
Episode 206 – The first all-new Elmer MSTing since 2002. Or 2005. Or something.

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 what do you think it’ll be?” Rick asked as he stepped into the apartment.

“Well, after that last chapter, I could use a break from Delta.” Rebecca replied as she followed him, stopping to lean on the back of one couch. “Though after that one, I could use a break from all human contact too.”

Rick shrugged. “It was more doofy then horrific to me, but I can see where you’re coming from. Maybe we’ll have another Transformers comic.”

“Dull surprise there.” Rebecca waved a hand. “Though it’s too early to call patterns.”

“What’s too early?” Natasha cut in as she entered, a large pack on her back. “Y’all want me to come back later?”

“Naw, you’re cool.” Rebecca shook her head. “What’s with the pack?”

“Was out shopping.” Natasha explained as she dumped the pack on the floor. “Salvage shop was having a sale on reconditioned army boots, so I thought I’d get some.”

“Pure class.” Rebecca smirked.

“Isn’t she just?” Matt added as he stepped past. “Good to see you all.”

“Likewise.” Rick smiled. “Something up?”

“Nothing really; more of Natasha’s methodology reminds me of the last place I went.”

“Oh really?” Rick raided a brow. “I’m kinda curious, actually. Been looking for ideas for my comic and all.”

“Yeah, I’m interested too.” Rebecca added.

“Well, not too long before we got started here, I finished up a long stay in a remote, far-flung world.” Matt offered, giving Rebecca a sidelong glance. “It was an... interesting experience.”

“How so?” Rick asked.

“See, these guys had just emerged from living underground after a couple of centuries and had begun to recolonise the surface of their world.” He explained. “They’d been driven under there by a devastating war and basically living in a subterranean city since then. As far as they were aware, they were the only other people on the planet.”

“Were they?” Rebecca raised a brow.

“We’d reached that conclusion too.” He nodded. “Our first survey of the planet showed us nothing; it was only the second that found them, and that was because of a twenty-year gap between sweeps.”

Even after them there were no other signs of human life.”

“Harsh.” Natasha whistled.

“It gets better.” Matt continued. “See, they had lost a lot of their culture and history and the like while under there. Kind of understandable and all, given that they had other priorities like staying alive. What was really interesting was that there was an ‘upper’ underground city that had been abandoned and badly damaged, so whatever had forced them underground had forced them to then go even further.”

“Double harsh.”

“Any idea what that was?”

Matt shrugged. “I suspect some ancient war that they’d managed to blow out of all proportion, what with their lost records and all. They speak of titanic monsters of metal and fire, striding the earth, et cetera et cetera, so I don’t put much credit to it.”

Rebecca raised a brow. “Interesting.”

“Bearing in mind that these people also have only the vaguest inclination of their broader history; they know they came from Earth but they have no idea where that is.”

“I’d be interested to know more about this world.” Rebecca added.

“I’d be interested to know more about where you last were.” Matt countered.

“Touche.”

“Sounds interesting.” Rick commented.

“Oh, it was.” Matt concluded. “If you’re into wide open spaces, the odd long-crumbled ruin, digging things out of the dirt and a fear of cybernetics that nobody wants to talk about.” He glanced at Rebecca again, who gave a small shrug.

“Maybe she stopped by to blow up one of their picturesque enigmatic ruins.” Rick offered.

“Could be.” Matt gave a smirk.

“So what do you do?” Rick asked, turning to Natasha. “I mean, you said you work in salvage, but I was curious as to if you have any specialties.”

She gave it a moment of thought. “Well, I do a lot of underwater recovery, diving through flooded cities and the like in my sexy swimsuit.”

“Can I get details?” Rick was rather eager as he took out his sketchbook.

“Well, as sexy as a forty-ton reconditioned aquatic warfare frame can be.” She laughed. “Big, slow, clunky, sometimes leaky... lots of fun. But it’s what I’m good at.”

“Sounds interesting. Your planet got an abundance of underwater cities?” Matt asked.

“Not by design. Mainly flooded ones or ones that were on reclaimed land or artificial islands or the like.” Natasha explained. “Apparently centuries ago we were a wealthy and prosperous trading world. Nowadays, we just got some impressive abandoned cities, both above and under water... and some which are between the two.”

“But no, say, legends of ‘titanic monsters of metal and fire, striding the earth’ or the like?” Rebecca

needed

"Not that I've heard, no."

"And no unreasonable fears of, say, cybernetics."

"Never met anyone with any." Natasha finished.

"Interesting." Rebecca glanced at Matt, and gave a dismissive shrug. "Just making comparisons."

"Sure. Of course you were." His tone spoke of an effort to feign belief.

"It is an interesting point to raise." The Voice cut in. "But not that relevant."

"And morning to you, Straxus." Rebecca cut in. "How's it going?"

"Well, I'm glad to see you all here." The Voice replied, not betraying a hint of emotion. "I have a new fic for you today."

"So the B-Team don't get the Delta Experience?" Rick sounded genuinely disappointed.

"Today I have something else." Voice offered. "Today we have a Zoids fic called the 'Tale of Yurei and Lance'."

"Which will be about two gratuitous self-inserts in a world of giant plastic dinosaurs." Rebecca commented.

"Sounds fantastic." Matt added. "And I have no doubt that it will be a cinematic masterpiece."

"Really?" Natasha asked as she clambered onto the couch, the others following her.

"No, not at all." Matt finished. "Hit it, Voice."

The big screen switched on, swapping the proceedings over to script format.

> Thought I might as well post this here,

Matt: No need to on our account.

Natasha: Oh come on, it's just getting started. No need to be that harsh.

Matt: After that comic, I'm not taking any chances.

> this is a fic a friend of mine and I have been beta-ing together

Rick [Snake]: Oh no! Beta!

Natasha: Yeah, they were *Tread*ing the fic.

Rebecca: Oooh, nice and obscure.

> (co-writing), we haven't worked on it in a long time but posting it here now might give it some new
> life.

Matt: Or at least end with it lurching off across the landscape as an undead horror.

> Originally it was posted on aff.net,

Rebecca: aff.net; home to the malformed throwbacks that even ff.net rejects.

> it isn't anywhere near finished but I hope you enjoy what we have so far.

Natasha: If we don't, do we get our money back?

> If you like it i'll poke Lance into helping me write some more.

Matt: Again, no need to on our account.

> Please feel free to review ^ _ ^;

Rick [Gives a thumbs up]: It stinks!

> For the most part the odd chapters are done by me and the evens by Lance. Our two styles are
> clearly different to me, but may be less so to others...

Natasha: The blind, the illiterate and bacon sandwiches rate high on that list.

> Disclaimer: Tomy owns zoids and all that shizzle. Not us. Don't we wish? So yeah, don't sue us
> cause, well at least i'm poor...

Rebecca: If you owned Zoids, odds are you'd be poorer now.

> -----

> The Beginning of a Legend

Natasha: In the time before Monkey, primal chaos reigned. The four worlds formed again and again...

> Authors' Notes:

> This is a tale, not about any of the actual anime characters

Rebecca: Not of sight, not of sound, but of crap.

> but of our own fan fic characters we have played extensively on 3 RPGs,

Matt: Well *that* bodes well.

> they have become somewhat of a legend.

Rick: A legend in their own lunchtime

Rebecca: Yeah, if you're lucky, you might become a "oh my god it's terrible" legend like Tom Dyrone.

> This is a team effort between Yurei Avalon and Lance Asakura,

Rebecca: That's one.

Matt: What are you counting?

Rebecca: Internet role-play clichés. They've already got Japanese names, which is the first. I fully expect them both to have improbable tragic pasts and at least one of them to carry sword and/or have a nonsensical animal companion.

> the story of their lives in the zoids world on the Planet of

Rick: Zoidstar!

Rebecca: Somehow I doubt it.

Rick: So we won't have any witty banter and interesting observations from Zetton and Zunder?

Rebecca: No

Rick: And no Namer naming things?

Rebecca: Again, sadly no

> Zi, of their struggles and victories, hopes and agonies as they overcame some impossible
> situations.

Matt: The struggle to fold a fitted sheet.

Rick: The nightmare of peak-hour traffic

Rebecca: The desperate horror of finding there's no toilet paper.

Natasha: The impossible search for pants. [The others look at her] Hey! It happens!

> The storyline makes the most sense if you were a member of these RPGs

Natasha: And even then I doubt it.

