance mobile suit corps.

AC-186 SUMMER

In his lecture at Lake Victoria, Instructor Treize expounded on a crucial principle of warfare: there are no set formulas for tactics and strategy. The key, he emphasized, lies in accumulating knowledge from military history, theoretical frameworks, and battlefield analyses. One must then internalize this information, refine it through personal insight, and apply it practically.

Treize went on to stress that even in the current era dominated by mobile suit warfare, it remains imperative to grasp the fundamental principles of past combat operations. Only by building upon this foundation can we continue to devise innovative tactical plans for the future.

A prime illustration of this concept can be found in the massive mobile suit engagement during the "Ocean of Storms WARS," an event so momentous it's often referred to as the "First Lunar War."

The spark that ignited this conflict was a rebellion among the laborers at the Marius Plant. Despite reforms implemented by Vingt, including reduced work hours, the extended lunar stays had pushed the workers to their breaking point.

The Moon's one-sixth gravity, while initially tolerable, became a source of intense psychological strain after a month, rendering sleep and rest virtually meaningless.

Unsurprisingly, the factory directors and managers, subjected to the same grueling conditions, failed to empathize with their subordinates'

plight. They made no attempt to engage in dialogue, exacerbating the growing rift between management and labor. Tensions escalated rapidly, culminating in strikes and demonstrations triggered by a fusion reactor incident.

At this juncture, had the management sought to bridge the divide through negotiation, catastrophe might have been averted. Instead, these inept administrators committed a grave error: they appealed to the Alliance Space Forces stationed in the Moon's Sea of Tranquility to quell the unrest.

Eager to curry favor with the Romefeller Foundation, the Alliance Space Forces responded with excessive zeal. They deployed three Chimeras (Leo II models) to forcibly suppress the demonstrating workers. This heavy-handed approach backfired spectacularly, igniting the fury of the laborers who commandeered ten newly-constructed Chimeras (Leo III models) of their own making.

In a stunning turn of events, these civilian-piloted units engaged and decisively defeated the military's mobile suits.

Several factors may have contributed to this unexpected outcome. Perhaps technological advancements had outpaced expectations, rendering the workers' freshly-minted Leo IIIs superior to the military's older Leo IIs. The numerical advantage certainly played a role, with the laborers fielding more than three times the opposing force. Moreover, one cannot discount the deep affection these workers held for the machines they had lovingly assembled day after day—a bond potentially stronger than that of professional soldiers to their assigned units.

In the aftermath of this confrontation, the Marius Plant fell under worker control. The Alliance Space Forces and management personnel found themselves unceremoniously ejected from the facility. News of this uprising spread like wildfire, drawing resistance fighters from across the system to the lunar stronghold.

Particularly notable was the influx of rebel remnants from the L-1 and L-2 colony clusters—the closest to the Moon. These determined individuals hijacked shuttles, arriving in groups of dozens. They came empty-handed, knowing that cutting-edge Chimeras awaited them at their destination.

The plant's impressive production capacity—capable of rolling out ten mobile suits per week—allowed the rebels to amass a force rivaling that of the Lunar Space Forces in just two months.

While piloting these machines initially posed a challenge, over fifty seasoned terrorists and ex-Alliance Forces soldiers had already rallied to

the cause. Within days, their ranks would swell to a hundred pilots commanding an equal number of Chimeras.

The Lunar Space Forces stationed at the Sea of Tranquility base seethed with indignation at the unfolding situation.

"This is no laughing matter," growled Commander Million Liddell Hart, the General of the Alliance Space Forces. His weathered face creased with concern as he surveyed the tactical displays. "We cannot allow the Moon to fall into rebel hands."

Without hesitation, General Liddell Hart dispatched an urgent request to Field Marshal Chilias at Alliance Forces Headquarters, seeking authorization for a full-scale deployment of the Space Forces.

