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## Episode 274 – Revisiting an old favourite

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It was a nice apartment, well-lit, spacious and well furnished. A pair of nice, plush leather couches set the scene, arranged in a neat L-shape, with a small coffee table between them. What dominated the room, however, was the massive flat-screen against one wall, so big as to loom over all else around it. By comparison, the broad windows with views out over a strangely futuristic metropolis and the other doorways leading away to gods alone knew where seemed like afterthoughts.

"So it was another attack of... her?" Tsuneo asked as he entered, Rebecca right behind him.

"Yep," she said, nodding. "Flying out of nowhere, being an arse and reveling in it. And with a legendarily bad fic to boot."

"I thought she was finished with us after... that thing." Tsuneo winced.

"Maybe she got bored," Rick offered. "Or maybe she found R3BE and decided that it was the sort of thing that she couldn't sit on indefinitely because it was just so awesomely bad."

Dan just shook his head. "I'm not gonna ask, but all I can say is that better you guys than us."

Tsuneo glanced between Dan and Rebecca, and then just shook his head. "So do you know if they're coming back?"

"No idea," Rick replied. "But hey, at least now they have precedent, if nothing else. And you guys can consider yourself forewarned or the like."

"Fun," Dan shot back. "So worse fic than Solaris Jokers?"

"Well, it was complete," Rebecca considered. "For very board values of 'complete.' True, that's about the only nice thing I can say about it."

"I'm not sure if that's even a good thing," Tsuneo said.

"Here's the thing. Dead fic is a recurring part of this job," Rebecca began. "So many of the reviews are a start that then goes nowhere and abruptly ends without resolving anything, usually the result of an author getting bored or wandering off or actually realising how bad their idea was."

"This is true," Tsuneo agreed. "And I have noticed that the result is less a lack of conclusion, as it is that the fics often end when the story's only just getting started?"

"Like with BGC Next Gen Whatever," Dan said. "It spent forever on the drawn out bank robbery gone bad opening, then dawdled through introducing the new Knight Sabers and vomiting out backstory. And when it had begun to show the slightest hints of life and it suddenly dropped dead. Ending on an unfunny gag at that."

"Or look at the Tale of Yurei and Lance," Rick put forward. "It spent forever wandering around with the setup of getting the titular characters together, and then abruptly stopped just as it was in motion."

"And then you have fics that only get as far as a bit of backstory before they peter out," Rebecca observed. "Solaris Jokers was a good example, where the fic ended after the backstory. Or for an even

worse one, look at Fur and Metal. It spent forever on a painfully long and forced setup, but never went anywhere after that."

"You could argue that Green Lantern Regenesi was a complete fic," Tsuneo considered. "If you figure the fic's only goal was to shove a Green Lantern ring onto the sparkliest Sue you've ever seen."

"But on the other hand, I tend to find that the worst fics are the ones that actually have an end," Rick countered. "Because the endings themselves are often too sucky for words."

"Such as?"

"Well, as a worst case scenario, consider Delta Thirteen," Rick explained. "So we've had twelve chapters of silly cartoon violence and punching out giant monsters. We've also just come from the awesomeness that was the Justice fight-"

"For broad values of 'awesome,'" Tsuneo interjected.

"It was still cool," Rick continued, shrugging it off, "And so you'reexpecting some sort of awesome end that'd cap this whole thing off. Instead, what do you get? A long, boring ramble about weddings and babies and Tom verbally abusing his ex and more babies and four hundred babies. It's a complete swerve from where the fic was heading, and not only doesn't fit with the rest of it, but leaves you wondering what the hell it was you just read."

"Agreed there," Rebecca noted. "For all its myriad flaws, the ending of Delta Invasion is one of the most egregious and least inadvertently amusing."

"The end of the fic managed to make the fic even worse," Tsuneo agreed. "Which isn't easy, given that it was Delta Invasion."

"On a related note, take a look at the Horrible Secret of Space," Rebecca continued. "We've just come off a trillion chapters of things exploding in the ultimate battle between good and evil for the fate of all mankind. So what does the fic give us as a conclusion? Tom drinking, beating up a guy and trying to force some comedy."

"And then it got worse," Tsuneo noted.

"Oh yes." She nodded. "Because then we follow through with the nonsense interviews that seem to have no function at all. They don't add anything to the fic, they don't provide any sort of conclusion or resolve anything at all, and they run entirely counter to everything else in the fic. The whole chapter achieved nothing and, of anything, removed what little resolution the prior chapter gave the fic."

"Now if you want un-endings, consider The Legacy," Rick offered.

"Like you could make anything out from that mess," Dan snorted.

"Well yeah, but the ending is rather out of there," Rick explained. "So after a trillion chapters of random new characters, random new Zoids, nonsense plot points and exposition, the entire war - because a war started, apparently - is resolved by a single nameless guy in a Zoid that the fic hasn't even hinted at showing out of nowhere and arbitrarily ending things. It'd be like Voldemort getting done in by some random nameless passing Hufflepuff."

"It makes Old Conflicts Renewed's ending seem decent by comparison, which is a dire statement indeed." Dan winced at the thought. "Zeph gets instantly forgiven for the war crimes he's complicit in, and then we have a wedding."

"So then what do you think Grill on Fire's ending will be like, given that you've read six dozen chapters of it so far?" Rick asked.

"I honestly have no idea," Tsuneo said. "We keep reading it, but it keeps going without actually covering any new ground. It's like Xeno's Paradox, the fanfic."

"Well there's an amusing mental image," Rebecca said with a smirk.

"Good morning everyone," The Voice stepped into the conversation, its usual bland cheerful self.

"Speaking of amusing mental images, how's it going there, Screaming Skull?" Rebecca shot back.

There was an ever so slight pause, and a barely audible sigh. "Today's review is of a BGC fic, called Bubblegum Climax-"

"So we're getting a Lemon." Rebecca shrugged. "I figured this was inevitable"

"It's not a lemon," the Voice objected.

"With that title? On a BGC fic?" Dan raised a disbelieving eyebrow. "It's one of the most obvious porn titles ever. At least, of the ones you can still say in a PG timeslot."

"I'm sure I could think of a worse one," Rick offered. "Like Bubblebutt Cr-"

"Thank you," Tsuneo cut him off.

"Or Bubbleg-"

"Again, Thank you"

"Or even Soldier-"

"Anyway, Voice," Tsuneo sharply changed the topic. "Is this original BGC or 2040?"

"Does it really make a difference?" Rebecca asked. "Be honest."

"Oh yes," Rick nodded. "Blatantly eighties versus soft nineties."

"And the lesbian undertones," Dan agreed. "Quality versus quantity and all."

"Not to mention how quickly it forgets Linna exists," Rebecca finished.

"It's... it's an original series fic, serving as a sequel series of sorts," The voice finally managed, sounding more than a little resigned as it explained.

"Poofy mullets and headbands for everyone!" Rick added as he sat, the others joining him. The big screen turned on, changing the world over to script format.

> GeoClimber@aol.com

Rebecca: AOL e-mail addresses. Remember those?

> Here's a revised version

Rick: The original was the 'Alan Smithee' cut

>of the first installment in the BGCX series.

Tsuneo: A series that I suspect begins and ends here.

Dan: That does seem to happen to us a lot. It's also not a bad thing.

> Feel free to e-mail me at geoclimber@aol.com.

Dan: I'm not sure you want to hear what I have to say.

Rebecca: Odds on the account was taken over by Spambots years ago.

> The second installment is on the way, named Dark Horizon.

Tsuneo: A title with the depth and menace of 'any time after sundown.'

> It should be finished by the time you read this.

Rebecca: Assuming that nothing untoward happens or the writer doesn't think of anything better to do, like, say, taking up knitting

> Bubblegum Crisis, Crash! and other related characters, concepts, etc.

Dan: AD Police, Tokyo 2040, Parasite Dolls, Hurricane Live and Scramble Wars if you really want to push it.