> and were actually involved in the making of this,

Matt: Names have been changed to protect identities. Those involved in the making of this fic are now in Witness Protection.

> but to those who are not familiar with it we do hope you enjoy

> our months of work and come to find these characters life like,

[They all snigger]

> because to us they are.

Matt [Pinocchio]: I'm a real boy now!

> Please stay with us for what will most likely be a long story, read and review. The story may have

> some intense scenes

Rick: Like this INTENSE INTRODUCTION ACTION!

> and graphic moments;

Natasha: When you put an image into a Powerpoint presentation, is that a graphic moment?

> hopefully it will be fully appreciated here for what it is.

Natasha: A bacon sandwich?

Matt: That's twice now and we're still in the intro.

Natasha: I like bacon sandwiches!

> And now, as do all things, our journey begins.

Rick: It is too late for the pebbles to vote.

> ~Lance Asakura and Yurei Avalon~

> Word Key:

Matt: "Up" means "potato"; "hello" means "my god is lettuce"; "purple" means "purple"

Rick: So if we run the intro through that, we get... [squints] Gabriel is at Odessa! I knew it!

Natasha: What does that mean?

Rick: I have no idea.

> ZBC = Zoids Battle commission

> NBD = Neo Back Draft

Rebecca: New and Improved Backdraft now with twice the Elephanders and Active Enzymes!

> Jaguars or Smoke Jaguars = A large mercenary team known as the Smoke Jaguars.

Natasha: Hey! You leave the Smoke Jaguars out of this.

Rebecca: Sympathy for a faction who's idea of "riot control" was orbital bombardment?

Natasha: Nobody deserves to be in this.

> Chapter One

Matt: Chapter one, audience nil. Manchester nothing.

> Sighing heavily she shrugged her shoulders to adjust the sword digging uncomfortably into her back

Rebecca: Ding, and that's two. And we're only on the first line of actual fic.

> as her feet tramped along the dusty road,

Natasha [Muttered]: Walk across the desert and not bring any sensible shoes. What was I thinking?

> bringing her deeper into the Zoids Battle Commission Territories.

Rick: This is Zabat country. We can't stop here.

> She'd been traveling for weeks now

Matt: Would that make her a... MegaTraveller?

> to get to the heart of the fairly new colonies,

Rebecca: Where a new life awaits her, no doubt.

Rick: Especially if she flies Pan Am to get there.

> to where she would hopefully be safe.

> As her too thin figure kicked up dust on the desert road,

Matt: Given that this is an internet role-play character, I'd imagine her build could best be described as "stick figure with basketballs strapped to her chest"

> she was dimly aware of the black wolf panting beside her as he trotted along,

Rebecca: ...sword and improbable animal companion. [Rubs her forehead] Yep, this is gonna hurt.

> nose practically dragging on the ground.

Matt [Sniffs the air] Smells like Snausages!

> She flashed him an absent smile, clucking at him.

Natasha: Who's the chicken now, dog?

> "Just three more kilos until the bar they told us about Maru Sithan..."

Rick [Guttural]: Good thing too. This is hellish out here. No trees on the prairie.

Rebecca: "Maru Sithan" is either somebody's horrible Star Wars Sue or the result of mashing a keyboard. And I don't know what's worse.

> Her boots crunched loudly on the hard packed, wind scoured ground as they walked, sweat had
> long ago turned her hair thoroughly damp and her black silk pants and shirt stuck badly to her.

Rebecca: Wearing black in a desert? Lady, you deserve to die of dumb.

Matt: You wear black.

Rebecca: Black is chic for the city. In a post-apocalyptic wasteland I pick light colours and materials that breathe easily.

> She

> cursed under her breath as she shifted her heavy cloak over her head to shade herself better.

Rick: Black clothes, heavy cloak. Did she want to throw on a sweater and leather heels while she was at it?

> She

> hadn't counted on walking nearly fifteen kilometers from the zoid shop she'd stopped at when her
> old scrap heap had died.

Natasha: She'd put a bullet through the head of an old washing machine. It was the only kind thing to do.

> But she'd had no choice, she couldn't get the thing going and she'd die if
> she waited in the desert for a ride.

Matt: The irony is, just after she set off, Lord Humongous swung by and was gonna offer a lift.

> So she'd been forced to walk the distance to the nearest zoid
> shop and try and buy herself a new ride with the last of her meager funds.

Rick: All she has is a buck-twenty in pocket change and some *yens*

Matt: You could still probably buy all the Brave Jaguars you could ever want with that.

> She was disheartened to

> find there was nothing in her price range aside from a

Natasha: Box of one dozen starving, crazed weasels.

Rebecca [Yurei]: Okay, I'll take that.

> scout fox model, which also wouldn't be in for

> another five days. Terrific.

Natasha: ...is it too early for another Albuquerque riff?

Rebecca: This whole intro is an Albuquerque riff

> So she'd been forced to pay for it ahead of delivery,

Matt: Nice doing business with you, sucker.

Rick [Yurei]: What was that?

Matt: Sucker. Want one? Get one free with purchase.

Rick [Yurei]: Sure thing!

Matt: Here you go, you big maroon.

Rick [Yurei]: What did you call me?

Matt: Maroon. The Zoid is maroon.

Rick [Yurei]: Okay then!

Matt: Dumbarse.

Rick [Yurei]: Say what?

Matt: We have an old Evil Pegasus out the back, but you don't want it. Got belly flopped by a King Gojulas.

Rick [Yurei]: Okay, now you're just mocking me, aren't you?

> and then had to walk
> fifteen kilometers to the nearest anything that resembled civilization, and the shop keeper had told
> her that was a

Rick: A tiny little survivalist community in rural New Zealand, about to be squashed by a giant armoured truck

Rebecca: Obscure and I like it.

> rinky dink old mercenary bar

Rick: That bar may look like a mess, but those scars were earned in battle. It's a seasoned, well-travelled mercenary bar.

> and a few sleazy shops and an even sleazier motel.

Natasha: The cheap hookers had to move out; they got too many complaints from the rats and roaches.

> *****

> It was late afternoon when she finally saw it.

Matt: I see a whale! A white whale!

> Her traveling companion gave a weary yip

Rick: Relief at last!

> and circled around the building ahead of her to check to see if it was safe for her to enter

Matt: And to scavenge through the bins. Last night was drunken fry-up night!

> before joining her as
> she pushed open the wooden door, shaking the sand out of her cloak from the dust storms and
> entered.

Rick: We don't serve your type in here.

Rebecca [Yurei]: Hey! Where the wolf goes, I go!

Rick: I meant you. The diseased fleabag can come in, but we don't want any Mary Sues lowering the tone of the place.

> The door protested almost as much

Matt: The door doth protest too much, methinks.

> as the drunken patrons as she brought in the cold night air with
> her into the stifling bar, cutting through the room with a similar effect to a dagger.

Rebecca: That's when she realised her mistake. She'd walked into a gay mercenary bar.

> As the old
> fashioned oak planked door shut behind her she pushed her long silver braid under her black cloak,
> effectively hiding it and any other tell tale signs of her heritage,

Natasha: Silver braid's a giveaway to her past? Do they not like Swedish people here?

Rebecca: Naw, but it's probably a part of her generic improbable tragic past, which means we're three

for three without any actual dialogue.

> in case they were around.

Matt: You never know when a family crest or a hereditary medical disorder may be about to sneak up on you.

> She sat down at a wall table, partially in shadow to help keep her features indistinguishable.

Rick: If you're trying to be inconspicuous, then you're failing so hard.

Rebecca: "Sitting in a corner of the bar and looking mysterious?" Damn it, what is this? RPG cliché city?

> The

> wolf meanwhile has swept in under the hem of her cloak like a black shadow,

Matt: Except it didn't clear the lawyers, and had to contend with being a Sky Shadow.

Rebecca: Moderate obscurity. Ten points.

> ensconcing himself

> under the table. The only sign of him was an occasional flash of amber eyes and a barely audible

> growl if anyone came too close to his mistress.

Matt: This might sound stupid, but why is anyone letting a wolf a bar? It's a wild animal; it's going to piss on the floor and chew on the furniture.

Rick: Two theories.

Matt: I'm interested.

Rick: First is that this is a bad-arse mercenary bar and they feel it adds ambience.

Matt: Interesting thought, but what's your second idea?

Rick: It's a terrible fanfic and the laws of logic don't apply.

