

[PREVIOUSLY ON GUNDAM BUILD FIGHTERS: DESTINY](#)

Team Avalanche has been defeated, meaning that Johann and his comrades are now in the top sixteen, and things may be looking up for the members of Team OGM. However, even stronger opponents loom ahead, in the form of the mysterious Team Overlord.

EPISODE 10: Big Trouble in Little Anaheim

Johann blinked, then opened his eyes. A grey concrete ceiling stared back at him, and suddenly he felt a throbbing pain in his head. He tried to hold it, but found his hands tied behind his back, attached to a pipe running parallel to the floor. *The hell?* He turned his head, and saw that the entire room was some sort of concrete-lined basement, judging from the grass coming in through the thin, lone window. He turned the other direction, and--*Wait, is that a person?* Apparently tied by her hands to a column, a long-haired girl was about ten feet away, in a sitting position on the floor.

“Fira?”

At the sound of her voice, Fira Elias looked up at Johann, her face burning in anger. “Oh, hey. Decided to wake up?”

“Where the hell are we?”

“I don’t know. All I remember was ducking into an alleyway, then I passed out and found myself here. Do you remember anything?”

Johann tried to concentrate, but his head seemed to be actively resisting the effort. “I remember that I was going out to get something for gunpla...”

“Well, that helps. I’m not 100% sure why we’ve been abducted, but I suppose all we can do is wait. The entire room’s bare, and the people who tied us up must have paid attention between selling cookies.”

Selling cookies? Oh, Girl Scouts. At least her sarcasm hasn’t been damaged. He shook his head to clear it. *So what did happen...*

Five Hours Ago

“That’s great, Joseph!” Mia was almost through the roof with happiness, jumping up and down and hugging the couple in front of her.

So you got the girl, huh? Or I guess it could be said that she got you, considering the circumstances. Johann smiled regardless. “I’m happy for you both.”

“Thanks!” Leah was holding onto Joseph’s arm, leaning into him, the two held together by Mia’s ecstatic embrace. Finally, she withdrew, and got in Joseph’s face. “If you make her cry, I’ll come over, kick your ass, and make sure that you’ll never make another girl sad.”

“Mia!” Leah blushed.

“I don’t think there’s much chance of that happening,” Johann said. *Joseph’s too stubborn to give up on this.* “He’s the kind of guy who’ll do anything to make it work.”

“Leah, come with me.” Mia grabbed onto the surprised girl and pulled her into the hallway.

After a few seconds, he could hear Mia’s voice in a faint interrogatory tone. *She must be grilling Leah. I guess from her perspective, this didn’t come out of nowhere, but she’s definitely the kind of girl who looks for juicy details.*

“Johann?” Joseph, now alone in the room with him, seemed to be descending off of the high he had been on for the last half hour. “Do you think I’ll be a good boyfriend?”

“Well, I know you’re a good person, and I’m sure there’s not much more to it than that. Just respect each other, and the rest should follow naturally. Plus, Leah’s relatively low maintenance, you know that.”

“Yeah, she does all the maintenance herself,” Joseph quipped.

“That’s the spirit. I’m here if you need me, but I think you’ll do just fine.”

Joseph grabbed Johann and gave him a big hug. “Johann, you’re the best friend I could ask for. I’m the happiest guy ever right now, and I owe it to you.”

“Thanks.” Johann’s voice was muffled as the air was slowly being squeezed from his lungs. *Jesus. I hope he’s gentler with Leah.*

Suddenly, the door opened, and the two girls walked in. “Hey, Johann, I was wonder--”

Suddenly, she saw the two guys pull away from each other. “Should I leave you two alone?”

Johann smirked. “Give us about ten minutes; I’ll be able to finish by then.”

“What happened, Mia?” Leah’s view was blocked by a corner of the wall.

“I’ll tell you later. For now, I need to go back to the room.”

“Oh, there’s something I wanted to talk to you about, Mia.” Johann followed her outside the room.