At this critical juncture, the lunar base's arsenal was formidable: forty Chimeras optimized for space warfare, twenty high-mobility space fighters, ten Tragos units (Tragos II models) designed for lunar surface combat, and the crowning jewels of their fleet—the massive lunar battleships Sagittarius and her sister ship Centaurus, veritable mobile fortresses in their own right.

General Liddell Hart, ever confident, believed that even if the Marius Plant managed to field a hundred Chimeras, victory was assured with these two colossal vessels at his disposal. These behemoths lacked flight capabilities; in fact, they weren't truly ships in the conventional sense. Rather, they were gargantuan tanks that crawled across the lunar surface on massive caterpillar treads. Yet, as they traversed the vast "oceans" of the Moon—in reality, sprawling expanses of crater-pocked rock and sand—Liddell Hart insisted on referring to them as battleships, a quirk born more from personal fancy than practical designation.

Despite their unconventional nature, these machines were awe-inspiring. Stretching over 300 meters in length, each boasted twenty-five triple 260mm gun turrets, two colossal 1300mm beam cannons, and a hundred twin machine gun emplacements. Their firepower was said to equal that of fifty combined Chimeras and Tragos units. With both the Sagittarius and Centaurus, Liddell Hart believed they could easily match a force of a hundred mobile suits.

"The numbers don't lie—victory is within our grasp!" declared General Million Liddell Hart, the last great proponent of the "big guns" doctrine in the After Colony era.

It's worth noting that during this period, Liddell Hart was also championing the construction of space-faring attack vessels—true "space battleships"—to combat the rising tide of piracy. Until now, space

transport ships had existed, but dedicated warships were deemed unnecessary by both the Alliance Forces and OZ. This mindset was understandable, given that space had never been the theater for large-scale naval-style engagements in recorded history. The concept of space battleships and fleets had remained firmly in the realm of fiction.

Undeterred, Liddell Hart pursued his vision. He commissioned Dr. Mike Howard, the preeminent expert in vernier development stationed at the Corsica base, to design this revolutionary vessel. The general had already chosen a name: "Peacemillion." While ostensibly meaning "Peace for All," it reeked more of personal aggrandizement.

Indeed, Liddell Hart would later succeed in having this class of massive battleships dubbed the Peacemillion-class. However, the first of these vessels wouldn't be completed until AC-192, a full six years after the current conflict. Dr. Howard's obsession with propulsion systems, aiming for capabilities that could reach beyond the solar system, severely delayed construction.

Tragically, General Liddell Hart would never live to see the ship that bore his name.

In time, Milliardo Peacecraft would command this vessel alongside Howard. Later still, it would serve as a carrier and supply ship for the Gundam pilots, providing crucial maintenance and resupply for their mobile suits.

On Earth, the Alliance Forces High Command was desperately trying to cool the hot-blooded General Million's fervor. Undoubtedly, the occupation of the Romefeller Foundation's Marius Plant by workers and anti-Alliance Forces rebels demanded swift action. However, the crux of the problem lay in General Million's temperament.

His penchant for overwhelming firepower was legendary. There was little doubt he intended to unleash the colossal beam cannons of his lunar battleships, obliterating the plant outright to flush out the enemy Chimera units. In his mind's eye, Million likely envisioned a grandiose, old-fashioned lunar showdown.

"That approach," Vingt Khushrenada interjected, cutting through the grim expressions of his fellow generals, "would not constitute a strategic victory."

His assessment was coolly rational.

"Our primary objective is to reclaim the Marius Plant. If it's destroyed—whether by friend or foe—we've effectively lost."

Lieutenant General Venti, ever positioned to challenge Vingt, countered, "Mr. Vingt, surely the Romefeller Foundation has the resources to rebuild a moon base or two?"

Vingt's retort was scathing.

"We're not about to entrust our financial decisions to incompetent military men. Our economic cushion isn't that plush."

