**Rating:** Teen And Up Audiences  
**Archive Warning:** Graphic Depictions Of Violence  
**Category:** F/M, Gen, Other  
**Fandom:** Sword Art Online  
**Relationship:** Kirigaya Kazuto | Kirito | Yuuki Asuna | Asuna, Kirigaya Suguha | Leafa/Original Male Character(s), Konno Yuuki | Yuuki/Original Male Character(s), Shinozaki Rika | Lisbeth/Original Male Character(s), Ayano Keiko | Silica/Original Male Character(s), Asada Shino | Sinon/Original Character(s)  
**Additional Tags:** Alternate Canon, Military Background, Friendship/Love, Romance, World War III, Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Minor Character Death, Original Character Death(s), Mild Blood  
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**SAO: Warfare**  
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**Summary**  

In the aftermath of the incidents, the SAO/ALO gang enjoys life as good things begin to happen on several occasions. However, they get caught in the middle of the war that consumes nations worldwide. They took up arms and fought against the invaders only to discover the enemy's plans. They take the war to cyberspace that'll decide the whole fate of the free world.  

(In process of being re-edit)
Kirito investigates the killings of players in the real world in Gun Gala Online. During the 'Bullet of Bullets' tournament, he befriends a fellow player 'Sinon' who teamed up to go against 'Death Gun, a player who has a past in SAO and help put an end to his killing spree. Alex helps out even in the aftermath of 'Death Gun.' They learn about the player.

After events on the ‘ALO’ and ‘Sugou’ incidents, the SAO survivors finally relaxed. Kazuto and Asuna are together as their love towards each other continues to bloom. The love between Alexander Mitchell and Suguha Kirigaya continues to bloom as well.

However, there will be a series of events that'll have given the black swordsman an assignment, followed by an online game quest on New Year’s Day and a play who is diagnosed with a fatal disease while a cure is sought for the person.

But little what future lies for Kazuto, Asuna and the others will send them towards a world plunged into darkness and decide the whole fate of the free world.

December 14th, 2025:

Alex Mitchell heads to the hospital that his friend, Kazuto Kirigaya, aka Kirito, is at. He knew that something was up with Kazuto in the past few days. Kirito has transferred his avatar account to the GGO account.

He too managed to transfer his avatar to GGO as well. He did have a hard time locating him, and when he finally did, he couldn’t help but laugh at Kirito’s girly appearance. Kirito mentioned that something went awry during the transfer and gave him a feminine appearance and yet Alex came out just fine.

Alex too signed up for the ‘Bullet of Bullets’ tournament and has managed to gain some place. Later on, like Kirito, he too met Death Gun and also recognized the ‘Laughing Coffin’ symbol on his arm and agrees to protect Kirito and his new friend Sinon from this guy at all cost.

However, during the final round, his avatar got killed by another player and is forced to withdraw from the tournament.

He made it to the hospital and finds the room he’s staying at which his health and condition is monitored. He also finds Asuna with the tablet that Yui can communicate through. On the flat screen tv, he sees Kirito battling Death Gun in a vicious sword fight.

"Come on, Kirito," Alex murmured nervously, "take that son of a gun out..." However, Kirito is
getting serious of slashes from Death Gun’s sword. Sweat begins to pour from Kirito’s forehead. Asuna is extremely worried as well as Yui is.

"Kirito..." Asuna said. Looking over to his body, she knelt down and took his hand in prayer.

"Please daddy, you gotta keep strong," Yui said through the tablet as she is placed between Kirito and Asuna’s hand. It seems that it may be Kirito’s last stand and all hope appears to be lost. However, a chance is given when Death Gun sees Sinon aiming her scopeless rifle at him and he moves away to avoid it. This gave Kirito a chance he needed and he charges him with a series of sword attacks.

"I'll be..." Alex's voice was a mix of shock and relief as he watched Kirito pull out his handgun and fire into Deathgun's cloak, disabling his cloaking. The black swordsman delivered the coup de grace with the lightsaber, slicing into the sinister avatar, and splitting him in half. Asuna, on the other hand, is overjoyed that he pulled through.

"Daddy made it!" Yui said happily. Asuna smiled back at Kazuto, even if his body was not responding. She teared up in joy at his survival. However, when Sinon went over to his avatar, both she and Alex were reminded that the game was not over.

'What now, Kazuto?' she thought. The title appears, proclaiming the two winners of the ‘Bullet of Bullets’ tournament. Then a ‘souvenir’ grenade is given to them. Sinon then gives Kirito a friendly hug as she gives the grenade to them. Kirito freaks out as the grenade explodes.

Bot Alex and Asuna were confused at that moment.

"Umm... what was that?" Asuna was left hanging.

“I have no idea,” Alex said he didn’t recall his older brother Jonathan said anything about this. He looks at Kazuto, his life signs are normal. “Since nothing happens, he should be coming back very soon.”

"Still... that was weird," Asuna remarked as the two surprising winners were announced. She had to wonder why this Simon character had to hug her boyfriend like that.

Alex notices it as she did, but he doubted it means anything. “I’m sure that hug meant nothing,” Alex reassured Asuna. “She’s probably got caught in the moment they won. That could happen sometimes.”

"Mmmm..." Yui hummed with a visible pout. She certainly did not like other girls laying their hands on her dad beside her mommy. After a minute, Kazuto comes to from the AmuSphere. He gets up and smiles as the first person he saw is Asuna. "Asuna..."

"Kazuto..." Asuna's eyes teared up as she held his hand. She moves close to his bed and gives him a warming embrace.

"You did it..." Asuna cooed.

"Daddy," Yui also teared up.

Kazuto looked to the hand Asuna was grasping. It was then that he understood the sensation. "Thanks for that support, Asuna. I almost forgot something important there," Kazuto weakly chuckled.

“Is it something to do with this ‘Sinon’ character?” She asked. Her eyebrow raised when she asked
"Wha?" Kazuto was initially startled. There was a bit of silence between them before the boy laughed.

"No silly," he explained, "you made me remember my gun just now!"

"And that hug she gave you?" She asked. A hint of worry and disapproval that her Kazuto would allow another girl to hug him like that.

"S-she caught me off guard!" Kazuto defended, "she's just a friend who got caught up in all this!" He then squeezed her hand. "No one can ever replace you, my Asuna..."

Kazuto waited for Asuna to respond. The silence was long between the two. Then she smiles and took his hand, showing that she understands.

"I can see how you snatched Asuna so easily," Alex teased, "you are one chick magnet!"

Kazuto chuckled nervously. "I give smiles to some." He continued. "But I give my heart to only one... my heart is always yours and yours alone Asuna."

Asuna's eyes lit up as she embraced him. "Thank you..." Asuna was touched by his words.

As they broke their embrace, Kazuto's expression turned serious. "Still, I need to see if Sinon is alright after all that," he said, "hopefully Death Gun's accomplice chose to leave her alone."

"I could check for you." Alex volunteered. "Just gotta tell me where she lives."

Kazuto nodded. He spilled the details to Alex, and the latter was off to Sinon's house. Leaving him with Asuna and Yui in the room together.

"You fought so hard that you were actually sweating..." Asuna said.

"Yeah, he was hard to beat like before," Kazuto commented. "But I managed to defeat him."

"Yeah," Asuna said in a worried tone, "but who would have thought that Red Xaxa was still trying to keep the death game going... Talk about someone stuck in the past."

"Yeah..." Kazuto said. "But at least he'll be behind bars for his crimes."

"Thank goodness," Asuna said as she stroked Kazuto's chest. He rests his head on her shoulder and sighs happily.

"Ohhh, Mommy and Daddy are getting lovey-dovey?" Yui beamed in excitement. Ms. Aki also looked on in amusement with a smirk. Kazuto and Asuna smiled lovely and shared warm gazes into each other's eyes. It was then that Kazuto and Asuna shared a heated kiss together, losing themselves in it.

Alex Mitchell reaches the address Kazuto gave him. He hops off the bike and headed towards the apartment complex that Sinon is living. He and his family have been living in Japan for a decade and he's gotten used to the architect of the nation. He heads towards one of them, but as he does so, he
hears someone scream. Someone’s in trouble he thought and he kicks the door in and sees Sinon without the blue hair and a male teenager around her age appears to force himself onto her. He kicks him in the face and wrestles him towards the ground.

"Who the hell are you!?" the intruder screamed at him. He reached up and tried to grab Alex by the face.

But Alex manages to pin him towards the wall. "The one that Kirito sent." He replied. Then he saw the intruder reach into his coat pocket and pulls out what appears to be an unknown type of syringe and he attempts to jab it into Alex's stomach. But he quickly moved out of the way, causing him to jab the syringe into the air. He then slams his knee against the intruder's elbow, bending it outward and causing him to drop the syringe.

"Give it up," Alex said, "the police already know what's going on, and they're on their way!"

"You took everything away from me!" The intruder struggled, straining from his broken arm, but it was no use.

"What it looked like was that you were about to murder her, just like the rest of those players you and your brother did in," Alex growled. He twisted his arm further. "You've just run out of time."

The intruder tries to struggle free, only to realize it's hopeless, Alex has him pinned down. It was then that the black-haired girl with the glasses recovered and stood up. She walked back into her room in full view of the light. Alex takes the intruder’s belt off of him and made make-shift handcuffs that bounded his hands where he came to move.

"..Kyouji…" the black haired girl murmured the boy's name. Alex deduced that she was Sinon, based on her similarities to her avatar.

“I’m guessing you’re Sinon? Hopefully, I got it right on the first time.” Alex said as he got up on his feet.

"Yeah..." Sinon said cautiously, "but you aren't Kirito..." She did not know if she could completely trust this young man.

“No, he sent me here to check on you,” Alex replied. Sinon then recalls another character who appeared sometime after Kirito signed up for the ‘Bullet of Bullets’ tournament. And he seemed to be a friend of Kirito as she remembers chatting together. Then it hit her.

“Are you Lexar?” Sinon asked.

"You bet your dollars I am," Alex smiled.

“I remember seeing you with Kirito.” She added.

"Yeah," Alex scratched his head, "he and I go some ways back in SAO, you see..."

It was then that Kyoushi squirmed under Alex. "Hey who are you to talk to my Shino-" He did not get to finish as an aggravated Sinon suddenly smashed her music player over his head.

"Whoa!" Alex flinched back. That rendered Kyoushi unconscious; Alex was surprised for the sudden aggression Sinon has shown, then again, he’d seen her in the tournament so it wouldn’t be a surprise. Sinon collapsed onto her floor, clearly, a bit drained from the adrenaline rush.

"Sorry about that, Lexar," she sighed, "it's just been a long evening for me. This guy was supposed
to be my friend, but it turns out that he was in cahoots.” Alex kneels down to see if she’s alright and
finds the syringe that Kyouji tried to inject into him and picks it up.

“I’ve never seen this type of syringe,” Alex commented on the designs. “This must be a new one.”

"Probably got it from his dad's hospital," Sinon said, "that's for some of the less cooperative
patients."

They both looked at the unconscious Kyouji. “Pity that he’ll resort to this,” Alex said in a low tone.

"He was never like this," Sinon said, "or I at least I thought he wasn't. I guess I never really knew
him." After some time, the police came and took Kyouji away.

"By the way," Alex perked up, "Kirito and I didn't quite get your real name."

“Shino Asada,” Sinon replied. “And yours?”

“Alexander Mitchell, but you can call me Alex.” Alex smiled as he extended his hand to her.

"Nice to meet you, American,” Shino greeted with a handshake.

December 15th, the next day:

Alex arrived at one of the schools in Tokyo. According to Kirito and Shino; this is the school she
goes to. He saw Sinon coming out from behind the school. She looked as though she had just come
out of a test, but Alex just brushed it off. "Hey Shino, over here!"

Sinon sees him and she headed towards him. A few of the girls behind her gossiped about how cute
Alex was, but he ignored it. If anything, he could not wait to be back with Suguha at the café.

"Having a good day?" he asked Shino.

“I have.” She replied. “It was a little rough, but it was nothing.” After Sinon hopped on the back of
the bike, Alex starts it up and takes off.

“Where are we going?” Sinon asked.

“We’re meeting Kirito and the other guy who contacted him on the Death Gun incident,” Alex
replied.

"I see..." Sinon said rather nonchalantly. After a few minutes, they arrived at the restaurant; Alex
sees Kazuto and waves to him. Kazuto waved both teens over. As expected, Kikuoka was also there
with his knowledge, professional smirk. Alex and Sinon headed towards them.

"Ah... the winner of the 3rd Bullet of Bullets," the man curtsied. He stood up and extended a
handshake. "How do you do, Miss?"

“Uh…Fine I guess.” She answered with a handshake. “And you might be..?”

"Seijirou Kikuoka," the agent introduced himself, "but you can just call me Kikuoka."
“It’s an honor to meet you Mr. Kikuoka.” Sinon continued.

“Mind if we continue this conversation inside?” Kikuoka suggested.

Sinon nodded. As this was on Kikuoka, he brought the three inside and ordered them some sweet desserts to soothe their nerves.

“I understand that you contacted Kazuto on this matter some days ago, is that correct?” Alex asked Kikouka as he takes the first bite of the dessert.

"Yes," Kikuoka answered, "though it wasn't like I was going to let him wing it as he did in ALO. I entrusted Ms. Aki with his wellbeing due to her stellar service during the SAO Incident."

“Kinda figured since I’ve got wind of what he was up to,” Alex added.

"So it seems," Kikuoka narrowed his gaze, thinking about his operational security. Then again, he kind of broke it when he told Asuna about it all.

“We do stick together since SAO,” Alex added,

Kirito nodded in agreement. “He’s right.”

"I see," Kikuoka relented, "then I suppose that we can move on to the heart of this matter."

“Of course,” Kirito said as he continues on his dessert.

“What of Kyouji’s true agenda?” Alex asks. Kikuoka cleared his throat, and then looked at the three teens with a serious expression. "As you all are probably aware of at this point, Kyouji Shinkawa is the younger brother of Shouichi, otherwise known to us as Red Xaxa. Thanks to Kazuto here, we were able to decipher how Death Gun was able to pull off the murders."

Kikuoka then glanced to the boy in black. Kazuto picked up on the cue, who deadpanned somewhat. He then put down his dessert.

“Kyouji acted as Shouichi’s accomplice after SAO was cleared a year ago,” Kazuto said. “While Red Xaxa acted out in GGO, Kyouji found the addresses of players who lived in apartment complexes with low securities. Using the syringe and timing his shot with Death Gun's online, Kyouji was able to make it look like that Death Gun was killing the players with that pistol.”

“Also we’ve learned that the managed to get their hands on the syringe through their father.” He continued.

"The owner of that hospital," Alex added.

“Precisely,” Kazuto said. “The injections were designed for less-corporative patients.”

“Yeesh.” Alex cringed from the thought. “And come to think Kyouji tried to stab one in me. Good thing I managed to move out of the way when I did and subdued him.”

"Still," Shino mused, "with all that ground to cover with the players of the BoB tournament, including myself..." The others took note of the slight chill in her voice. "There was no way that just two brothers would be enough. Kyouji could not drive, so how would he have gone such far distances?"

"I think I may have an idea who might have taking Kyouji around,” Kazuto said. "Johnny Black."
Kikuoka seemed to confirm Kazuto's words with a frown. "Johnny Black, aka Kanamoto Atsushi. According to his file, he was Shouichi's best friend. When they were both trapped in SAO, Atsushi joined him in Laughing Coffin."

"Even after SAO, he agreed to become part of Shouichi’s plans to continue killing players," Kazuto added.

Alex shook his head at that. He glanced out the window at the hustle and bustle below. "And for what? Just to get everyone's attention?" He swirled his spoon about his cup's rim. "If you think about it, it's some pretty extreme measures for something so trivial."

"Indeed," Kazuto said.

Kikuoka spoke up. "Right now, we have the two brothers in medical detention, undergoing psychiatric examination. As for Atsushi, he managed to escape, and is still at large."

"I'm sure he'll turn up eventually," Alex commented.

"I doubt he'll stay hidden for long." Kikuoka hummed. It was then that he looked out the window and said, "with Shouichi and Kyouji as they are, though, I'm not certain if they'll ever be able to distinguish between VR and reality anymore."

It was then Shino said, "Kyouji's reality was Gun Gale Online; he had abandoned the real world for it."

"What?" the American boy questioned.

"Ms. Shino, what do you mean?" Kikuoka had a quizzical expression.

"I think what she's meant that Kyouji did that because he wanted to become stronger," Kazuto explained.

Kazuto reflected even further. "I understand the feeling, because, in a way, I left a part of myself in SAO," he explained, "yes, it was a death game that I and many others wanted to escape, but I cannot deny that it was because of that very desperation that drove my quest to become stronger, for myself, then for the people I love."

"Indeed. That what drove us into pushing to greater limits." Alex added before continuing. "Especially back in January."

"Not to mention me trying to get over my own fears as well," Sinon admitted.

It was then Kikuoka said. "I'll let you know when Kyouji’s able to get visitors. But it may take a while."

Sinon accepted. "Please do that," she said.

Alex looked at her as though she had grown two heads. "Girl. That guy just tried to murder you!"

"I mean, I understand he was your friend, but still…" He continued.

Sinon shook her head. "I know that... but there is much that I want to talk to him about. That includes everything we've discussed today. There might still be some hope, which he is not completely gone despite what his brother did to him."

Kikouka nodded before speaking. "In that case, I’ll let you know when...." He turned to Kazuto.
“Also, there was a message left by Shouichi for you. Do you wish to hear it?” Alex was a little unnerved. He looked to Kazuto, waiting for a response.

“Yes, can you play it?” Kazuto asked. Kikouka plays the recording.

“What has happened in Gun Gala Online will not be the last. My work will continue on in the future and you will be powerless to stop it.” Shouichi says in the recording. The recording left the three teenagers chilled from his words. It may not be the last time they’ll see him.

"Not exactly, Shouichi," Kazuto murmured, "I’ll be waiting for you if that happens, and I will not be alone." Alex nods as Kazuto finished. The two boys were not going to let their guard down so easily after this GGO incident. If Shouichi wanted to wait for them, they were going to wait for him first.

The group of four finished their desserts, with Kikuoka paying the tab and leaving in a taxi.

“So, ready to head to the dicey café?” Alex asked he was eager to see Suguha there.

"I’ll lead the way," Kazuto offered. Getting on his bike, he gestured over to Shino. She got on and held on as Kazuto started his bike. Alex starts his bike up and follows Kazuto.

A few minutes later they’ve arrived at the café. The two boys and Shino entered through the doors and they see Asuna, Suguha, and Rika. Both Kazuto and Alex smiled to see their girlfriends at the bar waiting for them.

Asuna smiles when she saw Kazuto, she gets up, heads towards him to give him a warm embrace.

"Hi, Kazuto," Asuna greeted with closed eyes. Her touch was soft and warm as ever.

"Asuna," Kazuto returned it with a firm, yet comforting hug.

Alex grinned at Suguha, who gave a shy smile. He heads over to her and gives her a firm, but comfort hug. “Suguha.” He said softly as he feels her head resting on his shoulder.

"Hey, Alex," Suguha greeted.

Sinon watched this and felt her heartstrings get tugged. ‘So they are their girlfriends,’ she thought of the two girls embracing Kazuto and Alex. Rika just watched the two couples and sighs softly.

The hugging then stopped as Kazuto speaks. “Asuna, Sugu, Rika, this is Shino.”

"Nice to meet you, Shino," Asuna greeted first, "I'm Asuna."

"Suguha."

"And the one and only, Rika!"

Shino was rather shy in raising her hand. "Well nice to meet you all."

“Also, there is another guest that is coming here,” Kazuto says to Shino.

"Huh?” Shino blinked her eyes.
However, Rika suddenly interrupted, "come have a seat and drink with us. We three girls have heard a lot about you from these two stooges." She ended with a snicker.

"S-stooges?" Alex questioned.

"Rika..." Kazuto sighed. Asuna and Sugu giggled.

“Ok,” Shino said as she sat down with the three girls. The six sat down at a table together, sharing things such as who each of them was, how the two present couples got together, and their interests. Gradually, Shino felt more and more comfortable around this group, which seemed to be very outgoing and friendly. Shino also learned from Alex that his family moved to Japan in 2015 after his father, David Mitchell stationed in one of the US naval bases outside of Tokyo which not only the base served for the Coalition of Allied Nations, but the Mitchell family have a house built nearby where it has a great view of the base and the Pacific ocean. His older brother Jonathan joined the US Navy in 2019 after high school and is now holding the promotion of Lieutenant junior grade at the same base their father is at.

"So you're actually from a military family, for real?" Shino said with a hint of amazement in her voice. After all, it was not common or prestigious for people in Japan to talk about military service or family history for that matter.

“That’s right.” Alex smiled. “I came from a big family, ranging from military services to politicians. I also have an uncle who’s not only a part of a political party but a novelist as well.” Shino smiled at this, albeit shyly. It was then Kazuto mentions that the person who is coming over to the café is from the same town Shino once lived. Shino had to wonder who it was.

“Kazuto told us what happened to you.” Asuna said to Shino, her eyes widen from shock and she turned to Kazuto. Fearful of the next response, she was about to back away when Alex suddenly stopped her. "This guest you are about to meet is someone very important," he reasoned, "please, Shino. At least hear her out."

“I understand what happened was horrible, but you cannot outrun the past," Kazuto added. It was just then a woman came in the café with her daughter. Shino looked at the two curiously as they approached. It was then that the woman asked, "Shino Asada, isn't it?"

"Uh...Yes, indeed I am.” Shino said nervously. It was then that the woman and her daughter bowed. "I'm not sure if you remember me," she began, "but I was the woman who previously worked at the bank that day." It was a painful memory for Shino, but she lets the woman continue.

"You may not have known this at the time," the woman went on. She then turned to the little girl beside her. "...but I was actually pregnant with her when that man tried to rob us."

"W-what?" Shino thought in shock. Suddenly, the expression of fear on the woman's face started to come back to her.

"If it wasn't for you, me and my daughter, Mizue, wouldn't be here." The woman continued. "We like to thank you for saving all of those people that day."

"Huh!?" Shino was blown away. After all, in her mind, no one that day would have been thinking that she was a hero, let alone her mother. For this woman to come and thank her for what she did turn that all upside down.

"But we also want you to forgive yourself after that.” She continued. It was just then her daughter, Mizue showed Shino a drawing she made of herself, her mother and Shino. Shino was stunned but
then started to tear up. Naturally, Asuna and Sugu started to become concerned, but their boyfriends gave them reassuring glances.

Shino looked to the little girl again, who said, "thank you for saving Mommy and me!"

Tears continued to stream down her face as the little girl's words touched her. With that, she took the little girl's hands into her own for a few seconds. Then she went for an enveloping, yet gentle hug as she softly cried. The others, including Alex and Suguha, found the sight endearing.

"Think she's learning to let go at last?" Sugu asked Alex as she leaned against him.

“It appears so,” Alex commented. “But I do hope that she finds someone that cares for her.”
Excalibur

Chapter Summary

Kirito and the gang begins the quest for Excalibur. During the quest, Lisbeth and Silica begins to take interest of Alex's new friends.

December 28th, 2025:

Asuna Yuuki relaxed in the bathtub. So far, life’s been treating her great so far. Although the Death Gun investigation did had her worried. But at least Kazuto made it out ok and they’ve made a new friend, Shino Asada. They’ve managed to help her let go of the tragic past that haunted here, even she no longer gets panic attacks whenever she sees anything resembling a gun.

She also couldn’t believe she and Kazuto found the wooden house that they had bought on the original Aincrad on the 22nd Floor in back in SAO. Plus New Years’ is coming up and she’s planning to spend it with Kazuto.

‘Kazuto...’ Asuna thought blissfully. Every time she thought of him, her body would just heat up with all the things they did together, both innocent and intimate. The warmth of the water just made it even stronger. However, her dreams were interrupted when her smartphone rang. She turns over to look at it and it was Kazuto. Gleefully, she answers it. “Hello, Kazuto.” She says sweetly.

"Hey, Beautiful," Kazuto's voice came through, "what's happening with you?"

“Not much. Just relaxing and thinking about you.” She replies.

Kazuto laughed. "What, having a bath while getting all steamy and hot about me?" he guessed.

This caused Asuna to blush brilliantly. She almost rebuked him when it settled on her that Kazuto guessed right.

"Y-you hit it on the nail there," Asuna admitted.

"Well, if you don't mind," Kazuto suggested, "I could come over and give you a REAL good bath in there."

“Mmmmm...I would love that.” Asuna cooed from the thought.

"Then I'd get to rub you and touch you in all the right places," Kazuto suggested with a naughty tone.

“Oh, Kazuto.” Asuna sighed from that thought. ‘We should try that someday.’ She thought to herself. Then shaking her head clear, she then refocused.

"So, anything else you are calling me for, besides getting me aroused in here?" she giggled.

“The gang and I are planning to start a quest to obtain the Holy Sword called Excalibur. And I was hoping you can aid us on the quest.” Kazuto says.
"Why not?" Asuna agreed with a smile. However, she could not help but notice just how heated her body had become from their earlier talk. Deciding to see, she had her hand move under the water towards herself. Upon grazing her skin, she moaned audibly.

Kazuto chuckled when he heard Asuna’s moaning from his end. “Can’t wait to see me after the quest?” He asked.

Asuna giggled. "You could make a mutual bath a reward for me coming on this quest for you,” she suggested, "then I can show you a few new tricks myself."

“Ooohh, I can’t wait.” Kazuto said excitedly.

"Promise?" Asuna asked.

“I promise, my love,” Kazuto says. “See you then. Love you Asuna.”

"Love you too," Asuna said, before hanging up. As she settled back into the bath, she was all smiling.

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The Mitchell Residence.

Alex gazes at the view of the Pacific Ocean. Both his older brother and father are down at the naval base and moms out at the hospital doing rounds; leaving him by himself. He’s learned that his Johnathan is set to get a promotion. He’s asked his father if Suguha and his friends could be invited to the ceremony. But he said that he could, just gotta check with the planning.

‘Hard to believe my older brother is getting promoted’ he thought to himself. It couldn’t get any better than this. Then he hears his smartphone ringing, he looks at it and shows the picture of Suguha. He quickly answers it. “Hey, Sugu,” Alex said happily.

"Alex-kun!" Suguha chimed, "you free today?"

“Yep, got nothing planned,” Alex replied before asking. “Why you ask?”

"Kazuto’s found this great quest to find this sword known as Excalibur," Suguha told him, "everyone else is being invited, and so I thought I’d call you! Want to come along?"

“That sounds great Sugu,” Alex said with excitement. “Also, think Kazuto mind if I bring a few of my friends with me on the quest?”

"Of course not! The more the merrier!" Suguha laughed.

“Great. We’ll see you and Kazuto soon. Love you Suguha.” Alex said.

"I love you too, Alex," Suguha said, before hanging up. Alex makes a note for his family in case they come back soon and wonder why he’s on the AmuSphere before contacting a few friends.
Kirito and Lexar were the first to see each other as they logged into ALO.

"Yay! We're the first, Kirito!" Lexar cheered as the two Spriggans fist-bumped each other.

“We sure are,” Kirito said. “I'm glad you've accepted the quest.”

“Yep, I've also brought a few other people to the quest as well.” Lexar added, “Hope you don't mind.”

"Of course not," Kirito laughed, "more people means more fun after all."

It was then that several more lights shone as players logged in. First, Leafa appears, then Klein, Lisbeth, Silica, Sinon and finally, Asuna.

"Lexar!" Leafa cheered as she ran up to him and hugged him.

"Hey, Leafa," Lexar greeted as he gently stroked her hair.

Meanwhile, Asuna was walking up to Kirito with a noticeable sway in her hips.

“Asuna,” Kirito said as he stared at her, mesmerized by the way his in-game wife walked. Asuna giggled as she stroked his chin. "My, my," she cooed, "someone's ready for me, isn't he." She giggled as Kirito blushed, wrapped around her finger.

All the others had various reactions, from amused to weirded out.

“I got great news if you want to hear it.” Asuna said softly in his ear.

"Yes?" Kirito murmured, forgetting that the two had an audience.

“I’m free on New Year’s.” She then says. “We could spend New Year’s together if you want.” She winked at him.

"Y-you mean?" Kirito stammered. This made the bluenette giggle.

"Everything you want, I'll show you," Asuna said as she hitched her leg up along Kirito's hip. This made his heart do leaps and bounds. She was seriously seducing him. Lexar smiled as Asuna seductively embraced Kirito. Leafa, on the other hand, blushes heavily from the sight of her cousin and his in-game wife wrapping her leg around his hip. Silica blushes from what she is witnessing. Klein smiles as he gives him two thumbs up before commenting. “Kirito, you’re one lucky dog.”

"Oy!" Lisbeth decided to call it, "you two sexy specimens can do that later, alright!? We've got a quest, and this is public for crying out loud!"

Kirito and Asuna stopped midway, with the latter clinging on to the former. Asuna was now hot and blushing, while Kirito stared at the others.

Lisbeth held her nose high in annoyance. "Sheesh, you two," she complained, "What is it, Asuna? Is Kirito not getting you laid enough that you have to be so lovey-dovey out in the open!?"

"Heh, heh," Kirito nervously chuckled, though his girlfriend seemed to have a different reaction.
"I could argue that someone here isn't getting enough love right now," Asuna said seductively. She winked at Lisbeth.

Lisbeth just scoffed. ‘Whatever.’ She muttered.

"Hahahaha," Asuna giggled. Kirito just held her, smiling all the while. It was just then, three more lights are shown, Alex smiles as this means that they’ve arrived.

They were three young boys around Lexar's age, each one good looking in his own way.

“Everyone, this is Scott Mason, Timothy Hudson and my cousin, Randal Mitchell.” Lexar introduced to Suguha and his friends. Randy and Scott are Salamanders while Timothy is Sylph.

"Nice to meet you all!" Scott waved.

"Likewise," Timothy beamed.

"Quite a gathering, I see," Randal said with a cheer.


“Hi, I’m Asuna.” Asuna smiled.

“Kirito.”

“Sinon.”

Lisbeth.”

“Um…Silica.” She blushed when she caught sight of Timothy.

Alex then noticed that there were only three.

“Hmm... Where is Spike? He should be here by now.” He said to himself.

It was then that another flash sounded. Everyone else turned to see another boy around their age, who is also a Sylph.

“Shigeru Hirose.” Alex greeted him. “You’ve made it.”

“Yeah, had a little trouble finding a connection.” The Sylph said embarrassed. “But I’m here.”

It was then that Sinon's face lit up in surprise. "Shigeru?"

“Shino?” Spike’s face lit up when a familiar voice from the short blue-haired avatar. It was then that everyone, especially Lexar, Leafa, Kirito, and Asuna began to gasp and murmur in surprise themselves. Was Sinon...?

“I haven’t seen you since the 3rd Bullet of Bullets tournament,” Spike said as he headed towards Sinon.

"Same here," Sinon giggled unexpectedly. As the two met, they gave each other hearty hugs.

Kirito and Asuna stared on at the two, completely at a loss for words. Leafa was also silent, with Lexar sputtering uncontrollably.

“Lexar..,” Spike says as he and Sinon broke the hug. “It’s been a while since GGO.”
“Spike…” Lexar said after he managed to stop sputtering. “…It’s all coming back to me now.”

"I'm sorry," Kirito then broke in, "but you have another guy friend, Sinon!?”

“Sorry if I haven’t introduced him to you,” Sinon explains. “He was one of the players during the Bullet of Bullet Tournament.”

"Yeah, and I came pretty darn close to top 5, too...” Spike murmured in disappointment. However, Sinon distracted him with a cheery smile.

“How did you two meet?” Kirito asked, his confusion begin to turn into curiosity.

“A few months back,” Sinon replied. “Spike was new to GGO and I’d showed him the ropes of the game.”

“Yeah, it was completely different for me when I went there. But I eventually have gotten the hang of it.” Spike smiled cheerfully.

"Yeah, but you're still my noobie,” Sinon teased with an elbow bump.

"Hey!” Spike pretended to be mocked. Sinon giggled as she gives him a hug. Kirito then looked to Asuna.

"Okay,” he admitted, "I totally did not see that coming. Did you?” He raised his eyebrow for emphasis.

“Me neither.” Asuna admitted as well.

Lisbeth, despite her own shock, recovered quickly and returned to her usual self. "Well you three will have plenty of time for Huggies and lip-sucking later on!" she interrupted, "now can we get a move on!?”

This made Kirito and Asuna hug each other tighter with red faces over Lisbeth's blunt words.

"Lisbeth...” Leafa sighed along with Lexar. Spike and Sinon, though, had stronger reactions.

"Don't get the wrong idea, Lisbeth!” Sinon denied, "It’s not like that!”

"Same here,” Spike said with a sweatdrop.

“Yeah, whatever. Now can we get that sword?” Lisbeth groaned.

"It was my idea, Liz,” Kirito grumbled. After that, the entire group donned their armor and flew off for the quest.

After some time, they entered Jötunheimr via a secret passageway in Alne.

"Wow, I didn't think that Alfheim could actually get this cold..." Timothy said as he started to shiver.

“Yeah, no kidding; Guess we should’ve gotten armor that’ll keep us warm,” Scott replied.

"You guys were all so fired up minutes ago, that I almost could feel the heat of your excitement,”
Lexar joked, which Leafa laughed at.

“At least I’m not complaining about the cold,” Randy commented.

Kirito was hugging Asuna, who hummed pleasantly at his touch. "I'm fine on my own, but thanks anyway," she expressed. Kirito plants a kiss on Asuna’s cheek.

“For extra warmth.” He smiles.

As they continued down the stairs, Scott says softly to Tim and Randy. “I wonder if we find Excalibur, it’ll utter ‘Fools!’ at us?” Both Tim and Randy looked at Scott like he’s crazy.

“What made you think that?” Tim asked, very confused.

“You’ve never seen ‘Soul Eater’? He said, and then he shook his head in disappointment. “Man, you don’t know what you’re missing.” Tim and Randy simply shook their heads.

“What do you think about Lisbeth?” Scott then asks in a soft tone to them.

Tim was suddenly curious about the sudden change in topic. "Yeah?" he said, "what about her?"

“She’s very pretty.” He commented. “I probably have a shot with her.” Scott looked at Lisbeth in front of him. Underneath her baggy red clothing and armor, Lisbeth's form was muscular, toned, and even quite sexy. She might have been a tough girl earlier, but her pinkish, childlike appearance was still quite appealing nonetheless.

“You can give it a try,” Randy said to him softly. “But don’t be surprised if she rejects you.”

“I doubt she would.” He remarked before noticing that Timothy is gazing at Silica.

"Something caught your eye, Timmy?" Randy almost teased.

“Oh..Well I…” Timothy splutters as he blushes.

“I’d admit, she’s very cute for a girl of her age.” Scott winked at him.

"S-Scott!” Tim rebutted with a blush. Unbeknownst to the three, both Lisbeth and Silica could overhear some snippets of their conversation.

"Come on, I’m sure you have to courage to ask her out.” Scott teased.

"Dude, I'm not a ladies man like you," Tim reminded.

Lisbeth hummed to herself in amusement, while Silica was surprised at what they were both listening.

“It’s OK, it probably won’t happen anyhow,” Scott said with a grin.

“What do you think Silica?” Lisbeth whispered to her.

"I... I don’t know...” Silica said uncertainty about herself. She subconsciously rubbed her relatively small and slender figure.

“I think Scott’s good looking, not to mention cute.” She smirks as she takes a good look at him. She could tell that he’s well-tone underneath that armor and clothing. Then she glances at Tim’s figure.
“Tim’s a little smaller, but sure looks to be a good fit for you, Silica,” Lisbeth teased with a pat to the shoulder. Silica blushes as she made glances at Tim’s small but toned body, she admits to herself that Tim’s really cute.

“But could he really like someone like me?” she thought, not realizing that she was mumuring.

Lisbeth heard it and pouted.

“Come on Silica. Give him a chance.” Lisbeth encouraged her. The Cait Sith looked back at the newcomer Sylph. Liz, on the other hand, was grinning and thinking of testing Scott.

‘I probably can do it.’ Silica thought to herself, ‘maybe Liz is right. It can’t hurt to try…’

Meanwhile, Spike and Sinon were getting reacquainted with each other.

“So I heard you’ve been doing great since GGO,” Spike said to Sinon.

"Yeah, though ALO has allowed me to diversify a bit. A change of theme and scenery doesn't hurt, either," Sinon said.

“Especially the avatar you’ve picked,” Spike admitted while smiling. “It does make you so adorable.” He blushes as he says this; he pointed it out the cat-like ears and tail that Sinon has. Sinon’s cheeks got tinted pink, but she refused to be flustered. "I just thought that being a Cait Sith would give me the best agility and stealth. Nothing else like you're thinking,” she defended.

“Really?” Spike asked.

"Yeah, and it certainly gets my mind off the recent events that happened lately," Sinon admitted.

"I see..." Spike accepted though he found the tail and ears to be eye-catchers. Subconsciously, Spike reaches out and gives her tail a tug.

"Wha??" Sinon jerked up. With a blooming red face, she turned around to see the daring Slyph tugging at her tail. He couldn’t help but smirk at Sinon’s blushing face and mentally noted how cute she looked.

"W-what are you doing!?” Sinon screeched in shock and embarrassment. Spike then blushes the second he realized what he did.

“Oh…Sorry, I couldn’t help myself.” He admitted as he lets go of her tail. By the look on Sinon’s face, it looks like she’s getting ready to pummel him for it.

"Seriously...” Sinon growled as she rubbed her tail. The blush failed to subside however, as her mind began to flood with thoughts that were rather steamy. As she gazed down to hide it, all the other girls and guys looked at Spike and Sinon.

"He’s got guts. I’ll give him that," Klein smirked.

“I agree to that,” Kirito whispered.

"Sinon looks rather HOT under the fur,” Asuna joked with a giggle.

Lisbeth then looked at the Undine with surprise. "That's my line,” she thought aloud.

“I’m sorry Sinon.” Spike apologized while gazing down in shame. However, Sinon suddenly felt conflicted. It was an embarrassing experience, yet she could not deny that a chill shot up her spine. It
was shocking, yet as it settled, it was somehow making her feel warm. It was then that Sinon came to an epiphany.

*I'm AROUSED!*' she realized with wide eyes. Spike notices this. “Something wrong Sinon?” He asked.

"N-nothing!” Sinon denied, "There’s nothing wrong here!"

"Really?" Lisbeth teased, "Then why do you look like a cat caught your tongue?" Asuna snickered to herself, while Silica glanced at her own tail. Lexar and Leafa smirked at Sinon and Spike.

"I have a feeling that those two have more than they let on," Lexar surmised.

"You think?" Leafa said. "Look at how red Sinon is," she pointed out, "and Spike there seems to want to look elsewhere." However, their fun of watching the two blushing was short when Yui appears.

"Mommy, Daddy!" Yui beamed.

"Yui!" Asuna smiled back as the little fairy landed on her shoulder. Kirito just chuckled.

While Klein and the other girls were also smiling, the other boys were shocked at what they had just heard.

“She’s their daughter?” Scott whispered to Timothy with a look of confusion on his face.

“Actually she is,” Lexar explained.

"Wait," Scott asked, "so these two got laid for real!? Is that even a thing in VR!?”

“Well, it’s kinda complicated than you think.” Lexar smiles.

"No, I wanna know," Randy spoke up, "given that our avatars are very much based on our RL physical characteristics, it should be impossible for those two to have a daughter that’s looking to be eight or nine years old."

Lexar shrugs. “Well if you insist.” Then he explains how Kirito and Asuna founded Yui back in SAO and adopted her and raised her as their own child as well as she defied the cardinal system of SAO. They eventually managed to save her from being deleted and became a family ever since.

"Wow. That's some heavy stuff," Scott remarked.

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"Wow. That's some heavy stuff," Scott remarked.

“Indeed. Never thought of that.” Timothy added. It was then that the group emerged out of the cave, and into the underground cavern that was Jotunheimr.

“So this is the place, huh?” Scott said after admiring the view.

"Whoa..." Timothy was in awe, having thought that he had seen it all on the surface. However, it was then that he noticed Silica shivering a little.

"Brrrr..." Silica hugged herself to keep warm, with Pina nestling himself on her head. Then Timothy headed towards her and wraps her arms around her.

“You look cold, I can help with that.” He said to the shivering cait sith.

Silica suddenly stopped shivering. It was then that she realized what was happening. "T-Tim, what
are you-" she said.

“It’s OK Silica. You’ll be warm very soon.” He said softly. Silica sensed herself easing into the boy's arms, and pretty soon, started to smile with the warmth of the embrace. Pina also sensed his master's sudden comfort and continued to rest on her head.

Lisbeth and Leafa looked at the two, and could not help but think it was an adorable sight.

“Has anyone told you how beautiful and cute you are?" Tim added. Silica's eyes shot open. Never before had someone told her that in such a straightforward manner.

"Really?" she said, with her cat ears twitching and tail curling. "That's the first time a boy ever said that to me..."

“It’s true.” He admitted as he smiles.

"But..." Silica looked down at herself, "but I'm not as strong as Lisbeth, nor am I as confident as Asuna or endowed as Leafa.” However, Tim hugged her even closer.

“It doesn’t matter if you aren’t. As long as I’m here, we can be strong together.” He blushes afterward.

"Tim..." Silica exhaled as her mind drifted into bliss. Even Pina could not resist the serenity he was feeling as her familiar.

"Whoa," Kirito said, "that was fast."

"As fast as we were, Kirito?" Asuna remarked.

“Hey,” Lisbeth called, "if you two new lovebirds have time for that, we've got a quest to do!"

“Right,” Tim replied as he feels her cuddle into his warm embrace.

"Hey," Lisbeth called, "if you two new lovebirds have time for that, we've got a quest to do!"

“Right,” Tim replied as he and Silica blush from their tender moment. It was then that Leafa heard a familiar moaning sound. Twitching her ears, she picked it up again and recognized it.

"Leafa?" Lexar asked as he flexed his fairy ears as well. The blonde Sylph then ran to the edge, with her boyfriend joining her. It was then that the two saw what it was.

"What is that?" Lexar asked. It was then that he saw his girlfriend’s expression light up. Lexar had to rub his eyes at what he saw. It was some sort of elephant-like creature with insect wings, lots of green eyes, and many tentacles. It made for an unusual sight, but Leafa seemed rather happy.

"Tonky!" she called out.

“Tonky?” Lexar asked in confusion. He recalled Suguha saying something about founding Tonky but didn’t mention the size or description of the creature.

"Hey, there!" Kirito called out to the creature. Tonky then approached Leafa, Lexar, and Kirito nearing the edge. The others were awed at how large, majestic, or unusual he was.

“So this is Tonky,” Lexar said to himself as he gazes at the creature.

"Interesting specimen there," Randy mused, "I'd certainly love to examine you myself."

It was then that Leafa glared at him.
“What? I mean like observing it.” Randy defended, he was sweating. Leafa huffed, causing Lexar to snicker a bit. It was then Tonky nears Randy, causing him to feel somewhat uneasy. It then extended its tentacles towards both Randy and Klein.

"What's he doing?" Klein panicked. Randy is now getting very nervous and is not sure whenever to flee or not.

"Relax," Kirito smirked, "he's just telling us to ride on his back." Asuna hummed excitedly with Yui.

“Really?” Randy asked he sighed in relief. The others begin to get on Tonky’s back. Randy is the last.

"Mmm..., nice and fluffy!" Silica said with joy.

“No kidding,” Tim says, enjoying how soft Tonky really is.

"It's pretty awesome. We get to get a full view from up here." Scott added. Lisbeth watched as the elephant-like Tonky cruised over the cavern. "I wonder what would happen if you fell all the way from up here."

“Wouldn’t be pleasant, that’s for sure;” Scott replied.

"You mean like how someone tried to reach the upper levels of Aincrad by scaling its sides,” Asuna quipped. It was then that she looked to Kirito with a smirk. "Well, care to show the lady?” she asked.

“That was the one time. It didn’t work though.” Kirito chuckled nervously. Suddenly, he smirked at Sinon and Silica. "Though, maybe our more cat-like friends would like to take a shot," he suggested. The two cait sith girls shot glances at him.

"Are you crazy!?” Silica shot back.

"Nope, not a chance," Sinon quipped.

“Really? It'll be fun.” He joked.

"Sending Silica here to scale a humongous castle and hurt herself?” Tim defended, "no thank you."

“Don’t worry, I was kidding.” Kirito chuckled. It was then that Tonky made his bellowing sound, as he suddenly dove towards the massive hole in the ground. Everyone screamed as their ride descended rapidly, with Leafa being the only one cheering as Lexar gritted his teeth beside her.

"Whoa!” Scott was nearly blown back from Tonky’s 'crown'. He reached out with both arms and grabbed something. He thought it was the creature's head, only to find that it felt firm and fleshy. A feminine gasp emanated from the source.

He looked in front of him and saw Lisbeth. Realizing that he actually grabbed her chest, he blushed like a rose. The blacksmith girl likewise was as pink as her hair.

"Tim!!" Silica screamed as she held onto him for dear life.

"Ahhh!!" Tim screamed with her as he used both hands to hold on.

Spike, Kirito, Randy, and Klein all held onto the long hairs. Spike then tried to get to the front, only to touch something like a rope.

“Ahhhh!” Sinon screamed as she holds on, then she yelped when she felt her tail being touched
again, he turns around to see Spike touching her tail. Spike gulped, expecting Sinon to get angry at him. Yet again though, her response surprised him. She extends her hand out to him, urging him to grab on.

"Sinon!?" Spike yelled over the wind.

"J-just hold onto me, t-tightly!" Sinon said with a pink face.

Not questioning his fortune, the male Sylph used his other hand to grab Sinon's hand. It was then that the shocking chills from her tail turned to pleasurable warmth, along with grabbing Spike. It was then that Spike begins to feel very fortunate as he holds onto Sinon’s hand. However, he too begins to feel pleasurable warmth. As Sinon helped Spike up to the front, he was still holding her tail. Rather than feeling annoyed, she had to admit that it was truly arousing. She smiled cheekily with pink on her face.

"Thanks," Spike breathed.

"And thank you," Sinon replied. Then Tonky stopped at an altitude where they could see the ground. Then Tonky came to a jolting stop. Almost everyone held on, except for Kirito, who went flying upwards.

"Wahh!?" he yelled loudly as a certain bluenette was in his path.

"Huh?" Asuna looked behind her. She felt Kirito bumped into her from behind, almost knocking her down. Asuna squeaked as Kirito crashed into her, causing Yui to jump off her shoulders. The couple collapsed onto Tonky’s furry back, with Kirito resting on top of Asuna's back.

"Ow..." Kirito groaned. Asuna felt dazed from her husband impacting her. However, the sensation of being sandwiched between the fur and a male human body brought the Undine to her senses. Kirito regains his senses and realized he’s lying on top of Asuna.

“I’m so sorry Asuna. I didn’t mean to…” Kirito quickly apologizes to her.

"Ugh..." Asuna said, "My back..." While she meant to convey discomfort, her blush and dreamy expression suggested otherwise.

'Huh?' Kirito thought upon seeing this. When he shifted, though, his groin happened to brush against her rear.

“I must’ve strained it when we landed.” Asuna continued but blushes when she feels him brushing against her rear.

"Need some relief?" Kirito asked, to which Asuna nodded. With that, Kirito begins rubbing his hands on Asuna’s back, relieving the tensions from her shoulders and spine. Asuna sighed from his hands as if they’re magic, forgetting the audience around them.

"Ah...ah... yeeesss," Asuna exhaled. Kirito smiles from the sounds of satisfaction from her lips and continues rubbing the tensions with his thumbs.

"Kirito..." Asuna closed her eyes and smiled.

"Asuna..." Kirito replied, as his hands began to roam her body. Asuna did not mind, even as her lover's skilled hands were going from the small and shoulder blades of her back towards her front and lower rear. As Kirito's hands grazed Asuna's chest and rear, it was then that Yui interrupted.
"Daddy! Mommy! People are watching you two being lovey-dovey!" the little AI pouted. The two couple blushed heavily as they completely forget others around them. Lexar and Klein smiled big while Leafa, Silica, and Sinon blush from the show.

"Well..." Timothy said with a blush as he held Silica, "I did not see that coming." He squeezed her hand to let her know that she was not alone in her embarrassment.

Lisbeth huffed, "seriously, you two seem to go at it at the turn of a dime! Don't you two have any shame!?"

Asuna sputtered for a bit, before shooting back, "You're one to talk! You just let Scott grab your chest yourself!" Lisbeth blushes, she hit the nail at that moment. Scott blushes when Asuna mentions this.

"Dude!" Timothy said, "you seriously groped her!?" Silica sank even further in his arms, too embarrassed at what she was hearing.

"Way to go, kid!" Klein laughed before Randy elbowed him.

Scott, on the other hand, was blushing. “I-I didn’t mean to!” He sputtered. “I lost balance and grabbed her by mistake!” Lisbeth then glared at Scott, then back to her own chest. She could still feel that it was a bit sensitive from being grabbed so firmly.

"Lisbeth, girl,” Scott defended, "I really did not mean it."

“I’m sure you didn’t.” Lisbeth scoffed.

“No really, It’s true.” He said nervously. He knew he has the hots for her but grabbing her chest is not a good way to impress her. It was then that she glanced at her chest.

She sighed, and said, "I have a way for you to make it up to me later." Scott sighs of relief, at least she’s not mad anymore.

"Sorry I grabbed your tail again Sinon." Spike apologized.

"Actually," Sinon said as she wrapped it around herself, "I wasn't as startled that time."

“Oh…OK.” He replied. “…and Thanks..”

Sinon then put a hand to her blushing cheek. "If you want to," she said with twitching ears, "I'll let you pet me later on." She shook her ears for emphasis. Spike blushes the moment he realized what she meant.

"Really?" Spike was incredulous.

"Meow," Sinon teased. Spike blushes. He could not help but start to feel hot from how Sinon was posing and meowing quietly to him. It was as though she was daring him. 'I guess I'll find out later.'

Tonky then began to cruise gently over the ground. They looked over and they see what appears to be Tonky’s kin being slaughtered on the ground below by players.

"What the hell?" Scott wondered as a four-armed giant also attacked the creature, instead of the other players.

“What is going on here?” Randy said, his tone was in both sadness and disgust from what he is witnessing. Lexar had to hug a shuddering Leaфа, while Silica clung to Tim, who reciprocated.
Kirito, Asuna, and Yui pondered as to how the players were actually controlling the giant, while Klein, Sinon, and Spike looked ready to pounce.

After Tonky’s kin fell dead, its killers sheathed their weapons and moved on. As the group watched, a giant avatar-like figure appeared behind them, with flowing golden hair and a blue long dress to accommodate her blue eyes. Kirito was both awed and confused at the same time.

"What the? Who are you?" Randy asked, a little surprised.

“I am Urðr, I’m the Queen of the Lake.” She spoke to the group. "You have bonded to my kinsman, and I am grateful. I have spoken with my sisters at length, and we have a request for you. If you will be so kind, we ask that you save our lands from the Frost Giants."

"Yui?" Kirito prompted his AI daughter.

"She's an NPC," Yui answered, "but there is something strange about her."

"What do you mean?" Asuna asked.

"Her speech is different, as she does not follow the same set responses as a normal NPC. Her core language module is connected to the core of the game."

"In other words..." Asuna surmised, "She’s an AI?" At that, Yui nodded.

“What you are witnessing that the massacre of my kinsman is ordered by Thyrm, the king of the giants.” Urðr continues. "He shattered our peace by casting Excalibur into the Well of Ort, the heart of our land. The sword severed the roots connecting this world to Yggdrasil and its blessings, and thus enabled Thrym and his frost giants to invade and subjugate my people. My sisters and I escaped, but we do not have the power we once had."

“And if he succeeds in wiping out my kinsman, I’ll be powerless to prevent him from invading the world of fairies.” She continues. The others were in shock and horror as they realized she was referring to ALO.

"Arun!?" Lisbeth cried out in alarm.

“Alfheim?” Lexar said in shock.

“Impossible,” Klein added. “He can’t do that.”

“Never thought he would try that,” Scott remarked with worrisome in his voice.

“We got to find Excalibur and put a stop to it before this could happen,” Kirito says.

"Once he conquers your world, Thrym will ascend Yggdrasil and claim the Golden Apple and make himself the sole ruler of all Alfheim," Urðr finished.

The girls themselves were left silent in shock. Asuna tugged on Kirito's arm, while Leafa squeezed Lexar’s hand. Silica and Tim looked at each other, sharing their concerns.

"Then what’s with all those players helping that bastard in his scheme!?" Spike yelled.

“It seems that they’ve been manipulated into helping him achieve his goal,” Randy answers with a dark tone. “..This sounds all too familiar…”

"Lured by the promise of Excalibur as a promise, your kind has been deceived by Thrym into
helping him with his genocide of our kinsmen," Uror detailed, "but he has no power to bestow Excalibur on anyone else, for should Excalibur vanish from this world, the blessings of Yggdrasil will return."

“Well, what are we waiting for? Let’s get that sword.” Scott said with determination.

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**Thrymheim, sometime later:**

Kirito, Asuna and the others managed to defeat Thrym with the help of the god of thunder, Thor. Who, unusual, was in the form of a female NPC Freyja, much to Klein’s disappointment.

Despite their victory, they soon realize that the quest is not over yet and Yui notified them that stairs were founded behind Thrym’s throne and they proceeded downstairs where they found Excalibur resting in its plinth.

“So this is Excalibur,” Lexar remarked on the sight of the sword.

"It's majestic,” Leafa thought aloud.

“Sooo…” Scott begins to ask. “Who’s gonna take the sword out?” Kirito looks around.

“I don’t know about you, but I could take a crack at it,” Scott smirked.

"Don't hurt yourself now,” Lisbeth warned.

Scott just smiled at her. “It can’t be that hard? I bet I can pull it out with one big tug.” After all, he managed to save Lisbeth from one of Thrym's attacks. Scott rolled up his sleeves and went up to Excalibur.

"Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone shall rightwise be king of England.” Scott joked as he wraps his hands on the hilt and gives it a tug….Nothing…He tugs again…Still nothing.

"Haha!” Klein laughed, "Sorry kid, but it takes a real swordsman to do it." He pushed Scott aside and flexed his fingers. "Here, let me." Scott steps aside as Klein makes his move on the sword. Unfortunately, nothing.

“Huh? This is odd.” Klein pondered as he pulls on the sword, but it didn’t budge.

"Maybe you are too hotheaded and brash for your own good for the sword to select you," Randy said as he stepped forward, "it probably wants someone who can understand it well.” He reached for the sword, only to strain as it refused to budge. After a few more efforts, he relented, "or at least I thought I'd understood it.”

“Apparently not.” Lexar chuckled as he stepped forward. “It takes a person who can help lead those in need.” He reaches for the sword; he too strained against the sword. “This can’t be right.” He relented.

"It's alright," Leafa comforted.

“My turn,” Spike said as he steps forward, eager to pull the sword out, it too refused to move.
"Aw man..." Spike groaned. Sinon giggled.

“It’s OK, at least you tried.” She reassured him with her smile. Tim turned to Silica with a nervous expression.

“I guess I’m next,” Tim said nervously.

"Good luck, Tim," Silica smiled before giving him a small peck on the cheek. This made him smile shyly with gasps all around. With this newfound encouragement, Tim steps up towards the sword and gives it the strongest tug he could make…Nothing.

Tim hung his head in disappointment as he stepped down. "Sorry, Silica," he said. But to his surprise, she catches him in a hug.

“It’s OK.” She said softly. As Silica looked up, a cheered-up Tim stroked her hair and ears, eliciting giggles and some sighing from her. He feels his cheeks flushing when he does this. He remembers how cats liked their ears and head stroked, and since her cait sith appearance resembles a cat.

"Well now," Lisbeth said, "I guess one guy remains unless we girls take a shot."

It was then Kirito steps up. “I guess I’m left.” He turns to Asuna who gives him a reassuring smile. Kirito then laid hands on the handle and pulled steadily. Surprisingly, the sword begins to come out of its plinth. The others were surprised while he pulls it out, especially the guys.

"The Black Swordsman the true master for Excalibur!?" Klein exclaimed.

"Talk about overpowered!" Scott whined.

Lexar just smirked as he witnessed his friend pulling Excalibur out. He had a feeling that Kirito would be the one the second he couldn’t pull the sword out. Asuna and Yui were cheering as he pulls the sword out.

"Daddy pulled Excalibur out!" Yui chimed with joy.

"You did it, Kirito!" Asuna glimpsed onto her husband cheerfully.

However, after he pulled the sword out, the roots of the World Tree begins to grow at a rapid speed.

"Whoa!" Scott yelped.

"What's happening?" Lisbeth questioned.

“The World Tree roots are growing around to break Thrymheim,” Yui explains.

“We got to get out of here,” Randy exclaimed. Unfortunately, the roots appeared through the stairs, shattering them. It was then that the group stared at Randy.

"You were saying?" Spike questioned.

“What are we gonna do?” Randy was starting to panic. They’re trapped and at any second, it’ll break, sending all of them to free fall.

"Lexar!" Leafa clung to him. He held her in his embrace.

‘This is it.’ He thought to himself. The others had worried looks on their faces. Then Thrymheim breaks and everyone begins to free fall….Then, a giant white creature appeared underneath them, it
was Tonky.

"Tonky!" Leafa breathed a sigh of relief. The others sighed in relief. The benevolent creature floated up to the collapsing platform and held steady.

"He's going to carry us to safety!" Lexar recognized, "come on!"

Leafa yelped as he swept her off her feet. Lexar looked into his girl's eyes. "Ready for this leap of faith?" She looked back into his eyes and nods in agreement, trusting her boyfriend. Lexar makes the jump off the ledge and landed on Tonky's back.

"Come along guys!" Leafa called back. Spike looked at Sinon and asks. "You ready?"

"Me?" Sinon said confidently, "I have the ability and stamina of a cat." She purred rather suggestively.

Spike chuckled nervously. "Right, silly me." He then takes her hand. "Let's do this."

Together, they both jumped onto Tonky.

"Well, I guess it's my turn," Lisbeth said, only to be stopped by Scott.

"About earlier..." Scott begins to say. Lisbeth just closed her eyes and smiled. "Actually, for being such a good boy to me," she said, "why don't I treat you to a drink at this kickass Dicey Café?"

"Really?" Scott asked.

"Of course." She replied with a smile. Together, they took each other's hands and jumped on Tonky's back. Silica shook a little from the height and distance between her and Tonky. However, Tim came behind her and wrapped an arm around her waist.

"It's alright to feel nervous," he confided, "we all get nervous."

Touched by this, the young Cait Sith smiled, "then we are nervous together." He sweeps Silica off her feet and looks at her in the eyes, smiles. "But I got you." He jumps off and lands on Tonky's back, carrying Silica in his arms.

"Finally," Klein sighed, "time to call it for this hash." He was rather tired of the quest.

"I agree," Randy said. The two of them jumped and landed in a rather silly fashion.

Kirito and Asuna are the last to jump down. However, Kirito realizes that Excalibur was too heavy for him to jump and his inventory is full.

"Kirito/Daddy?" Asuna and Yui questioned him.

"It's too heavy for me to jump with and my inventory’s full," Kirito mentioned. However, he had to make a quick decision.

Kirito smiled rather regretfully. "Stupid system." And with it, he decided to toss Excalibur into the abyss below, together; they jumped and landed on Tonky.

"We're good, go!" Lexar prompted Tonky. The giant creature begins to head out. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief, while Kirito and Asuna watched the golden sword fall into the abyss.

"Too bad," Kirito shook his head. It was then that Asuna laid a comforting hand on his shoulder.
"Spike," Sinon said. Spike quickly moves up to her.

"Yes, Sinon? Need help?" He asked.

"I need you to spot for me," Sinon indicated.

"Okay," Spike said, a little uncertain, "but what's the target?"

"The golden sword." Sinon was referring to Excalibur.

"That?" Spike's eyes widened. He zoomed his vision onto the sword. "That's over two hundred meters, girl!"

"Not a problem," Sinon said, shocking everyone, including Kirito and Asuna. Sinon placed the arrow on the bow and took aim.

"This should be a cinch," she commented as she pulled the bow back.

"Two hundred meters and still dropping," Spike said, "whatever you are doing, do it now."

It was then that Sinon began her incantations. Suddenly, she lets go of the bow and the arrow traveled down towards the falling golden sword. The arrow struck its target, and turned into a lanyard of light, to the surprise of both Spike and Kirito. Sinon then gives the bow a jerk and the lanyard is pulled back, along with the golden sword. Spike and Kirito were amazed as Sinon heaved the sword high into the air, before catching it in her hands. She grunted a bit from the weight of Excalibur, but otherwise stood proud with the prize.

"That's amazing." Spike was in awe at what his friend just did. The other girls and guys also had similar reactions.

Sinon smiled back at Spike. "Thanks for spotting for me," she expressed. Spike smiled. "You're welcome." It was then that the two looked at Kirito. They both nodded at him.

"Here ya go, Kirito," Spike said. Sinon promptly stepped forward towards him when Asuna suddenly stepped in.

"Mind if I hand it to him?" Asuna asked the two.

Sinon looked at Spike, who shrugged, "Why not?" Asuna smiles as Sinon hand her the sword. Then she turns and hands the sword to her husband.

"Here you go, my love." She smiles.

"Thank you," Kirito reached, only for Asuna to pull it back with a teasing grin.

"First, you have to promise me one thing," Asuna indicated.

Kirito raises his eyebrow in curiosity. "Like what my love?"

It was then that the bluenette giggled and stroked his cheek seductively. "Promise that you will think of me when you draw it," Asuna said, "and that you'll be MY Excalibur."

Kirito smiles as he gazes into her beautiful eyes.
"Sure thing my Asuna." He smiles.

She then wrapped her arm behind his back and pulled him close to her. "Don't forget that promise to give me a good bath time, either," she whispered with a dreamy expression. As Kirito took the sword from Asuna, some of the guys looked on in amusement, while the girls seemed to have mixed feelings of the display.

“I guess that’s it? ALO is saved?” Lexar asked.

"Yeah," Leafa said while pouting at the affectionate display her brother was in. Lexar noticed this and decided to make his move.

“At least we’ve saved Tonky’s kin.” He gives Leafa a reassuring smile while patting her on the shoulder.

"Lexar," Leafa sighed. Lisbeth just shook her head at Kirito and Asuna. "Can't those two keep their sweetness in the bedroom for once?" It was then that Scott came alongside her.

"I'm with you there," he grumbled but smiled at Liz.

“So….I hope you live close by,” Lisbeth asked.

"Yeah," Scott said, suddenly remembering, "your offer still good?"

Lisbeth smiled, albeit with an uncharacteristic blush. "Yes... and maybe I'll show you where exactly you can touch me..." Scott’s face flushes a deep red as he hears this.

"You did grab my breasts," Lisbeth continued with a blush, "but I can show you how to treat a woman right."

“Right,” Scott said sheepishly. “I’ll look forward to it.” He smiles.

Sinon sat down as she was exhausted. The fight with Thrym, the retrieving of Excalibur, and the day's excitement overall were more than she had experienced in any session in GGO.

“Yeah, no kidding,” Spike commented. “But at least it’s all over now.” Sinon leaned back, thrusting her chest out as she exhaled. She then closed her eyes.

"Spike," she said, "could you help me unwind?" This caught him off guard when she suggested what she meant. But he smiles.