Mia closed the door and turned to Johann. “So do you actually have something to say, or did you just need an excuse to leave them alone together?”

“A bit of both. I managed to get some data on our next opponents, and I wanted your opinion.”

“Oh, good. Shoot.”

“Well, their name’s Team Overlord. They’re from New York, and they have a habit of making new suits before each match, or at least they minmax all the way to victory.”

“So what’s our strategy?”

“We take them out one at a time, dealing as much damage with as little risk to ourselves as possible.”

“So basically wing it?”

“I suppose that’s our option. They can’t be too familiar with their own suits’ operations if they switch them each fight.”

Mia thought for a second. “So what was your question?”

“Who do you think we should bring? I don’t know if we should sub Leah in for anyone.”

“Well, in light of recent events, I think that Joseph would fight much harder if he knew Leah was there. His feelings are currently at a crescendo, so now is the perfect point to take advantage of that.” She clenched her fist triumphantly.

Johann cringed. “And I thought I was manipulative...”

“Only on the battlefield, kiddo.” Mia nodded. “So when’s the battle again?”

“3 PM. It’s eight now, so...seven hours?”

“I see. I’ll do my best to fix stuff up with the Ranger. It’s not in too bad a condition, but I’ll have to ask you to get some parts. It might not be for the best if I fight tonight.” She appeared dejected.

“Are you really that upset?”

“Not really. I’m just mad that I died because I didn’t consider the enemy’s potential. I’ve gotten complacent after all these low-tier enemies.” Her eyes flashed dangerously.

Johann felt unsettled by her look. *She’s scary sometimes.*

She sidled up next to him. “That said, you mind doing me a favor?”

Johann checked his phone. *Is this it?* He checked a street sign, and reconfirmed his location. *It should be on this next road.* He wiped the sweat from his brow and looked around, pulling a piece of torn notebook paper from his pocket. *Let’s see...another GM Sniper II, and a System Weapon 22? I didn’t know that one was out yet. Looks like she’s also running low on pla-plate and plastic cement...* He kept walking down the crowded street.

As he passed an alleyway, he looked down it, the small thoroughfare lined with doors to the adjacent businesses and trash littering the ground. He gazed down at the girl being wrestled around the corner.

Wait, what? Two burly men were covering the mouth of a dark haired girl with a rag and attempting to pull her out of sight. “Hey, you!” He yelled and started to run towards them. He rounded the corner and--

Not my smartest move. His head still ached. “Well, we’re in here now.”

“No shit, Sherlock. Well, I said I wasn’t 100% sure why we’re here, but it’s probably something to do with my dad.”

“Is he rich or something?”

“He works for PPSE as an executive, so yeah, some money. They probably want ransom, and they’re negotiating now.” She stared at him. “However, I’m more worried about you. You weren’t part of their plan. I heard one of them chewing another guy out for bringing you here; he said he should have just left you in the alley. So that’s one person here who doesn’t have any monetary value and whose current existence is a threat to their operation. I’m not a betting girl, but I don’t like your chances.”

The growing fear in Johann’s gut intensified. “Well, do you have a plan?”

“Not really.” However, she was pointing with her foot at his hands, still attached to the PVC pipe by some thin cord, though there were several loops of it. *Looks like breaking the rope isn’t an option.* He tugged a bit, but the pipe was securely attached to the wall and didn’t budge.

Fira started to whisper. "Are there any strands that seem looser than the rest?"

Johann moved his fingers, then started to tug on each strand. Surprisingly, one came undone, looping out and forming a single, longer loop. He held it so that Fira could see it.

She sighed in relief, then made cutting motions with her feet. *I see. I need to use the cord as a saw.* He tried to grab the ends of the cord, but the loop was fairly small, and it took a bit of maneuvering. He started to move it back and forth.