"Then do you have a more effective solution to offer?" Venti challenged.

"We'll dispatch the Specials to the site immediately. I request that General Liddell Hart postpone any engagement until their arrival."

General Noventa, ever the voice of reason, pointed out the flaw in this plan.

"During that time, the enemy's forces will only grow stronger."

The math was simple and alarming. Ten new Chimeras rolling out each week. It would take Treize at least seven days to depart from Lake Victoria and reach the Moon, ready for combat. By then, they'd be facing an enemy force of 110 next-generation Chimeras.

"We'll be overwhelmingly outnumbered," Noventa concluded grimly. "A winnable battle could slip through our fingers."

Vingt fell silent, his mind racing. Unknown to most, the Marius Plant harbored a vital secret—a rich vein of resources. Once known as the "Marius Hills" in the Ocean of Storms, it contained the "Marius Hills Hole," a vertical shaft leading to underground lava tubes. Here, they extracted neo-titanium (also called luna titanium), crucial for mobile suit armor and drive systems. More critically, they were on the cusp of perfecting an entirely new alloy: Gundanium. Though not yet successfully refined, its potential was staggering.

"Once Gundanium is perfected, mobile suits will become the ultimate weapons," Vingt thought, his gaze locking onto Marshal Chillas, the supreme commander. His eyes silently pleaded, "Please, we must protect that site at all costs."

Chillas nodded slowly, then spoke. "I authorize the deployment of the Alliance Space Forces from the lunar base under General Million Liddell Hart's command."

"No, that's--"

As Vingt started to protest, Chillas raised a hand and continued, "However, the use of the Sagittarius and Centaurus is strictly forbidden."

"Marshal, that's cruel to Liddell Hart!"

Even the usually mild-mannered Noventa raised his voice.

The room erupted in protests.

"Without those ships, their force consists of only mobile suits and fighters!"

"The enemy will have numerical superiority!"

"It's tantamount to sending them to their deaths!"

Chillas's gaze sharpened.

"Let us not forget, as Mr. Vingt pointed out, that our strategic goal is to reclaim the Marius Plant. Allowing the use of those battleships and their massive beam cannons would inevitably result in catastrophic damage to the facility."

"Then at least restrict only the use of the giant beam cannons," Noventa pleaded. "It's not us who'll die on the battlefield, but our soldiers."

Noventa's concern for his subordinates was admirable—a quality that earned him the unwavering respect of the rank and file.

"Hmm..." For a moment, Marshal Chalias wavered. He, too, was more compassionate than the typical hardened military man.

"Perhaps we could consider that compromise..."

"Wait, please!" Vingt couldn't contain himself any longer and stood up. "We must also consider the risk of General Liddle Hart going rogue!"

At this point, Major Septum, serving as a tactical advisor to the Space Forces, interjected. Though recently reassigned to ground duty and seated at the far end of the table as a staff officer at Alliance Forces Headquarters, he spoke up despite his junior position.

"Mr. Vingt, from a tactical perspective, if the Sagittarius and Centaurus deploy, it's unlikely the enemy will rashly emerge from the plant. This could lead to a stalemate, potentially allowing us to transition into a war of attrition."

"A war of attrition?" Vingt paused, considering the implications. If they could buy time, Treize and the Specials might arrive in time to turn the tide.

"Very well," Vingt conceded. "But the giant beam cannons are absolutely off-limits. That condition is non-negotiable."

With this compromise reached, the decision for full-scale engagement was made. The order for the entire Space Forces to deploy was immediately relayed to General Million at the lunar base.

However, such compromises and middle-ground solutions are untenable, both strategically and tactically. It's akin to saying, "Take your weapons, but don't use them."

Had Chalias and Vingt maintained their hardline stance, General Million might have been forced into a war of attrition, avoiding reckless attacks.

