

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

Johann is caught up in a kidnapping attempt by a party after Fira's family wealth, and the two battlers barely manage to escape before they are turned over to some other organization. At the same time, Team OGM has to battle without the expertise of their tactical leader, but manage to survive on their own skills, along with a new armament for Mia's suit. Relieved to find their team members safe, OGM and Shadow Force prepare for their quarterfinal matches.

EPISODE 11: Rumble in the Desert

Johann reached for a file and began to remove material from his Gunpla's weapon. *I think I can enhance the beam rifle's power by adding some metal parts. I just need to clear out enough space to do it. Maybe I can even shorten the beam rifle's barrel so that it can be used in close combat? It's a possibility, and it might let me fight like Mia does with her pistols. Worth looking into.*

He heard the door open. "Johann, you in here?"

"Joseph, could you knock?"

"Why? You weren't doing anything bad."

"It's not that, it's the principle....whatever. What is it?"

"I got the data on the next team."

“Perfect. Let me see it.” He took the papers from the older boy and looked at them. “Team 101st Artillery. Interesting name, apparently from...Texas?”

“Yeah, they’re apparently a more military themed team that uses stuff with big artillery cannons. They’re famed for their deadly accuracy with their armor piercing shells. It’s said that their leader can take out two suits at once by determining when the arc will hit them both.”

“Geez, that’s scary. What suits have they been using?”

“Well, so far, they’ve been using a Xamel, a Zeon-modded Guntank, and a Zaku Tank. It’s possible they might switch things up before we fight them, though the girls agree that they’ll likely stay in character and keep using the same theme. So most likely, we’ll be up against weapons from the same era that our own mobile suits are from; it’ll be Early Federation vs Early Zeon.”

Johann smiled excitedly. “This is going to be epic. No matter what, both teams are going to have a great time with this.”

Fira opened the small case that she kept by her bedside. Inside was a small blue gunpla, a gundam with an angular head based on the Mk.II. Its bazooka and beam rifle were in separate compartments, along with the shield.

Blue Destiny Gamma. You’ve done well as my partner, but I’m afraid that will come to an end soon. She closed the container and looked over at her cell, which started to ring.

She picked up. “Hey, dad.”

A dark green Throne Eins flew low to the ground, its massive gun charging as it aimed at the

massive battleship hovering above it. Beams fired from every visible opening, and missiles turned the jungle into a layer of dust. *One shot...One shot, that's all I need.* The Eins' pilot connected the reticle with the middle of the *Alabaster*, then pulled the trigger. A large red beam streaked through the air as it came close to the ship. *It can't dodge at this range! We've won!*

However, as the shot got close, it spiraled away like a whirlpool, dissipating into thin air. Within less than half a second, half a dozen beams struck the green suit, melting its armor into a pile of slag.

[BATTLE ENDED]

“AND TEAM ALABASTER WINS THEIR WAY INTO THE SEMIFINALS! FIND OUT WHO THEIR OPPONENT WILL BE IN TOMORROW'S MATCH, TEXAS' 101ST ARTILLERY VS MISSISSIPPI'S TEAM OGM! BUT DON'T WAIT TILL THEN FOR MORE GUNPLA BATTLE ACTION; TEAM SHADOW FORCE FROM VIRGINIA BATTLES TEAM MAVERICK FROM CONNECTICUT AT 2 THIS AFTERNOON!

Johann took his hands off of his ears. *God, he's loud. But if we win our next fight, we'll be up against them.* He shivered. *That last barrier, it looked like an I-Field. But it was able to block a fully charged shot from a suit like the Eins, which means that it's much stronger than anything that could be mounted on a mobile suit. This is a problem...*

Suddenly, his phone began to ring a chiptune version of the Gundam opening. *An unregistered caller?* He pulled his phone out and looked at the ID. He blinked in surprise. *Fira?* He checked his watch. *11:13; I have time.*

Johann looked around. The park was nearly empty, with the only other people in sight being a

few college students and parents with kids, less than a dozen total. However, he saw a lone girl sitting on a bench nearby, looking in the other direction. "Hey."

She quickly turned her head, then waved at him. He walked over and sat down. "I got your call. You had something you wanted to talk about?"

"Well, yes..." She seemed hesitant. "I didn't feel like I could talk about this to my teammates, and since I got you involved..."

"Is this about us getting kidnapped? Because I already told you I got into that of my own free will."

"No, not entirely. I mean, it's not about that directly. What happened is..." She twiddled her thumbs. "I got a call from my dad."

"Oh, the executive?"