> Walker, I do not like it here...

Rick: Well if they get too rowdy, Chuck Norris will just spin-kick them all into order.

> His mental voice was soft, barely a whisper in her mind as the wolf

> clearly expressed his concern for his caretaker.

Natasha: Wait, what? It's a telepathic wolf now? Where the hell does that come from? [Glances around] there's no precedent for that in Zoids canon, is there?

Matt: Please say no. It'd be too stupid for words.

Rick: Well, there's no precedent for there being actual fluffy wolf-wolfs, as opposed to giant robot ones at all, let alone a telepathic one.

Rebecca: So we're now dealing with a level of special snowflake that defies all logic. I fully expect her to be a lost princess by the time this is over.

> She bent down to stroke his ears for a moment before whispering to him.

Natasha [Seductive]: Snausages

> "As well as I am not comfortable here, but this is the only place to go for now. Sit tight Maru, it's only
> for a few days."

Matt: That's the sort of 'famous last words' that are the last anyone sees of you. Well, until someone finds your skeleton years later.

> She sat back, calling for a soda with what little money she had left,

Rick: Fanfic discussion! Genuine attempt at a reference to Zoids Fuzors, or just a stupidly out of place and inappropriate choice?

Matt: Inappropriate.

Natasha: Inappropriate.

Rebecca: Inappropriate.

Rick: And that's it for fanfic discussion for this week.

Rebecca: Wait, you can call for Fanfic discussion?

Rick: Tsuneo said I could if he's not around.

> her half starved figure making her seem like a wraith in the dim light, otherworldly and unreal.

Natasha: Someone get a bacon sandwich into her, stat!

> With a snarl and a curse she suddenly drove a dagger into the table, point first

Matt: Hey Yurei, do the thing with the knife.

> and complained about having to wait five god damned days for a god damned zoid

Rebecca: Having a cooling off period before you're allowed to purchase military hardware. It's like they're trying to stop you from running out in a hundred-ton giant robot dinosaur with lasers or something.

> and god damned the ZBC this and that

Natasha [Yurei]: Damn their rules and their regulations and everything!

> until she attracted the attention of a man at one of the tables.

Rick: He was a mercenary man, on a laser mission.

> She hadn't meant to draw attention to herself; in fact she tried to avoid it due to the circumstances
> that had pushed her into a mercenary life.

Rebecca: So here's a hint; if you're trying to avoid attention then maybe, just maybe, walking around in all black with a sword on your back, a wolf at your side and sitting in the dark corner of a bar while talking to said wolf is not the way to do it.

Rick: Maybe this is like the bizzaro universe where such things don't apply. Maybe by wearing drab colours, carrying a sensible sidearm and keeping goldfish, you stand out in the crowd.

Rebecca: Sad part is, by Internet RP logic, you're right.

> Being a lone woman traveling was dangerous, and she
> was instantly defensive as he came over to her table, her hand going to her belt warily.

> "Evening Miss... I hear you complaining about not having a zoid right now.

Matt: You know, I think that's about the worst pick up line ever. At least, the worst that doesn't involve Pokemon.

> If you want you can borrow a rev raptor of mine for now,

Rick: Rev Rapter, the Zoids equivalent of your dad's rusty old Valiant.

> we can sit down and work out the details if you'd like." She
> studied the man warily for a moment, before dropping her hand onto the table, removing the dagger
> she had stuck in the wood in her frustration.

[Matt and Rick cross their legs]

> "What's your name stranger...?"

Rebecca: Wrong use of "you're", but it's not the usual wrong use. Not sure what to make of that.

> Her voice was slightly hoarse from her sudden outbreak of a few minutes ago.

> She continued to study his broad shouldered form while she waited for an answer. "Dale
> Sabrehaven.

[They all giggle]

Rick: Is this fic going to be a stupid names contest or something?

Rebecca: It makes me miss the subtlety of Snake, Killa and Master T.

> And yours?" She grudgingly lowered her eyes as she pushed back her chair and stood
> up.

> "Yurei Avalon.

Matt: And we get name-drop about a dozen pages in.

Natasha: I guess we just assumed it was her.

Rebecca: I'd bloody well hope so. I'd hate to think there was somebody else in the fic with as many
checklist Mary Sue traits.

> Of... it's not important.

Matt: Not hiding anything, at all.

Natasha: Hells no.

> What's this you said about a rev raptor?" She followed him

Rick: I think it's a metaphor for something. Like, 'you wanna go back to my room and check out my
Rev Raptor'.

> back to his table as she sat down, calling for another drink. Her wolf remained in his vantage point
> under her table across the room.

Matt [Guttural]: I watch you when you sleep.

> "I said you can borrow it for a couple of matches, provided you pay for any damages from battle of
> course."

Matt: Now I don't know about you, but I'd be wary of lending my giant robot dinosaur to somebody
I'd just met in a skeezy bar who is blatantly hiding something from me.

> She nodded and considered it for a moment, just a bit of light hitting her violet eyes and
> illuminating them.

Rebecca: Violet... eyes. Not actually on my list, but they're a bonus. Maybe I should be thankful that
they're both the same colour.

> She was about to give him an answer when her pager beeped.

Rick: It's to remind her to change over the laserdisks that she's encoding and putting on her zip drive.

> Sighing she

> opened a pouch and removed it, irritated to see it was the shop she had just walked from.

> Excusing herself she sat at a nearby table, where to her extreme annoyance she learned her scout
> fox had come in early, and she could pick it up any time.

Natasha [Yurei]: Damn them for being efficient, fast and helpful!

> Cursing again she thrust the pager back into her bag,

Rebecca [Yurei, villainous]: Soon, pager. Soon your time will come. Soon, you will rue the day you beeped me!

Rick: Nice Grey Deleslie there.

Rebecca: I've been practicing.

> sighing she let her head rest in her hands for a moment, a few tendrils of silver hair

> drifting down to the table.

Rebecca: Inconspicuous!

Matt: I think that this girl could write a book on how to get attention easily.

Rebecca: She'd never have made it through training where I work.

Matt: And where do you work? [Raises a brow]

Rebecca: Depends; where do you? [Smirks]

> She'd have to walk back there in the morning. In the mean time she'd

> better find herself a room in the roach coach motel across the way.

Natasha: And they charge by the hour. Extra for the dog.

Rick: Worst part is, when she wakes up in the morning the place will be surrounded by badly animated birds.

> Saying goodbye absently to the Sabrehaven man

Rick [Signing]: I am the Saberhaven man; that is what I am. I am the Saberhaven man, I have the master plan.

> she got up and left, the wolf darting out the door

Rick [Saberhaven]: Nice arse, but pity about the company they keep.

Matt [Gruff]: I'll say. A nice wolf like that shouldn't hang out with a horrible Mary Sue.

> behind her as she stepped into the cool night air, the stars bright in the desert. She wasn't aware of

> the eyes that followed her out of the bar...

All: DUN DUN DUN!

> Chapter Two

Matt: Electric boogaloo

Rebecca: Really?

Matt: It's a classic.

> Lance arrived in ZBC Territories and looked around his training was already deducing areas and

> whether or not they were safe much as it was to his distaste.

Rebecca: Well... now I'm conflicted. On one hand, our co-author has a terrible case of the run-on sentence. On the other hand, he's covered in that one sentence what would take the first author half a page.

> Heading down the main street of the

> town he was currently in he frowned and wondered when the Omnious Captain would respond.

Rick: Captain Ominous was a pre-Crisis DC villain who could create fear waves with his Ominous Staff. He was killed off in a random house-cleaning, but came back in Blackest Night as a super-powered Zombie.

Matt: Worst part is that I can't tell if you're making that up or not.

> "Excuse Mr. Asakura is it?"

> Lance spun around weapon nearly drawn only to see the legendary Vincent Fury of the Smoke
> Jaguar Clan.

Matt [Lance]: Who are you and what do you want?

Rick [Vincent]: Surely you have heard of me. Vincent Fury, a friend of the oppressor, a champion of evil.

Matt [Lance]: No, I've never heard of you. Now what do you want?

> Lance studied him for a moment as was his usual way of things and responded carefully.

Rick: [Long pause] Great!

> "Yah I'm Asakura but call me Lance."

Natasha: Lance Asakura, cousin to Glaive Takahashi and Bec de Coubin Yamazaki.

> Vincent nodded and said.