Alternatively, if a clear operational name like "Operation Marius Plant Recapture" had been given, both the objective and actions would have been underpinned by strategy. From a tactical standpoint, there wasn't

really a need to defeat the enemy. Bloodshed isn't everything in war; political negotiations could have bought time.

Compromises and concessions are often mere rhetoric confined to conference rooms, causing nothing but trouble for soldiers on the battlefield.

Chilias and Vingt's misjudgment at this juncture could be considered fatal.

However, both were chronically fatigued from six months of pushing reforms. No one can truly blame them for this.

Upon receiving the order, General Million flew into a rage so intense he nearly shattered the monitor after reading the final line:

"The use of the giant beam cannons on both the Sagittarius and Centaurus is strictly forbidden."

Million, his eyes bloodshot with fury, gnashed his teeth.

"Don't use the beam cannons? What are those ground-dwellers thinking? This is absurd!"

He had absolutely no intention of following this order. In his mind, he thought, "If necessary, I'll fire based on the situation at hand. Isn't that obvious?"

His deputy, concerned, tried to placate him.

"But General... these are orders from High Command."

Million retorted with an immediate command.

"All hands, battle stations! Mobile suit squads and the Sagittarius and Centaurus, launch!"

Simultaneously, Treize Khushrenada at Lake Victoria received deployment orders. He was likely the only one on the Alliance side maintaining his composure.

Gazing at the full moon visible through his window, Treize mused, "This deployment calls for true resolve."

He was prepared for death—his own, and that of others, friend and foe alike.

"Space combat is a far cry from ground warfare."

The newly deployed cutting-edge machines were further improvements on the space-combat Leo "Chimera," dubbed "Greif" (Leo IV type, meaning "griffin" in German).

Treize departed Earth at dawn the following morning, leading twenty-five white-painted Greifs and twenty-four elite cadets aboard a large transport ship. Among these cadets were the five who had participated

in the Mogadishu battle: Zechs, Lucrezia, Izumi, Solac, and Elve. Each now commanded three or four subordinate cadets.

Treize aimed to have them replicate his own experiences, knowing that battlefield experience would undoubtedly make a significant difference. He taught them that this was the duty of those who fight "for the soldiers who come after."

At the Marius Plant, a gaunt middle-aged woman named Artemis Sedichi, a remnant of the anti-Alliance Forces, took command. Her son, Colonel Sedichi, would later serve as a frontline commander during the White Fang uprising in AC-195.

Artemis, likely a nickname shared with the moon goddess, was in her thirties. Beautiful yet unapproachable, she demonstrated remarkable intelligence and leadership amidst the predominantly male plant workers. She truly lived up to her namesake.

"We've received intel that the Alliance Space Forces are mobilizing," she announced. "Let's stand united here and show them our resolve for space revolution."

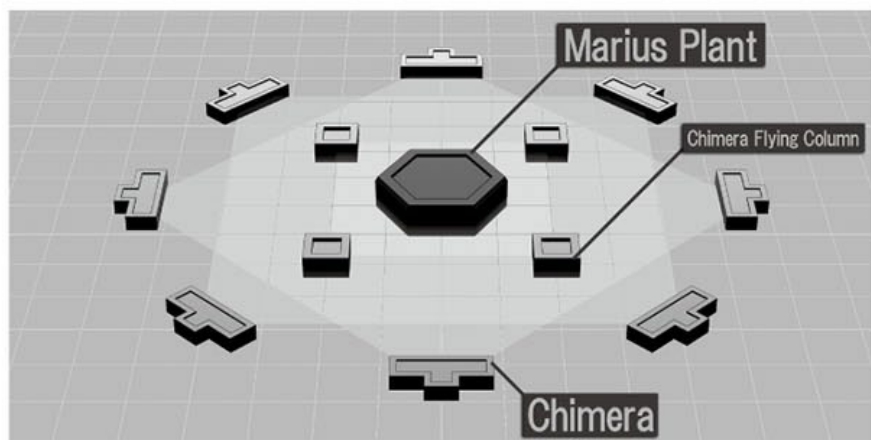
A capable strategist and commander, Artemis possessed an almost supernatural intuition coupled with the cool composure of the blue moon.