“OK.” Spike then sat down and began stroking Sinon on both the ears and tail. She sighed with a happy expression as she began to relax. Her face cutely turned pink with bliss. As he strokes her ears and tail, he begins to feel warm from the inside. It wasn’t a surprise since he had a crush on her back in GGO, however, as they hung out more, the feeling inside him begins to grow as he rubs his fingers on the rims of her cat ears and the fur on her tail.

"Spikey~" Sinon moaned, to his blushing.

“So…we did it,” Tim said to Silica. Silica jumped, her pigtails swaying. She then smiled as she said, "thank you for protecting me against that giant back there."

“No problem.” He smiles. “Wouldn’t want a pretty girl like yourself to get harmed on my watch.” Both their cheeks grew pink.

"So..." Tim said, "Think we can meet in the real world one day?"
"Sure thing." Silica replied, which causes Tim's face to light up.

"That's great.." He said happily. "My family moved to Japan weeks ago." Silica's face lit up. Her eyes shone as she suddenly grabbed his arm in glee. He was surprised, but he quickly became happy.

"So, know any places to meet up?" He asks her.

“Well, there’s a place called the Dicey Café. It’s where we usually hang out at.” Silica explains.

"Care to send me an address?" Tim asked.

“Sure thing.” Silica replies and she gives him the address of the Dicey Café. Tim smiles as he begins petting her cat ears.

“Such as good kitty.” Tim cooed. Silica giggled as he rubs her ears, her cheeks flushed red.

“Meow.” She said softly into his ear, followed with her giggles. Randy and Klein looked on, bummed at their guy friend's fortunes.

“Guess it’s just us guys,” Randy commented.

"When am I ever gonna get a date?" Klein whined.

“Same here,” Randy replied. And then Ór appeared along with two others.

"Thank you, fairies of Arun," Ór said, "you have vanquished Thrym and removed Excalibur from our land."

“It’s our pleasure,” Lexar spoke up. Then Ór looked to the two other ladies beside her. "My sister's here and I now have the power to restore Jotunheim to its former glory, and again partake in the blessings of Yggdrasil. For your bravery and kindness, we bestow you the legendary sword, Excalibur." Kirito bows his head to Ór and her sisters. One of the sisters then looked right at Lisbeth, who. With Scott, began to wonder why. It was then that the sister said, "And you, a young fairy, have shown yourself worthy of the mantle of Thor, and for that, we bestow upon you his greatest gift."

Lisbeth barely recovered as Thor's hammer landed in her arms. It was then she got a notice that it was now equippable. She marveled at the sight of her own legendary weapon.

"Amazing, Liz!" Scott exclaimed.

“I might find some use for it. Maybe melt it down or something.” Lisbeth commented. Scott's jaw nearly dropped in shock.

"Liz!" Scott protested, "That’s Thor's hammer you got there! It's not just any other weapon!"

“Relax. I’m not saying I’m going to.” Lisbeth defended. Scott sighed in relief and then gave a complimenting smile.

"I actually think it suits you," he explained, "I'd say that you'd scare off just about any creep who'd mess with you."

Lisbeth giggles from his comment. “Why I actually do. Thanks, Scott.” She smiles. Asuna had to smile for her friend. She was happy that Lisbeth had perhaps found someone at last. However, a rumbling sound interrupted her train of thought. She then looked up at the source of the sound.
"Kirito, look!"

It gets Kirito’s attention and looked where the rumbling sound is coming from. Kirito and Asuna watched in awe as the ice broke away from the roots of the World Tree. The roots then began to twist and turn as more and more of the ice disintegrated. The ice wasteland begins to disappear, turning it back into a green paradise. Lexar and Leafa watched in awe as it all happened. Tonky then droned in happiness as Joteunheim's natural beauty returned. The others begin to watch Joteunheim being restored to its beauty.

"It's beautiful," Silica said in a child-like awe.

"No kidding," Tim said as he wrapped his arm around Silica's waist.

Soon enough, the sun shone through the surface above, illuminating the lush greenery and crystal clear lakes left behind. The roots of the Yggdrasil were firmly planted into the reservoirs.

“Very beautiful,” Spike commented as he stood next to Sinon.

"It really is..." Sinon marveled.

Spike then lowered his head as he murmured to himself, "but you have a shine of your own, Sinon." However, Sinon hears it with her high senses of hearing and smiles.

“Thanks, Spike.” Spike blushed at that. Sinon then turned with a cheeky smile and hugged him. “My Spikey.” Sinon cooed.

"Sinon...” Spike cooed back, rubbing her ears. Sinon cooed from his gentle touch. Down below, the hunters were perplexed as to the sudden change in setting, and even more so by the appearance of more of the creatures they were just hunting moments ago.

“At least the pact between them stopped,” Randy said as they witnessed it from above.

"Are those... Tonky’s kin?” Lexar wondered. Leafa meanwhile, was tearing up with joy. Lexar went over and hugs Leafa.

"We did it, Leafa," Lexar said, "Tonky has his friends back."

“Yes, he has.” Leafa turns to Lexar and hugs him back. Kirito, Asuna, and Yui looked around in happiness as the quest concluded. Then, Urua and her two sisters begin to fly away. The Spriggan swordsman then could see that Excalibur was now usable, and thus was able to insert it into his inventory. The Undine next to him smiled and wrapped her arms around him.

"You really are my Excalibur," Asuna complimented and teased playfully.

“Indeed I am,” Kirito smirked and gives her a kiss on the cheek.

"Just a peck on the cheek?” Asuna giggled, "then how about this?" She reciprocated with a full-blown kiss on Kirito's lips. Kirito deepens the kiss in return.

"Mommy and Daddy sitting in a tree!” Yui teased.

“K I S S I N G,” Lexar whispered in Leafa’s ear.

Leafa then suddenly turned around and grabbed her boyfriend by the cheeks.

"If they can do it, so can we!” Leafa asserted before smashing her lips against his. Lexar was
surprised by her sudden force but relaxed as he feels her soft lips touching his and deepens the kiss. Everyone else had a mixture of happiness, amusement, jealousy, or longing as the two-star couples made out, with Tonky and his newfound herd bellowing in approval. The quest was done at last.
A caring family

Chapter Summary

The gang celebrates their victory on their quest. Then Alex informs them that everyone's invited to his older brother's promotion in the US Navy. Afterwards, they learned of his family's generous offer as well as confidence for Kazuto and Asuna.

Later that day:

Everyone gathered at the Dicey Café to celebrate the victory of their quest for Excalibur. Alex was helping Kazuto installing the four cameras in the corners of the room. Asuna and Suguha saw what their boyfriends were doing, and walked over towards their respective boyfriends.

"Alex, what's with the cameras?" Suguha asked.

“This is for Yui so that she can fly around here while in fairy form,” Alex replied. “It'll give her experience in the real world.” He smiles at her.

Suguha grinned, realizing what that meant for her would-be niece. "That's very nice of you."

“Doing what I can for her, as well for Kazuto and Asuna.” Alex smiles. Meanwhile, Asuna was looking over Kazuto's shoulder. There, on the computer screen, was Yui in pixie form, flying around in what seemed to be live footage of the café.

“How is it Yui?” Asuna asked she was happy to see her AI daughter being able to fly around in the café.

"It's wonderful!" Yui beamed, "it's as though I'm really here with you and Daddy!" To emphasize, she did a couple of backflips, with the cameras following her apparent movements.

“I’m glad you’re enjoying it.” She replied happily. Kazuto sits next to her and watches the computer screen.

"So what exactly are you doing?" Asuna asked her lover.

“I’ve managed to finish getting the cameras. They’re fully functional.” Kazuto smiled.

"So this is the school project you've been working on," Suguha said as she walked up with Alex. "What's it called again? Mecha...nomics?"

“I believe so,” Alex says before turning to Kazuto. “Isn’t that correct?

"Mechatronics," Kazuto clarified.

“Right. I’ve heard that they’re great with their growing technology for both America and Japan.” Alex commented.

Suguha was now puzzled. "What exactly are people going to be using these things for?"
“To create human-machine interfaces to replace our Full Dive technology,” Kazuto replied. “And to bring Yui into the real world.”

"This is just one of many steps to begin to bridge the gap between our worlds," Alex said, "talk about augmented."

“We don’t know how long it may take.” Kazuto continues. “But hopefully, we’ll be able to perfect it.” Then the front door opens and three people walked in. The gang smiles as they recognized the three by their appearances. Scott Mason, Timothy Hudson, and Randy Mitchell.

“Sorry, we’re late.” Randy apologized. “It took a little longer than expected.” He chuckled nervously. Asuna hummed in amusement, apart from color differences, the three boys otherwise were not so different from their ALO avatars.

“It’s a very nice place here,” Scott commented as he looks around the café. The door then opens and it was Shigeru aka Spike. His RL appearance matched his in GGO and ALO.

"Wow, this is Dicey Cafe, Sinon?” Spike awed as he walked in with Shino following.

“Indeed it is Spike,” Shino replied. “It’s a very nice place here.” She smiles.

"Ah... new customers," Andrew responded cheerfully as the boys approached. "How can I help you all?"

“We’re here to meet Kirito and his friends here,” Scott said with a smile before asking. “You know him?”

Andrew nodded towards the boy in black, who turned with the chestnut-haired girl to look at them.

"Sinon," Asuna greeted.

“Asuna.” Shino greeted her in return. Scott and Tim recognize Alex as his Lexar avatar matches his real-life form.

“Lexar?” Scott asked.

“In the flesh.” Alex smiled. “And you can call me Alex.”

"I'm Kazuto," the other boy greeted, "the real Kirito."

Kazuto then hugged Asuna around the waist and brought her closer to him. "This is my girlfriend and in-game wife, Asuna."

“Wow. She’s just as beautiful as she was in ALO.” Scott commented on Asuna’s beauty, which causes her to giggle and blush from his comment. “You’re so lucky to have her.” He then said to Kazuto and gives him the ‘thumbs up’.

"Thank you," Asuna giggled as her boyfriend smiles. Her eyes then shot to the door. Asuna then smirked. "You are quite the lucky guy yourself, Scott," she gestured to the door. Scott turns around and sees what appears to be Lisbeth. Even though she doesn’t sport the bubblegum-pink hair and red baggy clothes and armor; her appearance, however, he recognizes her facial expressions.

"Hey everyone!” Rika announced. Just beside her was a girl with pigtails whom Tim surmised must have been Silica.

‘Just as pretty as in ALO.’ Tim thought to himself.
It was then that Rika laid eyes on the new boys that were present. She was a little surprised until she recognized Scott from his appearance. She smirked.

Keiko, on the other hand, recognizes Tim from ALO and her cheeks flustered to pink. Kazuto, Asuna, Alex, and Suguha watched in amusement as the two new pairs recognized their partners. Yui also channeled in via the cameras Alex installed. Scott and Tim notice the cameras moving.

“Making additional to the security?” Scott asks.

Kazuto just shook his head, whereas Yui sounded off, “I'm watching over Mommy and Daddy here, thank you!”

“Oh…That’s very kind of him.” Scott smiled and chuckled nervously out of embarrassment. It was then that Scott felt someone grab his arm. He found himself face to face with a snickering Rika

"I found you, Scotty,” Rika teased. Scott smiles as he gazes at the same beauty that he has aided during the quest.

"Hey Lisbeth," Scott greeted.

Rika then smiled in a friendly manner. "It's Rika here," she reintroduced herself, "and I still owe you that drink."

“Rika, that name suits you.” Scott smiles as they both headed to the bar. Tim and Keiko stood in front of one another, blushing and silent as they stared.

“Silica?” Tim asked, breaking the silence.

"Um... it's actually Keiko," the girl introduced herself, "and you are Tim, aren't you?"

“Indeed I am.” He smiled before adding, “Keiko…That’s a perfect name for a girl so pretty as you.” Keiko blushed, but something inside her compelled her to act. She acted... by going up to Tim and pecking him on the cheek rather boldly. Tim blushes as he felt her soft lips touching his cheek.

Keiko released him and shook sideways rather joyfully with her pigtails. "Nice to meet you, Tim," she said.

“It’s nice to meet you too Keiko,” Tim replied.

Keiko giggled, before hugging Tim again. "How about we sit down for a drink?" she suggested.

"Fine by me," Tim replied, "I'll pay for the both of us." They both smiled as they headed towards the bar. Kazuto, Asuna, Alex, and Suguha watched as the two new couples sit at the bar. Randy, on the other hand, looked rather wistfully at the multitude of couples that were in front of him.

‘I wonder if I’ll find the one for me?’ He thought to himself. Then Alex approached him.

“So Randy, how’s Japan treating you?” Alex asked his young cousin. He was aware that moving to Japan was hard on Randy, meeting people he doesn’t know or living in a place he’s not familiar with. However, Alex manages to help him out whenever he can.

“We managed to get settled down here for almost a month,” Randy replied.

“Well, if you need any help with rearranging and locations here in Japan, just give me a call,” Alex offered.
"Thanks," Randy smiled back.

Then Suguha begins to ask. “How did you and the others met Alex?”

“How did you and the others met Alex?” Alex answers. He explains he has chatted with Randy online and he learns that his friends, Scott and Timothy are playing the VR version of ‘Fallout 3’, however, they had a hard time with locations and planning during the quests. Randy asked Alex that if he could help, which he did and aided them of the game, which includes liberating Paradise Falls to leading an assault on the Talon Merc Camp. His leadership skills he earned while in SAO and ALO have finally paid off. He was also involved in other VR remakes such as ‘Homefront’, ‘Star Wars’ and the VR released ‘Far Cry: Revolution’, which is a spiritual remake of the ‘Homefront’ series as well as one of the Far Cry games.

"Sounds like someone's been busy like my brother," Suguha laughed, "Alex here is very much like Kazuto."

“Indeed he is.” Kazuto chuckled. It was then that Asuna rubbed Kazuto's neck. "And hopefully as good with handling Suguha as Kazuto here is good with me," she suggested. He smiles as he feels her hand rubbing his neck. Suguha and Alex were blushing though, as they knew what Asuna was talking about. Randy was confused, however.

“Uhh…What do you mean by that?” Randy asked with his eyebrow raised in confusion.

A still-blushing Alex turned back to his cousin. "Well..." he began rather hesitantly, "you see... Kazuto and Asuna have this way of... 'getting along' when they are alone, you see...”

At first, Randy didn’t get it, but it didn’t take long to figure out what he meant. His eyes widen in surprise and his face flushes a deep shade of red. “Oh my…” was all he could say as he covered his mouth.

"Yeah..." Suguha said as she watched her brother get wrapped around Asuna's finger as she stroked him, "he's pretty much whipped at this point."

“Indeed.” He smiled before continuing. “Anyway, I’ve been a great help on other games….Although, there were some misadventures on some games.” He said sheepishly.

Suguha tilted her head in confusion. “Like what?”

“Well, first, there was ‘Fallout: New Vegas’. I was asked to help lead them to several spots that have unique weapons.” Alex explains. “However, I was never been notified there were Cazadors in one area…I never imagine they could be that aggressive towards players.” He explains that the Cazadors were mutated tarantula hawk spider wasps in the game. He even shows them a picture of one of the Cazadors chasing the screaming player, who they quickly recognize as Alex.

"Oh..." Suguha realized. She was now trying not to smile.

“Talk about an aggressive insect,” Kazuto commented, both he and Asuna tried not to laugh.

"Oh yeah," Scott chimed in, "I remember this one. You forgot how to fight at that moment."

"Ooo..." Rika was sitting next to Scott and joining in with snickers, "so much unlike you, Alex."

Then Tim and Keiko joined the group as they mentioned it. “Who knew the one who leads the charges at Paradise Falls and the Talon Merc camp raid would scream like a girl.” Tim snickered.
"And I thought I was the scaredy cat!" Keiko exclaimed rather uncharacteristically, smiling mischievously. Then Shigeru and Shino join in.

"So sad," Shino shook her head, "I have been chased by worse."

"No kidding," Shigeru added. "I've seen worse things in SAO than this." He chuckled. Alex buries his face to hide the shade of red that could be seen. Suguha hugs Alex to comfort his embarrassing moment.

"It's OK Alex, at least you're my shining knight." Suguha said softly in his ear. Alex smiles as he wraps his arm around her, allowing her chest pressed against his body. Suguha sighed as her chest was squished against Alex's.

"Maybe one day... We can..." Suguha trailed off, her face bloomed red. Alex was now blushing as well. "D-don't rush it if you're not ready," he warned.

"Don't worry; we'll take our time until we're ready," Sugu responded, her eyes lit up with hope and promises.

"In the meantime," Sugu suddenly took on a seductive and suggestive tone as she rubbed her chest against Alex, "maybe we can take one step at a time... my hunkie..." Alex couldn't help but feel aroused from the thought. It would be a great idea to take one step at a time; they'll even use the ALO world to practice to prepare themselves for the real world. Kazuto and Asuna watched in a mixture of amusement and surprise, while all the others were blushing at what they were witnessing.

"Auntie Leafa and Uncle Alex are being lovey-dovey!" Yui exclaimed.

"Indeed they are Yui," Kazuto says happily. Sugu's and Alex's faces blush when they heard 'Auntie' and 'Uncle'.

Rika glared at the embarrassed couple. "Great," she groaned, "more sickening sweetness and love feasting."

"No kidding," Scott whispered in Rika's ear.

Rika sighed, "Seriously, it's already crazy enough with Kazuto and Asuna. Now we will have Alex and Suguha doing it too..."

Scott then smirked. "Tell me about it." He added.

A red-faced Tim glanced at an equally red Keiko. "Are they always this... turned on?" Tim muttered.

"More than you think," Keiko whispered in reply.

"Arent't they the lovely couple." Shigeru murmured to Shino.

"Yeah," Shino said rather nonchalantly, "and don't bother trying to stop them, because they'll keep doing it and doing it."

Shigeru just nodded, agreeing with her. He then had thought if they're gonna do it one day, but it'll take a while before they get a chance to.

"I've remembered something, I've gotten great news for everyone," Alex said suddenly.

"What is it?" Randy asked.
“As you are aware that my older brother Jonathan; is getting promoted during the ceremony that is in three days.”

“And?” Klein asked. “Are we invited or something?”

“I’ve asked my father that if I could take all of you to the ceremony.”

“What did he say?” Kirito asked.

“He says you’re all invited.” He replied happily.

“Really!?” everyone chorused.

“Yep.” He smiled. “We could all celebrate my brother’s promotion as well as the new year later that day if you want.”

“Well count me in!” Klein said, "It’s not every day that I see a military promotion!"

“Am I invited too?” Yui chimed with excitement.

“Sure, I’m sure that they’ll let you see the ceremony.” Alex smiles.

"Yay!" Yui cheered to her parents' delight.

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**December 31st:**

Kazuto, Asuna and the others arrived at the Naval Base; they’re all dressed up in formal wear for the ceremony.

"It's been a while since we were last here," Asuna remarked.

“Indeed,” Kazuto added. They remembered the first time they’ve been at the Mitchell Residence several months ago where they were introduced to Alex’s family and toured the naval base nearby. It was also the place where Alex and Suguha shared their first kiss.

"Looks like we are back..." Suguha was radiant. They see where the ceremonies are taking place at, down nearby the naval base.

"I hope you all have your tickets ready for security," Alex relayed.

“We all got them here,” Kazuto said as everyone got their tickets out. Alex and Suguha looked to one another and smiled. Everyone was ready to go through the checkpoint. They presented their tickets as they entered through security checkpoints.

"I'll never get used to how fortified military security is," Klein said as he put his belt back on after having to take it off for the metal detectors.

“Well, we gotta keep alert at all times,” Alex commented as he puts his shoes back on.

"I know..." Suguha sighed as she straightened out her skirt.
"Still, even with the female guards, do they have to pat us down so roughly like that?" Asuna complained as she fitted her shoes back on.

"Apparently so," Kazuto added, even though it was for extra security, he felt it was unnecessary.

Asuna stared back at Kazuto. 'Only you should get to touch me,' she thought.

Kazuto could tell what Asuna’s thinking and moves closer to her ear. “At least, later on, I can give you that bath I promised you.” He whispered into her ear.


They’ve made their way through various rows of seats until they got to the row that is close enough to see the ceremony up front as well as for Yui to see it through the smartphone and they sat down.

"There are so many people here!" Yui noticed.

"Indeed they are, Yui." Asuna said as she gives her smartphone a perfect view of the crowd and towards the area where the Ceremony is going to take place.

"So from what I've read, "Yui said, "these ceremonies are supposed to celebrate your world's warriors for their accomplishments?"

"That's right, Yui," Alex said as he continued. “As well as for promotions to the next rank.”

"That means your brother has a greater status then," Yui figured out.

"That’s correct; he’s become a Lieutenant very soon.” Alex answers.

"Lieutenant?“ Yui asked. Alex and Kazuto explain that Lieutenant is a high rank above Sergeant as well as other ranks.

"Wow... that's really high," Yui awed.

"Indeed Yui. It goes all the way to the top, General is the highest rank.” Alex smiled. “Unless you’re in the Navy, that rank would be Admiral.”

"Just like in SAO and ALO,” the little girl surmised. She bowed her head in gratitude. After a while and the crowd had settled in, the ceremony begins. The platoon of US Navy sailors, servicemen and companies of Navy SEALs soldiers appeared. They wore their dress uniforms as they stood in attention with pride and honor.

"They're starting, Asuna," Kazuto said. Asuna smiles as she holds her phone up for Yui to see. Then the Admiral and several of his staff arrived in front of the platoon and companies.

"This is a big deal, alright," Asuna noted. Then everyone stood up as the National Anthem of the United States begins to play. Afterward, everyone sat back down as the Admiral appeared before the podium.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, the staff of the Department of Defense, distinguished guests, welcome.” He began. “Before I begin, it is an honor to be here today as we honor those who are gathered here today to receive their gratitude and honor for serving the Navy of the United States of America. Since the beginning, the United States Navy serves as a show of force as well as serves to prepare to engage enemies that threaten freedom and liberty on not just the nation, but the rest of the free world."
The American members of the circle of SAO and ALO friends smiled in agreement.

“Also, we mustn’t forget the accomplishments we have made for the men and women here today as well as for their families and friends who have given them confidence in order to achieve their goals.” He continued.

"This kind of reminds me of all the motivational speeches that Heathcliff once made,” Asuna admitted to Kazuto beside her.

Kazuto's face twitched a bit at the mention of Kayaba's tag, but could not help but agree. The speech went on for some time before medals are brought out by one of the staff. Kazuto and Alex admired it as it takes them six months back when they were awarded for their bravery against Sugou’s plot to take over the world. It was then that the Admiral called the man of the hour.

“Jonathan Mitchell.”

Alex smiled proudly as his older brother approached the Admiral.

“For your services in the United States Navy, you are hereby, promoted from Lieutenant junior grade to Lieutenant.” The silence was deafening as Jonathan Mitchell had his insignias replaced. With that, the Admiral extended his hand with a smile. "Congratulations, Lieutenant."

“It is an honor, sir.” Jonathan smiled as they shook hands and saluted. The crowd rose to clap, with Alex being the most excited for his elder brother.

Then he heads back in line, and then a female Navy officer appeared before the Admiral. It was Rachel Mitchell, the older sister of Randy and the cousin of Alex. She is given the promotion of Lieutenant as well. It went on for some time, during that, older siblings/cousins of Scott and Tim, Alec Mason and Edward Parker, received promotions of LT. Colonel and Lieutenant. Scott, Tim, and Randy likewise cheered on their respective seniors. Rika and Keiko smiled for their respective boyfriends.

The officers and the Admiral exchanged salutes, signaling the end of the ceremony. Alex rendered a shaking, but proud salute for his brother. Suguha smiled for her boyfriend's happiness.

Afterward, everyone gathered at the buffet.

"Congratulations to your brother, Alex," Suguha beamed.

“He came a long way to get that promotion,” Alex said proudly.

"Just like you came a long way to be my hero from SAO,” Suguha flipped the script with a loving smirk.

“That is so true.” Alex smiles. It was then Jonathan appeared towards his little brother.

"Well if it isn't the happy couple." Jonathan teased.

"Hey Jon," Alex laughed, with Suguha smiling with some pink on her cheeks.

“I bet this is the greatest day for me, right?” Jon asked.
“Not just you, but our cousins,” Alex mentioned. It was then that the two brothers noticed Scott and Tim drinking, eating, and laughing alongside their other relatives, their new girlfriends, Rika, and Keiko joining in.

"Looks like we have another two happy couples added to the roost as well," Jon teased.

“Indeed so.” Alex chuckled. Scott and Tim have introduced their girlfriends to their family relatives. They were surprised that they’ve met them so soon but mentioned that Alex has helped them make new friends after moving to Japan.

Rika has gotten along with Scott and his family. So far, he’s managed to make up for accidentally groping her chest during the quest.

"Congrats, you two!"

"Those girls look so cute!"

“Thanks,” Scott replied.

“They’re very nice too,” Tim mentioned, while Rika and Keiko smiled and blushed from the compliments they’re getting from their boyfriends’ relatives.

Scott smiled as he looked to Rika. "Don't worry, girl," he assured, "they may tease, but that's how they are. Otherwise, they love new people."

“Your family has been very nice,” Rika admitted as she sips on lemonade.

“Indeed they are.” Scott smiled. It was a good thing they made a great impression for his relatives. Keiko was quite sheepish from the adoration and attention she was getting from Tim's relatives, especially the older male servicemen, who were commenting on how her cuteness and shyness made her a magnet for someone like Tim.

“So what do you think of my family,” Tim asked Keiko.

Keiko smiled back with pink cheeks. "They seem to be very happy and kind towards us," she said.

“Indeed they are.” Tim smiled. “It was hard for me when I moved here.” He then continued. “It means leaving the home you known all your life and into a city where you’re not familiar with.”

“Yes, it is,” Keiko admitted, she recalls it was hard for her while stuck in SAO, especially after she almost lost Pina. But with Kirito’s help, she managed to revive the little blue dragon.

Keiko giggled in delight. "Well, how about I help you?” she offered, "I know some good places for just the two of us."

She leaned towards him. "What do you say, Timmy?" she used her new pet name for him.

Tim blushes as she gazes into her beautiful light brown eyes. “That sounds great Keiko.”

“Ooohh. Looks like Timmy’s getting a little flustered here.” Edward teased.

“Indeed he is.” Their mother replied with a smile.

Even Keiko giggled as Tim was blushing. Never did she know that she was able to make a boy blush, and she loves every second of it.
“It appears Tim’s taking a liking to Keiko,” Scott whispered in Rika’s ear. It was then that Rika got mischievous. She gave a quick peck to Scott on the cheek. Gasp...
As everyone enjoyed themselves, Alex noticed one of the people at the buffet; he appears to be in his late forties, in a business suit and slick black hair.

Suguha notices Alex was glancing in a different direction. “What is it, Alex?” She asked.

“I think that’s my uncle over there,” Alex answers as he pointed towards the dressed man. Suguha and the others looked as well. It was then that the uncle noticed Alex.

“I think it is Alex,” Jon said. “Uncle Robert Mitchell.”

“Robert Mitchell…” Klein muttered. “Where did I heard that name from?”

The uncle then moves towards the table before speaking. “How are my favorite nephews doing?” He smiled.

“We’ve been doing great.” Alex smiled. “Glad you’ve made it to the promotion.”

“Wouldn’t miss it for the world,” Robert stated. I was then Klein remembers.

“Robert Mitchell. I remember.” Everyone turned to look at Klein, who said, "you're that political big shot and co-author of that alt. history by Harry Turtledove!"

“That’s correct. I was very fond of the series.” He admitted proudly. “Also I was curious on what happened afterward too.”

It was then that Suguha was curious. "Alex?"

“The Southern Victory series is an alternate history which explores the timeline where the Confederate States won the civil war which leads to rising tensions between the two countries in the fictional Second Mexican War as well as two alternate world wars,” Alex explains to Suguha. “It’s a pretty interesting series, although it ended after WWII ended and the Confederate States was absorbed by the United States after 83 years of independence. Uncle Robert has extended the timeline that explores what happened afterward.” He smiled at her.

"Oh..." Suguha wowed. She then smiled. Her boyfriend had a very diverse family.

“He also wrote a novel series on where the Second American Revolution failed and takes place roughly on this year I believe,” Alex said while trying to recall the series’ timeline.

“It takes place in the alternate 2025,” Robert said in a correction.

“Right.” He smiles sheepishly.

Suguha giggled. 'Oh, how I never get tired of this,' she thought.

“That’s very interesting,” Kazuto commented, he and Asuna were amazed by Alex’s family. Still, Asuna could not help but think of her own family. Even though her ex-mother Kyouko is in prison, but her father and brother have been caring for her after the ‘ALO’ and ‘Sugou’ incidents. In fact, Shouzou and Kouchirou managed to get jobs working for the Coalition of Allied Nations in Japan. It wasn’t easy at first due to Kyouko’s involvement with Sugou, but they cleared themselves that they knew nothing of Kyouko’s plans with him.

Kazuto noticed Asuna glancing down in thought. "Honey?"

Asuna’s mind snapped into reality when she heard his voice. “Oh, sorry Kazuto.” She apologized.
Kazuto could guess what Asuna was thinking. He then leaned next to her and said, "Don’t worry, when we get married, it will be a whole new start for both our families." Asuna looks into his onyx eyes and smiled from that thought. At least they’ll be able to put all of that behind them.

“Also, after dinner, we could head back up to our place and prepare celebrations for the New Year,” Jonathan suggested.


Alex was floored, while Kazuto and Asuna blinked their eyes. They had barely met the guy, and he was offering gifts?

“I do apologize that the gift was late,” Robert explained as he mentioned that he wanted to send them the gift months back, but it got delayed on a few occasions, most of the time, the gift was being hand-made by Alec Ross’ son.

Kazuto then decided to speak up. "Excuse me, Mr. Robert Mitchell, but why for me and Asuna?"

“Well, Most of us, including myself, believe that everyone deserves to choose their own futures instead of having their futures chosen for them,” Robert explains. “Some of my friends fought in the Second Revolution for one of those reasons.”

Robert then added, "Besides, Alex told me a lot about you guys, and I would like to express my best wishes for the both of you with this gift."

“Indeed, you two deserved each other after what you’ve gone through,” Alex added.

It was then that Suguha nudged her cousin's shoulder. "I don't know what it is, but I have a feeling that you and Asuna will love it." Suguha beamed as Alex hugged her, smiling as well.


Even Jon was smiling. "Hearing all that you both went through, and seeing where you both are now, you give guys like me hope that I will find myself a good girl and give her the same," he beamed.

“Same here.” Randy joined in. “Who knows if I may find someone that is the one for me. But hearing about you two also gives me hope.” Kazuto and Asuna could not help but be touched by the outpouring of support, even as this day was for Jon Mitchell.

“Thank you so very much.” Kazuto bowed to Robert Mitchell, Asuna did the same.

"Do us all a favor by getting married and having your happy ever after, alright?” Robert winked. At which both Kazuto and Asuna went pink. Even Alex and Suguha blushed at how to direct Robert was.

Later at the Mitchell Residence.

Everyone has gathered at the house after dinner and prepare for their New Year’s Eve party. As everyone is getting ready, Robert Mitchell arrived with two small packages. “This gift is for you
Alex. It’s my latest book.”

“Thanks, Uncle Robert.” Alex thanked him as he opens the package and it is a hard covered book. On the cover, it shows the American flag flying on the pole, but the flag itself appears to be in shreds but still intact. Below is the title: ‘Shattered Union: The Story of the Second American Civil War’.

"Another good read to sharpen the mind," Alex said as he examined the book, before flipping to the synopsis. He then smiled at his uncle. "Thank you, Uncle Robert."

"Anything for a special nephew," Robert replied.

Suguha looked to the book that Alex was holding.

“Huh, interesting,” Alex commented as he read the synopsis.

“What is it, Alex?” Suguha asked as Alex raised his eyebrow in interest.

“It says here, it takes place where Donald Trump is 45th President of the United States.” He answered.

“Wasn’t he like the Secretary of State?” Kazuto asked.

“Indeed he is.” Robert answers and he explains that he has once got an interview with him, during the conversation, he mentioned that he once considered of running for President in 2016. However, after the Second Revolution, America was back on track and he approved on how the country’s progress is going so he decided to say as Secretary.

“And I’ve gotten his permission to have him the 45th president of the United States in my book. However, I’ve managed to narrow down possibilities of how America would’ve gone if the Second Revolution never occurred.” He finished.

"Huh...” Suguha wondered what such a world would have turned out to be like, as Donald Trump had already been notorious for his bombastic and aggressive approach to policy. Alex however, was influent by the alternate timeline such as the nation going through a crisis such as the race riots after Ferguson; the national debt has risen to nearly 11 trillion, the unrest in the Middle East with the risen terrorist threat known as ISIS.

“Very interesting,” Alex said.

"Yeah,” Robert scratched his head, "that could have been real messy.”

“Indeed it would have been if history took a different course,” Alex admitted. Suguha looked at Alex as he said that. She sometimes wondered what would have happened if she had never met him. As she does this, Alex also had the thought of what he would’ve happened if he never met Suguha, he glances over and he could tell she’s thinking of the same thing.

"Alex..." Suguha groaned.

“Suguha…” Alex sighed. Kazuto and Asuna were watching with Rika and Scott, the latter two frowning a bit at Alex and Sugu looking dreamy eyed.

“I never knew Alex is always this mushy,” Scott whispered in Rika’s ear.

"Ah...” Rika groaned, "what love birds..."

“Indeed they are.” He added.
Asuna giggled, "Then what was up with you giving Liz here her back rub, Scott?" Rika’s and Scott’s faces flustered when Asuna mentioned this.

"T-that was different!" Rika defended, "I was having a bit of a sore back!"

"Yeah!" Scott joined, "I was just helping her as a friend!"

Asuna looked upon them with an unusually devilish smile. "Really?" she said in a sly tone, "then what was up with you reaching for her waist and eliciting all those cute sounds from her?"

"W.what do you mean?" Scott denied. But he wasn’t fooling her.

"Don't deny it," even Kazuto joined in the tease, "if that wasn't what I hear from Asuna coming out of Rika, then I don't know what is!" To emphasize his point, Kazuto stroked Asuna on the abdomen, eliciting a moan from her. Asuna's cheeks went pink. Scott and Rika blushed; they were both caught in the act.

Kazuto and Asuna then laughed and gently smiled. "It's alright," Asuna said, "I can't blame you for enjoying yourself for once, Rika."

"And take it from me, Scott," Kazuto added with a wink, "she's a good combo of kickass and sweet."

"Kazuto!" Rika shot out with a blush. Scott steps in.

"Hey, that's my Rika you're talking about." Scott defended her.

Kazuto then nodded in affirmation. "She really is," he agreed, nodding at a blushing Rika.

"Indeed she is," Scott admitted.

Asuna giggled again, taking Kazuto by the arms. "Well, we'll let you two have your fun, just like Alex and Suguha. Rika, have fun getting your body massages. Scott seems to do it in all the right spots."

Robert then pulls out another small box, Kazuto, and Asuna sees this and assumes that this gift is for them.

"Oh?" Asuna was now curious.

"Gather around everyone," Jon said, causing Alex to wonder if he knew something. Robert begins to clear his throat.

"Friends and family," Robert began. "I'm pretty sure that the gifts for Kazuto Kirigaya and Asuna Yuuki continued to pour for them for some time.

"And after all, they've gone through together; I for one will say that they deserve every bit the support and adoration they've received.

“However, these two represent on what true love really is and how one can go so far to protect the other. "I've seen plenty of loyalty and love in my day, but these two," he gestured at the happy couple, "have something special between them, something I have not often seen over my long years here on this Earth."

Kazuto and Asuna smiled as his compliment.
“Which is why they should have a symbol of their own that not only represents these two but to represent what true love is all about.” He finishes. He opened the box and reached in. "On behalf of this here family and grateful comrade, Alex Mitchell..." He pulls out what appears to be a piece of folded cloth and he unfolds it. It was a 3x5 flag; it was light blue with a red line at the bottom. One the left shows a shield with three swords crossed together. The couple looked closer at them and they see that they’re the same swords they’ve used while in SAO. Asuna’s rapier is in the middle of Kirito’s two swords. On the bottom, above the red line, are Japanese symbols. They both translate ‘For Kirito and Asuna’ on it.

"Wha?" Asuna breathed, while Kazuto had no words. There was a silence as the two stared at the battle flag.

“A gift from us to you.” Robert congratulated as he hands the flag to the surprised couple. Suguha had her mouth covered in surprise, while Alex was smiling. Klein just grinned in amusement while Rika and Keiko were astonished. Shigeru and Shino looked on with confused, but impressed looks. Meanwhile, Kazuto and Asuna were taking the flag in hand and marveling over it.

“I..I don’t know what to say,” Kazuto said in awe.

"Our own banner..." Asuna murmured. Slowly, they both held the flag together while Robert smiles on.

"Congratulations, warriors of SAO," Robert cheered.

It was then that Jon saluted. Seeing his older brother, Alex decided to render a crisp salute for his friend. Slowly, everyone joined in the salute for their two friends.

"You go, brother," Sugu teared up in happiness. Kazuto and Asuna then bowed to him, thanking him for the flag.

"Thank you, Mr. Mitchell," Kazuto said, " It means a lot to the both of us."

“You’re very welcome,” Robert replied with a smile. After it was over, they continued setting up for the New Year's Eve party. With Kazuto and Asuna, they were surrounded by their immediate friends who were marveling over the SAO battle flag.

“I gotta admit, it looks very well designed,” Klein commented. Rika and Shino were all smiles. "Now you two have a symbol of battle," Shino remarked.

"Hehe, what do we people not do for you guys," Rika laughed.

"It looks amazing, and it does fit you two,” Shigeru added.

"It does really fit your style," Scott remarked.

"Even though we've never played SAO at the time," Tim added. Keiko could not help but skip in happiness. "Wait ‘til Yui sees this!"

“I bet she would,” Rika added.

Asuna giggled. "We'll at least that saves us the symbol-creation part of guild building.

“Yes Indeed.” Kazuto chuckled. As the others marveled on the flag, Tim and Keiko stood next to each other.
"It's a wonderful life, isn't it, Timmy," Keiko sighed in happiness.

"Indeed it is." Tim replied happily, "Wanna see the nighttime sky? Just the two of us?" He asked. Keiko was surprised yet again. This young boy was much like her, reserved and shy at times. Yet he was proving himself to be bold in his gestures towards her.

Seeing Keiko stunned in silence, Shino decided to gently nudge her. "You go ahead, Keiko," Shino assured, "we'll all catch up later."

This gives her the courage she needed; she looks up into his forest green eyes. "Sure, we can go outside."

"Well then," Tim extended his hand, which Keiko took. The two practically waltzed away. Kazuto and Asuna smiled as they witnessed the two young couple head outside.

"So cute," Kazuto said, happy for Keiko.

“They’re so perfect together.” Asuna sighed happily for them.

Tim and Keiko stood outside the Mitchell home and gazed into the nighttime sky. The stars and moon shined brightly over them as well as the reflecting off of the ocean.

"Wow..." Keiko looked on in child-like wonder.

“I got to admit, they’ve picked the perfect spot to build their home,” Tim admitted as he stared into the nighttime sky with her. Keiko snuggled into Tim, breathing in relaxation. Tim held her closely.

"Moving to Japan has got to be the best thing that has happened to me," Tim said. "Mmm..." Keiko hummed. She closed her eyes from the warmth of her boyfriend.

"Would that have something to do with someone?" She asked.

“Indeed it is,” Tim replied. “That someone is you, Keiko.” He said warmly.

"Hehehe," Keiko laughed. She had a dreamy look in her eyes. "And you," she added, "are the best the best thing that has happened to me, too." He gazes into her eyes, the light brown color in her eyes reflected beautifully from the moonlight. Keiko suddenly recognized their proximity and blushed. "T-Tim..." she gulped.

“Keiko,” Tim said sheepishly. They both stood in awkward silence, gazing into each other very shyly.

"To... to be honest, Tim," Keiko confessed, "I was always a shy girl... I'm not exactly the hottest or most confident of the girls..."

“And….for me..” Tim confessed as well. “I’ve been shy sometimes too before I’ve met Alex…”

Keiko twiddled her thumbs. "Same here before I met Asuna and Rika... yet... I don't know why my heart pounds like this...

“Same here. My heart is racing and I’m not sure why.” Tim rubbed his nape before he continued. “It feels like I’ve known you for a long time even though we’ve only met a couple of days ago.”

“I feel that way too,” Keiko added. The two gazed into each other's eyes again. It was then that an intangible, yet powerful cord started to form between them.
"I guess we are in the same boat, Timmy... all shy and clueless..."

"Indeed we are," Tim replied. It was then that the two were touching noses. "But at least we are shy and clueless together," Tim whispered as his hand found its way to Keiko's hand, intertwining their fingers together.

Without another word, the two shy individuals met each other in their first sweet kiss. Their faces blush a deep red across their faces as their two lips met softly. The two parted, with Tim being rather rosy-faced. The two were silent for a few seconds, processing what had happened.

"Keiko... I-" Tim was cut off with Keiko putting a finger to his lips.

"Tim... please do that again..." He nodded and they pressed their lips together in another sweet kiss. He puts his arm around Keiko’s slim body, bringing her close in a warming embrace.

"Mmmmm..." Keiko hummed contentedly. The kiss between the two deepens a little, Tim hummed through the kiss as well.

'Mmm... peaches...' Tim thought about the taste on Keiko's lips.

'Mmmm... raspberries... ' Keiko thought as she does the same. The two kept up the chaste kissing, before separating again. This time, Keiko had a bright smile on her face.

“I guess this means…” Tim says.

“...We’re meant to be.” Keiko finishes. Tim brushed his girlfriend's pigtails, now giving the most radiant smile yet to Keiko. "I love you," he confessed.

“I love you too,” Keiko confessed as well. Finally not being shy anymore, the two kissed again, with the moon reflecting off of their smooth skin and giving them an innocent and warm glow. The warm feeling they had earlier has grown stronger when they kissed for the third time. Unbeknownst to them, their friends happened to be watching the new couple's tender moment with smiles on their faces. Those who were coupled had some of the dreamier expressions.

“It’s a very adorable moment,” Alex whispered in Sugu’s ear.

"Hehehe..." Sugu giggled.

“And the ironic part of that is that’s the same spot where we had our first kiss.” Alex then adds. Suguha had to cup her own face to stop from squealing at the sweetness. Kazuto and Asuna smile on with warmth from their first kiss.

"That is so cute~" Asuna whispered in a wistful tone.

“They’re a perfect match,” Kazuto said in a hushed tone.

Asuna hummed contentedly. As she looked on, though, it was then that she remembered the deal that she made with Kirito. If anything, the soft French kissing that Tim and Keiko were now doing was starting to get her going.

“So....Wanna leave early for that bath and massage you promised?” Asuna whispered in her boyfriend’s ear.

Kazuto then blushed, now reminded of the deal. "Asuna..."

"Not going to back out on me now, are you?" Asuna teased. She then poked his pants for effect.
"I've got plenty of tricks to make you moan and sigh, my cutie..."

“Mmmm..” He hummed softly from that though. “Sure, let’s head back home.” Taking Asuna by the hand, Kazuto quietly led the Yuuki girl away, while the others looked on.
Kirito, Asuna and the others meet Yuuki Konno during the Absolute Sword duel while Randy begins to take interest in her.

January 6, 2026:

Asuna, Leafa, Silica, and Lisbeth are doing their homework at Asuna and Kirito's log house, while Kirito was sleeping on the rocking chair with Pina and Yui on top of him. Alex, Scott, and Tim are with them.

Asuna smiled as she sees her in-game husband with their daughter and the little blue dragon snoozing on top of him.

"He's such a sleepy head," Tim remarked.

"Yeah..." Silica yawned, "I'm starting to nap off..."

"You can rest on me if you want," Tim suggested.

"Don't," Silica denied, "you'll... just..." She trailed off before resting on his shoulder. She began to breathe steadily as she slept. Tim wrapped his arm around her and held her gently as she fell asleep. Liz on the other hand, glared a little at Kirito.

"Is he this sleepy while online?" Scott whispered in Liz’s ear.

"No," Liz glanced over to Kirito, "that sleepy head there is daring us."

"Is that so?" He smirked

"Ah..." Tim suddenly yawned. Pretty soon, Tim dozes off with Silica.

"Hahaha," Asuna giggled at the sight of Tim and Silica snoozing together. Leafa starts to feel a little sleepy too.

"You too...ah... Leafa?" Alex asked through his own yawn.

"Ye. Yeah." Leafa answers as she yawns. She then begins resting her head on Lexar’s shoulder.

"Oh, Sugu. You just had to... goooo...aaaannnnndddd..."Lexar dozed off as he faces touched his girlfriend's cheek. Scott chuckled softly.

"You two are such sleepy heads," he chuckled, referring to Alex and Tim.

"Indeed they are," Lisbeth added, then she’s starting to feel drowsy too.

"Liz?" Scott questioned.

"Ye...Yeah." Lisbeth yawned.
Scott laughed softly, "You're sleepy!"

"Darn it Kirito…" Lisbeth muttered as she rests her head on Scott. He stroked Lizbeth's baby-like face as she snoozed.

'So cute...' he thought. He then closed his eyes from his stroking and Lizbeth's warmth. His hand gently rested on her lap as he snored.

“Oh boy,” Asuna muttered as the others begin dozing off around her. She then glanced over to her husband, who had Pina and Yui sleeping on him. There was an empty spot on the couch he was sitting on. She gets up, went over to Kirito and sits in the spot next to him.

Asuna snuggled up next to Kirito. "The one attack that I can never defend against," Asuna murmured with a smile. She then closed her eyes and rested against him. "Kirito and Yui... so cute and snuggly..." Subconsciously, Kirito moves his arm and wrapped it around Asuna while he’s still snoozing. The room was warm and silent as all four couples were dozing off, with Kirito and Asuna holding Pina and Yui together.

Over thirty minutes went by, which felt like hours for them. Kirito begins to stir awake.

"Uh..." Kirito began to open his eyes to the feel of three bodies lying against him. He smiles as he sees Pina, Yui and Asuna laying on him all snoozing. He then glanced around and was surprised to see all of the other guys and girls napping together. Asuna snuggled up into Kirito’s arm, while still napping. Kirito smiled, hugging her tightly while making sure not to startle Yui on his head.

“Mmmmm….Kirito…” Asuna murmured in her sleep.

"I guess I am a knockout with my napping," he chuckled. Asuna then begins to stir and opened her eyes and sees Kirito.

"Gotcha," Kirito grinned. Asuna was confused. It was then that Kirito used his right arm to lightly tickle Asuna. She starts laughing as Kirito tickles her side.

"You fell asleep, Lightning Flash!" Kirito teased, "you snooze you lose!"

“You…..meanie….” Asuna giggled. Yui and Pina began to stir from the shaking and the giggling.

“Mommy?” Yui groaned.

"Hehehehehe!" Asuna continued to giggle. Yui couldn’t help by a smile to see her mommy being tickled by her daddy. Pina got off Kirito's lap and hovered as Asuna reached around for Kirito's sides. Then Kirito begins to laugh as Asuna’s fingers found and begin tickling his sides. With that Leafa and Alex opened their eyes to the laughter. Then Silica, Lisbeth and their respected boyfriends followed suit.

“I knew it,” Lisbeth exclaimed. “I knew Kirito was challenging us!”

"No wonder why Asuna refers to his napping as an attack," Scott agreed.

She then glanced at her boyfriend. Tim and Silica couldn’t help by a giggle at the two couple tickled each other.

“They are so playful!” Silica exclaimed. Pina skrawed happily as he flew back to his master.

“Indeed they are.” Tim smiled. As they watched, Tim's hand slipped around her back and tugged
Silica’s tail gently. Silica squeaked in surprise as she felt her tail being tugged.

"Sshhhh,” Timmy cooed, "it's alright, Silica-chan; just relaxed.” He gently stroked her tail with a soft and warm hand. Silica sighs as her boyfriend’s hands touch her tail with care.

"Meow," Silica purred innocently.

“Good kitty.” Tim smiled as he rubs her ears.

"Hehehe... yes, Master. Meow," Silica teased as Tim stroked her ears and tail.

“Maybe soon, I could rub your belly if you want me to,” Tim suggested.

"B-belly?” Silica was confused.

“If you don’t want to, it’s OK with me,” Tim said sheepishly.

"Um..." Silica mumbled, before looking at Tim, "just slow and gentle, alright?"

“Don’t worry, I’ll be gentle,” Tim reassured her. Tim then slowly reached for her belly and gently rubbed his fingers against her shirt. Silica coos from his gentle touches against her belly and blushes.

"Timmy... Meow... Ruurrr..." Silica purred gently as her ears and tail twitched.

Tim smiles. “Very good kitty.”

"Hehehe... Meow..." Silica giggled and purred, enjoying her treatment as a cat girl. Lexar and Leafa watched on in amusement at the young couple.

"Silica really enjoys the pet treatment,” Leafa laughed.

“Indeed she does.” Lexar chuckled. Leafa kept smiling for Silica and her boyfriend, as Lexar stared at her.

“There’s a forest that players hardly venture through,” Lexar whispered in Leafa’s ear. Leafa yelped with a blush.

“It’s perfect for us to explore without interruption with the other players.” He smirked. Leafa's face was cherry red at the thought of them undressing in front of each other, out in the open. “It’ll be very exciting for both of us.” He added.

"Y-yeah!” Leafa agreed.

“Also, we can explore it anytime we want.” He smiles.

Leafa then glanced back at him. "Tomorrow, then," she adamantly stated.

“Tomorrow it is.” He replied and he hugs her.

"J-just don't be too rough on me...” Leafa murmured.

Lexar takes her hand as he gazes into Leafa’s green eyes. “Don’t worry; I’ll be very gentle on our first time.”

"Okay...” Leafa smiled a bit.

Meanwhile, Kirito and Asuna were calming down from their tickle duel, while Yui looked down at
them with amusement.

“I can’t believe you pulled that on me.” Asuna giggled as she rests her head on his chest.

"You seemed to be enjoying it, though," Kirito teased.

“Very true Kirito.” Asuna admitted.

"Oh, Mommy and Daddy," Yui giggled as she floated above them.

"You both seemed to have a lot of fun!" She beamed, "let me join in!"

“Sure Yui, you can join.” Asuna smiled as their AI daughter turns into her original size.

"Hug attack!" Yui squealed as she caught her parents in a downward glomp, nearly causing them to fall over. Kirito and Asuna laughed with joy as they caught Yui.

"Mmmm!" Yui cheered, before giving a mischievous look. "Gotcha!" But before they know it, they find themselves being tickled by Yui.

"Hahahahaha! Y-Yui...haha...Yui-chan!" Asuna laughed.

"Hohohohehehaha!" Kirito laughed in enjoyment.

“Tickle Mommy and Daddy! ” Yui exclaimed with excitement. The two parents collapsed to the floor as their daughter continued her playful assault. Then Yui stopped and smiled,

"I win!" Yui cheered. The two parents looked to one another and grinned mischievously.

"Tickle attack!" they both exclaimed. They both tickled Yui, who squeals in both surprise and excitement as she’s being tickled.

"Wheehahahahahehehaha!" Yui squealed. Everyone else watched with smiles and giggles at the family moment. After a while, they’ve stopped. The laughter died down and the family hugged each other. It was then that Silica looked outside and noticed something.

“It’s stopped snowing outside.” Silica said as she saw a clear sky.

"You're right, Silica," Tim noticed.

“Everyone wants to head out to the porch?” Scott suggested.

"I'll make us all some tea," Asuna inputted.

"Sounds good!" Leafa agreed. She, Lexar, Tim, Silica and the others headed out to the porch.

"Here you go, Yui," Silica offered Yui some snow for a snowman.

"Thank you, Silica!" Yui cheered. Scott, Lisbeth, Asuna, and Kirito watched as the others start building snowmen.

"Ahh...” Kirito sighed in contentment, holding his cup of tea.

"It’s very beautiful in the wintertime, Liz," Scott waved his cup.

"Yes indeed, Scott," Liz tapped her own against his. Silica, on the other hand, tries to make a snowman of her own, but it keeps falling apart each time.
Tim chuckled softly. “Mind if I help?” Tim offered.

"Thank you!” Silica beamed. Together, they started building a snowman and have succeeded. Silica was so happy with the results of it and hugged Tim.

Meanwhile, Leafa and Lexar were making snow angels together.

“They’re perfect snow angels,” Lexar commented.

"They are, just like us," Leafa commented as they looked down at the angels they made in the snow, finishing with their hands touching.

“My angel,” Lexar said softly. It was then that Lisbeth and Scott remembered something.

"Oh yeah!” Scott faced Kirito and Asuna, "have you both heard about Zekken?” They both shook their heads ‘no’.

“Never heard about Zekken,” Kirito said.

"I'm all blank here," Asuna added.

“Do you know?” He then asked Lisbeth.

“Oh yeah,” Rika said, "you two were out on vacation so you wouldn't have heard of Zekken."

“Yeah, we didn’t get a chance to log in,” Kirito said while rubbing his nape sheepishly.

"Oh...?” Lisbeth mischievously questioned, "You and Asuna went on another escapade?"

“Something like that.” Asuna blushes as they relive their memory together on New Year’s.

“So... what's Zekken? Some kind of game object?” Kazuto questioned.

“Zekken’s more of a player,” Lisbeth explained.

"Zekken's a duelist who’s been challenging players on the 24th Floor," Scott joined in, "this player joined not too long ago, but everyone dueling Zekken has gotten it handed to them. Zekken's so good that no one has ever been able to damage this guy by more than thirty percent."

“Is that so?” Kirito said. His eyebrow raised in curiosity.

"Yeah..." Scott said, as all the others came up to the porch.

"That Zekken was really good," Silica remarked.

"Too good," Tim added.

“I remember hearing about this user.” Lexar then added. “I even challenged him and got myself beaten.”

"I did,” Leafa admitted, ”and Zekken beat me like a champ. I could barely see Zekken coming."

“I’m not sure if Randy heard about Zekken.” Lexar pondered to himself. “He really does like a good challenge every now and then.”

"Really? What makes this Zekken so strong?” Kirito asked.

"I see..." Kirito mused, "What else?"

“I believe I heard of this special eleven hit combo.”

Both Asuna and Kirito's eyes widened at this. "Eleven hits!?"

“Yep, Leafa and I fought against Zekken and got beaten,” Lisbeth said.

"What about you and Scott?" Asuna asked Scott.

“Yep, I've gotten beaten as well,” Scott said as he nods sheepishly.

"Don't even ask me nor Silica," Tim said, "seeing Zekken go, we knew we had no chance."

“And Randy?” Kirito asked. Seeing that he, Asuna and Randy are the only people left.

“No, he hasn’t.” Lexar answers. “But he would try. Randy likes a good challenge every now and then.”

“Yeah, like in that game ‘Left 4 Dead’ where he blasted through those zombies.” Scott chimed. They’ve remembered how brave and crazy Randy fought.

“And of course there was ‘Homefront’ and the ‘Far Cry’ game.” Lexar then added.

"I see..." Kirito mused. He then looked to his Undine wife. "What do you think, Asuna?"

“Sounds a very interesting and brave player.” Asuna admitted. "I say that we go and find out for ourselves," She suggested.

“I'll contact Randy and tell him about Zekken,” Lexar added.

"You go do that," Kirito said. At that, Yui skipped up to her parents.

“I know you can do it, Mommy and Daddy.” Yui chirped happily.

"We will," Asuna reassured, kissing Yui on the forehead. When she got back up, she checked the clock on her pop up screen.

"I guess it's time for dinner," Asuna said, "I can't keep my Dad and Kouichirou waiting. We'll meet each other tomorrow and go to see this Zekken."

It was then that Leafa and Lexar looked at each other. Lexar spoke up, "Leafa and I have some plans tomorrow so you guys will have to go on without us."

“Ok. Take care.” Asuna smiled. As everyone begins logging out, Asuna is the last to log out.

She wakes up in her bedroom wearing the AmuSphere. The bedroom was dark as it was hours ago when she logged in; she got up from her bed and turned the light on.

“Gotta go down and meet Dad and brother," Asuna murmured as she got up and dressed for the
evening. Sada met her at her bedroom door and notified that they’re downstairs. She headed downstairs to hear the conversation. She smiled as it was Kouichirou and it was no doubt that the conversation was the jobs they worked at. She arrives to see her father Shouzou and her older brother at the table.

“Hey, Asuna. Got back from ALO?” Kouchirou chimed when he sees his little sister.

"Yep, just was doing homework and having a bit of fun with Kazuto and the others," Asuna said with a smile.

“That’s very good.” He smiled. “It’s good to have friends and Kazuto to be with.” He turned to Shouzou. “Right father?”

"I could not agree more," Shouzou closed his eyes, "especially since I owe him for his loyalty towards you, Asuna." Asuna smiles as she sat at the table and they have dinner.

"I certainly can see that he loves you more than life, and would certainly make for a very good husband to you," Shouzou said. It was then that his gaze lowered, "probably a much better one than I have been to your mother..."

Both Asuna and Kouchirou frowned by the mention of Kyouko Yuuki. After what she has put Asuna through it made the entire Yuuki family lose trust in not only for her decision to make the creature Sugou her fiancée but tried to keep her and Kazuto separate after the whole incident.

"The truth was that she was never always like the woman you both knew," Shouzou continued, "if anything, she was not only intelligent and beautiful but also kind and adventurous when I met her." His face took on a sad expression. "I should never have neglected her emotional needs and left her to bury herself in her work and vanity. That was how I lost her... there was so much I could have done to keep the family together."

“Even after what happened back in 2013,” Kouchirou added. Mega-Corporates in America fell in the wake of the Second Revolution and caused a ripple effect around the world, including Japan which caused her to lose her first job as well as her best friend.

"Yes..." Shouzou continued to eat but slowed down as he teared up, "I was so contented with her success, that I failed to see how much of herself she put into Mega-Corporates. I did not realize it at the time, but looking back, that was when I lost the kind and happy woman I fell in love with."

He shook his head, "I should have been by her side after that, but I was too busy trying to keep RECT afloat. I just assumed her to be a lot tougher than she really was. My neglect of this family has cost me your mother, and nearly cost me the both of you."

Asuna and Kouchirou stopped eating for a bit. At this point, the hurt in Shouzou's eyes was apparent.

"If only I had set aside some of my own work to look after her, if only I had bothered to take more part in raising the both of you with her instead, none of this would have happened. I-" Shouzou sniffed, "I have failed to be the man you three needed most in your lives... for that... I'm truly sorry..."

Feeling sympathy, Asuna got up, walked around the table and gave her father a comforting hug. Kouchirou also joined in the hug for their father.

"Father... I didn't know," Asuna admitted. She had never seen her father show this much hurt, even in the immediate aftermath of the ALO Incident.
"I'm very...truly sorry for what happened to you." Shouzou said. "I never should have let her put you together with that creature. And I was completely wrong to arrange your marriage with him while you were asleep... I was desperate..." Asuna just held their father in a big comforting hug.

"I'm sorry I couldn't protect you two..." Shouzou wept, "and I'm sorry I could not save your mother from herself."

"We're very sorry too," Kouchirou said. Asuna said nothing as she hugged her repentant father. The room fell silent as the Yuuki children comforted their father in a group hug.

"I'm sorry... I never knew," Asuna comforted.

"Me neither," Kouchirou added.

"I... I miss her..." Shouzou said, "I miss her so much." Asuna hugged her father even more.

"We're still here, Dad," Asuna said, rubbing her father.

"We’ll get through this, Dad. We’re all here for you.” Kouchirou said.

Shouzou smiled at his children, "thank you."

"No problem," Kouchirou said.

"You are truly helpless without us," Asuna joked.

Shouzou wipes his tears away before he gives his children a hug. Sada watched through a crack in the door, smiling at the family. While she was sad that Kyouko was gone, she took comfort in the fact that the two Yuuki children were still here with their father. And no matter what, they’ll get through the rough times and make a full recovery for the Yuuki family.

"Asuna..." Sada murmured before clicking the door shut quietly.

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The Next Day:

Randy couldn’t believe he lost the Absolute Sword duel with Zekken in about ten seconds or more. ‘How did I lose that quickly?’ he thought to himself. He groaned as he tried to stand up and retrieve his sword. As he does then, he thinks back at the moment before the duel began. He came in gunho and ready to challenge Zekken, but Zekken had more than a few surprises. The first surprise Zekken had was her beauty. The rich purple long hair and wine red-colored eyes could stun any guy. They may be appearances for the avatar, but it did make her a looker. Most striking, though, was her smile just as she pummeled him into the ground. Was it her looks that distracted him long enough for her to defeat him or was it just her skills alone? However, despite his quick and humiliating defeat, he couldn’t help but think about the player’s smile and beauty looks. Kirito, Asuna and Scott went over and helped their friend up.

"Randy!" Scott said

"You okay?" Kirito asked.

“Yeah...I guess.” Randy said as he is lifted up on his feet. Randy looked up and saw all the others
present. However, neither Leafa nor his cousin were present.

"Say, where are Lexar and Leafa?"

"They've decided to go on a quest somewhere." Kirito explained. "But didn't give many details on it."

"I see..." Randy understood.

"So... where is Zekken?" Asuna asked.

"She left right after she finished the duel. She appears to be heading to the tree." Scott recalled.

"She?" Asuna questioned. Kirito was likewise confused.

"Up there!" Lisbeth pointed, "it's Zekken!" They looked up and see Zekken, her rich purple hair shined from the ALO sunlight.

"Hehehe!" Zekken giggled as she jumped down in front of a surprised Kirito and Asuna, revealing herself to be indeed a girl. As the others were surprised and confused by Zekken's appearance, Randy, however, finds himself gazing at this attractive player. She was even beautiful before the duel began.

It was then that Zekken looked at Randy's friends with a grin. "Wow," she spoke, "you brought more friends to challenge me?"

"Well..." Kirito hesitated. "...We heard about you from the others."

"Though, they didn't say you were a girl," Asuna chuckled nervously.

"Well, you know what they say.." Zekken said with a giggle. "Looks can be deceiving." Kirito looked to Asuna who gave him a reaffirming glance and nod.

"I guess I'm next to duel her," Kirito said nervously. However, he quickly assumed a confident persona and drew his swords.

"Shall we?" Kirito suggested, making his fighting stance, showing he's ready. Zekken hummed in amusement, before raising her sword. "Bring it on!"

The duel between the Black Swordsman and Zekken begins. It goes on for some time; the two players engaged heavily and stood their grounds as swords clashed into one another.

"Get her, Kirito!" Asuna cheered. He smiles as he gets encouragement from his in-game wife and continues to stand his ground.

"Hiyah!" Zekken barreled at him with astounding speed. Kirito barely managed to block but was pushed back a considerable distance. He quickly regains his distance and prepares to use his combo strike attack.

"Rah!" Kirito lunged back at her.

From outside the fight, Asuna and the others could hardly see what was happening with the dust being kicked up. Randy tried to keep tabs on Zekken as she tried to get an opening. Despite the dust being kicked up, Zekken manages to hold her ground against the Black Swordsman.

"Wow," Randy thought aloud, "someone who could actually hold her own against Kirito..."
The duel continues until Zekken executed an eleven-hit combo on Kirito. He didn’t even stand a chance against her. Asuna was floored as Kirito fell to the ground, his health depleted from the duel as the system declared Zekken, or Yuuki, the winner. Asuna ran over to help her in-game husband up.