"Yeah, he works for what used to be PPSE, after they were acquired by Nemesis. But that's not the point." She took a breath. "He told me that he wants me to come home."

Johann started. "Wait, what? Why?"

"He doesn't think I'm safe here."

"And what, he's planning on locking you up until he's not legally allowed to?"

"Well, more like a squad of bodyguards, but he's not backing down on the 'return home' thing."

"Can't you just say 'no'?"

“I wish it was that simple, but you haven’t lived with him. He’s incredibly protective of me, and I think he sees me as sort of a liability. That if I’m allowed to run around, I can be used as leverage against him.” Her voice seemed bitter.

“Sounds like you kind of resent him.”

“I suppose I do, in a certain way. It was his decision to pull me out of North Eliwood Elementary; I didn’t have a say in the matter. Everyone at the new school knew exactly who I was, and they were other rich kids, so I didn’t have any actual friends, just political allies. Even when I graduated that school and started attending Nergal, my actual friends were only the ones in the Battle Club. Same situation, rich girl, people getting close to you because they think you’ll be a future ally. I think my place on the battle club was the only thing in my life that I ever earned legitimately through pure merit.”

“That sounds really sad. I can’t imagine how hard that must have been.”

“It wasn’t easy, I’ll admit. But still, I never hated my father. I understand he just wanted me to have a good head start on life, but still, I wish I could have had a normal childhood to a certain extent. Honestly, I think I would have liked it if I had just stayed in a normal public school. It might be the whole ‘grass is greener’ thing, but I honestly believe I’d have been happier.”

“Well, you like the battle club, right?”

“Of course I do. I don’t regret going to Nergal, and I don’t regret what’s happened since then. However, I don’t really have anyone with an outside perspective to talk to, that’s why I asked you for advice.”

“So that’s why you left that day.” Johann put the pieces together.

“Yeah, I gave the box and the letter to my dad’s assistant, and I suppose she delivered them.”

She smiled. “You’ve been using the GP Base I gave you all along, haven’t you?”

Johann nodded and pulled the small device out of his pocket. It had small scratches on it, but was otherwise well cared for. She took it from him, flipped it over and slid the battery cover off. Written in black marker was her name, in the rough penmanship of an elementary schoolgirl.

Fira Ellias.

“Do you want it back?” Johann queried.

“No, you keep it. It’s been yours for a lot longer than it’s been mine, and I have my own now. It’s fine.” She handed it to him, and he secured it again.

Johann leaned back. “So advice, huh?” He thought for a second. “Well, I can really only say that you should do what you want. I mean, you’re not just your father’s anymore; he needs to start respecting your autonomy.”

“Okay, fine, but how do I tell him that?”

“Just tell him what you told me. I can’t think of a father who, in his heart, doesn’t just want the best for his child.”

“Thing is, I don’t think he considers me able to make my own decisions.”

“Well, you can’t just let him control your life forever. You’ve gotten this far on your own merits, and you’re a responsible enough person to manage your school life and being a main fighter on one of the country’s most prestigious Gunpla Battle teams. You’re already past the point that he can just lock you in a bubble.”

"I know. I know that I have to stand up to him, but...I just feel like it's hopeless. I mean, I just feel like the second I start talking to him, I'm going to turn into a scared little girl."

"Well, you don't get to make that decision. Because I am redeeming this right now." Johann pulled out his wallet and pulled out a small, folded piece of light pink stationery.

"Wait, that can't be--That's the paper I used in elementary school!"

"Oh, but it is! The, and I quote, 'first ever Fira Ellias Battle Coupon'. Redeemable for one gunpla battle should I ever meet you after the date of issuance. And I declare that battle to occur during the Gunpla Battle 18 and Under National Championship Finals!"

Fira started to smile, then giggle, then laugh uncontrollably. "You seriously kept that? You nerd." She wiped her eyes and shook her head. "I guess I can't argue with that, can I? I made a promise, and there's no way I can go back on it now."

"Nope. Not gonna let you get out of this one. Coupon is sacred."

"Fine, I'll talk to him. If nothing else, I should be able to convince him to let me stay for the tournament."

"You'd better. If you're not there, I'm going to assume you ran because you were too scared to fight."

Fira stood up. "You won't have to worry about that. Just make sure that you don't lose before you face me."

"Likewise."

"Don't give me crap; you know I'm going to make it."

“Then we have nothing further to discuss.” He rose to his feet and checked his watch. “Your battle is in about an hour. Do you think there’s enough time to go get some ice cream or something before we go back?”

“What for?”

“To celebrate your impending defeat.”

“I’m sorry, I must have misheard. I believe that you just implied that you had a chance of victory against me?”