"Our forces consist of a hundred Chimeras! We'll divide them into eight units of ten each. Additionally, we'll form four strike teams of five elite units each. We'll surround the Marius Plant with a double formation for complete defense."

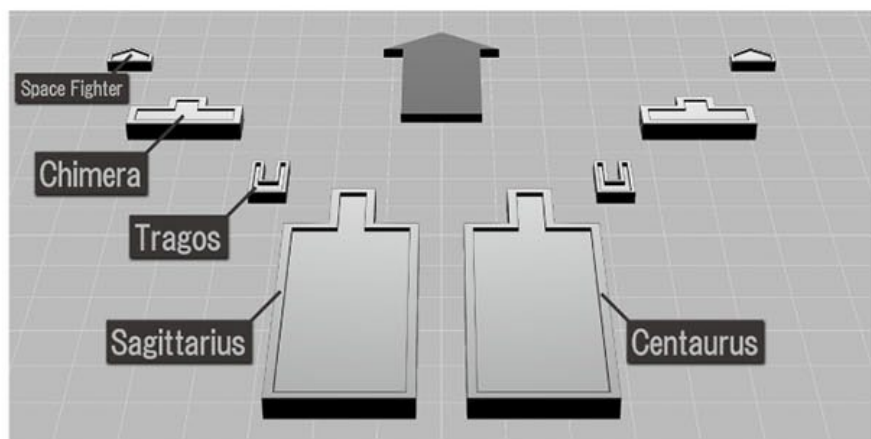
This formation arranged the ten-unit squads into an eight-pointed star, combining two squares. At its center, four five-unit squads formed a smaller square, serving as the defensive core. This multi-layered formation, ideal for defense, could respond to attacks from any direction. [Battle Formation I]

Similar formations existed in Napoleon's era for infantry. Considering mobile suits as infantry, this was tactically the best formation.

In contrast, the Alliance Space Forces adopted a crane wing formation, a V-shaped array. Ten high-mobility space fighters were positioned at each wing's tip, with twenty Chimeras as the main force between them. The Sagittarius and Centaurus formed the central stronghold, flanked by five Tragos units on each side. [Battle Formation II]



〈戦陣図 I〉



〈戦陣図 II〉

Though classic, this was the natural evolution of Treize's tactics scaled up for a large force. It was an ideal deployment for mobile suit units, prioritizing individual mobility.

At the tactical level, both sides were evenly matched, but in terms of raw power, the Alliance Space Forces held an overwhelming advantage.

A simple calculation of force ratios showed 100:170 - 100 for the anti-Alliance forces against 170 for the Alliance forces. In a war of attrition, the Alliance Space Forces would undoubtedly emerge victorious.

With the Sagittarius and Centaurus at the center, a direct breakthrough was nearly impossible. If Million had advanced slowly while maintaining this formation, victory might have been possible even without firing the massive beam cannons.

However...

Artemis wore a faint smile.

"Here they come..."

At this moment, she was aware of the Alliance Forces High Command's order forbidding Million from firing the main beam cannons. An informant had provided this crucial intelligence.

"Will they really refrain from firing?" her aide inquired.

"What would you do?" Artemis countered.

"If ordered, I wouldn't fire."

Artemis chuckled softly. "I suppose so... A normal commander could win sufficiently with this force." Her words were gentle, but her gaze was sharp. "But they will fire."

"How do you know?"

Artemis stared intently at the approaching enemy force. "General Million Liddle Hart... he's no ordinary man."

Meanwhile, General Million sat in the command chair on Sagittarius's primary bridge, waiting for the moment the main guns came into range.