Asuna pulled a bottle out of her inventory. Briefly looking at it, she popped the cap off and seemingly drank it. Her friends, including Zekken, looked at her quizzically, before she put her lips to Kirito’s. Randy smirked as Asuna gives Kirito a kiss as if it’ll revive him. But who could blame her? Everyone else, including Yuuki, simply gasped or blushed at the apparent display of affection.

It was then that Kirito started to twitch slightly. Eventually, he opens his eyes as he feels Asuna’s lips touching his.

"Mmmmm..." Kirito hummed in pleasure. They parted lips as Asuna gazes down into his eyes. "Sorry, Asuna," Kirito apologized, "I didn't see her coming."

“It’s OK Kirito.” Asuna cooed. “At least you tried.” Asuna then kissed Kirito, as their friends and all the other players blushed, gasped, and murmured among themselves.

Even Zekken looked like she felt awkward with a blush on her face, which Randy noticed.

‘She looks very cute with that blush.’ Randy thought to himself. Zekken’s face flushed a cherry red as the bluenette kisses Kirito after the defeat. Not every day she’d see someone do that, usually if they win the duel. But she defeated him and he still gets a kiss.

"Umm... hello, blue-haired girl?" Zekken called out, "you still going to duel me or what?"

“Ummm…Sure…I guess I’m next.” Asuna replied as she helped him.

"Be careful Asuna," Kirito said.

“Don’t worry, Kirito.” Asuna reassured him as she approached Zekken. "Let's see how your speed compares to mine," Asuna grinned.

“We’ll see about that,” Zekken replied. Followed by her smile.

"So... how do you want to do this? On the ground or in the air?" Zekken asked.

“On the ground.” Asuna replied.

"Oh yeah, and feel free to use magic, but I'll just be using my sword skills," Zekken said as her wings deactivated. She then sent a request to Asuna.

Looking at her name, it was then that she saw 'Yuuki' again. 'That must be her real tag,' she thought. She accepts the request and draws her rapier sword. Randy watches as the duel between Asuna and Zekken begins, but he hopes that he'll be able to duel her again. A few tense moments passed as the two duelists faced off. Kirito held his breath as he went back towards Randy, Scott, Tim, Lisbeth, and Silica to watch.

Then the duel began, Asuna went full out as more swords clashed against each other. Asuna deflected many of Yuuki’s blows as she attempted her own slashes and stabs. As with Kirito, Yuuki proved to be a nimble and aggressive opponent, but Asuna was not called the 'Lightning Flash' for nothing. As the battle raged on, Asuna punched Yuuki while their swords were crossed and then used the window to activate a rapier Sword Skill, Quadruple Pain.
"Got you!" Asuna cheered as she went for a stab. To her surprise, Yuuki skillfully managed to block her fast attacks and then activated her own Sword Skill. Yuuki went at Asuna with a yell as she cut into her. Asuna recoiled from the attacks before regaining her stance and activating her own skill.

"I won't lose!" The two clashed, causing a major explosion whose shockwave nearly blew everyone off their feet. Asuna fell back, badly scarred from the clash.

However, while Asuna had used up her last attack of Starry Tear, Yuuki's Sword Skill was still ongoing.

Yuuki attacked Asuna with several consecutive cuts. Asuna's HP dropped as she takes on several hits, but she still remained standing. Yuuki's sword continued to glow as she readied more attacks.

"The eleven hit combo..." Asuna murmured. Kirito, Randy and the others held their breath as Yuuki prepares the eleven hit combo. Yuuki then plunged the sword into Asuna, causing a shockwave to rock the whole area. Then the duel stopped, the dust cleared and Yuuki appears to be on the verge of winning. However, despite the inevitable victory, Yuuki extends her hand to the bluenette.

"That was awesome!" Yuuki beamed. Asuna was confused by her cheerfulness, but she takes her hand and she was helped up onto her feet.

"We could definitely use someone like you," Yuuki said with a grin.

"Ummm...Thanks.." Asuna said, she smiled afterward. Randy, however, sees that this is his chance to ask her for a second round.

"Zekken!" Randy called out.

She hears this and sees Randy. "Yes?"

"Um... if you don't mind..." he began, "I would like a rematch with you!" Everyone was surprised that Randy has challenged Zekken for a second duel; even Kirito and Scott were surprised as well. The first time didn’t go too well as he let his guard down. But they see that he’s determined to redeem himself after that blunder.

"Whoa, I didn't see that coming," Lisbeth said, glancing at Scott, "you?"

"Nope, he seems persistent," Scott remarked.

"She's already so strong, and he wants to go at her again!?" Silica expressed her shock.

"I didn't think he had that much guts in him," Tim inputted.

"Sure, I could beat you for a second time." Zekken giggled.

"Zekken?" Asuna questioned.

Yuuki just waved. "Don't worry," she said, "I think he just needs to be taught a little lesson here."

"I hope you know what you're doing," Kirito warned Randy.

"Come on, Kirito," Randy shrugged, "I love challenges." He then drew his sword. "Besides, there’s something about her that interests me." He said softly.

"I see..." Kirito said, before shaking his head and perking up. "Wait, what!?" However, Randy had already stepped up to Zekken.
“I’m ready for Round 2.” Randy smiled.

“Hey, Randy!” Scott shouted. “Make sure you don’t get a nosebleed if she flashes you.” He laughed. Randy turned and glared at him. His face went pink.

“I make one little mistake and I’ll never hear the end of this.” Randy murmured to himself.

Zekken, or Yuuki, drew her sword again with a smirk. "You are a bold one, even more so than that Spriggan over there," she remarked.

"You mean Kirito?" Randy asked. He then replied, "I guess I'm about to find out whether I'm brave or stupid."

"Get him, Zekken!" one onlooker cheered.

"Pummel him!"

The second duel between Randy and Zekken or in this case, Yuuki begins.

"Hiyah!" Yuuki rushed at Randy. But this time, Randy was aware and blocked Yuuki’s sword attack. It was then that Randy kicked Yuuki’s feet from out under her.

"Aaahhh!" Yuuki yelled as she falls flat on her back and Randy makes his jump slam, but she quickly rolled away and Randy’s sword hit the ground.

"You sneaky-!" Yuuki yelled as she charged up a Sword Skill. Randy makes another slash combo, but she quickly blocks them and pulls a fast move that knocked him down onto the ground.

"You're mine!" Yuuki yelled as she brought her sword down. However, Randy jumped back as her blade hit the ground.

"Get back here!" Yuuki chased after Randy. The two players chased each other before Randy quickly stopped and dropped to his knees. He brings his sword in a low slash, catching Yuuki off guard.

"What!?" Yuuki was surprised.

"Gotcha!" Randy shouted as he uses the firestorm blade towards the unexpected Yuuki.

"Agh!" Yuuki felt the sword pierce through her. The others were stunned by Randy’s surprise attack.

"What the-" Kirito himself was shocked.

"He actually did it.” Scott was awestruck.

"But... where did he get..." Tim's question trailed off. Randy stood proudly in his accomplishment. He drew the sword out of Yuuki's chest, causing her to stumble back in surprise.

"H-how?" Yuuki asked.

“The Firestorm blade combined with the stop/drop attack.” He said proudly. “Very useful against opponents. The duel declared Randy as the winner. Even Asuna was floored at how Randy seemed to use a combination of cunning combined with a critical hit from a rare weapon to defeat Yuuki. The Imp girl collapsed as she had lost energy from that critical blow. After the duel, Randy extends her hand to Yuuki, offering to help her up.
“You’ve fought very great.” He commented with a smile. Yuuki accepted as Randy pulled her up. She stared at him for a bit, before snickering and then laughing.

“I had to admit, that was a very good move,” Yuuki said as she laughs.

“Well it worked, didn't it?” Randy scratched the back of his head.

“We could use someone like you in our guild.” Yuuki then said.

"Huh?" Randy perked up. “What do you mean?”

“We’ve been looking for a player with that kind of fighting skills and you fit the bill.” Yuuki smiled at her cute smile.

"Wait, who's we?" Randy asked. Kirito and Asuna are confused by Yuuki’s offer.

“Umm….” Kazuto begins to ask.

“What guild are you talking about?” Asuna finishes with a question.

Yuuki looked at both of them with the same smile. "Oh, just a group of friends like me who could really use some help with something," she explained.

“Neat,” Randy exclaimed.

Yuuki looked very cheerful at this. "I'm Yuuki," she introduced herself.

Randy smiled. “I’m Randy.” He introduced himself before showing her the others. "These two you fought are my friends," Randy waved to Kirito and Asuna.

"I'm Kirito, the Black Swordsman," Kirito introduced himself. He then looked to Asuna beside him. "And here is my girlfriend and Berserk Healer, Asuna."

“Nice to meet all of you.” Yuuki smiled. It was then that Tim, Scott, Lisbeth, and Silica went up to Yuuki, who perked up in recognition of their appearances.

“And this is Scott, Lisbeth, Tim, and Silica.” Randy continued.

"I remember you four," Yuuki said. She looked to Scott and Lisbeth, "I beat you two that same day!"

“Yep,” Lisbeth replied with a smile.

“Can’t believe Lexar and Leafa weren’t here to witness this,” Scott commented. “They sure missed out on the action.”

"I'm sure we'll tell them all about it," Kirito smiled.

“I wonder what this quest they’re doing,” Tim asked, curious about the quest they’ve mentioned earlier.

“Whatever it is, it’s probably boring anyway,” Scott added.

“How about we have the invitation over dinner?” Asuna suggested. Yuuki was even more surprised that she was being offered dinner by these people.
“So what do you think?” Asuna asked.

"Wow..." Yuuki breathed, "I think my friends will like meeting all of you..."

Randy chuckled. "What do you say?" The Imp player looks like Randy and smiles. “Of course we’ll have it over dinner.”


At the Log House in New Aincrad. Kirito, Asuna and the others are enjoying dinner with Yuuki and the Sleeping Knights, guild. Yuuki introduces to her friends in the guild.

“This is Siune, Jun, Talken, Nori, and Tecchi.” Sound, an Undine healer, smiled as she held her tea.

"I'm Siune, and I wish to thank Miss Asuna and Mr. Kirito here for their hospitality." She complimented with a smile.

Kirito and Asuna bowed her head for her gratitude. “You’re very much welcome Siune.”

Jun, the Salamander boy, likewise introduced himself. "I'm Jun, nice to meet you all!"

Scott smiled. “It’s very nice to meet you all too.”

"I'm Talken," the nervous-looking Sylph boy with glasses said,

"I-it's nice to m-meet..." He was promptly bumped on the back by his Spriggan teammate.

"Come on, Talken, no need to be so sheepish in front of our hosts!" The dark boy turned back to Kirito and Asuna.

"I'm Nori, and I'm glad to meet you all!" Kirito, Asuna, Silica, Tim, and Lisbeth greeted them.

“Very nice to meet you too,” Tim said.

"And I'm Tecchi," the male Gnome of the Sleeping Knights greeted, "it's likewise a pleasure!"

“A pleasure likewise.” Lisbeth chimed.

"Of course, you all know me, Yuuki, leader of the Sleeping Knights," Yuuki chimed in. The others smiled. Randy, of course, couldn’t help but think about Yuuki. He feels something very unfamiliar within himself. It was unusual, but it wasn’t something bad, but something very good, a warm feeling. It was then that Jun looked to Randy. They heard that Randy himself managed to defeat their leader in the Absolute Sword duel. It was hard to believe that after Yuuki’s winning streak, she was defeated.

"So!" Nori glanced up at Randy, "what's the story on that second round with Yuuki!?"

"I'm curious myself," Tecchi chimed in.

“Well, the first round didn’t go as well as planned.” Randy chuckled nervously. “But I’ve redeemed myself in the second round.” Yuuki pouted at Randy. Who he led a nervous smile.
"I’m sure you’ll be able to beat me next time." He reassured her. Yuuki bumped him in the shoulder. "You were playing dirty," she said, "I can still feel the heat from that flame sword inside me."

"It was an improvised move I’ve learned from another VR game," Randy explains. "Plus the Firestorm Blade was still new to me."

It was then that Yuuki gave an evil grin. "Still," she retorted, "didn't your mommy and daddy teach you how rude it is to hit girls?" This comment caught Randy off guard; he searches through his thoughts to make a comeback comment. But he has none; she’s got him in her trap.

“Well….There wasn’t….” Randy stammered.

Yuuki laughed, "oh? What's the matter, hotshot? Shy around girls?"

“She’s got you right there Randy.” Scott chuckled. “You did fumble the first round only by her appearance.”

"You're the one to talk, grabbing your girlfriend's chest when you first met her," Randy retorted. Scott’s cheeks flushed.

“That was an accident.” Scott defended. “I’ve lost balance and grabbed her by mistake.” Kirito and Asuna shook their heads on that embarrassing incident; Lisbeth blushed as she recalled him grabbing her chest. Scott was blushing and blubbering, while Yuuki and her friends reacted in shock.

"Wait, what?!" Jun yelled. Talken’s eyes widen in surprise from what he’s heard. Nori was staring at Scott with a dropped jaw, while Tecchi could not find the words to speak.

"Um..." Siune dared to speak up, "what was that?"

"It was an accident Siune." Scott was now blushing.

"He's right," Lisbeth was blushing as well, "it's a long story, but it really was an accident." She then gave a stink eye to Randy, who visibly recoiled from her gaze.

"Liz," Silica warned. Randy is now feeling a little bad as he sunk into his chair in shame.

Yuuki chuckled. “It’s OK, I was giving you trouble.” She giggled. Randy sighed a bit at Yuuki's playful nature. After it died down, Siune begins to speak.

"Anyways," she began, "the reason we had Yuuki hosting duels is that we are searching for one or two more players strong enough to join our ranks."

“Never thought of that,” Scott remarked.

"Well," Yuuki said, "the thing is that my friends and I are trying to beat one of the floor bosses as a single group." Her gaze then lowered a bit, "the Sleeping Knights will be disbanding soon, but we wanted to get our names on the Iron Palace Monument before we do so. We initially planned for a seventh member, but the latest update has given us the liberty to add an eighth member."

“Interesting.” Randy then commented. Yuuki then smiled at Randy, Kirito, and Asuna.

“Who’d be the eight members of your guild?” Kirito asked.

“Well, we’re having Randy as the seventh member,” Yuuki said. She then looked to Asuna. "Since you could keep up with me longer, I think we’ll have you on our team," she said, "after all, it's not
every day I come across a kickass healer who can keep up with my speed, let alone kiss her boyfriend back to life."

Asuna blushes as she smiles. “I’m very honored to be the eighth member.” Kirito looked a little bummed but decided to differ to his wife.

As the evening went on, the two groups of friends continued to eat, chat and laugh. Yuuki and Randy were also getting to know one another, with the latter's shyness fading away.

“So you’ve moved to Japan after your family got jobs?” Yuuki asked as she learned that his parents are doctors that are helping to work on fatal diseases.

“That’s right.” He smiled. “It was hard for me when I moved, but at least I’ve made new friends here,” Randy glances at Kirito, Asuna and the others. Yuuki had a bit of a sparkle in her eyes. Randy is taking very interest in Yuuki. The warm feeling he had earlier is growing stronger with every minute.

"I've got to ask, though," Yuuki looked him straight in the eye, "why did you really lose the first round?" Randy blushes from her question. However, he had to come clean to her one way or another.

“Well…."He began. “…You see, I wasn’t expected a fighter to be so…..” He trailed off as his face turns cherry red.

Yuuki's eyebrow twitched. "Well?"

“…Beautiful….Never seen a fighter that beautiful like you..” Randy finally said. The Absolute Sword of Alfheim was stunned silent. She had been approached by many boys, even among her teammates, but none of them had been this straightforward in their confession to her.

Randy begins to feel that it may have creeped her out. "I'm sorry if I came out like that." He gazes downwards in shame.

"N-no," Yuuki waved her hands, now blushing. "I-it's just that..." Randy raises his head in both confusion and relief.

"I-" Yuuki was about to say something when the front door suddenly opened. Everyone turned to the door and were surprised to see two players wearing nothing but their undergarments. Randy was completely stunned as he recognizes them, Leafa and his cousin Lexar. Yuuki had no words as she found herself gazing upon a teenage Spriggan boy and a Sylph girl who was just locking the door behind them, apparently not noticing the crowd, especially Kirito and Asuna behind them. "W-what did I just walk into!?"

"Whew..." the blonde girl breathed, still not looking back, "we made it, Lexar."

“What just happened?” Talken said as the door closed behind them. It was then that Lexar perked up, his hairs standing on end. He slowly turned around to see Kirito, Asuna, Scott, Lisbeth, Tim, Silica, and even Randy staring at him and Leafa, along with a number of other guests, which included an Imp girl talking to Randy. It was then that he had a nervous expression.

"Hey, Leafa," he murmured, "don't look now..."

It was too late, Leafa turned and see the group sitting at the dinner table, including the Imp girl. Her faces turn cherry red as they’re both caught without their clothes.
"EEEEHHHH!?” Leafa breathed out in shock.

"W-what the heck!?” Jun was blushing a crimson red.

"Sugu!?” Kirito cried out.

“Alex!?” Randy was in a state of shock to see his older cousin and his girlfriend without their armor.

It was then that Asuna stood up. "Lexar!? Leafa!? What's going on," she asked, "why are you two only in your underwear!?”

“Well….” Leafa said sheepishly.

“We were ambushed by creatures,” Lexar explained, but it was a lie to cover it up. As everyone listened to their story, Scott and Lisbeth looked over the two near-naked players.

"Wait..." Lisbeth said. She and Scott looked over at how messy and sweaty they were. There was quite a bit of dirt on them, but there were no wounds of any sort.

"Hold on," Scott spoke up, "if you two were ambushed, why do we not see any damage on you?"

Leafa looked to Lexar nervously. He shrugged his shoulders, before Leafa replied, "we... kinda healed ourselves... you know..."

Scott however, was not convinced. Looking southward, it was then that he said, "Really?" He then stood up and pointed, "then how do you explain that!?"

Lisbeth then paid close attention to where Scott was pointing. Her eyes widened at seeing just how wet Lexar's boxers and Leafa's panties were.

There was a deafening silence, before Lisbeth said, "O-M-G!"

“You two did it while in the forest, didn’t you?” Scott smirked as he and Lisbeth put the pieces together.

"Did it?" Tecchi was confused.

"What is that supposed to mean?" Talken was in the same boat.

Kirito, on the other hand, looked at his sister like she had two heads. "I don't believe it..." he began.

“Kirito?” Asuna said.

“I don’t believe it!” He said out loud and his voice was surprised.

"What? What don't you believe?" Yuuki was now impatient.

"Yuuki... “ Randy was sweating bullets. “I think what Kirito’s saying that….” He trailed off, now blushing from this awkward moment.

"You and Lexar had sex out in the woods!?" Kirito dropped the bombshell.

"Kirito!" Asuna said with a blush. The entire room fell into a deafening silence. Both Lexar and Leafa blushed out of embarrassment. Scott just smirked while Lisbeth, Tim, Keiko, and Randy blushes from hearing Kirito’s claims.
It was then that Kirito realized what he had done. "Oh..." he breathed, feeling like a complete fool. Siune, Nori, and Tecchi blushed heavily while Jun and Talken just stood with their jaws dropped. Yuuki was the most shocked of them all. She was as stiff as a statue, but Randy began to see her face grow rosier by the second.

It was then that Scott broke out into laughter. "Oh man, this is too much," he said, "Lexar! You and Leafa had to have your first time out in a forest of all places! You're even braver than Kirito and Asuna here!"

"SCOTT!" Kirito and Asuna both reacted with rosy cheeks. Then Lisbeth just shook her head. “Of all the things Kirito and Asuna have done, now we got Lexar and Leafa going at it in the woods.”

"Good one on you, Lexar! Hahahaha!" Scott laughed. It was then that Siune fainted, causing Nori and Talken to rush by her side.

Randy looked over to Yuuki, whose eyes were actually rolling to the back of her head as she tipped backward. He imminently reacted to it and manages to catch her in a quick manner and set her gently onto the floor. Looking up, he saw Tim and Silica fainting together, while Asuna had barely caught a paralyzed Kirito herself.

Lexar, on the other hand, was laughing nervously while Leafa was putting her face to his bare chest, unable to speak anymore.

"Um... Leafa and I will be going to our room now..." Lexar said. The two near-naked players left the dining room.

"Oh, man," Lisbeth shook her head. Asuna sighed as she gently lowered the unconscious Kirito back into his chair. She then turned to the male Sleeping Knights and bowed.

"I'm so sorry about this," she said.

“I just didn’t think anyone would go for it in the woods,” Talken admitted.

"They are either brave or crazy," Nori said as he fanned Siune's heated face. It was then that he looked over to Asuna.

"By the way, Miss Asuna," he questioned, "what did Scott here mean by those two being braver than you and Mr. Kirito?"

Asuna looked at Kirito and blushed sheepishly.

It was then that Tecchi figured it out. "Oh? So you two get hot and heavy, huh?"

"Yes..." Asuna said embarrassedly.

Jun's eyes widened. Suddenly he was grinning.

"I guess I should have figured," he said, "Yuuki did note how passionate you two were when you gave him the 'kiss of life'."

“That is true.” Asuna admitted. Meanwhile, Randy was fanning Yuuki’s heated face.

"Oh man, this is not how it should have gone..." Randy murmured as Yuuki lay unconscious. As he kept fanning her hot face, he mentally noted that despite being unconscious, she was beautiful.

"Well," Asuna sighed, "I guess dinner is done anyways." She looked over to the empty plates and
then to her husband, who lay on the couch. She gave a small smile. 

"Well, guys," she looked over to the Knights, "since Yuuki and Siune are out cold, I can let you all stay for breakfast tomorrow morning."

"Thank you very much." Jun smiled. Scott then went to lift Tim from the couch. "I got the sweet boy here."

"And I've got a vanilla girl here," Lisbeth said as she lifted Silica. Nori and Talken lift Siune as Jun helps Randy lift their leader Yuuki from the floor.

Asuna then went for Kirito. Lifting him by the arms, she sighed, "like brother, like sister."

"Tell me about it," Randy agreed. They carried the unconscious players to the bedrooms and laid them down gently on the bed covers.

"Thanks for the help, Randy," Jun thanked him.

"No problem," Randy said, looking at Yuuki sleeping. On the other side, Nori and Talken were lowering Siune gently.

"Hehe," Tecchi laughed a bit, "today's been full of surprises."

"No kidding," Jun replied.

"Well guys," Nori suggested, "I say that we go to bed and wake up for a fresh start tomorrow before we have more surprises... and naked couples walking in on us."

Scott chuckled while Randy blushes. "Scott, please tell me you are not getting any ideas," Randy warned.

"No, I just couldn’t imagine Lexar and Leafa doing it in the woods," Scott explains.

"Yeah... my own cousin, strutting around in the buff with Leafa like Adam and Eve!?" Randy thought aloud, "Not even Asuna and Kirito would do such a thing in a million years!"

"Gotta admit, it was pretty impressive it." Scott smiled. "They got guts to do that."

"They're crazy, that's for sure," Jun added.

"I'm turning in for the night guys," Talken said, "let's lock our doors and stuff before something else happens."

"Same here," Scott replied and he leaves the room,

Randy finds the chair that's in the bedroom and sits in it while watching the sleeping Yuuki from the corner of the room.

'Yuuki...' he thought as he dozed off.

After everyone got to bed, Lexar and Leafa just sat on the edge of the bed, still in their underwear and embarrassed for what has happened.

"I didn't expect Kirito and Asuna to be back so soon..." Leafa said, and then she covered her cheeks. "With guests some more! I'm so..." She was very embarrassed. Lexar just held her.
“Me neither. I didn’t think everyone would be there.” He admitted. The two just sat quietly for a few seconds. However, Lexar glanced over to see Leafa glowing in the moonlight.

“But at least we enjoyed it in the woods. Right?” Lexar asked the Sylph beauty. Leafa blushed even more, but she managed to smile upon thinking of their first time together.

"Yeah, and your hands were sooooo good to me..."

Lexar smiles. “And you were amazing, not to mention very tasty.” Leafa leaned against him, taking in his manly pine scent. Her breasts then brushed up against his arm.

“I love you Leafa,” Lexar whispered into her pointy ears.

"Love you too, you sexy beast,” Leafa replied.

At that, she noticed a bulge in her lover's boxers. “Still hard I see.” She giggled. "You still look absolutely delicious," Lexar said as he grabbed Leafa and flipped her over onto their bed. He gave a predatory grin as he looked down at her.

Leafa giggled, "You know everyone will hear us."

“So?” Lexar smiled deviously. "Let them hear us," Lexar said, "I've stopped caring since they now know."

"You naughty boy!” Leafa laughed.

Lexar then captured her lips in a heated kiss, starting another round of hot, sexy love.
A Cure is Hope

Chapter Summary

Randy and the others helped Yuuki & The Sleeping Knights in their quest, then they learned about Yuuki's medical condition. But Randy gives her hope for a future for the both of them.

January 8th, 2026:

The Kirigaya Residence.

It was a silent morning. Kazuto and Suguha are the only ones in the house. Even at breakfast, it was quiet. Kazuto was still shocked at Suguha last night on ALO. Suguha, on the other hand, was embarrassed after getting caught with her boyfriend in their undergarments.

"So..." Kazuto asked, "slept well?"

“Yes, I did…” Suguha answered before asking, “…Have you?”

"Well... the last thing I remembered was blanking out, and then waking up to my own room." Kazuto scratched his head. Sugu then smiled sheepishly.

"Kazuto... about last night," Suguha began.

"What about last night?" Kazuto asked. Suguha was blushing, especially at the embarrassing walk in, and the steamy love that followed afterward.

"Sorry Alex and I barged in like that. We didn't think you two would be in so early, let alone have visitors."

Kazuto chuckled nervously. “Yeah….Didn’t think you and Alex were having a moment together..” He rubbed his nape sheepishly.

"You're not mad at me, are you?" Suguha questioned with a nervous look.

“Mad? No, I’m not…” He answered. Suguha sighed. “Just surprised that you two have done it in the woods.”

"Yeah... that was Alex's idea, hehe," the shy girl laughed.

Kazuto then took on a quizzical expression. "I'm also surprised that you were bold enough to take him up on it."

“Yeah…Even though it was awkward that we had forest animals as witnesses.” The girl blushes. Kazuto's eyes widened before he chuckled.

"Wow..." he teased, "didn't take you for such a wild girl, Sugu." Suguha blushes when he mentioned it.
“Yeah…that’s true.” She chuckles.

"I guess I'm no longer the only one who's kinky here, now that you and Alex have kicked it off with a bang," Kazuto concluded.

“Indeed we have," Suguha added with a sheepish smile. Suguha and Kazuto laughed at their situation. It was then that the Kirigaya girl remembered the guests.

"By the way," she said, "care to talk about the guests you brought in for the show?"

“Right,” Kazuto recalled. “They did have gotten quite a shock last night.” He chuckles. “Especially Tim and Keiko.”

"I know," Suguha pouted embarrassingly, "but what I mean is who they are and what they were doing there."

“Well…” Kazuto begins. He explains that the guild called the ‘Sleeping Knights’ let by Yuuki, are looking for players with skills for their quest before they disband.

"So they want to be on the Monument of Swordsmen," Suguha realized aloud. She cupped her chin in an amusing manner. "They must really want it bad."

“Indeed. Asuna and Randy made it on their team.” Kazuto smiled. “And we’re gonna help them achieve their goal as well.” Suguha hummed in approval.

“Let’s get going, brother.” Suguha chimed.

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**Log House, New Aincrad:**

Kirito’s avatar flashed into the log cabin’s bedroom, and Asuna followed shortly. Then Leafa and Lexar showed up afterward. The two couples exited their respective rooms, meeting each other in the hallway. An awkward silence fell over them for a bit.

“About last night…” Lexar began.

Asuna sighed. "I guess that means that all four of us have given up our virginities. Still," she looked to Lexar and Leafa, "next time knock before entering."

“We’ll remember that next time,” Lexar promised before smiling sheepishly. Asuna smiled. As the couples walked into the living room, they could detect the log in signals of their friends, including the Sleeping Knights. Pretty soon, others begin to flash into the log cabins. Lisbeth, Silica appeared, followed by Klein, Scott, Tim, and Randy. Then Yuuki and the Sleeping Knights appeared shortly.

"Good morning, everyone," Asuna greeted.

Everyone greeted her one by one. Yuuki then looked over to Lexar and Leafa. Her face took on a mixed expression. "Well, look who it is," she said, "the naked forest lovers from yesterday." Lexar and Leafa blushed from their embarrassing introduction last night. Scott and Lisbeth smirked while Tim and Silica blushes.

"Well..." Lexar began but trailed off.
I’m guessing the mountains would be your next area to make love on?” Lisbeth teased.

"L-Lisbeth! Cut it out!” Leafa cried.

Scott snickered. “Good one Lis,” Scott whispered in her ear. Lexar grumbled in frustration but nevertheless turned back to Yuuki with a smile.

"I'm Lexar,” he introduced himself, "sorry about last night."

“Nice to meet you Lexar,” Yuuki responded with her smile nonetheless. “The name’s Yuuki.”

"I'm Leafa,” the Sylph girl introduced herself, "you actually fought the both of us that one time."

“Yeah, I recall fighting you.” The Imp girl stated.

"You're a tough cookie, I'll give you that," Lexar complimented.

"Yep, she's the toughest there is!” Jun cheered loudly, to everyone's sheepish expressions.

Randy, on the other hand, gave an amused smirk.

“But Randy managed to beat her in the second round.” Scott smiled. Randy blushes.

"Ah... I see- wait! What!?” Lexar exclaimed, looking to his cousin.

“It’s true,” Randy admitted. “We both fought in a duel and managed to get the upper hand.”

"More like you played dirty,” Yuuki pouted in mock anger, to the amusement of her guild.

“Dirty?” Randy gasped in a mock shock.

"Yeah,” Yuuki then took on a teasing smirk. She went up to Randy and poked him in the nose. "Who pretends to retreat and then stab a girl in the chest with a flaming sword of all weapons?"

“It was a clean tactic,” Randy smirked combined with his innocent look on his face.

"Clean? Haha!” Yuuki laughed, "You’re as clean as your dirty-minded cousin to stick something that hots into me!” Randy’s face flushed a deep red. It was shocking that he learned of his older cousin’s lovemaking in the forest with his girlfriend, but now it’s being used against him.

"Y-Yuuki!” Siune exclaimed with a deep red face. Talken flushes as well.

"Okay, okay.” Leafa said, waving her hands, "we all get it now!” Silence fell on the group.

“Anyway…. “ Yuuki began. “Now that everyone’s here. Shall we begin the quest?”

"Sure thing," Asuna said with a smile, "we can discuss more of the details on the way there."

“OK, Let’s get going.” Lexar added, smiling his usual smile that Leafa loves.

"Allow me to escort you and the Knights there, Asuna," Kirito offered with a chivalrous bow.

“Sure thing Kirito.” Asuna smiled as her in-game husband’s noble kindness.

"Same here!” Scott pitched in.

"We may not be fighting this round,” Tim said, "but we can make sure no one else gets in the way.”
“Right,” Randy added. “But we’ll be prepared in case we have to.” Silica giggled as she held onto Tim. "I like to help out other groups every now and then."

“Same here.” Lisbeth pitched in as well. “Like to test my hammer I acquired.”

Yuuki looked at Kirito and his eager beaver group. She smiled a little solemnly. "You all have been very nice to us, and look to have some kickass tricks... too bad you can't join us," she said.

Kirito looked to Yuuki understandingly. "It's alright," he reassured her, "we'll have plenty of adventures after we help you Sleeping Knights get your names on there."

“Alright, let’s get going.” Lexar chirped. The two groups teleported to the town on the 27th floor, making sure to save there for respawns. With that, they eventually flew off towards the dungeon.

Randy, in particular, was getting to chat more and more with Yuuki.

“So….” Randy began. The Imp girl turned to his attention. "Yes?" Yuuki asked.

"About last night...Before the interruption." Randy continued, his face flushes as he trailed off. Yuuki likewise blushed, from Randy's confession before that embarrassing episode that made her faint.

“You didn’t feel awkward about how I commented on your beauty. Didn’t you?” He said, his face redder than ever.

"I-" Yuuki tried to speak, but stuttered. This was definitely a first for her. "It's just... I never had someone tell me that upfront before..."

“It’s true, I couldn’t help but…….” He trailed off for a moment. “…. but think about how beautiful this player is.” He confessed. Yuuki blushed, now silent at the flattery she was getting. Randy gazes down sheepishly after what he said.

"You know..." Yuuki looked back at him, "you're kinda cute yourself..." Randy’s eyes widen in surprise as he raises his head up.

His face flushes even more. “Really?” He asked.

"Yeah, especially with that face and those eyes,” Yuuki said in a childish tone and smile, "and you seem to be pretty cool in your own way."

Randy smiles from her compliment. It was the first time a girl gave him a compliment. Most of the time, he was an outcast back in his hometown.

"That's a first from a girl for me..." he admitted to Yuuki.

The Imp giggled. This was turning out to be a first for both of them. Randy chuckled. It’s been going good so far. Meanwhile, Jun and Nori were watching Yuuki interact with Randy, with Scott, Lisbeth, Tim, and Silica beside them. The two could not help but be surprised that Yuuki had taken an interest in someone. Needless to say, they were a twinge jealous at how Randy was wrapping her around his finger.

“Talk about getting acquainted,” Scott whispered in Lisbeth’s ear.

"Like how we got acquainted," Lisbeth teased.

“Very true.” Scott chuckled nervously. Lisbeth then pecked Scott on the cheek. He smiles and
looked back at her.

"Just a peck?" Scott smirked.

Lisbeth just shrugged.

“May I…?” Scott suggested.

"Why not?" Lisbeth suggested, "I mean, what are we to fall behind the other lovebirds?" Scott leaned forward to Lisbeth and planted his lips on hers. This takes her by surprise. But she relaxes as she feels how soft his lips are.

"Mmm..." Lisbeth moaned loudly into his lips, to the wide-eyed expressions of Jun and Nori. Even Tecchi and Talken had their mouths gaping. Tim, Silica, Lexar, and Leafa were surprised as well. However, Lisbeth wasn't content with a chaste kiss, as she practically pushed Scott into the nearest wall and squeezed herself against him.

The entire group halted as Scott and Lisbeth snapped and went into all-out lip-biting and groping, to the shock of the boys and the blushing of the girls.

“And I thought we were this lovey-dovey,” Lexar whispered in Leafa’s ear, chuckling in the process.

"Tell me about it!" Leafa giggled.

Asuna and Kirito were very amused, given Lisbeth's past teasing.

“And come to think she used to tease us.” Asuna giggled.

"Look at them," Kirito laughed, "if that isn't a sign of what's to come next, I don't know what is!"

Scott, on the other hand, pulls her closer in his arms as they continued their make-out session.

"Sheesh," Yuuki whispered to Randy, "are your friends always like that?"

“Only Kirito and Asuna,” Randy replied. “As well as Lexar and Leafa.”

"Well, it looks like you've got another couple..." Yuuki said. She blushed as Scott's hands went towards Lisbeth's rear. She lets out a squeak through the kiss, but it turned into a moan.

"That's so... hentai..." Talken whispered shyly.

Tecchi was almost drooling at the sight when Nori slapped him.

“Ow,” Tecchi exclaimed softly as he rubbed his cheek.

"Um... guys?" Siune intervened, "we've got a dungeon to clear." Scott and Lisbeth break the kiss, leaving a bridge of saliva between their lips.

“Yeah, there’s time for lovey-dovey later.” Lisbeth giggles.

"Amen to that, and so much more," Scott grinned before licking Lisbeth in the cheek. That elicited a giggle from her, which had a childish tone to it.

“Shall we get going then?” She then asks.
"Lead the way, my blacksmith," Scott jested.

As the two got up, the group resumed their journey, fighting mobs along the way. The group saw the door, as well as a number of players gathered in front. Yuuki frowned at this development.

“Lot players here,” Tim commented.

"Wait a minute..." Nori did a double take, "I recognize that guild." He focused on the guild emblems on their cursors.

“Recognize them, Nori?” Tim asked.

"These are the jokers hogging all the kills with the bosses, Talken!" Nori frowned, "these guys are trying to steal ours!"

“Then we better stop them quickly,” Randy said with determination.

"Alright, our first PvP battle!" Siune cheered rather excitedly.

Asuna glammed over to her husband.

“I’m ready when you guys are,” Kirito reassured.

Asuna smiled. "Thank you, Kirito," she said. Yui then popped out of Kirito's pocket.

“You can do it, mommy and daddy.” Yui cheered.

Yuuki's eyes widened at that. "Mommy, Daddy?" She glanced at Randy.

“It’s a long story.” Randy smiled. Yuuki looked back and forth, before pouting.

"Later then..." she relented.

"Haven't done PvP for some time already," Scott said as he drew his sword and shield, "Hope I'm not too rusty.

Lisbeth drew her hammer out. “Only one way to find out.”

"Then let's have some fun," Scott cheered.

As the two groups drew their weapons, Kirito spoke, "let's keep our weapons at the ready, but try and talk this over with that guild first."

“Don’t think it’ll do any good Kirito,” Tecchi said. “We tried that before.”

"So..." Yuuki smiled, "we'll just have to ambush them before any more of them arrive."

"Oh boy..." Tim gulped, clutching his sword.

"Hehe..." Silica likewise was a little nervous at having to fight other players for a change. The others nodded in agreement, if they want to help the Sleeping Knights, they'll have to engage the hoggers and catch them by surprise. Yuuki glanced over to Kirito, who nodded in agreement. Seeing that affirmation of support, the Imp girl psyched up and ordered, "Attack!"

The two groups went in with a yell, causing the rival guild to perk up in surprise. Their surprise then turned to shock when Yuuki and Kirito lashed out at the nearest players. Lisbeth took down three
players with her hammer, sending them flying into the air.

"W-what are you doing!?!" One player yelled at them.

“Stopping you from stealing our kill!” Scott replied back.

"Out of the way!" Tecchi yelled as he bashed one of them with his shield.

"Hyah!" Leafa dodged an ax before slashing its wielder in the back. Lexar supported Leafa with his sword, taking out two players. Tim blocked another player's two-handed sword, while Silica rushed around and stabbed the player. Kirito engages four players with his duel-swords.

"Whatcha going to do?" One of the players mocked, "we've got you surrounded!"

"There's four of us, and one of you," another pointed out. Kirito just scoffed at their callouts while retaining his calmness.

"Hyah!" The players lunged at him. However, Kirito just calmly blocked and slashed away at them. He managed to fend off three of them, only for a fourth one to get around to flank him.

“I got you now!!" The fourth player yelled as he raises his two-handed sword, preparing to slash it down.

"Kirito!" Asuna used her speed to get in front of the blade, blocking with her own.

“Wha….?” The fourth player gasped in both surprise and confusion. Asuna drew her sword back and bashed his weapon away. She stepped aside as Kirito stabbed him with both swords. The fourth player went down onto the ground faster before he realized what has happened. However, all the other players that were not killed outright were standing back up as healing spells rejuvenated them.

"No fair!" Yuuki moaned.

“Now you’re gonna get it.” The leader of the rival guild said.

"Hey guys,” Nori looked back nervously. The two allied groups turned around to see more of the guild's players running in.

"Shoot..." Randy murmured.

“We gotta stand our grounds,” Lexar ordered. As the band of friends stood together, Yuuki happened to be bunched up with Kirito, Asuna, and Randy.

"Sorry about this, guys," she apologized.

“Don’t worry,” Randy reassured her. “We’re not giving up that easily no matter what.”

"Even if we don't get this boss," Asuna said, "we'll get the next one."

"Besides," Kirito grinned as he leveled his swords, "I'm having too much fun already." As they prepared for the inevitable. Out of nowhere, arrows hit the rival players.

"Wha-" Siune was dumbfounded, whereas Kirito grinned.

"Right on cue," he said confidently. They turned to see a Cait Sith firing arrows at them. Alongside the female archer were a male Sylph and a red samurai-styled Salamander. Both men were grinning as they drew their swords.
"Sinon, Spike, Klein!" Asuna exclaimed.

"Took you three long enough," Kirito called.

“Sorry for the late arrival.” Klein joked.

“Shall we continue the show?” Spike asked. Sinon smiled at her boyfriend, before drawing her next arrow. She gave a striking smirk, which caused the guild players to sweat.

"Let's play some more," she purred, to Spike's chuckle. He and Klein charged at the guild players with arrows flying from behind them. Together, they struck down several players in the onslaught.

"Asuna," Kirito said, "you and Randy go with the Sleeping Knights into the boss room. We'll hold off these guys."

“Alright, Kirito.” Asuna replied as she and Randy headed with the Sleeping Knights to deal with the boss room.

"I guess that leaves the rest of us to fight these goons," Leafa said as she positioned herself.

“Indeed it has,” Lexar replied as he positioned himself next to Leafa.

"Alright, gang! Let's do it!" Kirito said as they all flanked the guild from all sides. The tide turns for the better for Kirito and his guild. The rival guild was getting weaker by the second; even the healing spells couldn’t keep up with the growing wounds.

"I'm going for the healers! Cover for me Siune!" Asuna yelled.

"I got it!" Siune said as she continued to heal her teammates. Tecchi and Talken aided Asuna as she went after the healers.

"Haaaaaaaahhhhh!" Asuna yelled as she sped through the ranks, opening a path. She stopped in front of the panicked sorcerers, before activating her Sword Skill and cutting them down. The healers went down like a pile of rocks. Lisbeth slams her hammer against five of them, sending them airborne.

"Healers down," Yuuki announced, "let's clean them out!"

"Right with you, Yuuki!" Randy exclaimed as he bisected one of the players.

In just a few seconds, Asuna, Randy, and the Sleeping Knights had defeated all of the players standing in front of the door. Sounds of clashes and yelling could still be heard behind them as Kirito and the others fought the guild.

'This is it. Victory is in our grasp.' Randy thought to himself.

"Alright," Asuna said as she stood in front of the boss door, "this is it, make sure you all have your potions at the ready for anything."

"Don't worry," Yuuki said as she checked her inventory, "we're all good here."

Randy checks his inventory. “Good here.” He called out. Yuuki nodded affirmatively, and seeing that the Knights were all psyched up, she took a deep breath. "Let's do this."
The door opens up and the eight of them headed inside. Randy walked beside Yuuki calmly as they entered the central dungeon, even as the door locked behind them. It was quiet….Too quiet….

"I... I have a bad feeling about this..." Talken said with anxiety.

"Talk about an eerie calm before the storm..." Jun remarked.

“Indeed it is” Randy commented. It was then that the lamps lit up, bathing the room in a menacing light. The players tensed up as it was a sign the boss is appearing soon. It was then that a giant two-headed monster spawned into the room. Its four arms had hammers and chains in them. As the health bars filled up, its name was shown to be the Four Armed Giant of Floor 27.

“Yikes...” Randy said in shock.

"Come on," Yuuki nudged his arm, "we've got this." Randy smiles at her encouragement.

"Sleeping Knights," Yuuki brandished her sword, "attack!" Together, they started their battle against the Four Armed Giant of Floor 27. Jun barely got out of the way of a hammer, while Randy and Yuuki deflected a chain attack from the monster.

'This guy is tough. ’Randy thought. ‘But not tough enough.' Asuna counterattacked with a beam from her spell stick. It managed to do some damage to the boss. Randy rushed up to its legs and slashed away at one of them. However, it sees Randy and tries to stomp on him, he dodges his stomp attacks. During this, Talken throws his spear at the boss, but he catches it.

“Shoot!” Talken grunted as the boss brought its chain down on him.

"Move!" Yuuki shoved the boy aside, narrowly evading. The boss tossed the spear into the air, but it accidentally hit a crystal where the boss's two heads connected.

“The crystal...” Randy said as he sees the boss flinch in pain as its crystal was hit.

"Asuna!" he called out, "try shooting a beam at that gem on his chest!" Asuna sees the crystal and raises her spell stick to aim at the crystal. The giant instinctively blocked with his arms, nevertheless confirming Randy's suspicion. He jumped back towards Yuuki.

"Hey Yuuki," he said, "See how he was blocking his chest?"

The imp girl sees what Randy meant. “Yes!”

Asuna understood this as well. "That's got to be his weak spot then!"

“We got to keep him busy long enough to hit his weak spot!” Randy suggested.

"Yeah, but..." Yuuki glanced at the height of their new target, "it's so high up, and we can't fly in this dungeon!"

Tecchi and Jun continued to hold back the onslaught of the giant, though it was clear that they were straining. Thinking quickly, Randy charges at the boss, hitting its legs as he did before.

"You got any ideas, Asuna?" Yuuki said as she watched Randy. But before she could answer, Randy hits one of its knees with a flaming sword attack, causing it to buckle down. Randy takes out the other knee, the boss buckles and falls to the floor on its knees. Its arms uncovered its chest to keep itself from falling down.
"Now Yuuki!" Randy yelled as he swung his Firestorm blade.

“Now’s our chance sis!” Yuuki yelled out, but she squeaked when she quickly realized what she’d said. Asuna glanced over to Yuuki, wondering what that was about. Nevertheless, she refocused on the battle. She aims the spell stick at the boss’ chest and emits a beam towards it, hitting square in the crystal. The boss recoiled backward, only for Randy to charge up to a Sword Skill with his Firestorm blade.

"Hah!" he slashed at the legs, bringing the giant to its knees. Asuna keeps firing at the crystal, hitting it as many times as she can.

"Tecchi, duck with your shield!" Yuuki ran towards her friend. As the boss’ health bar reaches zero, Asuna fires one last beam at the crystal. The beam struck, bringing its health within a killing blow.

Yuuki jumped onto Tecchi shield and was catapulted into the air as she charged up her sword.

"Go down!" Randy yelled as he stabbed at the legs, bringing the behemoth lower for Yuuki. The Imp girl charges her sword and unleashes her eleven-point combo on the boss. With a final thrust, she pierced through the gem, which shattered into pieces as the Now's health drained to zero. The boss collapses onto the floor, defeated.

"We did it.” Randy stood in shock. He then looked to Yuuki, whose face was lighting up in realization. Then the dungeon door opened up and Kirito and the others arrived to see the boss defeated.

"Asuna!" he called out to his girlfriend.

"Mommy!" Yui popped out of his pocket. Asuna smiles as she embraces her boyfriend and their AI daughter.

"You did it," Yui said as she snuggled against Asuna's cheek.

"I knew you had what it took," Kirito complimented. Randy and Yuuki looked on the couple and the little fairy who is their daughter. Randy smiles at the family moment for them. Yuuki, on the other hand, was looking to Randy with a smile on her face. Suddenly, she went and glomped him. This surprised Randy, but he quickly smiles and hugs her in return.

"We did it, Randy," Yuuki cheered, "We beat the boss!"

“Indeed we have.” Randy smiled as he continues hugging her. It was then that the two groups of friends sat down together, relaxing.

“Congrats Yuuki.” Klein cheered.

Yuuki went to shake his hand. "Thank you, Mr..."

"Name's Klein!" The samurai boasted, "I'm a badass samurai and single!"

Kirito, Asuna, and the others just sighed at the playboy's attempts to woo her. Lexar and Leafa did the same thing.

“Hard to believe that could’ve been me,” Scott whispered in Lisbeth’s ear.

"Well, you are my playboy," Lisbeth smirked suggestively. Randy, on the other hand, steps in front of Yuuki.
“She’s way out of your league Klein. No offense but she prefers a better guy than you.” Randy defended her. This took Klein, Kirito, Asuna and the others by surprise. Even Lexar was surprised.

"Randy?" Yuuki questioned. Then the young male Salamander’s face flushes when he realizes what he is doing. Even the male Sleeping Knights were taken off guard by Randy's assertiveness. Scott smirked as he figured out Randy’s defense of Yuuki.

"I get it now," Scott said, "You’ve got the hots for her!"

"Wha…?!" Randy sputtered. Everyone gasped as they all stared at Randy, whose face continues to grow redder.

"Wha?" Yuuki asked aloud, staring at Randy. He continues to sputter, unable to speak correctly as he tries to explain.

"Whoa, whoa," Yuuki waved her hands, "slow down a bit there." Randy stops; his face still cherry-red. There was a palpable silence over the whole dungeon before Tim spoke up,

"Um... I guess you guys got the boss." He asked.

"Yeah…” Asuna replied. “We sure did.”

"Yeah," Randy said, quickly covering for himself and Yuuki, "wish you guys could have seen us! It was an awesome fight!

“I bet it was.” Lexar smiled. He could tell that his cousin has a liking for Yuuki. But for now, he’s gonna keep quiet on it.

"The weak spot on the boss was obvious." Yuuki chimed.

"It was only obvious when Talken's spear landed on that gem," Randy pointed out.

“Interesting,” Lexar commented.

“Indeed it was,” Yuuki added.

“So…..shall we get to celebrating our victory?” Randy asked.

"I second that," Siune said rather awkwardly.

"No buts here," Jun raised his hand.

“Alright!” Randy said excitedly. “Let’s get going!” With that, everyone left the dungeon.

Randy looked to Yuuki as they walked up to the next floor. "Yuuki... I-" he was cut off by her putting a finger to his lip. Yuuki’s face was flushing red the same is happening to Randy's face.

"Later," Yuuki whispered to him, at which he nodded.

Kirito, Asuna, Lexar, and Leafa looked on with amusement and approval from behind them, with the male Sleeping Knights befuddled for the most part.

“IT appears we got another love blooming,” Lexar whispered in Kirito’s ear.

"Hehe..." Kirito chuckled.
At the Log House in New Aincrad. Kirito, Asuna and the rest are celebrating their victory.

"A toast to the Sleeping Knights," Kirito said as he raised his drink. Asuna raised her drink, along with Lexar, Leafa, Randy, Yuuki, and the others followed suit.

"Cheers!" Everyone said as they downed their drinks and ate together. Kirito and Asuna sat with each other as well as Leafa, Lisbeth, Silica, and Sinon sat with their respective boyfriends. Yuuki and Randy sat with each other as well.

"Randy," Yuuki said.

“Yes, Yuuki?” Randy replied.

"Is it true?" Yuuki looked at him, "is what Scott said true?" She had a light blush to her face. Randy starts to blush again. He couldn’t believe he let that slip out and everyone had heard him, including Yuuki. But he cannot lie about it now since everyone has heard him.

“Yes…” He said sheepishly.

"You actually... think... I'm beautiful?" Yuuki managed that line, with a shyness that was uncharacteristic, yet cute for the Absolute Sword.

“Yes..” He replied again. But this time he raises his head up when he answers to her.

"Yuuki... I may be a dirty and sly fighter in your eyes," he said, "but I'd be lying to you and myself if I said otherwise." Her hand went up to her chest as she is touched by his words. No boy ever said anything like that to her in her life. He was telling the truth.

"Zekken... Yuuki... would you like to hang out with me?" Randy had taken the leap.


“I mean not in ALO, but in the real world,” Randy explained. “I may be new to Japan, but we could find a place you’d probably know.” There was a silence between the two. The conversations of the others only served to amplify it, somehow. Randy feels awkward from his approach of asking out a girl he just met hours ago.

Yuuki’s eyes glanced away as she took on a very anxious expression. "Randy..."

“Yuuki…?” Randy asked, confused by her expression. Asuna and Kirito were talking with Siune rather happily until Asuna noticed the sad expression on Yuuki's face. She gets up and heads towards her.

“Is there something wrong Yuuki?" Asuna asked.

"Randy... sister..." Yuuki murmured.

"Sister?" Randy wondered.

“Yuuki…” Asuna asked. It was then that Yuuki perked up and smiled. "I know! How about we go and check out that monument!"
“Sure.” Asuna said happily. Yet, in the back of both Randy and Asuna’s minds, they could not help but be bothered by Yuuki’s dodging of their questions. The group photo of them is taken. After the two groups of friends finished their celebrations, they went over to the Iron Palace to check out the monument. Lo and behold, the names of the Sleeping Knights, including Asuna and Randy, were inscribed on it, under the heading of Floor 27.

"Whoa," Talken marveled.

"Whoa indeed," Randy exclaimed in awe.

"Now your memory is truly immortal here," Kirito said with a bit of a tease, stroking Asuna's hair. She giggles as he strokes her hair.

Silica remarked, "I'm glad we could help you Sleeping Knights make your dreams come true."

"Same here," Lexar added. "It's very good to help out a group of friends achieve their goal."

"I would certainly like to fight more bosses with you guys any day!" Klein chimed in, bumping fists with Tecchi.

"Especially with Randy in the ranks." Lexar smiled. "He was very good in other games."

"No kidding," Nori said, though he became a little sullen. "Too bad we'll be disbanding though."

This made Lexar raise an eyebrow. It was then Leafa stepped up. "Mind if I take the picture for the group?" She asked.

Yuuki chimed, "Go right ahead! Gather around Knights!"

As her friends gathered around, it was then that Yuuki suddenly grabbed Randy and pulled him closer to her. Randy blushes as he feels Yuuki pressing her body against him when they bunched up together.

"Say cheese!" Leafa prompted as her crystal camera went off. She looked like the picture and it was a perfect shot of the whole group.

"Here you go," Leafa said as she sent the image to Asuna, Yuuki, and Randy. The three marveled over the image, where Asuna was beside Yuuki and Randy as they both did the victory sign.

"We all look very cute in this." Asuna commented while smiling. Yuuki giggled, which caused Randy to smile and hold her closer to him. The imp girl sighed as she feels him hugging her closer.

"Yuuki..." Randy whispered to her.

"Randy..." Yuuki replied in a hushed voice.

"Please don't break up the Sleeping Knights," he asked. He then gazed into her eyes. "I want to see you more."

"I'm sorry?" Yuuki was caught off guard from his statement.

"Yuuki..." Randy said, "You are a funny and awesome girl to be around, and I really want to get to know you better. I really do want to meet you in the real world, if you don't mind." It was then Yuuki had the same sad expression on her face again.

"Well..." She trailed off again, unable to look him in the eye.
"Yuuki?" Randy looked at her with worry. At that point, she realized it's no hope of keeping it a secret from him. It was time to tell him the truth about herself.

"Randy... Asuna..." Yuuki began. The two listened to what Yuuki is about to say. "I think it is time to let you all know why we wanted to be on this wall..." Yuuki took on a solemn tone. She looked to her Sleeping Knights, who all took on solemn expressions themselves. They looked to one another, before nodding at her.

"Go on, Yuuki," Siune agreed, "let them know." Asuna and Randy looked back at Yuuki who begins to speak. Kirito, Asuna, Randy, and their friends gathered around Yuuki and the Sleeping Knights to hear them out.

"Yuuki…?" Randy asked.

"Have any of you heard of the Medicuboid?"

"I have," Kirito answered.

"Medicuboid?" Leafa wondered aloud.

"Kirito?" Asuna asked.

"Never heard of it," Lexar said before turning to Kirito.

"It's a Full Dive device that is being utilized for medical purposes. It alleviates the pain from medical operations while giving their users the ability to roam the net as free agents," Kirito explained, "it's only a prototype, but the government has been subsidizing its testing for a number of volunteers."

"I recall my father saying something about that," Randy concluded.

"That means..." Leafa said.

Asuna looked to Yuuki with widened eyes. Randy did the same.

"Yuuki….Are you….?" Randy asked.

Yuuki lowered her head. "I'm a survivor of AIDs, and a volunteer for the Medicuboid program..." It was a bombshell for Randy. AIDS was a very well known deadly virus that is contracted by either various unprotected sex or used needles. However, there was no telling how long Yuuki may live as the death was inevitable.

"W-what?" Asuna was in shock, as with Leafa, Lisbeth, and Silica. Even Lexar, Scott, and Tim had to gasp, whereas Kirito narrowed his gaze.

"It's true," Siune spoke up, "and it is the same for myself and all Sleeping Knights here, as recipients of the Medicuboid." It meant that all of the players are terminally-ill patients.

Yuuki then went on to explain her history of AIDs from the time she and her twin sister were born, and how it affected her entire family, especially her mother. It was especially tear-jerking when she told of how her mother was ready to give up on life, until she found the resolve to move on, and eventually signed her daughters up for the Medicuboid project. Of course, it did help keep the sisters alive, only for Yuuki's twin sister to pass on.

"Yuuki..." Randy said.

“Now you know,” Yuuki said in a very sad tone.
"Sorry I had to keep this from you all..." Yuuki said, fighting emotions.

"Yuuki..." Asuna said as she reached out. However, Yuuki drew out her menu and reached for the logout button.

"Wait...," Randy said suddenly. "...There is a way..." This causes Yuuki to stop; her finger was about an inch away of pressing the logout button.

"What?" Yuuki asked.

"My father’s work on fatal diseases," Randy explains. "He’s been working on Nano-Machines that could be used in medicine."

"Randy?" Lexar murmured. Leafa herself is also blinking.

"My father has come up with a way to cure all deadly diseases and cancers with the use of nano-machines that can be injected into the body and eliminate the disease/cancer right at the source." He continued.

"He’s right," Lexar added. "I heard my uncle, his father, talk about it."

"You-you’re serious?" Jun asked.

"Very..." Lexar replied.

"That means..." Nori realized.

However, Lexar stopped him, "it's only a prototype, though. We don't know if it actually works yet."

"Plus they said they need a blood donor in order to replace the infected blood of the patient." He continued. Yuuki was speechless. Asuna was also speechless as well.

"Yuuki?" Randy approached her again. Her expression was blank, with a deafening silence. It was then that her hand moved to another option on her menu. She typed something in and sent it to both Randy and Asuna. They both hear the cling in their inbox and checked their menus and read it was the address to the hospital.

"Meet me there around one in the afternoon," Yuuki said, and without a word, logged out and vanished before Randy could respond. He looks at the address again and he recognizes it.

"It’s the same hospital my father’s working at," Randy stated. Asuna shook silently as she looked on. Kirito and the others looked at her with concern.

"We’ll be there for her," Randy said with determination.
"Yuuki..." Asuna said worriedly. Kazuto just hugged her and rubbed her shoulder. Suguha embraced Alex’s arm. Together they entered inside. The group of teens went over to the receptionist’s desk. The receptionist smiled, "Hello, what can we do for you today?"

"We were informed of a one o’clock appointment with Yuuki Konno." Randy hummed, this made the receptionist’s eyes widen with her coworkers. "I'm sorry; may I get your names?"

"Randy Mitchell."

"Asuna Yuuki."

"Kazuto Kirigaya."

"Alex Mitchell."

"Suguha Kirigaya." The receptionist checks the names in and sees the 1’oclock appointment on the computer.

"One moment please," the receptionist said as she picked up the phone. The others waited in suspense as the receptionist calls the doctor.

"Medicuboid..." Alex wondered aloud, "Full Diving for the terminally ill."

"Who knew..." Randy said as well. After a short minute, the receptionist finishes her call.

"Doctor Kanashi will see you all shortly," she announced.

"Thank you," Asuna replied.

"Thank you very much," Randy replied as well. The receptionist smiled in return. After a few minutes, one of the doctors approached the teens.

"Randy Mitchell," the doctor greeted cheerfully.

"The one and only." Randy greeted him in return.

"I'm Dr. Kanashi," the man introduced himself. He then looked to Asuna. "You must be Yuuki's other friend."

"Indeed, I’m Asuna Yuuki.” She replied with a bow. Kazuto likewise bowed. "I'm Kazuto Kirigaya, another friend of hers."

Alex and Suguha also bowed. “The names Alexander Mitchell and this is Suguha Kirigaya, two more friends of hers.”

"Ah," Dr. Kanashi recognized Alex, "your uncle has said a lot about you." He extended his hand, "nice to meet an SAO survivor."

Alex took his hand and shook in a polite manner. “It’s wonderful to meet one of my uncle’s colleagues.”

"Doctor," Randy then spoke up, "can you take us to Yuuki? She knows we want to see her."

“Absolutely.” Dr. Kanashi replied. “Just follow me and I’ll lead you to her room.” As the group walked behind the doctor, the man then said, "I heard a lot about you all from Yuuki, especially Miss Yuuki and Randy here. I honestly did not expect her to reveal the Medicuboid voluntarily."
“Well, she told us about her condition,” Randy replied.

As Dr. Kanashi turned towards a door, he remarked, "You people must be quite special for her to spill the beans like that. It's not everyday AIDS survivors do that." He unlocked the door, allowing the five inside. They see Yuuki laying in the medical bed hooked up what appears to be the Medicuboid machine with a few monitors and heartbeat monitors hooked around her.

"Yuuki!" Asuna gasped as she leaned on the window separating the viewing space from the sealed portion. Her eyes teared up at the pitiful sight of an emaciated girl hooked up to the large Medicuboid. For Kazuto, the sight of Yuuki in her depleted state brought back memories of the SAO Incident.

"My gosh..." Sugu put her hands to her mouth.

"Yuuki...” Randy gaped in the sight of her and placed his hand on the glass. Even though the viewing space between them is small, but to him, it felt like she was miles away.

"Hey..." a voice came in through the intercom, "don't stare at me like that... it's a little insulting to be looked on like that." Randy’s mind snapped back into reality. "Yuuki? Is that you?"

"The one and only," Yuuki said.

“It’s good to hear your voice,” Randy admitted.

"We came as promised," Alex said, "you... sound pretty well."

Yuuki chuckled, "well you guys couldn't exactly leave me alone."

“We wouldn’t….” Asuna added.

"Yuuki," Kazuto said, looking at her, "you've been here all this time."

"Three years straight to be exact.” Yuuki pointed out.

"Yuuki..." Randy said as he looked on at her past the glass.

"Randy..."

"Even though we only knew each other for a short time.” Randy began, his hand still planted on the glass window. “But it felt like I’ve known you for a long time from the moment I saw you.” Asuna held her hands to her heart, with Kazuto taking her aside as the moment played out. Suguha and Alex likewise stepped aside in respect.

“Really?” Yuuki asked. The tone in her voice sweetens from his words.

“Indeed,” Randy replied. ‘I’ve heard of ‘Love at First Sight’ but never believed it myself. But after seeing you, I now believe that it is true.”

Yuuki did not answer for a while, processing what she had just heard. Taking a virtual breath, she said, "why me, though? I'm just a sick girl trying to pose as a strong warrior..." There was sadness in her tone

“I saw something in your eyes.” Randy explained, “And it wasn’t just the eye color. But they show promise for happiness and hope. Hope for a second chance to be fully cured.”

"But... there's no known cure...” Yuuki said.
"Back then there isn't..." Randy continues. ".But all that's gonna change...."

"How can we be sure that your solution works?" Yuuki questioned, "And why should you go through all this trouble when I just drag you down?"

"Because I believe it will." Randy then answers. "I wanna give you those chances for a life with the people that cared for you."

"A-are you serious?"

"Indeed I am." Randy smiled. "You and I will go on all sorts of adventures together, in ALO and in the Real World. I'll take you places you want to go and do things you want with you."

Yuuki was touched by his words. "Randy...." Was all she could say.

Kazuto and Alex were smiling, while Asuna and Sugu almost wanted to squeal and cry at once. It was then Dr. Kanashi appeared with Randy’s father, Dr. Joseph Mitchell.

"Son!" Joseph said in surprise.

"Dad!" Randy said after being startled.

"I didn't expect you to be here," Joseph expressed.

"We're visiting Yuuki, Uncle Joseph," Alex explains.