> are copyrights of their respective owners including AnimEigo, Youmex, Polydor, Artnic,

Tsuneo: And anyone else who might have owned the BGC franchise or at least had a claim to it over time. There's a lot of them.

Rick: I think I have a claim to it too.

>General Motors...sorry, not GM.

Rebecca: I think a joke just tried to occur. Think.

> I used a Compaq Presario 850 and Word Perfect 6.0 in writing this,

Dan: Care to date your fic any more there?

Rick: He uploaded it to his GeoCities webpage via a CompuServe connection using a 2400 modem.

>so does that entitle them to any rights? NOT!

Tsuneo: Careful or else this will turn into a rant about lizard people again.

> B U B B L E G U M C L I M A X

Rebecca: I think there's a problem with your spacebar.

> F R E E F A L L

Rick: The story of a 90s Superheroine who has just discovered Anime and won't shut up about it.

> Nene looked up at the display screen for the third time in two minutes:

Dan: Nobody had replied to her Tweet yet, and she was worried that she was no longer popular.

> First Global Airline Flight 204 from Berlin should have arrived five minutes ago,

Rebecca: Just wait until she finds out that she's here a day early. Timezones confuse her.

>but its name was yet to appear under "Arrivals."

Rick: Maybe aliens took it.

Dan: Maybe it's just been delayed

Rick: I like my idea better.

> She tapped her foot impatiently on the gleaming synthetic marble floor

Rebecca: Slipped on the over-polished floor and sued the airline for thousands.

>and glanced around. There must have been thousands of people,

Dan: Or even hundreds.

>but it did not look a bit crowded under the

>huge, encompassing dome of the Mega Tokyo Airport.

Tsuneo: Why they had chosen to build the airport under a dome was another matter.

> I wonder how Sylia's doing. Nene thought. I'm bored.

Dan: Steady on, girl, the fic's barely started.

Rebecca: Yeah, give it a bit to flounder aimlessly, and then you can be bored.

> The past month had been uneventful,

Rick: Boomers had rampaged, Priss had wrecked her motorslave, Linna was complaining about her stock options, epic clash between the forces of good and evil for control of the world... You know, stuff.

>ever since the Knight Sabers' apocalyptical battle with Largo at the Tokyo Atomic Plant.

Rebecca: In a rare moment for a BGC fanfic, it acknowledges the existence of Crash.

Tsuneo: I take it that's a rare occurrence?

Rebecca: Crash is to BGC what the second and subsequent seasons were to Heroes.

Rick: Wait, Heroes lasted more than one season?

> Even boomer crimes declined, for the first time in the past five years.

Dan: That might have something to do with all Tokyo's boomers being fused into one lump then blown up.

> There was nothing to do

Rick: This sounds like the kind of trailer that includes the phrase "But a new threat emerges."

>and she was worried that she would gain an extra pound or two sitting there all the time.

Rebecca: Her all-cake diet might have also been a factor in that issue.

> That's why she was so glad to receive Sylia's call about a job offering last night.

Tsuneo: True, it was as an entry-level data clerk getting only minimum wage and with terrible hours, but in this market, she wasn't going to be picky.

> She could really use some exercise! "FGA

Rick: What does the Freedomian Golfer's Association have to do with any of this?

>flight 204 has arrived, we apologize for the inconvenience the delay has caused you.

Tsuneo: Those responsible have already committed ritual suicide.

> Passengers will exit through Gate 54." Nene's thought was interrupted by the public address announcement.

Rick: [PA System] Also, we're really not sure why it didn't show up as 'delayed' on the board a few minutes ago. We're actually pretty bad at this.

>"About time." She checked the maze-like map

Tsuneo: And here she was without her ball of twine.

>on a nearby board and started walking toward Gate54.

Rebecca: The bad end of the airport where all the cut-rate airlines park.

>"I tell you the guy's late, Linna." Priss said inside the car.

Dan: Face it, Priss. You accept Craigslist dates and this is what you get.

Rebecca: You accept a Craigslist date and it's a blessing if the guy never shows.

>"He was supposed to be here ten minutes ago!

Tsuneo: So far, it seems that the message of the fic is that people are late.

> How much longer you want to wait?"

>"As long as it takes for him to show up. This job is too important to loose."

Tsuneo: After losing their last few contracts to the Solaris Jokers, the Sabers need the work.

>Linna replied. "Can't you settle down and wait? For once?"

Dan: But she hasn't trashed her bike in hours. How can she relax?

>"I should never have come.

Rick [Priss]: I'm jeopardising the whole mission just by being here. Vader's on that ship.

> I'd still be in bed if not for some jerk who said wait for him here and wouldn't show." Priss

> crossed her hands behind her head and leaned back on the seat.

Dan: Poor Priss, she's up before three in the afternoon.

Rebecca: You'd know, wouldn't you?

> Just then,

Rick: A devastating war broke out on the Vok homeworld.

>the sound of a motorcycle engine broke the morning's silence.

Rebecca: Like a leaf-blower on Sunday morning. That should be a crime, preferably a capital one.

>Linna lowered the driver's

>side window and called for Priss to pay attention. Moments later, a racing bike appeared around the

>corner of the street.

Dan: Botched the turn, skidded off the road and plowed into a newsstand. Still, not their worst entrance.

> Through the moist morning fog, Linna could see vaguely that the rider was wearing

>a black biking suit and a helmet of the same color.

Rick: They say that Dr Stingray augmented his brain, and that he's actually a renegade cleaner droid. All we know is that they call him The Stig.

>He(She) stopped right beside the designated phone booth

Rebecca: There's a phone booth? This really is the future of the eighties.

>and, after seeing Linna's car parked across the street,

Tsuneo: How could you miss a lime-green minivan with a Garfield stuck on one window?

Rick: After 1989, it'd stick out like a sore thumb

> put something on the small counter inside.

Dan: The bum who had been squatting there immediately took it and ran off.

> The rider then turned the bike around and sped off, disappearing into the fog.

[Rick imitates a bellowing fog horn, then a loud crash]

>Linna brought the car to a stop beside the phone booth,

Rick: Priss was convinced that it was a drive through box and was placing her burger order. Linna found it best just to humor her.

> looking inside. Sure enough, there was a datadisk sitting on the counter.

Tsuneo: Promising her fifty free hours of AOL.

> Making sure nobody was around,Linna reached out and took the disk.

Rebecca: Again, how inconspicuous can you be in a soccer mom van?

>"Hey, call Sylia and say that we made contact. Priss, are you listening?"

>Linna found her staring at the direction the bike has gone.  
>"What's wrong?"

Rebecca [Priss]: Their tail light was out.

>"Why do I have the feeling that I've met this person before?"

Rick: Priss didn't realise that the black-clad rider was actually Johnny Blaze.

Dan; Is that the best you could come up with?

Rick: It's either that one of or a series of identical robot maids.

>Priss said, still gazing out of the window with intensity.

>"Well, what's the chance of that? It could have been anyone,

Rebecca: Theodore Roosevelt, Atilla the Hun, Mother Theresa... anyone.

>you know, and we are not supposed to

>intrude on the customer's privacy anyway.

Tsuneo: That last rule was added after Nene gushed about their newest job on her Facebook page.

>Let's go, you can still catch some sleep on the way to Sylia's

>place."Linna hit the gas pedal.

Tsuneo: Feel the tremendous surge of power!

Rick: Put. Put put. Putputput. Put.

> Neither she nor Priss noticed the dark, helmeted figure

Dan: So their contact was Dark Helmet?

>who watched them from a nearby alley.

Rick: Yep, looks like it's going to be a busy day for Joe Chill.

> One hour later, Linna and Priss arrived at the newly built Lady 633.

Tsuneo: Newly built? What happened to it?

Rick; It had to be rebuilt to comply with the Boomer Zoning Laws.

> After a short welcome back party

Rebecca: Really short. They served one round of snacks and it was over.

>for Sylia at the insistence of Nene,

Dan: She held everyone at gunpoint until they agreed.

