

#0: Meet the Agents

"Let's see... Response Center 113... 113... Damn it, why do all of these hallways look alike?"

Agent Keats, glanced down at the slip of paper in his hand, then at the long gray halls, shifting the box under his arm so he could get a better grip on it.

"Now what did they tell me? I just have to not think about it?" He paused for a moment, "What does that mean?" Keats glanced about the long gray halls, feeling his ponytail brush against his neck as he did.

Hard to think something so simple could mean so much...

Keats' thoughts drifted back to when he had first arrived, a former Renegade from the Tales of Symphonia continuum. As a Bit Character with no name and barely any appearance to speak of, he had fallen through a Plot Hole after being attacked by what he now knew to be a Mary Sue.

Lost and confused, Keats had ended up running through the base eventually running into the biggest sunflower he'd ever seen (and considering he'd never seen a sunflower before, that was saying something). The... sunflower was able to talk him out of turning him/hurt/it/whatever into mulch, and only then did it occur to him that he had no name, no real appearance underneath the helmet, no identity whatsoever.

With nowhere to go, he'd reluctantly signed up to join this...Protectors of the Plot Continuum thing. In return, they had given him a name and an appearance, as well as training and knowledge of his situation, though finding out that he was only part of a fictional series (and not part of the continuum itself, even!) was an unpleasant shock for him.

Once that had worn off, though, he'd thrown himself into training, and, after much work, finally managed to become an agent. Now he was on his way to his Response Center, if he could only find it, that is...

Then he stopped, blinking in surprise. In front of him was a door, barely distinguishable from the walls around it, save for a hand-made sign proclaiming "RC 113". Beyond the door, he could hear someone singing, and not all that well, either.

"Guess this is the place..."

Taking a moment to readjust the box under his arm, and to put the slip of paper away, he cautiously lifted a hand and knocked.

Meanwhile, the sole occupant of the room was currently in the process of putting a poster up on the wall. As she did, she was singing along to the mp3 player in her pocket, music blasting through her earphones.

"Noooo, no more sor-row, I've paid for your mis-takes, youuuurr time is bor-ro-wed, you time has come to be e-rassseedd..."

The newly-minted Agent Gijinka stepped back to examine her handiwork, hands on her hips.

"Perfect!" Just then there came a knock at the door, and she spun around, pulling out the earphones as she did. "Come in!"

After a moment, the door opened and a young man stepped in, giving Gijinka a first glimpse of her new partner. He was fairly tall, with lightly-tanned skin and sharp hazel eyes, and wore a black t-shirt and jeans, the usual outfit of a PPC agent. But what really got her attention was the scar across his nose, the slightly pointed ears, and the fact that his hair was bright scarlet and

tied back in a short ponytail. Along with the cardboard box under one arm, he had a black satchel over across one shoulder and a large broadsword strapped across his back.

At the same time, Keats examined his new partner. She looked to be about 20 or so, slightly heavy-set with glasses and short brown hair. She wore jeans and a t-shirt as well, though her shirt bore the legend "I like my digital life so much better than my stupid real life".

He also took a moment to regard his new Response Center. The room looked fairly small at first glance, but that was probably because there was so much stuff crammed into it. For starters, there was a console in one corner, and what looked to be a food replicator next to a small fridge. Against a back wall was a bookshelf fully stocked with a variety of literature with a few beanbag chairs set in front. At one end of the room were two neatly-made cots, one was presumably his, the other had a few plushies by the pillow and a black steamer trunk beneath it. Finally, there were two other doors, one marked "Bathroom" and the other "Closet". To add to the decor, Gijinka had put up posters all around the room, ranging from various bands and fantasy images, to films and anime, and even one of Jay and Acacia, the PPC's most celebrated agents.

"So, uh, you're my new partner, right?" Gijinka asked after a moment.

"Huh? Oh, right. My name's Keats." The young man said, holding out one hand. "And you are...?"

"Agent Gijinka," the other Agent responded, taking his hand and shaking it. Keats offhandedly noted that her hands were smudged with ink stains. "Nice to meet you."

The Half-Elf agent raised an eyebrow. "That's an... unusual name."

"Oh, it's not my real name," Gijinka replied. "It's from my fan fiction-writing moniker, back when I wrote fan fics. I still do, though, but not as often as I used to, I mean, I wanna improve before I get back to that. But I joined the PPC 'cause I was sick of seeing all the Mary Sues and whatnot..."

Keats held up his hand as if to protect against her rambling. "Okay, okay, I get it."

Gijinka blinked. "So, where're you from?"

The other Agent fell silent for a moment, almost looking lost in thought. After a moment, he spoke up again. "Well... I came from a Tales of Symphonia Suefic, a pretty nasty one from what I can remember. I... didn't have much of a part, just a nameless Renegade, really. I fell through a Plot Hole into Headquarters so they asked me to join up, and well, the rest is history..."

Keats noted that her expression was blank for a moment as if she was talking it all in... then suddenly she seemed to explode with excitement, the words falling from her mouth in a rush.

"Oh WOW! You're from the Tales of Symphonia 'verse! Awesome! Have you ever met any of the characters? Do Apple Gels really taste like apples? Hey, did anyone ever tell you your hair makes you kinda look like Zelos?"

Keats blinked. "Er... no, not really." Mentally, he sighed. *Great, just great. Of all the partners in the whole PPC, I get stuck with the crazy fangirl.* Out loud, he said, "Look, if we're gonna be partners, you'll have to keep the fangirling down to a minimum."

The girl frowned, crossing her arms across her front. "I make no promises."

The Half-Elven agent just sighed and put the box he was carrying on his cot. "Well, I guess I'd better settle in before I get any more-"

BEEEEEEEEEEEEPPPPPPPPPPPP!!

"-Surprises."