"So it seems..." Joseph said as he looked at the group, then over to Yuuki. "She's got quite an attention, hasn't she?" He asked.

"Let's just say that she's quite the lady, Dad," Randy let slip, only to blush at the admission.

"Oh..." Yuuki vocalized in amazement. Dr. Mitchell smirked as his son tries to hide his blushing face.

"Ah... no wonder why Ms. Konno was so anxious yesterday," Dr. Mitchell realized, "it's wonderful to be young and in love."

"Indeed..." Alex smiled while nudging his cousin on the shoulder.

"Anyway," Alex began. "About your work on fatal diseases."

"Ah yes," Dr. Mitchell returned to his serious focus, "now we have been running simulations and a number of animal tests with the treatment I've been developing..."

"Is it possible it'll eliminate AIDS?" Asuna asked.

"Yes it could," Dr. Mitchell said with some hesitancy. "However....We need a donor of blood in order to replace the infected blood cells before the nanites could continue their work." Randy gazes down from that thought, and then he gazed back at Yuuki. Then he realized something before turning his head back to his father.

"What blood type is she?" He asked.

"She's blood type O," the doctor indicated.

'Blood type O’ He thought to himself. He then recalls himself having a blood test and hearing his
blood type.

“I think you may have found a donor.” Randy then said.

"Woah,” Yuuki vocalized, while the others gasped and looked to one another.

"You, Randy?” Alex asked.

“That’s right; I’m a Blood Type O as well.” He said.

"I did not see that one coming,” Asuna admitted.

“Me neither,” Kazuto replied. “He’s very determined.”

"I see..." Dr. Mitchell looked at his own son, "but I must warn you about something."

“Something about…?” He asked.

“The procedure would depend on the amount of blood needed for the treatment. So it may leave you woozy if this occurs.” His father explains before continuing. “Plus, the nanites would leave her weak after having her blood cells and bones reconfigured. But with luck, they’ll repair them after the AIDS and HIV are eliminated from her body.”

"Ummm..." Yuuki vocalized.

“But we will be on standby during the operation to make sure it goes smoothly.” He also added. Randy then hugged his dad. "Thanks for doing this, Dad."

“It’s at least we could do for Yuuki.” Dr. Mitchell responded as he hugged his son. Alex and Sugu could only smile at Randy, with Asuna smiling happily for her friend and her boyfriend to be. Kazuto was also all grins.

“We could start the operation very soon if you want.” He then said.

"I'm ready, only when Yuuki is," Randy said, looking back to the girl behind the Medicuboid. Yuuki smiles through the monitors from the thought of Randy’s selfless act for her.

"If you're asking me,” Yuuki said, "what are we waiting for?"

“Good to hear. Let’s get started.” Randy chimed. The young Mitchell was both anxious and nervous on the inside, keeping himself from bursting out with a 'Eureka!' at the prospects.

Alex, on the other hand, looked on with pride. “Way to go, Randy dude."
The Purpose of Love

Chapter Summary

Randy Mitchell donates his blood to Yuuki as the treatment for her AIDS takes place. Afterwards, they learned the true meaning of love.

Thirty or so minutes later:

Randy lays on one of the hospital bed, waiting for his blood transfusion.

Just opposite him was Yuuki Konno, detached from her Medicuboid, but behind a sterile curtain, with IV tubes inserted into her for the operation.

Kazuto and Alex watched in fascination with their respective girlfriends.

"Hard to believe this is happening," Sugu whispered in Alex’s ear.

"I really do hope it goes well for their sakes," Alex confided.

“I’m sure it will,” Kazuto reassures him.

"Thanks, but this is my cousin and his girlfriend to be we're talking about here," Alex replied.

“‘I know,’ Kazuto added. Randy, on the other hand, was somewhat nervous. There were times where he fainted on the sight of his own blood whenever he accidentally cuts himself. So far, he managed to stay calm. Dr. Mitchell watched from the sidelines as Dr. Kanashi followed his instructions and set up the operation.

“‘The nanites are in place.” Dr. Kanashi said. Randy looked up and saw the solution containing the nanites in an IV bag connected to Yuuki. Soon, he was going to have his blood transfused through it. He sees his cousin and his friends and gives them the ‘thumbs up’. Showing he is ready for it.

"Alright," Kanashi said, "start up the pump." Mitchell activates the pump and the nanites in the IV bag begins to flow through the tube and enter into Yuuki’s body.

"Hi!" Randy yelped as he felt his blood drawn out of his arm. He looks at his arm and sees his blood going out of the vein in his arm through the tube. He starts to feel a little dizzy but manages to stay strong for a time being.

"Just hang in there," Joseph murmured. The dizziness continues to increase in Randy; it was slow but growing.

‘This isn’t so bad.’ Randy thought to himself. His blood mingled with the solution, as both went into Yuuki's body. The nurses watched carefully as the nanites circulated. So far, the nanites begin to do their work.

‘Getting there…’ Randy thought to himself as he fought drowsiness. The nanites eliminated the infected blood cells and begin to work the infected areas in the bones.
"I don't believe it..." Asuna said in amazement.

“They’re working,” Suguha added in awe and amazement as they witnessed the AIDS virus being removed from her body. Alex and Kirito themselves were speechless as they looked at the screen for Yuuki’s body. Minutes have passed and very soon, the nanites have completely eliminated the last traces of the AIDS virus.

"It's done..." Asuna said. She and the others smiled at the success of the nanites miracle.

"Yuuki..." Asuna breathed out in relief. Randy, sighed in relief as he realizes the nanite treatment is a success. However, his dizziness has increased near the end of the operation.

"Randy," Alex ran up, only to be halted by the nurses.

“No one is allowed inside until the patients are safely unhooked from the IV tubes.” One of the nurses explained. Meanwhile, Randy was definitely feeling woozy and out of it. He sees the room appearing to be spinning and the colors being distorted.

"Randy!?" Alex called out. The voice, however, became distorted as he blacks out.

"Randy!

"Is he alright?" Asuna asked, her face shows signs of worry as she witnessed Alex’s cousin passing out.

"He's fine," Kanashi assured her, "he's just recovering from the transfusion." The nurses steadily removed the IVs from him and patched him up. Alex watches as the nurses tended his unconscious cousin. The group of friends then looked over at Yuuki behind the curtain. The nurses checked her vital signs, showing that she’s stabilized. Then they steadily removed the IV’s from her and patched her up.

"So... it's done," Kazuto said with confidence in his voice.

“Indeed it has,” Asuna added. Then the doctors approached the teens.

"What's the word?" Suguha inquired.

“The operation was a success and the AIDS virus, as well as HIV, was removed from her body.” Dr. Mitchell says.

Asuna teared up in joy. "I'm so glad..." she expressed, before breaking down and letting it flow. Kazuto gives her a comforting hug, overjoyed that his girlfriend’s friend is cured.

"It worked, Uncle," Alex said, proud of his cousin and uncle.

“Indeed it has.” Joseph smiled. The two couples watched as both Randy and Yuuki were transported out of the room.

Randy wakes up, his vision was blurry and swirling, but he regained his sight as he sees the hospital ceiling.
"W-where..." he groaned. He looked around and finds himself in one of the hospital rooms. His senses were still blurry and he has to take it slow and easy.

It was then that he remembered someone. "Yuuki..."

He looked around some more, then he sees Yuuki, sleeping in the bed right next to him. His eyes drank in the sight of the girl sleeping peacefully. She was debilitated from her long slumber, but nonetheless recognizable and beautiful.

"Yuuki." Randy sighed to himself. He continued to stare at her for some time, admiring how the sunlight was shining down on her. After a while, her eyes twitched and fluttered as she wakes up from her slumber. Randy's eyes widened with a gasp. As her eyes opened up, her wine-red colored eyes shined from the sunlight reflections. The two stared at each other across from their own beds. They did not say anything, taking in the sight of each other in real life.

Finally, after about two minutes, the newly awakened girl tried to speak, with a slight croak to her voice from years of neglect.

Nevertheless, she managed, "h... h-hello..."

"Hello...Yuuki." Randy said. Still, dizzy from his recovery, but he stayed up nevertheless. It was then that Yuuki began to smile softly. Randy could not help but think of how adorable she looked, despite her pasty appearance.

"It worked." He said while he smiled softly.

"I..." Yuuki's smile grew, as did the tears.

"We can do things you want to do now." Randy continued. “Once I recover, I'll come and visit you every day during your recovery.”

Yuuki nodded slowly but happily. "Hello, Randy," she reintroduced herself, "my name is Yuuki Konno." She closed her eyes, "and I'm glad to be free."

“I’m Randal Mitchell.” Randy introduced himself to her. “Welcome back Yuuki.” With that Randy slowly extended his hand out towards Yuuki. With some effort and struggling on her end, she did the same with her arm. Their fingers intertwined one another when their hands made contact.

Yuuki giggled, causing Randy to go a little pink. "How I've missed being able to touch for real."

“Indeed, we’ll take it slowly.” Randy smiled.

Outside, Kazuto, Asuna, Alex, Suguha, Joseph, and Kurahashi watched with smiles on their faces.

"This takes me back," Kazuto said to Asuna, thinking of the first time they met in the real world after the whole ALO Incident.

"Indeed it has Kazuto.” Asuna replied happily.

"Ah..." Joseph was rather dreamy looking, "my son has grown up..."

“You got that right uncle.” Alex smiled on.

"Hehehe..." Suguha giggled, "the love is in the air."

Asuna followed along. She then said to Kirito, "at least I now have you without all the other girls
worrying about love."

It was then Suguha remembers something. “Are the other players of Sleeping Knight gonna get the same treatment?” She asks Dr. Mitchell.

"Well, we still have to process the data of the experiment from the nano-machines as well as Yuuki's Medicuboid," Joseph remarked, "but I'll have to say that this one has been very promising. I'm encouraged by what we might find."

“I wonder what the treatment would be called?” Alex wondered.

"Oh..." Dr. Mitchell mused. It was then that he smiled.

“I’m considering either the Yuuki or the Randy treatment.” He suggested.

"Yuuki-Randy," Asuna mouthed aloud, "calls it the Yuuki-Randy Miracle..."

Kazuto could only smile at her suggestion.

“Alight, the Yuuki-Randy Miracle it is.” Dr. Mitchell smiled Kazuto hugged Asuna, as both of them watched the lovely scene between Randy and Yuuki unfold inside.

“It’s hard to believe this has worked,” Yuuki said softly.

"I know..." Randy replied as he rubbed her hand with his, "but all that matters is that you are here with me."

“I always wanted to see the beauty of the world again.” Yuuki continued.

"Trust me..." Randy assured, "there is much to catch up on."

Three days later:

Randy arrives at the hospital; Kazuto, Asuna, Alex, and Suguha haven’t shown up yet.

‘They should be here shortly.’ Randy thought as he headed inside. He went into the lobby and up to the receptionist, who smiled upon seeing him.

"Ah, Ms. Konno's knight in shining armor," the lady beamed, "what can I do for you?"

“I’m here to visit Ms. Konno.” Randy smiled.

"Oooh..." the other nurses giggled, as did the receptionist, earning a blush from Randy.

"Sit tight, and I'll get her," the receptionist said. Randy nods and waits. He then sees Kazuto, Asuna, Alex, and Suguha walked through the front doors. He waves to them who spotted him and approached him.

"Hey guys," Randy greeted as they sat down with him.

"So, what's the word?" Asuna inquired; eager to go see her friend.
“Just waiting to be taken to Yuuki.” Randy smiled.

"It's already been three days since that treatment," Suguha remarked, all smiles, "I want to see how far she's come."

“Same here,” Asuna smiles as well, she was very happy her friend is on the road to recovery, it was slow, but progress is showing great. It was then that the receptionist returned, with someone else in tow. Randy's eyes widened upon seeing who it was. It was Yuuki, who’s up and in a wheelchair. The others had the same reaction as well.

"Yuuki!" Asuna gasped.

"Hey Asuna," the girl smirked, "don't look so shocked."

"We didn't expect you to be up and about," Randy admitted.

"Hehe!" Yuuki giggled, "as a matter of fact, Dr. Mitchell and Dr. Kurahashi said that today I can be discharged for the first time in three years!"

“Really?” Asuna said in surprise.

“That’s amazing!” Sugu chimed.

"Sweet deal!" Alex concurred.

Kazuto then greeted, "welcome to the group."

It was then a voice is heard from Asuna’s smartphone. “That’s amazing.” Asuna and Yuuki perked up at the sound of that voice. Taking out her phone and turning on the screen, Asuna chuckled upon seeing who it was.

“Hi, mommy.” Yui chimed.

“Hi, Yui.” Asuna smiled at her AI daughter. It was then that Yuuki remembered her surprise earlier from the boss raid.

She leaned over towards Randy. "Um... about that explanation," she reminded.

“Oh, right. About Yui.” Randy mentions and explains to Yuuki how Kazuto and Asuna adopted Yui while stuck in SAO who was one of the AI of the Cardinal System and later restored in ALO.

"Whoa..." Yuuki was floored by this revelation. She looked over towards her best friend and her in-game husband. "Asuna... I didn't know that you and Kazuto were..."

“Father and Mother.” Asuna finishes.

"And SAO Survivors on top of that!" Yuuki exclaimed. She then could understand how Asuna was so strong, and why Kirito fought the way she fought. She then wheeled herself closer to the couple.

"You two are very lucky and special to have each other," she expressed.

Yuuki then laughed, "I guess us being stuck in VR is another thing we have I common."

“Indeed. Not to mention it also found love for some.” Asuna gestures over to Alex and Suguha. The two couples smile.
“Hello, Ms. Yuuki!” Yui beamed happily from the phone screen.

“Hello, Yui.” Yuuki smiled as she sees her on the phone screen.

"You're amazing, Ms. Yuuki,” Yui complimented. This causes Yuuki's face to fluster in pink. “Why thank you for the compliment, Yui.” She smiles.

Yui giggled happily. It was then that Randy stood up and got behind Yuuki's wheelchair, grabbing it by the handles. "How about we leave here, and we go somewhere to eat," he offered.

“Sure thing Randy.” Yuuki agrees and giggles as they leave the hospital.

Sometime later, Kazuto, Asuna, Alex, Suguha, Randy and Yuuki arrived at the Dicey Café.

“This is where we eat and hang out.” Asuna explains to Yuuki.

"Wow...” Yuuki was awed. Randy chuckled at Yuuki's endless sense of renewed wonder about the world. Ever since she awoke from her long sleep, Yuuki was taking everything in like a newborn child, ready to see what there was to the world that she had left.

There was then a growling sound that brought Randy out of his musing. He looked down to see a rather sheepish and red-faced Yuuki holding her midriff.

“Sounds like someone’s hungry.” Asuna giggled.

"Oh man... how could I forget that," Yuuki groaned.

Kazuto couldn't help but laugh, with Alex joining him. "Now how can we forget that one, Alex?"

Randy chuckles before saying. “Shall we head inside?” Yuuki nodded. The three couples opened the door and went inside. It was lively and bustling as numerous patrons were having their lunch. They see Agil who is behind the bar as usual.

“Hey, Andrew.” Kazuto greets his friend.

"Kazuto!” Andrew greeted with a friendly smile. Yuuki couldn't help but be taken aback by the cheeriness.

“I see you got a new friend here.” Andrew smiled friendly at Yuuki.

“This is Yuuki Konno.” Asuna introduced her to him.

"Hi there," Yuuki waved from her wheelchair.

It was then that Andrew’s eyebrow twitched upon examining her. "Say, have I seen you somewhere before?"

“I think you have.” Yuuki then pondered.

"Wait a minute!” A voice rang out. Randy and Asuna turned to see that it was Scott and Rika sitting together.
“Hey, guys.” Yuuki waved at the couple.

"Yuuki!” Scott exclaimed. Tim and Keiko likewise turned their heads towards Yuuki.

“Surprise!” Yuuki and Randy both exclaimed happily.

Rika then looked to Asuna. "You didn't say that Yuuki was-

"Cured and discharged?” Asuna finished. She looked between her two friends proudly. "You have Randy to thank for that.” They looked at Randy who was smiling big. They were surprised, not only Randy got a girl of his own, but he saved her from her terminal illness.

"Told ya," Randy beamed, to Yuuki's chuckle.

“How did he…” Rika begins to ask.

"Took a bit of my Dad's tech and my own sweat and blood,” Randy said as he gently caressed Yuuki's shoulder.

"And I couldn't be prouder of him," Yuuki finished.

“Awesome,” Tim exclaimed.

"Pretty slick there, Randy man!” Scott gave him a thumbs up.

“Very bold of you there,” Rika replied.

"Why thank you," Randy replied. He then looked down at Yuuki. "Now, let's get you some real chow." Everyone sat down together; Randy sat next to Yuuki, who looked at the bowl of Udon noodles in front of her, a first in three years.

"Wow..." Yuuki marveled aloud. Asuna and Randy smile as they see Yuuki marveling over the Udon noodles. Taking the chopsticks in her right hand, she drew out the first strands, and slowly brought them to her mouth. She opened up and took them in, as the others watched anxiously. The Udon noodles made contact on her taste buds, it was overwhelmingly good.

“Mmmmm..” Yuuki hummed delightfully. To emphasize her delight, she slurped as she ate the noodles. She all smiled. "How I missed this!"

“Being in the VR world for a long time can do that,” Alex says. Kazuto, Asuna and the SAO survivors nodded in agreement.

"Mmmm!" Yuuki hummed delightfully as she ate the noodles, veggies, and fishcakes excitedly. The others, especially Asuna and Randy smiled.

After Yuuki drank all the soup, she smacked her lips. She was radiant with a closed-eye smile. "Nothing beats a good bowl of udon!” Randy's heart fluttered at the sight of his happy girlfriend.

“Indeed Yuuki.” Asuna replied she was all smiles for her friend.

Randy chuckled, "and this one will be on me as your treat, Yuuki."

“Thanks, Randy.” Yuuki smiled at her boyfriend's kindness.

"You betcha," Randy replied, before giving a surprise peck on the cheek. Yuuki’s cheeks went pink as she felt his soft lips pecking her cheek and she smiles.
"Oooh..." the girls teased, while the other boys were grinning like Cheshire the Cat. Alex smiled proudly at his cousin’s kindness.

"Hehe..." Yuuki giggled, "So you want to play that game?"

"Really?" Randy smirks as he asks. Yuuki grinned before quickly planting a wet kiss on Randy's cheek. His face flushed as he feels her lips touching his cheek.

"Don't think I'm naïve, Randy," Yuuki cooed, "Even when I was stuck in a Medicuboid for all those years, I took the opportunities to study on my own." She then teasingly brushed her hand against his arm, "my studies include wrapping a cutie like you around my tiny fingers..."

"Is that so?" Randy chuckles. "Perhaps you could show me sometime.” He suggested.

"Bring it on, cutie, hehe!" Yuuki giggled mischievously. Asuna and Kazuto looked on with amusement in their eyes. Alex and Suguha have the same expression on their faces.

It was then that Alex whispered, "That reminds me. I'm definitely in the mood for dessert." Suguha blushes by what her boyfriend meant.

"Well..." he sheepishly followed, "only if you are up to taking that next step..."

"I don’t mind.” Suguha answers sheepishly. Scott and Rika looked around them, pouting somewhat.

"I’m guessing they’re gearing up for another sex quest in the ALO wilderness or something,” Scott whispered in Rika’s ear.

"Don't know..." Rika murmured, "I just have a feeling that was a warm up..."

"Indeed," Scott replied softly. “But that doesn’t mean we could do one of our own.”

"Eh?" Rika perked up, "what do you have in mind?"

"Well, we could do it near a cave in one of the mountains,” Scott suggested. “I’m sure they’re isolated from other players.”

"Oh?" Rika perked up, but then assumed a mischievous expression, "wanna do it in the buff?"

"You bet I do,” Scott replied with a deviously grin on his face.

"Hmmm..." Rika mused. It was then that she said, "why not?"

"I'll be looking forward to our quest.” Scott chuckles. “Are you?”

"Bring it on," Rika giggled rather uncharacteristically. Scott thought it was rather cute.

Yuuki was looking over to Alex, Suguha, Scott, and Rika. It was then that she gestured Asuna to lean over to her and Randy.

"Guys?" she asked, "why do I have this strange feeling that they are up to something?"

“How do you mean Yuuki?" Asuna asked.

"I don't know, I just have this feeling," Yuuki continued. Kirito, Asuna, and Randy noticed her cheeks turning pink. She then nodded at Alex and Suguha, who were staring at each other. "I mean, seeing what those two did that night..."
“Now that you mentioned it…” Asuna then said. Randy also started to go pink at what Yuuki was getting at. As if that wasn't enough, his cousin and Suguha started to rub against each other, as did Scott and Rika. Tim and Keiko distracted themselves with each other from the spectacles.

It was then that the door opened, and looking over, Randy recognized Shigeru and Shino together.

“Hey, guys.” Randy waved at Shigeru and Shino.

"Hey, Randy," Shigeru greeted, just as he and Sinon laid eyes on the wheelchair-bound girl.

“Yuuki?” Shino said in confusion. Yuuki looked at Shino in confusion, but her face then lit up in recognition of the girl despite her glasses.

"Sinon," she recognized. She then looked over to Shigeru. "You must be Spike, then!"

“That’s me.” Shigeru smiled. It was then that Shino looked to Asuna with a quizzical look.

“She was diagnosed.” Asuna explains. “But she’s cured.”

"All thanks to me," Randy pounded his chest proudly.

“Really? How so?” Shino asks.

"Well, a bit of my Dad's tech..." Randy then held Yuuki's hand, "and a bit of my blood now flowing through her veins."

Yuuki went a little pink at the way he phrased it. Randy went a little pink as well.

"Wow..." Shino said. It was then that her cheeks went pink. Shigeru likewise seemed uncharacteristically sheepish as he held her rather close.

“That was very generous of you Randy,” Shigeru admitted.

"Thank you," Randy replied. Asuna, on the other hand, felt something about those two. She could tell that both Shino and Shigeru appeared to have their time of moment earlier. But wasn’t sure if it was either on VR or in Real life.

'Hmmm...' Asuna thought in amusement, 'I guess I'll have to talk with Sinon...' Shigeru and Shino then ordered some drinks and sat down with Yuuki and Randy, chatting animatedly about their plans.

“That’s very nice of you,” Shino commented.

“It’ll take some time,” Randy replies. “But she’ll be walking in no time.”

"I certainly will," Yuuki beamed, "besides, I feel more alive even after three years of FullDive!"

“And I’ll be with you always Yuuki,” Randy says while he gives her a hug.

"Aaawwww..." Suguha dreamily vocalized, while Alex was hugging her and grinning.

"Mmm..." Keiko hummed delightedly, with Tim rubbing her back. Asuna put both hands on her cheeks, suppressing her cute squeal. Kazuto smiled at his girlfriend's cute reaction.

"Man Yuuki, you hit the jackpot," Rika chimed in.
"You are whipped there, girl," Scott agreed.

"I sure have." Yuuki giggled. Randy could feel the radiance from Yuuki's happiness, and he would not trade it for anything else in the world. For the first time in his life, he had someone whom he could belong to.

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**March 29th:**

Yuuki's recovery has proven great for her; she no longer needed the wheelchair and is learning how to walk again. Randy, along with Kazuto, Asuna and their friends continued to help her out.

Today, Randy was bringing Yuuki out with the others to watch the cherry blossoms in bloom on a clear spring day. Kirito and Asuna were sitting off to the side, with Yui accompanying them in a probe. Alex, Suguha, and Andrew were setting up a picnic, while Klein was trying to show off some girl on his phone to Scott, Tim, and their respective girlfriends. Shigeru and Shino were lying down on nearby.

"Beautiful, aren't they?" Randy said to Yuuki, referring to the cherry blossoms.

"Mmm," Yuuki hummed with a happy nod. While she had fun with seeing all sorts of places in the virtual world, she never forgot the times that she and her family went out for picnics together. It was her family's carving out of a happy corner of the world.

"I'd always wanted to see the cherry blossom trees in person as I've heard a lot about them as well as seeing pictures of them." Randy smiled.

"You know something else?" Yuuki then asked. Randy turns to Yuuki with his eyebrow raised in curiosity from her question.

"Something like...?"

"It makes me feel soft and warm seeing the petals fall..." Yuuki said dreamily as she lethargically rested on Randy's shoulder.

Randy smiles as he holds her closer. "Very true.." Yuuki closed her eyes as she revealed in the sensations, including the rather comforting warmth of her new boyfriend. Randy rests his cheek against her short purple hair and feels the softness of her hair pressing against his cheek. It may not be long like it was in ALO, but it's perfect enough for him.

"Hard to believe I've come this far already..." Yuuki whispered.

"Not to mention being around the people that cared for you," Randy whispered in return. Yuuki snuggled as she adjusted herself. It was then that she was glancing at him, eye to eye.

"Did I mention you got the beautiful eyes?" Randy asked, his cheeks flustered when he finished his question. Yuuki's mouth formed an 'o' as she turned pink.

"It's true." He smiles.

"Oh, Randy," Yuuki laughed, "you always have something to say."
“Indeed.” He chuckled while his face flushed. "It was then that Yuuki pulled back a bit; before planting a peck on Randy's cheek. He smiles as her lips touched his cheek.

"I do notice something we've been missing though..."

“Like?”

It was then that the girl turned a lovelier shade of pink. A few seconds of silence passed between them. It also didn’t take long for the boy’s cheeks to turn a lovely shade of pink as well. Yuuki then closed her eyes again and held her lips open in anticipation. It was then that Randy figured it out. He closed his eyes in return. The two individuals slowly leaned towards each other until their lips met softly. The kiss was soft and sweet as the two made another first for themselves, especially Yuuki. Their faces flustered a deeper color as their kiss slowly deepens.

'Oooohhhhh...' Yuuki thought as she got lost in the overwhelming sensation. If there was another thing she re-learned about reality, it was that the senses were much stronger. Randy, on the other hand, was lost in the passionate moment which seems to last an eternity for the two. After several moments, they parted and gazed warmly into each other’s eyes.

"That... was amazing..." Yuuki panted, desire shining in her eyes.

“Yes...it was.” Randy breathed. Happiness and desire shined in his eyes. He takes his hand and gently strokes her cheek with his fingers. Yuuki held his hand in hers, before saying, "do it again..."

“Sure thing, Yuuki,” Randy replies as they both shared another passionate kiss.

"Mmmm!" Yuuki moaned into Randy's mouth. Something inside of her was welling up. Three years in VR made this sensation dormant, only surfacing whenever she entertained a few crushes. However, being back in real life with this wonderful boy was causing this feeling to come back stronger than ever. The feeling within Randy was welling up in a warmly matter as their kiss deepens some more.

Suddenly, Yuuki pushed him down as she presses herself into him. She moaned loudly as her tongue invaded his mouth.

Randy was taken off guard but quickly relaxed as he feels her tongue slide into his mouth and making contact with his own. Yuuki then broke the kiss to take a breath, while still pinning him to the ground. Looking cute and sweet seconds ago, the girl had desire and pleasure oozing from within. Randy grins as he recalls seeing that smile back in ALO when she defeated him in the first round.

"You look fired up," Randy remarked.

“You bet I am.” Yuuki giggled. Yuuki then crashed her lips down on Randy's again, moaning aloud as she twisted to get different angles. Randy could feel her rubbing against him. He wraps his arms around her waist, holding her closer to him.

'So sweet,' Randy thought before his mind drifted into blissful nothingness. Yuuki wraps her tongue around his, moaning with ecstasy. Without thinking, Randy's hands made their way down Yuuki’s back as he rubbed it. She moaned loudly through the kiss.

It was then that his hand happened to rub against her skirt-covered rear, eliciting a squeak out of Yuuki. She promptly broke the kiss, as she stared down at Randy in embarrassment.

Randy blushes when he realized what he did. “I’m sorry Yuuki,” Randy said sheepishly.
"I-it's fine," Yuuki said. She then lowered her gaze. "I didn't think it would escalate like that."

"Me neither," Randy admitted. The two sat still for a while, though Yuuki was still on top.

"Randy," the girl finally spoke up, "one thing at a time, right?"

"Right." The boy replied. "We'll take things slowly."

"Good," Yuuki smiled, to which Randy smiled in agreement. They then both hugged each other in a warming embrace.

"That is so hot and cute," Asuna was gushing as she, Yui, and Kazuto watched from their spot.

"Randy and Yuuki are being lovey-dovey." Yui chimed.

"Who would've thought the Absolute Sword was an Absolute Kisser?" Kazuto joked.

"Very true." Asuna giggled. Yui watched as Yuuki and Randy went at it again. It started to make her think more about the relationship that existed between her Mommy and Daddy, and now all her other friends.

'I wonder if there's someone else for me out there?' She thought.

"Hey, Mommy, Daddy?" Yui said.

"What is it Yui?" Asuna asked.

"Mommy," she said, "think I'll ever find the love that you and Daddy share?" This question got them off guard, but they figured it may happen sooner or later. But they didn’t realize it would be soon.

"Well…" Asuna begins. "…There might be one out there."

"Well," Kazuto scratched his head at a loss for words. He almost kept forgetting how smart Yui was.

"I was wondering since I've seen the love between you and Daddy as well as Uncle Alex and Auntie Leafa," Yui says. Asuna and Kazuto looked at one another, thinking of what to say to the young AI. Yui waited for their response.

"Well, Yui," Asuna began, "you are still a little young right now for that, but..." She took a deep breath. She smiled said, "I'm sure you'll find a cute boy who'll spoil you one day!"

"OK, mommy." The little AI chimed happily. "I'll wait 'til then."

"Asuna!" Kazuto said, feeling a little protective over his daughter.

"What’s wrong Kazuto?" Asuna asked.

"Well..." Kazuto was sheepish. It was then that Asuna could guess why, based on his reserved expression.

"I understand that you’re looking after Yui,” Asuna says before continuing. “But we are bringing her into the world one day.”

"Yeah..." Kazuto scratched his head, "it's a little soon, though to have that talk."
“True.” Asuna admitted. They are discussing Yui’s future too soon. Yui, seeing her parents look conflicted, then said, "Sorry, Mommy and Daddy."

“It’s OK Yui.” Asuna said to comfort her. Kazuto smiled sheepishly. After some hesitation, Kazuto said, "Your turn will come... eventually..."

“OK, Daddy.” Yui then chirped happily.

Meanwhile, Shigeru and Sinon lay together on the grass as they enjoyed the serenity of the park.

“Very beautiful, isn’t it Shino?” Shigeru asked.

"Yep,” Shino giggled as she hugged him. Shigeru smiled as they both hugged each other and cuddled on the grass.

"Meow," Shino meowed cutely as she licked her boyfriend’s cheek. Shigeru chuckles, they’ve been dating each other for some time, both online and offline.

"You are such a sexy kitten," Shigeru complimented.

“Yes, I am.” Shino purred. Shigeru laughed. How did he end up with this hottie? “You sound very delightful as a catgirl when we did it the first time,” he remarked.

“Indeed I did.” She giggles. Shigeru looked around for a bit and seeing that everyone else was occupied, his hand shot underneath Shino’s skirt, rubbing against her rear. Shino squeaks in surprise but purrs as she feels his hand rubbing against her rear.

"You are so sensitive, even in VR," Shigeru said, "I can imagine what would happen if you had real cat ears and tail." His naughty mind conjured images of Shino with cat ears and a more feline attire.

Shino giggled before responding. “You could pet me all you want.”

"Hehe," Shigeru chuckled as he stroked the underside of her chin.

“Meoww.” Shino meowed cutely again.

"Hmm..." the boy then had some naughty thoughts occur to him.

"Hey, Shino," he said, "do you happen to be into cosplay of any sort?"

“Well now that you mentioned it...” Shino smirks.

“What do you say that we order some ‘inventory’ for the next session?” Shigeru quirked his eyebrow suggestively.

“Ohh. I would love that.” She said with her cheeks flustered pink.

"Good kitty," Shigeru cooed as he rubbed her back.

“Nyaahhh,” She teased him with her cat sounds.

Alex and Suguha were just finishing helping Agil unpack the picnic.
“Everything’s almost set,” Alex said as he flattened out the picnic blanket. Suguha sat back as she exhaled blissfully.

“It’s very beautiful outside today,” Alex commented on the weather.

"I never get tired of watching the cherry blossoms," Suguha remarked as she brushed her silky hair back. She had a dreamy look in her eyes as she relaxed.

“Yeah, they're very beautiful….” Alex added. “But do you know what else is beautiful?”

"Let me guess," Suguha replied, "it’s something to do with a certain swordswoman in your life?" She had a cheeky tone to what she said.

“Yep.” He smiled. “That certain swordswoman is you, Sugu.” He then crawled up to Suguha. He leaned over her with a cool smile. "And you look as sweet and sexy as ever with your dress,” he whispered.

Suguha giggles and blushes after Alex finished his compliment on her light blue dress. “Thanks.”

Looking around, and glancing back at Andrew, who had his back turned, Alex grinned naughtily at Suguha. "You know, I am a little thirsty right now, and I could just drink in your sweetness right about now."

Suguha blushed from the thought. After their steamy adventure back in January, it was erotic. Since then, they eventually progressed their lovemaking into the real world, where the tastes and pleasures were even stronger, despite the initial pain. She loved that Alex could take pleasure in her lactating quirk, but having her do it with him in public was another thing, plus with her brother nearby.

"Alex..." she warned.

“But if you want to do it later, that’s fine with me…” Alex reassured her. “Besides, it would be crazy to do it in public. Wouldn’t it?”

"Mmm..." Suguha nodded sheepishly.

"At least we can do this," Alex said, before pressing his lips against hers, tasting her vanilla flavor.

“Mmmmm…” Suguha moaned as they shared a passionate kiss. She tastes his mocha flavor on his lips.

The two parted with some panting.

"You know..." Suguha panted, "... I don't know if it is just you, or the caffeine from your coffee that is firing me up..."

“I’m guessing you’re the vanilla cream to my mocha coffee.” Alex teased.

Suguha hummed in amusement. 'So you like vanilla cream, huh,’ she thought. It was then that she leaned into Alex, and whispered in his ear. "Then perhaps I'll start drinking a bit more mocha with vanilla milk, and throw in more chocolates," she suggested.

Alex smiles from that thought, but then he had an idea. “If you want, we can have chocolate-covered strawberries.” He whispered.

"Mmm..." Suguha was now interested, "that sounds delicious..."
“Indeed. I’m getting excited from thinking about it.” Alex chuckles. Suguha looked down at her breasts and brushed her fingers over them. Alex sighs and grins as his girlfriend start to tease him.

Scott and Tim with their respective girlfriends were listening to Klein about how he was going to find the girl he took a picture of in passing. They couldn't help but sigh at his declarations and attempts.

“What do you think, Rika?” Scott whispered.

"I dunno, given his luck," Rika whispered back, "I feel kinda sorry for him."

"Poor Klein," Tim said in pity to Keiko, "he's such a womanizer."

“Yes indeed,” Keiko whispered back.

"I'm going to find her and get her to go out with me," Klein squealed as he rubbed his phone, "I want her to know a badass samurai when she sees one!” Scott just rolled his eyes before turning to Rika. Tim mentally sighed as he did the same with Keiko.

"Come on, guys," Klein egged on, "you all can tell this has to be some sort of destiny, right?"

“I’m sure you’ll be able to ask her out.” Scott then said.

"It doesn't hurt to try," Tim added.

"What they said," Rika agreed, with Keiko nodding wordlessly.

“I got a feeling she may be the one,” Klein said gleefully.

"All the best, Klein," Scott wished. Tim cuddled with Keiko.

"I'm glad that Yuuki's out here with us," Keiko beamed.

“Indeed. Not to mention the Yuuki-Randy Miracle has helped many terminally-ill patients.” Tim added.

In fact, after Yuuki was healed, there was a news firestorm over the Yuuki-Randy Miracle being successfully tested. Since then, it saw further experiments with very similar results, leading to a rise in demand for the procedure. Over that time, Yuuki and Randy had become celebrities of sorts in the medical industry as well as various health charity organizations such as the Mercury Phoenix Trust.

“They sure made into history,” Keiko remarked.

"Mmmm," Tim hummed in agreement as he looked over to Randy and Yuuki made out.

“As well as going far to prove their love for each other,” Tim added. Keiko looked over and blushed as she saw how Yuuki was dominating on top on the Mitchell boy.

“No kidding.” Rika then added. Tim and Keiko blushed red as Yuuki pulled back with some saliva between herself and Randy, before licking his cheek in a tantalizing manner.

"Seriously, where did she learn to kiss like that?” Keiko wondered.

“No idea.” Tim pondered.
"Ho-ho..." Rika said with a naughty tone, "looks like our little Zekken is quite the minx."

"Indeed she is," Scott remarked. "It looks like Kazuto and Asuna would be getting some competition, not to mention Alex and Suguha."

"Don't forget about us, my hunk," Rika pointed out with a sly and sexy smile.

"Right." Scott chuckled, followed by his slick smile. "I guess that leaves only Shigeru and Shino and you two." He said to Tim and Keiko, who blushes from his statement.

"I don't know... but I get this feeling that Shigeru and Shino aren't so innocent anymore," Tim said as he looked over to those two, who were giving each other sexy grins.

"Yeah, you’re probably right," Scott replied to Tim as he glances over to Shigeru and Shino.

"Anyway, anyone ready for a group photo?" Rika suggested.

Tim smiled, pulling Keiko close to him. "Well, what are we waiting for?"

"Same here!" Keiko cheerily agreed.

"Better get the others," Scott said.

"Allow me," Rika smiled down at Scott as she stood up. She then cupped her hands. She shouted, "hey, all you lovebirds out there! If you are all done ogling and lip-sucking, let's have a group picture!" The couples groaned from Rika’s remark on their moments together, but they got up and started heading towards her.

"Rika... did you have to say that aloud?" Asuna sighed.

"Sorry, Asuna. But it's the only way to get your attention." Rika chuckled.

"I was having fun with Randy cutie here~," Yuuki said in a cute tone, to Randy's blushing.

"Yeah, we saw that," Scott smirked.

"Seriously, though," Keiko chimed in, "how did you learn to kiss like that, Yuuki?"

"Well, being in VR for three years, you learn some interesting stuff." Yuuki giggled.

"Hmmm..." Kazuto was very amused, "reminds me of a certain flash in SAO." Asuna giggles and blushes from his statement. Everyone gathered for a group photo. After Andrew set up the camera, Rika put the timer on and rushed back by Scott's side, grabbing his arm. Asuna, Suguha, Keiko, Shino, and Yuuki bunched up together with their respective boyfriends.

It was then that Rika got cheeky. Grabbing Scott by the collar, she pulled him in for a kiss. Scott blushes as he’s taken off guard by the short brown-haired beauty but he returns the kiss. Yuuki pressed her cheek against Randy’s blushing cheek, giggling as she does this. Alex places his hands around Suguha’s waist and stomach, causing her to blush. Kazuto and Asuna looked into each other’s eyes, before closing them and meeting in a kiss. Tim hugged Keiko gently from behind, causing her to smile brightly.

The camera snaps a picture at that moment.

"Alright, let's see," Andrew went over to the camera.
“Is it a good shot?” Klein asked as Andrew looked at the camera’s picture.

"Take a look,” Andrew said with a bit of a blush. Klein looks at the photo and sees the results made by the couples.

Klein chuckles. “Couldn’t stand still for a picture, eh Kazuto?”

"Hey, can’t help that my girl is such a hottie," he admitted aloud.

“Very true, my black swordsman.” Asuna giggled.

“Guess it’s better than nothing,” Andrew admitted.

"This is so much fun!" Yuuki squeed.

“Indeed.” Randy chuckled. “Shall we begin the picnic?”

"Alright, Alex," Suguha laughed, "you can let me go now."

“K, Sugu.” Alex smiles as he lets her go. As he does so, a book fell out of his bag and landed on the grass. “Oops.”

"Oh," Yuuki noticed the book and went to pick it up.

“It’s a book my Uncle Robert wrote,” Alex says as Yuuki looked at the book’s cover and title.

"Interesting," Yuuki said as she reads the title ‘Shattered Union: The Story of the Second American Civil War’.

"I’ve heard about this, though I never got the chance to download it," she remarked, to Randy and Alex’s surprise.

“It’s very interesting,” Alex adds.

"Wait..." Yuuki then realized something. This gets Randy and Alex’s attention.

"You guys are related to THE Robert Mitchell, the author!?" Yuuki said in surprise.

“Indeed we are,” Alex said proudly.

"Wow..." Yuuki breathed in amazement. Randy and his family continued to surprise her at every turn.

“We were amazed as you were Yuuki.” Asuna said as she smiles.

"Guess that makes two of us," Yuuki laughed with her friend.

“By the way, How far did you get on the book Alex?” Klein asked Alex since he has managed to read a few chapters whenever the chance he got.

“Almost to the end,” Alex responded. “It’s very good.”

"Care to give me some hints?” Yuuki teased Randy and Alex.

“Well...” Alex began. “In this timeline, it’s very bleak than our timeline.” He went on explaining that Obama’s two terms in office did great damage to the nation, ranging from rising economic debt to racial division set up to weaken the nation. Then after Donald Trump was elected president, the
parties of America who enforce Leftist views raged hatred across the nation. Then various Far-Left extremist groups (with help from the United Nations) pulled off terrorist attacks on the nation’s capital of Washington DC as well as spreading their war across the nation, killing innocent people and destroying memorials dedicated to soldiers as well as marvel inventions. Even the State of California used the situation to secede from the Union, therefore sparking off the Second Civil War.

The situation in America also had an impact across the world, the Second Korean War occurred after North Korea invades their southern Korean nation. An Islamic terrorist organization called ISIS gained more ground across the Middle East with help from Iran. And nations of Canada, Mexico, China, and Cuba aids the terrorists in America which cause tensions with other countries, thus beginning the third world war.

"Dang..." Yuuki thought aloud, "that's some heavy stuff."

"Yeah." Alex rubs his neck. "It would’ve been very messy."

"Still," Alex then frowned, "I just can't help but feel that the entire world is teetering on the edge, right now." The others became worried about him as he says this.

“I mean with Mexico and Cuba becoming the Latin American Federation, China extending its borders in the past and the Middle East united under Totalitarian rule. Not to mention the European Union on the verge of collapse and what Canada has done in the past.”

Kazuto and the others frowned from his mentioned about Canada. The Canadian government, under Prime Minister Robert Grace announced January 22nd a day of mourning for the creature ‘Sugou Nobuyuki’, claiming he was a victim of the Coalition’s lies on him conducting illegal experiments on the 400 players as well as the rape attempt of Asuna Yuuki and calling for justice on Kazuto for his murder. They even went as far as building a statue of the creature and martyred him as a ‘symbol of civil liberties’, and coincidentally the statue was placed right next to the statues of the tyrannical US president Barack Obama and USSR leader Vladimir Lenin.

"Hard to believe that Japan is still this peaceful..." Keiko said.

“The Coalition managed to keep China from invading us after the Second Pacific War in 2020,” Rika recalled.

"Yeah, and part of the reason we came here was to catch a break from it all for a bit," Tim said to Keiko.

“Indeed,” Andrew added.

"Well, it's not all bad," Scott pointed out. He then hugged Rika, "I found you, Rika girl."

Rika giggles. “Indeed you have. Right, Keiko?”

"Yep and Timmy here know how to please this little kitten." Keiko snuggled up to Tim and purred. Tim blushed and smiled at her open affections.

“Same here for Yuuki.” Randy chimes in. Yuuki curls up to him in a warming embrace.

"Don't forget Alex Mitchell and his sweet girlfriend here," Alex said as he wrapped his arms under Sugu's chest and sniffed her. Sugu blushes and giggles.

During the discussion, Asuna continued to frown from the thought of Canada honoring that creature of a fiancée her own mother planned to marry her off to. She remembers the US Government
pressuring Canada for it, even several Canadian citizens protesting the statue’s release. But their
government refused and responded by beefing up security on the Canadian border as well as
violently putting down the protesters. Kazuto notices this and hugs his girlfriend.

"It's going to be alright Asuna," Kazuto cooed.

"Mommy should not be bothered by the bad people," Yui agreed.

"Yeah, but I just wished they knew what I went through." Asuna sighed.

"Denial is a river in Egypt," Kazuto said, "but what matters most is that you are here and well." He
rubbed the small of her back. Asuna smiles and relaxes from his touch.

"There... there," Kazuto whispered smoothly, "that's the cute Asuna I know."

Asuna failed to stop herself from moaning from her boyfriend's touch. She could get aroused very
easily by him.

"Mommy and Daddy are being lovey-dovey." Yui chirped.

"Seriously?" Suguha questioned her brother. However, Alex just smiled and licked the back of her
ear. Earning him a squeak in surprise from her.

"Hehe... someone's being a kettle calling the pot black," Alex teased as he gently assaulted her
sensitive spot. Suguha shudders and sighs from her boyfriend’s magic touch.

"Aaaahhhhh..." Sugu was finally moaning alongside Asuna.

"Sheesh!." Rika groaned. "Going at it in public again!"

"Count us in," Scott mischievously said as he took her and felt his way up her hips.

"S-Scott, but I-" Rika weakly protested but was failing. It was when he nuzzled his face into the
back of her neck that she gave out with a sensual moan.

"Uuuhhhhh..." He breathed in as he runs his hands down her hips.

Asuna, Suguha, and Rika had succumbed to their boyfriends and their inner desires, moaning in
abandon to the speechless wonder of Randy, Yuuki, Tim, and Keiko. Even Yui was blushing from
inside her probe as her Mommy writhed under her Daddy's touches.

It was then Shigeru gently hugs Shino from behind and runs his fingers across her stomach.

"Mind if we add your voice to the chorus?" Shigeru suggested as he worked on Shino.

"Shigeru..." Shino mewed as he runs his hands down her body.

"Meeeoowvvwwwuuuuuuuuuuuhhhhh..." Shino's mew trailed into a moan as she joined the other girls.
Randy, Yuuki, Tim, and Keiko blushes from the couple getting lost with each other.

Andrew couldn't help but silently blush from hearing the girls moan as their boyfriends worked their
magic. He was then thinking of his wife.

'I think I'll need to get this off my back with her...' he thought.

"Haha," Klein could not help but laugh at the boldness of his guy friends. "Hey, when I do get a
"girl," he suggested, "count me in on the fun!"

"Sure thing, Klein," Kazuto said with a smirk.

"K-Kazuto-uuhhhhhhh," Asuna's protest failed as she got lost in her arousal.

"Allleeeexxxx..." Suguha moaned.

"Scootttyyy~" Rika cooed.

"Spiiikkkkeeeeyyyyy~" Shino exhaled.

The four girls had flushed faces from the work their boyfriends were doing to them. Pleasure built up inside them as their abs and chests were fondled.

"They're pretty bold, gotta admit," Tim admitted to Keiko as the others watched them.

"Guys..." Randy said as he sweated, "you're drawing stares..."

Indeed, some of the other park goers were either staring or just trying not to pay attention. Those with children either ushered them away from the scene. Some were even at a loss as to explain why, as one child put it, 'why were those men being so lovey-dovey with the ladies?'

"So?" Scott raised his eyebrows.

“Well, we don’t want to get kicked out of the park,” Randy said with concern.

"Very true," Alex remarked. As the boys stopped, their girlfriends stopped moaning. However, as Asuna, Sugu, Rika, and Shino turned to face their boyfriends, their heated gazes showed that they were well far from being completely done. It was clear that they had been positively aroused. Kazuto, Alex, Scott, and Shigeru smiled as they want to come back with them to their places and continue there later on tonight.

"Kazuto..." Asuna panted, "I'll need you tonight."

"I know," Kazuto said with a grin. During this time, Yui logged off as the boyfriends were caressing their girlfriends. She was experiencing embarrassment and information overload from seeing her Mommy and Daddy go at it.

"Uh... I feel a certain pressure in some areas now..." Suguha said as she rubbed her chest against Alex's.

"Mnnnnm...Me too." Alex sighed as he takes in her scent.

"Look what you've done to me," Rika said with a sexy smile as her chest heaved above Scott's face, "I hope you are ready for your 'punishment' tonight."

"Indeed I am." Scott chuckled. "I'm such a bad boy."

"That you are..." Rika grinned.

"Shigeru~" Shino breathed heavily.

"I say that we go shopping afterward for tonight, my cat girl," Shigeru suggested as he ran his fingers through her hair.
“Meow…” Shino mewed softly.

"Oh man," Randy chuckled embarrassed, "I know those looks."

“Indeed,” Tim added.

"Alright," Andrew then butted in, "how about we enjoy the rest of the picnic before weird things start happening!?

“Right on Andrew,” Randy commented. Everyone sat down and enjoyed the rest of the picnic with the sun shining in the blue sky. In the meantime, Asuna, Suguha, Rika, and Shino were still hot and thinking about how they were going to make wonderful love with their soulmates tonight.
Promising Futures

Chapter by Jax189, Raijin117

Chapter Summary

The day have arrived and the future looks promising for Kazuto and Asuna, not to mention their friends.

August 28th, 2026:

It was some time after the 'Ordinal Scale' Incident and after Kazuto was brought back from the Underworld. Kazuto and Asuna walked through the park the same one that they went to on their first date in the real world. Things had not changed since he left.

It was a close call for Kazuto, as his soul got damaged while in the Underworld. However, his memories had been restored with Asuna's help. He could not thank her enough.

Kazuto holds Asuna's hand and smiled at her. "Thanks for saving me in The Underworld," he said.

Asuna smiled back at her beloved. "I didn't know what would happen if I lost you," she confided.

Kazuto kissed her on the cheek. "Same to you if I lost you."

Asuna smiled in contentment.

"It's great to be back in the real world," Kazuto said to her as they walked through the park, "those months in there was too long for me." Even though he was only in there for three days in real time, time in the Underworld had been slowed down to months.

Asuna gave her boyfriend a big kiss and smiled.

"Yes, it was Kazuto," Asuna admitted. For the entire time, she was worried for his safety after the Soul Translator he was strapped in got damaged. For that time she thought she had almost lost him.

Asuna then made the decision to dive down to the Underworld to look for him and get him cleared out of the Human Empire that reigned the Underworld. Kazuto rubbed her back and kissed her forehead.

"It was dangerous there," Kazuto said, "But at least Alice and Eugeo managed to get out with us."

"True," said Asuna as she stroked his hair.

"Just couldn't believe Gabriel would pull a stunt like that," Kazuto frowned. Asuna did the same as she thought back on the whole incident. They learned that Gabriel Miller was responsible for leading an attack on the Ocean Turtle while Kirito was in Full Dive in the Underworld. The facility took some damage from the UN Commando Strike Force under his command. However, the Ghost Ops units who have presently foiled the attack and captured Miller. The two, along with Eugeo and Alice arrived to witness the Ghosts interrogating him. However, they became disgusted by the Ghost's methods of interrogation, as they practically used brutal tactics in order to pry information out of him.
They've learned that Miller and his family's company was one of the companies crippled by the American Rebels at the start of the Second Revolution. He, his family, and their company, Glowgen Defense Systems, survived the drone attacks but suffered major financial losses. After the war, the new US government attempted to investigate and sanction Glowgen, but he and his family fled to Canada. Despite resettling in the northern nation, Gabriel harbored hatred towards America for the loss of his family's company and vowed to get revenge on them. Accepting the UN's offer to lead an attack on the Ocean Turtle, it was his way of getting back at America and Japan. However, his failed assault, as well as the UN's involvement only landed them in hot water with the Coalition of Allied Nations, especially after the USS Bush incident back in June of last year.

And if that wasn’t enough, they also learned that Vassago Casals, one of the commandoes of the UN Peacekeepers, was PoH, former leader of the Laughing Coffin guild back in SAO. He was planning to take advantage of both Kazuto and Asuna while they were strapped in the Soul Translator but Alex Mitchell, who was also present at the Ocean Turtle, managed to help repel the UN Peacekeeper raid of the Ocean Turtle as well as kill Casals. However, the event left him traumatized as the whole even seemed like it was his fault, but in time, their American friend managed to make a full recovery from the whole event.

Asuna said, "Well at least I saved you with the help of Rinko."

"Indeed." He replied. "However, there was one person that managed to get me through all of that."

Asuna smiled. "Who would that be?" She asked as she rubs his back. He turned and made eye contact with her beautiful chestnut colored eyes. "That person was you."

Asuna's smile widened, touched by his compliments about her being his motivation.

"You're my everything since the day we met," Kazuto continued, "from the days of being trapped in SAO to the quest I set out to save you."

Asuna responded, "and you're still my prince and my black swordsman."

"And you're still my Lighting Flash, and my beloved princess," Kazuto replied back, "and I want to spend the rest of my life with you." The two gazed deep into each others' eyes.

"And I want to spend my life with you as your wife, Kazuto," Asuna cooed softly. Kazuto smiled.

"And I want to support you like your husband who will love you every day," he replied. Suddenly, Kazuto got down on his knee, reached into his coat pocket and took out what appeared to be a ring case. He opened the case and showed a beautiful diamond ring to her, the moonlight reflected off of the ring beautifully.

"Asuna Yuuki…..Will you marry me?" Kazuto asked. His eyes were sincere and caring.

Asuna gasped softly as she gazed at the diamond ring Kazuto possessed. "Yes, Yes! Of course, I will marry you!" she squealed. He then gently held her left hand and slid the ring onto her finger. It was a perfect fit. Asuna couldn't hold back the tears of joy as they flowed from her eyes down her cheeks.

"Kazuto, you are so sweet, handsome, future husband," Asuna said as she hugged her fiancé and planted a big kiss on the lips. Kazuto returned the passionate kiss, holding her close in a warming embrace in the cool August night. Asuna kept kissing, as tears of joy continued to flow from her eyes. It did not take long for Kazuto to follow suit. They had come all this way from the days of Sword Art Online, through the tough trials in the ALO incident and helping Asuna in recovering
from her experience with the creature Sugou, to Kazuto winning the Bullet of Bullets Tournament, finding Excalibur, restoring Asuna’s memories as well as the memories of their friends during the Ordinal Scale incident. Asuna returned the favor with her rescue and revival of Kazuto in the Underworld and fought back the Dark Territory and UN Forces alongside their friends, old and new. They even brought two of the Underworld's greatest knights, Eugeo and Alice into the real world via android bodies, for them to represent their people to the powers that be.

After what seemed like an eternity, they parted lips and exchanged heated gazes into each others' eyes. Not a word was said as they spent a moment of silence together. The world around them seemed to disappear, leaving them alone with one another.

"We'll plan our wedding," Asuna declared.

"It'll take place sometime after we graduate from SAO survivor school," Kazuto said as he held her hands, "we've got plenty of time for that."

Asuna smiled. "Good idea, and you'll be carrying me like the valiant knight that you are. You'll have to build up your strength, though."

"I will take care of the exercise," Kazuto chuckled.

"I'll be looking forward to it," Asuna giggled. The two lovers exchanged heated glanced towards one another. Asuna rested her head on her fiancé's chest.

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**September 9th, 2028: Two years later…**

The wedding of Kazuto Kirigaya and Asuna Yuuki is located at the Mitchell Residence. Alex's home was the perfect location as it has a bigger field as well as a great view of the ocean.

Kazuto was nervous at first since this is his real wedding and really who could blame him?

Kazuto took a deep breath and thought to himself. 'Ok, Kazuto you got this. This is what you wanted to have and you're marrying the girl of your dreams.'

It was then, Alex Mitchell came in to check up on the Groom. Alex is Kazuto's best man while Scott Mason, Timothy Hudson, Shigeru Hirose, and Alex's cousin, Randy Mitchell are the groomsmen. On Asuna's side, his sister Suguha Kirigaya is her Maid of Honor while Rika Shinozaki, Keiko Ayano, Shino Asada, and Yuuki Konno are the Bridesmaids.

He notices Kazuto sweating. "Hey Kazuto, feeling nervous?" He asked.

"Yes," Kazuto said to Alex

"Don't worry about it," Alex reassured his friend. "After all, it is your big day."

"True," Kazuto said.

"Not to mention you'll gonna be with Asuna forever." Alex smiles.

"Yeah as a married couple," Kazuto said as he wipes his sweat.
"Also, Yui gets to be here." Alex chimed. He and Kazuto manage to create a hologram projectile camera that’ll emit a hologram of Yui that'll have her in the real world as a flower girl for her parents' wedding.

"That will be really cute." Kazuto said "I'm excited"

"Same here." He replied back. Kazuto smiles

Meanwhile, Asuna gazes herself in the full body mirror. The wedding dress she has gotten glowed beautifully on the Yuuki girl. Asuna smiles and happy tears begin to form in her eyes.

"Hey, Asuna." Suguha chimed as she checks on the bride.

"Hey, Sugu." Asuna said, "I'm so excited and nervous."

Suguha nodded in agreement and said. "It's OK, Asuna. It is your big day after all."

"True and I can't wait!" Said Asuna, she and Kazuto had planned this wedding for two years. Everything's gone perfect for her and her soon-to-be Husband. Also on the day after the wedding and reception, they leave for America as she and Kazuto received job offers for technology at one of the universities near New York City. They were called Mechatronics, a technological organization developed between the United States and Japan to ensure a better future for the world. In Kazuto's case, he and Asuna hoped to develop a way to bring Yui into the real world.

"I'm ready for this!" said Asuna as she grabs the bouquet of flowers. Sugu smiles as she watches her brother's future wife and picks up her bouquet of flowers. Asuna begins to walk down the aisle ready.

The wedding ceremony begins, Kazuto waits at the altar as he went out with his aunt. The pastor at the altar was Nicholas Barnes, a pastor that has a chapel within the naval base. Then came out Randy with Yuuki as they headed down the aisle, after them Shigeru and Shino, then Timothy and Keiko, Scott and Rika, and finally, Alex and Suguha. Alex smiles as the spot where the altar sat on, is the same spot he and Suguha shared their first kiss three years ago, and it was also the same spot Tim and Keiko shared their first kiss as well. It was Alex who suggested having the altar be there as it has a special meaning.

Asuna smiles as she walks down the aisle. As she does so, everyone turned to see the bride, all beautiful in her white wedding dress and the music begins to play for her. Yui appeared in her hologram form and begins tossing virtual flowers as she continues down the aisle.

Kazuto blushes and thinks 'Wow she's so beautiful.' Asuna, on the other hand, was holding back her tears as she heads down the aisle.

Kazuto smiles as she approached him at the altar. Asuna stands with her soon to be husband and smiles at him.

It was then the pastor began. "We have gathered here today to witness the celebration of the holy matrimony between Kazuto Kirigaya and Asuna Yuuki.” The two looked into each other as this was said. Her eyes shined beautifully from the sunlight. Kazuto holds her hands.

“Also, I’ve been notified that they would be reading their own vows to each other.” Pastor Barnes says.

“Alright, My vow to you Kazuto is I will protect and be by your side till death do us part.” Asuna said to her Fiancé. “And I will give you comfort and love as you do the same for me since the
Kazuto smiles “The same thing as you Asuna.” He said to his soon to be wife. “I’ll fight for you and for our love, whenever through the thick and thin. We’ll triumph in the end.” He continues. Asuna smiles and looks into his eyes.

“Now if you may take the rings,” Barnes speaks. It was Alex’s cue and he hands Kazuto the rings. He takes his ring and gives it to Asuna for her to place on his finger as he takes the one for Asuna. “Do you, Kazuto Kirigaya, take Asuna Yuuki to be your lawful wedded wife until death do you apart?” Pastor Barnes asks.

Kazuto smiles “I do.” He said as he then slides the ring on her finger.

Barnes then turns to Asuna and asks. “Do you, Asuna Yuuki, take Kazuto as your lawful wedded husband until death do you apart?”

Asuna smiles with happy tears in her eyes “I do.” Then she slides the ring on his finger.

“By the power invested in me, the government of Japan and the United States Navy, I now pronounce you husband and wife.” Barnes smiles. “You may now kiss the bride.” Kazuto lifts the veil and kisses Asuna’s lips very passionately. She returns the kiss, tears of joy flowed from her eyes and down her cheek. The audience from both sides of the family as well as guests cheered for the newlyweds. Kazuto then carries her bridal style as the photographers took great shots of them. Everyone gathered around as the wedding reception begins.

“And the speech from the best man, Alexander Mitchell.” The DJ speaks, everyone turns their attention towards the American boy who stands up and begins to speak.

“Kazuto and I have met a few years back during the infamous death game known as ‘Sword Art Online’. He’d saved my hind more than once, which I owed him my life.” He smiles before continuing. “Even in the darkest moments in ALO, we looked out for each other and rescue the ones we love. It doesn’t matter what race, gender or nationality we both came from. But friendship is a strong bond to have amongst us and it gets through the darkest time.” Kazuto smiles.

“And now, he’s got the love of his life and they’ll be living a Happily Ever After.” Alex finishes. The crowd cheers as he sits back down.

Kazuto says to Alex “That was beautiful bud.”

“Thanks.” Alex smiled. With that, the reception began. Kazuto smiles and is with his wife

“Hard to believe this day has come,” Scott whispers to Tim.

Tim replies "I know right? It's crazy."

“But at least they’re together at last,” Randy admitted. He glances over to Yuuki Konno and smiles.

“Hey Yuuki, Randy’s eyeing you.” Rika chuckles. Yuuki’s cheeks went pink and she smiled back to her boyfriend. Over two years in the relationship and he’s proven to be a better man for her after helping her with her cure for AIDS. The two have been going on dates, both online and in the real world. Eventually, they decided to explore each other in their relationship; they made love while in ALO and later made love in the real world.

‘After this shall we make love again?’ Yuuki thought to herself and blushes and hides it.
“I could tell you’re thinking of making love with him again,” Rika whispered in Yuuki’s ear.

Yuuki whispered back blushing "Yes, any places that would do?"

Rika smirked at the Absolute Sword. “You could try the beaches.” She softly giggled. Keiko blushes as she overhears their conversation. She and Tim were the last ones who made love in both the ALO world and in Real Life. They’ve been dating for two years and so far, the relationship has gone great for her and her boyfriend before they sealed their love after giving away their virginities to each other.

After they finished their meal, it was time for the newlyweds’ first dance together. Kazuto and Asuna headed out to the dance floor together. As they begin, the song for them begins to play. They both smile as they recognized the song. “At the Beginning’ by Donna Lewis & Richard Marx. They recalled their friend Alex suggested this song as it reminded him the two of them of how they first met. He was right, it did remind them of themselves back in SAO. From the first time, they met, to share a snack of creamed bread to meeting with the first floor boss. Then they grew together that they marry in the game as well as adopting Yui as their daughter. Then after the game was cleared and Asuna was captured by the creature, he goes into the ALO world and rescues her and their tearful reunion in the hospital. They’ve remembered every single moment

Knew there was somebody somewhere

Like me, alone in the dark

Now I know my dream will live on

I've been waiting so long

Nothing's gonna tear us apart

And life is a road and I want to keep going

Love is a river I want to keep flowing

Life is a road, now and forever

Wonderful journey

I'll be there when the world stops turning

I'll be there when the storm is through

In the end, I want to be standing at the beginning with you

As the song continues, Kazuto and Asuna continued to gaze lovely in each other. After everything they’ve gone through, they were here, starting anew with each other. Even though they’ve made love way back in SAO, ALO and in the real world in the past, they can make love as a married couple.

Life is a road, and I want to keep going

Love is a river I want to keep going on

Starting out on a journey
Life is a road and I want to keep going

Love is a river I want to keep flowing

In the end, I want to be standing at the beginning (beginning)...