>the Knight Sabers started the briefing.

Rick: But first Priss needed to use the bathroom. And Linna wanted to check her portfolio. And Nene held them up for another round of cake.

>"First, I want you to see this."Sylia turned on the TV screen.

Rebecca [Sylia]: This device receives audio and video signals transmitted through the air or via a cable and then displays them on its screen.

> The Mega Tokyo Daily News was just on,

Tsuneo: It's the Plot Development Nightly News with your host, Sally-Anne Exposition.

> hosted by the computer generated anchorman D.J. Tommy

Rebecca: DJ Tommy, here for all your generic dystopian Cyberpunk news needs.

Rick: Up next, we have the latest on the Aztlan-Amazonia war, the unrest in the off world colonies and the newest scandal rocking the Wayne-Powers management.

>who, as usual, was spitting out words faster than machine gun.

Dan: A machine gun that shoots words. Okay, it wasn't a terribly good metaphor.

>"The new Orbital City Space Habitat is finally complete.

Tsuneo: Only a decade late and ten times over its original budget too.

> The formerly SDPC's Genaros Space Station,

Rick: But now living as a woman by the name of Susan.

>partially rebuilt and refitted to accommodate permanent human settlement, has been opened to  
>tourists." Video clips appeared on the screen, showing a giant wheel with a dozen cylindrical arms

Rebecca: Given that it went from a cylindrical habitat to wheel, it was more than 'partially' rebuilt.

>that was the Habitat itself and the many accommodations inside it: artificial garden,

Dan: Boasting the latest in fake plastic plant technology

>observation lounge, and apparently, honeymoon suites with huge round rotating bed.

Tsuneo: Space just got infinitely tackier.

>"Contact the Phoenix Travel Agency

Rick: Their motto? You'll always come back

Dan: Now with twice daily flights between Alaska and Romania.

>near you to experience free fall, zero gravity

Rebecca: Free-fall \*and\* zero gravity?

>and more.

Rick: This has been a paid advertisement by Dystopian Cyberpunk News. Eat more Soylen Green!

> Now, for last night's . . . "Sylia turned the TV off.

Dan: Before they get to the regular Game of Thrones spoiler report.  
Rebecca: Here's a hint, a character you like dies horribly.

>"Our customer this time is the International Aerospace Agency,

Tsuneo: The nonspecific space agency.

>who now controls the Orbital City.

Rick: They also control the horizontal, and the vertical too.

> They have received indications of illegal arms traffic going on inside the Habitat,

Dan: It's being used as a storehouse for Trikes, Rocket Launchers and Siege Tanks.

Tsuneo: Anaheim Electronics has denied any knowledge of any activities going on there, especially when it involves their own products.

> which has happened before while the installation still belonged to the SDPC."

Rebecca: I can just tell that Eddie Obeid is going to be tied up in all of this somehow.

>Sylia paused and turned to Linna. "The datadisk, Linna?"

Dan: Linna surreptitiously takes her glass off it and wipes it down.

>"Yes.Here." Linna handed the disk to Sylia

Rebecca [Linna]: That's my only line.

Tsuneo: Big part for Linna in this episode then.

Rebecca: Oh yeah. This was her spotlight episode.

>who inserted it into the computer. A middle-aged man, the CEO of IAA, appeared on the screen.

Rick: Whoops, had it tuned to the generic white guy channel.

>"Knight Sabers, your job is to investigate and possibly stop

Dan: [CEO] Y'know, if you get around to it or something. No pressure.

>the illegal arms dealing on board the Orbital City.

Dan: So the purpose of this data disk is to repeat what Sylia just said?

Tsuneo: Ah, but the disk has multiple language options. You can get him to say it in Urdu if you want.

> This matter must be kept secret at all cost,

Rebecca: Which is why they're hiring the armoured mercenaries who have a habit of blowing up every place they go.

>the tourists on board must not be disturbed in any way.

Rick: So they can all enjoy a good night's rest at Norman Bates' space hotel.

> \$30,000,000 is our offer, with an extra \$20,000,000 if the parties involved are caught without

>drawing public attention.

Tsuneo: That seems like an awful lot, like several orders of magnitude more than their prior payments.

Rick: But how much is that in Yens?

> Additional information is included on the disk.

Rebecca: As well as deleted scenes, director's commentary and an Easter egg you'll spend hours hunting for only to be disappointed at its content.

> Your service will be greatly appreciated." the message ended.

Rick: End communication! [Folds his arms over his chest]

>"That's a big sum, Sylia. I don't think we should miss out on this one." said Linna.

Dan: Quit padding your part, Linna

> It sure beats working eight hours a day in the stock market.

Rebecca [Linna]: Stupid global financial crisis isn't going to engineer itself.

>"Right. So we'll have to start getting ready for the trip right away.

Rick: Pack your space suits, your space lingerie, your space bikinis and your skimpy space nighties.

> The shuttle tickets have already been reserved."

Tsuneo: [Linna] Hey, what if I said I couldn't come? I can't exactly vanish into space for a week at the drop of a hat in my line of work.

Rebecca: [Sylia] Not to worry, I had you fired.

>"Hey, sounds like a paid vacation to me." Nene said, stretching out on the sofa. "I'm ready for some  
>exercise, too. How about you, Priss?"

>"Huh? Oh, sure,

Dan: Hey, pay attention! If we've got to watch this, so do you.

> not like if I've anything else to do." Priss answered hastily.

Dan: I take it her music career is going that well.

Rebecca: At this point her best option is a drunken rampage in a hotel to drum up some publicity.

>She had been thinking

>about the mysterious messenger who delivered the datadisk this morning.

Rebecca: I get the impression that the revelation of the messenger's identity is going to be a big deal. I also get the impression that we're going to be spectacularly disappointed.

Rick: Maybe the author will tease us with part of their name.

> There's a certainfamiliarness about this person that Priss couldn't exactly define.

Tsuneo: Even though all they saw was a fleeting glimpse of a black suit.

Rick: Maybe it's the suit that was the old friend. They used to be close, but then it decided that it wanted

to see other bikers.

> It was like seeing an old friend but couldn't recall the name.

Dan: So she made some lame excuses and then tried to divert the conversation to the catering.

>"All right, if all goes as planned, we should be on our way to the Habitat by tomorrow afternoon.

Tsuneo: Instead, you sit around on the tarmac for hours while your flight is delayed.

> Personal business should be taken care of before that." Sylia concluded the briefing.

Rick: The conversation ended on this.

> In a dimly lit room on board the Orbital City Space Habitat, a man

Dan: Searched in vain for a spare light globe.

> stood in front of the observation port,

Rebecca: I'm going to wager that this is our villain introduction.

> taking in the grandiose view.

Rick: Nobody was ready to tell him he'd been staring at a screen saver for hours.

> The Sun was rising slowly from the other side of the horizon,

Rick: And then the Invid invade!

Rebecca: Wrong eighties anime series featuring transforming motorcycles.

Rick: So we're not going to find out that Priss is actually a computer?

Rebecca: No.

Rick: Or if Rom Stol will ever defeat the Gylandar and Devil Satan Six?

Rebecca: N - wait, did you just make a Machine Robo reference?

Rick: That I did.

Rebecca: I am genuinely impressed.

> basking

>the swirling clouds in golden light. The dark rim of the Earth looked like a ring mounted with a fire-  
>colored pearl.

Tsuneo: Careful there, don't want to blow your metaphor budget all at once.

> A beautiful world, full of potential.

Dan: The world that had been the birthplace of selfies, twerking and the McRib.

> He has always found himself deeply moved by the scene no matter how often he sees it.

Rebecca: He also laughs at the end of Night of the Living Dead, so take that how you will.

> Well over seven feet tall, he was an imposing figure by any standard: muscular torso,

Rick: Slab Bulkhead!

>powerful biceps

Dan: Dirk Hardpec!

>and legs.

Rebecca: Flint Beefknob!

> Dark, flowing hair fell to his immensely broad shoulders.