> "Very well Lance I noted that you were trying to join Omnious."

Rick: Aka, Team No Evil Plans.

Natasha: Who's their boss, Shinnok?

Rick: Good one.

> "Yah what's your point?"

Rebecca: None. He just likes stating the obvious, really.

> "Why not join the Jaguars instead we are so much better then those fools and I am sure a pilot of
> your potential couldn't turn down the possible access to the extensive base and hanger."

Matt: And breathe.

Rebecca: They also have a great dental plan!

> Lance considered it for a moment and said.

> "All right I will join the Jaguars then."

Matt [Lance]: I mean, I already had my heart set on joining some other team and was ready to meet their leader when a total stranger approached me in the street and give me a one-sentence pitch with absolutely no actual substance to it. However, I'm perfectly ready to go with this person who I met just minutes ago based on very little evidence. It's the dental plan that got me.

Rick [Vincent, Evil] Yes! Dental!

> Vincent handed him a communicator which also showed the location of Jaguar Base and said.

> "Keep this on you or else the base defenses will fire on you the base is only 2.5 kilometers
> southeast of here,

Matt: Two and a half kilometres away? Now I'm no expert, but unless there's a sudden, unexpected and very small mountain range in the middle, wouldn't that put the entire town in range and line of sight of their defences?

Natasha: They do accidentally incinerate the odd local, but you get used to it after a while.

> I expect to see you when you are ready."

Rick [Vincent]: I mean, I've just given access to a complete stranger whom I just met on the street, including a way to bypass our defences and an invitation to walk in through our otherwise heavily defended front door. I'm sure that nothing can go wrong with any of this.

Natasha: This has been two idiots negotiating.

> With that Vincent left and headed to a nearby Whale King with the Jaguar symbol.

Rebecca: Using a three hundred meter-long flying aircraft carrier to commute two and a half clicks to town? Sounds like a reasonable use of resources to me.

Matt: I bet he doesn't even separate his recyclables.

> Lance pocketed the communicator and then entered the bar

Matt: Of all the bars in all the RPGs on all the Internets, why'd you have to walk into mine?

> and sat down across from a woman grumbling about a

> zoid and noted that Dale had responded.

Natasha: And at last, the plots intersect. Thank you, narrative!

> Lance had only known Sabrehaven for a short while but

> never the less realized the man was an experienced pilot who was quite good.

Rebecca: If you get my drift.

> After Dale had talked to her for a moment

Matt [Yurei]: Have I mentioned how amazingly enigmatic I am yet?

> she got a call and left the bar off on some errand or something from what Lance could guess.

Rick: She had to go defrost her freezer. Shoulda got a frost-free.

[There is a quiet ding]

Rick: Hmm, wonder what that was.

> "Interesting woman..."

Natasha: It's almost like fate will bring them together or something.

> Ordering a drink Lance considered what he should do as Vincent and Meka entered the bar

Natasha: Who's that meant to be?

Rebecca: I'm guessing some character we're supposed to know from the crappy RPG boards that spawned this fic.

> and sat

> at the table Lance was at. A conversation started up right after that and soon one of the many fights

> in the bar began to start up

Matt [Shouting]: Pay no attention to the melee! Now where were we?

Natasha [Shouting]: The existential nature of Meka's existence!

> though what it was about Lance had no clue nor did he care.

Matt: Violence is okay when it happens to people you don't know.

Rick: Well. That last chapter not only was a shocking change of tone and pace, but had an almost Deltaesque quality to it.

Rebecca: On the other hand, it was also a lot shorter. I want more like it.

> Chapter Three

Rick: And back to Yurei. Damn.

> She took one look at the motel and decided she would rather sleep in a gutter.

Matt: Good idea! After all, filthy, disease-ridden alcoholic bums can't be wrong, can they?

> There was no way she was about to stay in one of those rooms.

Natasha [Yurei]: I mean, they only get the basic cable package and all. No way am I putting up with that level of depravation!

> Roach motel was an understatement. Not to mention

> she highly doubted the structural integrity of the thing.

Rick: I'm sure that Ben Grimm's just fine, thank you. Rock-solid, even.

> Turning with a sigh she pushed her loose silver bangs out of her face

Natasha [Yurei]: Did I mention that I have silver hair yet? I have silver hair.

Rebecca: I suspect that it'd be important if we gave a crap.

> and headed back across the street to the bar, shivering in the cold night air.

> Bright light streamed from the windows into the inky blackness, bringing with it a cheerful warmth as

> well as a wall of noise, including the sounds of shouting, drunken laughter and things breaking.

Rick: Wait, did she just walk into one of my family get-togethers?

> She

> doubted she'd get much sleep in there, even if she was lying face first in the darkest corner in the

> back with ear plugs.

Natasha: Try encasing your head in solid concrete. That works.

> With a resigned sigh she stepped onto the wooden porch, her boots thudding

> hollowly on the sagging wood, not that you could hear it over the ruckus.

Matt: Matt was annoyed by the sudden change of person and tense.

> Opening the door she stepped into chaos.

Rick: She walked in on Lady Death, Evil Ernie, Chastity and Purgatori. Not pretty.

> Without flinching she ducked a mug thrown her way, it smashed above her head against the door as

> she shut it, showering her in tiny shard of glass which she shook off like a dog. After a dull

> inspection, which would have merely brought her to an empty table as far away from the ongoing

> brawl as possible had her gaze not fallen on the cat.

> Several men were tormenting what appeared to be a cat, spitting and hissing in the corner. Her face
> contorting slightly in rage

Natasha [Yurei]: Fighting and killing each other is okay, but teasing a cat? Now you'll all pay for your Crimes with your lives!

Matt: Hey! That cat's the only source of mostly disease-free protein in town!

> Yurei drew her favored sword, the mysterious Echoes

Rebecca: Check that, mysterious and likely enigmatic and hereditary *named* sword. It's like the author saw a Mary Sue checklist and went "yeah, I can do all of that".

> and kicked over a chair as she jumped onto a table and bellowed.

Natasha [Yurei]: Okay guys, let's do this! Yurei Avalon!

Matt: How dare you besmirch the good name of Leeroy Jenkins.

Natasha: Truly, I am filled with shame.

> "HEY! Why don't you morons pick on someone your own size?!" Everything stopped. Like one entity

> all heads in the bar swiveled towards her, gawking at her.

Rick: So, keeping a low profile.

Matt: Yep.

Rick: Not drawing attention to yourself.

Matt: Uh-huh.

Rick: She has no idea, does she?

Matt: Not a clue.

> An eerie light glinted off the sword, reflected in her eyes.

Natasha: Wow, now that is cool.

Matt: What, you like this?

Natasha: Oh no! I was just looking at the throw-rug you guys got.

> Stepping forward after jumping down from the table the brawlers hastily

> cleared a path in front of her

Rick: Oh noes! We're a bunch of large, burly, rowdy badarse mercenaries carrying guns and heaven alone knows what else being threatened by one scrawny girl with a sword! What are we gonna do? I'm so scared!

> as she made her way over to the cat. Bending down she muttered

> some soothing words, checking it for injuries.

Rebecca: It then spat at her, bit her hand and tried to claw her face off.

> Her black wolf covered her rear, baring fangs and

> snarling to dissuade anyone from trying to jump her.

Matt: On the other hand, she travels with a wolf, so I suppose she's used to having fleas and animal pee all over everything.

> Satisfied the cat was well

Natasha [Yurei]: Thank god this little kitty is okay!

Matt [Mercenary]: Hey lady! Over here! I got stabbed in the guts and I think they're spilling out! I

need help!

Natasha [Yurei]: My work here is done.

> and the brawl was done she sheathed her sword despite the fact almost

> all of the combatants were well armed and calmly turned to leave, leading the cat out with her.

Rick: ...and nobody jumped her, shot her in the back, bashed her head in with a chair or left her in a shallow grave? At all?

Rebecca: That's a bit dark for you.

Rick: I know but... I just want something in this caphone fic to make a shred of sense.

Rebecca: Wow. Good thing Tsueno's not here or else his head would have exploded by now.

> Chapter Four

Matt: On the upside, it's another Lance chapter.

Natasha: "Chapter" is too strong a word. More like 'outline of a scene'

> Lance chuckled at the fight being stopped but realized that it was the same woman from earlier that

> was stopping the fight all to check and make sure a cat was all right.