About an hour later, his fingers were raw, but he had made a cut about an eighth of an inch deep. Not that much compared to the diameter of the pipe, though, and his rope was wearing out. He kept going, his fingers now numb from the continual pressure.

Suddenly, the rope snapped, fraying as it came loose from both sides. Fira's face lit up.

"It's our chance! Keep going!"

Johann tugged again, and the entire knot loosened slightly. He carefully tugged on each strand in the knot until he found the correct one, then he began to unweave the Gordian mass. After a few minutes, he was done, and he stood up, rubbing his wrists.

"Get me! Quickly!"

With not a second to lose, he walked over to Fira and quickly untied her, the knot fairly easy to undo while not restrained by it. She also started massaging the constricted blood vessels in her hand, then picked up a piece of the cord that he had been tied up with.

"So what now?"

"Now? We get out."

“How do we overpower that many guys?”

“We don’t need to. All we need to do is get out. We can get the police from there.”

Fira listened at the door, her ear cupped to it. She motioned that she could hear one person outside. *Probably just the schmuck they left on guard duty.* Johann continued to wait, then Fira said loudly, “I have to pee!”

The voice that answered was unsympathetic. “Deal with it.”

“Come on, do you want me to pee my pants here?”

“I don’t really care.”

“You’re such an asshole!”

“What did you call me?” Suddenly, the door swung open from the outside, and an angry thirty-something charged in, brandishing a gun.

Fira leapt out, pulling the rope with both hands around the guard’s neck. She leapt onto his back, and he attempted to gasp for air, but was unable to release the pressure caused by the garrote cord. Within about half a minute, he lay on the floor, drool streaming out of his mouth.

“Is he dead?”

Fira wound the rope around her wrist. “No, it would have taken a bit longer to kill him. I just made him pass out.”

“No chance he’s faking?”

“Choking is very hard to fake. Certainly not a talent someone like him would have.”

Not gonna ask about that. I guess she got kidnapped a lot or something. That or her dad is a hitman in disguise.

Fira looked out the window, then reached down and pulled the gun from the grunt's grasp. She pulled the slide back, then cleared the chamber, detaching the magazine and making sure that nothing was obviously wrong with it. "Looks like we're fine. It's a 9mm Glock, and it appears to be fully loaded."

"Okay, so what now?"

"We sneak out. Firing this will guarantee that we're screwed. It's why I choked the guy instead of beating him up. So let's go. This is a basement level, so we need to go up before we can escape."

The hallway they were in was also bare concrete, and there were no visible doors, though light was visible from small fixtures on the ceiling. At one end, there was just a wall, but at the other, they could see what looked like a set of stairs. Fira moved silently to the lowest one, then peeked around the corner, the black gun held in a ready position. she motioned for him to come over, then carefully began to climb the stairs.

At the top, Fira peeked around, then held her hand over his mouth, ducking behind the flight. She whispered softly into his ear. "There's one guy to the left of the stairs. He doesn't seem to be armed, but I can't tell for sure. There's a window next to him, though. It looks like we're in an office park of some kind, in an abandoned building."

"Is the window big enough--"

"Probably. We just need to get past him."

“Oldest trick?”

“Oldest trick.”

He grabbed a chunk of concrete near the ground, his fingers aching from the ropes, then threw it down the hallway in the opposite direction. Quickly, both of them ducked below the bend in the stairwell. The man moved quickly, passing the stairs and reaching the other end of the hallway.

Suddenly, Fira and Johann dashed towards the window, and Fira quickly fiddled with the latch, swinging it open. She pushed him through first, causing him to fall about two feet to a small grassbank below, then began to climb out.

She was most of the way through when the man turned around and saw the escape in progress.

“Hey! Stop! Stop or I’ll shoot!”

Fira said nothing, but pointed the pistol in his direction and pulled the trigger, the muzzle flashing and the slide kicked. The bullet passed by the man’s ear, but he dodged to the left, causing it to ricochet off the concrete walls, sparking before coming to a rest. In his moment of hesitation, Fira pulled the rest of her body through the window and rolled onto the grass.