Tsuneo: That must be a pain to take care of in microgravity.

> Everything is normal about him except for one:

Dan: The fact that he's about seven feet tall?

Tsuneo: No, it's the word "villain" stamped on his forehead.

>he's not completely human.

Rick: His father was a cosmic space god possessing near omnipotent powers. His mother was an exotic dancer who lived in a trailer park in Reno. Theirs was an awkward relationship.

> His name is Demond,

Rick: Lord Demond, leader of the secret terrorist group AXIS and pilot of whatever traced over Gundam the art team thought they could get away with.

>a cyborg or an "enhance person" as some people preferred.

Rebecca: More derisively known as a bot-botherer or Mister Clanky.

> Cybernetic implants beneath his bronze colored skin

Dan: Between his long hair and his spray tan, Demond belongs on the cover of a trashy bodice-ripper.

> gave him the power of a boomer

Tsuneo: And the gentle touch of a mother's caress.

>and the cold logic of a computer,

Rick: And yet, if you ask him what love is, his head explodes.

>yet he retained a human's dreams and ambitions.

Tsuneo: Despite his obvious evil plans, he still one day dreamed of being a pretty fairy princess.

Dan: So Demond is Tim from Dreamstar then?

> Abruptly, the computer monitor on the desk behind him came to life.

Rebecca: It had finally finished updating its drivers.

> A figure wearing a black motorcycle helmet

Rick: With an oversized floral print dress and boxing gloves.

> appeared on the screen. A gloved hand pushed up the visor, revealing the beautiful  
> face of a young woman.

Rebecca: Like that's a surprise. Is the mysterious masked figure ever not a beautiful young woman?

Rick: Only when it's Michael Schumacher.

> She had a narrow chin, flawless smooth skin, perfectly proportioned nose and

Dan: Only the faintest hints of a handlebar moustache.

>full lips, all framed by strands of lavender hair.

Rick: Though she was his most trusted lieutenant, Demond was always wracked with doubt that she was prettier than him.

> Her most prominent features were her gray eyes:

Rebecca; Mainly because they came out of her head on stalks.

>eyes that shone with a special light,

Rick: The Omega Beam.

>but were opaque as the tinted visor.

Tsuneo: You'd be worried otherwise.

>"Your report?"Demond turned around and asked.

Dan: [Rider] Uh, nothing. Just wanted to check that I hadn't left the front door open.

Rick: [Demond] In a space station?

Dan: [Rider] Yeah, I guess you'd know by now.

>"I have successfully infiltrated the IAA.

Tsuneo: [Rider] I got a menial desk job and was hit on by my manager.

> They have hired a mercenary group called the Knight Sabers  
>for the job. I delivered the datadisk containing the information about the offering myself."

Rebecca: The IAA apparently trusted the new girl enough to let her handle this sensitive and potentially illegal operation.

>"The Knight Sabers, ha? I've heard about them.

Dan: Largely the disgusting things people have scrawled about Priss on bathroom stalls.

> Well done, Rena.

Tsuneo: [Demond] Congratulations on your part in setting dangerous mercenaries against us.

> Return on tomorrow's shuttle flight. It's going to get more interesting after all."

Rick: [Rena] But I've gotten myself a good spot in their organisation. I mean, aren't they going to be suspicious if someone they trust with sensitive information suddenly heads into space?

Rebecca: [Demond] Not to worry, I had you fired.

>"Understood. Rena out." The transmission cut off.

>Demond looked out of the view port again.

Dan: Actually he's just staring at a goldfish bowl. Not that he'd notice, mind you

> Glittering lights could be seen coming from the night side

>of the globe---the only marks of human existence.

Tsuneo: Actually, even on its launch pad, you can see the Star Eva from space.

> One day all these will be mine, then the lights will go off, one by one.

Rebecca: In case you missed it, he's the bad guy.

Tsuneo: I think that the depiction may have been a bit too subtle to get the message over. Maybe if he was burning down an orphanage or the like it would have helped.

>"Passengers, you may unbuckle the safety harness now that the artificial gravity has been activated

Rick: I didn't think that Bubblegum Crisis had mysterious artificial gravity.

Tsuneo: It's a little known fact, but Largo's Super-boomers used gravity weapons.

Rick: Oh? So why does everything fly by jets or rotors then rather than using anti-gravity tech?

Tsuneo: Because you've thought about it more than the writers did.

>and the shuttle is on course to Orbital City. Please feel free to move around.

Dan: You know what's the funny thing? If I was on a space shuttle flight, I'd actually like it if there was no gravity and I could float around a bit.

Tsuneo: Granted, it would be kind of cool.

Dan: And as a bonus, you could steal all the spare change that floated out of people's pockets.

> Refreshments will be served shortly."

Tsuneo: So this isn't one of those budget space flights.

Rebecca: The really cheap ones charge a premium for the oxygen.

> Nene quickly got out of her harness. "What a bumpy ride! Lucky I didn't eat too big a breakfast."

Tsuneo: Yeah, that fourth round of French toast and pancakes would have just been excessive.

>"Yeah, wait 'till the trip back home." Linna said, seated beside Nene.

>"I'll worry about that later." Nene pushed aside the cover on the view port. "Wow, check out the view,

>Linna! Isn't that fantastic?"

Rick: That's tremendously exciting, Nina!

> The blue-white sphere that was the Earth occupied one corner of the view port, a crystal ball one could  
>almost reach out and touch with a finger.

Dan [Nene]: I dunno, it looks like a badly painted on sci-fi background to me.  
Rebecca [Sylia]: She's wising up! Rock the "ship" a bit more!

> The rest of the sky was filled with innumerable number of stars, unblinking now that the atmosphere  
>no longer separated their mysterious lights from the eyes, like diamonds on a tray covered with black  
>swan velvet.

Tsuneo: Sudden onset description attack!

>"It is beautiful. Holo-vids and photos just can't beat the real thing."Linna came alongside Nene.

Rick: But no, you can't wind down the window to get a better look.

>"Well, we'll have plenty of time for sight seeing once we reach the Habitat." Sylia said to them both.

Dan: [Linna] Didn't we have a job or something to do there?  
Rebecca: [Sylia] Eh.

>Then she noticed Priss sitting in her seat silently, arms folded across her chest, seemingly to have  
>drifted off into her own deep thoughts.

Dan [Deep]: I like fluffy cakes.

> Could she be thinking about Sylvie again, after all this time?

Tsuneo: Could this be an incredibly forced set-up?  
Rick: Depends on if Priss did gymnastics practice at the start of the film.

>Sylia wondered, remembering the incident years ago. It's like visiting a friend's grave, isn't it?

Dan: The space-grave of someone who you didn't even know came from there, but... I guess so.

> After a sixty minute flight, the shuttle arrived at the Orbital City Space Habitat.

Rebecca: Sixty minutes to get from Earth to Generos? It's at L-5, which would be about thirty-six hours by shuttle. Unless there's been a quantum breakthrough in reactionless propulsion technology, it's nigh on impossible. Not to mention the acceleration needed to reach 250,000 kph required would have splattered the passengers all over the back of the cabin.

Dan: All right, we all bow down to your awesome knowledge of space travel

Rick: Maybe they're getting there in the Star Eva.

> Robotic arms

Rick: Hey Rebecca?

Rebecca: What?

Rick: You could use those arms for Asteroid mining

Rebecca: I hate you.

>gently moved the shuttle into place in front of the docking bay.

Tsuneo: Gently cradling the shuttle in their arms like a newborn baby.

> A tube-like corridor then

> extended out from the dock and connected with the shuttle's airlock.

Tsuneo: And once again, they're at the furthest gate from the terminal.

>"All docking procedures complete. Passengers may now exit the shuttle.

Dan: [Announcer] You don't have to go home, but you can't stay here.

> It's been the crew's pleasure to serve you. We wish you a happy stay in Orbital City."

Rick [Announcer]: Now get out!

>"Whatever."Priss muttered, followed the other passengers into the docking corridor.