“Sure, let’s go with that. So, do I have to go alone?”

“What’s going on?” A Cherudim that seemed to have been modded to use twin pistols instead of a sniper rifle fired shot after shot at a blue blur that dodged right and left, approaching faster than a suit of its size should have been capable of. In a microsecond, it stood poised underneath the green and white machine, the silver compartments on its legs popping open to offer a pair of blue-handled beam sabers. They launched into the suit’s hands, igniting immediately as the Gamma brought them up, slicing the enemy’s arms off. She immediately followed by driving the saber into the enemy’s head, then using the same arm to drive her fist into the enemy cockpit, crushing it.

[BATTLE ENDED]

Looks like Fira is able to move forwards again. Johann rose from his seat and walked up the stairs to the exit, . But I’ve still got work to do on my end.

“Are you done?” Mia looked over Johann’s shoulder curiously. The two were in the boys’ hotel

room, but Joseph was on a snack run, and Leah was in her own room fixing up the other suits. She had offered to help Johann, but he had refused, saying that this was something he needed to do for himself.

“Not yet.”

“It’s getting dark. If you don’t go to sleep, you won’t be awake for the match tomorrow.”

“I know, but I can’t end this with a half-done beam rifle.”

“Can I help, then?”

“Wasn’t your suit damaged?”

“Not much. I have plenty of spare weapons.”

“Then sure, just paint this part brown and I’ll sand this down to shape.”

“Got it.” She sat down next to him and picked up the pot of tan paint, pouring herself a small amount of thinner into a plastic tray.

“This is nice, honestly.”

“Building?”

“Yeah, it reminds me of when we came up with the idea for the team.”

“OGM. We just mixed up OG and GM.”

“Do you remember why we picked the GM?”

“After all these years? A bit. I think it was because of the challenge. We were taking mass production suits that most people would consider low-tier, and then making them into world-class machines.”

“It was something like that. I remember Joseph being salty that we didn’t use the Zaku, but he warmed up when he realized that you could load a lot more weapons on a GM.”

“Good times.”

The two worked in silence for a while. After a few minutes, Joseph came back in, bearing white plastic bags. “Sup, guys?”

“We’re almost done.”

“Cool, let me see.” He leaned in close, and Johann showed him the beam rifle. It was much more compact than before; not quite a rifle, but also larger than a pistol. It was comparable to an SMG in silhouette, but retained the slim curves of a beam weapon.

Joseph whistled. “Not bad. I’m sure you’ll be able to use it next match.”

“Well, to be fair, I highly doubt close combat will be a major part of a battle with artillery suits.”

“Fair enough, but it’ll be important for the battles in the future.”

“Alabaster and Shadow Force.”

“Yeah. If we make a wrong move fighting either of them, we’re dead.”

“Have we decided who’s going to be on the team to fight 101st?”

“I was thinking the three of us. Leah needs some rest after repairing all the suits. We might need her to fight Alabaster, as well. I’m still working on a plan to beat them that doesn’t just involve hitting them really hard and hoping it works.”

“What’s wrong with that?” Joseph cut in. “Sounds fun to me.”

“Well, it might come down to something like that, but for now, we should focus on the match at hand.”

The stadium was packed as OGM walked into the arena, the battle system idling in the middle. As they entered, the crowd cheered, and as four youths dressed in what looked like Zeon field uniforms, tan with olive drab insignias. They carried a trio of ammunition cans that they held as they marched in beat.

“What’s that?” Mia whispered in Johann’s ear.

“Their team captain is in JROTC.”

“Ah, makes sense.”

Joseph walked forwards and shook hands with the aforementioned captain, then each returned to their positions.

The EZ-X dashed along the edge of the red cliffs, Johann tracing his eyes over the dusty canyon floor below. *Mia should be in position soon. Joseph will run through the canyon and avoid cannon fire, while I draw it. Nadesico provides aerial reconnaissance. I wonder what suits they’re using? Did they keep their old lineup, or switch it out?*

Suddenly, an alert popped up on the screen, and he fired his thrusters, carrying his machine out of the way of the shell that slammed into the ground where he had been. His eyes flicked towards the projected shot origin, and he sent the data to his teammates immediately via the Nadesico's uplink.

"Got it. Heading there now." Joseph's voice came over the radio clearly.

"Mia, do you see anything?"

"I'm in position, but I haven't gotten visual on any of the enemy suits. They're likely hiding in the canyons, since they can arc their shots."

"Understood. Keep an eye out as we go."