With you...

Mmm.

Asuna holds her husband hands and kisses his lips, there was applause. Then it was for the bride to dance with her father. Asuna’s father, Shouzou steps up and dances with her daughter.

“I’m very proud of you Asuna,” Shouzou says softly

“Thanks, Father,” said Asuna.

“And Kazuto has proved himself a better man for you for the past three years.” He continued. Despite the fact that his ex-wife Kyouko disapproved Kazuto due to his gaming and social background as well as living with the guilt of not being able to support her in the past long before SAO, he still has hopes for the Kirigaya man. Asuna smiles at her father.

“It’s also gonna be the best future for both our families,” Shouzou whispered to his daughter’s ear.

“Indeed it will.” Asuna replied. To take his mind off of his failure to prevent his ex-wife’s own fate, he starts to think about the very first day his daughter Asuna was born in the world as well as the times he watched her grow up into a beautiful and intelligent woman she is now.

Then the song ends. The father and his daughter step off from the dance floor, it was time for the groom to dance with his aunt Midori. As they danced, Suguha watched from the table.

Kazuto holds his aunt's hands.

“Suguha and I are very proud of you Kazuto.” Midori smiled.

"Thanks, Aunt Midori," said Kazuto and dances with her.

“If only your parents were alive today….?” Midori said softly in a sad tone. Kazuto knew what she meant. But she then smiled. “But I’m sure they’re proud of you from where they are.” She reassures her nephew. Kazuto smiles and hugs his Aunt. Suguha smiles from the table. She had faith that he’d pull through while trapped in SAO. And even though she had a crush on him, she helped him, along with Alex, into saving Asuna from ALO and they happily reunited in the hospital. But of course, she moved on when she met Alex who was Lexar during the ALO incident and they grew together after that.

Their love for each other grew stronger every single day as Kirito’s and Asuna’s love have.

As Kazuto continues to dance with his aunt, Alex stood next to Suguha. “It’s indeed a great moment,” Alex whispered in Sugu’s ear.

“Yes, it is…” Suguha replied as she gives him a kiss on the cheek.

“Soon, we could have the dance floor with them.” Alex smiles. Suguha smiles with him.
After they finished their dance, the groomsmen, the bridesmaids as well as Alex and Suguha headed to the dance floor. Sugu takes his hand; they dance together along with Scott and Rika, Tim and Keiko, Randy and Yuuki and Shigeru and Shino. Yuuki holds her loves hands.

“You’re so beautiful Yuuki,” Randy whispers to his girlfriend.

Yuuki blushes hard “You are so handsome.”

“Hard to believe our relationship has come all this way,” Randy admitted.

“Indeed..” Yuuki replied. “You’re the best boyfriend I ever have in my life and my knight.”

“And you’re the universe to me and my daring swordswoman.” He chuckled.

Yuuki smiles and they both shared a lovely passionate kiss. They’ve remembered the times where they’ve gone on adventures on both the ALO world and the real world. Including exploring Japan’s beautiful countryside, one for their beautiful scenery, the other for spots where they made love.

Keiko, on the other hand, begins to dance with her boyfriend. The two gazed each other in the eyes lovely.

“Beautiful in a dress, as always,” Tim said, referring to Keiko’s dress which causes her cheeks to turn pink.

"Stop it you're making me blush." She giggled.

"Is true.” Tim smiled as they touch foreheads with each other. He pets her pigtails with his fingers, causing her to blush even more.

“Hard to believe it’s been two years,” Keiko admitted.

“I know,” Tim replied. “Where did all the time go?” He joked.

Keiko giggles before saying “I know, we have a lot of fun together Timmy..” Tim blushes and smiles whenever Keiko uses his pet name for him. He gives her a kiss on her forehead.

“You missed.” She giggled before leaning up on her tip-toes and kissing him on the lips.

Rika and Scott shared a dance together.

“You’re a very great dancer,” Rika said to her. Scott smiles.

“Thank you and so are you.” He replied back.

“Practice makes perfect.” She beamed happily. “My chunky pie.” She giggles before giving him a kiss.

“Indeed it has..” Scott replied back. “But the only difference is we practice in the ALO world.” Rika chuckles as her cheeks went pink.

“You’re so cute when you get flustered by my words…” Scott said before leaning into her ear and whispering. “Not to mention my touches.” This causes her cheeks to flush.

“Not here silly…” Rika giggled softly.

“We could do it tomorrow if you want..” Scott then suggested. Rika thought about it, they’ve made
love in the real world a few times whenever her parents are away as well as his place. But they’ve done it several times on ALO for caution before bringing it into the real world where the senses, tastes, and pleasures are stronger, the only downside is the initial pain, but they managed it over time.

“It’ll be an honor…” Rika smiles.

“Thank you, my love….” Scott then gives Rika another kiss.

Shigeru and Shino share a dance of their own as they watched the Husband and Wife dance together.

“Knew they get married,” Shigeru admitted.

“Indeed Shigeru,” Shino replied. “But at least Kazuto is gonna be with his woman forever.”

“My Spikey..” Shino giggled.

“My kitty…” Shigeru remarked softly. Shino lets out a small mew into his ear, causing him to fluster. He always loved the cat noises his girlfriend has made and he’ll never get tired of it.

“My handsome knight and noobie,” Shino smirked while sticking his tongue out at him. Shigeru rubs her ears with his fingers, causing her to fluster.

“Meow…” She teased him softly with her cat noises. “I want some petting Spikey..”

“Perhaps we could hang out at your place and log on there?” Shigeru suggested.

“You read my mind.” She smiled. Before giving him a peck on the cheek and mewed.

“My Sinon…” Shigeru said dreamily.

“My Spiky…” Shino replied in the same matter.

Klein sat at one of the tables with Eugeo and Alice.

“So….How you like it here so far?” Klein asked the android couple. It was strange for the couple who lived in the Underworld coming into the real world in android bodies. But they’ve managed to make a living in Tokyo, not to mention their arrival to the world was broadcasted to news channels and websites in various countries. However, it did make some controversies, but none serious as from Vatican City on the UN side. Pope Francis made an outrageous claim, saying that if it’s not made by God, it’s an abomination to man. The news media from the Coalition called his claims hypocritical as the Pope shows his support for Islam as well as his defense for Sugou Nobuyuki while denying his inhuman experiments on 400 human beings back in 2025.

“It’s like coming out of a dream.” Alice chimes.

“Indeed. Although it’s a little weird exploring this world in these bodies.” Eugeo mentions. “But we did manage though.”

“That’s good to hear.” Klein smiled. “But I’m positive that you’ll be getting new bodies sometime in the future.”

“How could you be certain that it would be possible?” the female android asked.

“With Kirito’s genius on technology, not to mention Mechatronics having a job in the States, you’ll be out of those android bodies before you know it,” Klein reassured the couple with smiles.
“Speaking of which, find the girl of your destiny?” Eugeo asked. The two have heard of Klein’s attempts to pick up women from Kirito’s stories, and so far, he wasn’t even successful….Even in ALO.

“I have….” Klein said proudly.

“Did you even ask her out?” Alice then remarked. Klein sweated before saying “Not yet….But I will soon. Plus, I’ll be able to show her what a badass samurai I am.” He smiled. The two android couple just rolled their eyes.

“Hey, I’m sure she’s the girl of my dreams and soon we’ll be a couple,” Klein said with determination in his voice.

“Hope it goes great for you two,” Eugeo said with reassurance. After Klein gets up and leaves to get seconds, leaving only Eugeo and Alice alone together.

“It’s still a lot strange being in these bodies,” Alice admitted to her boyfriend.

“Same here,” Eugeo replied. Despite being androids, they’ve maintained their bodies and gotten the hang of them in the past two years. “But I believe that Kazuto’s research in Mechatronics and his intelligence, we’ll be able to get new bodies.” He held Alice’s hand. “I do miss the feel of your touch.” Alice sighs.

“I miss your touch too….” Eugeo replied. “But the wait will be worth it as the feeling will be pleasurable.” He reassures his girlfriend. The upside of being androids is they’ll be able to dive into the ALO world without the use of the AmuSpheres and meet their friends there.

“I sure hope so….” Alice giggles. “Because I’m just dying to explore each other’s new bodies here like we have while in Full Dive.” Eugeo flustered from the thought. It was then the female android leans towards him and gives him a peck on the cheek.

“This is for good luck.” Alice smiled. The two moved closer to each other and placed their arms around each other, just cuddling in each other’s embrace.

The reception continued, the best man Alex danced off with the groom to everyone’s surprise.

“Who knew he could dance like that.” Suguha said in astonishment.

“Didn’t he say he’s from Oklahoma?” Rika asked as she recalls him moving to Japan from the US state of Oklahoma.

“I believe so,” Keiko mentioned. “Same with Timmy.”

“And Scott and Randy.” Rika then added. “They sure know how to dance,” She then giggled.

“No kidding.” Yuuki smiled. Afterward, it was time for Asuna to toss the bouquet of flowers to the bridesmaids. She tosses it in the air and Rika catches it.

“Yay.” Rika cheered, much to the other girl’s disappointment.

It was then Kazuto to remove the wedding garter from Asuna’s stocking. His newly wife giggled as she sits down on the chair and raised her leg up for him to see the garter. Kazuto smiles as he recalls times where she has raised her leg for him on several occasions.

“Well….That garter isn’t gonna remove itself.” Asuna giggled. Kazuto snapped his mind back into
reality and he proceeded in slowly removing her wedding garter all the way down to her ankle.

“Good boy.” Asuna said cheerfully. Kazuto smiled as he stands up. The groomsmen and the best man gathered around as he prepares to sling the garter to the group. He makes the shot in a random direction, Alex catches it with ease.

“My my looks like Suguha may be looking towards a wedding with him.” Rika teased, causing Suguha to blush. Afterward, everyone gathered and congratulated the newlyweds. Then two familiar faces came. It was Fuji Yamane and Yuki Tsutano.

“Hey, Kazuto. Congrats on marrying Asuna.” Yuki chimed happily.

“Thanks,” Kazuto replied while rubbing his nape sheepishly.

“Nothing to be embarrassed, it’s your day after all.” Yuki chuckled.

“It’s amazing that the two of you made it this far,” Fuji commented. “Then again, you have since SAO.”

“Indeed. He’s always my black swordsman.” Asuna giggled.

“Indeed he is,” Fuji replied.

“Bet he’ll do great in bed.” Yuki joked, causing the newlyweds to blush. Then they see Maxwell Lavoie approaching them.

“My congratulations for the two of you,” Maxwell says as he smiles. “And may the happiness between the two of you last a lifetime.”

“Thank you very much, Mr. Lavoie.” The two bowed towards him in gratitude.

“Looks like you two are having a happily ever after.” A voice is heard; they turned to see Robert Mitchell with David Mitchell.

“How does it feel now that you’re both husband and wife?” Robert smiled as he asks the question.

“It almost feels the same.” Asuna admitted. It was true; the only difference of it is that they’ve got married in the real world.

“But it takes time for it to settle in. Eventually, everything will be part of the routine.” Robert mentions with David nodding in agreement.

“Plus with the new job in America shows greater promise for your futures.” He adds.

“Indeed as well as the future of the world,” Kazuto says.

“Anyway, won’t be keeping you at bay. We’ll let you continue your reception and later your honeymoon Mr. & Mrs. Kirigaya.” He bows to them before leaving. Then a slow song begins to play and they just danced together slowly.

“I can’t wait to start our honeymoon together…My wifey..” Kazuto chuckles softly to her, causing Asuna’s face to fluster.

“Me neither, my hubby.” Asuna giggled. The two just danced alone together, even when everyone begins to leave for the night.
“We gotta go,” Rika said. “Scott’s offered me a ride home.”

“OK, Rika.” Asuna chimed.

“You have fun Mrs. Kirigaya.” Rika winked at her friend before Scott took her by the arm like a gentleman and leaves.

“Yeah, Shigeru and I are gonna leave too,” Shino added. “We’re gonna go on a quest together.”

“OK, you two have fun.” Kazuto waved goodbye.

“Shall we head off, my Sinon?” Shigeru grinned.

“Yeah…Let’s…” Shino chimed as they headed off. Slowly, most of the guests left, leaving only Alex, Suguha and a few family members of the Kirigayas and the Yuuki’s as well as the Mitchells.

“Guess we could head on home.” Asuna suggested to her new husband.

“Sure thing my love,” Kazuto replied. The two were notified that Yuki Tsutano was the driver for the newlyweds. The eye-patched, raven black haired veteran smiled as he escorted him to the limo and they headed off to the Yuuki manor for their lovemaking before leaving for America the next day. His driving was still rough, but not as much when they first met.

Yuki slammed on the brakes in front of the Yuuki manor.

“Here you are you two lovebirds.” Yuki chuckled. “Make sure you two take it slowly.”

“Don’t worry; we’ll make sure we take our time,” Kazuto said as they exited out of the limo. Yuki gives his farewell and leaves.

“Ready to make love as husband and wife?” Asuna asked with a smug look on her face.

“Sure thing Asuna Kirigaya,” Kazuto replied. He then sweeps her off her feet after they entered through the home. She giggles as he carries her upstairs to her bedroom where they’ll be making love.

September 10th, the next day:

Alex, Suguha and the others just returned from the Tokyo Airport to give their farewell to Kazuto and Asuna for their trip to America and they carried on their daily routines. Around 5:00 pm, Alex and Suguha are standing near the ledge near the Mitchell Residence. So far, they’ve cleaned up the leftover decorations from the wedding and reception. Now it’s only an empty field like before.

“Hard to believe we were all here last night,” Alex admitted to Suguha who was gazing at the ocean.

“Indeed.” Said Suguha, her eyes, and her black hair shined beautifully from the sunlight. Alex placed his hand in his pocket nervously.

‘OK Alex, if you’re looking for a chance, now is the time.’ He thought to himself. Fortunately, Suguha noticed his nervous state.
“Alex?” Suguha asked as he turns to her attention.

“Sorry…” Alex apologized. “It’s just that this spot means a lot.” This gets her attention; her eyebrow was raised in both surprise and curiosity.

“I mean, it was the spot where my family stood as the house was finished. Then, later on, it had led to best memories, including the first kisses.” Alex remarked. Suguha’s cheeks flushed pink as she remembers the first kiss they both shared three years ago after he asked her out. Then as time went by; Timothy and Keiko shared their first kiss on the same spot on New Year’s Eve on that same year. And now yesterday, the wedding and the reception was held in the same field.

“Yes, those are the best memories.” Sugu smiled on. He turned to her, they gazed into each other’s eyes in a heated gaze with their hair blowing in the wind.

“Our relationship has stood against the tests of time and patience and we’ve managed to proven true to each other,” Alex confesses. “There are times where we spend out tender moments together.”

Both their cheeks flushed as the recalled their times where they cuddled and made out with each other, eventually, they begin making love with each other.

“Even before we became aware of each other identities, we still had each other’s backs in the darkest times as well as trusted each other.” Alex continued. “As well as trusting each other with our secrets.”

Suguha nods in agreement, she recalled confessing her secret that she once had a crush on Kazuto for a while. She also struggled when her brother was trapped in the SAO death game and during the ALO incident; she tried her best to get over him. Despite Kazuto learning the shocking truth and Suguha’s devastation, she still helped him rescue Asuna and respected his life’s future with her. It was also awkward for her to tell Alex this embarrassing secret of hers, but despite it, he still loves her no matter what.

“And I always thought about if there would be someone that would cherish my love as I do the same for him. Then you came along and everything changed since then.” Suguha confided. “Ever since, I wanted to spend the rest of my life with a person like you and you alone.” Alex chuckles and hugs her.

“And I want to be the man who is willing to do everything to make you happy and to spend the rest of your life with,” Alex concluded.

‘It’s now or never.’ He thought to himself. It was then that Alex kneeled down before her, he reached his hand into his pocket and pulled out a small box. He opens the box, revealing a beautiful diamond ring in it.

“Suguha Kirigaya…will you marry me?” Alex asks her.

Suguha begins to shed tears of joy as she gazed down at the diamond ring. “Yes, of course, I will marry you!” She squealed happily and glomps him in a tight hug, knocking him off his feet and they both land on the ground. Fortunately, he had a really good grip on the ring when the black-haired girl caught him in a tackle-hug.

After she released him for the hug, Alex held her left hand gently and slides the ring onto her finger perfectly. Suguha smiles and the two leaned in until their lips met in a slow and sweet, passionate kiss. They both moaned as it deepens and their tongues made contact with one another. Suguha rubs her lover’s back as they kiss, Alex runs his hands down her hips and held her closer. He feels her chest pressing against his own. They break the kiss, leaving saliva between them and their faces rosy
“I love you Suguha,” Alex said to his fiancée.

Suguha said, “I love you too Alex.”

“We’ll be planning our wedding.” Alex smiled. “Mind if we make it a themed-wedding?” Suguha thought about it for a minute. It could be nice if they do a themed wedding.

Suguha smiles “I like a themed wedding.”

“We should be able to come up with a theme for our wedding.” Alex smiled.

“True.” Suguha giggled

“How about the ‘Lord of the Rings’ theme?” He suggested. “It’s one of my favorite movie series.”

“I love that choice,” said Suguha as she ruffles his hair.

“I can be your Aragorn if you can be my Arwen.” He chuckled, causing Suguha to giggle.

“Yes, I can be your Arwen, my sexy, future husband.” She hugs him and feels his chest while he rubs her back and brushed against her rear. It earned his ears a cute squeak and giggle, following the kiss on his neck. Unbeknownst to them, Alex’s family watches their tender moment from the sliding glass door with smiles on their faces.

“I guess this means we’ve got another wedding coming up,” Jonathan smirked to see his little brother proposing to her.

“Indeed we are.” Marie Mitchell replied, her face is rather dreamy looking. “Our little Alex has grown up.”

“Indeed he has Marie,” David added.

“Pity that he didn’t propose months earlier,” Jonathan said. “Then we would’ve had a double-wedding ceremony.”

“I doubt it’ll work,” David said with an annoyed look on his face. “But at least he took his time with her.” The family continued to watch as the young Mitchell child continues to hold the feminine Kirigaya in a warming embrace. Suguha gives her fiancé a neck nibble, causing him to shudder.

September 12th, 2028

Tokyo, Japan

A company car drives towards the security post of the Fuchu prison entrance. One of the security guards looks at the driver and asked him for some identification and reason for the visit. The back window rolls down and the face of Samuel Norton is shown. Norton is the head of the ‘Ghost Op’ faction of the Coalition of Allied Nations, responsible for the special operations for the Coalition ranging from raiding compounds to sabotage behind enemy lines that include the renegade United Nations peacekeepers and the growing-United Hegemony Alliance.
“We’re here on a visit to one of the prisoners here,” Norton explains and tells him the name of the prisoner.

“OK, you’re clear.” The guard said as he raises the bar and the car enters through. Very shortly, the car finds a parking spot in the ‘visitors’ section and Norton steps out of the car. He, along with two personal bodyguards headed through the parking lot and towards the entrance of the prison’s visitor center.

He takes a very deep breath as he approached one of the front desk clerks. “I’m here for the visit of prisoner 1701,” Norton says.

The front desk clerk replied, “Sure thing we’ll get the prisoner ready.”

“Thank you.” Norton bowed to her in gratitude as he turns to sit in one of the chairs. After a few minutes passed, the clerk said. “Prisoner 1701 is ready sir.”

“Thank you,” Norton said as he and the two bodyguards followed the two security guards down the hallway and into one of the rooms where interviews and interrogations of prisoners take place. Norton pulls up the chair and sits in it with the two bodyguards and security guards in the same room. They both stand guard in case if anything goes horribly wrong. Then the door on the other side opens and another group of security guards appeared, escorting ‘Prisoner 1701’ with them, Kyouko Yuuki. The guards showed no emotion on their faces as they ordered her to sit down in the chair on the opposite of the table, who obeys and sits.

“Kyouko Yuuki,” Norton says as the light shows her face. “I see that prison life has treated you fair.” He then added, with a bit of sarcasm in his voice.

Kyouko, on the other hand, was angry. “You did this! Ruined my life thanks to Kazuto.”

“On the contrary, you did that on your own,” Norton said in a calm and cool tone. He figured that the woman would express anger towards him. However, he remained his grounds towards the former mother of Asuna.

“What’s that time you got any visitors?” Norton then asked. She glared at him with her dark eyes. A look like that would’ve caused every man to freeze in terror, but for several, it only spurred them on. “I could tell that you’ve received none….Not even your own family has bothered to visit you, not even once.”

“True I never did so you’re the first one.” She said.

“Indeed. And you’re probably wondering why?” He continued. She remained silent, aware of his knowledge.

“It’s because of what you’ve done.” He finishes. “They hated you and want nothing to do with you after what you tried to do to Asuna as well as keeping her separate from Kazuto.” She remained silent.

“And here you are, still expressing hatred towards him only because you judged him from his gaming background as well as his social background.” He continued. “It’s no wonder why many people hated the upper class because people like you think the ‘commoners’ should perish just because they don’t live the lives as you do.” Kyouko becomes angrier as he slammed her kind.

He moves closer as he continued. “You know what I think? I think you hated Kazuto because he
crashed the marriage you were planning for that rapist Sugou. Anyone who is willing to sell her own daughter into slavery just for their career cares only for themselves.”

It was then that Kyouko became furious. “I wanted my family to move up into the world and be accepted by the best of society that could offer my children until your country and that no-good commoner brat wooed my daughter in some stupid game!” She said angrily. Norton just sighs.

“You and your country think you can run around like you own the world!” She continued.
“Especially after what you did in the past!”

“Still ranting about the past.” Norton sighed. “What has happened to you fifteen years ago was unfortunate. But it’s all in the past.”

“For you, but for me, I’ve lost a dear friend to me.” Kyouko continued, sadness was displayed in her voice. But it soon replaced into anger. “All thanks to you.”

“You can still blame me all you want,” Norton said as he reaches in his briefcase. “But it won’t get you out of prison.” She remained silent, but she still makes her angry glare at him. He pulls out a photograph and places it on the table. Kyouko picks it up and sees it’s a wedding photo of Kazuto and Asuna.

“You see how happy she is?” Norton then asked. “After what she went through, you still wanted to take away your happiness for your plans for her?” Her hands clutched the photo in rage; the image of her daughter being wooed by a nobody commoner is enough to make her blood boil.

“But I see that you still won’t accept her happiness,” Norton said as he sits back up. “I’m sure that the photo will keep you company since you’re still gonna be here for a long time. So consider this visit the first and last.” He takes his briefcase and walks away with his bodyguards. She looks at the photo as Norton leaves the room and after the security guards escorted her back to her cell. The photo of it continues to boil her blood. She was her daughter, but now she’s officially dead to her like she’s dead to Asuna. She takes the photograph and is prepared to tear it into shreds.

But….She hesitated. At that very moment, she found herself unable to bring herself to tear the photo that contains her daughter with her husband. Sure she’s married a commoner, but…..She’s her own flesh and blood. Perhaps it may be her kind spirit, trying to win its way out after years of emotional neglect even before the death of her friend Kikyo that occurred after the Second American Revolution began. Sometime after that, she buried herself with work when she found a job as well as take care of the family while Shouzou, worked for the RECT company.

Unable to look at the photo nor could she bring herself in tearing it apart, she sets the photo facing down and just sat in the cot. She placed her face in between her knees as she pressed her back against the wall. A small tear flowed down from her eyes and down her face.

“Am I really a horrible mother?” She mumbled to herself, there were no noises after that, just the silence that filled the cell once again.

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**Log House, New Aincrad:**

A year has passed since Kazuto and Asuna got married and moved to America for work, Kirito and Asuna logged in their Log House in New Aincrad.
Kirito stretches “So good to be in love.”

“Indeed it is,” Asuna added. She then giggles when Kirito plays with her beautiful blue hair.

“So soft and smooth,” Kirito commented on her hair as he nuzzles into her back and inhaling her hair’s scent. “But nothing is compared with your chestnut-colored hair.”

“Thanks, my hubby.” Asuna giggled.


“The others should be here by now.” Asuna pondered from the absence of the other players.

“Don’t worry, they’ll come,” Kirito reassured her. Just after he said it, lights begin to appear, signaling that the others are logging in ALO. Lexar and Leafa are the first two to appear.

“Kirito!” Lexar chimed to see his two friends. The two spriggans bumped fists. “How’s married life treating you?” He asked.

“Doing great.” Kirito answers. “And it’s great to be with her.” Asuna beamed with happiness from her husband’s compliment. Then more lights shone as more players entered. Scott and Lisbeth, Tim and Silica, Randy and Yuuki, Spike and Sinon and finally Klein and Agil.

Amongst them is Eiji Nochizawa aka Nautilus, he was once an associate to Professor Tetsuhiro Shigemura’s scheme of robbing memories of SAO survivors during the “Ordinal Scale” incident in hopes of reviving Yuuna, his former girlfriend. However, in the end, he was betrayed by the Professor when he ordered the SAO bosses to attack him in order to rob his memories. But Kirito and the others managed to defeat him and restored everyone’s memories and Eiji turned himself into the police. He was released on May 8th without indictment due to none of the Fuurinkazan members pressing charges against him. Later on, he ran into Kazuto and with his help, they managed to fully repair Yuna via copies from the data. Eiji became a part of Kirito’s ALO guild since then as well as taking his avatar a Gnome race along with Yuna who took the Sylph race.

“Well isn’t it the lovely married couple.” Agil chuckled.

“Not to mention spoiling Asuna rotten.” Klein joked, earning a blush from the married couple.

“Oh, Klein.” The Salamander American rolled his eyes. His pink-haired Leprechaun girlfriend giggled.

“So how’s America treating you?” Lisbeth asked. It was a full year since Kazuto and Asuna left for the US for a job at mechatronics.

“We managed to make it home there,” Kirito answered. “Good thing we’ve learned about America’s cultures and its laws.”

“Good thing you’re doing great,” Leafa said.

“By the way, how are you and Lexar,” Asuna asked. She, Kirito and the others are excited that Lexar and Leafa have become engaged in the real world and are in the process of their wedding.

“So far, we’ve almost gotten everyone ready.” Lexar beamed happily. Leafa smiled as she’ll be his wife. Kirito smiles for his future-brother-in-law. Leafa pecks Lexar on his cheek. Silica and Tim watched their friends enjoying their conversation with each other.
“So….Any plans for next weekend Silica?” Tim asked her. Silica is taken by surprise but she smiles.

“Oh…well I’m not sure, but I’ll find out.” Silica answers.

“That time at one of the forests was amazing.” Tim blushes. Silica blushes as well as their memories of their trips together in the Virtual and the Real World where they had their sweet moments together as well as the lovemaking they’ve done.

“Yes, it was.” Silica replied sheepishly. It was then Silica leans up to one of his ears and whispers.

“And you’re still amazing Timmy.” She giggles. Tim blushes as she calls him by his pet name. It was then Lisbeth noticed the young couple.

“Tim’s looking a little flustered, doesn’t he Scott?” She whispered to Scott who noticed his flushing cheeks. She could tell that the two did have their moment in the real world; she used to have that with Scott.

“He kinda does,” Scott admitted.

“I think they really did it again.” Lisbeth deduced. “I guess those two aren’t so innocent anymore.”

“Apparently so,” Scott added with a smirk. Lisbeth giggled. They’re glad that Silica and Tim have taken a step towards in their relationship and gotten out of their shy shells. Around Keiko’s 18th birthday, she developed a growth spurt which has made her height reached between Asuna’s, Rika’s and Yuuki’s. She also sports long hair that reaches halfway her lower back close to Asuna’s hair length. She no longer has a small chest as her breasts are B-cup size. Tim also had a growth spurt around his birthday as he grew taller, roughly around the rest of his male companions as well as receiving a toned body. The latter enjoyed Keiko’s new appearance, but she’ll always be the sweet small girl he knew in his heart. Keiko likewise had the same thought as well.

Both Scott and Lis so need to hear some details on it as they haven’t mentioned it to them yet, Nautilus and Yuna smiled on the happy couple, one day with Kirito’s help, Yuna will come into the real world and they’ll spend their happy lives together just like the rest.

Then Yui appeared and hugs her parents.

“Mommy! Daddy!” Yui chimed. Kirito and Asuna hug their daughter. Then Yui sees her aunt and uncle.

“Auntie Leafa! Uncle Alex!” Yui exclaimed happily as she hugs them. Lexar ruffles Yui’s hair, she giggles in response.

“Am I gonna be in your wedding?” Yui asks.

“Of course you are. It wouldn’t be the same without our flower girl.” Lexar smiled.

“Yay!” Yui cheered. Kirito and Asuna watched as their daughter continued hugging her aunt and uncle. Then two more lights showed and appeared before the players. It was Alice and Eugeo.

“Eugeo! Alice!” Kirito greeted his friends.

“How you two doing?” Asuna asks.

“We’ve been doing great,” Eugeo replied. Despite the couple being androids in the real world, they remained cheerful in the past five years.
“Although we long for having flesh.” Alice lamented.

“True, but at least you won’t be able to age. Right?” Scott remarked.

“Indeed, but we prefer to age with all our friends,” Alice admitted.

“Speaking of which,” Eugeo added. “How are the friends you’ve made in America?” He asked the couple.

“They’ve been great,” Kazuto said as he and Asuna explained that their new American friends were amazed by his knowledge as well as his fame in the past. They’re also been helpful on their project, although it did take almost a year on the project, but it showed very promising results and lamented that another year or so, they’ll be able to create a way to replace their full-dive technology which not only brings Yui into the real world but being able to emulate human flesh bodies for the couple.

“Hope it goes great.” Tim encouraged them.

“Sounds very complicated.” Silica added.

“Wish you two the best of luck.” Lisbeth cheered.

“Same here,” Yuuki added.

“Me too,” Sinon added as well, their respected boyfriends nodded in agreement.

“Thanks, everyone.” Asuna blushed. Kirito smiled while Yui walks up and hugs him.

“I know you and mommy can do it, Daddy,” Yui said as she hugs him. “We all believe in you.” Kirito kneels down and hugs his daughter; Asuna kneels down and does the same. Afterward, everyone started their own adventure on ALO as usual along with extending their guild with help from the Sleeping Knights. After the Yuuki-Randy miracle cured the others, the Sleeping Knights guild remained together and joined alliances with Kirito’s guild and managed to expand their influences and ranks in the past five years.

The quest lasted for a couple of hours as everyone from Kirito’s Guild and Yuuki’s Guild have arrived back at the Log House.

“That was fun.” Jun cheered as they entered through the doors.

“It sure was Jun,” Yuuki replied as she sat down in one of the chairs. “Whew. I’m beaten.”

“Didn’t think the Zekken would be so exhausted.” Randy teased as he sits down next to her. Yuuki playfully elbowed her boyfriend. “Says the one who ran from the beast.” She giggles.

“Yeah, talk about your ‘knight in shining armor’ fleeing from danger.” Spike laughed. This earned Randy an embarrassed fluster on his face. However, the Imp girl gives her Salamander boyfriend a comforting hug.

“It’s OK, at least you did your best.” Yuuki comforted her while nuzzling against his shoulder. Randy smiles and hugs her in return.

“Thank you very much for the adventure Mr. and Mrs. Kirigaya.” Sieun bowed to the married couple.

“You’re very welcome.” Kirito and Asuna replied.
“It’s very good to see you two again,” Klein said while giving his Spriggan friend a noogie.

“Yeah, wouldn’t be the same without seeing you.” Kirito laughed as the two wrestled playfully.

“Don’t forget your future brother-in-law.” Lexar joined in, but Klein manages to get him in a headlock with Kirito while giving the two Spriggans noogies. Asuna, Leafa and the others watched in amusement.

“They kinda do this more often, huh?” Talken spoke up as Lexar manages to get the upper hand.

“They kinda do,” Sinon responded. She then squeaked in surprise, she turned to see Spike slightly tugging on her tail.

“Sorry, couldn’t help myself,” Spike admitted. “You’re so cute when your face flusters.”

“Meow…” Sinon teased him.

“My kitty,” Spike replied as he rubs her ears, who purr in response. Minutes went by and the wrestling stops. Everyone celebrated their quest via cookout. It was then Kirito stands up, everyone stops and listens on what he’s about to say.

“I’m glad to hold our celebration together here,” Kirito said as he begins. “We’re sorry that there were times where we didn’t have time to do so. But we have managed to come here whenever chance we get.”

“But I’m very proud to be here as well as to congratulate Lexar, who I fought alongside in SAO as well as ALO, who will soon be the husband of Leafa.” Leafa and Lexar smiled as Kirito mentions them in his speech.

“Not only they’ll share a long, happy life together, but it’ll bring the families closer no matter what their nationality is. Friendship and Families are indeed forever.” He finishes. Everyone cheers.

“Thank you very much Kirito. It means so much for me and Leafa.” Lexar thanked him.

Kirito then smiles and says “I hope for the future for you two will have a safe honeymoon.”

“I guarantee you it will. Not to mention special.” Lexar smiles at Leafa.

“Well…Better get going,” Klein stretched. “I and my parents are out to the countryside to visit my relatives. I should be back on the 15th.” It was amazing that he still managed to get an internet connection out there.

“Hope you have a good time,” Kirito said. “And have a safe trip back home.”

“Will do Kirito,” Klein said before he brings out his menu and hits the logout button.

“Later guys,” Klein said as he disappears in a flash of light.

“Better get going as well,” Sinon added. “I and Spike are spending the night together again.”

“Yep. Not to mention some petting to do.” Spike added. They both logged out. One by one, everyone logged out of ALO, leaving only Kirito, Asuna, Lexar, and Leafa.

“Seeya brother.” Leafa chimed as she hugs Kirito.

“We’ll see you two later,” Kirito added as Leafa and Lexar logs out.
“Night Mommy! Night Daddy!” Yui chimed as she hugs her parents again.

“Night Yui.” The married couple hugged their daughter again before she disappears in a flash of pixels.

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**Dehli, Delaware County, NY, USA. 8:25 pm:**

Kazuto and Asuna wake up in their home. It was one of the American-style bungalow homes they’ve been renting for a year now. It was just as cozy as the Yuuki manor back in Japan as well as closer to the State University of New York at Delhi where they worked at.

They both removed the AmuSpheres off of their heads and set them aside before rolling over until they met eye contact. They exchanged heated gazes towards each other. It’s been a full year since they got married and arrived in America and they’ve been having a good marriage. Working on the project on Mechatronics together has indeed shown great progress and promises for their hopes of bringing Yui into the real world. But they’ve been spending moments together ranging from touring the county they’re staying at to romantic steamy nights.

Their gazes lasted for what appears to be eternality when it was only minutes that passed.

“Asuna.” Kazuto breathed.

“Kazuto.” Asuna sighed. Their hands reached out and touched one another, intertwining their fingers together.

“I can’t wait for the day. You know?” Kazuto says.

“To bring our daughter into the real world and spend the rest of our lives together as a real family,” Asuna added.

“Also we could work to have another child of our own,” she smirked. Kazuto then said, “Well Yui would love to have a little sister or brother.”

“Indeed.” Asuna giggled. And without any delay, the married couple leans in and met in a passionate kiss. They held each other in a warming embrace as the kiss deepens, wrapping their arms around each other. The couple moaned as they rubbed their hands against each other. They break the kiss for some quick breaths before continuing their French-kissing.

“Aaaahhh….MMmmmmmm…” Asuna moaned as they got lost in one another. The make out was slow, yet intense as the couple continued on. Then before they knew, their steamy session has gone further and lasted for what appears to be hours in a sea of pleasure. The couple just laid on the bed, panting and cuddled with each other.

“I love you Kazuto.” Asuna panted while gazing up in his Onyx-colored eyes. Kazuto does the same as he gazes into her chestnut-colored eyes. Both of them as well as their hair and faces shined by the moonlight, framing every detail on them.

“I love you too Asuna,” Kazuto replied back tiredly.

“Guess we better head in.” Asuna yawned very cutely.
“Indeed, we got a big day for our new group of friends at the university,” Kazuto replied they both recalled that the students and employees are attending an event of mourning on the 9/11 attack the next day. They also recalled the time where they helped Alex in the tribute to the victims of that day as well as his grandfather who he’d never met. It was the least they could do for their friend and fellow SAO survivor.

Kazuto and Asuna have gotten into their undergarments, cuddled with each other and pulled the covers over both of them.

“Goodnight my hubby,” Asuna cooed as she snuggled into his chest.

“Goodnight my wifey,” Kazuto said in a soft tone. He kisses her on the forehead and she rested her head against his chest, breathing softly. Before long, she dozes off to slumberland. Kazuto strokes her beautiful long hair and very soon, he too falls asleep. The day ended peacefully, but little did they knew that the next day would change everything and the world they know will not be the same.
September 11th, 2029, 6:58 am:

The neighbor town of Dehli in Delaware County, New York is peaceful as the town starts of its day. Small business stores and restaurants ran, as usual, the traffic is busy, but not as much. The town continued to thrive as usual.

In one of the suburbs, the sun shines above the streets, trees, and houses. The sun shines in one of the house’s windows of the bedroom where Kazuto and Asuna Kirigaya are sleeping. The married couple continued to sleep in their beauty sleep, embracing each other the whole night. It was then the alarm went off at 7 and turned to one of the radio stations.

“Good Morning New York!” The radio host said. “It’s a beautiful day here in the old’ US of A. Weather shows promise of a clear and sunny day without any clouds in the sky. But it is also a day mourning as today is September 11th, the day of infamy for America twenty-eight years a.” Kazuto reached up for the clock radio.

“Mnmnmnmngg….” Kazuto groaned as his finger hits the snooze button and the radio broadcast shuts off. He then retracts his arm back and snuggles back to his wife. He smiles as his cheeks felt her soft chest and shoulder. She was still sleeping like an angel with her long chestnut-colored hair spread in certain areas on her back and shoulder. He leans into one of her strands of hair and inhales the sweet scent, sighing as he feels her soft hair against his cheek. Pretty soon, Asuna begins to groan and stir as she awakens, her eyes are groggy but they slowly opened up.

“Morning my Asuna.” Kazuto greeted her.

The young woman feels something warm pressed against her, she looked and sees her husband cuddled with her.

“Morning Kazuto.” Asuna greeted him. The morning light continues to shine from the window onto the couple. They just shared heated gazes towards one another; Asuna caresses his head, running her slim fingers through his black hair while the latter does the same, stroking her beautiful hair and feeling the soft and silky strands on his fingertips.

“My Black Swordsman.” Asuna giggled.

“My Lighting Flash.” Kazuto chuckled. The continued sharing heated glances to each other, their hands intertwined with each other. Then the two individuals shared a passionate kiss, moaning softly as their soft lips met before parting.

“Wish we could stay in all day,” Kazuto admitted.

“I know,” She sighed. “But we got a busy day today.” After that, the two lifted the covers off and gotten up from the bed. “I’ll get the bath ready.” Asuna cooed as she headed towards the bathroom, swaying her hips sideways as she walked. As the water from the tub is heard being turned on, Kazuto smiled as he gazes out the window, it was sunny and clear outside.
‘A beautiful day indeed.’ Kazuto thought to himself. ‘Nothing will derail this day.’

“Kazuto-kun..” Asuna’s honeyed-voice called out from the bathroom. Then he sees her head appear from behind the door, only her head and shoulders are seen. Her hair is messy from the bed but shines beautifully. She then extends her arm out, holding what appears to be her nightgown and drops it onto the floor.

“It’s ready..” She teased him with a wink in her eye before disappearing behind the door. Kazuto smiles as he notices the invitation and he heads towards the bathroom door.

‘A perfect day indeed.’ Kazuto thought happily and he closes the door behind him.

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**Downtown Manhattan, New York City, NY; 7:45 am:**

The traffic in the Big Apple is heavily busy as usual. Block after block, the streets are packed with various cars, vans, trucks (both pickup and semi), buses and even taxi cabs trying to get to one area of the city. Some of the citizens take the Subway trains and commuter railways to help them get around the city as well as Long Island.

On the Brooklyn Bridge, traffic flowed on the bridge, slow but steady. Within the traffic, two best friends are heading to work at the New York harbor located at the Port of New York and New Jersey. One driving is Charles Allen, the other is Mark Russell.

“Do we always have to take this way every morning?” Mark groaned in annoyance. “This is the crappiest route ever.”

“Well, there is an event going on today,” Charles explained. It didn’t take Mark to figure out he was referring to the 9/11 tribute.

“Very true Charlie,” Mark replied. “Not to mention it is New York City. It’s no surprise here.” Charles then saw a luxury car cut across from him that nearly caused an accident that ended up causing him to get a bit mad and angry that he made his thoughts well known.

“Damn Lexus! You don’t own the road Jackass!” He shouted. Then he turned to Mark and apologized. “Sorry Mark, I’ve always had bad luck with Lexus drivers.”

“No problem man.” He said. “It is New York.”

“Anyway…” Mark begins before asking. “Remember the guys from the ‘Warning against the Hegemony’ movement?”

“I remember…” Charles recalled the time Mark has dragged them into one of the meetings a few months ago. It was a group that formed ten years ago that leads rallies and speeches, warning America and the Coalition of Allied Nations of the growing threat of the United Hegemony Alliance. Despite their rallies, the Coalition has kept the Hegemony in check.

“Managed to talk to one of them at the pub last night,” Mark added.

“Well, what did he say?” Charles asked with a bit of concern.
“The usual, saying that the Hegemony is poised to attack us.” He answers. “What do you think?”

“I’m not sure…I mean they’ve been talking about it for a long time.” Charles admitted. “But I highly doubt the Hegemony wouldn’t try anything very rash. Plus I never believe in their conspiracy like you do.”

“What does that mean?” Mark said, sounding very defensive by his blunt statement. “Doesn’t the massive buildup of the Hegemony bother you?”

"If he was serious, we would've been hit already and besides as Admiral Yamamoto said supposedly if the Hegemony dares to attack us, then all they will do is to awaken a sleeping giant and fill it with a terrible resolve. The Japanese during World War 2 learned it the hard way along with Nazi Germany even though they were at war with Russia at the time.” Charles said calmly. “Besides, it’s all conspiracy to me anyway.” He added.

“Come on, one day we’re all gonna be waking up under one of the flags of the hegemony, and it wouldn’t be so conspiracy then,” Mark replied back.

“Sure, I’ll keep that in mind.” Charles rolled his eyes. "I do hope it'll be just that...” Charles thought to himself.

Several minutes have passed and they’ve made it through the traffic and arrived at the New York Harbor parking lot, they both checked in and started their work. The day seemed normal, but soon, it would all change......

Dehli suburbs, Delaware County, 7:50 am:

Kazuto and Asuna Kirigaya have finished their morning bath; she enjoys washing her hubby in her girly shampoo and body soap as it makes him silky and smelling sweet like her. Sometimes their colleagues tease him about it whenever they get close enough to smell the aroma. They both dried up and gotten dressed for the day and set up breakfast Asuna have fixed for the both of them.

“So…..We’re meeting our friends at the university. Am I right?” Asuna asked.

“Indeed, they’re getting together to pay their tribute to the 9/11 victims today,” Kazuto explains. The tribute is going to be held at the State University of New York at Delhi and of course, some of them are going to the WTC memorial in New York City themselves.

“At least they’re paying tribute to the fallen.” Asuna commented, they both recalled doing the same thing to their American friend Alex a few years ago who mourns for his grandfather that he’d never met in his life.

“Indeed,” Kazuto replied. “I’m sure Alex will be doing the same when daylight reaches Japan.”

“I’m sure he will.” She added.

Then Kazuto explains that afterward, they’ll continue their research on Mechatronics on the finishing touches on the experimental laser that allows the person who is created in the Virtual Reality world and bringing them into the real world.
“Hard to believe we’ve come so far on finishing it.” Asuna smiled; Kazuto smiles from the thought of being able to hold Yui into their arms in the real world at last.

“We’re getting close of bringing Yui into the real world.” He reassures her, her eyes are filled with hope and promise.

“I’m just so happy I cannot contain myself!” Asuna squealed with happiness. Kazuto chuckled from his wife’s cute reaction.

“I’m happy too.” He added. “Soon, we’ll take her to places she’s always wanted to go. Not just here in the US but back to Japan.”

“You mean…” Asuna trailed off.

“Yep, we’re gonna bring her to our home,” Kazuto concluded. The chestnut-haired woman got up and hugged her husband tightly. She breaks down and allows her happiness to flow down her cheeks as she squeezes him in her hug.

“I love you so much Kazuto…” Asuna said as her hug didn’t let up.

“I love you so much too Asuna…” Kazuto replied as he returned the hug and nuzzles into her neck. The couple continued to hold each other.

New York Harbor, NYC, 8:22 am:

The New York Harbor is one of the busiest, if not, the largest harbors in the world. They imported large shipments of cargo from various ships that bring them to their docks as well as carrying out America’s ‘Green Fuel’ solution which has helped the American economy to reach at its highest after being sold to various countries that replaced Fossil Fuel/Oil machinery. While many saw the Green Fuel as a boon including the group Green Peace and actor Leonardo DiCaprio, others saw it as a curse like the UIR or United Islamic Republics who saw it as a threat to their oil-based economy.

Commercial cargo isn’t the only thing that flowed through the harbor but sometimes tours are held for those who are out of town and they take ferry tours around the city to see the sights, including the Statue of Liberty, one of America’s symbols of the nation. A gift from France as a symbol of Friendship between America and France, it is also a symbol of America and a symbol of hope for Immigration during the turn of the 20th century. At the sight there is a poem “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus that goes like this:

_Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,_

_With conquering limbs astride from land to land;_

_Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand_

_A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame_

_Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name_
Charles Allen and Mark Russell went about their day as usual. Charles is one of the accountants, whose job is to overlook management and financial information for managers, investors, tax authorities and others that kept the harbor afloat. Mark works down at the docks loading and unloading cargo from the ships via forklift.

Charles’ office sits near the window that overlooks the dock as well as a few feet close to the communications room where he sometimes has to deliver messages to the manager.

As he enters into the communications room, one of the technicians notices several blimps on the radar.

“Attention unknown cargo ships;” He begins to speak. “This is the New York Harbor; please identify yourselves; over.”

There was no response.

“Attention, you are entering into American waters, identify yourselves immediately; over.”

Still no response.

Charles looks over his shoulder and contacts the authorities over the cargo ships that aren't responding, he’s getting a feeling that something isn't right with this at all.

"Someone get me the Port Authority. We got half a dozen cargo ships refusing to identify themselves.” Charles said over the phone.

“Copy that, we’ll arrive there ASAP, out.” The voice from the other side replied.

Charles, on the other hand, stares out the window and sees the ships getting closer as he then speaks to himself while reaching for his concealed pistol. "Perhaps, some conspiracy theories aren't crazy after all..."
Dock 18, 8:25 am:

Meanwhile, at the dock, Mark waits in his forklift for the next shipment as usual. He spots several more cargo ships approaching the docks. However, he noticed several security guards begin arriving at the scene.

"What is going on that we need security?" Mark asked himself. As one of the ships move closer to port, he sees several guards drew their assault rifles out.

“Whatever it is, it’s going to be big.” Mark gulped as he backs up his forklift by several feet. He waits as the tension seems to build up as what he doesn't realize is that a storm is about to break. The ship then docks at the port, the security guards aimed their assault rifles at one of the dock doors. Then one of them stood out and held a bullhorn up to his face and said, “You are illegally docking without identification. Remain where you are and prepare to be boarded!!”

Inside the ships, the crews have other plans.

“You are surrounded and we will board you. This is your last warning!” He shouted through the bullhorn. At this time, Mark is beginning to sweat. The group of security guards decided enough is enough and take action while Mark is watching the whole scene is unfolding before him. Then the doors begin to open slowly. At first nothing, but then within seconds, the peaceful world of New York Harbor shatters like glass as the insides of the ship lite up in flashes of light with loud popping noises like someone lite several rolls of firecrackers. The body frames of the cars are punctured with various holes, the glass of the windows and windshields shattered and the guards fell to the ground dead or dying with bleeding holes. Mark hears and sees the commotion going on. Then his face goes pale when he sees soldiers coming out of the ship. From the deck, he hears the sound of the helicopter blades spinning up; then he sees the Hind-D gunship hovering from the deck of the ship. From the looks of the gunship, it’s been upgraded with newer engines and weapons on it.

"Oh, Shi...." Mark gasped as he sees the gunship opening fire on the pack of cars, setting them ablaze and causing others to scatter across the docks. Not wasting time, Mark starts up his forklift and begins to drive away. “SHIT! SHIT! SHIT! SHIT! GOT TO GET AWAY!” Mark panicked in his mind. One of the patrol cars smashed into one of the containers as they were trying to escape, only for a missile to hit it, engulfing the car into a ball of fire. Mark reached his phone and shouted, "Charles! We're under attack!!"

Seconds later, he grabbed a radio from the Port Authority guards and radioed the same news quickly. Just then he sees one of the gunships aiming at his direction, indicating that he’s been targeted.

“SHIT!” Mark shouted as he jumps out of the forklift just as the gunship fires onto it, turning it into burning wreckage. Mark quickly got up and has to find Charles and get out of the dock.

Meanwhile, Charlie looked on as the chaos unfolds onto the dock. He quickly drew out his Beretta pistol out as he headed through the offices and outside.

"Looks like World War 3 just started!" Charles shouted as he raced to find Mark. Then he sees four T-90 tanks rolling out from one of the ships, the tanks themselves are modified with an improved 125 mm main gun, two M61 Vulcan cannons. One mounted on the turret and the other fixed forward.

"Crap, heavy metal and not the music type, but the war type..." Charles said bitterly. He had to avoid the tanks unless he wanted to get blown to smithereens. As he sneaks behind crate after crate, he sees one of the soldiers scouting out, probably to check for anyone hiding.

"Looks like I'm going to have to get my hands dirty if I want to live..." Charles said to himself. Then
he finds a pipe wrench next to one of the tool boxes and he picks it up. He raises it up and smashes it into the side of the soldier’s head, knocking him down. He brings it down again, smashing into his face, killing him in the process. "Now I need to find Mark and get the hell out of here!" Charles said to himself. Before he leaves he picks up the soldier’s AK-MX along with some ammunition; the rifle itself is an updated version of the AK-M which is the successor of the AK-47. Although new, it still uses the 7.62x39mm ammunition like its processor. Grabbing the gun and some ammo from the dead soldier, Charles heads out to find his friend and to defend his homeland however he can do.

Mark is having a tough time on his own; so far, he’s managed to keep himself from being killed and captured. However, he must find Charles in order to get out of the docks. He sees a group of news choppers in the distance, obviously broadcast the whole thing.

"Hope they don't get too close..." Mark said to himself. Then one of the military commanders’ steps out from the ship as the soldiers advanced further. He takes his binoculars out and spots the news choppers from the distance. He points at one of the choppers, ordering the choppers to be shot down. Then three IFVs came out along with the Mil Mi-24 Hind-D gunship, modified with new engines and weapons. Together, they took aim at one of the news choppers before opening fire on it. Then in an act of evil like that of the sinking of the RMS Lusitania from World War 1 and the Wilhelm Gustaf of World War 2, the News copters were shot down. Mark’s jaw gaped in horror as the News copters went down in flames.

“Damn!” Mark shouted. He was fortunate that the noises of war drowned out his shout. However, he realized that he’d soon be discovered and he had to make a hasty escape. It was then that he sees Charles. Upon seeing him, Mark makes his chance and starts running through the chaos. Charles raises his rifle up but sighs in relief to see it was Mark.

"Charles!" Mark shouted.

“Mark!” Charles yelled.

By the time they reunited, they both looked up and see large squadrons of military transport planes that resemble the 747 passenger jet planes dropping in paratroopers and military vehicles on various neighborhoods throughout the city.

"We need to let others know we're under attack!" Mark shouted.

"But first, we need to get out of here!" Charles shouted seconds later. “We gotta head to my brother’s place; he can help us and the city!” Mark then yelled.

"Right! Let's get to it!" Charles shouted. They begin to make their way through the dock; however, they stumbled across several soldiers.

"Oh, that's refreshing..." Mark said sarcastically. Then the soldiers turned to see them, one of them shouted in a different language as they raised their rifles at the two. But Charles was quick as he takes them down with the same rifle.

"Let's go now before more show up!" Charles shouted.

“Right!” Mark replied as the two took off. However, there was something odd about the soldiers as they made quick examinations while they took their weapons and ammunition. For the enemy soldiers were something else. Then they see something that caught their eye, they turned him over and see a symbol of the crescent moon and a star on the shoulder pads; they’re the very symbols of Islam.
"I'll be damned! It's the UIR!" Charles shouted.

"Damn, I hate it when I'm right or when you're right," Mark said.

"The parking lot can't be far." Charles then yelled as he and Mark headed towards the parking lot only to find it several cars in flames with the gunship hovering over the lot.

"Now what?" Mark asked.

"There's gotta be a way to get outta here," Charles says.

"We got to find something or we're dead," Mark said. Charles looks around frantically, then he sees what appears to be a small tugboat next to the dock. With the distraction, they should be able to escape from the chaos at the dock.

"Mark, if we can distract that Gunship's attention, we can escape," Charles said.

"How?" Mark asked.

"What about the gas tankers?" Charles then said, recalling a load of gas tankers unloaded from one of the cargo ships earlier along with a shipment of fireworks. If they could be set ablaze, it'll be able to distract the gunship long enough for them to escape.

"All we need is a flare gun to set off the fireworks and we're in business..." Mark said. Charles then heads to one of the boxes near the small security post, quickly pulls some drawers out and finds a flare gun.

'Got the flare gun.' Charles mentally thought to himself before quickly darts out and heads through some stacked boxes and pipes and finds the gas tankers. The tankers carried the propane gas and still in good use. He opens up the valves from the tanker and opens the cargo crate door, letting the propane gas flow into the container. He runs out of the way and aims the flare gun at the running liquid and fires it before darts out of there. The flare lands on the propane, igniting it and setting the tanker and container ablaze. Then, an explosion rocks the docks allowing Mark and Charles the time to get away safely. As the gunship flies over to investigate, Charles and Mark started up the tugboat and steamed away from the chaotic dock, by the time the gunship turned around, they were far away.

"Charles, we need to get help and let everyone know that World War III just started!" Mark shouted.

"Once we get out of here, we gotta find a way to contact the government," Charles replied. Then they heard a loud boom, the two turned to the direction of where the Liberty Island is only to witness the Statue of Liberty suffering a direct hit by a mid-range missile strike and starting to topple over and onto the base.

"Dammit to Hell!!" Mark shouted. Charles just stood there in shock as he witnesses the Statue of Liberty fall into rubble. Then they both see streams of smoke in their air, indicating that they're missiles. They see them strike at several buildings at the heart of New York City, including the Empire State Building and the Chrysler building. They see two missiles strike the Brooklyn Bridge, watching the entire bridge, support cables, and all buckle down into the Hudson along with the cars and people that were trapped trying to get out of the danger. They disappeared into the Hudson, the US flag that is mounted on top of the bridge was also hit and it falls into the water as well.

"Damn Savages!" Charles shouted.

"I can't argue with that!" Mark shouted seconds later.
"We gotta find my brother!" Mark then added.

"Let's get to it!" Charles shouted. They steamed the boat near Brooklyn and they made it to the closest harbor, it was small but supports some fishing boats. They quickly jumped off of the boat and they headed to the streets.

"Where does your brother live?" Charles asked.

"Not too far, just a few blocks from here!" Mark replied. They both headed to the streets where is pure chaos, people running out screaming in fear, cars that tried to get out ended up colliding with each other and jamming the roads. The two made their way through the chaos from people running to the various car wrecks that littered the streets until they found what they were looking for.

"With any luck, he’s probably gearing up for a secret escape down to the sewers," Mark added. The two enter the place that at first glance no one is home, but they both hear a click and turn around to see the man they were looking for in the question.

"Mark. Charles." The man said by the surprise of his young brother’s arrival and survival.

"Luke..." Mark said quietly. But the three became started by the explosion noises outside.

"It seems that World War 3 is here," Luke commented.

"Is it obvious? We were down at the docks when the UIR started to attack and we barely escaped." Mark said.

"At least I and the others are prepared for this." Luke then added.

"Others?" Charles asked.

"I and a group of friends are gearing up to repel the invaders via guerrilla warfare," Luke explains.

"Who are they?" Mark asked.

"They’re part of the Warning against the Hegemony movement." Luke answers.

"The warning against the Hegemony?" Mark and Charles asked at once. It was quite a surprise that they would be ready this quickly. Then again, most Americans were prepared for the end of the world since before the ‘Y2K’ scare back in 1999. Then he ushers the two to follow him.

"Quickly, there’s no time to lose." He said as he opened the secret hatch that leads downwards into the ground. The pair follows him to a secret hidden room that had a planning room and a few other things. On the main table, a map shows the entire sewer system of the city, including certain areas where the manhole covers are. The map itself will play an important part in the war. Luke then walks over to the table with a few others nearby.

"I guess we’re all set," Mark said to Charles.

"Indeed Mark.." Charles replied back. "Indeed…” Then they stood with the others as they begin laying out the plans as New York fell to the UIR.
State University of New York at Delhi, 8:26 am:

Kazuto and Asuna arrived at one of the parking lots at the University. They’ve stepped out of their car, taking their paperwork and the two AmuSpheres with them. Whenever they get a chance, they use the AmuSpheres to make Full Dives into the ALO world to check on the results as well as check on their AI daughter Yui.

Together, they headed towards the University’s main entrance where their friends are waiting for them, Alan Grayson, one of the Mechatronics’ engineers who helped the two with the experimental laser. Andrew Jackson aka Andy, who is one of the physicists, he calculated the possibility of bringing any AI from the VR world and into the real world. And Bruce and Jason Jackson, who are brothers; they’re computer technicians who have degrees on computer programing and computer repairs. They too helped Kazuto and Asuna on the experimental laser. But, in a case of emergency whenever a terrorist attack or invasion, it has a self-destruct system programmed into it that’ll fry the circuits to the point of rendering them useless so it wouldn’t fall into wrong hands. Even though they said it wasn’t really necessary, but then again, you’ll never know what would happen.

“Hey Kazuto, Asuna; made it just in time.” Alan greeted the married couple as they entered through the main doors.

“Indeed..” Kazuto replied.

“You know, you don’t have to come to it,” Bruce concluded.

“We know.” Asuna replied. “But we want to for our friend back at home.”

“You referring to Alex Mitchell, correct?” Jason asked. They’ve heard a lot of them, ranging from surviving the death game ‘Sword Art Online’ to exposing the madman in the ‘ALO incident’ as well as their friends and family who’d helped them get through it all, including their American friends.

“Correct, we’ve held him one a few years ago for him.” Asuna said.

“That’s very nice of you two.” Andy complimented on their good deed.

“Thank you very much.” The couple smiled. As the entered through the hallway, Jason mentioned that they’ve gotten the laser up and running to continue more work. As they continued on, they noticed that the hallway is less crowded than expected; but the cafeteria seems to be packed with students and employees.

“Wonder what’s going on here?” Asuna looked on confused. One of the students, Drake Tanner, sees the group before saying “Somethings going on the news on TV.”

“On TV?” Bruce said in confusion. He, Kazuto, Asuna and the others followed Drake into the cafeteria where everyone is gazing at the 55-inch flat-screen tv displaying the FOX news channel as the news anchor Kyle Wilson as he begins to speak.

“This just in… There are been reports from New York City that massive shootings have occurred in New York Harbor. We have our news chopper on the scene right this minute.” Then he turns to the field news reporter who is in one of the choppers overlooking New York Harbor. The video footage shows cargo ships unloading what appears to tank, AFV’s and troops and they’re advancing into the docks.

“As you can see here, the entire harbor is in chaos.” The field reported said. “The cargo ships are unloading military vehicles and soldiers. I’m seeing gunships taking off from one of the ships and they’re tearing up the docks. The security forces are no match against them…” Then the helicopter
pilot suddenly swerved a sharp turn, a projectile zipped passed the news chopper and the camera caught a view of a modified Mil Mi-24 Hind D gunship in air-borne and has a lock-on with the news chopper. The jettison trail of smoke from the missile is proof that it’s trying to shoot them down. Then the turret gun of the gunship lights up in flashes of fire. The news chopper suddenly gets hit by a hail of bullets, causing it to go into a flat spin. The news reporter screams as the chopper continues to plummet into the ground and the screen goes black the moment it impacted.

Everyone stood in shock from what they witnessed; even news anchor Kyle Wilson was speechless for a few seconds. Then one of the producers hands him a few pieces of paper, he reads them and realizes that they’re other reports.

“Um….I’m getting other reports from cities of Boston, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia that similar attacks are occurring from other harbor ports. This isn’t an isolated event; it appears we’re being invaded.” The latest report sends chills down to every student, including Kazuto and Asuna.

“Th…This got to be some joke.” Alan gulped, praying that it’s got to be some sick prank.

“I doubt it is…” Drake said in a dark tone as more video footage of the attacks is broadcast. Then they hear “Something’s dropping out of the sky.” Everyone turned to the cafeteria windows that lead to the outside. They see what appears to be paratroopers dropping from the sky and landing in the field, the football field, and tennis court. Kazuto, Asuna and the others couldn’t see over the crowd, but Drake leaves the cafeteria unnoticed by the others. Bruce does the same as he quietly heads to the lab.

Some of the students who are outside beginning to observe that is going on around them. They even drew out their smartphones to either take pictures or recordings of them.

Then suddenly, the paratroopers drew their assault rifles and guns down several witnesses who were taking snapshots. The students gasped in horror, then the paratroopers aimed towards the window, they exploded in tiny pieces of glass as the bullets ripped through them and downing several students. Kazuto, Asuna and the others ducked quickly as their fellow students fell dead to the floor. Realizing it’s not safe and they quickly headed out the cafeteria.

“We gotta get out of here!” Alan shouted.

“Where’s Bruce!?” Jason panicked as he is unable to locate his brother.

“He’s probably at the lab!” Kazuto replied as they headed down the hallway, only to find Bruce coming back up from the stairwell.

“It’s OK, it’s been taken care of. Now let’s get the hell outta here!” Bruce exclaimed.

Kazuto and Asuna quickly headed to their offices to grab their wedding photo frames, they’ve gotten their AmuSpheres with them and they made a mad dash out of their offices as Bruce set the self-destruct program to the laser. Causing a small explosion that shook the hallway.

“It’s set! Let’s get out of this place!!” Bruce replied as they ran down the hallway. One of the paratroopers, armed with an RPG launcher, fires from the door entrance and it hits the display case filled with trophies and plaques of the university’s goals in sports and quiz games. Glass, wood and golden pieces were sent in all directions. Kazuto and Asuna narrowly dodged the rocket as they jumped out of the way, the explosion sent them flying out the door and they landed on the ground outside. Both of them are dazed from the landing as they sat back up.

“Asuna; you alright?” Kazuto checked his wife for any wounds.
“I’m fine Kazuto.” Asuna replied as she checked him for any wounds. Luckily neither of them are hit by the fragments of the rocket as well as the flying debris.

“Get up! Our car’s nearby!” Kazuto ordered frantically, Asuna quickly got up and gathered their small belongings and they made a mad dash towards their car. Unfortunately, they see one of the students who is trying to get out of the parking lot only to get gunned down from the paratroopers. The bullets ripped through the 1969 Dodge Charger the student was in, it set off sparks from the car battery which sets off flames from the engines. Then one of the soldiers tossed a grenade that landed between the Charger and the 2027 Chevy Cruise that belonged to Kazuto and Asuna. It exploded, ripping the two cars along with two more in a shockwave explosion. The car that once belonged to them is gone.