Dan: She got held up behind Wolverine at the metal detector.

>Sylia, Nene, and Linna fell in behind.

> Suddenly, Priss caught something familiar-looking in the corner of her eye.

Dan [Max the bunny]: Is moon dust poisonous, Sam?

> It was somebody wearing a tight-fitting, black jumpsuit,

Rick: It'sCatwoman and/or Black Cat!

Dan: And/or?

Rick: Same thing, really. Except if it's the unrelated Golden Age black cat, in which case she's a cowgirl for copyright reasons

Dan: I shouldn't have asked.

>like the one the mysterious biker wore.

Tsuneo: The sad thing is, I find the mysterious biker more interesting than our obvious villain.

Rick: Wait, really?

Tsuneo: Sorry, I meant to say I find the mysterious biker \*suit\* more interesting.

> But before Priss could get a closer look, the person reached the other end of the corridor and  
>disappeared.

> Could it be the same guy? Priss thought.

Rebecca: Could it be two completely unrelated people who just happen to have the same taste in clothes?

Tsuneo: I'd hope so. If they've been wearing the same suit for the last few days, it'd be getting a bit rank.

>Sylia approached her, "Is something wrong?"

Tsuneo: [Priss] Yeah, the mission seems off. It's a huge amount of money for a simple search job that really doesn't suit our team and talents.

>"Not really . . . no, everything's fine, Sylia."

Dan: We're fine, everything's fine. How are you?

>Priss decided not to trouble Sylia with the matter, at least for the moment.

>"All right, if you say so.

Rebecca: And because nothing can ever go wrong with not telling another member of your covert infiltration team that there's a problem.

> Now, Nene and I are going to check on the equipment being unloaded.

Tsuneo: [Nene] Wow. Watching boxes move. I get all the thrilling jobs.

> You and Linna can go ahead check in our hotel room, which will be our temporary base of operations.

Rick: Watch as Priss empties out the entire mini bar fridge in minutes.

> We'll meet there in half an hour."

> Later that day, Priss and Linna went to patrol the area of the Habitat around the Main Cargo Hold, >where smuggled weapons were supposedly hidden.

Tsuneo: Their employer seems to know a lot about the situation. I wonder if they're even needed here.

Rebecca: Not really, but the International Aerospace Agency needed a sizable expenditure to justify their budget for next year, and this fits the bill.

> Although there was no different between day and night in space,

Rick: It doesn't even effect the wandering monster table?

>most people in the Habitat still followed a regular timetable. It was 12 P.M. station time,

>so there were very few people in the corridors,

Tsuneo: Twelve PM is the middle of the day. Wouldn't it be busy?

Rick: Turns out most people in the Habitat still follow a regular siesta.

>which made keeping the investigation secret a lot easier.

Rebecca: In other words, the plot is forcibly shoving them forwards.

>Priss walked down a long narrow passage way amidst the cargo containers.

Rick [Reading]: Unsold Dark Spinners, secret McRib stash, Real Doll supplies, HERC parts (useless)...

> There must have been thousands of them or even more,

Dan: There's thousands, or... Thousands.

>since the Habitat was also the supply center for the Moonbase. To Priss, every crate looked the same.

Rebecca: Ever tried reading the labels?

>"Hey, Linna, how are we supposed to know which one of these damn crates contains weapon?

> They are all alike!"Priss said over the hand-held communicator.

>"Keep it down, will you? Just look for the ones with suspicious markings."

Tsuneo: Look for the ones from the Pyongyang State Baby Milk Factory, for example.

>Linna replied from the other end of the giant hold, knowing just how fast Priss could loss her patience.

Rebecca: And quietly cursing all the life decisions that had bought her to this point.

>"Yeah, do that and we just might find it in a couple of weeks, if we are lucky."

Dan: [Priss] Oh look at this, it says "Illegal smuggled weapons" on the lid. That was easier than I expected.

>Priss continued down

>the dimly lit passage way, looking right and left at the seemingly endless rows of crates.

Tsuneo: It strikes me that this is the sort of thing they should have worked out in advance rather than blindly and obviously stumbling around in the dark. It also strikes me that this is but one of many flaws in the plan so far.

> Suddenly, she heard footsteps in front of her. Turning around the corner, she confronted a shadowy  
>figure standing in the middle of the passage way.

Rick: You turn the corner. In front of you is a shadowy figure that is-

Dan: I waste him with my crossbow!

Rick [Sighs]: Roll for initiative.

> Seeing Priss, the person swung about and ran toward an open corridor nearby.

Dan: Stumbled on a loose box and ran face-first into a stack of toilet rolls, bringing them down on top of him. Still, not their worst entrance.

>"Stop!"Priss yelled, went after the person, one hand going for the gun in her jacket.

Rebecca: Given all the options she could have taken to not blow their cover and keep a low profile, I'm impressed that she immediately went for the worst of them.

>Linna heard the yell and started running toward Priss's position. "Priss, hold on! No solo actions!"

Tsuneo: No running off on a self-destructive one-woman rampage like you always do!

> The shadowy figure ran into the corridor, in doing so passed under a light panel. In a flash, Priss saw  
>that the person was wearing the same black jumpsuit she saw twice before.

Rick: Maybe she's just chasing Rinzler.

> After the person went in,

>the corridor's steel door started to lower. "You are not getting away this time!"Priss dived for the small  
>opening between the door and the floor. She got in barely.

Dan: Safe!

> The door thudded behind her.

Rebecca: And that's when Priss realised she'd run into the waste disposal system.

>"Priss!"Linna arrived just in time to see Priss dashing into the corridor. Seeing that there was no way  
>to get in, she took out the communicator and contacted Sylia.

Rick: [Linna] Hey boss?

Rebecca: [Sylia] Let me guess, Priss ran off on her own again and got into trouble?

Rick: [Linna] Got it in one.

> It was peach dark inside the corridor.

Rick: It's a kind of fuzzy pink darkness.

>Priss switched on a pen-sized flashlight to get a better look.

>She could see a bare wall about 30 feet in front of her, where the corridor turns to the left.

Rick: You are in a thirty foot long corridor, leading to a door. There is a spiked pit trap in front of the door, concealed by - Er, forget I said that last bit.

>Priss started moving forward cautiously,

Rebecca: Insert comedic 'sneaking' music here.

>her trusted Cobra Automatic in hand.

Rick: Standard issue sidearm of Alley Vipers everywhere.

> As she reached the left

>turn, someone suddenly kicked out at her from around the corner,

Dan: I bet it's another damn ninja.

Rick: I've been meaning to as this for some time now but, what the hell is it with you and ninjas anyway?

Rebecca: Trust me, you're better off not knowing

> sending the flash light flying out of

>her hand.Priss jumped back and fired one shot blindly. The shot apparently did not score

Rick: The German judge was particularly harsh.

>because immediately afterward she felt two hands on her shoulders,

Tsuneo: She's accidentally walked into the station's spa with complimentary massage service.

> pulling her back. She instinctively ducked

>and held on to one of her attacker's arms. Using it as a lever, Priss carried the person over her

>shoulders, dumping him(her)

Rebecca: It.

Dan: Them.

Rick: The incredibly mixed-up creatures who stopped living and became strange Zombies

>onto the ground.

>"Why do you follow us?"

Dan: You dropped your keys!

>she picked up the still-working flashlight and shone the beam upon her attacker's face.

Rebecca: She'd been jumped by a very small and somewhat irate fruitbat.

>"Sylvie . . . " was all Priss had time to say

Rick: Along with "The horror... The horror..." [Pause] And something about frogs.

>before someone knocked her out from behind.

> Meanwhile, Linna had gotten back to the hotel room

Dan: Which already looked like a disaster area.

Rick: Sheets folded and stacked, soft music playing, the faint scent of herbal tea wafting through...  
What have they done to the place?

>where Sylia and Nene were monitoring the situation.

Rebecca: Sylia was monitoring the situation. Nene was abusing their free wifi to get all the torrents she could.