“Run! GoGoGoGoGo!”

Johann didn’t need that much provocation. He grabbed Fira’s wrist and started to move quickly out into the parking lot of what he could now see was an abandoned office building. “Where now?”

“I don’t know where we are, they took our phones, and I’ve never been to this part of Anaheim before. Just run and try to find somewhere with security guards.”

He looked back, and saw the man climbing out the window, a gun similar to the one Fira wielded in his hand. Roused by the noise of gunfire, several other people were streaming out of the front of the building.

“Well, this is just dandy.” Fira searched with her eyes. “There!” He saw where she was pointing, and he could see a building with a large American flag out front. “The Ameribank building!”

As they reached the front door, Fira realized that she was still carrying the gun and dropped it quickly as she pulled Johann through the front door, the mob slowing as they saw their quarry enter the building

The lobby of the bank was decorated quite nicely, denoting this as the main offices of the business, not a place where people cashed checks. A security guard on duty saw the two kids enter, out of breath and their clothes dirty. He stepped forwards, but before he could say anything, Fira started to talk. “We’ve just escaped a kidnapping, and those people on the street are coming after us. Please, call 911 right now!” He looked startled, but then noticed the strangers outside, and nodded to the startled front desk receptionist, who picked up the phone and began dialing.

Soon after the police arrived, they captured several of the members of the gang, and their testimony confirmed Fira’s suspicions: they had been hired by an unknown party to kidnap her, and Johann had been an accidental casualty of that. Unfortunately, the head of the gang had escaped, though a manhunt was underway.

Johann had been given a blanket for some reason, and he pulled it around him, though he didn’t feel cold. They sat in the lobby of the local precinct, where an officer was standing next to him,

smiling warmly as he kept a steely gaze towards the door, as if he expected the kidnappers to return.

Johann looked around the room, and suddenly noticed a small television in the corner. "Hey, Sir, what time is it?"

The officer checked his watch. "It's almost 3 PM."

Johann looked around, and found the remote on a nearby end table. He pointed it at the screen and--

"Is he not here?"

"No, he's not responding to his phone, either..." Mia bit her lip. "We might just have to go into this without him."

The team across the battle arena seemed a bit more composed as they placed their Gunpla on the catapults.

Destiny, Strike Freedom, and Infinite Justice...What a team to have to fight without Johann...

Leah put her hand on Mia's. "He probably just lost his phone." She didn't seem convinced, though. "Cheer up, and let's win this. Do you want all this training to go to waste?"

Mia forced a smile. "You're right. Let's go." *However, I was counting on being able to mod the Ranger today...I hope we can manage.*

BATTLE START

The Base Command carried the Ranger and Titan as it flew over the ocean, the much heavier machine's bulk supported by the mechanical arms normally used to repair suits.

"Can you guys manage from here?" An island popped up on the viewscreen, and Mia could see that it was large enough to fight on.

"I think so."

"I'm fine." Joseph's voice was determined.

"Releasing the Titan. I'll stay behind and support you guys amphibiously. Good luck." She stopped gripping the bulky GM, which ignited its shield thrusters and began to fly towards the island. The Nadesico pack carried the Ranger to the island, its sniper rifle held underneath one arm, the shield clutched tightly in the other. As soon as the two suits were released, the Base Command retracted its arms and sunk beneath the waves like a submarine, quickly fading from view.

"Mia! Heat signatures from 3 o'clock! Three of them!"

The SEED trio were making no attempt to hide themselves, proudly flying into the open. The Strike Freedom was wielding the Unicorn's Beam Magnum, and had a large shield reminiscent of the Banshee Norn's. The entire suit was white, gold, red, and black. The Destiny Gundam had wings that were more angular than the normal ones, with bladed edges. its color scheme was black and orange. *Arch Destiny? Not quite, but a similar motif.* The Infinite Justice was dark black with white and teal accents, and it seemed to have the Sword Impulse's Excaliburs attached to the FATUM-01 pack.