"This is no joke. Am I supposed to sit idly by while the enemy swells like a snowball?" In his mind, the phrase "ten Chimeras a week" conjured images of multiplying rats or cockroaches. He imagined mobile suits continuously increasing even now.

In reality, under these battle conditions, the plant was not operational, and not a single unit was being manufactured.

"Don't use the main guns, they say!"

At that moment, an operator shouted, "Main gun energy charge complete!"

"Targeting set!"

"Transmission from Centaurus: main guns ready to fire!"

"Sagittarius, main guns ready to fire!"

"This is no joke!"

The ancient Greek historian Thucydides identified three causes of war: fear, interest, and honor. At this moment, all three elements were present in Million's mind.

The "fear" of an endlessly multiplying enemy.

The "interest" in minimizing allied casualties through overwhelming firepower.

The "honor" of being a victorious general in a grand battle.

"Only a fool would miss such a perfect opportunity," Million bellowed.

"He is a fool," Artemis said sharply.

"Sagittarius, Centaurus, fire main guns!"

"All Chimera units, break formation!"

Both commanders' orders came simultaneously. The massive twin beam cannons of Sagittarius and Centaurus unleashed four straight beams of light towards the Marius Plant.

However, even faster, a hundred Chimeras scattered in unison, detaching from the Marius Plant. In the lunar environment, jumping power is six times that on Earth. In what could be described as an instant, the Chimera units soared upwards, spread to the sides, and retreated.

The aim of Sagittarius and Centaurus was precise. The Marius Plant vanished without a trace. A few Chimeras that failed to evade were caught in the explosion, but the damage was minimal.

"I told you they'd fire," Artemis said, piloting the lead Chimera and leaping over her troops, grateful for their precise execution of the plan.

"All Chimera units, proceed to phase two of the operation," she commanded.

The second phase formation mirrored the initial eight-pointed star multi-layered formation. The key differences were that the distances between units were now expanded tenfold, and instead of defending the Marius Plant, they were now encircling the Space Forces themselves. This defensive formation had been transformed into one of encirclement and annihilation.

Initially, the blinding flash from the beam cannons prevented Sagittarius's bridge from grasping the situation. General Million rose from his command seat, instinctively shouting, "Sit-rep!" He was eager to confirm victory. But the news was far from favorable.

"All shots hit the target! However, enemy mobile suit losses are..."

"What is it?"

"No confirmed mobile suit losses!"

"Impossible!"

Had Marshal Chalias been present, he would have berated Million as an "utter fool!"

If Vingt learned of this, he would have immediately declared it a strategic defeat.

The Alliance Space Forces were practically immobilized in their initial movements, which proved fatal. First, the left wing's ten high-mobility space fighters were shot down, overwhelmed by twenty new-model Chimeras with twice their firepower.

Next, the left wing's main force of twenty Chimeras engaged forty enemy units and were rendered combat ineffective. Just as most humans are right-handed, making the left side more vulnerable, the left wing crumbled first.

The retreating Chimeras fled rightward, blocking Sagittarius and Centaurus's forward path. At this point, the Allied forces had already lost their mobility.

"Get out of the way, you fools!" Million couldn't help but shout. "We'll crush you!"

Despite being said to match a hundred mobile suits, Sagittarius and Centaurus were helpless against the dispersed enemy formation. Ironically, their massive size, once an asset, now hindered them against mobile suits.

Over fifty enemy Chimeras swarmed Centaurus, concentrating fire on its power systems and causing massive explosions. It could no longer move.

Million watched in horror, likening the scene to an elephant being overwhelmed by rats.

"This... this can't be happening..."

As the Centaurus suffered multiple explosions, the Sagittarius began to retreat. In mobile suit combat, these lunar battleships proved far too large. While they might have been effective in ship-to-ship battles, they were clearly ill-suited for this new era of space warfare.

"Damn these mobile suits!" Million could only gnash his teeth and groan.