Johann leapt off the edge of the cliff, then fired his arm anchor at one of the canyon walls ahead of him. He swung on the cable, then retracted it, firing his thrusters after gaining some forwards velocity. He sped between the layered walls, scanning for signs of movement.

"Johann! I've detected something! Five hundred meters ahead."

"Good work, Mia. Thanks." He increased his thruster power and narrowed his sensor band. A faint ping appeared on his console. He focused on the screen, trying to pinpoint the enemy location.

Suddenly, a small flash appeared near a rock formation. Johann dropped quickly as a shell whistled over his head, impacting the rock behind him. The explosion pushed him forwards a bit, but wasn't close enough to actually deal damage. He locked onto the source of the signal, and on full magnification, saw what appeared to be a brown and grey tank with the upper body of a Zaku. its backpack was equipped with a pair of artillery cannons, and it held a pair of Zaku

machine guns, both of which were now raised to target the EZ-X. Muzzle flashes appeared as bullets arced past Johann's head.

"I've got visual on what looks like a Zaku Tank! Armaments two artillery cannons and machine guns!"

"I see it. Joseph, anything on your end?" Mia said.

"I'm too far away from your current--" A loud explosion could be heard over the radio. "I just found what looks like the Xamel. I have to engage."

"Good luck. We'll take care of things here. Johann, distract it, but stay out of this area." He could see a newly highlighted area on the map.

"Understood. I'll leave it to you." He flew forwards, then raised his beam rifle. "Let's see how you handle this." He pulled the trigger, sending a bright yellow beam at the enemy tank. *Yellow? I guess my mods to the rifle did more than I thought.* The treads of the enemy tank whirred, and it pulled out of the way of the shot, which hit a large rock. The plasma widened a hole where the shot hit, melting through two meters of reddish stone. Johann whistled. "Not bad."

"Don't just stand there feeling proud of yourself, you moron!"

Johann heard Mia's voice a second before a burst of bullets struck his armor. He immediately twisted to lessen the impact, but an alert still appeared that his leg joint had been damaged. *Shit! I was daydreaming, and because of that, my gunpla was damaged.* "Sorry!"

"Come on! Head! Game! Get it in!"

“Roger!” He dodged the remaining fire and fired his rifle again, and missing again. *It’s fast for a little tank.* Suddenly, the tank’s right tread shattered as something impacted it, rocking the entire suit as it accidentally started to move in a circle.

“Got it! Go for it, Johann!”

“Already on it!” He ejected the shield on his right arm and retrieved one of his beam sabers, which he ignited. The tank, immobile but still active, moved its guns, but the EZ-X dodged below them and sliced upwards, slashing the barrels off. At the same time, he raised the rifle and leveled it at the tank’s body. “Eat plasma, Zeon scum!” He pulled the trigger.

The Zaku’s chest disappeared. In its place was a molten stump, with ruined treads. He looked at his rifle. *This thing is packing a lot of power now. Not megaparticle cannon level, but still. I need to be careful with it.*

Joseph tugged, then yanked his fist free from the Xamel’s body. The smoking wreck of the suit was battered and bent. “Johann, Mia, I’m finished over here.”

“Good job. Regroup at these coordinates.”

“Understood.” He turned to leave, but suddenly, his screen went black. The surrounding lights changed from blue to red. He looked around in panic. “What’s going on? Did my connection go bad?”

“What’s wrong, Joseph?”

“My controls won’t respond!”

“What?” Johann pulled up the status screen for the team. “Holy shit, Joseph, I think you got one-shotted.”

“Wait, really?”

“Yeah, you’re dead. Probably one hit from an armor-piercing shell.”

“I had just killed the Xamel. No way that was him.”

“And we finished off the Zaku Tank. So only one more option.”

“The unknown third member.”

“Right. We’d better be cautious; we’re probably dealing with the captain now.” He switched channels. “Mia, Joseph’s down. Enemy is a skilled marksman; don’t stay in one place for long.”

“Wait, really? That must have been one big bullet.”

“Cut the chatter, keep on guard.” He slipped back into the canyon and started looking around, hefting his rifle. *Where are you?*

“Johann! The Nadesico’s spotted something!”

“What is it?”

“It looks like a camouflage tarp!”

“Is it occupied?”

“Can’t tell. Uploading the coordinates to your map.” He saw a new waypoint with a blinking red dot on his display.

"Thanks. Heading there now. Relocate to cover me."

"Yes, sir!"