“We gotta find the others!” Asuna yelled. Everywhere around them is pure Pandemonium on the campus. Students who tried to make a run for it or attack the paratroopers were gunned down, others were captured by them. They turned to see a group of paratroopers spotting the couple and aimed their rifles at them. One of them shouted at them, ordering them to surrender. However, they hear that the language he is speaking sounded like he came from the Middle East.

As it seems they will be captured, out of nowhere, a pickup truck plowed the paratroopers down. The window is rolled down. It was from Drake Turner.

“Kazuto! Asuna! Get in here now!!” Drake ordered. The couple wasted no time and they both hopped in the bed of the truck as he takes off, narrowly avoiding a 2002 Volkswagen New Beetle that crashed into one of the vans that were trying to pull out hastily. Then they see Bruce and Jason in a pickup truck of their own and they see Alan, Andy and a couple of others with them in the bed of the truck.

They got close to each other before Drake shouted. “Follow me! We’re getting outta here!!” With Drake in the lead, the two trucks leave the State University of New York at Delhi as it descends into chaos. Kazuto and Asuna looked up and see large groups of 747 airliner jet planes flying side by side. Out from the backs of them, they see parachutes opening up as they leave the tails.

“It can’t be..” Kazuto murmured out loud in horror, Asuna is speechless from terror as they drove towards Delhi. However, they see that the invaders have taken the town as the streets are a battleground between paratroopers and the local police. Several cars are in flames along with a few small buildings in flames, paratroopers were rounding up civilians as they gained more ground of every block.

Then as they rounded the corner they see a large group of the soldiers trying to stop them and engaged at them. But they managed to swerve back and forth, avoiding the bullets and taking out a few soldiers before Drake flooring the gas pedal. One of the soldiers fired an RPG at them but missed as it hits one of the parked cars. The two trucks continued to drive off away from the chaos while dodging block after block of the foreign soldiers. Together, they left the town of Delhi as they see smoke rising from above.

“Where are they heading!?!” Asuna shouted through the blowing wind.

“My uncle has a hunting/sporting shop four miles up ahead!” Drake replied as he opened the window on the back. “We’ll get supplies and weapons there and will be heading out!”

“Out!? As in hiding in the woods!?” Kazuto asked loudly.

“Yes!!” Drake replied back.
After two minutes. They reached the building close to the road, just as Drake described it. They pulled their trucks over in front of the entrance and the others hopped out and headed towards the doors.

“You sure we should be here?” Andy asked.

“I work part-time here,” Drake reassured them. “Besides, he’d probably want us to do this.” He takes the key out from his pocket and unlocks the front doors and they entered into the store. Only Kazuto and Asuna are left with the trucks. They both sat there, in shock and silence; the processing of what has happened. Kazuto turned to see Asuna, who is gazing off into the distance in a ‘thousand-mile’ stare; apparently, in a catatonic state, her face is pale and emotionless.

“Asuna?” Kazuto asked as he nudged his wife, she hasn’t responded. He nugged her again, still nothing.

“Asuna?” Kazuto asked again, hoping to snap her out from her state but to no avail, his heart sinks further as she appears soulless and begins to fear that she may not respond at all. He pulls her into his embrace and held her in a firm, but a caring hug.

“Please Asuna…” He begged, after a few moments, he felt a tear flow silently down her cheek and onto his neck. Then, Asuna raises her arms and slowly wraps around him, holding herself onto her husband.

“…Kazuto…” Asuna finally spoke softly.

“It’s alright Asuna…” Kazuto sighed in relieve, but he continued to hold her; they both continue to sit there silently hearing explosions from the distance. After a few minutes, Drake, Bruce, and the others came back out, carrying food, water, rifles, shotguns, pistols and ammunition, including bows and arrows. They also carried out sleeping bags, lanterns, flashlights, batteries, the emergency radio, and other camping equipment; they also brought toilet paper with them as neither of them is gonna be using leaves at all. And following the group is Drake’s uncle, Robert Turner who has heard noises when they came in but recognizes his nephew and his friends.

“We told him what has happened,” Drake said as they packed the trucks with the weapons and supplies. “He’s agreed to help us and let us use his cabin all the way deep in the Catskill Mountains.” He mentions that no one knows where the location of the cabin except for family members, which makes it very easy for them to be in hiding completely undetected. Then they heard what appear to be helicopters approaching. One of them looked on and they see what appear to be Huey helicopters and three Apache gunships flying towards the town of Delhi.

“Don’t worry, they’re one of ours,” Alan reassured the group before finishing packing the trucks. After that, everyone jumps into the back, barely squeezing into between but managed to make what use. Drake’s uncle instructs them to keep on going and don’t stop for anything or come back into town no matter what they hear. The trucks took off down the road, leaving the store and on their way to the cabin in the Catskill Mountains.

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**September 12th, 6:38 am; Tokyo, Japan:**

The city of Tokyo continues to shine through the nighttime sky as the people continued their casual
ways throughout the city. Soon the rising sun begins to break over the mountains and plains of the country. However, in neighborhoods that surround Tokyo are calm and quiet, far away from the noises of the city. The Kirigaya Residence is usually quiet around this time of night as well as daytime, whenever the inhabitants are home or not. But it is usually occupied by the engaged couple of Alexander Mitchell and Suguha Kirigaya, the former moved out of his home and into Kazuto’s bedroom after agreeing to his father that they’ll be just roommates together. But they have some sweet nights together as they have in the past, but only whenever Sugu’s mother is not home.

Alex and Suguha are cuddled together in her bed, snuggled under the covers in a warming embrace throughout the night. So far they’ve been engaged for almost a year, the process of their wedding and reception has made great progress; although it was stressful on the both of them planning all of it as well as the cost of them. But it will be all worth it in the end and nothing will derail their plans…..or so they thought.

Alex’s cell phone that is sitting on Sugu’s nightstand next to the bed begins to ring. It rang for a full 20 seconds before Alex woke up, rubbing his eyes with groaning noises and picked up the phone. Despite being half-asleep, he can still see who is calling him. It was his older brother Jonathan. This makes him curious and confused.

‘Why would my brother call me at this time of an hour?’ Alex thought to himself. Only one way to find out, he pushes the ‘call button’ and brings the smartphone to his ear.

“Hello?” Alex spoke.

“Alex? This is Jonathan.” The older Mitchell replied. “Have you seen the news?”

This gets his attention. “No, I haven’t. Why?” He asks.

“You may want to turn it to the news channel,” Jonathan said with a grim tone. Alex was still confused by his mentioning to have him see the news channel. But he steps out of the bedroom and down the hallway.

A few minutes later, Suguha stirs awake as she rolls over to Alex’s side of the bed only to realize Alex isn’t in bed.

“Wha…” Sugu murmured as her eyes fluttered open. She looks down to Alex’s side of the bed, seeing that he’s isn’t there. She gets up and looks at the clock and realizes its half-past six.

‘He must be up toward the kitchen or something.’ Sugu thought to herself. She headed towards her bedroom window and opens the blinds, letting the sunlight reflect off of her gorgeous figure clad in her undergarments. She was very fortunate to land herself with such a wonderful boy like Alex who treats her like a princess, even after she admitted her embarrassing past when she used to have a crush with her brother/cousin Kazuto.

“She?” Suguha spoke up as she rubbed her eyes and headed out her bedroom and down the hall. He hears what appears to be the TV from the living room.

‘He must be checking the news or something.’ She thought and headed down the hallway until she enters the living room, she smiles as she sees her fiancée standing in the middle of the living room in front of the tv. She sneaks up and wraps her arms around his torso and pressed her chest against his back.

“Morning Alex-kun..” She said sweetly. However, she was confused when he didn’t respond like he normally does.
“Alex?” She asks. She becomes a concern about her lover’s non-response.

“Suguha…” He finally spoke.

“What’s wrong Alex?” She asked it was then he moves and shows her the tv screen. It was the Tokyo news channel and on the footage, it shows what appears to be New York City under attack by military forces.

“What you are seeing here are satellite footages of New York Harbor being overwhelmed by invaders.” The news anchorman said as soldiers, tanks and other armored vehicles are seen pouring out of the cargo ships and have taken over the harbor.

“According to various markings, it appears they’re soldiers of the United Islamic Republics.” The anchorman continued. “And they’ve taken over the harbor and are advancing throughout the city, taking over the entire metropolis.” Then the live footages continued on until it catches one of the UIR advanced Hind-D gunship taking aim and firing at them, the screen quickly faded to black, indicating that they were destroyed.

The screen moves back to the anchorman, who then reads the reports of East Coast cities of Boston, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and the capital of Washington DC have fallen to the UIR. Then footages that were smuggled out shows the White House, most of it is in burning rubble as the smoke rises up into the sky, on top of the White House, the flag of the United Islamic Republics is flown over it and the soldiers tossed the tattered US flag down to the ground after it was torn off of the flagpole. As he continues, the blood with Alex and Suguha were growing cold by the minute. But for the American, it was a nightmare coming to reality.

It was just as he feared. There were times where he’d heard news on the Hegemony increasing its manpower in the past years as well as express his concern to Suguha and his friends. There were nights that he’d prayed that it wouldn’t escalate and a peaceful resolution would be sought. But it seems that they all vain hope and only prolonged the inevitable, now what has occurred in America won’t end there, pretty soon that other countries will be under attack. The next news report confirmed it as reports of the UIR clashed with the US/Israelite forces on the borders of Israel in the West Banks, the carnage is intense as several soldiers of the US and Israeli armed forces fought bravely against Islamic soldiers and armored vehicles who are advanced forward.

Then the news anchorman was handed another report and the color on his face turned to pale white when he read it.

“I…I’m now reading that various fleets from the Coalition of Allied Nations ar…” He hesitated…

“…Are engaging with ships from the People’s Republic of China outside of Taiwan, Korea and…..Japan…And so far, they hold…holding out for now. But we will get further news on the situation.” He finishes. The couple just stood in both shock and horror.

“My God…” Suguha said as the growing horror begins to unfold on the news. Her hands clutched tightly onto Alex as tears begin to form. Her fiancée turned around and just held her in his embrace. Eventually, the tears begin to fall down her face in streams, followed with her soft sobs.

“It’s over…” She cried into his chest. “Our we-wedding plans are ruined!” Alex just continued to hold her as sobs and hiccups are heard from her.

“I’m scared Alex! I’m so scared!” She continued to cry out. Then she feels his hands touch her tear-stained cheeks, she looks up and gazes into his forest-green eyes; she could see some tears in the corners of his eyes.
“I’m scared too…” Alex finally said.

“What are we gonna do?” She asked, her voice was shaking with fear.

“We need to get to my dad’s and get out of here.” He concluded.

“But that means that we…” Sugu stopped at mid-sentence as she looked around. It was the home of the Kirigayas for generations. Leaving it is like leaving their lives behind.

“I know it’s very hard to leave our home. But if we stay here, we’ll all be killed or taken captive.” Alex explained. It was true; the Chinese had a vendetta against Japan since World War 2, not to mention what they would do if, or this case, when they land on their shores.

“We need to get the others too.” Sugu then pointed out. Her friends Rika, Keiko, Yuuki and Shino as well as their respected boyfriends not to mentioned Agil and Klein.

“We’ll get our friends on the horn and have them get to my place where they can be evacuated.” Alex then said. He knows that in a situation like this if the war came, all military personnel would be in charge of evacuation civilians. However, they’re limited as there was no telling how long it would take before the invaders conquered the nation. He also pointed out that some VIP’s would get better seats during the evacuation; this includes Randy’s father Dr. Joseph Mitchell as well as Tim’s and Scott’s parents. With luck, the families of their respected girlfriends would gain a seat to be evacuated before the crowds come.

“Then we better get started.” Suguha said.

“Before the crowds come in.” Alex finishes. After that, they broke the embrace and headed back to her room to get their phones. Suguha goes to call her friends and her mother while Alex calls his father. World War 3 has begun….

Chapter End Notes

Whew! Managed to finish it a few days before the New Year rolls around. With the light-hearted chapters now passed, the events of the third world war has begun and will send in the characters towards events that’ll change the course of history.

Also I wouldn’t have gotten far without help from friends who agreed to assist me with this chapter.
Chapter Summary

As the darkness begins to cover through the days, a glimmer light twinkles as the hopes for freedom are called through the darkness.

Deep in the forests of Catskill Mountain, September 11th; 9:28 am:

The two trucks have driven for almost an hour. The forest trail wasn’t a smooth one as it is filled with rocks, fallen tree branches as well as leaves. Everyone had to hold onto the trucks as well as keep the supplies from falling out. They’re very fortunate that the trucks haven’t tipped over whenever they run over larger rocks. Eventually, they reached their destination; they stopped in front of the cabin.

The cabin itself is medium sized and it’s almost like any cabin, has two bedrooms, one bathroom, and a living room and small kitchen. The cabin is also equipped with a septic tank system as well as its own water system enough for a small family. But for a group of college students that came up to hide from the invaders, it’s a different matter.

“Well…here it is..” Drake Tanner said as he steps out of his truck, Bruce, Jason, Andy, Kazuto and Asuna stepped out to see their cabin. Amongst them is Jennifer Rhodes and Christine Thompson, the latter is the niece of political figure Samantha Thompson who is the leader of the ‘Society for Integrity in Marriage’ that outlawed ‘Arranged Marriages’ in the United States and nations of the Coalition of Allied Nations.

“It looks cozy,” Kazuto commented. To him and Asuna, it almost resembles the cabin back in New Aincrad in the World Seed. This left the married couple worried of their daughter Yui; she’d be worried once she realizes that they haven’t shown up as well as what has been going on in the real world.

“It’s better than nothing.” Jennifer Rhodes replies. Then she turns to Drake before asking “You sure no one knows where it is?”

“Absolutely. This place is built long ago so no one knows its location except for my family.” Drake smiled proudly.

“Let’s get everyone and the supplies inside,” Christine added.

Everyone begins unloading the trucks and carried the supplies inside the cabin. Inside, the furniture in the living room is covered in sheets to keep the dust off of them. Even the television is covered with the sheet. It would’ve been like a vacation, but what has happened in the past hour, it was a place to hide out. Everyone was silent, processing what has happened earlier.

Both Kazuto and Asuna were still processing what’s happening.

“OK,” Drake groaned as he sets the last of the supplies down on the floor. “We should be safe here; my family designed the cabin to look like part of the forest from not only on the ground but from the
Kazuto said “Ingenious I love it”

“Let’s get the place set up,” Alan said as everyone begins to settle in, the sheets are taken off and the supplies are unpacked. Jason begins to fiddle with the television set. It was an old 2010 flat screen television set.

“Hope this thing works,” Jason muttered as the TV flickered on. Kazuto and Asuna sat down on the couch and held each other as the TV shows the news broadcasts from New York City, showing that the city has fallen to the invaders and the flag is shown flying. The flag itself has a red field with green bars on top and bottom. In the middle is a white circle and in it shows the crescent moon and star. Kazuto holds Asuna tightly as images of the chaos are shown. Then a different version shows several US armed forces engaging against the Latin American Federation along the US/Mexican border. The wall that was constructed from 2014 to 2016 ran across the border from the US and Mexico and was used to keep the illegals out of America. Then all of a sudden, there was a loud explosion that shook the ground, the cameraman who was broadcasting the event, stumbled onto the ground along with the camera. He got up and picked it up, by the time he did, the big section of the wall was covered in a thick cloud of smoke that rises up into the sky. When it cleared, it showed a huge gaping hole that peered all the way through. What was once the wall that protected the border now lies in ruins as various armored units of the Latin American Federation begin to come through the gaping hole of the wall?

Soldiers begin firing back at the advancing Latin American Federation armed forces. Kazuto, Asuna and the others stood in shock from what they just saw on TV. No one was able to penetrate through the wall; it would take a lot of explosives for that. However, it switches to one of the news choppers where similar explosions are seen all the way down. It appears that the Latin American Federation has been experimenting with powerful explosives in the past.

Kazuto said “Oh my God!”

“Impossible,” Andy said in shock.

“The wall couldn’t be penetrated.” Jason lamented.

Asuna said “It has now” As the news channel continues, the anchorman Kyle Wilson then reads the reports on similar attacks that are occurring in Israel.

Kyle continues speaking towards the camera. “According to the US President Hal Jones, he declares a state of emergency in the wake of the attacks; he will be speaking with the cabinet and military advisors very shortly on the matter.” They could tell by the look on the anchorman’s face that he is very nervous.

“Guys, I’m very worried about all this,” Alan confessed.

“I know Alan.” Drake comforted him with a pat on the shoulder. “We all are.”

Kazuto kelp holding onto Asuna as expressions of fear and worry are written on her face. It didn’t take long for the soft sobs to take over.

“Shh…It’s going to be alright.” Kazuto said in a soothing, hushed tone while he strokes her hair.

“But how….” She sobbed. “How would we have a happy future now that the war is here?” She continues to cry into his chest.
“I’m scared Kazuto.” Asuna cried.

“I know Asuna,” Kazuto reassured her. “I’m scared too.” Kazuto then kisses her on the forehead. Asuna continued to hold onto her husband while he continues to hold her in comfort, reassuring embrace, and not letting go. It was then Drake Turner stood up amounts the group and begins to speak.

“I understand that what has happened in the past hour is unbelievable. Even I’m having a hard time adjusting it, and I’m sure that all of you are.”

The group continued to listen.

“But we cannot allow fear to take control of is, panic will only make things worse.” He continued.

“What if the United Islamic Republics decides to come through here?” Bruce asked.

“The Catskill Mountains is one of the most complexed mountains and forests in the US,” Drake answered.

It was then Jennifer’s turn for a question. “You’re not expecting to wait it out. Are you?”

“I never said that we are, but we can’t just stand by while our friends and families are getting slaughtered down there.” She continued.

Kazuto said, “Jen is right.” He stood up, Asuna followed suit. “We need to make a stand against the invaders here.” It wasn’t the first time that he faced a life-threatening situation. In fact, it takes him and Asuna back to the Sword Art Online death game back in 2022 where Kayaba has trapped 16,000 players. Even in the death game, He fought through it all, even Asuna, who is Second-in-Command with the Knights of Blood, also fought through ‘til, later on, they fought for each other.

“If we’re gonna have a future, we need to work together.” Kazuto continues. Asuna holds her hubby’s hand.

“Then we better get started, shall we?” Drake asks, the group now filled with confidence from Kazuto’s words. It really wasn’t a surprise since he and his wife are survivors of SAO. Eventually, they’ll be able to get a holding against the invaders.

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September 12th, 9:21 am; the Mitchell Residence, outside Tokyo:

Alex Mitchell and Suguha Kirigaya, along with her mother Midori have arrived at the Mitchell Residence. They were very fortunate that they’re getting a ride out of Japan despite the fact that the Chinese hadn’t made it to the Japanese islands.

“Good thing we made it,” Alex commented as he, Suguha and Midori steps out of the car. Suguha looks around and sees that they’re the only ones who made it.

“I hope the others will get here soon.” Suguha expresses her worries about her friends. She managed to call Rika, Keiko, Yuuki, and the others on the situation.

“I’m sure they’ll be here,” Alex reassures her. His father David and his brother Jonathan promised to
get the others out with them.

Suguha sighs in depression. Then, just as if on cue, few cars and vans have arrived at the residence. Then they got out, they see it was Rika, Keiko, and Yuuki along with their families. Keiko’s parents held a cat carrier. Alex recalls Keiko mentioned that her dragon Pina was named after her cat in the real world. Following them is Scott Mason, Timothy Hudson and his cousin Randy Mitchell with their respected parents. Randy’s father, Dr. Joseph Mitchell and his assistance, Dr. Kanashi, held a couple of briefcases as well as the laptops. On them contains a list of medical reports as well as treatments, including the Yuuki-Randy miracle. It was no doubt that their research has been saved and taken care of back at the hospital. And with them are Eugeo and Alice, they’re both assisted by Mitchell and Kanashi.

Yuuki holds on to Randy with worry on her face. “You don’t think China would try to invade Japan, would they Alex?” She asks.

Alex said “Probably.”

“I can’t even believe this is happening.” Keiko confided.

“Well, they have tried to back in 2020,” Scott explained; even though it may not help with the situation. “But then again, they could be trying for it especially since they’re scoring victories in the Sea of Japan as well as the seas near Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines.” Tim went over and held Keiko in his hug.

“It’ll be alright.” Tim soothed her. “We’re going somewhere that is safe.” Keiko hugs him in fear.

“I just hope that Shigeru, Shino, and the others are alright,” Rika said, she remembers Klein being in the countryside with his family, Andrew with his Wife as well. Shino and Shigeru are visiting her mother’s as well.

“Don’t worry…” Alex reassured his friend. “My dad told me that Fuji, Yuki, and Maxwell will be searching for them as well. It was then Rika turns to Scott and hugs him in fear; her strength squeezes her boyfriend hard. But despite this, Scott returns the hug and caresses her head. After a short while, Jonathan has arrived, Alex smiles at his brother’s arrival.

“Jonathan!” He exclaimed as he hugged his older brother.

“Alex.” He replied.

“Any idea where we are going?” Alex asks. The Lieutenant Brother looks at him and then the group of families before speaking. “Everyone here will be sent to the US State of Hawaii.” He explains that the strong US Navy presence will be there to escort them to their temporary housing areas before being moved into the US mainland. Rika was a bit surprised by the Navy soldier’s information on their transportation.

“Hawaii?” Rika asked.

Keiko said “It would be a nice place

“Haven’t been there since the Coalition meeting back in ’25,” Rika added. Even though it won’t be to get sun on the beaches.

Keiko said, “It’s nuts.”

“Never would’ve imagined that anyone would try to start a war with everyone,” Alice admitted,
during her and Eugeo’s years in the Underworld, they couldn’t imagine it would escalate into this despite what they have heard on the news.

“Not to worry,” Jonathan reassured them. “One of the navy commanders stationed there is a very good friend of the father. He assures that you’re all in good hands.” The young Mitchell brother sighs. “Let’s hope so.” He muttered to himself before Jonathan begins guiding the group down to the base where they will be escorted to one of the ships.

“K, everyone has your ID’s?” He asked. They were required to have photo ids and to carry no more than one back per person. But with some doctors and scientists, it was an exception. Eiji however, chooses to stay behind as he didn’t bring in his luggage.

“Everyone follow me.” He then commanded before everyone begins climbing into one of the military trucks and drove down to the Navy base. It was a short trip before the truck stops and everyone begins climbing out from the truck. The group is then guided to one of the Supercarriers the USS George W. Bush. Alex grins at the sight of the Ford-class Supercarrier; it took a heaving beating back in 2025 after their brush with the UN Peacekeepers and the Supercarrier of their own, the Obama. The ship managed to limp back but it was heavily damaged. It took almost two to three years to have it completely repaired; it now has improved control system, two rail guns hidden underneath the flight deck, and stronger armor. All of the Ford-class Supercarriers all have the rail guns installed after the USS Bush incident as well as stronger armor.

Everyone begins to board the Bush via the catwalk. Suguha holds her lover's hand; she has a history of motion sickness whenever she goes on a ship or airplane. However, she must muster all of her courage and strength in order to cross the Pacific to safety. Keiko’s cat, Pina meows from within the cat carrier.

“It’s OK Pina,” Keiko coos to comfort the cat. “We’ll be safe soon.” Timothy held Keiko in a comforting hug; Rika does the same to Scott. Everyone is lead inside the Supercarrier and into one of the briefing rooms. Jonathan informs them that sleeping cots will be brought out to them in order to get the families comfortable.

Before he could leave, Alex stands up and asks “Are you and Dad coming?”

“I and Father are gonna stay behind in hopes of locating the others.” He replies. This causes Alex’s blood to run cold. If China does invade Japan, he and his father would be killed. Sugu starts worrying as the older Mitchell explains this.

“What if they catch you and dad and torture you?” Alex then asks the tone in his voice is shaken from the thought of losing part of his family to war. It was then Jonathan stepped up and hugged his younger brother.

“Don’t worry Lil’ bro.” He reassures him. “Father and I will take care of ourselves. The Mitchells are die-hards.” He chuckled, cheering up Alex. Then he mentions that they need to oversee the evacuation of Japan if, or in this case, when, the Chinese land on its shores.

“Just be careful,” Alex says. “Promise me that you and dad won’t get killed.”

“We promise,” Jonathan reassures him again. “Make sure you take care of Mother and Suguha for us.” After that, he leaves. Suguha went up and hugs her fiancée to comfort him.

“Don’t worry, Alex,” Sugu says in a hushed tone to soothe him. “From what I heard about your family, they’re strong.”
Alex smiles “You always know how to cheer me up.” The black-haired girl giggled as she continues to hold him in her hug.

“Yeah, Alex.” Rika then chimes in. “Your family is very strong.”

“Indeed, as well as very resourceful.” Keiko then added.

“Same here, your family is very courageous as well as strong.” Alice lamented as well as Eugeo who nods in agreement.

Yuuki smiles and says “And you are even hot.” This earned her a glare from Randy with a raised eyebrow.

“I mean, not as hot as you my Randy.” Yuuki giggled and hugs him, Rika chucked.

And with it, everyone felt the Bush beginning to move.

“Looks like we’re leaving Japan.” Rika lamented.

“Indeed, I hope Shino, Shigeru, Klein, and Andrew will be alright.” Keiko worries.

“Let’s not forget Shouzou and Kouchirow Yuuki.” Alex added. The others nodded in agreement as the two are the only ones in Asuna’s family that understood and supported her and Kazuto. Rika hugs her boyfriend as the Bush leaves the docks and sails off into the Pacific away from Japan; everyone knew that the world won’t be the same again.

A day later, one of the officers came in before making his announcement to the families.

“Everyone, the transport plane will depart for Hawaii in twenty minutes.” Everyone begins to pack up and leave the briefing room; Tim helped Keiko to put Pina back into the carrier despite her meowing in protest.

Keiko said softly to her cat “It will be ok Pina.” Tim helped soothed the munchkin cat by rubbing his ears, he purrs softly from his gentle touches as they placed him in the cat carrier. Keiko giggles as it reminded her of the times where he pets her ears in ALO as well as doing the same in the real world.

Everyone arrived on the carrier’s flight deck where one of the transport planes is seen with its engines active, showing that it is ready for takeoff. Everyone boards the plane and got comfort as they could. Yuuki held Randy’s hand.

“Think of it like a trip to another country,” Randy said, trying to clear the tension that he knows that everyone is feeling.

The Konno girl giggled. “Oh Randy, you know how to make me smile.” Randy smiles back. It was then, the PA announcement begins to speak.

“Attention everyone, this is your captain speaking. Please remain in your seats before take-off and before landing. We thank you for your corporation and calmness before the flight.”

It was then the captain says. “Now for a moment of prayer before take off.” Everyone held each other’s hand and bowed their heads in respect before the captain began.

“Father in heaven, we thank you for the safety of the lives here and we ask for our protection as we trek over the ocean and to protect the lives of those who’ll do what they can to get those to safety in history’s darkest hour. In Jesus’ name, and all God’s people say; Amen.”
Yuuki felt her own heart beating during the prayer, and with that, the plane begins its takes off, leaving the flight deck and climb up into the air. Alex got a glimpse of the USS Bush growing smaller as the plane departs it.

He held Suguha close to him as the plane makes its journey towards the US state of Hawaii.

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Honolulu, Hawaii:

The Transport Plane lands into one of the military air bases near Honolulu. Everyone leaves the transport plane and everyone is relieved the trek over the ocean is over.

“Hard to believe that we managed to get here in one piece,” Yuuki commented as she held Randy’s hand romantically.

“Thank the Lord for getting us across.” Randy lamented as they both shared comfort glances with each other before sharing a small kiss.

As the last of the group steps down from the plane, one of the officers approaches them.

“Please follow me to the bus where you'll be taken to the housing complexes.” The officer says before guiding them to one of the buses. Everyone followed them as they boarded on the bus, Dr. Mitchell and Dr. Kanashi boarded the other bus with their paperwork with them as well as Eugeo and Alice. Dr. Mitchell is worried that the nanites would be used for the Hegemony’s own purposes.

“Fear not Dr. Mitchell.” Dr. Kanashi reassured his assistant. “The nanites are programmed only once and will self-destruct if any attempts were made to reprogram them.” He nods before sighing in relief that the fail-safe will do their jobs no matter what. Plus, most of the nanites were either evacuated or destroyed before they evacuated.

The two buses arrived after over an hour in traffic and through the countryside before stopping in front of the driveway. Everyone steps out of the buses and see the place they’re staying at are a group of tropical houses designed for those who are staying in Hawaii for renting for the week or weekends. It was a perfect location for a small group of families for safety, there is also a basement big enough to house many in case of air-raids. Yuuki, Rika, Keiko, and Suguha stood in awe at the beauty of the houses while Alex and the others nod and smirks. At least everyone will be close together. Suguha held onto Alex as she breathes in relief that they’re safe.

“Better head on inside,” Scott spoke up, everyone agrees with them as they entered the house. Inside, the textures of the living room and kitchen are cozy looking while beautiful at the same time; the same as the bedrooms.

Suguha smiles “Like we are happily married.

“Yeah, except we’re with our friends and their families.” Alex smiled back as he mentioned this to her, it was then the short black-haired beauty kissed him on the lips.

“Alright, you two.” Rika scoffed. “This isn’t the honeymoon..” Keiko giggles as the engaged couple blushes.

Scott then plops onto the couch and begins searching for the remote control, Rika sits down next to
him and pokes him on the side.

“Rika..” Scott chuckled as he feels her fingers poking him.

“What…?” Rika smirked.

“Just looking for the remote for the tv so we can get updates from the news channels.” He explains.

Rika smiles “Well I’ll cuddle up to you my love.” She giggles before she finds the remote sitting on the lamp stands next to the couch. She turns it on and flips it to the Fox News channel. Rika hugs him tight as everyone gathered around to watch the news report.

“Our top news today,” the news anchorman began. “...military forces from the United Islamic Republics and the Latin American Federation continued to advance their way into the East Coast and of America and from the southern border, taking cities and causing destruction against them. The United States Army is doing its best to halt against the advancing invaders while evacuating civilians whenever they can.”

Everyone who is watching the news report shows expressions of shock and fear. Keiko hides behind Tim while Rika and Suguha held themselves closer to their boyfriends, even Yuuki as she whimpered behind Randy.

The anchorman continues, “In other news, President Jack O’Connell announces from the city of Pierre, South Dakota that America will continue to fight against the enemy.” Jack O’Connell became the acting Commander-in-Chief after President Hal Jones was killed in the evacuation of Washington DC and he was sworn in office in mid-flight. He also made his speech that’ll keep the Americans’ morals up and never give in to fear.

Yuuki gets all emotional as she continues to hold onto her boyfriend.

“Good thing he’s in charge after what happened,” Scott remarked, he recalled seeing the news reports of President Hal Jones making his emergency meeting with the Pentagon and orders an evacuation of the city, but not before his helicopter getting hit by one of the missiles, taking the president’s life in one strike. The vice president, Jack O’Connell managed to get out of dodge as he is the next successor.

Rika smiles “True”

Then the anchorman continues on world events and shows that the Coalition’s joint navy fleet is losing against the Chinese and invasions of the Philippines, Taiwan, and Japan maybe inevitable as well as showing Chinese tanks rolling through the borders of the United Korean Republic. In the Middle East, the UIR continues to engage against American/Israelite troops in the West Back in bitter street-to-street fighting. Footage begins to play as it shows a group of soldiers from the US Marines and the Israeli Army engaging against the UIR soldiers. Shouts of soldiers are heard with the combinations of gunfire from rifles echoed through the streets.

Suguha and the girls worry while Alex and the boys looked nervous.

“Guess it’s official now…” Randy has spoken. “World War 3 has begun.” It wasn’t a secret since Alex has expressed his concerns about world events to them.

“You don’t think they would try to invade Hawaii..” Yuuki expresses her concerns. If the Chinese invade the rest of the free Asian countries, how long would it take to cross the Pacific?

“Not to worry Yuuki-chan,” Randy reassures her. “The Navy presence here is very strong as well as
an advanced early-warning system….Plus we won’t be here for long since we’ll be heading to the mainland.”

However, hardly everyone was convinced, if the United Islamic Republics managed to sneak their forces by the Navy and early-warning systems, there’s a possibility that the Chinese would do the same. The UN peacekeepers did the same thing to the USS Bush back in 2025.

But then the anchorman announces that the United States Navy and Marines are ordered to sink any cargo ships if they come closer without any communications.

“Well, that’s somewhat a relief,” Rika commented.

“Indeed,” Scott replied. It was then that Alex then spoke up. “Think we should get settled in this place. Not sure how long it’ll be before we’re leaving to the US mainland.”

“I agree with Alex.” Randy too spoke up. “It’s best that we get to settle in.” Even though the housing complex is designed for relaxation and vacations, it’s their home for now. Everyone begins to unpack and get settled in, calling for who gets the beds and who gets the couches or air mattresses.

Rika said, “You’re cuddling with me, my sexy boy.”

“Pretty much,” Scott smirked. Tim helps Keiko with her unpacking, including helping with Pina.

“I’ll sleep here on the floor to make sure you’re alright,” Tim reassured his girlfriend, who smiles and giggles in his politeness to her. They’re sure their parents wouldn’t mind as long as there’s no funny business between them. Keiko then leans forward to Tim and plants a sweet kiss on the lips. Even though the war has started, there’s still hope that they’ll be able to look into the future.

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**September 17th; the sewer system, underneath New York City:**

Charles Allen and Mark Russell travel with the resistance group to their base of operations. It’s been six days since World War 3 began.

"How much farther? I can still hear those bastards up-top..." Charles Allen said in a hushed whisper.

“Not farther, I hope,” Mark replied back in the hushed tone.

Then a few minutes later, the group came to what looked like the entrance to a sewer pump station at first glance.

“I guess we’re here,” Mark commented. It was then that the door had a slit that opened and a pair of eyes stared back and looked at the group before the figure spoke.

“Identify yourselves.” The figure said.

"I am Charles Allen," Charles said.

“Mark Russell,” Mark added. The figure behind the door looked at the group before he spoke. The others identify themselves as well, then the door opens up and the group walks inside. The room wasn’t too big or too small, but it was large enough to fit a dozen or more people along with stuff being laid out in the room as at the center was a table. It also includes a couple of television sets that
show what’s been going on in the world from the free nations and through occupied territories. The group then heads to the nerve center of the place to plan their next move.

The group meets up at the center of the room while Charles and Mark look around to see all of the faces looking at them, but are put at ease by the one who led them there.

“So what’s our next move?” One of the resistance soldiers asked. The leader of the resistance cell comes forward and looks over the map of New York City and the general area before the leader speaks up. Robert Lee Grant, lived in New York City almost all his life and like every other New Yorker, he too sought to fight for the liberation of the city.

“OK, so far, the Islamic Army managed to have complete control of the Manhattan Island, they’ve made it into their stronghold for this front.”

"They’ve also taken the liberty of commandeering the Subway system to ferry troops and supplies underground. Hope they like the smell." He continued.

“Which they’ve used to take control of Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island,” Luke added.

"So what now?" Mark asked.

“We’ll cut off troop supplies in areas in the Bronx and Brooklyn,” Grant responded.

"Any ideas? We do have a copy of the Art of War by Sun Tzu do we not?” Charles asked.

“Let’s not forget some areas that have helipads placed in, so open conflicts are suicide unless they’re dealt with,” Mark replied.

"Okay, hit what is weak and avoid what is strong," Charles said.

“Also, according to Recon, it appears that the United Islamic Republics have some new toys with them,” Luke added grimly. He explains that the Islamic armed forces have in their possessions are combat drones and he shows them photos of them patrolling one of the neighbor streets in Queens.

"Don't those look similar to the T-1’s from Terminator 3?” Charles asked.


"Great, did the UIR steal a key to our patent offices?” Mark asked.

“Jo, take a closer look at the drones.” Luke pointed to one of the markings that are visible. “Those are Chinese markings.”

"So that means that somehow, China must've hacked and gained the plans for this machine," Mark said.

“That and they developed some drones of their own.” It was no secret that ever since the Second Revolution, the People’s Republic of China made several attempts to create some advanced combat drones of their own, some of which didn’t turn out too good, but the rest made it into the People’s Liberation Army and eventually into the Grand Islamic Army.

"So, any other types of drones should we be worried about?” Charles asked.

“Other than the ground combat drones, they also brought their aerial drones with them.” Luke continued.
"Which types should we be watching that patrol the sky?" Mark asked.

"The ones that'll act as scouts for anyone who would try to sneak through the streets, that’ll alert any occupying soldiers who are nearby." He answers.

"What do they look like so we can know what to expect?" Charles asked.

"According to reports in countries that China has controlled, ranging from Mongolia to Vietnam, Malaysia; heck, even India. And they’re pretty slick as well.” He shows them the photos of the scout drones hovering above one of the city markets in New Delhi. Mark paused for a moment and looked at the drone a bit more closely as in his mind, dots began to connect before seconds later, he realized the drone looked very familiar.

"I think I’ve seen something like this,” Mark commented. “It looked like they’ve duplicated the old drones of the past.”

Charles leaned in and spoke, "Which ones?"

"The ones that the old US government once used to spy on US civilians, most of which were destroyed after the Second Revolution,” Mark answered.

Charles looked at Mark and spoke, "You mean the Predator type?"

“Well, kinds like that, but with a mix of the quadcopter.”

"Any weakness?"

“So far, we’ve found a small battery pack on the drones that can be hit by concentrated gunfire and it’ll bring them down.” Luke then deduced. “And I’m sure that the ground combat drones have the same weaknesses. Plus they can be hacked which will come in great use.”

"That will be fun..."

“But I’m more concerned on the gunships the Islamic army has brought with them,” Luke said with concern in his voice.

"Great...now what?" Charles groaned.

Luke gives details that the gunships they brought are the old Hind-D gunships with modifications of its engines, weapons and flight capabilities. If the soldiers don’t get to them, the gunships would.

“That sounds so cheery,” Mark said with some sarcasm.

“Which is why we need to focus on taking out the heliports first before moving on the other objectives,” Grant stated.

"Where do we start?" Charles asked.

“We’ll get started very soon.” Grant answers. “We need to show the people that they can be pushed back no matter how armed they are and the numbers they come in.” Everyone then went over the final key details very carefully before moments later, they all came to an agreement and moved out. Charles and Mark went with Luke as they left their base. Grant and his forces went their separate ways as they all moved out to show the United Islamic Republics one, clear message: America is not theirs for the taking!

Charles, Mark, and Luke appeared through the manhole cover in one of the neighborhoods of
Soundview, Bronx. So far, no Islamic forces have spotted them as they maneuver through the streets like American ninjas in the shadows as they make their way to their main objective for the day. The Recon soldiers kept their eyes towards the sky to spot any scout drones and Hind-D gunships. They quickly hide in an abandoned Pizzeria restaurant when Mark quickly sees a drone like a sharp set of eagle eyes before they continue on their way. They waited as the drone makes a pass through the streets; so far it hasn’t spotted them.

“That was close,” Mark remarked.

"Yeah..." Charles said. They continued on down the street, hiding in corners to get the element of surprise. It was then that they heard footsteps and the sounds of tires and tank tread moving as Mark used a mirror to see around the corner without exposing himself.

“I’m seeing tanks and IFV’s coming this way,” Mark said to the others. Luke gestures Charles to set up the explosives to trap them. Without the patrol noticing, Charles quickly maneuvers the explosive traps and gets them ready to explode on command.

“Wait for my signal,” Luke ordered softly as they hid out of sight. The tanks and IFVs moved closer and closer towards them, not realizing they’re heading right into an ambush.

"NOW!" A moment the order is shouted, Charles presses the button on the detonator and the tanks and IFVs became engulfed by the wall of flames and shrapnel combined with the explosive shockwave that shook the neighborhood. Seconds later, the trio quickly moved in and attacked the patrol taking it by total surprise. The soldiers who have gotten out to investigate, the destruction was gunned down, and the others got pinned down by the wreckage.

"Eat this UIR Scum!" Luke shouted. Charles covered Mark as he tossed a few pipe bombs towards them, sending Islamic soldiers in all directions and in pieces. Then as quickly as they came, the trio fled the area before reinforcements could muster and retaliate against the rebels.

“So far, we’re doing great,” Mark said after they fled through an alley.

"Yeah, we need to remind these bastards that this nation is not theirs for the taking as we have the blood of our Founding Fathers in our veins," Charles said quietly. Mark nods in agreement. It also goes towards not just the United Islamic Republics, but to the Latin American Federation who have destroyed the wall along the US/Mexican border and taken Texas and parts of New Mexico and continuing to advance through the South, various US forces fought back whenever they can. The third is China who has taken California, Oregon, and Washington, as well as beginning to take parts of Alaska. Strangely, the US state of Hawaii managed to escape the clutches of the Chinese and held out on their own.

"Their Chinese and the Latin American bingo buddies will also learn about this lesson the hard way as well," Luke said.

“Agree,” Charles replied. After several minutes, they’ve come across several trees, indicating that they’re near the Soundview Park, where even though the trees would provide great cover, but they’re crawling with Islamic soldiers.

"Great, now what?" Mark asked.

“We gotta sneak through the park unnoticed,” Luke said. “And make sure we take down our targets quietly.” They holstered their weapons and drew out their combat knives, perfect weapons for silent kills. The age may have created firearms that replaced outdated weapons of the sword, ax, arrows, and mace. But the knife has evolved with the modern era of warfare. And with that, it has stayed as a
secondary weapon for when guns become piratical for close quarters combat as the trio snuck up and killed the soldiers one by one. They also hid the bodies behind trees and bushes to avoid being alerted by the others. With that done and dusted, the group moves on and carefully avoiding any unwanted attention that could alert the UIR to their presence. They’ve made it through the park and continue to progress their way through Southview. Along the way, the group can't help, but be reminded of what used to be their home and that many buildings in the Big Apple were either damaged or destroyed.

Charles sighed sadly to see many shops, restaurants and apartments and condos are in ruins. He can only imagine in horror of the sports stadiums near New York being used as concentration camps or extermination camps by the Grand Islamic Army. Several malls, schools, and warehouses would be used to store weapons, ammunition, vehicles and the fuel made by crude oil. Pushing those thoughts out of his mind, Charles concentrated on the next objective for his group in their war against the Islamics and their allies.

"According to intelligence, they got a heliport nearby, close to near the marshes that are close to the park,” Luke said.

"Alright then, let's get to it,” Charles said. After some time, they’ve arrived in the marshes of the park. They see a lot of Islamic activity.

"Damn, that's a lot of soldiers..." Mark said quietly.

“We need to find a diversion.” Charles then looked around the area and sees what appear to be some fuel tanks.


“Probably fuel made from crude oil,” Mark commented.

"And more of a good reason to blow them up to help us out with our war," Charles said.

“Indeed.” The trio then continued to sneak their way back through the bushes until they got to the fuel tanks, they’re like four or five of them, large by the sizes. Quickly find their weak spots, the group waits for the perfect chance to blow them all in one shot as Charles and Mark put on explosives on them quietly and then seconds later, Luke fires the first shot at the first tank to start a chain reaction. The gunship begins to take off; Mark fires his rifle at the gunship’s cockpit, managing to cause the pilot to spin the gunship in a wild direction. Seconds later, the gunship crashes into the second fuel tank causing the others to blow up forcing the group to flee the area for cover. As they did, they managed to take down several UIR soldiers with concentrated shots. With their shots and precise aim, they would make the rebels of the American Revolution and warriors like the late Chris Kyle and Audie Murphy proud.

Charles fires an RPG at one of the tanks, managed to hit its fuel tank, sending it into a ball of flames.

"Great balls of fire!" Charles shouted. Mark chuckled before taking out a few more Islamic soldiers. Within a matter of moments, the area was a collection of dead bodies and twisted metal from the equipment that was destroyed.

“We did it,” Mark remarked. He’s very proud that they’ve succeeded, but this was only the beginning. The Hegemony-controlled media would try to censor this attack and claim it as a ‘terrorist attack’. But they’ve got various resistance cells in the process of establishing throughout NYC as well as throughout the occupied states. For soon, the United Islamic Republics, China and the rest of the Hegemony allies would reap what they had sown...
“Let’s get out of here and make our way to our next mission,” Luke said as he leads the others to the next manhole cover. Moving quickly, the group moves the manhole cover and they all climb in and close the entrance above them before any Islamic forces could find them. They headed to the weapon cache to replenish their ammo supply as well as gather C4 to demolish one of the bridges the Grand Islamic Army is using for their convoys. Once the group was replenished, they head back out again.

“Alright, guys. We’ve got a new target.” Luke said as he explains that the UIR is using the New Haven Railway Line to transport their troops, weapons, and supplies to Manhattan, which is a stepping stone to use the railway lines and roadways for transportation through the occupied territory.

"So, our next job is to sabotage that line?" Charles asked.

“Yes, and to do so as the train will cross the bridge. Not only they’ll lose their re-enforcements, but it’ll show the people that they can be stopped.” Luke replied.

"Normally, I would be against destroying an American bridge, but this is an exception," Charles said.

“Very true, but buildings and other things can be rebuilt in time,” Luke replied. “Especially since most of them are under control of the Hegemony. But we must try to save historical buildings and monuments whenever we can.”

"Right, let's get to work." Mark said. Everyone arrived at one of the train bridges that borders near the harbor to the land.

"Okay, we need to place explosives on key points on the bridge so it'll collapse with no difficulty," Luke said.

“According to the time schedule.” Charles pointed out. “The train will be arriving here in roughly twenty-five minutes. So we better act fast.” With that quickly said, the group moved quickly and very carefully to plant the explosives before the military train was to pass by.

“OK, we’ve managed to plant the C4 in every specific position,” Mark stated.

"Now, comes the waiting part..." Charles said. Fifteen minutes have passed as the trio looked from the distance to see the supply train coming down the railway line, on cue. Pulling out a device, Luke quietly counts down the seconds before the supply train reaches the designated pointed and then, presses the button. The explosion rips underneath the locomotives, causing them to buckle off the rails along with several passenger cars carrying soldiers. Then the other explosions appeared at the beams as they disappear into shrapnel and causing large sections of the bridge to buckle downwards into the water, along with the flaming locomotives and the train cars. One of the explosions also detonated one of the fuel tanker cars carrying its own oil-refined fuel; engulfing several cars on both sides in a huge ball of flame and setting off a chain reaction of explosions with it. It didn’t take long for more sections of the bridge to collapse from the massive damage it took from the larger explosions and plunged into the waters below.

"Suck it Islamic Assholes..." Mark said. One of the enemy’s supply routes have been several, Charles grinned as the train is wiped out from the multiple explosions that could be seen for miles.

‘This will give the people hope.’ Charles thought. Plus it'll boost up the enlistment of the Resistance as several areas in NYC will be under control. The group then heads on out to the next target to hit when the trio turned around and see several civilians looking outside and see the resistance soldiers and begin to see that there is hope for them. The group smiled and continued on to their next objective following in the footsteps of the Founding Fathers before them.
Their final target of the area is at the Our Lady of Solace Roman Catholic Church in Van Nest, the church itself is used as a communications area for parts of East Bronx.

“There’s our final target for this area,” Luke said as the trio laid eyes on the church.

“They’ve disgraced a sacred building,” Charles said.

“No kidding,” Mark replied.

“Once we take control of the church, we’ll be able to gain control in certain areas in East Bronx with ease,” Luke mentions. With that said, the trio went to work on ridding the church of Islamic filth. They peaked around the corner of the bushes and see that the church is surrounded by Islamic soldiers.

“This may be difficult than we thought,” Mark commented softly.

"Any ideas anyone?" Charles asked quietly.

“We need to find a diversion,” Mark whispered. Luke looked around the area to find something or anything that could help the trio regain the church and help the resistance out greatly.

Then he sees several feet away are one of the propane tanks from the barbecue grills. It’ll come greatly for them. Luke smiles and whispers an idea to his brother and to his friend of how they could use the propane tank to their advantage.

Some short time later, they’ve rigged the propane tank with the C4 and had it placed in one of the vacant houses, once they press the detonator, it’ll explode; hopefully, it’ll get their attention and sent out to investigate.

After a quick count-down, Luke pressed the button on the detonator and the tank exploded. Just as predicted, several Islamic soldiers were alerted and went over to investigate, leaving the outside completely unguarded.

“Now’s our chance.” Luke urges as they quickly headed to the cemetery and reached the back doors.

“One...two...three...now!” Luke shouted.

Seconds later, the trio emerged and all hell broke loose. The feeling of time slowing down when the adrenaline rushes through the heart, performing greater feats a normal human couldn’t do on a normal basis. The trio quickly picked off targets in quick and easy shots in the heads, neck, and chest. They were all dead before their bodies hit the floor. Then like a flash of lighting, it was all over.

“This will provide great use for the resistance,” Luke commented by the success they’ve made.

“Indeed it will,” Mark added, and then Luke heads to one of the console’s keyboard and begins typing away.

“We’re adding a jam to their communications so that the rest of the soldiers don’t get the drop on us,” Luke mentioned. “This includes those who are investigating our diversion.”

Okay then, let's do it,” Charles said. As Luke sets in the jamming device, Mark looks through the window outside to check on the soldiers.

"Looks like we’re doing okay as no Islamic shits have shown up, but we need to move fast if more
show up,” Mark said.

“We will, once after we set the jammer, we’ll send word to the resistance and they’ll send others to get this place operational,” Luke replied.

"Okay then....keeping watch," Mark said quietly. A minute or so went by and the jamming device has been placed. Seconds later, the jammer activated and caused some chaos among the ranks. Mark and Charles see the soldiers were trying to contact HQ but are unable to get hold of them.

“They’re getting confused now,” Charles stated.

"That's good and nice..." Mark said. Then they see them coming back to the church.

“Better get ready.” Mark then said.

“Time to give them a reason to fear us more..." Charles said. The trio got ready for the ambush. Moments later, the doors opened up and the soldiers came in and see their operations lay dead on the floor. Before they could do anything, all of a sudden, they are then ambushed by the American rebels. The soldiers fought back, but their numbers quickly dwindled to two; within a matter of moments, the two soldiers fall to the firepower of three rebels.

“I’ll contact the rebel base and notify them of our success.” Luke lamented on success.

“Do it,” Mark said as Luke begins to communicate with the resistance. As he does so, Mark and Charles looked around the church; several of the religious items were removed from the church and replaced with both communication technology and other religious symbols that relate to Islam.

"Let's restore it to its true form..." Mark said.

"With pleasure..." Charles said seconds later. Shortly after, they removed all symbols of Islam and restored the place with Christian symbols as well as the American flag hanging above them signaling that they have captured the point location.

"Now it looks good," Mark said.

“Got the word from HQ,” Luke spoke up. “The Resistance will begin expanding the outposts and checkpoints very soon.”

“Good. Mark replied with a smile. Charles could see everyone rallying up against the invaders. It may be a slow climb to the top, but in the end, they will win. For the spirit of Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness burns bright in all Americans and their allies who believe in it.
September 14th:

Yuki, Fuji, and Max are traveling through the Japanese countryside via van, however, it was easier said than done as it was backed up by heavy traffic.

"Even here in the countryside, can never escape this crap...." Yuki grumbled. They’re traveling to the city of Nagano, the capital city of Nagano Prefecture in the Chūbu region of Japan. Last time they heard that Klein was visiting his relatives who lived close to the countryside. Amongst the group is Shigeru Hirose, Shino Asada, Andrew Gilbert Miles and his wife who also went to the countryside to look for him the moment they heard the news about World War 3 starts, this also includes Eiji Nochizawa in spite rejections from the latter’s family.

“This can’t be good for them,” Fuji stated.

"We shall see for ourselves when we see them," Yuki stated before added. “They sure picked a bad time to go on vacation.”

“Seems that way.” Maxwell agreed. “But we need to find them as soon as possible.”

“Yes indeed.” The older man replied back before he turns off the interstate exit and headed down the road; the van and its occupants continuing on their quest to find their friends in Japan. As he continued down the road, the three see several Mitsubishi F-2’s, F-15 Eagles and F-35 Lighting II fighter jets streaming overhead; they have markings of the Japanese Air Self-Defense Force.

“At least they’re responding to what’s going to happen,” Fuji commented as he sees the fighter jets, then he turned the radio on and it switched to the news report.

“In other news, the Chinese are reported in the Sea of Japan, the Japanese Self-Defense Force and armed forces from the Coalition are taking extreme measures to fend off the Chinese after the Prime Minister issued an evacuation for Japan.” The person said on the radio.

"What they really want is the world,” Maxwell muttered. Then the radio broadcast reported that the Royal Canadian attempted to engage the Chinese and the UIR only to have their combat vehicles and vessels shut down and easily conquered. It was all thanks to a backdoor in the tech the Chinese sold to the Canadians, Maxwell shook his head of his former country’s corruption and the direction they lead to them being easily defeated not helping matters was the Political Correct people controlling the nation.

“We need to find them fast.” Maxwell then said.

“I know, keep your shirt on,” Yuki reassured him. The Japanese Self-Defense Force is heavily backed up by the US-led Coalition forces in spite of the death of US President Hal Jones, but the vice president succeeded him and continued to command the country from a different location of Pierre, South Dakota; the exact location is kept a closely guarded secret.

“How far until we get there?” Fuji asked.

"Uncertain,” Yuki replied grimly. The older man then turned to Max in hopes of him to try contacting Klein or Shino, hoping one of them pick up.
"Try to see if you can raise Klein or Shino...." Yuki ordered. Maxwell nodded before taking his phone out and dials Shino’s number.

“Come on…pick up.” Max pleaded as the phone rang. Then a female voice is heard.

“Shino?” Max asked before adding his name.

“Lavoie-san?” Shino replied. He asked her if they located Klein and his family yet.

"Not sure, we’re still searching. Eiji, Andrew, and his wife managed to regroup with us."

“That’s good to hear.” The Canadian soldier added with relief. During the phone conversation, Shino tells him that they’re aware of what’s been going on and they hoped and prayed that it wouldn’t escalate, but with the invasion of America’s East Coast, it’s only a matter of time before the Chinese make their way on Japanese soil.”

“You have to get out of there soon.” He warned. “We’re coming to pick you up.”

"Don't try to get yourself killed doing it."

“We won’t, we should be near you shortly.”

“Don’t get shot or blown up.” And with it, the conversation ends.

“We’ll get to them shortly,” Fuji reassured.

"Let's hope so...." Yuki added. After for some time, they’ve made it to the city, entire streets have been crowded with people trying to get out, the Chinese attacks not doing any favors.

“We need to fight through this crowd in order to get to them,” Yuki suggested. They don’t know what the situation from the Sea of Japan is, but they knew that it’s only a matter of time before the Chinese send in their air force to conquer Japan’s air space.

"Let's hope it holds for now..." Fuji muttered as Yuki turns the van and headed towards a narrow street where there’s less traffic which is very good for the van and its occupants.

“So far, we’re doing good.” Yuki lamented.

"I sure hope that is the case..." Fuji agreed. According to some addresses, Klein’s relatives shouldn’t be far ahead. It didn’t take long to find as they see what appears to be a small group right outside in front of the house. Their home is furthest away from the city limits which makes it much easier to find it.

“Is that them?” Max asked.

“IT’s them.” And with it, they parked in front of the house, Shino, Klein, Andrew, and Shigeru headed towards the van. “Hello!”

“Glad to see all of you OK.” Yuki sighed with relief.

“I know, the same goes for you too.” Shino lamented. They learned that Klein’s relatives are fine and managed to pack up for their evacuation. Eiji also has accompanied them in helping to locate Klein and his relative. His family was strongly against his decision to do so as there is the possibility that he’ll get left behind and trapped in Japan, but he felt that it’s the right thing for him to do.

“Will they be safe?” Eiji asked.
“I’m sure they’ll be safe once we get out of here,” Shino replied.

“Very true…” Klein appeared; he carried the last of the luggage.”And we should do that like now!”

“You don’t have to tell us twice.” The gang crammed everyone into the van; it wasn’t very comfortable at all. But they have to make due as Yuki starts the van and takes off.

“Hope everyone’s comfy,” Yuki said in a joking manner to ease the tension.

"Shut it…." Fuji muttered, he along with Max, became crammed into the very back.

“Right…let’s go…” Yuki turns to the corner and towards the main street to see it filled with cars and people.

“Crap….” He muttered. He knows it’ll take some time before they’ll get out of the city, but they would find a way. They’re also alternate routes that lead out of Nagano in hopes to avoid traffic, but they cannot guarantee that. For now, they needed to focus on the present route.

“I’m glad that we’re out of there,” Klein exclaimed.

“Same here..” Eiji agreed.

“But at least we’ll be on our way to Tokyo, and soon we’ll be out of here,” Shigeru added.

"Let's hope that's the case...." There was silence in the van, outside nothing but horns honking from cars and people chattering as they navigate their way around them. It was then they heard new and different sounds of what appears to be thunder from the distance. But the thing was that there are no thunderstorms in the area. It was, in reality, the sounds of something dark, the sounds of war.

“They’re close….” Fuji said grimly.

“Too close…” Yuki added. The older man knew that he had to act fast, it’s only a matter of time before the Chinese MiGs make their way through along with ground forces. He had to take the van off road, it’s risky but he had no choice. It was then that Chinese MiGs and the Japanese Air Self-Defense Force are engaged in the dog fight in dominance for air space, not seen since the Battle of Britain from the Second World War.

“We need to get out of here.” Kathy then said.

“Working on it,” Yuki said before he sees what appears to be a trail leading away from the main road and away from the war that is going on. Suddenly they hear what appears to be one of the jets coming down, then the ground shook violently from the sudden impact. They turned to see the smoking rising from the main road along with the wreckage of cars.

"Less looking and more getting the hell out of here!" Klein shouted. Yuki floors the gas pedal getting out of the ever closer battlefield. They continued down the road, far away and fast. Booming sounds can still be heard from the distance.

"Must go faster, must go faster, go go go go!" Fuji shouted.

“I’m tryin’! I’m tryin’!” Yuki shouted back while trying to stay focused on the road ahead. He turned and swerved onto the road driving like a bat out of hell. The passengers held on as he made tight turns and bumps with a few hoping the driving won't kill them. Fuji and Max are in less fortunate as they got a full view of what is behind them, however, they don’t see anything at the moment, but it could change on a turn of a dime.
‘So far, so good.’ Fuji thought to himself. Then they hear more jets above them, they couldn’t see from where they are but they could tell there’s a dogfight and they’re right underneath it.

"It’s getting closer!” Someone shouted. Yuki continues to speed down the road, at this point the van is at its top speed; everyone hoped that they wouldn’t crash. They heard explosions from above followed by a deafening crash that came from behind, making them even more scared than before.

The crashing noises caused the older man to jump as well; he knew that was too close. He had to keep up the speed as well as not to crash; he hasn’t been this frosty since this time during the War on Terror where he had to drive the jeep through the streets of Fallujah while dodging bullets from Al-Qaeda terrorists and Insurgents. He would make it through no matter what.

“This is tense!” Shigeru said aloud.

"NO KIDDING SHERLOCK!!!” Yuki shouted back, then he sees what appears to be a flaming jet going into a flat spin towards the ground and it’s heading towards the path that they’re taking.

“CRAP!” The older man panicked, he pressed the pedal to the floor as hard as he could to beat the flaming fighter jet.

“We’re not gonna make it!” Shino shrieked in fear, but Yuki ignored it and focused on the road. It seemed like they’re gonna collide into the jet. But by a miracle, Yuki clears the path just one second before the jet smashed into the ground.

"Told ya we make it!” Yuki said proudly.

"Not sure that even qualifies!” Fuji added. The continued on for several miles, trying to get away from the war. Nearly half an hour passed when Yuki decided they’re far away and he slows the van down to a halt.

Yuki turned and asked. “Everyone Okay?”

“Well…besides being cramped up in here and almost killed by jets, we’re all good,” Klein replied. “And no one has brown pants.”

“That’s good to hear.” Yuki chuckled before asking Fuji on where they’re at.

“Any idea on where we are?” The older man asked. Fuji takes out his smartphone to the GPS system.

“Let’s see…” Fuji muttered, after a few minutes the screen pings.

“We’re near Mount Azumaya.” Fuji reads the GPS before adding. “And Tsumagoi is close by too.” When the older man asked, he says that it’s roughly around thirty miles.

“Let’s get to it then,” Yuki said as he turns the van around and heads off to that direction, hopefully where the war has reached yet. Time passed before they reached the village limits of Tsumagoi with the possibility of uncertainty hanging over.

“OK, we’re here, now what?” Yuki asked.

“I don’t know about you, but we should stop for a moment and stretch our limbs.” Shino groaned.

“OK, let’s make it quick.” Yuki opens the door; everyone steps out of the van to have a few precious moments to relax. They looked around and they see people leaving their homes as well, the situation
has indeed gotten serious.

"Looks like we're not the only ones..." Andrew muttered.

“There’s no telling how many people will be trying to evacuate.” Eiji lamented.

“Yes, we all know..” Klein agreed. He, Andrew, Shino, and the others are relieved that their friends have made it out of Japan before all of this madness happened. Yet some were still stuck, either from traffic and overcrowding or unable to leave their homes to be taken by the tyrannical Chinese.

“Can’t really blame them,” Yuki said with sympathy. The others agreed as they knew that their homes will be taken away and converted by the Tyrannical Chinese government and use them to spread their empire as well as kill anyone for the trouble back in the last world war. Though, when the Chinese will be defeated, their descendants will have to bear their sins though right now, that was not an idea at the moment.

“I think we should stay and fight.,” Eiji suggested. Everyone looked at him like he’s crazy.

“Are you nuts!?” Klein exclaimed. "We're nothing compared to the Chinese!"

“What he said…” Kathy agreed.

“I know you want to do something..” Andrew lamented, but Eiji spoke up.

“I understand that we need to get out. But what if they try to remove our history? Landmarks and everything that our ancestors has worked hard on could be removed. I’ve done things in the past that left me with regrets and I felt I need to redeem myself.” The others knew what he was referring to, he was involved in Professor Shigemura’s scheme of robbing memories of SAO survivors in order to revive Yuuna’s memories. However, it changed when the Professor betrayed Eiji in the process and the rest of the guilds hated his guts for his involvement. But after Kirito defeated Shigemura and put an end to his plans, the former helped him fully repaired YUNA via copies of her memories. But deep down, he put shame on himself for his actions.

“Okay….” Klein said. But Shino knew what the Nochizawa male is saying; nodding in a slow understanding of what the guy was getting at.

It was then she spoke up at last. “He’s right…”

“Huh?” Andrew was confused.

“We need to make a stand here, this is our home and we have to defend it,” Shino explains. “Plus we won’t be able to get out in time anyway, so I’m staying with Eiji.

Then Shigeru stood by Shino. “And I’m staying with her too.

“OK….” Yuki was stunned; Fuji was just as surprised as his friend. Klein then steps in and announces that he’s also staying.

“Are you serious?” The older man asked.

“We’re very serious..” Klein replied before adding. “Plus I highly doubt that we’ll be able to get out with all this traffic unless we turn our van into a skyway flyer.”

"That's true and we're still not yet have flying cars like the ones in Back to the Future Part II yet....if only..." Yuki muttered.
“Then it’s decided,” Andrew spoke up. His wife Kathy agreed.