Rick [Lance]: She stepped into save that kitty. She is such a wonderful and caring person.

Matt [Mercenary]: Oh gods! I think the wound's turning septic! I need help! Please!

Rick [Lance]: I wonder if she'll go out with me?

> Chortling Lance studied her for a moment as she headed to leave the bar.

Rick: Just as he thought. She's a woman.

> As went out the door Lance revised the minute

> inspection he gave her in the same way he deduced everyone noting that there was also an

> unnaturally intelligent wolf near her.

Natasha: He then revised that assessment when it began licking its balls

> Glancing at the door for a moment Lance headed out the bar and caught up to her.

> "A very interesting way to stop a fight original that's for sure."

Matt: Nobody ever threatens people with weapons! That's such an amazing idea!

> Yurei spun around her sword drawn and saw one of the people who was sitting at the bar now

> speaking to her.

> "Who the hell are you?!"

> Lance chortled for a moment as he noticed Vincent and Meka leaving the bar and heading to the

> Whale King and he said amusingly.

> "Someone who is interested in you for some strange reason.

Matt: He is strangely entranced by the bit of toast stuck in her teeth.

> Tell you what, there's a base not far

> from here if you want you can crash there as my guest I was getting ready to check in with the

> Jaguars."

Rebecca: So not only did Vincent give access to his base to the first person he came across, but he's Then okay with said person bringing a complete stranger onto the base. Security!

Matt: On the other hand, it would be rather easy to infiltrate.

Rebecca: Laughably so. Save a cat, you're in!

> Heading past her he glanced at the wolf for a moment and chuckled as he headed over to a black
> Hel digunner.

Natasha: Haha! I'm going to make a hat out of it!

> Opening the cockpit canopy he climbed into the zoid and said as the cockpit canopy
> was getting ready to close.

Rick [Lance]: Come with me if you want to – argh! It's slammed shut on my hand! Can someone open this damned thing? It hurts!

> "That is unless you'd like a sleazy place to stay

Natasha: Hey! This is a nice place. By my standards.

> but from the way you speak and look around at this place I would think not."

Rebecca: Her arrogance and attitude is alluring to him

> Yurei scowled for a moment but suddenly realized something.

Rick: My sword is made out of cheese!

> "I don't have a zoid until I go pick it up in the morning;

Matt: The postman left her a note on the doorstep. Truth is, he was just too lazy to bring it around.

> you'll have to give me a ride to the base, then back to the zoids shop."

Rebecca: They've only just met and already she's bossing him around. I can see who wears the in-character pants in this imaginary relationship.

> He

> nodded his assent as she crammed in after him. Maru hopped in after with an unnaturally high leap

Rebecca: Great. Now the fleabag's got super-powers too

> and then said to her in his calm mental voice.

Rick: Cerebro?

Matt: Magneto.

> Walker are you sure we can trust this one?

Rick: They should know better then to mess with Chuck Norris.

> Yurei snorted for a moment

Rick: Yurei's snorting something? That explains a lot.

> and then said to Maru with a distasteful, murmured voice as she

> crunched down in Lance's Hel digunner which was moving at a good pace for the short zoid it was.

Rebecca: Hold on, I've found another RP cliché. Spending more time talking with an NPC under the players' control then with other people.

> "Let's face it Maru our cash is low and if he is telling the truth we can actually sleep in comfort for
> once and maybe get some free meals god knows a base probably is stocked full of things. "

Matt: Our heroine, the freeloading bum

> Lance opened his communicator and identified himself and the automated turrets of the base never
> came up and blasted them but remained where they were. Maru looked around with a worried look
> and responded.

> Walker bu.....

> "No butts Maru. We trust him for now, only the heavens know how much this offer could mean to us
> if he is telling the truth.

Rebecca: So far, the talking wolf is the smartest person in the fic. That's distressing.

> Maybe we can join these Jaguars as well and make some money more easily."

Matt: It'd be hard to get through the tortuous selection criteria.

Rick [Vincent]: Who are you?

Natasha [Yurei]: Someone.

Rick [Vincent]: Why do you want to join the team?

Natasha [Yurei]: To mooch money

Rick [Vincent]: What can you bring to the team?

Natasha [Yurei]: I have a talking wolf.

Rick [Vincent]: You're in.

> Maru snorted but said nothing a massive pair of doors slid opened and the zoid walked in and Yurei
> could feel the doors close behind and the elevator start taking them to the main hanger of the base.

Rick: There were two guys on a couch going in the other direction.

> Entering the massive hanger the zoid was directed to a parking spot

Matt: Being the jerk that he is, he left his Zoid in a disabled spot.

> and Lance could already see

> that the ZBC provided him with a Gustav since he was a registered pilot there; obviously the Jaguar
> base took care of transporting it. Parking his Heldi Gunner by the Gustav he turned off the zoid and
> climbed out of it and waited for Yurei.

Natasha: -to post the next chapter.

> Chapter Five

Rick: Is alive!

> Jumping down from the low built zoid easily, the wolf following she grudgingly gave her thanks.

Rebecca [Yurei]: People trying to help me are jerks!

> "Heh I guess I owe you one...

Matt [Han Solo]: That's two you owe me!

> the prospect of walking another fifteen kilos in the morning on already sore feet did not thrill me,

Natasha: Still too early for another Albuquerque riff?

Rebecca: I wish we were listening to Albuquerque right now. On an infinite loop. Forever.

> although had I had a second party I might have taken up that mercenary's offer."

Rick: So from what I can gather, in this fic, people make huge decisions at a moment's notice based on a few words of conversation.

> Studying the base carefully she followed him down the hall,

Matt: Acting casual while the Stormtroopers walked the other way.

> their boots echoing off the metal passageway.

Rick: The old man downstairs is complaining about the noise.

> "So where the hell are the quarters for pilots? I suppose I should join up if they'll take me, no where else to be at the moment." She ignored the regretful pang she got from the truth behind this statement.

Rebecca [Yurei]: I have backstory angst!

> Instead she unconsciously checked the male pilot out.

Natasha [Yurei]: Mmm, nice rear.

Rick [Lance]: What was that?

Natasha [Yurei]: Your Heldigunner. It has a nice rear-mounted gun.

Rick [Lance]: Oh. I thought you said...

Natasha [Yurei]: I am mysterious! [mimes running off]

> He led her down the hall and showed her to a room. "These are the rookie quarters..."

Natasha: You will sleep with the other low-ranked scum.

> he wore a rather amused grin.

Rebecca: A rather amused grin with that tie? Fashion disaster.

> Opening the door for her he flicked on the light to reveal the spare quarters.

> She set her small bags down and frowned. Could be worse she supposed.

Matt: It's not too bad. You get bread and water once a day and they change the straw every week.

> Suddenly remembering something she turned to face him before he could leave. "What did you say your name was...?"

Rebecca: You bought this girl into your heavily defended lair of evil and only now do you ask her name? Security!

Matt: I have a suspicion that you could get in there by simply claiming to be a pizza boy.

Rick: Wouldn't the automated defences incinerate you?

Matt: You call ahead

> Her eyes narrowed slightly at his almost arrogant expression. At least it seemed arrogant to her.

Matt: Yurei calling someone arrogant is like...

Rick: Pat Lee calling somebody an embezzling jerk?

Matt: Works.

> “You can call me Lance like everyone else, Miss...?”

Rebecca: Yurei Amber Flores Picard-Avalon.

> She scowled fiercely now, not trusting him all that much since he hadn't given her his last name as
> well.

Natasha: If you have trust issues, then don't go with someone you don't know to their secret
subterranean lair!

> “Avalon.... Yureian Avalon...” she said her name hesitantly, dropping her haughty demeanor,
> almost as if she was afraid of something.

Rebecca [Yurei]: Backstory angst!

> He shrugged slightly, stepping out into the hallway. “I'll meet you in the lounge in the morning Miss
> Avalon, then we'll go pick up your zoid.” She nodded, and then pulled the door shut quickly, the wolf
> berating her all the while silently.

Natasha: I'm worried that the wolf might be one of us.

> Shrugging she found the small, sterile looking bathroom and gratefully peeled off her grimy clothes,
> tossing them at a droid to be automatically cleaned by the morning.

Rick: The droid stole her underwear and re-sold them to a Japanese vending machine company. No
malice or anything, it's programmed to do that. Between you and me, that's how they paid for the
elaborate lair.