Mia raised her sniper rifle, and the visor slid down over the suit's face. *I suppose we can't avoid fighting them directly. Shit.* She fired a shot at the Destiny, but its wings expanded and blue exhaust flared out from between them, pushing the suit quickly out of the way. The left part of the backpack swung underneath its arm, and the beam cannon erupted with a massive red-white beam, one which Mia only barely dodged, the heat searing the paint off her shield.

Joseph charged directly towards the Strike Freedom, his suit amazingly maneuverable due to the thrusters on his shield binders. The gold-framed suit raised its rifle, shield, and hip cannons, the normal Strike Freedom rifles apparently absent from the suit, and fired, the shield apparently also containing a beam cannon. Joseph did a bit of a midair flip, dodging above the railgun shots and letting his I-field weaken the beam shots before they were absorbed by the shields on his binders, leaving only superficial damage. "Don't underestimate me just because I don't go straight for the bullshit suits, asshole!" The Strike tried to dodge, but at this range, Joseph managed to grapple his leg with his right arm, the claw locked around the thinly-framed suit. It struggled to get away, and pointed its rifle directly at his head. However, Joseph jerked the suit, causing the shot to fly wide, and he began to swing the Freedom like a doll. He increased his grip, but something seemed to be preventing him from crushing it.

Leah's voice cut in. "Joseph! Phase Shift!"

"Of course! That's it."

The Freedom's wings expanded, and it released eight red teardrop-shaped DRAGOONS, each rocketing away from the suit as the Titan grabbed onto the suit's rifle and tear it from his grasp.

"Shit! Funnels!" The red weapons flickered around, taking up position before--

Streaks of smoke from the ground slammed into them, causing a small explosion as the shaped charges in the missiles directed most of the force into the mobile weapons. Some DRAGOONS had more than one hit them, and the clouds of debris sprinkled the two combating suits. Several hundred feet below them, the Base Command closed its missile tubes and sank below the waves once again.

"Thanks, Leah. I owe you one."

"You can pay me back later, big boy," she said teasingly.

Saved by my own girlfriend; I need to step up my game. Joseph, renewed by this turn of events, fired out the mass near his elbow, the pistons stopping it from going very far. Said pistons then suddenly contracted, and the Strike Freedom's leg exploded, the force of the blow unable to be stopped by even the power of Phase Shift. At the same time, Joseph used his other arm to fling the suit at the Destiny Gundam, which was engaged in ranged combat with Mia's GM Ranger. The Freedom slammed into the Orange suit, and within a second, it exploded, the suit's nuclear reactor destabilizing and engulfing both suits in an atomic fireball.

"Goddammit, Joseph! Warn me when you do that!" Mia was outside the blast radius, but pieces of the machines still pelted her like hail.

However, there wasn't time to rest. The Infinite Justice, which had been attempting to maneuver behind the Ranger, threw the Shining Edge hidden in its shield. The beam boomerang cut through the GM's sniper rifle, and Mia dropped it, the two halves falling towards the black water below. *Shit, this is bad. It's down to three suits vs one, but that Justice looks like it actually has some skill, not just beam spam.*

As if to confirm her suspicions, it caught the Edge and returned it to its shield, before reaching behind its back and pulling out both Excaliburs, linking the beam-edged swords and igniting them, forming a massive two-bladed weapon. It raised it above its head and charged, the FATUM swinging up to give it additional thrust. Mia reached to her backpack and removed the pair of pistols from the rack, aiming them at the dark suit. She fired several shots with each, but they were blocked easily by the machine's shield. It brought down the sword on Mia's head, and she barely moved out of the way, the shield on her left arm torn loose by the impact.