> Nene tapped into the Habitat's main computer

Rick: By this we can assume she's "in."

>and brought up on the display screen blue prints of the area around the Main Cargo Hold.

Rick: Actually these are the initial blueprints for the proposal before zoning regulations, council objections, safety assessments, revisions half way through construction and a change of tack when the neighbors complained.

>"The corridor Linna described doesn't exist according to these diagrams."

Tsuneo: I guess it's a dummied out level or something that wasn't finished before the game shipped.

Dan: If you find a way in there, the admins will just teleport you out anyway.

> Nene zoomed in on the exact location from where Priss disappeared.

>"It seems that the SDPC did not give up all their secrets when they turned the station over to IAA."

Rebecca: Or, alternatively, the IAA could have deliberately hidden the corridor when they completely rebuilt the station. Or it could be an oversight caused by such a massive remodeling.

Tsuneo: Leaping to conclusions, the fanfic!

>said Sylia, attempting to analyze the situation. "Maybe they were connected to the arms traffic after all.

Dan: Or maybe it's their secret speak-easy where they go to consume bootleg liquor.

> But apparently the business did not stop after they closed shop."

>"You think there's a secret base of some sort on board?"

Dan: [Nene] They've got a cushion fort with a sign on it saying "No gurls aloud!"

Rick: [Linna] Looks like we're in trouble.

>"They've got to hide the weapons somewhere, don't they? Nene, overlay the cross sections and see  
>if you can find anything suspicious between the walls."

Rebecca: Check if they've got any Jaguar sports cars or Apollo capsules.

Tsuneo: Well that certainly is obscure.

>"Okay." Nene quickly keyed the commands. After a thorough scan of the area, she located a large

>between-the-decks space, unaccounted for on the blue prints.

Rick: That's where we're going to build the kid's bedroom and maybe a rumpus room as well.

>"Suit up, Nene, Linna. We're moving out." Sylia gave the order.

>". . .Why did you do it, Sylvie?"

Rick: Instagramming selfies of you in a Mudkip costume, I mean. It's so many levels of tacky.

>Priss asked, hot tears running down her cheeks.

Tsuneo: Controlled by one of those annoying single taps you can never get just right.

>"To be . . . free . . . Priss," Sylvie answered in her arms, with a weak, barely audible voice. "like you .  
>. . ."

Rick: To be free to live in a derelict trailer in the slums and have one person you know die per episode.  
Freedom!

Dan: Also the freedom to make Blade Runner references, I'd imagine

> Her head dropped back as the last strength left her.

>"Sylvie?"Priss hugged her closer as if to warm her, to win her back from death's grip . . .

Rebecca: You're probably also crushing her ribs, but at this point it's largely irrelevant.

>"Sylvie!"Priss screamed, waking up from her nightmare. Trying to sit up but couldn't, she discovered  
>that her hands and feet were tied.

Dan: I guess Rena's into that sort of stuff. [Tsuneo hits him with a cushion]

> She blinked a couple of times before her eyes adjusted to the bright light.

Rebecca: But are there four lights?

> A man's face came into focus. He had strong facial features

Rick: His nose was a former Mister Universe.

>and dark, shoulder-length hair.

Tsuneo: And a large mole in an unfortunate spot that you really don't want to mention but just can't  
help stare at...

>"You were lucky that I didn't crack open your skull." the man said in a menacing tone.

Rebecca: Between her thick head and her poofy mullet, you'd be hard-pressed to have any effect at all.

>"Oh, shit . . . "Priss began to feel the pounding headache.

Dan: [Priss] Bah, I've been front row at a Spinal Tap concert. This is nothing.

> She shook her head to chase it away.

> A quick glance around revealed a storage room of some kind.

Rick: It's Atari's holding facility where they kept the ET cartridges before burying them.

>"What were you doing in the Main Cargo Hold? You are one of the Knight Sabers, aren't you?"

Rebecca: She could be an urban explorer who was looking for artistically derelict buildings to photograph.

Tsuneo: She's in a space station.

Rebecca: So she's branching out.

>her captor asked.

>"Who the hell are you that want to know?"

Dan: And no, "The Invincible Team Dai-Guren, who the hell do you think we are?", while cool, is not an acceptable answer.

Rick: It certainly wasn't when I wrote it in an English Literature exam

Tsuneo: I'm beginning to see why the army was a valid career choice for you...

>Priss said in return, angry over both her present situation and her carelessness.

Tsuneo: Sneaking around while wearing a bright orange life vest was, in retrospect, not a good idea.

>"I am Demond, if you want to know. I run the business around here."

Rick: [Demond] They want ultra-chase figures, they come to me. They want foil incentive cards, they come to me.

>"So you are the rat who's been smuggling junks onto the station."

Tsuneo: His smuggling of traditional Chinese fishing boats was a rather odd operation, but no less illegal for it.

>"I wouldn't call those junks, since every one of them can blow you to pieces, or pretty much anything else for that matter."

Rick [Demond]: I'm sorry I fluffed my line and-

Rebecca: Keep rolling

Rick [Demond]: But shouldn't we re-do it so-

Rebecca: Keep rolling!

>Demond said half-amusingly.

Dan: Demond makes a habit of laughing at his own jokes.

Rick: Sure he's an evil crime lord, but he gets so lonely.

>"You are gonna be sorry for this, I promise." Priss said between her teeth, wanting just to punch the man square in the gut.

Rebecca: I suspect that's the same reaction that he gets from anyone who meets him, even the ones he didn't knock out and tie up.

>"I'd like to see you try, if you ever get the chance." Demond turned around and walked to the exit. "I'll leave her to you for now, Rena."

Dan: So he's leaving the captive heroine alone with a single potentially sympathetic underling. Anything

that goes wrong now is entirely his own damned fault

Rick: He might as well go jump in his shark tank now and save everyone else the bother.

>he said to someone outside and left the room. With his words, a young

>woman wearing the ever familiar black jumpsuit

Tsuneo: I still want to know what's so distinctive about this black jumpsuit.

Rick: Maybe it's Colonel Pribluda.

> came into the room.

Dan: She tripped and fell on the frame and her helmet tumbled off, while Bobby Heenan kept talking. Still, it's not her worst entrance.

>Priss was again stunned by her resemblance to Sylvie:

Rick: And we don't just mean the old Night Elf model she had in Vanilla or the placeholder she used during the Wrath beta either.

Dan: That's SylvannasWindrunner. No connection at all.

Rick: So it's a critically panned biopic about the life and death of a poet?

Dan: No, that's 'Sylvia', which was based on the life of Sylvia Plath, before you ask.

Rick: So... damn, you just stole my thunder.

Dan: Ha. Can't keep going after that, can you?

Rick: Not even for a crack about Sylvanian Families then?

Dan: No.

>her face, her hair, even the way she walked.

Rebecca: Even the way she chewed her toenails and scratched herself in public.

> But yet there was something different about her,

Tsuneo: Something to do with her not being dead.

>something in her eyes that told Priss this was not her dear Sylvie.

Rick: For Priss was in love with a dead robot.

> Rena took several tentative steps toward Priss, as if afraid of her.

Rebecca: She was once run over by Hoquetet Rose, so the apprehension is understandable.

Rick: ...you beat me to a MOSPEADA joke. I am impressed.

Rebecca: Vested interest.

> She looked her over carefully,

>then asked in a low voice, rather hesitantly, "What's your name?"

Dan: [Priss] I am known as Valentinez Alkaline Xifax Sycidabohertz Gombigobella Blue Stradivari Talentrent Pierre Andre Charton-Haymoss Ivanovick Baldeus George Doitzel Kaiser the Third.

>"Priss."Priss had to tell her---Sylvie had said the same words, in the exact same way that night

>when they first met, a life time ago.

Tsuneo: Because telling someone your name when you meet them is something that people rarely do.

>"I'm Rena, as you already know."

Rick: As you know.

> Rena became a little relaxed, knowing that Priss would talk.