> Turning on the shower she got
> a large cloud of steam going, and stepped in and sighed with pure pleasure as the hot water
> washed the grit out of her hair and off her skin.

Natasha: Probably shed half her serious lack of weight right there.

> Twenty or so minutes later she stepped out, vigorously drying her hair with a towel and then slipped
> on a fine silk night shirt from her pack, one of her few decent possessions left. She'd been forced to
> sell the rest to eat.

Rebecca: I'm gonna probably sound like an idiot for saying this, but maybe she should have sold that
heavy cloak of hers if she was gonna tromp across the desert.

Rick: How about selling the huge enigmatic sword? That'd have to be worth a few.

Rebecca: True, but it's probably also vital to her backstory angst.

> Banishing that thought from her head she slid into bed, snuggling down beside the wolf and
> switched off the lamp.

Matt: That's be unpleasant, lying in bed next to some smelly, hair, flea-ridden animal.

Natasha: Poor talking wolf.

> Sleeping peacefully for a few hours she was fairly rested, but like always the
> nightmares came back. Sitting up in bed with a silent scream she panted for a few moments, caked
> in a cold sweat like always. She's seen his face...

Rebecca: ...nightmares of her tragic past, check.

> Sobbing she pulled the wolf to her,

Natasha: YIPE!

> who had
> woken up at her tenseness and scooted closer, allowing her to bury her face in his fur

Matt: Mmm, ticks. They make everything better.

> and cry for a
> few minutes before she gave that up, too tired to do more and curled up in a ball, slipping into a
> dreamless sleep eventually.

Rick: Yep, generic angst all right.

Rebecca: Twenty says that something like this happens in every RP session.

> With the morning came her appointed visit with this Lance person to pick up zoid after she had
> dressed and picked up her clean clothes from the droids.

Matt [C-3PO]: I cleaned and pressed your clothes, Master Yurei. May I do anything else to aid you?

Rick: Blipple bloop bleep.

Matt [C-3PO]: How dare you say that about her, you malfunctioning little miscreant!

> Before meeting them she'd gobbled down
> what to her seemed like a feast, she'd been living off of dried food mostly for a long time now.

Natasha: Hardtack and swill. Yum.

> Dressed, fed and fairly well rested she found her way to the lounge, and stood there taken aback for
> several moments. She'd grown up in a palace and seen a lot of things,

Rebecca: Lost princess. I called it.

> but this just amazed her. It
> was like an oasis in a desert. Out in the middle of nowhere was a militaristic base, with a full lounge,
> spa, game room and anything else a pilot could want.

Matt: Oh yes. A subterranean lounge would just totally blow away a palace.

Rick: Her palace didn't have an X-Box.

> She made a silent promise to herself to spend some time in the hot tub and pool when she got
> back, a sentiment which her wolf companion would decline on no doubt, but come anyway just to be
> near her.

Matt: Mmm, wet dog smell.

Natasha: Hey, I noticed something. In the "Yurei" chapters, most of it is her inner monologue and Talking to the wolf with some added angst.

Rick: Yep.

Natasha: And the "Lance" chapters are him interacting with the world, talking to other people and moving the plot along.

Rick: Again true.

Natasha: And the "Yurei" chapters are a lot longer

Rick: Correct.

Natasha: This sounds like a one-sided deal to me.

> Lance did not keep her waiting long.

Rebecca: Regrettably, that's also what happened on their honeymoon.

> As soon as he appeared in the lounge she joined him, and they
> walked back to the hanger, her wolf naturally following like a black shadow.

Rick: Or, at least, a Blue Bacchus.

- > Wincing as she
- > crammed herself back into the hel digunner along with him and the wolf

Rebecca: Here's a suggestion. Leave the flea-bag at home.

Natasha: But Yurei had to go pick up her Zoid!

Rebecca: You did that joke already.

Natasha: I did? Damn.

- > they made the ride back the
- > fifteen kilos or so to the zoid shop with a speed she would have envied yesterday when she was
- > walking across the desert.

Rick: Along the way, they stopped to laugh at a pair of Australian explorers.

- > Prying herself out she and the wolf made their way into the shop to sign the paperwork, she gave
- > them her pilot's license yet again

Matt: These guys make getting access to advanced military technology such a chore.

- > and had the combat system installed.

Rick: Stupid thing keeps crashing to desktop.

- > Heading out into the back lot she inspected her "certified pre owned" scout fox.

Rebecca: Only one owner, a little old lady who drove it to battles on Sunday.

- > With a little haggling she'd managed to get improved leg actuators,

Matt: But also had to pick up Exposed Movement System to balance it out.

Rick: Obscure.

- > but she was flat broke at the moment.

Natasha: No option. She'll have to sell Maru for medical experimentation.

- > Making sure she knew the way back to the base alright and handing her a similar communicator to
- > his he got back into his own zoid after making sure everything with hers was set and took off to do
- > whatever it was he did.

Rebecca: ...and then they freely hand out duplicate communicators as well. These "Smoke Jaguars" deserve what's coming to them.

- > Feeling somewhat better about her current state of things she got into her new zoid and set off,
- > glorying in how fast she was now crossing the desert in the fox.

Rick: Take that, Burke and Wills!

- > Returning to the base she nervously
- > watched the turrets as she entered, thankful they didn't fire on her new fox

Matt: So what say we let her think it's safe then open fire? Then go "Just kidding!"

Natasha: You crack me up.

- > and parked her zoid in the hanger, and decided it was time to go enjoy herself.

Rebecca: Time to go sit in a corner and ignore everyone.

> Chapter Six

> Lance didn't sleep well that night his dreams were once again troubled nevertheless he kept a calm
> and fully composed face with a slightly jovial smile to it so as not to draw suspicion on himself few
> knew his last name he didn't even give his true name to the Battle Commission worried that those
> that created him might still be alive.

Matt: Sentence!

Rebecca: He has traumatic flashback nightmares too? What are they going to do, out-checklist each other?

> Seeing her head to the shop the Hel digunner ran up the ramp
> of one of the Jaguar's Whale Kings the massive transport lifted off and took him to the battle-field of
> his appointed battle. Lance sat there with his arms folded he didn't go to sleep and he didn't really
> do anything as he waited.

Matt: And again!

> An hour later a buzz sounded throughout the mostly empty Whale King hanger

Rick: Okay, who let rip?

> signaling to Lance that they had arrived at the battle-field for Lance's next battle.

Rick: The team of Master T, Hellhound, Killa, Mountain Breaker, Snake and Mad Max.

> The Hel digunner shifted for a
> moment as the Whale King hanger door opened slowly allowing the bright sun to creep in.

Natasha: Wait, that's not the sun! It's a Deathsaurer!

Rebecca: In a Zoids fic? Don't tempt them.

> Then the
> transport hanger door was open the Hel digunner rocketed forward turning on its boosters and then
> leaped out.

Matt [Whistles as he looks down]: Splat.

> Free falling for forty feet the Hel digunner dived into the sand with a practiced ease
> Lance not even breaking a sweat.

Rebecca: Looking good there, eight point nine, nine point one... harsh seven point oh from the East German judge.

> His opponent arrived in a Gun Sniper and it roared its challenging call.

[Natasha makes small cat noises]

> The judge pod crashed and the battle was about to begin but something else happened
> instead.

Rick: Suddenly, there was a continuity reset! Lance woke up in a volcanic cave in Alaska.

Natasha [Fairchild]: Come with me if you want to live!

> There was a flash of a highly concentrated particle beam that thundered forward and crashed into

> the judge pod destroying it.

Matt: No fair! That Judge robot was just three days away from retirement.

> Lance already knew what it was the Hel digunner surfaced and began to

> open fire on a hellish looking dragon with three sinister heads that was covered in black armor.

Rick: Soviet Gidorah!

> Flipping on his communications he snapped.

> "Assassin, get out of here now!!!!"

Natasha: What, he wants the assassin to leave? I'm confused. Again.

> "No way Lance and lose the fight?!"

> "Forget the damn fight this is your life!!!!"

Rick: But giant robot dinosaur cockfighting is serious business!

> The Gun Sniper looked over at the destroyed judge pod

Natasha [Judge]: Tell C-3PO... I loved...

> and after one more order to leave the area from Lance hightailed it out of here

Matt [Lance]: Go get help!

Rebecca: Sure thing... sucker!

> and Lance turned his gaze back to the dragon calculating his chances.