“Well, Yuki?” Fuji asked. Just as he was about to answer, they hear more Chinese jets streaming above them, taking out the Japanese fighter jets.

“I think that should be the obvious answer.” Max pointed out. The older man just sighed before speaking.

“Alright, we’ll stay. But we need to find a place where we can hide out and organize.” He added.

“Alright sounds good,” Fuji says it was then he suggested that there’s a decommissioned Oil Refinery some miles away.

It was then Maxwell suggested that they should get back into the van and get to their destination.

“Let's go so we can plan out in safety...” Yuki then added, after that everyone climbed back into the van and Yuki starts it up and drives off towards their hideout.

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**Log House, 22nd Floor, New Aincrad:**

Yui floated around the inside of the log cabin; it has been days since she heard from her mother and father, it was all too quiet.

‘I don’t like this.’ Yui thought to herself. In the past few days, many players were logging on less. She had a feeling that it’s likely due to the real war outside in the real world. Now New Aincrad and ALFheim only populated with Non-Playable Characters. She linked herself to various news media websites; all which had the same news report.

“The same thing around the world,” Yui said. One news coverage showing the invasion of New York City witnessing the destruction of the Statue of Liberty, the next shows the flag of the United Islamic Republics flying over the White House in Washington DC. The other with Chinese tanks crossing over the border to the United Korean Republic as well as Chinese navy ships engaging the fleets of Korea, Japan, Australia, and the United States on waters near the formers’ nations. And finally, Japanese and American soldiers evacuation citizens in Japan through Tokyo.

“It truly happens, World War 3 is happening.” Yui came to a conclusion. She heard about her Uncle Alex expressing his concerns on world events in the past along with Scott, Tim, and Randy. Others also mentioned what is happening and prayed that it’ll blow over without incident.

“We’re gonna have to fight this war, one way or another,” Yui said. It was then she heard a familiar voice.

“You got that right Yui.” She turned around and sees Yuna.

“Yuna?” She said. It was then she flew over to her and Yuna catches her in an airborne hug. “I’m happy that you’re safe.”

“I’m glad that you’re safe to Yui,” Yuna said, returning the hug. After they finished their hug, the two decided to get down to business. Yui explains that all of the players have stopped logging onto ALFheim from the third world war.
“I’ve noticed too,” Yuna said, believing the little AI child. Yui nodded.

It was then Yui suddenly froze, she was still as a statue before she closed her eyes.

Yuna became worried as she placed her hand on Yui’s shoulder. “Yui?”

There was no response. Yuna shook her slightly hoping to get her to wake up, but still no response.

"YUI! This isn't funny!” Yuna shouted. After what seemed like it was all hopeless, Yui opens her eyes.

“Yui! What the heck was that all about!?” Yuna said in a panic.

“I detected logins down in the abandoned city of Alne,” Yui answered. “But they seem unusual..”

“What do you mean?” Yuna asked.

Yui paused for a moment before saying, “The codes of their avatars seemed different, as their codes don’t follow the same responses as any of the avatars.”

"Who could they be?” Yuna asked.

“Don’t know, but we need to get to Alne to get a closer look,” Yui said, she turns into her pixie form and flies in mid-air.

“I’m coming too,” Yuna says as she follows her.

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City of Alne:

The City of Alne, located at the base of the World Tree, once stood as the capital of ALFheim. It is known to be a neutral city and, even after the establishment of Yggdrasil City, acts as the main raiding base for the advanced dungeons on the Alne plateau as well as the central trading market for all races. However, it was abandoned by players during the beginning of the war.

Yui and Yuna arrived outside of the city. The latter then said. “OK Yui, we’re here. Now what?”

“We need to get closer into the city,” Yui said. The duo slowly made their way into the city, it was then they hear something overhead.

“Hide,” Yuna warned as they both hid underneath one of the buildings as it passed over them. But as they looked, they noticed it’s not one of the dragons or any of the flying creatures of ALFheim. It’s a helicopter. On top of that, it wasn’t American, Japanese or any of the nations of the Coalition. Yui looks up and sees the details of the helicopter, her mind searches throughout the web before saying. “That’s an Hind-D gunship, modified with improved engines and weapons systems.”

Yuna just nodded; as they reached deeper into the city they see heavy activity at the city’s center. They see soldiers, tanks, and BTRs making their way through the streets. Artillery guns and Surface-to-Air missiles are being placed across the rooftops. They’re fortunate that they’re not spotted, Yui listens onto the radio chatter and the languages are distinct from each other. Several soldiers are speaking in Arabic while others speak in Chinese. For Yui, it was no doubt that they’re soldiers for China and the United Islamic Republics. She searched through the radio chatters and haven’t found
other language barriers for the rest of the Hegemony Alliance. She tells Yuna who they are.

“I should’ve known they’re Chinese and the UIR,” Yuna said with bitterness. It was then she asks.
“How did they get here and why?”

“I’m not sure Yuna,” Yui answered. “But somehow they found their way in.”

"That’s where we need to find out how?” Yuna had a grim thought that they might have found the NerveGear helmet and used it and such. But for now, they need to find a way to contact Kirito and the others of what’s going on. They left the city limits and headed back to New Aincrad where they remain out of sight for a time being.

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**September 21st, One day after Japan fell to China:**

The City of Tokyo has been very quiet, no longer one of the busiest cities in the nation since the Chinese invasion. After China successfully won the naval battles in the Sea of Japan, they’ve landed on the shores, the Japanese Self-Defense Force, re-enforced by stationed units of the Russia, Australia and the United States fought against the Chinese invaders, but only delayed them long enough for the nation to evacuate its civilians to other countries of America, Chile, Australia and Brazil. Before the nation fell, ¾ of the population were evacuated out of the country; only 1/4 remained, ranging from the rest of the population and half of the Japanese Self-Defense Force stayed behind to aid the civilians into insurgencies against the Chinese occupation. For Japan had its own version of the Dunkirk Evacuation, but this time people were fleeing from home rather than to it.

Ti Tsang stands in view of the city from the balcony of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building. Commander of the fourth fleet of the People’s Liberation Army Navy, who have helped Commodore Jian Sieu in naval battles in the Sea of Japan; earning a great reputation in the People’s Liberation Army Navy as well as leading the landings of the Japanese shores in Yamaguchi, Shimane and Fukuoka and begin advancing towards inland; but the Japanese Self-Defense Force have been troublesome that halted the advancing armies for a short time which never lasted too long. Next to Commander Tsang is Commodore Sieu, who he begins to speak. “Beautiful, isn’t it Comrade Tsang?”

“Yes….It is indeed.” Tsang commented. Although the streets of several areas in Tokyo are silent, even only a few buildings still retain their lights while the others dimmed out due to power shutdowns. Several civilians who were left behind were confined into very strict curfew while the Chinese military personal wonder about, setting up checkpoints throughout the city to using several buildings to house soldiers, military vehicles as well as weapons and ammunition. While they look and see their work unfolding, unknown to them, some Japanese vow to never surrender to the occupation forces and take a page from the Americans as they vow to bring honor to the Bushido code.

On the other hand, Commander Tsang begins to think. He wanted to follow his father’s footsteps as he once served in the People’s Liberation Army in the past and honored the will of the people with pride. However, his father’s career ended during the Second American Revolution when the transport ships he was on was hit by the American weapons satellite called ODIN, sending the ships and the souls down to the bottom of the Pacific, including his father’s.

Tsang joined the navy in 2018 and saw action during the Second Pacific War against Japan and the
US-led Coalition of Allied Nations and defeated them months later and the nation was forced to give into its humiliating demands that they’ll leave Japan, along with Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines alone.

Despite the defeat, Tsang proved the superiors of his superb skills and techniques which lead him to promotions until he eventually earned the commander position.

‘I have followed your steps father.’ Tsang though as he looked onward, but even in his achievements in both the military and his family, he had doubts if he did the right thing, but he blocked his doubt out of his mind.

"No matter, what I'm doing is the right thing..." Tsang muttered to himself quietly. Then one of the officers approached Tsang and Sieu, he stopped before them as he made a crisp salute, the commanders followed suit before Sieu spoke. “Anything to report?”

“An order came from Beijing.” The officer stated before he handed him the message. The two Chinese officers then looked over the order given to them.

“Commodore Jian Sieu and Commander Ti Tsang, in order to preserve peace and stability within the troubled country of Japan, several residents of the nation would be used as puppet leaders in order to reassure the public while keeping the troublemaking situations in check. Several people would be a great use for the people of China and the future of extending our rule in the continent as well as our influence towards the future.

Best regards comrades

President Cheng Hui-Chan.”

Both officers look at each other and then to the other ones in the room with them before one of them speaks up.

“Some of the recommendations for a perfected leader for this nation are in this location.” One of the officers explained as he shows the locations of the Fuchū Prison.

"Are you sure our leaders want to use convicted criminals? What if they get out of line?" Commander Tsang said with a hint of anxiety.

“I’m sure that we’ll use any means necessary to make sure strict discipline is enforced,” Sieu reassured him. “What had happened in the past few days have probably reached to their minds that their attempt to resist is futile.”

“However…..” One of the officers interjected, the high ranking officers turned to his attention. “The prison’s security staff has barricaded themselves within the prison as well as the other prisons. We have to deal with them before we can inspect the prisoners.” This somewhat left Tsang a little tense, even after China took Japan, they knew that the Japanese will not go without a fight and will keep on until death; as if they took inspiration of their ancestors during the days of the Japanese Empire.

"Very well then, we'll do what we have to do to secure those prisoners." Commander Tsang said before adding. "If worse comes to worst, kill them."

“We will do our best.” Then the officer saluted to them before turning around and leaving. Commander Tsang then sighed and sat down on a nearby chair while Sieu sends out an order to lead a raid on the prisons, but only eliminated the guards and spare the prisoners.
Meanwhile at the prison…

The entire security staff of the Fuchū Prison has successfully barricaded themselves in the prison from the Chinese soldiers. During the invasion, there were discussions on whenever to have the prisoners evacuated or executed, but neither of them reached on an agreement and vowed to stay behind. However, the Warden of the prison is reaching to the conclusion that they may not last long if the war prolongs. He stands up and begins to speak to the staff that still remained in prison.

“I’m pretty sure that you are aware of the situation that has happened all around us.” He said before walking over to the only window in the room, sighs, and lowers his head before he speaks again.

“We are dealing with a crisis of our own in here, it’s no surprise that the Chinese will be making their attempts to try to take this prison and free the scum in this place for their own ends, especially Prisoner 1701.”

“How about we kill her before the Chinese get her?” The guard asked.

“I’m pretty sure that you are aware of the situation that has happened all around us.” He said before walking over to the only window in the room, sighs, and lowers his head before he speaks again.

“We are dealing with a crisis of our own in here, it’s no surprise that the Chinese will be making their attempts to try to take this prison and free the scum in this place for their own ends, especially Prisoner 1701.”

“Which one?” The guard asked.

“Kyouko Yuuki, known as Prisoner 1701.” The Warden said before explaining the crime she committed by aiding the madman Sugou Nobuyuki in his illegal experiments on the 400 players back in 2025 that would’ve toppled the Coalition if it took off. And worst that she arranged her own daughter to marry him who he molested while in the ALO game. Even after that, she tried to keep her own daughter from seeing the boy that not only loved her buts stopped the madman’s plans.

"Ah, that one...shouldn't we kill her before the Chinese get her?" The Guard asked.

“It hasn’t come to that yet…” The Warden replied. “But it appears that we may have to as well as the others.”

"Should we start now?" The Guard asked. But before the Warden could answer, the building shook violently as if someone threw boulders at them. Then the other guards ran and informed him that Chinese troops have arrived and has begun their raid on the prison.

"EVERYONE TO YOUR POSTS! DO NOT LET THESE INVADERS TAKE THIS PRISON!"

The Warden shouted. All of the guards grabbed weapons and dug in, waiting for the inevitable. They know that they won’t be able to escape and they’re gonna go down fighting rather than surrender to the Chinese. The prisoners, on the other hand, had a rough idea of what was going on but didn’t know what was going to happen next.

Kyouko Yuuki sets up from her bunk and tries to see what is going on outside of her prison cell; it was no surprise that the Japanese government have left the prisoners like her to die when Japan fell. However, when the prison shook from the explosion, her mind begins to wonder if she’s gonna die right here.

On the other hand, the sounds of battle roared onwards.

“THEY’VE BREACHED THE GATES AND ARE NOW HEADED TOWARDS THE ENTRANCE!” One of the guards shouted.

"HOLD THE LINE! DO NOT LET THEM PASS!" The Warden shouted. At this moment, time felt like slowing down to a crawl as the adrenaline rushed within the guards. The Japanese aren’t proud of their history from the sins their ancestors committed in the days of the Empire and had to live and carry the burden from generation to generation. But they’ve redeemed themselves overtime
and eventually continued to build a strong relationship with the west. Now, they will die fighting to protect their freedoms from tyranny. For the first time ever, Bushido was being redeemed in the most graceful and honorable way possible. The doors on the prison entrance exploded inward, sending in the debris of splintered wood, glass, and plaster in all directions.Seconds after the smoke filled the hallway, Chinese soldiers started barging in with their rifles firing. The Prison Guards struggled to fight back, but they began to go down left and right along with any prisoners the Chinese saw unfit to live.

"RETURN FIRE! WE GOTTA PUSH THEM BACK!" One of the guards shouted seconds before he gets hit by one of the bullets and fell to the floor clutching his wound; seconds later, he was shot and killed. The Warden looks on in horror as the chaos begins to unfold in the prison.

The Warden would know that in moments, the prison would be overrun. He loads his rifle and awaits the inevitable. After checking that his gun was good to go, he got ready and went out into the fray. He takes out the first two soldiers he sees before they could react. Then three more came out and he managed to take them down with headshots. Despite his skill, he and his guards were badly out-numbered. One by one, they all have fallen, only the Warden remains.

The Warden then made his final stand in an intersection in the prison as he awaited the onslaught. Then, the Chinese troops came in and he did his best to slaughter as many as he could, but then he fell as three soldiers shot him all at once. As he fell to the ground, his life flashed before him.

"At least, our sins we did as the Empire of Japan will be cleansed from my family's bloodlines." The Warden said with his last breath. He lay motionless on the floor as the last traces of life faded away from him. Then, the Chinese soldiers without any cause for proper burial simple pick up his body, carry it outside and dump it into a mass grave in the prison’s cafeteria.

Afterward, Commodore Jian Sieu and Commander Ti Tsang arrived at the prison to see the process. Commander Tsang looked to see all of the staff of the prison including the warden being thrown into a mass grave making him feel disgusted on the inside.

"It could’ve gone, easy comrade," Sieu said as he made glances at the bodies. "But there was no other way.” He then just looked out to the horizon as his soldiers secured the prison. It was then Sieu ordered some soldiers over to him.

"You want to see us, sir?" One of the soldiers asked.

"Yes, I want you to go to the warden’s office, from the files of prisoner checklist; these obtain the names of all of the prisoners that are kept here.” The soldiers saluted and left the area for the Warden's office.

"Soon, the nation will fall in line in order to pursue peace on this side of the Hemisphere,” Sieu commented. Commander Tsang appeared to agree on the outside, but on the inside, it was another story. A few minutes later, the soldiers returned with several papers that contain the list of prisoners. Commander Tsang then took a few moments to read the list along with a few others near him to see who else would live and who would be marked for death.

"We got Prisoner 847,

Name Satoshi Isagura.

Offenses: Drug trafficking and ties with the Yakuza.” Commodore Sieu reads aloud. “We’ll add him to our list to live.” They continued to go through the list.
“Hmm…Interesting..” Sieu commented as he came across Prisoner 1701.

"What of Prisoner 1701?" Commander Tsang asked. Sieu looked at the profile of Prisoner 1701.

“Kyouko Yuuki, age 53; former college professor and former employee of Viacom International.

Offenses: Involvement of the RECT employee Sugou Nobuyuki for the illegal experiments of the 400 players who were trapped after SAO was cleared. Attempting to marry her own daughter, Asuna Yuuki, off to him where he made a rape attempted while holding her hostage in the ALO game. And hiring a hitman to assassinate an SAO survivor named Kazuto Kirigaya; arrested on February 12th, 2025.

Sentenced to serve sixty years in prison.” Sieu finished followed by rubbing of his chin.

"You would think given what she did that the Japanese would've killed her for her deeds...but....we may...have a use for her...." Commander Tsang said.

“Indeed...” Sieu replied before saying. “I believe that we found out candidate.”

"Send a few of our boys to go get her now!” Commander Tsang shouted.

The prison entered silence since the shooting stopped; Kyouko Yuuki sat on her cot as she came to the realization that the Chinese have taken control of the prison. At this point, there’s no telling what may happen next. She heard footsteps getting closer to her cell and wondered whether this was it and she would be executed by the Chinese soldiers that had attacked the prison. She hears one of them ordering her cell door to open up and hears clanking noises of the mechanized lock releasing.

‘This is it.’ She thought and shut her eyes as the door slowly opens. However, neither of them readied their rifles, she only hears footsteps of one of them approaching her bunk. She opened her eyes back to see the Chinese soldier standing in front of her before speaking in a firm, but calm tone. “Kyouko Yuuki?”

"Um...yes...?" The elder Yuuki woman asked in fear.

“You’re current sentence has been revoked, effective immediately.” The soldier replied. This had Kyouko confused. Why would the Chinese release her from prison? “I can understand that you have questions on your early release.” The soldier then said. “But all will be explained once we leave.” She then got up and followed the soldiers. But she stops and turned around towards the corner of the cell. The photograph still remained face down, time after time, she wanted to tear the photo of her former daughter who’s with the no-body commoner she met while trapped in the SAO game. But she found herself unable to despite what has happened to her that landed her in prison. One of the guards noticed her.

"Is there a problem?" He asked.

“No….It’s just nothing.” Kyouko replied before she went with them. One of the soldiers also noticed where Kyouko was staring in the cell and he quickly went inside. A face-down photograph was the only thing that caught his eye and he picked it up. He saw the picture of a woman with hazelnut-colored hair that reached her lower back in a wedding dress and with her husband who sports a black-colored hair. Not wanting to desert with the group, he quickly takes the photo and heads back.
to the group.

"What?" The soldier asks as everyone stares at him.

“It’s nothing…” The other soldier replied. The group then continued on their way to the outside of the prison where Commander Tsang and a few others were waiting.

“Ah…Kyouko Yuuki.” Commodore Sieu greeted her. “Good to see you free and about.”

“What is the meaning of this?” She asked while keeping her tone to a respectable level.

“Why, you’ve gotten parole.” The commodore replied. “We’ve read your profile here and you’re a pretty interesting character.” This only served to utterly confuse her as one minute she's rotting in prison and next minute, she's freed by the Chinese who want her for some reason.

“Why me though?” She then asked. “You know the sins I’ve committed.”

“Indeed,” The Commodore replied in a soothing tone. “But we also learned that you’ve once employed by a world-known company through Viacom Internationals until 2013.” It was a painful memory for Kyouko. She not lost her job back in late-2013 but lost her friend Kikyo who took her own life after being laid off.

“I understand what has happened to you. The Second American Revolution has taken your job away and left you out in the cold.” The Commodore continued. “But you are not alone, we also been humiliated by the Americans.”

"Commander Tsang's father was killed by the American weapon ODIN. Hear about it?" Commodore Sieu said.

“I have.” The woman replied. During the Second Revolution, Obama called out for aid from China, Mexico, and Cuba to help deal with the Rebels that were spreading across the nation. However, the Rebel leader, known as ‘The Patriot’, used the weapon ODIN to wipe out the reinforcements along the US/Mexican border, the Gulf of Mexico and in the Pacific before turning its weapons on a few targets in the respected countries, thus forcing them to withdraw all aid.

"I also lost my Uncle during the attack as well." Sieu then said.

"Are we going to try and take ODIN?" Kyouko asked.

“I can’t guarantee that madam.” The commodore said and explained that ODIN’s heavily secured since the second revolution both manpower and cyberspace.

“So what now?” She asks.

“For now, you’ll be acting as the leader of the Japanese Occupation Force which helps to keep the peace in the troubled nation,” Sieu replies.

“OK and how?” She then asks.

“It’s very simple.” Just to reassure the public that only through cooperation and volunteer work will re-establish the purpose to restore peace and order through the troubled region.”

“OK then,” Kyouko replied.

“Shall we head back to HQ? It’s more comfortable than a jail cell.” Sieu suggested.
“By all means,” Kyouko replied, this time with a small grin. At last, she was sentenced to sixty years, but now, she’s gotten early parole and free; and a chance for vengeance against those who had put her in prison and left her to rot. As they headed to the armored convoy, one of the officers approached Sieu and Tsang approached them with a report.

“Commander Tsang, Commodore Sieu: I’d like to inform you that we’ve taken over several facilities with minor trouble. Plus we’ve got some candidates for the Japanese Occupation Force.” The officer explains.

“Show me.” Commander Tsang said sternly. He hands them the report and reads it as the officer continues. “So far, we’ve got three individuals who are qualified for it, two of them are brothers.”

“Shouichi Shinkawa, age 23, a survivor of the ‘Sword Art Online’ death game.

Aliases: Red-Eyed XaXa during in SAO, Death Gun in the ‘Gun Gala Online’ game.

Offenses: Murdering players during the SAO death game and in GGO. One of the members of the SAO guild known as ‘Laughing Coffin’; arrested on December 14th, 2025.

“Kyouji Shinkawa, age 20; the younger brother of Shouichi Shinkawa.

Aliases: Spiegel of GGO.

Offenses: Accomplice of Shouichi of continuing to kill players after SAO was cleared by injecting succinylcholine into players while in full dive; arrested in December 14th, 2025.”

“Kanamoto Atsushi, age 23, a survivor of the ‘Sword Art Online’ death game.

Alias: Johnny Black.

Offenses: Accomplice of Shouichi of continuing to kill players after SAO was cleared by transporting Kyouji to addresses with low security. Attempted to murder Kazuto Kirigaya by injecting him with succinylcholine; arrested on June 29th, 2026.” The officer finished.

“They might be useful to us.” Commander Tsang said. While the officers were looking over the reports, Kyouko thought to herself that this ‘Johnny Black’ almost murdered this ‘nobody commoner’. But with the wedding photo she had left behind in her cell block proved that he survived.

‘If only he did the job of killing the good-for-nothing brat, Asuna wouldn’t have married him.’ She thought bitterly.

“And of this Kazuto Kirigaya…?” Tsang asked.

“He survived and believed to be taken to the ‘Ocean Turtle’ facility in the following day, which he made a full recovery.” The officer replied. Both Tsang and Sieu realized that the ‘United Nations Commando Strike Force’ under Gabriel Miller, attacked the Ocean Turtle but was repelled by the ‘Coalition of Allied Nations’ who were present at the time the attack took place. It was then one of the soldiers, who escorted Kyouko out of the prison, overheard the conversation and took out the photo that he recovered in the woman’s prison cell. ‘This must be Kazuto Kirigaya.’ The soldier thought to himself, it was then Tsang’s voice interrupted his train of thought.

"Excuse me, but can we get back to matters at hand?" Commander Tsang asked sternly. It was then he noticed the soldier holding something in his hand and spoke to him sternly. "What is it? Hand it
over now..." The soldier hands Tsang the photo, explaining that it was found in one of the prison cells that Kyouko Yuuki was in.

“What is this?” Commander Tsang asked as he examines the photo.

“A wedding picture of sorts.” The soldier replies. “But they do look familiar.” Tsang examines the photo; the woman is in her twenties and with long hazelnut hair with matching eyes, while the groom is around the same age and with black hair.

"Where have I seen them before?” Commander Tsang said to himself while stroking his chin.

“I believe they were on television that took place four years ago.” One of the soldiers pointed it out. It was then that the group saw their guest growl in anger and rage as she walked over to them and explained what the picture was all about.

“It’s a wedding picture of my former daughter Asuna and her commoner husband Kazuto Kirigaya.” The woman explained.

"So, why do you have one if you hate them so much?” Commander Tsang asked. Seconds later, he regretted it... Kyouko explained that she had her daughter to be prepared for the upper class in her future until the day Sword Art Online trapped 16,000 players, including her daughter and was wooed by the commoner Kazuto while trapped, causing her to steer away from her mother’s future plans. It was then that she handpicked Sugou Nobuyuki to be her future husband who captured 400 players after SAO was cleared, including Asuna. The whole incident exposed his inhumane experiments on the 400 players, including the footage of him making a rape attempt on her daughter while in the game. What followed next was her being seen as a monster and the serious retribution against her plans that followed shortly afterward. Followed by the banning of ‘Arranged Marriages’ shortly in July that year; and in the end, her being sent to prison along with anyone who helped her.

“I deeply understand what you have gone through madam,” Sieu said in a calm tone. “What they did to you is unfair.”

"That's why we're here.” Commander Tsang said. Silence loomed over them. It was about several minutes before one of them broke the awkward and tense silence.

“Mind if we escort you to your new quarters?” Tsang asked. After a rather awkward nod, the group left the area under heavy guard. They drove through empty streets and districts, passing empty shops, markets, and a few anime stores and malls.

“Such a waste,” Kyouko muttered. Some of the Chinese soldiers pondered on the Anime cartoons the Japanese are so fond of as they’re popular worldwide. They even thought of what to do with them: ban them or try to utilize them for their own propaganda ends. However, the answer is unclear for the moment, as of now, it’ll be banned for the time being until a proper decision is made.

It wasn't long before the convoy arrived at the destination and everyone got out and headed into the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building, up to the floors and arrived at one of the rooms, which was fashioned into one of the living quarters suitable for comfort.

"If you need anything, let us know..." Commander Tsang said.

“Will do,” Kyouko replied. With that said, the Chinese group left leaving the woman alone in her new quarters to ponder what to do next and how to exact her vengeance against her daughter, her husband and the nation in the west.

“Come on…pick up..” Max murmured as the phone is ringing from the other side, then a female
voice is heard.

“Shino?” Maxwell asked. “This is Maxwell Lavoie.”

“Lavoie-san?” Shino replied. He asked her if they located Klein and his family yet.

“Not sure, we’re still searching. Eiji, Andrew, and his wife managed to regroup with us.” She answers.

“That’s good to hear.” Max continues, during the phone conversation, Shino tells him that they’re aware of what’s been going on and they hoped and prayed that it wouldn’t escalate, but with the invasion of America’s East Coast, it’s only a matter of time before the Chinese make their way on Japanese soil.


September 20th, Manhattan Island, New York City:

The United Islamic Republics managed to seize control of the Manhattan district and turned it into their base of operations for the East Coast. Despite this, they continue to suffer attack after attack by American Resistance forces hellbent on sending them a message: their country was not theirs for their taking.

On top of the One World Trade Center tower, known as Freedom Tower, General Omar Nomaan stood against one of the railings overlooking the entire island; skyscrapers as far as to the shores of the bays and rivers. The tower was renamed to the ‘Tower of Allah’ after capturing the city; the Islamic general smiled proudly as he hears the flag of the United Islamic Republics snapped in the breeze behind him. He was present with his soldiers as they landed on the rooftop of the tower by helicopter and watched his men tore down the very symbol of American Imperialism and tossed it over to the side where it floated down towards the streets as the flag of his Islamic Superstate is raised up. The Commander center is added to the tower and acted as the brains of New York City while several radio and television studios sprout propaganda throughout the city, antennas and satellite equipment on top of the roof, the tower was high enough to send out messages and communications through the ranks of the Grand Islamic Army’s might.

Next to him is Commander Muhammad Yusuf Hassan, who he lead the charges of the Big Apple on that day. With that being said, however, the country was still refusing to back down from various militias that had sprung up determined to drive the Islamics from the East coast

“The Americans are getting restless General Nomaan,” Hassan said as they looked onward to the streets below. To the General, this was one thing he half-expected from the Americans given their so-called 'history' as he's heard it over and over again. But it won’t matter; all he had to do is squeeze harder against the Americans as they did back in Iraq and throughout the Middle East over ten years ago.

What he failed to see was this: follow Sun Tzu and you will prevail while if you ignore him, you'll fight in darkness, but he didn't seem to care about that tiny detail that would be their downfall. The two leaders then turned around and head towards the elevator of the tower. During the ride downwards, one of the two men decides to speak up as they past floor after floor in the massive skyscraper. "Did they ever play music in these things?"
“Yes, but only the American kind,” Nomaan replied and explains that it’ll be replaced with the music of Islam soon.

“OK then.” The Commander replied. They got to the floor where the engineers and technicians of the UIR are busy; the soldiers are there for security. Everyone in the room stops what they’re doing, face the men, and salute them as the two walk up to the group in the room.

“At ease,” Nomaan said following with his salute. Everyone relaxes as the two men look to see what everyone in the room was up to since they took control of the building. They’ve learned that the shipment of the combat drones from China has arrived to re-enforce their armies throughout the city.

“How soon would they be ready?” The commander asked.

“Won’t be long Commander Hassan; they’re being unloaded at the docks as well speak and being programmed for combat.” One of the technicians replied.

Good, these rebels are really beginning to annoy me.” Commander Hassan said.

“Also, we’ve been receiving the help of collaborators through the city.” The technician then said.

"Show me..." Commander Hassan said. He sees volunteers for assistance the Islamic occupation had histories with America. He learned that after the ‘Anderson Act’ was passed in 2014, outlawing political correctness in the nation. While one half moved to Canada, the others went into hiding from the new government as any practice of their ways is an ‘act of treason’ and punishable. The commander rubs his chin in deep thought of how to use these potential new assets for the United Islamic Republics before he then made his choice and spoke seconds later.

“OK, we’ve got some use for them.” He then said. He then gave an order to have them brought to the tower so he could see them in the person himself. Several minutes later, the volunteers arrived at the tower and are waiting in the lobby.

Then, the Commander arrives with a few others with him. The Commander looks at the volunteers, they’re a mix of minorities and Caucasians as well as both male and female. The Caucasians surprised the Commander as far as he was concerned, a good number of them hated Middle Eastern, but then recalled the leftists in UC Berkeley. He also recalled several formal leftist colleges who practice their views to the desecration of the American flag while calling the nation an “Empire built on Racism and Genocide”.

Then when Political Correctness was outlawed, many of these were then out of a job and thus in the eyes of the Commander, they wanted payback. He approached the group before he spoke.

“We are glad that you volunteered for the liberation of America. For too long, they have called themselves kings on their thrones while they spread their suffering across the world. They have stolen your homes and driving you into the wilderness.” He pauses for a moment before continuing.

“But today, that changes. Today is the day that you take your revenge against those who have wronged you in the past. Today is the day that you take back your homes from those who threw you into the streets while calling themselves kings. Today is the day that you reclaim your lives as True Americans.”

Unknown to him, the rebels are watching the speech with disgust and anger from a hideout with more anger being directed at those who are siding with the invaders.

“Allah is smiling upon us as we thrive to work together to restore peace and stability to the troubled nation.” He continued. “As one, we will purify the lands of the filth that is ‘Imperialism’ and give it
back to you… Soon, America will truly be the ‘Land of the Free’ and anyone who stands in our way will be purged to the depths of hell as they suffer our wrath.” The audience cheered as the Commander smiled as the speech was now over and his fellow officers then arrived to start the process.

The officers then begin to start the oath to the UIR and the Hegemony.

“I pledge my allegiance, to the flag of the United Islamic Republics, China and allies of the United Hegemony Alliance. To the principles, for which it stands – all nations, indivisible with the leaders and Allah for the pursuit of unity, peace, and justice for all those deemed worthy.” The traitorous false Americans then joined the UIR and the UHA betraying their home nation in the same way of how some Americans helped the Nazis during World War 2 as well as helping America to lose the Vietnam War and collaborating with the Soviets during the First Cold War. However, by doing so only made them the targets for the underground resistance and swift punishment will be yielded towards them in the future. For now, the traitors basked in the glory of their new masters unaware that their actions will bring the Left eternal shame just as how the Nazis brought all of Germany eternal shame.

As the officers are giving the new volunteers instructions, Nomaan approaches Hassan with a smile on his face.

“You did great.” Nomaan congratulated him.

"I guess, I was more nervous telling my dad I joined the military than this.” Commander Hassan said.

“I’m sure he’s very proud of you of the accomplishments we’ve made.” Nomaan smiled.

"You're right as when I told my mom, she fainted.” Commander Hussein said.

“Indeed, but she would welcome the hero of the UIR once we liberate the world of Western Imperialism.” Nomaan continued.

"Well then, let's get to work." Commander Hassan said. Together, they joined the officers and helped the volunteers on their training of policing the city.

The Resistance has switched to the news broadcast the Grand Islamic Army is reporting on TV. The whole speech from Nomaan announcing that the United Islamic Republics will do all in its power to bring peace and stability to the troubled country and soon will live together in peace.

“Turn that shit off,” Mark said bitterly. Charles switched the TV off and the screen went black. Mark went over to a nearby punching bag and started to punch it very rapidly and with a slew of curses that would've made a sailor blush. Charles and the others remained silent as he continued punching the bag, they knew what he's feeling and they don't blame him. It was a feeling of betrayal.

After a while, Mark stopped punching the punching bag and just sat down. Everyone initially kept a good distance away from the fuming American Rebel before one of them actually dared to approach him. There were times where Mark fumed his rage from time to time, ranging from his car not working to the people who distorted the truth to fit their agenda; however the big one was when footage from Japan where a man molested an innocent girl while chained up in the ALO game, the footage alone was enough to make anyone’s blood boil; even in the aftermath where Canada denied
the whole incidents and claiming they’re false. It was one of the main reasons to have him join the Society for Integrity in Marriage’ where its campaigns began and didn’t let up until Arranged Marriages was outlawed internationally on July 2nd.

And now this, this betrayal by these false Americans to the enemy appeared to be just as equal to what he saw all those years ago. And Charles understood it all as well as Mark did. It wasn’t just Luke and Charles, but everyone in the Resistance Cell felt the same way Mark was feeling at the moment as it wasn’t long before Mark recomposed himself.

“Sorry about that..” Mark apologized.

"Don't be, it's just you being you," Luke said.

“Yeah, and believe us, we’d do the same thing if we were you,” Charles added.

“Thanks,” Mark said. There was a long silence until Luke broke it.

“So now that these False Americans have come out in the open after all these years.”

"And we'll teach them the price of treason,” Charles said. The Anderson Act gave the False Americans options to either accept the changes or leave the country; even the protests they've attempted ended in disaster after a series of crackdowns were ordered, some were killed while the others either fled the country or went into hiding. With recent events, they have all come out of hiding or are in the process of returning to finish what former president Obama started.

“So far, we've managed to gain major grounds in the city,” Luke added.

“Like where?” Mark asked. Charles reminded him of the raids and captures of certain parts of the city, ranging from the Bronx, parts of Queens and Brooklyn.

“But Manhattan is still another matter.” Luke continued.

“We won’t be able to penetrate their tight securities as they’re all holed up there,” Charles added.

"It's Grade-A Green Zone territory,” Luke said.

“Indeed like several districts around Manhattan have the Grand Islamic Army on guard, basically Yellow Zones,” Charles commented. All of this sounded very familiar to Charles as it came from a video game.

"Then, there's the Red Zones which we operate the best and ones we also have to use caution, but not as much as the Yellow Zones. Going into the Green Zones now is a suicide due to our current state.” Luke said.

"Wait a minute, isn't this zone thingy very familiar to anyone?” Mark asked. There was a long pause as Mark made a point.

“It sounded like it came from a video game,” Mark added before he then realizes where this is all came from and quickly did a eureka moment with himself before he quickly spoke up.

"The Homefront Video Game! Why didn't that occur to me just now?” Everyone was confused by Mark’s statement before Charles asked. “Was it the Original or the sequel?’’

“The second one,” Mark said.

“I remembered the games.” Charles then said.
“We all have,” Luke spoke up. Mark sighed and then spoke, "Never imagined that it would turn into real life."

“None of us did,” Charles spoke as well.

“Now that he is out of the way, can we get to the subject?” Luke suggested.

"Right, as we must avoid what is strong and attack what is weak as Sun Tzu would say as even he would understand our plight, I hope," Mark said.

“Right, it’s no doubt that they’ll be releasing collaborators in the Yellow Zones to keep tabs on everyone.”

"How do we get rid of these collaborators? Assassins Creed style anyone?" Charles said.


“Indeed,” Mark said before asking, “When do we get started?” He was urged to have the collaborators removed very soon; it’s no secret that they’ll be spouting propaganda from televisions and radios to discourage the public.

“We just did,” Luke said. It was then that they begin to make contact throughout various Resistance cells and checkpoints throughout the city, the fight for liberation and freedom is still a long road to it, but they will prevail in the end.
September 22\textsuperscript{nd}, Hawaii, USA:

The US state of Hawaii has become a fortress in the Pacific Ocean, the island state managed to have stocks of food, weapons, ammunition and medical supplies for both the civilians and the US Armed Forces that are present. After the west coast fell to the Chinese a few days earlier, everyone became concerned about shortages of everything and the state would eventually descend into chaos. However, as promised; nations of Chile, Argentina, and Australia agreed to help out with supplies whenever they can, even the United States promised to help out despite losing the west coast.

At the housing complex outside of Honolulu, the group who had left Japan before the invasion began have managed to make a living together. Alex Mitchell and his cousin Randy, Scott Mason, Timothy Hudson, Suguha Kirigaya, Rika Shinozaki, Keiko Ayano, and Yuuki Konno, as well as their families, had gotten used to being in the same place including Keiko’s munchkin cat Pina. Randy’s father and doctor Joseph and his assistance Dr. Kanashi also continued to check up on the two former knights of the Underworld Eugeo and Alice via android bodies before they head up to the main hospital in Honolulu.

"Running android diagnostics now..." Dr. Kanashi said. For the past three years since coming to the real world, Eugeo and Alice have been used to walking around in android bodies, it was great an all but has limited most of their abilities. However, they were able to FullDive into the world seed and visit places such as ALFheim and New Aincraid where the log home of Kirito and Asuna is located.

"Systems check out, no sign of UIR infiltration for now." Dr. Kanashi said.

“Nothing to worry about Dr. Kanashi,” Alice spoke. “Our bodies here are designed to be hack-proof, the technicians from the Ocean Turtle were kind enough to add those features.”

“Very true Alice.” Dr. Joseph said. “But we must take precautions these days.”

"Can't blame you for that," Alice said.

“Especially since this Third World War has sparked off,” Eugeo added. They’ve learned from their friends that the real world had problems and conflicts in the past, but World Wars one and two were the most devastating and saddening when they’ve heard about the horrors that occurred during those conflicts.

For World War 1 had trench warfare, machine guns, the first usage of tanks, poison gas usage, the RMS Lusitania being sunk by a German U-Boat, and finally the Spanish Flu that hit and devastated the world.

World War 2, on the other hand, had the Blitz, aggressive expansion by Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, the first usage of Atomic weapons, and lastly the horror show known as the Holocaust. Kazuto explained to the two knights that Japan were ashamed of their own past for the horrors they’ve committed since the days of the Japanese Empire ranging from the colonies of Korea to the war frontlines against the Republic of China. For nearly the next seventy years, the Japanese Government have denied their past in order to bury them, even going as far as printing out history textbooks that white-wash their actions. Eventually, however, the truth finally was allowed to come to light and Japan could at least owe up to their sins as Italy and Germany have done the same as
well.

It took some time for the doctors to check up on the android couple’s body functions for any defects before they are cleared to return to the housing complex with the others. It didn't take that long for the android couple to arrive at their destination where their friends greeted them the moment they walked in.

“Hey everyone, we’re back.” Alice greeted their friends as everyone gathered around the android couple.

“Glad to see that everything’s working properly.” Alex smiled.

“Likewise,” Alice replied. Everyone sat down at the large couch, Keiko’s cat Pina jumped up on her lap and purred lightly.

"So, how did everything go?” Rika asked.

“It all went great; they wanted to make sure that no one would be able to hack into us and such,” Eugeo explained about their concerns.

“That’s good to hear.” Keiko chirped. As Eugeo and Alice sat down, everyone begins to discuss what has happened.

“Still can’t believe the west coast fell,” Randy stated.

"That's what you get when you send jobs over to China," Alex said. Long before the Second Revolution, the trading deal between America and China has helped to give the latter country the funds received by the product that not only made in labor camps but has caused more harm to the jobs and health in America. The money was then used to help build up their army for decades while the environment in China dissolved into massive pollution. Even after the trading deal ended by the end of the Revolution, China continued to build up their armies and weapons while expanding their jobs in their controlled nations such as Vietnam, Thailand, and India. Now the dragon has risen up and begins expanding their warfare across the hemisphere.

"Now, those who sent those jobs overseas are now reaping what they've sown," Rika said.

“Right…” Randy concluded, but then he pondered. “But it is strange that the Chinese left Hawaii alone while they took the west coast.”

"Something tells me that they wanted a much larger base for their invasion of the US than this set of tiny islands," Randy said.

“Or maybe realize that taking Hawaii isn’t worth the manpower,” Yuuki spoke up. It is possible that since Pearl Harbor in 1941 have caused the United States to increase their security and advanced early warning systems over time after the Second World War and the Chinese believed it would be suicide to lead a surprise attack on the US Naval Base not knowing what kind of defense weapons the US has in store. However, it didn’t stop the Chinese from forming a blockade around the Islands in hoping to starve them into submission, that theory left the group worried.

“Who know…. who knows…” Rika uttered.

“Let’s be thankful that the navies from Chile, Argentina, Australia, and New Zealand agreed to help out with us,” Scott concluded.

“Agreed,” Alice said.
“I just hope that Klein, Agil and the others are safe,” Keiko said in a worried tone, the others nodded in agreement. They hadn’t heard anything from their friends Shino, Shigeru, Yuki, Klein, Andrew and the others who didn’t get out of Japan before the nation fell. They could be anywhere from being in the local resistance to being in concentration camps or worse yet, dead though everyone hoped they were still alive. However, they’re more worried about their two friends Kazuto and Asuna; as they live in the state of New York which is close to New York City. But none of them are more worried than Suguha, her older cousin with his wife behind enemy lines on the East Coast.

Alex sees Sugu with worried expressions on her face and gives her a comforting hug. “It’s alright Sugu…” He said in a soothing tone. “If we know better, Kazuto and Asuna have probably managed to evade capture and are in hiding.”

“I hope so…” Sugu said softly as she buries her face into his shoulder.

“Yeah Sugu, they’re both tough and brave in their own way, I’m sure they’ll pull through,” Rika added while she patted on her back. “And let’s not forget Yuki, Max and your older brother back in Japan Alex, with their military backgrounds, I’m sure they’ll be training them how to fight back.”

“You’re right Rika.” Alex smiled. “From what I heard from father, Yuki’s tougher than nails.”

“He sure is.” It was a good thing to have Yuki, Max, and Jonathan to watch over their friends who are stuck in Japan. Maxwell’s military training in the United Nations Peacekeepers has paid off even after defecting to the Coalition in the ‘USS Bush incident’ in 2025, plus he agreed to stay behind with the others when Japan fell.

"They will win and they will never surrender," Alex said.

“Amen to that.” Scott chimed in. It was then Randy reached for the remote control and turns on the TV set, it was nothing but news of the ongoing war.

“Top news today, the nations of Australia and New Zealand are engaging against the Chinese on the shores near Darwin, Palmerston, Auckland, and Pukekohe in attempts the push them back into the ocean.”

"In the USA, the United Islamic Republics, China, and the Federation are facing fierce opposition to their invasion of the USA.” The others continued to watch the news, at least the US has halted the Hegemony’s advances.

“In the Middle East, the Israeli government and its people of 8 million have been evacuated and established a government-in-exile in the UK, Prime Minister Joshua Avraham has announced in his speech today.” Then the footage of the Israeli Prime Minister Avraham is shown before the public, attended by both the Israelis and the British.

"At least Israel will survive," Rika said. It was then Avraham begins to speak.

"Today, we people of the Holy Kingdom of Israel have landed in the UK having been driven from our home just as did Romans did thousands of years ago."

“These actions committed by the United Islamic Republics are inexcusable and inhumane that they will do anything to make sure the Holy Kingdom is blotted from the earth and replaced by their religion that defiles our lands and commits sinful acts in the eyes of God. But we will not be defeated, we will remain strong and we will retake our lands from the Islamic state. Our prayers go out to those who are still trapped and are struggling against the Islamic regime.” The crowds go wild at the speech as the Israelite leader steps aside to allow his UK counterpart to speak to the
crowds once they've settled down.

“The Israeli people have the right to exist as a sole nation in the past.” Prime Minister Jonathan Mills begins to speak. “They’re the first who migrated from Egypt to escape the harsh slavery that the Egyptians committed. They first created the 1st Jewish State in 1050 B.C. and have lasted until 586 B.C., then they’ve created the 2nd Jewish State in 538 B.C. and continued to thrive for hundreds of years until 63 B.C. when the Roman Empire crushed them and occupied their country until their downfall and passed on from empire to empire until the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the end of the Second World War. The Holy Kingdom was reborn in 1948 and they struggled to keep their right to exist against those who seek to have them removed long after the Holocaust tried to remove them.” Everyone clapped at the speech before they settled down again and he continues.

“However, the United Islamic Republics have defiled their lands and driven them out of their homes, others who were unable to escape are facing the horrors that will reflect what the Nazis have down during the Holocaust.”

"Make no mistake, the United Islamic Republics will pay very dearly for trying to finish what Adolf Hitler and the Nazis started over there, courts will be served, sentences will be carried out, and Israel will survive.” The camera pans out to show the crowd who are cheering as he finishes his speech. The others who are watching the broadcast smiled on by Britain’s full support for the Israeli Government.

"In the end, the United Islamic Republics will fill all Muslims with eternal shame just as how Hitler did for Germany," Rika said.

“You said it Rika.” Suguha agreed.

"Agreed," Alice said. It was then they watch another news report as the anchorwoman begins to speak again.

“In other news, vowing that the United States will defeat its enemies, President Jack O’Connell today has reinstated the draft for all males aged 18 to 25. For the first time since the Vietnam War, the draft is back and is sure to create some mixed reactions.” The room fell silent as the announcement of the draft being brought back in the wake of the war. Alex, Scott, Tim, and Randy looked at each other with concern on their faces, but neither of them is as worried as their girlfriends. Suguha is the most of the group, her fiancée being drafted into the war and the possibility of being sent to the frontlines. For in War, there is no extra life or do over as once you're dead, you're dead for good. The Draft was in itself a very divisive thing among the group.

However, they hear a knock on the door. The group looked at each other, wondering who would answer the door. It was then Rika volunteered and headed to the door. She opened to see a familiar face.

“Oh….It’s you,” Rika said in surprise, the door fully opens up for the group to see. Alex and Randy see their uncle, Robert Mitchell.

“Hello, Ms. Shinozaki.” Robert greeted her before she gestures him into the house. Behind Robert is another familiar face.

“Seijirou Kikuoka!” Suguha exclaimed in surprise, she got up and went to greet the couple who then went with her to greet the others in the room.

“Been a while since we saw you, Uncle Robert.” Alex smiled.
"Likewise," Robert said in a warm voice. He explained that he owned a vacation house in Hawaii and he and his family were in the right place when the war began.

"Talk about being in the right place at the right time." Randy complimented.

"No kidding," Rika replied.

"You’re probably wondering why we’re here." Robert then said they knew that it wasn’t a social call.

"I take it has something to do with the war?" Suguha asked.

"Indeed, I’m sure that you’ve heard what has happened." He stated. "We all need to sit down as this visit is one of grave importance." Robert continued. "It is the first time since the Vietnam War that the draft is reinstated and training would take place. However it wasn’t stated if the State of Hawaii is effect by this or not, but it’s only a matter of time until they do."

"And that’s why we’re here," Kikuoka added to the conversation. He explains that the Ocean Turtle is evacuated, including Project Alicization to Hawaii where it can be safe. Plus, they also found out that since he has a military background in the past, he’s also placed in charge of the operations in Hawaii.

"What does this mean?" Scott asked.

"This means that you, Alex, Randy and Tim would be under the command of Kikuoka here supervising the computer defense systems." Robert answers.

"This means we’re drafted right?" Alex asked.

"Right, but you’ll be reporting to Seijirou Kikuoka and Colonel Matthew Smith," Robert answers again.

"Are they good and trusty-worthy?" Rika asked.

"Colonel Smith is. Plus all of you and Kikuoka have known each other since SAO as well as with your friend Kazuto." Robert answered. It was then Kikuoka speaks. "Kazuto has been very helpful in the past as well as very important with all of you. Plus I’m sure he’ll approve of having me keeping a protective eye on you all...." Rika and the others agreed, they are known him since he told Asuna of the reasons Kazuto’s transfer to GGO to investigate the killings of players caused by Death Gun.

"When do we start?" Rika asked.

"For the boys, it’ll start in a few days. For you girls, not sure, but it’ll be discussed with your parents." Kikuoka stated.

"OK then…" Alex said. Sugu’s mind was all over the place during the conversation. Although she was relieved that her fiancée and her friends’ boyfriends won’t be sent to the frontlines; but it also put their wedding plans on hold even further thanks to the war. Alex noticed Sugu gazing down and lightly nudged. "Something wrong Sugu?"

"It's just that this war will put a damper on our wedding plans," Sugu said. Alex nodded in agreement as he understood. They’ve spent the whole year planning for their wedding as it was supposed to take place on October 14<sup>th</sup>, but the war postponed their plan. It was then Alex had an idea.
"I think I might have an idea," Alex said.

"What is it?" Sugu asked.

“We could have a wedding here.” He suggested.

“Huh?” Sugu said. His suggestion caught her off guard. It was then Alex explained that even though they may not be able to have the wedding they planned for, but at least they can do is make the best of it all.

“It may not be what we planned for,” Alex concluded. “But at least we’ll be able to elope.”

“Indeed…” Sugu sighed.

“Cheer up Sugu,” Rika reassured her. “At least we’ll be there for you two.”

“She’s right,” Randy added.

"We'll try to make it work," Alex said. It was then Rika asked Robert. “Got a question, I’ve heard that anyone from outside America that joins the armed forces here become US citizens, right?” Robert thought about it for a few moments before he finally spoke his answer out loud.

“Yes, if you decide to join the United States Armed Forces, you’ll become a US citizen.”

“OK then,” Alex said before turning to Suguha and their friends. “I guess we should get started with the wedding in a few days.”

"Okay then..." Rika said. “Let’s get started.” Everyone begins to make plans for the wedding as well as for the future of joining the US Navy in the technician department.

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**September 26th:**

The day for Alexander Mitchell and Suguha Kirigaya has come. Although it was small and the obvious fact that World War 3 was going on, the wedding would still happen as it would at least be a small light in a tunnel of darkness. Everyone decided to hold the ceremony at the housing complex they’re staying at, it was better than nothing. Alex sat in the room turned into a changing room for him to be in a suit.

"Not the type of wedding we wanted, but it'll do," Alex said to himself. On his side, he’s got Randy as his Best Man and has Scott, Tim, and Eugeo as the Groomsmen. On Sugu’s side, she’s got Yuuki as the Maid of Honor and has Rika, Keiko, and Alice as the Bridesmaid. After some quick, last-minute preparations, the event was about to get started. He peaked at the corner and sees his uncle Robert at the makeshift altar. He was fortunate that his uncle agreed to marry them in the ceremony. For his uncle was a certified minister who could legally marry someone as it was handy in this day and age when some pastors were drafted into the war.

After spending almost an entire day preparing, they begin the ceremony. Robert took a moment to pause and then after looking at everyone present in the room for the ceremony, he then started to speak.
"We have gathered here today to witness the celebration of the holy matrimony between Alexander Mitchell and Suguha Kirigaya.” He looked around to see that everyone was in a good mood and thus he continued to speak.

“These two individuals have stood against the tests of time for each other and have proven to be true to each other.” Alex and Suguha smiled to each other, he could see happy tears forming in her eyes as his uncle continued. It was then Randy gave the pastor the rings.

"It is now time for the rings,” Robert said. He hands the rings to the Bride and Groom. Alex was the first to start repeating the wedding vows.

“Suguha, from the first moment I lay my eyes on you, I knew I found the one I was looking for. I will lay my love on you for the rest of our lives and I will never leave you, forsake you, or abandon you for another.”

“I’ll stand by you and get you through the times whenever they’re good or bad and I’ll fight for you until the end.” Sugu was touched by his words. Then it was her turn, however, she was beginning to choke up in happy tears.

“Alex, I never thought in a million years that I would find someone like you let alone be standing at the altar with a loving person like you.” She paused for a moment before continuing. “I’ll always give you the love you deserve as well as you do the same for me. Together, we’ll fight for our love until the end.” Robert, on the other hand, smiled at the vows before he cleared his throat and spoke once more to the couple and the guests present.

"Alexander Mitchell, do you take this woman to be your lawful wedded wife ‘til death do you apart?”

“I do,” Alex answers, much to Sugu’s happiness as he slid the ring on her finger, it shined beautifully. Then Robert turned to her and asked. “Do you, Suguha Kirigaya take this man to be your lawful wedded husband ‘til death do you apart?”

“I do.” Sugu answers and then slid the ring on his finger.

“By the power invested in me and the US State of Hawaii, I now pronounce you husband and wife.” Robert smiles. “You may now kiss the bride.” Alex didn't need to be told twice as quickly as greased lightning, he kissed his bride who was now his wife as everyone around them cheered. Sugu, on the other hand, allowed her happiness to flow down her face as his lips touched hers. The two have come all the way from helping to aid her brother and his best friend to free Asuna from Sugou’s grasp to exposing his experiments to the world. Meeting each other for the first time in the real world and starting a relationship that lasted from there, to teaching her how to swim for the quest in ALO. Suguha has helped him with the restoring of his memories during the Ordinal Scale as well as helping him through his grief when Kazuto was injured by Johnny Black along with helping him recover from the attack of the Ocean Turtle. They’ve stood against the trials of time and challenges and with their friends by their sides as well as each other; they’ve proved that they’re truly meant to be. And now, they’re both married and will spend the rest of their lives together as well as help fight in the third world war.

The clapping died down so that Robert could make a further announcement. "And now without further ado, may I present to you for the first time...Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Mitchell.” Suguha blushes as she’s now a Mitchell. Although she still retained her maiden name, as her surname is now Mitchell. After that was done, the wedding ceremony was concluded as the reception was yet to begin even though it would be a bit smaller.
Everyone congratulated the newlyweds, even by the groomsmen and bridesmaids.

“Congratulations Sugu.” Rika smiled as she smiled and gave her friend a hug.

“Thank you…Thank you all.” Sugu replied as she was all smiles; Alice came up and bowed to her.

“Eugeo and I wish you to a happy marriage.” She said.

“Thank you, Alice.” Sugu bowed to her in gratitude. Meanwhile, Alex was getting some compliments from the guys. Even his uncle smiled upon his nephew.

“Way to go Mr. Married Man.” Scott teased.

“We’re so proud of you Alex.” Robert smiled.

“Thanks, Uncle Robert and thank you, everyone,” Alex replied. He knew that marriage is going to be a big responsibility; however, it’ll all have to be set aside for now. For the third World War was at hand and everyone knew that not all married couples would survive intact, but they all had one thing in common; they are willing to face the dangers together.

Everyone began the small reception; later on, the dance began starting with the Bride and Groom sharing their dance first.

Alex and Sugu smiled to one another as they danced slowly, they’re fortunate as their dance lessons have paid off. However deep down, they both felt sadden that some of their relatives aren’t here to witness their ceremony. But they had to put up their smiles for the rest of their families and friends; for this was their day and what they got was at least better than nothing.

Then it was time for the groom to dance with his mother, Marie. The two made their way to the dance floor where the two then danced.

“I’m so proud for you and Sugu,” Marie said happily.

"Thank you, mom," Alex said.

“And I’m sure that your father and brother are proud of you too.” She then said they both knew that they’re out in the Pacific trying to find ways to push back the Chinese and possibility help aid the insurgents in Japan.

“I’m sure they are,” Alex said softly. They remained silent as they continued their dance together until the song ends; their dance ends as another group got to dance. It was the bride’s turn and her father, Minetaka Kirigaya steps up for her. The two made their way to the dance floor as then the music plays.

“Hard to believe that you and Alex came all the way,” Minetaka commented softly to the bride.

“Thank you, Father,” Sugu replied softly.

“We understand that you and your friends are anxious on what has happened…But no matter what, we’ll stand by you together like we always have.”

“That’s good to hear,” Sugu confirmed. Afterward, the dance with the bride ended and everyone begins heading towards the dancefloor. Although Eugeo and Alice stood by and watched as their android bodies didn’t have the ability to dance.

“This is very nice,” Alice said.
“Indeed, it almost resembles the wedding ceremonies back in the Underworld,” Eugeo admitted.

“It sure does,” Alice added. Despite the war going on, they’ve volunteered to help out whenever they can; although it may be difficult since they’re in android bodies since they left the Underworld. But they’re positive that they’ll find a way to help out whenever and however they can, even if they have to do non-combat duties due to their forms.

As the couples danced with the bride and groom, Tim held Keiko gently in his embrace. The young couple smiled to each other, the light shines beautifully on her light brown hair along with her light brown eyes; radiating her in a type of glow that only made her more and more wonderful.

“Beautiful as always Keiko,” Tim whispered, causing the girl to go a little pink.

“Thank you, Timmy,” Keiko replied and leaned up to his ear and whispered. “And you’re always handsome.” She gave him a quick peck on the cheek before snuggling herself in his embrace again. They along with the rest of the guests continued their dances in a moment of harmonious peace.

Sometime later, the reception ended and everyone helped clean up the place, even the bride and groom after they finished with their last dance. With the clean-up concluded moments later, the wedding was now officially over.

“What time do we have to show up at the base tomorrow?” Rika asks.

"0700 hours in the morning.” Robert said. That means that they have to head on to bed early tonight.

“OK, we’ll be ready then,” Yuuki said with determination.

"We will be," Keiko said.

“Same here,” Rika added.

“Don’t forget us,” Scott mentions Tim, Randy and himself as well as the newlyweds. Everyone nodded in agreement and in a firm stance that they would all be together no matter what would stand in their way. They’ve faced odds before, for those who survived Sword Art Online are aware of this, ranging from helping Kirito locate Excalibur and saving ALFheim to getting them through the ‘Ordinal Scale’ incident. Even Alex went all the way to protect Kazuto on the Ocean Turtle as well as Asuna who decided to dive into the Underworld to retrieve and revive him; along with helping Alex recover from the attack. They’ve stood strong against those odds and they will again.

For now, tomorrow would be the start of another journey........into war...

October 27th, Catskill Mountains:

Over a month has passed since World War 3 began. The group continued to live in Drake’s family cabin high in the mountains. Kazuto and Asuna Kirigaya, along with Alan, Andrew, Bruce and Jason Jackson and Drake Tanner trained for modern combat whenever they could.

Daylight breaks as one of the Jackson brothers wake up and go to have a quick breakfast before heading out on patrol to keep an eye out for Islamic scum and their allies. They also have to find some supplies from other cabins or buildings within the area; however, it’ll be a little difficult as
they’re about several miles apart. But they have to try, even with the risk of being caught by Islamic soldiers or by the elements of nature.

“Can’t believe that it’s been a month since all this started,” Jason said to his brother.

“I know,” Bruce replied back. The forests in the Catskill Mountains are peaceful with the wind blowing through the trees and the birds singing. However, they know that this isn’t a vacation as this is war, which the United Islamic Republics and the Hegemony started.

“Hard to believe that they’ve haven’t searched for this area.” Jason pointed out.

"This country is vast and wide, it'll take time to search it all," Bruce said.

“But still, we need to be prepared when they do,” Jason added.

“Yeah.” Bruce nodded. They continued on through the forest while hiding behind trees and bushes whenever they can in case they’re Islamic scouts around. A first they found nothing, then they see a building in the clearing, it looked like it’s either one of the cabins or a general store. Both decided to proceed towards the landmark, but with caution as they don’t know if the structure or structures are abandoned, owned by some crazy and deranged Survivalist, or by the United Islamic Republics.

As they got closer, it was indeed a general store, they’ve searched all around the building as well the small parking lot, it was empty, they checked the doors of the place, the doors themselves are intact and locked, but they cannot be sure if the place is empty. Bruce managed to get the doors unlocked and the two brothers went in expecting a fight, but to their surprise, as they searched, they found nothing.

“The place is empty,” Jason said as they looked over the empty shelves and aisles, even the cash register is cleaned out.

“Yeah, it is,” Bruce replied. It was then he pointed towards the door that leads to the back room, it is possible that they could be supplies that aren’t been looted. “Let’s check in there.”

“OK then,” Bruce said as they headed towards the door, Bruce works his magic on picking at the door lock after they see it’s too locked. They’ve opened it and slowly pushed the door open before carefully entering the dark room. Jason turns on the flashlight and they see no one inside, but they see a few boxes in the room.

“Let’s search those boxes,” Bruce ordered before they lifted the lids of one of the boxes, it was empty.

“Figures…” Jason muttered before they moved to the second box.

“Empty as well,” Bruce said in disappointment. They’ve searched a few boxes which are empty, the last box remains.

“Last one.” He said, they opened it, and they see a few supplies in them. While it contains some food, but it also houses some houseware such as hand soap. It was then Jason sees what appears to be three bottles of cherry blossom shampoo.

"At least it's better than nothing," Bruce said.

“Not to mention the girls having something to wash their hair,” Jason added.

“Yeah…” Bruce then said as they gathered the supplies.
“Two of the girls aren’t happy with their hair being grimy and such.” Bruce then stated. “But at least they’re putting it up…But Asuna has outlasted them since it began.”

"True, but this is war as things like vanity should be considered last," Jason said.

“Right.” They packed up the supplies and gotten ready. “Let’s head on back.”

“OK then,” Jason said. The two leaves the General Store and heads back to the cabin, little did they know that they've been watched from afar. It appears to be one of the Islamic scouts searching through the countryside. The brothers, on the other hand, felt a gut feeling someone was following them or watching them.

After some time, they arrived back to the cabin where they’re greeted by Drake, Kazuto, and Asuna. The latter became Drake’s second-in-command with their experience of leadership in SAO and ALO.

“Anything so far?” Drake asks.

"Not much, just a few things we found," Bruce said.

“Better than nothing.” Asuna commented.

“I know,” Jason replied. They’ve been up in the mountains for over a month, so far, they’ve trained on various forms of combat from hand-to-hand to basic maneuvers of using firearms. Kazuto and Asuna made great progress of the training as they’ve learned them after SAO and ALO as well as they escaped the Underworld.

Although the United Islamic Republic was hunting them, they were being prepared for the day that they would have to fight the Islamic scum.

“So far, we’re making progress with the training,” Kazuto stated.

“Good.” Jason smiled.

“When we come across them, we’ll be ready.” Asuna said with determination. Bruce smiled before saying “Excellent, plus I’m sure they’re other resistance cells out there who are struggling against the United Islamic Republics and we’ll be able to support them any way we can.” As Bruce and Drake continued their conversation, both Kazuto and Asuna thought about their AI daughter Yui. They haven’t logged on for over a month and they realized that she’d be worried sick about her parents being gone for so long.

Jason notices the pair's worry and walks over to them with his brother to see what was wrong.

“Something wrong?” Jason asked the pair. It was then Kazuto begins to speak.

“It’s just that Asuna and I haven’t seen Yui in a long time.”

Asuna nodded in agreement before she took spoke. “Even though we can’t find a way to FullDive into the Virtual World, we can’t help but worry about her.”