Suddenly, the Titan rose up behind the Ranger, swinging a fist in at the dark suit. However, it was ready, quickly doing a flip while releasing the FATUM, the flyer slamming into the Titan's chest, carrying it off into the distance. He fought against it, but it kept going, pushing him out of the arena. Joseph dove and caught his gunpla as it fell out of the field of particles.

Mia dropped her pistols and reached to the back of her skirt, drawing forth the glowing red blades and crossing them above her head, stopping the second blow. Suddenly, this seemed to be what he was expecting, as he quickly disconnected the second blade and swung it around, aiming at her waist. Mia boosted backwards, the sword missing her by a millimeter. *I can't beat the force of his attacks at close range.* "Leah! Send it!"

"Got it!" Leah slammed her fist on a button on her console, and a torpedo dropped out of the bottom of the Command. It swam towards the surface, and as it broke the surface it sprouted wings, turning into a cruise missile. As it reached Mia's altitude, the outer shell fell away, revealing a long rod that had a bulge near the top. Mia flew over to it and grabbed onto it, pulling it loose from the rocket, which had run out of fuel. she gripped it with both hands, and the bottom extended, and the bulge on the end turned into two arms swung out, igniting to form a trident of beam sabers.

“I’ve got the Striker Trident!” Mia flipped around the weapon, leveling it at the Justice. “Now, let’s see what kind of mark this leaves!”

The strike was met by one of the Excaliburs, the blade caught between the tines of the polearm. However, the two outer tines expanded, making a perpendicular angle with the main shaft. The blades then began to spin, making a beam buzzsaw around the diameter of the spear.

The spinning blade hit the back of the Excalibur, slicing it in half and shorting out the blade, the plasma dispersing without a containment field. The spinning suddenly stopped, and Mia swung the beam pick into the Justice’s cockpit as the second Excalibur crashed down on her backpack, biting into the Nadesico. With a final effort, she sliced the black suit in half, then ejected the damaged flyer and let herself drop into the ocean.

BATTLE ENDED

”JOHANN!” Mia hit him with a flying tackle hug, causing him to fall down as she embraced him, as if she were afraid that letting him go would mean she’d never see him again. Leah and Joseph stepped into the room, Fira talking to her teammates as she underwent a similar process; Margaret nearly in tears as she held her friend close.

Joseph helped him to his feet, then, along with Leah, got in on the hug. “Dammit, you idiot, don’t scare me like that. Do you want to give Mia an ulcer?”

“I’m sorry, they didn’t find my phone until just a bit ago.” He smiled. “You guys did great.”

“Were you watching?”

“Yeah, that was good thinking, Joseph; you used the explosive frame of the Strike Freedom as a bomb. And Mia, good work with that new weapon. I didn’t know it was done yet.”

“Well, I had planned on buffing the Ranger’s weapons with the kits I sent you to get, but NOOOOO! You get your ass kidnapped and worry me half to death. So I had to finish that while I was waiting.”

“Mia, I’m sorry.”

“Johann.” He turned to see Fira standing nervously. “I just wanted to say...thank you. You got captured when you tried to save me, and if you hadn’t been there to get me loose, I’d probably be tied up in the trunk of a car right now.” She blushed. “So, don’t think I’m going to go easy on you when we fight, but I’m still grateful.”

“It’s nothing. I’d think less of someone who didn’t try to help in that kind of situation.” He smiled.

“You’re welcome, though.”

The two groups split up after leaving the precinct, and OGM made its way back to the hotel. Mia wouldn’t let Johann out of her presence until they got back to the rooms.

Johann flopped down onto the bed, and quickly passed into sleep. *Tomorrow is Team Shadow Force’s match to get into the quarterfinals... I wonder if Fira’s going to have recovered enough.* He put his arm over his eyes. He pulled out his phone and looked at it, then thumbed through the contacts until he reached E. *Fira Ellias*. She had put her number into his phone after they had gotten them back. *I wonder if this means she wants me to call her...* He put it on the charger and drifted off. *Questions for tomorrow. For now, sleep.*