Rick [Lance]: Well, if I bite off one of its heads, that makes it closer.

> "Ah well it was a good run..."

Rick [Lance]: We had a good show of it, didn't we random Heldigunner?

Natasha: Screw you, I'm outa here too!

> The Hel digunner opened fire on the Chaos Dragon with its back mounted AA Cannon but the shots

> had no real effect as the dragon generated a massive shield

Matt: Hm. Horrible invincible monster Zoid comes out of nowhere to obliterate the hero. I'm guessing that I'd be surprised how often it happens, right?

Rebecca: All the time.

> and gazed at the pitiful zoid and roared a massive challenging call.

Rick: FART!

Rebecca: No.

> Lance's throat went dry but he continued to fire round after round from

> the weapons that could target the dragon.

Natasha: Ineffectual fire always not works!

> When he stopped firing the smoke around the shield cleared and the dragon stood there unarmed.

Rick: Well that was a shock.

Natasha: Hey Rick, the sun came up.
Rick: No way!

- > Two of them opened their mouths and breathed
- > massive particle beam blasts the shots catching the whole field afire in a hellish place.

Rebecca: Particle beams do not work like that! Good night!

- > The Hel digunner tried to escape but the dragon swooped down at impossible speed

Natasha: Like some vast predatory bird?

Rick: That's Transformers, not Zoids.

Natasha: Oh.

Rick: Though Furman did write for the 80s English Zoids comic.

Natasha: Close enough!

- > and caught the small lizard like zoid its claws crushing into the zoid as well as the cockpit.

Matt: What is the sound of one claw squishing?

- > The dragon raised the feebly struggling Hel digunner and roared again.

Rebecca: Roar. I am evil. Roar.

- > In a last act of defiance before he was going to be
- > crushed in the dragon's teeth he set the zoid's weapons to overload

Matt [Lance]: I am saying impudence to you! And that is impudence!

- > and blacked out from injuries sustained when the cockpit was mostly crushed.

Rebecca: Fatal injuries? Please?

- > The dragon severed the power connections before
- > Lance's hasty act could be done and fired its particle beam.

Rick [Bored]: Well, no way he could survive that. [Checks watch]

Natasha: Waiting for something?

Rick: A Deus Ex Machina.

- > There was a flash of light and Lance
- > was pulled out by something and the flash of light rocketed away from the zoid

Rick: See? Called it.

- > in the direction of
- > Jaguar Base just as the dragon destroyed the Hel digunner's head melting it off with a particle beam
- > blast and then crushing the core turning it to stone.

Rebecca: Then he needed to make a Reflex save or else have his sword get stuck there for a d4 rounds.

- > Meka's organoid who had rescued Lance put him in the medical bay

Matt: So this Meka person has an organoid that can fly people to sickbay. So we now know... one thing about them.

Natasha: Is "organoid" another word for "Deus Ex Machina?"

Rick: In the Zoids anime? Hells yeah.

> where Lance was diagnosed with serious injuries his chances of survival low.

Rick: So in other words, he'll be fine.

> Lance turned his head slightly his memories hounding him.

Matt [Lance]: No mommy, I don't want to go on the pony ride! No!

> Memories of death, destruction, torture, cruelty, and just pure evil flashed through his mind

Natasha: Kindergarten was a tough time for him.

> as he lay there in the medical bed.

Matt [Lance]: Give it to me straight, Doctor, what are the odds?

Rick: Let me put it this way. Are you an organ donor?

Matt [Lance]: No.

Rick [Doctor]: Good! 'Cause they've been squished to a pulp anyway! Hah!

> Chapter Seven

Rebecca: Second-last part, kids. Let's just stay on target here.

Natasha: But it's a Yurei bit!

> Having spent the day in lavish attention at the pool Yurei was coming back from the lounge, her hair

> still damp

Natasha: What, not mentioning its colour for the billionth time?

Rebecca: You want them to?

Natasha: I... don't know.

> when she heard a commotion. Jogging down the hall she found a swarm of droids and

> medics work furiously on a flood of pilots coming in, many critically injured.

Rick: That wasn't a battle. They just had a chilli cook-off.

> She also saw a few

> sheet shrouded forms, but she ignored these as she looked around for anyone she knew,

Matt: Dead people don't matter!

> which considering she'd been in the ZBC territories only a few days numbered very few indeed.

> Having been trained under a healer at the palace back in her youth

> she was about to offer her services when she noticed one of the few familiar people lying on a bed.

Natasha [Yurei]: Why did you leave a pizza on his face.

Matt: Ma'am, that is his face.

Natasha [Yurei]: Oh. Awkward.

> Pushing her way through

> the throng of medics she came to his bed side. A strange man, badly cut up as well who looked

> vaguely familiar, she think she saw him in the bar the night before was talking to him in a low voice.

Rebecca [Yurei]: Wait, did I snub you then threaten you with a sword? Good times!

Matt: Can't... breathe... lungs filled with... urghhh...

Rebecca [Yurei]: We should do it again someday!

- > Clearing her voice nervously, and then remembering who she'd been in her past life she took on a
- > slightly arrogant aura to herself and launched into a long winded speech, which amounted to her
- > wanting to help in any way possible.

Rebecca [Yurei]: I must help sick people! And cats!

- > Flushing slightly afterwards when she realized what a pompous ass she'd made herself look like

Matt: Oh, she only realises that now?

- > she studied both their wounds, treating them as best she could

Rick: Here's a hint. Giving people heal potions doesn't work.

- > Frowning, slightly concerned she asked him how he felt.

- > "Like *Watch your language!* warmed over."

Natasha: That was... odd.

Rebecca: Auto-censoring of the archive source, or just plain stupid dialogue? Either way, it adds to the fic.

- > Was his reply, which made her laugh despite her worries.
- > Soon enough they were both laughing, which caused him some pain which sobered them
- > right up.

Matt: Hahaha. Ha. I'm dying here. Call my wife and kids. Please. The pain is unbearable!

- > "No honestly I feel better, although not great... looks like I won't be battling for a while.."

Rick: What does "massive cerebral haemorrhaging" mean?

- > Meanwhile
- > the other man, who she found out was named Vincent left to find his wife Meka, who was the
- > woman she'd seen the night before leaving as it turned out.

Matt: We now know two things, folks. Two!

Rick: Such an indulgence.

- > She blushed when she realized how
- > she'd been practically ranting at the man who was, it turned out the leader of the team she was
- > hoping to join.

Rebecca [Yurei]: Not... not gonna hold this against me at the interview, are you?

Matt [Vincent]: I have no idea who you are.

- > Shrugging off her nervousness at the awkward silence that had fallen she was relieved when the
- > wolf started with some of his antics, coming to her rescue.

Rick: Thank you, Maru. Your playful antics always make a vista of human agony and suffering so much more bearable.

Matt [Maru]: I found snausages inside a guy!

Rebecca [Yurei]: Oh you whacky dog!

- > Making plans to come visit this pilot
- > Lance again later she left, to go look at the bulletin board for battle listings she could enter.

Matt: People have died horribly in an unexpected attack. Guess it's time to go look for a fight!

> All the while the wolf was gleefully making suggestions of things she could do in her head.

Rick [Maru]: We could go roll in fresh poop or sniff each other's butts or pee on the furniture or...

> *****

> Several Days later...

Matt: Stuff happened to people we don't care about.

Natasha: Do you mean the dead guys in the infirmary, or the protagonists?

Matt: Yes.

> Entering the lounge in her new Smoke Jaguar uniform, which although not to her tastes was better
> than some she'd seen.

Rebecca: This one didn't feature arsless chaps or a clown nose.

> Lance had gotten out of bed a couple of days ago,

Matt: Wasn't he near-death or something?

Rick: Probably has a mutant healing factor or something.

> and while not any more

> open so to speak towards her he did at least seem a bit friendlier.

Rebecca: They sat and brooded in the same corner of the bar.

> Sitting down in a lounge chair, having just come back from a battle that turned out to be an easy win
> since her opponent didn't even show

Rick: Minutes after the match was over, Tom Dyrone would leap out of the plane and pancake on an empty ring.

> she watched with interest as Lance began to, for all

> appearances get ready to fight some other person she could only guess was a fellow team mate.

Matt: What's he doing, shadowboxing from his wheelchair?

> Absently scratching Maru's ears as she watched she heard one of the strangest stories in her life
> from this odd, old man.