He dodged between valleys in the red rock, making it ever closer to the designated battlefield. *If it's an artillery type, it can't be as maneuverable as an MS type. But if it sees us, we'll have a big problem. We're going to need to be quick.* He checked his map and looked at where the tarp had been located. Suddenly, his suit twisted and fired its thrusters directly up, and he raised his machine gun, firing as he rose above the clifftop. Puffs of dust shot up from the ground as the bullets tore through the tarp, but it was flat. There was no way the MS could be hiding underneath it. *We've been had!*

Reflexively, Johann jerked to the left as a massive shell blew past his head, the spiraling projectile passing not an inch from his left vulcan gun. He instantly looked in the direction where the attack had come from, and saw a massive tracked vehicle speeding towards him. It looked like...

"A tank?"

"What did you say?"

"The enemy is a tank!"

"Guntank, Zaku Tank, what?"

"Just a tank! It looks like a big tank!" The enemy machine had four large treads, two in front, two in back. They looked trapezoidal, with four wheels around which the tracks rolled.

"Are you sure?"

"Positive!"

“Yeah, you’re right! I see it!”

“Can you hit it, Mia?”

“Who the hell do you think you’re talking to!”

“I’ll leave it to you, then. I’ll see if I can engage it.”

“Understood.”

Johann dashed forwards, then fired at the tank. It made a quick turn, aiming its main gun at him, and Johann boosted into the air, leaping high above the shell that was fired at his suit. It exploded in the distance, causing a rock formation to collapse. He landed on the ground, sliding a few feet, then aimed his rifle at the--*What? Where is it?*

He checked his radar, but before he could, an alert popped up on his viewscreen, and his eyes shot up. His eyes widened.

Sailing through the air was the tank, but it was no longer just a tank. The four treads had rotated downwards, making what looked like legs. A section in the front of the suit had extended, creating what looked like a bestial head. The middle of the tank was now arched, folding slightly in the middle. The entire gunpla now looked like some kind of machine animal with a large gun on the back.

“Johann! Move!”

Mia’s voice snapped him back to reality, and he dashed to the left. However, small thrusters on the sides of the beast pushed it towards him, and Johann managed to dodge by only a meter.

He raised his machine gun, but suddenly two beam saber blades sprouted from either side of the head, which flicked up and sliced the gun in half.

“Shit! Mia, ETA?”

“You two are too close together! I can’t be sure I’ll hit only the tank!”

“Just take the shot!”

“Fine, have it your way!”

Johann slammed the claw of his shield into the enemy’s head, causing the sabers to short out. However, it seemed the cockpit wasn’t in the head, since the battle didn’t end, and the tank pulled back, coming around for another shot.

“Like hell!” He swung his right arm up and fired the rocket anchor, which embedded itself into the tank’s armor. “You’re staying with me!” He quickly retracted the cable and drove his shield into the top of the armor, attempting to pin the suit. He fired his vulcans and the small anti-personnel gun on his chest, but no luck, the armor was simply too thick. The bullets sparked off of it. “Mia, take the shot!”

“I’m working on it!”

“Don’t worry about me! I can fix a gunpla!”

“Fine, whatever!”

Suddenly, Johann’s right arm shattered, and a hole appeared in the center of the machine. It shuddered for a second then slumped down, and Johann boosted back as it exploded.

[BATTLE ENDED]

“So I want to stay. No, I’m going to stay, because this is something I’ve decided I want to do.”

“Fira, you’re being a lot more willful than usual.”

“Dad, this isn’t me trying to be rebellious. I made a promise to someone, and I don’t break promises.”

There were a few seconds of silence. “A promise? To who?”

“Someone I knew as a kid. I promised him I would battle him if I ever met him again, and I intend to keep that promise.”

“As a kid? Does that really still matter?”

“Are you asking an Ellias to break a promise?”

“Fira, that’s not the same thing--”

“It is to me.” The tone of those four words were final, leaving no room for debate.

“I see.” He was silent for another second. “Fine, I’ll allow it.”

“Wait, really?”

“Hey, don’t act like I’m so unreasonable. It’s just...you’re a lot like your mother.”

“Huh?”

“She rarely made up her mind, but when she did, she was unshakeable.”

"I'm surprised; you never talk about mom."

"Well, good luck. I'm sure the boy is going to be happy."

"Wait, what? When did I say anything about him being a boy?"

"You didn't, but I suspected."

"Wipe that smug smile off your face!"

"Ah, he's got a long road ahead of him, doesn't he?"

"There's nothing like that going on!"

"Of course, of course."

"I'm serious!"

"If you say so."

"Stop gloating!"

"You can't make me!"

"Aren't you supposed to be an adult?"

"And the greatest joy of a father is the right to tease his kids. I love you, Fira. Have fun."

"I love you too, dad."

Click.