Just then, a report came in: the allied right wing's ten high-mobility space fighters, now the farthest from their position, were under attack.

Million instinctively ordered main cannon fire towards the intense battle zone.

"Energy charge will take another 300 seconds!"

"If we're in range, fire shells!"

"We're out of range!"

Their hasty retreat had led to this predicament.

"Do something! Don't let them have their way!"

Despite the odds, the Alliance Space Forces fought valiantly. The right wing battled desperately, prepared to fight to the death, and managed to destroy several enemy units.

The battle in the Ocean of Storms had devolved into a war of attrition, with the rebel army's new Chimeras steadily decreasing in number as well.

The current force ratio stood at 80:75, with 80 for the anti-Alliance Forces and 75 for the Alliance Forces. However, this calculation assumed the Sagittarius's combat value as 50.

In reality, it was closer to 80:25, overwhelmingly disadvantageous for the Alliance Forces.

Yet, the situation was about to deteriorate even further.

Artemis and several commandos had infiltrated Sagittarius's primary bridge. This kind of sabotage from within was a trademark tactic of the resistance rather than the anti-Alliance forces.

They immediately opened fire on the ceiling with machine guns. Even if it wasn't Million, anyone present would have been paralyzed with fear.

"Hands up," Artemis said with an alluring smile. "Anyone who makes a suspicious move will be shot without mercy," she added, her eyes glinting.

The battle in the Ocean of Storms had reached a lull, silence returning after twenty-four hours of combat during which the Moon had completed one orbit around Earth.

Million Liddle Hart surrendered, and the Alliance Space Forces' mobile suit units retreated to their base in the Sea of Tranquility without a commander. The Sagittarius fell into rebel hands, while the near-destroyed Centaurus was repurposed as a prisoner-of-war camp—a pitiful end for the once-proud lunar battleships.

Carl von Clausewitz, a pioneering strategic thinker, described war in his treatise "On War" as an extended duel and a continuation of politics by other means. Victory allows the winner to impose their vision of the world, whether through subjugation or forced peace. If a stable and lasting order can be promised, the decision to cease fighting can be made. This has been the way wars have concluded throughout history.

The more bloodshed on both sides, the easier it becomes to sit at the negotiating table for a ceasefire or peace talks. If this doesn't happen, the only option is to continue fighting.

While both the anti-Alliance forces and the workers desired freedom and liberation, there was a subtle difference in their perspectives. The workers felt there was no need for further conflict, while the anti-Alliance forces and resistance argued for a thorough campaign to eliminate the remaining Alliance Space Forces.

No conclusion was reached, and debates continued. Artemis, the commander, became notably silent during these political discussions. She was a soldier through and through, interested only in military strategy and operations. A single word from her—whether to negotiate peace or continue fighting—could have settled the matter, but she remained silent.

This disagreement between the two factions ultimately worked in favor of the Alliance forces, particularly Treize Khushrenada, who was en route to the lunar base.

Two days later, the large transport ship carrying Treize and his 24 subordinates, along with 25 Greif units, arrived at the spaceport of the relay station in the L-1 colony cluster. Under martial law, civilian shuttle passengers were nearly non-existent. The only exceptions were evacuees from other lunar plants.

Most had evacuated within days of the Marius Plant rebellion, and at this point, only four people disembarked from the shuttle. Treize observed these four without particular interest.

Three were a family with a quiet six-year-old boy. The fourth was a man wearing a low-brimmed hat and carrying an incongruous viola case.

Unbeknownst to Treize, this man was Odin Lowe, the assassin of his great-uncle Heero Yuy and father Ein Yuy. Odin was no longer affiliated with OZ and had been working as a freelance operative for several years. As such, he was unaware of Treize or the Specials.

Odin attempted to pass by Treize. Their eyes met briefly, and Treize found Odin's demeanor puzzling but didn't dwell on it.

"My mind is full of the lunar situation..." was all Treize could think.