Rebecca: Something about going out to catch a fish, and landing a giant swordfish only to have sharks eat it all.

> He smells... let's leave. The wolf tried to convince her.

Natasha: Again we agree with the telepathic wolf. What is wrong with us? What is wrong with this fic?

> 'Tching' softly to the wolf so he'd hush she

> rested a head on her hand to study their forms as the spar- and tale began.

> Chapter Eight

Rebecca: Last part! [They all cheer]

> Lance warily had his bare hands opened just a bit as he slowly circled Pyro,

Rick: Where did this guy come from? What's going on here?

Matt: Vincent's open door policy finally went too far. Now random strangers are just walking in off the street.

> the old man had

> already beaten out some of his combinations with perfect counter moves astounding Lance slightly

Rebecca: Lance is pretty spry given that a few days ago he had severe injuries and a low chance of survival.

Rick: See, this is why I like his bits of the fic better. No pretensions, no bull, just pure, undiluted nonsense.

> as he began to listen to Pyro speak.

Matt: Unfortunately, it was muffled by his gasmask.

Natasha: Her. The Pyro's a girl.

Matt: You don't know that.

Natasha: And do you know she's a dude?

> "Lance you really aren't going to believe me but I did a bit of research when I heard your full name."

Rick: Lance Foo Foo Cuddly-Poops Asakura. The third.

> Lance dashed in and made a spiral kick only to get deflected and flipped back by Pyro who was

> only using one hand to accomplish that.

Rebecca: Great. The fights are getting Deltaesque on us. Next thing someone's gonna powerbomb their opponent through a table.

> "Really now and how did you know my full name...."

Matt [Pyro]: I stole your wallet!

Natasha: The fiend!

> Pyro laughed as he deflected two more of Lance's attacks and made a counter kick which Lance

> barely blocked and said.

> "Simple. I read your ZBC profile, your full name is Sorintayakalinto Lanceaka Asakura."

[They all burst out laughing]

Rebecca: Now that one goes beyond 'silly' and straight into 'stupid funny'.

> Lance stopped and gaped before doing a rapid combo doing a fluid movement of roundhouse kick,

> right hook, left uppercut, sweep kick, overhand right which Pyro easily dodged with that inhuman

> speed of his.

Rick: Inhuman speed. Take our word on this.

Matt: Or, if you like, perfectly normal speed compared to the guy who was almost crushed to death.

> "Your mind was open when you were in the hospital Lance."

Rebecca: Now he's telepathic too?

Natasha: Maybe he's secretly a wolf.

Rebecca: I'd say you're being silly, but the fic beat me to it.

> Lance growled and continued to circle him.

> "So what's this so called research you did?"

Rick: He looked up his Wikipedia page. Then maliciously edited it.

Natasha: Lance Asakura likes poop... oh come on!

> "Its simple I did some research on your adopted parents. Yes I also know you were created in a lab."

Rebecca: Terrible RPG cliché number... lots. Improbable, nonsense past.

> Lance gave him an icy stare

Rick: With his freeze-ray eyes!

> and his palm clenched and he hurled an attack at Pyro who smoothly

> deflected it again and said trembling with rage.

> "Don't ever mention that again."

Matt [Pyro]: That.

Rick [Lance]: You fiend!

> Pyro looked at him with an intense stare and said.

> "The point is Lance I was your adopted father's father which makes me your grandfather."

Rebecca: Wait... what? It makes you his adopted grandfather, but you don't get foster DNA when you get a foster home.

> Lance suddenly moved in and finally got a hit in on Pyro only to be thrown to a wall from Pyro's

> smooth countermeasure.

Rick: Not the first time Lance's hit the wall [Mimes drinking]

> "What do you mean....."

Natasha: I have no idea. Guys?

> Lance looked puzzled but there was something beyond that face that only Pyro could see right now.

> "I'll explain later

Rick: "I'll explain later" constitutes half the dialogue in Doctor Who.

> Lance."

> Yurei watched the whole thing as well as listened being the only other person in the lounge she now

> knew Lance's name as well as a piece of his history.

Rebecca: And was trying not to laugh at how dumb it was.

The big screen switched off, restoring the prose to life.

"Well that sucked." Matt cut in. "And usually I'm not that blunt."

"I'll say." Natasha nodded. "Still, I think the doofy of it definitely made the pain a lot less horrific. Well, maybe a bit."

"Well, can I have your opinions then for the review?" The Voice asked.

"First up, I can understand that these are RPG characters. As such, there is an attempt to create an idealised character that the player/writer would most want to play." Rebecca began. "However, there is a point where it reaches overkill. Unfortunately, both the main characters here, Yurei and Lance, are well over that point."

"Yurei falls into a lot of the pitfalls of RPG/Mary sue characters. The few descriptions are a good example; being incredibly beautiful, having exotically coloured eyes and the like. It's interesting when you note how little description that other characters get. Likewise, what we see of her as a person is stuffed full of cliché Mary Sue elements. She has a tragic background, which causes her to have nightmares and so on."

"Let's not forget that she also has a wolf companion that is allowed to go anywhere she does, like into bars." Matt continued. "However, her having a telepathic connection to said wolf strains credibility. It's something that doesn't really fit into the Zoids world as such, and seems rather... well, corny for want of a better term. And it doesn't add anything to the plot, which makes it somewhat redundant."

"Oh, and the way carries a sword is another outrageously Mary Sue trait." Rick added. "It's one that has always bothered me in RPGs and fanfics; why do people carry swords when guns are available?"

"Now here's the thing that got me." Natasha spoke up. "By comparison, Lance is under-described. There's almost nothing to go on for him appearance-wise. But he does have some of the same traits. He's got a tragic background, he has scary nightmares and he's got that classic standby, the secret identity. And, well, 'Sorintayakalinto Lanceaka Asakura' is a name that, in trying to be 'exotic' falls more squarely into the category of 'silly'. In fact, I'd categorize it as 'incredibly silly.'"

"The secondary characters don't receive much airtime and are not that well described. They fail to be anything other than simple scene fillers, and there is little reason to pay attention to them." Rick concluded.

"And then there's the schizophrenic writing..." Rebecca threw her arms into the air and sighed. "So yeah, crap fic was crap and without a single redeeming feature."

"I dunno, I think the Telepathic Wolf was the smartest and most likable character in the fic." Natasha countered.

"But it's still a bad concept." Matt shook his head. "No matter what way you slice it."

"Thank you for all that." The Voice finally spoke up, maybe a hint of apprehension in its tone. "That was... informative."

"Well, as a way to unwind, wanna come round to my place for a swim?" Natasha offered. "I got an indoor ground-floor pool."

"If I recall, it's a flooded ground floor." Rebecca shot back.

"Converted to a pool." Natasha concluded with a smile. "So we got a great art-deco tile bottom and the bar is just near the steps – which have brass fittings to boot."

"Sounds awesome." Rick finished as he stood. "And it could be some great idea fodder to boot."

"I'm up for that." Rebecca agreed. "Anything beats the staying here and risking another fic."

"Just as long as you don't bring a giant robot to the party, we're all good." Matt finished.

"Wouldn't do that." Natasha added as she headed to the door, grabbing her pack. "Not after the way

the landlord yelled at me last time I did.”

Author's notes:

Technically, this is the first all-new Elmer Studios MSTing; the others being either “rebuilt” or alternatively re-workings of incomplete material. And what better way to celebrate such a momentous occasion then with an incomplete fic based of a long-dead Fandom?

Yeah, I thought so too.

This is a Fic I've been sitting on for some time; had things worked out differently, it could have easily been a “Classic” Elmer Studios MSTing. It's a true classic in some ways; horrible Mary Sues, incoherent writing, nonsense plot and stupidly out-of-place elements come together in a fantastically bad package.

This fic is also known as ‘The Ballard of Yurei and Lance’, so I'll put that in here in the off-chance that someone's googling for it.

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The Tale of Yurei and Lance written by Yurei Avalon and Lance Asakura

Rebecca Bartley, Natasha Isavia, Matt Simmons and Rick R. Mortis created by Rick R. (natch)

Questions? Comments? Complaints? Shock and/or terror? Email us at [elmerstudios00 \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:elmerstudios00@gmail.com) and register your Jeff.

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> "Why not join the Jaguars instead we are so much better then those fools and I am sure a pilot of
> your potential couldn't turn down the possible access to the extensive base and hanger."