> She knelt down beside her. "I heard you say the name 'Sylvie' couple of times while you were  
>unconscious.

Tsuneo: ...there is no way that doesn't sound bad.

Dan: Tira Ashcroft thoroughly approves.

> You must know her then?" She asked with a certain hopefulness.

>"She was my friend."

Dan: Her close companion in a purely Oscar Wilde sense of the term.

Tsuneo: I should hit you for that.

Dan: But yet it is also strangely literate as well.

>Priss forced back the rising tide of emotion in her heart and looked at Rena right in  
>the eyes. "She looked just like you."

Rebecca: The end result of a lazy character designer at work

Rick: Her face changes depending on what porn she's traced over.

>"That I had thought so, since I'm cloned from her."

Rick: It's something about using her to control duplicates of the Knight Sabers' hardsuits... no, it doesn't  
make any sense to us either.

>"Clone?" Priss was surprised to hear that, even though it seemed to be the only logical explanation.

Tsuneo: She's a clone of a dead robot. Yes, perfectly logical to me.

>"Right. It is a relatively new technology, rarely practiced even today."

Dan: Best practiced in remote castles atop precarious mountains and with an abundance of lightning.

> Rena explained to Priss. "The

>33-S Sexaroids made perfect testing tools because of their mostly organic composition, nearly identical  
>to humans.

Rebecca: So why skip the complexities and go straight for humans anyway? It's not like this is even  
remotely legal or ethical to begin with.

Rick: Because the plot.

Rebecca: Of course.

> I was cloned from Sylvie's cells when she was transferred to Genaros, but I never got a  
>chance to meet her and she probably didn't even know I existed.

Rick: Geez, what kind of ungrateful sister are you? You never called, you never wrote, you didn't even tell  
her you existed...

Rebecca: No offence Dan, but that sounds as bad as your family.

Dan: Hey! We write. I get monthly death-threats.

Rebecca: Somehow I'm not surprised.

> She escaped soon thereafter . . . I heard that she died . . . "

Rebecca: [Rena] If I ever find the monster that killed her...

Dan: [Priss] Oh, uh, I have no idea what you're talking about!

> Rena lowered her eyes for a moment. "Please tell me about her, Priss. I really want to know."

Tsuneo: Please tell me about my dead clone donor. Conversations you never thought you'd have.

Rick: Unless you live in the Marvel Universe.

>she looked up again and asked most eagerly, her eyes shone with anticipation.

>Priss looked at Rena silently:

Dan: She'd heard some crazy stories, but this one took the cake.

> Only if she looked like someone else.

Tsuneo: So you'd only tell Rena if she looked like someone else?

Rick: What if she looked like my Aunt Edna?

Tsuneo: No-one should be allowed to look like your Aunt Edna.

> But the hurt was starting to go away now,

Dan: Because pain don't hurt.

Rick: So be nice until it's time not to be nice.

Dan: Does this mean Priss will rip Demond's throat out?

Rick: We can but hope.

>yesterday's bittersweet memories rushed forth in its place.

Rebecca: Swap physical pain for emotional. Yes, I can see that will end well.

>"That was a long time ago, when I first met her on the freeway . . . "

Rick [Priss]: She ran me over and ground me under her wheels for half a mile. It was love at first sight.

> It was a tale Priss never dreamed of telling.

Dan: Every time she tries to tell it, the rest of the Knight Sabers are suddenly busy.

> In a well-hidden spot in the middle of the Main Cargo Hold,

Rebecca: A well hidden spot in the middle of the massive expansive open space.

>Demond briefed his subordinates to set up a "welcome party" for the Knight Sabers.

Dan: Given how much of a goon this guy is, I can imagine that his minions are even worse.

Rick: Next thing you know, they ambush the Knight Sabers with balloons and cake.

>"We'll see how tough they are." Demond had confidence in his crew, which were all made up of first

>rate combat boomers.

Rebecca: The best repurposed waste management technology that money could buy.

> Besides, even if the ambush doesn't work, he still has a few nasty surprises in store.

Dan [Demond]: Ho hoho! Even if the Knight Sabers manage to survive my deadly combat boomers, I've got an even nastier surprise in store for them!

Tsuneo [Boomer]: Uh, yeah! A nastier surprise! Yeah! I'm sure it must be, uh... uh... More nasty!

> After the Knight Sabers are taken care of, nobody will be able to stop me.

Tsuneo: Except the station authorities.

Dan: [Demond] Well, yeah.

Tsuneo: And the space agency's response teams.

Dan: [Demond] Okay, well possibly...

Tsuneo: And if you ever get to Earth, there's anti-boomer forces like the ADP.

Dan: [Demond] Look, do you mind? I'm trying to be inspiring here.

> Victory will just be a matter of time.

>"And I have all the time in the world. Ha, ha, ha . . . "Demond laughed sinisterly.

Tsuneo: In case you'd missed it, he's the bad guy.

Rick: I am in awe of the subtle and nuanced characterization.

> A repulsor car, standard passenger transport of the Space Habitat,

Dan: Along with the repulsor scooter, repulsor segway and repulsor skateboard.

> was moving fast along the

>tunnel-like highway.Sylia sat behind the wheel. The many lights along the way reflected off the

>car and her gleaming hardsuit,

Tsuneo: So here's a question. How did the Knight Sabers manage to smuggle several hundred kilos of illegal military hardware onto both a commercial shuttle flight and then from there onto a no doubt strongly controlled orbital habitat?

Rick: I have two theories.

Tsuneo: Oh dear.

Rick: Theory one suggests that Sylia has perfected a method of breaking down the suits even further into tiny, discrete components that she could secrete in amongst their luggage in sections, disguised as relatively innocuous items. The end result is that, while it does take more time to make them ready, the suits can be effectively transported anywhere in complete secrecy.

Tsuneo; It's plausible, if pushing it given the sheer volume needed to do such, which leads me to ask about theory two.

Rick: The fic didn't even think about it once.

Tsuneo: I like that one more.

> throwing dancing shadows everywhere.

>"I'm not picking up anything."

Dan: So at least they sanitize their toilet seats up here.

> Nene had been scanning the area.

>"Strange, Priss's homing signal ended right around here."

Rick: Now a smart villain would have thrown her homing device down a garbage chute or something to

lead them off the trail.

Rebecca: A smart villain would have done any number of things differently, not the least of which is not being Demond.

>Linna expressed her doubt.

>"They could be using some kind of anti-radar device.

Rebecca: Or it could be blocked by the walls of the hidden section you discovered earlier.

Tsuneo: Leaping to conclusions seems to be the first option in this fic.

> We'll have to stop and check." Sylia slowed the car down,

Rick: To be fair, she does the same for every single roadside attraction she comes across. Girl just can't say no to a Zebra-painted donkey or lacquered frog band.

>as they approached the Main Cargo Hold.

>"Gee, I rather hoped that they'd show up, so we can kick some butt, boomers' or otherwise. Right,

>Linna? Let's . . . " Nene was interrupted by a loud explosion.

[Discrete applause]

> The car veered off to one side as the

>shockwave swept in. Sylia fought to keep the car under control, while more explosions went off all

>around them.

Dan: Turns out that Demmond was smuggling fireworks across state lines and they just drove into his stash.

>"Happy now?"Linna picked herself up from the floor and said to Nene in mock anger.

>"Sorry, I thought nobody ever listened to me." Nene replied defensively.

Rick: No, no you're right, girl.

>Sylia lowered her face guard. "It's an ambush.

Rebecca: It's Sylia's ability to grasp a situation that makes her such an effective leader.

> Knight Sabers, Go!"

>"Roger!" Nene, Linna complied in unison and both leaped out of the car.

Rebecca [Sylia]: Suckers. Off to the wine bar for me!

> At the same time in the secret hideout,

Rick: In the secret lair of the Legion of Doom, concealed within the murky swamps...

>Priss felt relieved after finishing her story.

Rick: [Priss] And that's how I conquered the Trake, beat the Cardassians and saved the galaxy!