"He looks like Heero and Ein... no, it couldn't be," thought Odin.

Distracted by this, Odin failed to notice the boy crouching at his feet.

"Oops!" Odin stumbled, nearly losing his balance. Though he didn't fall, he immediately apologized to the boy, fearing he had hurt him.

"I'm sorry, are you alright?"

The boy remained silent.



"Come, little one," the boy's mother approached.

"I'm very sorry," she said.

"No, it's fine..." Odin tipped his hat slightly and left.

The mother took the boy's hand, gently brushing off some dirt.

"Are you okay? Does anything hurt?"

"It fell," the boy said, holding a recruitment flyer for lunar plants.

"Thank you, but we don't need that," his mother said.

"Oh..."

"Because we're not going to the moon anymore."

"..."

"Come on, let's go."

"Okay..."

It was a mundane scene, yet Treize saw in this mother and child interaction a reflection of his own past.

"I haven't seen Mother's face in a while..." he thought. Angelina was currently hospitalized in the medical section of this L-1 colony cluster.

"It doesn't seem like I'll have time to visit..." he mused, sighing deeply with a sense of nostalgia.

MC-0022 NEXT WINTER

I shuddered.

Removing my virtual visor, I stared intently through the viewing window of the cryogenic capsule. Princess Aurora, codenamed "Heero Yuy," was on the verge of awakening.

His face was identical to that of the boy I had just seen.

"Will that child become Heero?"

"Thawing complete..." Master Chang pressed the capsule's open button.

"Finally!" Duo exclaimed, bouncing with excitement as he peered eagerly at the capsule. He whispered under his breath, "I'm counting on you, bro..."

Father approached the capsule, now emitting wisps of vapor, with his characteristic broad smile.

"Hey there, Heero!"

The youth addressed as such opened clear eyes. Those eyes... there was no mistaking it. They were the same as the boy's.

"You haven't changed a bit," Father said, his tone nostalgic despite his laughter.

Heero responded in a low, cold voice, devoid of warmth.

"Neither have you, Duo..."

His tone was utterly frigid.

To be continued in Vol.02

Afterword

You know, there's this absolutely delightful French restaurant in Kusunoki-cho, Yokohama called VOYAGE. Now, picture this: amidst the elegant decor, they've got a life-sized Yoda statue and a collection of Gundam memorabilia. It's utterly bizarre and brilliant at the same time. When I first stumbled upon this place, they only had a few SEED model kits. But now? Oh boy, you've got Tallgeese, Deathscythe, the works! They're all proudly displayed in a corner, adding this wonderfully eccentric flair to the place.

I've had quite a few meetings there for this novel, and I may have... well, contributed to their growing collection. I keep handing over Gundam stuff, and before I knew it, the place had transformed into this culinary sci-fi fusion. I feel a bit guilty, to be honest. But funny thing is, it somehow doesn't clash with the restaurant's chic ambiance. That's all thanks to the owner, Sakai. The man's a genius when it comes to conceptual design. And let's not forget the staff - they're absolute stars. The chef, Kashiyonagi? His food is to die for. And Torii, the mixologist? Give him any cocktail order, no matter how complex, and he'll whip up something magical.

Now, about this novel of mine. Truth be told, I couldn't have even started without standing on the shoulders of giants. There's Tomino's original Gundam blueprint, and Director Ikeda's perfect foundation with Wing. I owe them big time. And then there's my incredible team - editors, artists, the works. They've been my lifeline, really. It's only because of their support that we managed to kick off the serialization and finally get this book out there.

I'm incredibly grateful to all the Wing fans who've stuck with us, and to all the new readers who've jumped on board. Your support means the world to me, it really does. There's so much more I want to say, but I'll save that for the next volume.

Katsuyuki Sumizawa

Mobile Suit Gundam Wing: Frozen Teardrop

Vol.01 Rondo of Redemption (Part.01)

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