Rebecca: [Rena] Sorry I asked.

> She glanced at Rena who had listened attentively throughout:

Dan: In fact she'd fallen asleep.

>they both share the same memory now. "So how did you throw in with Demond?" Priss asked.

Tsuneo: She'd just graduated from University, but the job market was pretty terrible. An opening for 'Minion' was an opportunity she wasn't going to pass up.

>"I joined him in the fight for my people."

>"Your people?"

Dan: You know, Dolly the sheep, Scarlet Spider, Yuri mark two, Rei Ayanami, Superboy...

>"Yes. Boomers, cyberoids alike."

Rick: As well as Terminators, Droids and Transformers.

> Rena suddenly became less subtle, raising her voice. "Humans

>created boomers to be their helpers and partners,

Dan: And garbage men, and mobile ashtrays.

>but instead they look upon us as mere slaves, or simple pleasure units.

Tsuneo: That your average Boomer is a non-sentient mechanical device that just follows programmed instructions probably plays a big part in this.

> I intend to prove that we are much more . . . "

>"By supporting terrorism and killing innocent people?"

Rebecca: She was having doubts after the 'death to the fleshy ones' battle cry

>"I...I don't know. Demond said that a new world must be created, for us. Maybe death is an inevitable  
>step of that."

Dan: Hold on, guys. I think Demond's getting a motivation!

Tsuneo: No way! Next thing you know, he'll actually have a plan!

Rebecca: Or a personality beyond "one-dimensionally evil!"

Rick: Impossible!

> Largo . . . Priss had a brief flashback

Rick: Largely to all of the efforts Fred took deny his existence. That and all the lolicon porn he drew.

>of his haunting words, what he had said as they faced down on

>Genom Tower and later, at the Mega Tokyo fusion plant.

Dan: Something about separating recyclables... She never got it.

> This Demond sounded just like him.

>"But killing only results in more meaningless killing!" Priss shouted.

Rebecca [Priss]: This is why I go out on my revenge-driven rampages!

>"There was a time when I'd

>hated all boomers: so many people died because of them. But now I believe that they were not meant

>to be weapons, that humans and boomers can coexist together.

Tsuneo: Fic discussion! Genuine attempt to develop Priss' character further after the events she went through in BG Crash and, through that, force her to re-assess her key motivations and drives, or cheap attempt at forcing the plot along to its inevitable goal of having Rena switch sides?

Rick: Forcing the plot.

Dan: Forcing the plot.

Rebecca: Forcing the plot.

Tsuneo: This has been Fic Discussion for this week.

> Sylvie must have believed it too, or she could not have met me."

Tsuneo: That and she deliberately lied to you about her true nature and background. But hey, minor details.

> Rena became silent.

Rick: Which made the subsequent fart even more embarrassing

> She looked outside the small porthole where Earth hung in the dark void like a  
>blue-white marble.

Rebecca: What? Oh, sorry, that's a stain of the porthole. Let me clean that off for you.

> She felt confused. Sylvie believed it, should I believe it too?

Tsuneo: [Rena] Should I be a pointless copy of an existing character, or have my own motivations instead?

> Suddenly, an alarm went off, together with the sound of heavy gunfire outside.

Dan: Good thing that gunfight came along or we might have had a character moment

>"I'm sorry, Priss." Rena ran out of the room. The door closed after her.

>"Wait!" Priss yelled, knowing that Rena wouldn't stop.

Tsuneo: In retrospect, she felt rather silly.

> The rope did not feel very tight, so she started

>to try to break free. Soon her left arm became unbounded. Looking up, she saw the air vent above her  
>head.

Rebecca: So he left her alone with a single inept and easily swayed underling and access to a convenient air vent. Anything that happens to Demond is his own damned fault.

> I have to get out of here quick. Priss started to undo the rest of the bound.

Rick: Elissa Powers wishes she had it that easy.

Rebecca: You couldn't help yourself, could you?

>to be continued in part 2...

With that, the big screen turned off, transforming the world back into prose format. "In the next episode of BGX:FF," Rick announced in an overly dramatic voice, "Demond is a goon, Rena is inane, the plot limps along and the motorcycle suit remains the most interesting character by far."

"Your predictions are bold ones, Rick," Tsuneo smirked. "But I suspect that they will also prove to be entirely correct."

"That's assuming there is more of the fic," Rebecca noted. "Because so far we've got a pretty poor track record with BGC fics."

"How so?" Dan asked.

"BGC Next Gen Aftermath, Tech Wars and Blasts from the Past," she counted off on the fingers on her good hand. "All three of which ended after overly long and in two cases forced set-ups and character introductions without ever actually getting anywhere."

"Good point," Tsuneo considered. "I hadn't noticed that, but at the same time, there's a pretty clear pattern."

"And we've had an overly-long set-up," Rick observed. "And we've spent forever on introducing new characters. Not that I expect Demond will ever get any depth of personality or character beyond 'rargh, me evil.'"

"But at the same time, we've gotten further than any of those fics," Dan offered. "Because what passes for the plot seems to actually be in motion now. Hell, I'm not even sure if Tech Wars had a plot beyond show how awesome the new characters are."

"Awesome and inadvertently creepy," Rebecca added.

"That too," he noted.

"So how about it, Voice?" Rick glanced up at the ceiling. "We getting the rest of this fic or is it review time already?"

"Actually, the fic is complete," the Voice spoke up.

"Amazing," Rebecca said. "And against all probability too."

"So I assume that we'll be seeing more of it next time then?" Dan asked.

"That is correct," The Voice explained. "I have the second and final chapter lined up for next review."

"Which means two things," Rick grinned. "The first is that we get to see just how much of a goon Demond actually is. Me, I'm betting he's in the mega-Goon category. Hell, I think he could wind up rivaling Shrapnel for sheer goonishness."

"That is impressive," Tsuneo replied. "And the second?"

"That we're done here for today!" Rick finished as he stood.

"Even better," Rebecca laughed as she joined him. "Because I've had enough fic for one day, dead, alive, complete or whatever else."

"Of course, this all beggars one question," Tsuneo considered as he and Dan stood. "What is the most incomplete fic we've had so far?"

"Solaris Jokers wins it for me," Dan offered. "I mean, it basically was a chunk of ultimately redundant backstory and intro that could have been dropped or folded into the main plot or whatever else. Not only was it incomplete and only a prelude, but it didn't even need to exist."

"I can see fair grounds for that," Rick agreed. "See, while we also had that Zoids Genesis fic that was also an intro, I guess the idea of that one was less 'lead in to a fic that never happened' as it was 'messaging with an idea.' If there is a fic from that, then it's a bonus."

"So what do you think happened to the rest of that fic?" Tsuneo asked.

"No idea," Rebecca grinned back. "Maybe some guy called Rick just said he hated it or something."

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Author's notes:

When we began drawing up plans for restarting Elmer Studios, one of the first things we did was begin to pick out fics that we especially liked and would make good subjects for "rebuilt"s. BGC:FF topped the list for a number of reasons, key among them was that it was a strong favorite of both writers. It's definitely one of those fics that is enjoyably rather than offensively bad, and has more to laugh at than to be angry about.

And hey, it's short and complete, both of which are huge bonuses.

Bubblegum Crisis created by Artmic/Youmex

Bubblegum Climax Feeefall written by GeoClimber (at) aol.com

Rebecca Bartley and Rick R. Mortis created by Rick R. (natch)  
Tsuneo Tateo and Dan created by Zogster

Questions? Comments? Complaints? Dead robots? Email us at [elmerstudios00 \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:elmerstudios00@gmail.com) and register your Jeff.

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<http://www.heavens-feel.com/elmer/>  
All of Elmer Studios' MSTings, random DELTA Invasion Episode Generator and other stuff in one spot

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> After the Knight Sabers are taken care of, nobody will be able to stop me. Victory will just be a matter of  
> time. "And I have all the time in the world. Ha, ha, ha . . ." Demond laughed sinisterly.