"I understand and I'll work to see what I can do." Andrew Johnson said nearby. He and the Jackson Brothers understood the couple’s hopes of bringing their AI daughter Yui into the real world and they’ve met her once when they logged on with the AmuSpheres. For now, however, they had to focus on fighting the UIR and its allies.
It was then the two brothers had a bad feeling when they heard a small branch snap several feet away.

“What’s that?” Bruce said.

“Don’t know…And I don’t want to find out.” Jason replied as he takes his rifle from the sling. Drake, Kazuto and Asuna do the same too with their handguns; there was no time to get to their rifles as they’re in the cabin. Then the group quickly sets up for an ambush against whoever had dared to trespass or encroach into their territory. After what seemed like an eternity passed, a rabbit hopped out from the bushes.

“Just a rabbit.” Drake sighed in relief. It was then the rabbit hopped away when a pair of army boots came out. Looking at the rest of the figure, it was none other than a Grand Islamic Army scout.

“A Scout!” Drake shouted as they open fire on the scout. Before the scout could think, he was then riddled with bullets and was dead before he had a chance to hit the ground.

“Got him,” Bruce exclaimed. But then two more scouts popped from the bushes and opened fire at them, causing the group to duck behind cover.

"Great, this place is compromised," Jason said. At that moment, the clearing for the cabin became a warzone as three more scouts appeared and joined with their comrades. The group retreated back to the cabin.

"Now what do we do?!” Asuna shouted.

“Keep fighting.” Drake popped out from cover and returned fire. However, they realized that it’ll draw more of the Grand Islamic Army, it may be their last stand before they can begin the fight.

“Do we have to run!?” Asuna asked.

“We may have to!” Kazuto replied back.

Just as they thought it’s over, one of the scouts fell to the ground dead, then another fell. The rest turned to see where the shots are coming from before the third too got hit and fell to the ground dead. The sounds of battle suddenly ended, but everyone remained on edge in case more showed up.

“Is it over?” Asuna asked as she peeked over from behind cover.

“Doubt it. But we gotta keep guard.” Drake ordered. It was then a figure stepped into a clearing, but it wasn’t a UIR scout as he shot one of the injured scouts, killing him in the process. This one wore a standard combat gear whenever it was an old military uniform or civilian gear. Kazuto and Asuna were stunned when they saw that he was wearing the skull mask; it had brought the memories of the two encountering Ghost Op soldiers.

He seemed to be a Ghost at first, but judging by his gear says otherwise.

"Who’s that?” Asuna asked in a hushed whisper.”

“I don’t know Asuna,” Kazuto whispered back. “But he looks like one of the survivalists.”

The figure continued to inspect the dead scouts before turning his attention towards the group.

"Who’s out there?! Come out! Show yourselves right now!” Drake shouted.

It was then he spoke. “No need for any of that. It’s just only me.”
“Who are you?” Asuna asked.

“I’m not one of them. I’m on your side.” He replied back. “However, it’s not safe here, there are more Islamic scouts in the area.”

“So, this location is compromised,” Jason stated.

“Yes, however, there’s a very well hidden base here that will be useful for you. However, we must hurry as time is critical.” He continued. “I’m sure they’ve heard the gunshots.”

“Alright.” Bruce then said. It was then the man approached the group, who this time, have eased up.

“Take what you can and be out of there in five minutes..” It was then he turned to the brothers.
“Help me get their clothes off and put them in the cabin.”

“Consider it done,” Jason stated.

Then he turned to Drake and asked. “Does this place have kerosene or propane of any sort?”

“Yes, we do,” Drake replied he was confused at first. But then the survivalist tells them that they need to burn the cabin down so that they won’t look for them. Drake was shocked by his commands. The cabin was in his family for generations. Taking the torch to it is like erasing history.

"Do I have to really do it? It is been with my family for years.” Drake said somberly.

“I understand. But the Islamics will continue to find us unless they think you’re dead. It’ll throw them off the trail.” He explains.

"Fine..." Drake said bitterly. Kazuto and Asuna helped the others pack their belongings as quickly as possible, they’ve remembered to take their AmuSpheres as well. Pretty soon, they’ve packed the trucks again.

With that all taken care of, everyone was ready to head out again with their new ally, but Drake stood at the cabin with a lit flare in hand before with a sigh and a few tears, threw it at the cabin igniting it in seconds. They also left some of their rifles with the bodies to make it look like insurgents instead of their own.

“So where are we going?” Jennifer asks.

“Somewhere that we can be completely undetected.” He answers. “Now follow me closely and try not to stray away.”

“OK.” She said, she hops in the second truck; everyone followed the Man who is on the ATV as the cabin burned furiously behind them. They followed their mystery friend to the destination that none, but their mysterious ally knew.

After nearly four miles, they’ve come to a clearing, there was a patch of boulders and rocks on one side and bushes on the other, the rest is surrounded by trees.

“Is this it?” Drake asks.

“It doesn’t look like it’s safe.” Asuna commented. It was then the man stepped out of his ATV and pulled out a small device out of his pocket. It almost looked like a smartphone and he presses a few buttons on it. It was then everyone felt the ground begin to levitate for a moment; next, they knew, several feet around them begin to lower into the ground.
"What's happening?!” Asuna panicked as they continue to lower into the ground.

“It seems to be an elevator of sorts,” Kazuto said, he was confused but curious as they see concrete walls and steel beams. The opening above them closes and plunging them into darkness for a second before the lights flickered on.

“What is this place?” Bruce asked. Then the elevator takes them to a large garage, which several types of cars and trucks are seen lined up with each other. Several fuel depots are seen as well.

“Look at this,” Jason said in astonishment. Even the Kirigaya couple was amazed by the size of the underground garage.

“Look at the size of this place,” Bruce said in awe.

“It’s so big.” Asuna said in astonishment.

“Almost resembles the Fallout Vault,” Andy added. Then the elevator reaches to the bottom and stops. The man ushers the others to step out of the trucks.

"Except this isn't the Fallout franchise," Bruce said. Then the man spoke. “This place has been constructed back in the late ’50s during the First Cold War. The main living quarters, kitchen and storage were finished by the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis.”

"When did you find this?” Asuna asked.

“Been in my family for generations.” The man answers and he continued on how they expanded it during the ’70s and ’80s, installing the experimental Geothermal generators and gasoline depots as well as stockpiling the place with food, medical supplies, guns and ammunition before and during the ‘Y2K’ scare. He also mentioned that a superb water purification machine is installed which nearly resembles the one that NASA uses.

“Good thing you were ready,” Kazuto commented.

“As well as half of the nation.” He said. He then removes his helmet and mask, revealing a rugged but firm face and dark blue eyes with dark brown hair; a small scar is seen across his face.

“Forgive me for not introducing myself up there.” He said as he removed the mask. “The name’s Jack Preston.”

“Jack Preston!?” Bruce said in shock. “Aren’t you supposed to be that character from ‘Teenage Robot Chronicles?’ Some of the others looked at him with confusion on their faces as well as raised eyebrows.

“What? Jason and I watched that show all the time.” He defended. “Nothing wrong with that?”

“You’re mistaken then,” Jack replied, like the others; he too raised his eyebrow when Bruce blurted it out. The character Bruce mentioned was made for the Teenage Robot Chronicles as an anti-hero. Although despite that Jack shares the same name as him, there were hardly any references to either of them.

“What now?” Asuna asked.

“I’ve been trying to piece together of what has happened in the past month,” Jack explains. “And so far, it’s pretty grim.”
“But you’re also trying to help form a resistance here, correct?” Kazuto asked.

“Yes, been reaching out to various resistance groups throughout New York.” He answers.

"Has it not been good?” Kazuto asked.

“So far, they’ve managed to hold against them in various locations, including Rochester. But they’re hanging by threads.” Jack says grimly. “However, despite that; they’re doing whatever they can to push back the United Islamic Republics out of American soil.”

“What can be done to even the odds?” Kazuto asked. Jack then explains that he’ll give a short brief of the situation that is not just taking place in America, but the rest of the world and he’ll show them how they can help to it.

“This place has enough food, water, guns, and ammo that’ll feed a small army for years as well as technology that keeps this place going. And we’re not sitting this out while the Muslims, Chinese, and the Federation come in and taking what they want.” Jack continues as they head down a small hallway and shows them the shower room. Both sides have several shower heads and towels on the sides.

“Don’t worry about cold showers as this place has pilot lights,” Jack reassures them. The tour of the massive facility continues as Jack talks about the place and what other features his base of operations has to offer.

“This place has a large firing range for gun training and such,” Jack continues. “So don’t worry about wasting any bullets as we got plenty to go around. This place is reinforced with solid concrete and steel walls and ceilings designed to withstand a nuclear blast.”

“And you said this place is powered by Geothermal and Green Fuel generators?” Drake asked.

“That is right. They’re built to last forever.” He replied.

“Whoa…” Bruce was astonished.

“And of course, despite the steel-clad walls, messages and communications can be reached out to the others as well as peeking through media stations in both ‘Occupied’ and ‘Free America’.”

“That’s good to hear,” Jason remarked. It was then Andy spotted one of the doors in the hallway and asked what that leads to.

“Oh…” He said in surprise but he quickly recovered. “It’s just a storage room, hardly used.” What many did not know was that although it appeared to be a storage room, it actually contained secrets that Jack hoped none of his guests would find.

“OK…” Jason nodded. As Jack continued to show them the base, both Kazuto and Asuna had a feeling that there is more about the room. For now, however, they shrugged it off and continued on with the tour through at the back of their minds, they both hoped Jack would open up more.

“Also here is the bunk room, remember that we can’t neglect sleep in the midst of the invasion.” He further pointed out.

“Good,” Jason said.

“Mind if we head to the showers?” Jennifer asked. Despite having water at their cabin, they had to conserve their water supply.
“Sure thing, looks like you haven’t bathed in weeks,” Jack commented.

"Hey now, I don't smell that bad!” Jennifer shouted.

"Touche...touche..." Jack said.

“'You’ve kept complaining how grimy your hair was.” Andy retorted.

"Ha, ha..." Bruce said sarcastically. Everyone arrived at the shower room. It was good that they're a big wall in the middle of the room for the men and women to shower separately; each shower also has a cubic section for a person to shower in private. Asuna and Kazuto both wanted to shower together, but they were unable to due to the design of the showering areas though it didn't bother them that much.

The showers are a relief for the group, the feeling of hot water running down them as well as using the body soap and shampoo makes all of them feel refreshed. It was a step up for everyone instead of using a bag full of water, puncturing it, and having to do a quick shower. They were impressed by how he was prepared with this large fallout shelter; they’ll make do to the place during the war, and continuing their fight against the Islamic scum and their allies including those traitors who sided with the enemy of humanity.

They finished their showers and they see the closets filled with clothing for both genders, his preparedness continued to impress them.

“'What will we next discover about him?” Asuna asked.

“I don’t know Asuna,” Kazuto replied. “But I’m sure we’ll find out soon.”

"I got a feeling we're not getting the full picture of him.” Asuna stated. Kazuto nodded in agreement, there were times where he had a feeling about Seijirou Kikuoka after SAO was cleared in 2024, giving him his report on his SAO/ALO trauma program; have him investigate the deaths of players in GGO in late-2025 as well as test the Soul Translator in mid-2026. However, despite all that, Kikuoka himself has helped him locate the hospital Asuna was at as well as inform them of the investigation in GGO as well as helping Kazuto recover from his injuries.

“Same here…” It was all he could say for the moment. Everyone is fully dressed and leaves the shower room. They found him in the communications room where he is looking through the systems in the RB and Ham radios, laptop and desktop computers and such. On one of the walls is the map of the contiguous United States, they see that the East Coast of the US is colored in a dark green color, running from Maine to Georgia. The West Coast is colored in a dark pink; California, Oregon, and Washington are seen colored. The Southern US is colored in dark red; parts of Louisiana, Alabama, Florida and Texas are highlighted as well. Jack sees the others and stands back up.

“I see you found something that fits,” Jack commented.

"So, what's the latest?” Kazuto asked. Jack guides everyone to their chairs while he props up the map of the contiguous United States in full display.

“All right, here’s the situation,” Jack says as he begins pointing out the areas of the map.

“East Coast, West Coast, and the South; The United Islamic Republics and the Chinese have smuggled their entire conventional forces within massive cargo ships and transport plans disguised as passenger jetliners, bypassing our navy like the United Nations did in the past but instead filled them with UIR and Chinese soldiers.”
“That’s how they hit New York.” Drake pointed out.

“That’s right,” Jack said before continuing. “The Latin American Federation has been experimenting with concussion missiles, which packs a helluva punch than we realized. They coordinated the missile attacks on the wall that ran the US/Mexican border, bringing it down.” Everyone remembers the footage of the wall coming down and Federation forces rolling through the gaping holes and engaging the US Army and National Guard.

”Didn’t they have to go through security or did those scums find a way around it?” Asuna asked. “It doesn’t explain how did they bypass America’s early-warning system.”

“They had help from the United Nations,” Jack says and explains that the Canadian government and the United Nations have their hand of helping them, allowing a number of spies from China and the UIR to sneak into the US disguised as tourists to sneak into infiltrated several Strategic Air Command bases in both coasts and Texas.

“They’ve also managed to upload a virus that affected consoles connected to Attack Characterization System modules, causing chaos to our Early-Warning systems and opening the door right to the Hegemony. They rolled in and captured several key points and cities, including Washington DC.”

”Is there any way to beat them back?” Asuna asked.

“So far, various army units and national guards managed to halt their advances,” Jack says. “But we’re hearing rumors that the Islamics and China are capturing and torturing civilians in their camps.”

“Canada and the United Nations should be punished for what they’ve done,” Kazuto remarked.

“And they will..” Jack said before he continued. “But I’m getting reports that at the beginning of the war, the United Islamic Republics also invaded Canada, taking Newfoundland, Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and parts of Quebec.” Jack went on that after the invasion, Prime Minister Robert Grace refused to declare war on the Hegemony and several military leaders of the Canadian Army pulled off a coup, overthrowing Grace and the rest of the corrupted government before executing them.

“I guess that the people of Canada had enough of their bullshit and have taking matters in their own hands,” Jack uttered. The others agreed with him, even Kazuto and Asuna.

“Who’s in charge now?” Kazuto asked before Jack answered.

“A military colonel named Robert Gordon. He’s running the show now and will bring their nation back on its feet and will help repel the invasion soon.”

"Is there any way to contact him?” Bruce asked.

“Right now, he’s busy trying to get the country together to make the push against the Hegemony.” He answers. It was then that Jennifer asks about the war overseas.

“Europe tried to ride it out while retaining neutral,” Jack uttered grimly. “But the way the war went their way, it didn’t take long for the Islamics to turn their attention to them. They’ve taken Italy, destroying everything they see, including Vatican City.”

"Did any of the people get out?” Asuna asked.

"Just a handful of Cardinals and what they could carry with them,” Jack said. “The Pope went down
in flames along with the Swiss Guards fighting to defend it.” He continued on that they’ve begun moving up through Eastern Europe, countries of Greece, Albania, and the Balkan countries have fallen to the United Islamic Republics, including the neutral country of Switzerland.

“And come to think that the French President Andrien Lévesque had the nerve to order the army to stand down and allow the Islamics safe passage and occupation without bloodshed,” Jack said with bitterness.

“Spineless traitor…” Bruce muttered.

“It’s safe to say that the United Nations has ceased to exist,” Jack remarked. It was true since America and several nations left the UN, the latter organization moved its headquarters to Paris.

"How the mighty have fallen as it didn't betray the world, it betrayed itself," Jason said.

“That is correct.” Jack agreed. “At least the northern countries of Britain, Ireland, Sweden, Norway and Finland have prepared for the war and are engaging the Grand Islamic Navy in the North Sea and have halted their invasion to a stalemate.”

“As Britain did during the last war,” Andy commented. They’ve also learned that Germany and Spain managed to stall their invasions at their borders, stabilizing the frontlines for now despite using outdated weapons and vehicles as well as the European Union disbanding in the wake of the war.

However, they’ve learned that Australia and New Zealand are suffering invasions from China from the South Pacific and are making progress as well and capturing several cities and towns.

“What can we do?” Kazuto asked.

“We gotta make do of what we got here,” Jack explains. “We need to show the others that the Islamic soldiers can be pushed back. I’ve been keeping in touch with several resistance cells through various counties all over New York. They’re struggling to get the push on and they’ll use any help they can get. But we’re gonna help those in the nearest counties and aid them in various hit and run attacks as well as the liberation of the towns and villages.”

“When do we start?” Bruce asked.

“As soon as you finish training,” Jack spoke. “You managed to get here so far, but gonna need some of the basic training of combat as well as survival against the enemy in order to stay ahead of everyone else.”

It was then Kazuto and Asuna stood up and asked him about the computer systems that Jack has in his possession.

"Can we see the computer system you have?” Asuna asked.

Jack looked at her with a confused look on her face. “May I ask why? Nothing online.” It was then the married couple explained that they haven’t seen their AI daughter Yui for a month since the attack began as well as explained on how they came about Yui back in SAO. The others also helped explain to him as they’re on a project to replace all current FullDive technology and to bring Yui into the real world so they can be united with them as a family.

Jack was impressed by their story on Yui as well as the willingness to go far to be reunited in the real world. He nodded before speaking. “Alright, you can see her. I hope you got a couple of those AmuSpheres with you.”
"We do." Kazuto and Asuna said together.

“Very good.” Jack smiled before adding. “The hook-ups won’t take too long, I suppose.” It was then Drake asked Jack about his computer system, he expressed his concerns that it may be traced by the Hegemony.

“They won’t trace it as they have Ghost Circuity installed in them, making them invisible.” He reassured Drake and the others.

“Are you sure?” Bruce asked in a skeptical tone in his voice.

“Positive,” Jack said again. It was then he pointed out that they should pull out a couple of cots for them so that they’ll have something to lie on while they’re in FullDive.

“Thank you for allowing us to hook up.” Asuna thanked Jack with a bow.

“No problem.” Jack smiled as he leads Drake and Bruce to one of the storage rooms and gotten the two cots out and laid them on the floor.

“Thanks, guys.” Both Kazuto and Asuna said. It was then they lay onto the cots as they hook up the AmuSpheres to the outlet and hooked up the Wi-Fi to them.

“I hope this works,” Kazuto said in a soft tone as he lies down on his cot.

“Same here.” Asuna admitted as she and her husband place the AmuSpheres on and lay fully on their backs. They shared each other quick glances before turning towards the ceiling and closed their eyes.

“Link Start!” They both said in unison as their minds enter Full-Dive.

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**Log House, 22nd Floor, New Aincrad:**

Kirito and Asuna woke up in their bedroom of their Log House; their avatar home looks so peaceful. However, in the dawn of war, the cyberspace hooked to the World Seed has been deserted.

“We’re here.” The Bluenette Undine sighed.

“Now we need to find her.” The Black-haired Spriggan then said.

“Let’s get to it then.” She said as they begin searching the Log House. They’ve searched every room of the house, calling their AI daughter’s name.

“Yui?” Asuna called out as she headed into the living room. Kirito was in the kitchen and her name can be heard from there.

“Yui, you here?” Kirito called out, still nothing. They found the place empty and they headed outside, continuing to call out her name.

Asuna cupped her hands to her mouth and called out. “Yui!” Several minutes have passed and they traveled several feet from the house in all directions. However, there was still no sign of the AI child anywhere; it was then the fear of her safety begins to settle over them as they begin to wonder what
happened to her.

“She’s not here,” Kirito said with concern in his voice. He sees worry and sadness in his wife’s eyes.

“We’ll keep looking,” Kirito reassured her and they begin searching further outward into the forests the log house settles next to as well as the countryside of New Aincrad, however….Still no sign of her.

Despite the current situation that had both of them growing anxious, the two kept on looking; Kirito went to extra miles through the air via fairy wings but to no avail. After over thirty minutes of searching, they begin to fear the worst.

“We can’t find her anywhere Kirito.” Asuna said it was then the fear begins to take over. “What if she’s gone for real?” She hasn’t felt the overwhelming of sadness since Yui was nearly deleted by the Cardinal System of SAO and have shed tears for her. But thankfully, Kirito managed to save her heart of the system and later restored her during the ALO incident.

But now, the tears begin to form in her eyes of the thought of not being able to see their child again.

“Kirito…” Asuna broke down in tears; Kirito pulls her into his embrace as she sobs into his chest. It didn’t take long for the Black Swordsman himself to shed tears with her. All of their hopes and dreams to bring Yui into the real world has been shattered…..or so they thought.

From a distance, they heard a child’s voice and their ears perked up. They looked to see a small light floating in the air. Could it be her?

“Yui?” Asuna said as the light got closer and closer.

“Mommy? Daddy?” The voice said again. From that moment, their hearts are lifted up as she recognized that voice. Their relief is confirmed when the light turned into a small pixie form with black hair.

“Yui!” The couple exclaimed happily, and then the little AI turned into her original size and ran towards her parents.

“Mommy! Daddy!” Yui cheered happily as she catches them in a jumping glomp. Kirito and Asuna kneel down and hugged their AI, daughter, tears of happiness flowed down their faces as they’re relieved that she’s alright. At that moment, World War 3 seemed like a distant fantasy, but they’re convinced that she may have figured it out after their month absent.

“You didn’t come back and I thought something happened to you.” Yui cried as she hugged her parents tighter.

“We’re sorry that we didn’t log in for a month.” Kirito apologized as he and Asuna explained what has happened. They made sure to make as okay for their AI child as the war was very brutal and they didn’t want to risk traumatizing their kid. However, Yui is very smart and can figure it out one way or another.

“So there’s a war going on out there?” Yui asked as they broke the embrace.

“Sadly, yes there is,” Kirito said. Asuna nodded sadly as they had to flee their home in America and go into hiding with the others. It was then Yui mentions something about players not appearing in ALFheim as well as GGO and New Aincrad.

“Yeah…It’s true.” Asuna answered. And it was then a voice is heard that said. “It’s very true
“Uncle Alex! Auntie Leafa!” Yui exclaimed as she ran towards them and glomped her uncle. Lexar laughed as he catches her in a hug.

"Nice to see you and that it brings us relief to see you’re fine," Lexar said as Kirito and Asuna went over towards them; Leafa catches her brother in a hug.

“I’m so glad to see you safe.” Leafa teared up.

“As am I Sugu,” Kirito replied. Asuna and Lexar joined in the group hug, inside New Aincrad and ALFheim, where the war was for a minute, non-existent. It was then Lexar explained to Kirito that he and Sugu are gotten married a month ago.

“I guess this means that we’re in-laws,” Kirito smirked.

“Um…yes we are,” Lexar said sheepishly. It was then Kirito laughed. “Now we’re truly brothers.”

“That’s right.” Lexar smiled.

“Indeed,” Kirito replied. Then Lexar continued that he and Sugu, along with Scott, Tim, Rika, Keiko, Randy, Yuuki, and the others have made it out of Japan before the chaos and are now resettled in the US State of Hawaii.

“Including Eugeo and Alice?” He asked.

“Yes, also with Uncle Joseph and Dr. Kanashi as well as the families.” He reassured him. He continued on of how the United States government has reinstated the draft and they’ve joined the United States Navy in Hawaii on supervising its computer defense systems with Kikuoka.

“That’s good to hear.” Kirito sighed in relief. But then Asuna asked. “And What about Klein, Agil, Sinon and the others?”

“We don’t know honestly,” Lexar said grimly. “They were still in the countryside when we were evacuated.”

“Hope they’re OK,” Asuna said with concern. But Lexar reassured them that they’re with Yuki, Fuji, Maxwell as well as his older brother Jonathan. They’re in protection within the US Navy soldier, an Iraqi War veteran and a defected UN soldier. However, Asuna is worried about her father and older brother, who are also still in Japan as she asked Lexar about them.

“What about my father and brother?” She asks.

I’m guessing they’re still in Japan.” This has left her with the worry about being under the occupation of the Chinese. “However, with luck, I’m sure they’re keeping a low profile and managed to evade the Chinese.”

"I hope you're right.” Asuna said. “….I hope they’re alright.”

Lexar chuckled. “Don’t worry, they’re strong.” He looks around and sighs. “It sure is quiet here online. Only the five of us here.”

“Six you mean….” Another voice is heard, they turned to see another familiar face.

“Yuna…” Kirito said.
“Yui and I have been keeping a low profile on here.” She explains.

Lexar mentions that at the beginning of the war, it was possible that the Hegemony could wage Cyberwar and so far, they seem to be stabilized. It was then the little AI begins to speak up.

“When I checked ALFheim a few weeks ago, everything’s deserted.” She says. “And then Yuna and I saw what appear to be players. But……” She paused for a moment. “There was something strange about them.”

“UIR?” Asuna asked in fear. And when Kirito asked Yui about the description of the players, she explains that they don’t look like any of the ALFheim avatars as their armor and weapons are too modern and their coding are way different and the language barriers are Arabic and Chinese. Chills ran down the players, it was possible that the Chinese and the United Islamic Republics have somehow found the way to log into Cyberspace with their own version of FullDive technology.

"Then, we need to consider the grim possibility that this place has been infiltrated by the Islamics and its allies,” Kirito said.

“So far, they’re beginning to gather at the World Tree and some of the surrounding town,” Yui continued. “But they haven’t reached New Aincrad; so far they’ve not gone far yet.”

“What is very good for us,” Yuna added.

“Once we log out, I’ll give this report to Kikuoka,” Lexar stated. If what Yui said is true, they may be facing cyberwar no one has ever seen. And this time, it’ll make the SAO incident look like a tea party.

“Yuna and I will keep an eye out on these guys and report to you whenever I can,” Yui said with confidence. Kirito and Asuna are worried; they’ve almost lost Yui in SAO. But she has proven to be stronger than her parents, even taking part in the Ordinal Scale incident.

“Ok Yui……” Kirito paused for a moment before he said. “…Please be careful.”

“I will Daddy and Mommy.” Yui hugged her parents again.

"We need to get back to plan a way to stop the Hegemony from using this place for their plans.” Asuna said.

“Don’t worry, we will,” Kirito reassured her. “But for now, we’ll keep an eye on them. And……” He then continued. “If possible, we’ll contact the others and we’ll take the enemy here.”

“OK.” Asuna said before she turned to Yui. “Please be careful.”

“I will mommy.” Yui chimed and she shared one final hug before turning into her pixie fairy form.

“I’ll take care of Yui for you,” Yuna reassured them.

“Thanks, Yuna.” Asuna bowed to her.

And with it, the two AIs then left the area as everyone knew that they had to begin to find a way to counter the UIR and China’s attempts to use the cyber world for their ends.

“OK, now that we know that Yui’s safe, we also learned the possibility of the Hegemony’s presence in ALFheim,” Kirito said.

“Guess we should log off so I can report this to my superiors,” Lexar remarked.
“Good idea.” Asuna said. “I guess we’re logging off as well. Got some training to do in order to liberate areas from the Grand Islamic Army.”

“Good luck,” Lexar says Leafea hugs both Kirito and Asuna as she says. “Please be careful. We want you two to come home alive.”

“We will Sugu,” Kirito reassured her.

“I hope so,” Asuna muttered. It was then they said their farewells before Lexar and Leafea drew out their ethics menu and heads to the logout button; Kirito and Asuna did the same with their options menus.

“Back to reality,” Lexar said as he, Leafea, Kirito, and Asuna pressed the logout buttons and they disappeared in bright lights, vanishing from the virtual world. Within a matter of seconds, the married couples came back to the real world and back to World War 3.

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**United States Naval Base, Hawaii USA:**

Alex and Suguha went over to their commanders’ offices and explained the situation on ALFheim, as Seijirou Kikuoka and Colonel Matthew Smith continued to listen to their report; the former took it very interesting.

"Let me get this straight, the United Islamic Republics and China have entered the same virtual cyberspace that had everyone uses?" Seijirou Kikuoka asked.

“Yes, sir. It is possible that they’ve somehow obtained FullDive technology and managed to engineer it for their uses.” Alex reported.

"We need to figure out how." Seijirou Kikuoka said. Then Colonel Smith added. “And figure out why they’re using ALFheim as their beachhead.” It was no secret that FullDive technology has made logging into the virtual world of cyberspace possible; it was bad enough that the Hegemony has somehow obtained the technology and is using it to dive into the ALO world.

"Agreed and right away." Seijirou Kikuoka said.

"This may be a new form of cyber warfare that no one has seen." Colonel Smith then said. Which Kikuoka added. "One that needs to be dealt with quickly before it gets ugly and fast."

During their briefing, Suguha couldn’t help but think of what would happen if the Chinese and the Islamics continues to spread throughout the World Seed. And then if they continue to spread throughout the World Seed, they may have to go in and fight them in the virtual world. They also knew that World War 3 would spread now to a new front, but this time in cyberspace.

“You think that we may fight them there?” Suguha asked.

"I'm afraid that's likely." Seijirou Kikuoka said somberly. However deep down, Alex knew that they cannot allow this to happen let alone give in. He’d never gave in when he helped Kirito rescue Asuna, he never gave in when some of the SAO survivors had their memories robbed during the ‘Ordinal Scale’, including Asuna’s, and during Kazuto’s injury caused by Johnny Black and his self-pity, he’d never gave up on him along with Asuna and risked their lives to protect him from the...
United Nations Peacekeepers during the attack on the Ocean Turtle.

But this is their biggest trials he and his friends will be facing. Despite this, they will have to push against all odds. For he knew these powerful words from a certain Autobot despite him being a fictional character and those words are these: "Freedom is the right of all sentient beings."

“If we do begin to spread and we had to fight them, we’ll be ready for them,” Alex said, his voice is filled with confidence and hope. The others looked at him with both puzzled and impressed looks, however, Kikuoka let out a small smile, he was aware of Alex’s devotion and loyalty as Kazuto mentioned it to him several times during their recovery from SAO.

“We should get started right away,” Kikuoka replied. “However, it’ll take some time since hooking up the AmuSpheres with the United States defense network is complicated work.” However, Alex mentioned that he, Sugu and the others who arrived here have AmuSpheres of their own, they were a couple of years old as they were called ‘AmuSphere II’s’ which are the predecessors of the first AmuSpheres and most common used headgear of virtual games and roaming the cyberspace.

“We’ll get to work right away,” Alex said again. “As well as Sugu and the others.”

“As well as Eugeo and Alice.” Suguha reminded him.

“Right,” Alex remarked. He’d forgotten that their android bodies have built-in FullDive technology so that they can hook up to ALO. Plus, the US Navy will be working on their systems for the mission as well.

"I fear the war will get uglier as it drags on." Kikuoka sighed.

“You got that right,” Smith agreed. Which it was followed by; “Can’t argue with that.” Everyone knew it’s a risky task, however, with proper training as well as proper connections to the AmuSpheres, they should be in business. However, they must keep an eye on what goes on in ALFheim; Alex mentions that Yui is keeping on Recon for them in case something else goes on.

"Smart and very brave AI kid," Smith said. Alex also tells them that Yui is willing to help out any way she could.

“That’s good, the more info the better,” Smith said.

“So we should get started right away.” Suguha suggested.

"Right then, let's get to it,” Smith added. With it, the couple left the office with new orders to begin the operation for Alex, Sugu and their friends. As with those orders, the war front had just entered a new front: Cyberspace and it could very well determine the fate of the world.
November 9th, in the Japanese countryside:

Nearly two months since the third world war began; things are quiet in the countryside of Japan. The beautiful forests and scenery is the very heart of Japan’s beauty. But in these times, it’s deserted….or so it seems. The resistance group has made their base of operations within the countryside as the Chinese have left them alone and focused their attention within cities and towns with populations.

In the countryside, anything could happen as some Chinese soldiers wanted to avoid the area like the plague. Shino Asada sat in the trees with her sniper rifle rested in her arms watching for Chinese scouts from her scope. She, along with Shigeru, Klein, Agil and the others who were in the countryside when the war began became trapped due to traffic backed up by panicky civilians as well as Chinese paratroopers who begin taking control of several key points. Fuji, Yuki and Maxwell Lavoie who were looking for them managed to hide them for a time being.

Though it would be a matter of time before they were found, they received military training on how to fight in guerilla warfare. Yuki’s military background of the War on Terror and Maxwell’s training of the Royal Canadian Army and the United Nations Peacekeeper force came very handily indeed. Combing all of the knowledge that the group had with them, they made themselves a very deadly team that scared some of the Chinese to death.

‘Nothing so far.’ Shino thought to herself. There weren’t any Chinese scouts so far and she hoped it’ll stay that way for a while. With that said, nothing lasts forever. She radios to HQ to give them a status update.

“So far, no scouts here, it’s all quiet here,” Shino speaks into the radio. “It’s all too quiet out here.”

“Copy that Sinon, keep a closer eye out.” The operation replied.

"Roger that, Sinon out." Sinon replied back as she ended the radio transmission. She resumes her scouting mission. During the years, she has grown comfort of the sight of a firearm since her encounter with Death Gun during the Third ‘Bullet of Bullets’ tournament in GGO. The post office robbery that occurred years ago haunted her after shooting the robber dead. She eventually stopped having flashbacks and panic attacks ever since with the thanks of Kirito, Spike and her friends as well as the woman and her daughter who was there that day.

Some life choices one doesn’t have the luxury of waiting as one need to act now as Sinon knew that all too well from that day. It was then that she sees something from the distance; she looks through the scope to see what’s from afar.

"What do we have here?" Sinon asked herself. After a few moments, she saw what appears to be a jeep in the distance. The jeep came to a stop and a few Chinese scouts got out of the vehicle with their weapons ready.

“Looks like we got company,” Sinon said to herself as she readies her rifle. She had to be quick and smart in order to prevent reinforcements from being called in. She’ll have to take one the leader of the Scouts and send the others in a panic. After setting up her shot with her rifle, she doesn't hesitate and takes the shot.
The Scout leader went down as soon as the bullet made contact with his head, the others spun around to see him fall to the ground dead and rushed to investigate him. It didn't take long for the others to quickly fall to the ground in rapid-fire succession. After her rifle clicks empty, all of the scouts are dead; they've been halted for the moment. All she had to do is to radio HQ of her new update and have them clean up the bodies in order to make it look like they weren’t even here.

“HQ, this is Sinon.” He spoke into the comlink.

“This is HQ Sinon, what’s the status update? Over.” The operator replied.

“ Took down another scout team.” She reported. “Better send in to take the bodies away.”

“Roger that Sinon, we’ll send in the cleanup crew to dispose of the bodies. HQ out.” The conversation ended.

"Hopefully, there are no more patrols today though I could be wrong," Sinon said. Time went by as the resistance soldiers carried out the dead bodies and hid their weapons and the jeep; she waited for more enemy scouts. However, none have come so far and it’ll stay that way for a while. Sinon hoped it would stay that way and it could change at any moment as the Chinese would not take this very lightly at all.

“Sinon to HQ, all is quiet so far, no scouts in the area,” Sinon reported.

“Roger that. Do you need a switch out?” The operator asked.

“Affirmative. I need to refresh myself before I continue.” Sinon replied. She was on the stakeout for almost an entire day. Even though she didn’t mind the long wait, but it can get a little boring; plus she needs some rations and rest in order to continue on.

“Copy that, sending you a group to relieve you.” The operator then said.

“Will stay put until the group arrives, Sinon out.” Then silence fell again. Sinon then sighed as she waited for the group to arrive.

Several minutes have passed even though to her it felt like nearly two hours. She was relieved when she sees a small group of soldiers arriving. Three of them are part of the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force assisting a couple of resistance fighters. After they came, Sinon was then able to leave. She hopped onto the bike and sped off.

A few minutes passed before she arrived at one of the resistance outposts, she’ll have to check herself in to prove that she’s not a spy. Once she was able to check things out and prove she wasn’t a spy, she was let in. She enters into an abandoned warehouse that was once used for storage of oil barrels for Japan’s oil refinery before it was shut down in the late 2010s. It was the perfect place for a base of operations for the Japanese Resistance Force. She passed various people with some being armed with others doing non-combat roles.

She smiled when she came across her friends. Klein is training for combat as usual. Shigeru’s been assigned for communications and securities for the entire base as well as trained for combat. He’s also in charge of checking the broadcasts and news reports on both sides of the Coalition and the Hegemony. Andrew has been assigned for the patience of vehicles to weapon repairs while Eiji Nochizawa, Kouchiro, and Shouzou Yuuki maintained combat training from Maxwell and Yuki.

All of them took a brief moment to say hi before resuming their respective sets of work. Shino takes the moment to go over and hug her boyfriend.
“Shigeru…” Shino sighed as she pulls him in a warming hug.

“Shino.” Shigeru cooed as he nuzzles into her shoulder. The hug didn’t last long as they broke the hug quickly as they embraced.

"Shigeru, do you know how much I love you?" Sinon asked.

“As much as I love you too Shino.” He replied back. The couple for a moment embraced again and quietly kissed each other as for a moment, the war wasn't there and it was just them.

Both parted and to their embarrassment, a few were watching with one of them bursting into laughter.

“Even during the midst of the war, there’s never a dull moment.” Klein lamented while snickering.

“Speaking of which,” Andrew spoke up. “Didn’t I see you together with Susan?”

“Susan Vivian to be exact.” Klein corrected.

“And,” Andrew concluded.

“She’s pretty good looking in her own way.” Klein smiled. He mentioned that Susan herself was stationed at the base the year before and was too caught up in the panic during the evacuation.

“Okay.” Andrew nodded. Shigeru and Shino were amazed at how Klein was able to get a girl of his own. He was the only member in their guild to be single for the longest, not to mention being a virgin. It was sad for him that he was near the age of 30.

"I may be near 30, but I'm still good," Klein said.

“And hopefully that you’ll get to experience it for the first time,” Shino remarked.

“Indeed I will. It may be wartime, but at least I’ll get some for the first time.” Klein smiled. It was then Fuji, Yuki and Maxwell appeared in the room. Along with them are Kouchiroy and Shouzou Yuuki. The Yuuki managed to escape capture and joined the resistance to fight back against the Chinese. Like the rest, they couldn’t believe Japan is now under control from China.

"Are we interrupting anything?” Maxwell asked.

“Nope, everything’s all good,” Klein replied.

“So far, took down a few scouts,” Sinon reported.

“Good to hear.” Kouchiro nodded.

“I see,” Yuki concluded. “They just keep sending in more every day. But no matter what, we’ll push them out of the country.”

“Indeed,” Fuji agreed.

“I hope so,” Shino added.

“They have some nerve to invade Japan,” Kouchiroy commented. “I had a feeling that this day would come and hoped that it will blow over without incident.”

"As what we've seen, it did not," Shino remarked. It was unfortunate that she, along with the others
who got stuck in the countryside in the panic to escape the nation. But at least the Japanese government has left most of the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force to help from resistance cells throughout Japan through the way of freeing Japan was a long, uphill climb.

“Hard to believe that the war began just as you were all taking a trip through the countryside,” Yuki commented. Before the war began, Shino, Shigeru, and the others headed out into Japan’s countryside to look at the scenery as well as get with nature. However, the timing could’ve been poor when World War 3 began and they were unaware of what was going on until Yuki and the others found them and explained what was happening.

"Yeah, what happened in America was just a preview of what was to come." Shino lamented. By the time they heard what was going on, they tried to get to Tokyo and be evacuated, only to hit heavy traffic and had to go into hiding when they saw the Chinese parachuting from the transport planes overhead of them. They were one of the fortunate people not to get captured and sent to the POW camps.

They could only imagine in horror what was being done to those at those camps like what the Germans did to their captives in World War 2. It also reminded them of the time Japan did the same during the Second World War as well, but they eventually have moved on with the hopeful future in spite of their burdens, as well as relations to the west; the nation following the same example as Germany and Italy whom both accepted and teach about their darker parts of their pasts openly instead of denying them.

Now they have a third world war to deal with and the Chinese are more likely to exact their revenge against Japan for the dark acts that the latter have committed during the days when Japan was an empire and they won’t stop until they either conquered all of them or wipe them out in the act of genocide, for our heroes in occupied Japan, they hoped it wouldn't be the latter.

‘I sure hope Kazuto and Asuna are alright.’ Shino thought to herself, Yuki and Fuji have reassured them that Alex and the others have escaped Japan before the country fell. But as far as she’s a concern, she hasn’t heard any word about them, Shigeru and the others haven’t heard anything about them either and became worried about their safety.

"You're not the only one with that train of thought," Shigeru said. Shino turned and nodded in agreement. Even the older Yuuki heir agreed. Ever since the war began, he became very worried about his little sister Asuna. There was no telling what is happening in America, and the Hegemony’s occupation in the nation has become unmerciful and he, along with Shouzou, prayed for their safety.

It was then the former begins receiving a strange coded message and he begins to listen into the headphones.

"Yes, what is it?" Shigeru asked into the mike. It was then he heard what appears to be the voice of a little girl.

‘Who could it be?’ He thought to himself. It was then the line cleared up and the voice became clearer. It was then he recognizes the voice.

“Yui..” He said softly. Shino overheard him and was shocked.

“Wait...what?” Shino sputtered.

He turned to Shino before saying. “It’s Yui, somehow she’s managed to get into the communications system.”
"How?" She tilted her head in curiosity.

"Not really sure, but I’m pretty sure that she figured out what was going on.” Shigeru pointed out. It was true that Yui may be a child, but she is an AI as she knows ways around the internet as well as increased her knowledge about their world and the technology everyone has owned.

"Ask her what's going on?" Shino whispered before Shigeru begin asking her questions.

"She said something about ALFheim Online," Shigeru said. The communication has gotten the attention of Klein, Andrew, Maxwell, Fuji, and Yuki.

"Wait, Yui’s on the line?" Klein asked, stupefied of what he just heard.

"Yes, I just said she is." Shigeru rolled his eyes. Kouchirou and Shouzou overheard the snippets; there were times when Asuna have mentioned Yui on occasion. During her wedding, they noted how the hologram of a young girl who was a flower girl.

"Ahh…now I get it.” The elder Yuuki heir said at last while his father nodded in agreement.

It was then Kouchirou went over to Shigeru and asked him to put her on the screen if it’s possible.

"We'll see what can be done," Shigeru replied before beginning to type in the keyboard. A couple of minutes passed before the image of a girl with long black hair and the appearance of eight to nine years old.

"Hey, Uncle Spike.” Yui beamed.

"Hey there Yui.” Shigeru smiled, Shino smiled and waved to her, the camera itself has a small cam on it. But fortunately, the cam has been disabled from the internet as well.

"Hey, Auntie Shino.” The little AI smiled before asking. “How are you holding up?”

"Yes, we are Yui-chan, even though it’s a little hard.” Shino answers.

“I see that…” Yui said softly. Everyone knew that she’d figured out what was going on when they didn’t log into ALFheim. “How is everyone doing?”

It was the Klein stepped in. “We’re doing fine, hiding out in the countryside and all.”

“That’s good to hear.” Yui nodded. It was then Shino asked the AI child about Kazuto and Asuna, everyone was concerned about their friends who moved to America a year ago.

“Mommy and Daddy are alright,” Yui explained that Kazuto and Asuna managed to escape being captured and are hiding out with a prepper in the Catskill Mountains in the US. Both Shino and Kouchirou sighed in relief. At least they’re both alright and out of harm’s way. They also learned that both Kazuto and Asuna are assisting the American Resistance in the area to disrupt the Islamics’ operations as well as push them out of the country.

“That’s good to hear,” Kouchirou replied. He’s relieved that his little sister and brother-in-law are alright. Yui nodded as she knew that her parents were fine and by letting her uncle and aunt know, it would bring a piece of mind in darkness. Eiji went over and asked that if Yuna is alright.

“Auntie Yuna’s fine too.” Yui smiled. It was then the little AI spoke up.

“Something’s going on in ALFheim.” This gets everyone who is part of the ALO guild to attention.
“What do you mean by that Yui?” Andrew asked. It was then she begins to explain unknown players appearing in cities and towns across ALFheim as well as the World Tree.

“So far, they’re appearing to be growing in numbers, but they haven’t set foot in New Aincrad.” Yui finishes.

"Is it possible the ones who started this new World War are trying to use your world for their gain?” Kouchirou asked.

“It appears that they are,” Yui replies and pointed out that she’s been doing her research on the third World War and the countries that have started it. She also said that their uniforms of China and the United Islamic Republics match the ones who are appearing in ALFheim.

“Very good Yui,” Andrew said before adding. “Make sure to keep an eye on them so that we may know what we’re up against.”

“OK, Uncle Agil,” Yui said. And with it, her image disappeared.

“Good kid,” Kouchirou commented.

“Indeed she is,” Klein added. It was then he said. "Alright then, let's get back to work."  

Then Shigeru spoke up. “Think it’ll be possible to make updates to our AmuSpheres?” Shigeru and the others had their AmuSpheres with them before they went out on their trip. However, it was pointless to bring them since they were going to be out in the wilderness. But since then, they couldn’t try to activate them in fear of getting the devices’ signals traced back to them with the end result of the Chinese finding them.

“We’ll see what we can do,” Yuki said with reassurance. The others smiled from the promise; they want to help out with Yui whenever they could. No matter what the Chinese, Islamics, or their allies would pull out of their sleeves, they would have another thing coming.

Shino stretched her arms outward before saying. “Anyway, gotta hit the showers and relax before I head on out again.” And with it, she leaves. A few minutes went by before Shigeru stands up from the chair, he too needs to refresh himself before continuing for there is no rest for weary in the days of this new World War.

He was relieved for rest and he headed to the room where rows of beds are shown. They managed to turn the refinery’s cubic offices and cleared them into areas to store futon and camp beds in. It may not be much, but it was home to him, Shino and everyone else. He headed to his futon bed which is right next to Shino’s as she has some of her personal belongings, they were things that she saved before the Chinese came, and this includes the stuffed bear that he’d won for her at the fair and the photograph of the couple. Back when the thought of Japan being invaded and occupied was just nothing more than a fantasy, but now it was sadly a reality.

After a while, Shino appeared from the shower room with the towel in her arm, wearing only her undergarments. Shigeru smiled as he recalls times when they have their nights together alone in both ALFheim and in the Real World, both of which got really steamy. However, in the time of war, they don’t have those nights and they have to settle with cuddling and snuggling. It was pretty much all they could do, but neither of them complained.

Shigeru sighed as she approached him and lay down on the futon bed next to his.

“Thought I get comfy.” Shino smiled cutely.
“I thought you would.” He chuckled. He scooted his bed next to hers, the latter lay down, displaying herself to him.

“Spikey…” She cooed. He lay next to her and just held her.

“Meow…” She mewed while rubbing her cheek against his shoulder, Shigeru gently stroked her short, brown head while rubbing her ears.

"I love it when you do that..." He whispered softly in her ear, Shino removes her glasses to show her beautiful dark eyes.

“It’s at least we can do during this time,” Shino replied, Shigeru nodded in agreement before placing his arm around her and held her in his embrace. For a while, the war faded away as it didn’t exist and it was just the two of them as the room fell silent.

**Tokyo, Japan:**

The Chinese Military Dongfeng Mengshi Humvee parked in front of the gas station, Commander Ti Tsang stood near the fuel pump waiting for the tank to be filled up as well as waiting for the three boys who are in the convenient store. The jeep has been converted to run on the green fuel Japan has been using for over ten years instead of refined crude oil and natural gas China has been producing in the past.

The People’s Liberation Army and the Chinese-controlled Japanese Occupation Force have taken control of its entire government as well as the media, communications and fuel stations. They already managed to remove all of the religious shrines throughout Japan on orders from high command. They also managed to take full control of its transportations such as the ship ports in Tokyo, airports, roadways and train stations, including the bullet trains or known as the Shinkansen. Those types of bullet trains became quite useful for the Chinese to help transport their troops and supplies. However, they have to use other trains as well as semis to transport jeeps, IFVs, and tanks.

Commander Ti Tsang hoped that his time wasn't being wasted by this visit to this station. The jeep he is currently driving bears three flags. One is the flag of China which is located on the driver’s side. The doors of the jeep bear the flag of the Japanese Occupation Force, which is the flag of the Japanese flag with the Chinese symbol in the middle of the red sun disk. The third flag which is on the passenger’s side is black.

Before they left, Ti Tsang himself got a closer look at the flag and the designs on it made him uneasy, it bears the symbol of a coffin with a wicked smile across it; behind that is the second coffin and has the arm of a skeleton sticking out.

“I got a bad feeling about this,” Tsang said to himself. He read the reports on the three captives a few times. According to the prison records, they, with the exception of Kyouji, were members of Laughing Coffin; a guild from the Sword Art Online death game with the goal to kill players, even go as far as terrorizing and torturing them for the fun of it. It was until one day a guild of high ranking players managed to put a stop to them and have them arrested.

However, he learned that the leader of the guild managed to escape capture and remained hidden long enough, he eventually disappeared after the game was cleared.

Ti Tsang wonders if the rest of the People’s Liberation Army should be happy they’ve recruited those people or should be afraid. He also learned from Kanamoto Atsushi who claims that one of the
American players of SAO killed their leader PoH on the Ocean Turtle in 2026, thus making any progress they were trying to get ruined because of his interference.

He heard a few of China’s ships approached the Ocean Turtle and tried to capture it as they see no activity around it. However, it turned out to be a trap as the Turtle’s arc reactor was rigged to explode, taking half of the ships with it in the explosion. The rest barely survived and had nightmares for weeks while the wounded were brought back to the hospitals in Japan. Thus, in the end, the mission to capture it was a complete and total failure.

The US State of Hawaii managed to remain free from the Chinese invasion as the latter saw no use for the island state as the People’s Liberation Army Navy ships managed to take many small islands in the Pacific, this includes Midway island. They've turned those islands into naval ports so that ships and submarines can refuel and resupply before venturing out into the open ocean. There were attempts to invade and occupy the Hawaiian Islands, but they were thwarted by the islands’ early-warning system that either been unaffected or restored, the US Navy who are full-alert and managed to dig in despite being cut off from the Western Coast of America.

After what seems to be a while, the three boys came out of the store and headed back to the jeep with some goodies they’ve gotten. He knew that it’s them as they all wore the armbands that represent them as part of the Japanese Occupation Force. They also have bans of their own; they represented the same symbol on the black flag.

"In the name of Chairman Mao, these guys are creepy." He said to himself as the others climbed into the Humvee. He starts it up and they leave the gas station through the streets of Tokyo, they see activity going on from Chinese Soldiers who are at every checkpoint to citizens who are struggling to maintain life through the occupation. Some were much easier than others due to the past history between China and Japan.

“It’s good to be on the winning team,” Atsushi commented.

I couldn’t agree with you more.” Shouichi agreed before turning to Kyouji. “….right little brother?”

“Um….Yeah…” The young brother replied. The group chose the Chinese team for their own, perverted reasons. Tsang brushed the thought away and continued to drive down the streets. On further reports of the People’s Liberation Army, they’ve managed to make use of the Naval Base that was reserved for the Coalition ships and docked their own ships there; it was close to Chiba Prefecture. They were surprised that they also discovered a house that was located close to the base. According to the files, the house was the property of the Mitchells, Americans who have moved to Japan a long time ago while half of the family was stationed at the base. However, they found the place abandoned long before the Chinese captured Japan, half of the clothing and photographs were mission along with some items. He also heard that the soldiers founded several video game consoles in the house. However, they have no use for them and they were placed back where they were and use the house as one of the outposts, as the home could serve more than just a home.

After passing through several checkpoints, they finally arrived at the compound where their quarters are located at and the occupants parted from the Humvee.

"Why am I not surprised that those boys put the artwork of their logo here..." He said at last after the boys left. When that was done, Commander Tsang decided to refocus on his work. He checked reports from outposts throughout Tokyo which shows that they’ve been stabilized for a while with only minor disturbances, but they were eventually put down.

"Sometimes, I would if my dad ever felt the ever-present feeling that today is dragging out." Commander Tsang said to himself. He looked further into the reports that other units are
experiencing disappearances of their scouts.

"Must be due to those pockets of resistance." He muttered, he knew that they’re some citizens who are not gonna give the country up without a fight.

"Then again, this isn’t the land of the Samurai for nothing..." Commander Tsang then said. He’s probably sure that the high commanders are aware of the situation but have reassured the People’s Liberation Army that the resistance will collapse in no time; though if history is any indicator, it has of saying otherwise.

He places the reports back into the file and proceeded through the compound. Though Commander Tsang hoped for something more interesting today aside from the usual grind as even he would like a little something fun every now and then. He also noted that some of the animes in Japan are entertaining. Though a few that centered around the disgusting genre of incest as well as tentacles and vore, he had the Chinese outlaw right away or wanted to ban as although he may be a Chinese Communist, even Commander Tsang had standards.

"Why do people like that crap I’ll never know..." He muttered to himself before continuing on to his quarters, from where he’ll take his rest.

November 10th, New York City:

Within the underground resistance base in New York City, it had been two months have passed since World War 3 began after the Grand Islamic Army invaded New York. The invaders had managed to gain a very firm grip on the city. Complicating matters for those fighting back were those who chose to side with the invaders.

Charles Allen and Mark Russell were resting in their bunks. Despite fighting back and taking the full ground of the city, Islamic authorities tighten their grip. Making the fight much harder than it already was as many soldiers are stationed in several areas. They begin planning their attacks more carefully as well as doing the attacks by night where they’ll be sneaking through the shadows; along with enemy forces being the least difficult to deal with.

Mark stirred awake from his bunk and sat right upwards.

"Ugh, another day in reality." He grumbled. He used to sleep in on weekends, now he’s unable to do so as the war doesn’t care about taking days off during weekends or holidays, or weekdays for that matter.

He looked to Charles, who is snoozing away like it was nothing.

“How does he do it?” Mark wondered for a moment. Even during the war, he doesn’t seem to take the mind of it all, plus he recalled Charles saying stuff like not taking any worries of the world and let it all go for a moment to ease the mind. It also lets one person see what it worth fighting for.

“How he gets up soon,” Mark said to himself. And as if he heard what he just said, Charles stirs to wake up.

"About time you got up." Mark crosses his arms and shook his head. Charles chuckled a bit.

"Oh, really funny man." The two men got up from the cot and stretched before heading towards the door to learn of their next mission.
“What’s next?” Charles asked. The leader begins to speak.

“The United Islamic Republic has added more patrols in the Coney Island red zone.” He explains. “They’ve been using the docks nearby to unload their shipments of soldiers, tanks, IFVs, as well as weapons and supplies.”

"Man, it never gets easier." Mark groaned.

“Which is why we’ll be doing this raid at night, they’ll never see us coming.” The leader pointed out.

“Point taken.” He remarked. Both he and Charles heard that their recons were reporting some new tanks that were being unloaded from the ships, according to the designs, they don’t seem like they could be manned.

“Sounds like they're more drones,” Charles commented.

“Exactly.” The leader replied. “We’ll send in our forces to liberate Coney Island and capture these tanks. Hopefully, they’ll provide the backbone we’ll need for this war.”

"Won't be easy though as these will be guarded like crazy." Mark sighed. But Charles was determined to have the tanks captured, he spent a few years denying the growth of the war; even buried himself with work, weekend joys and news reports such as the passing of the Asuna Act in Hawaii. But the reality, it all came crashing in and found himself swept into the war, and now he has to fight to take back his city, his country, his home from the barbaric savage invaders.

“Also make sure to take several important checkpoints so that we have a fighting chance.” The leader then said.

"Sounds like a plan," Charles said. “Let’s load up.” He and Mark headed with the others to pick their loadout for the missions. Everyone in the group had their tastes from long range to heavy duty stuff. Charles was basic as he chooses a SOCOM 16 battle rifle with holo-sights on top and a Colt M4 Carbine assault rifle. It was one of the assault rifles smuggled into the occupied zones by the US Government in order to turn the tide of the war. He also chooses a Beretta 92FS pistol as a sidearm.

Mark was a different type of guy as his weapons of choice are the Baikal MP-133 pump action shotgun for close quarters and an HK416 assault rifle, an AR rifle based from the M4 Carbine. Mark’s sidearm of choice is the Smith & Wesson Model 29 revolver.

After getting their weapons of choice to suit their unique fighting styles, they all headed out.

**Coney Island, Brooklyn:**

Charles, Mark and the others arrived near the 7-11 store close the Coney Island Ave, the sun has already set thirty minutes ago. Not long ago, it would've been getting snacks and what not, but now it is abandoned.

“They sure cleaned out the place.” One resistance fighter commented on the empty store.

“No kidding.” Another fighter said.

“Cut it and let’s focus on the mission,” Charles ordered while keeping a soft tone to it.

“Okay then.” Everyone continued down Coney Island Ave until they came across the Coney Island
Avenue Bridge that crosses over Shore Parkway. So far, they don’t see any activity on the highway and they attended to keep it that way; though that could change at any given moment.

“So far, so good,” Mark said as he looked around. “Let’s get across this bridge.”

“Okay…” Charles agreed. Everyone crossed the Coney Island Avenue Bridge, everyone kept on guard in case any scout drones fly across them. So far, nothing and they made it to the other side. There, they saw that the once proud park was now something else. They see several units of Islamic soldiers patrolling the abandoned streets that lead to the park.

"Islamic Patrols..." Charles said before ushering everyone to hide behind cover. It was a few moments before the patrols were gone for now before everyone got out of their hiding spots.

“OK, we’re clear;” Charles said before they continued on to where they needed to be. As they continued down the streets, one of them recalled of one of the resistance’s outposts stationed here.

“Let’s find it,” Charles ordered they’ve arrived at the section of Coney Island Avenue and Neptune Avenue. The building on their right had some lights on the top floors.

“Anyone there?” Mark called in a low tone, he had to be careful not to attract any patrolling soldiers nearby, with a quick flashlight check, and there wasn't anyone in there. They headed up the stairs, they found that it had no people in it and secured it.

They also radioed HQ of securing an outpost and received word that the others will arrive shortly to secure it. It didn't take long for the outpost to be secured with more weapons and equipment brought with them. Making the outpost a good spot to fight the terror of the Islamics as well as to establish communications to other outposts throughout occupied New York City and the rest of occupied America. Once that was taken care of, the resistance unit continued their main objective.

They begin cutting through allies and ruined buildings to get to Brighton 8th and 7th streets, to their final destination or the main objective for the mission. As they reached the 7th street, they came across the parking lot that is fenced off with a chain-link fence. Next to the large parking lot is the playground that children once played on. Next to the large parking lot is the school 253. It is obviously used to store weapons and ammunition.

“There it is…one of our targets…” Charles stated.

“Yeah…” Mark agreed. They knew that it’ll take some time to clear them out, but they’ll be able to retake the school as well as use the weapons against the invaders. They also have to take closer looks to the vehicles in the parking lot.

"Well, would you look at that...” One of the resistance fighters remarked.

“OK, we’ll be splitting into two teams.” Charles then said, going over the plan to take the school grounds. “Mark will lead the attack in the building while the rest will follow me and take the parking lot. Any questions?” He finishes. The others shook their heads ‘no’.

“Good, let’s get going,” Charles concluded and everyone split up into two teams. With that done, the two went to their objectives in hand.

Mark leads the group inside the school building with the shotgun in his hands before turning to his team and asks. “Everyone ready?” As everyone nodded that they’re in place, they headed through...
the doors and into the building. At first, no resistance, but that could change at the drop of a hat.

Then after a few minutes, they spotted one of the soldiers standing in the hallway. He’s guarding one of the classrooms.

“Get him,” Mark ordered before one of the resistance fighters took him out with one shot to the head.

“Good shot,” Mark called. However, that one shot was enough to alert anyone within the building and soon, more soldiers came pouring out of the classroom and begin opening fire on them.

"Let them have it!" Mark shouted. The resistance engages the Islamic soldiers in the school’s hallways. Soon, both sides were firing their guns hoping to win, but only one could win. Mark managed to cap three to four of them with the shotgun while the others mowed the others down with the LMG.

"Don't let up!" Mark shouted. They headed into the classroom to see it's empty, they continued down the hall to check other classrooms. However, when they rounded the corner, more of the Islamic soldiers appeared and engaged the resistance.

“Take cover!” He shouted everyone, ducked behind large boxes as the hail of bullets whizzed past their heads.

"Let have it and don't let up!” He continued as he switched from his shotgun to his HK416 assault rifle and fired a few rounds while firing blinding from cover. The fight was intense and lasted for a bit before Mark took a grenade out and tossed it down the hallway. The grenade exploded, sending soldiers in scattered directions, soon enough all soldiers of the Grand Islamic Army were dead.

“OK, let’s move up,” Mark ordered as they continued on, they cleared every classroom to make sure none are hiding. It didn't take long to see there were none left as their nothing but boxes left.

“Alright, let’s move up the floor.” With that said, the group moved out. They’ve headed up the stairs, hoping there would be no more enemy soldiers, but anything could happen still.

But just as they reached the top of the stairs, they see more of the soldiers and shouted in Arabic as they open fire with their rifles.

“It never ends,” Mark muttered as he ducked behind the wall, he hoped that Charles is doing well.

In the Parking lot, Charles was more or less facing the same situation as Mark was at the moment. The parking lot is filled with heavy security. Thus, the situation outside was more or less a bit harder than what was going on inside the school.

“We need to hit them fast and hard,” Charles said softly to the others.

“Roger.” One resistance fighter replied.

“Roger that.” Added another. It was then they heard popping noises that were coming from inside the school building.

"Looks like they're in the same boat as us," Charles commented they see several units of the UIR heading towards the building.

“Let’s even the odds.” He added. From which is Charles added. "Yes! Let's not hold back!!"
He drops to one knee with the SOCOM 16 battle rifle and takes shots at the UIR soldiers, five of them dropped to the ground dead before the rest of the Resistance fighters opened up on them; hails of bullets struck down many of the soldiers before they realized they were present and ducked behind cover.

“Never gets easy!” He shouted before he lit up a pipe bomb and tossed it towards the soldiers, the pipe bomb exploded, sending half of the Islamic soldiers into the air in opposite directions. This evened things out, but not by very much as more kept on coming.

“Keep pushing them back!” Charles ordered, the soldiers of the resistance kept on going no matter what the odds were. It was then they see shots that were coming out from the school building’s windows, but they were hitting the Islamic soldiers instead of the Resistance.

"That's good! We need to keep up!" Charles shouted. Together, everyone pushes the soldiers back. However, they’ve managed to get inside some of the armored vehicles and tanks and used them against the Grand Islamic Army, delivering destruction towards them in the process. Charles was impressed by the resistance’s knowledge of tanks and military vehicles despite never driven them. But, that was for another day as they had bigger things to worry about.

It was then the tanks the resistance has captured begin to start up and put in motion to deliver some real, good pain to them.

However, it was then the Hind-D gunship appears and begins to descend over the compound. Fortunately for the resistance, the compound also stores SAM weapon systems there and one of the resistance fighters begins hacking into the consoles. Within seconds, the SAMs are online and fire on the gunships.

Charles smiles as he sees the Hind-Ds go down in flames and crashes down in fireballs of twisted steel.

“Nice,” Charles said to himself. Minutes have passed until the base is finally taken. Charles sees Mark and the others coming out of the school building’s entrance. The Islamic flag was torn down from the flag pole and replaced with the Stars and Stripes.

"What a long fight..." Mark said. "But it was worth it...

“Indeed.” Charles agreed, with this, they’ll be able to push on and retake the amusement parks throughout Coney Island and turn the tide against the occupation.

"Okay, let's keep on going and get rebels to re-enforce it," Charles said. As soon as reinforcements arrived; Charles, Mark and the others head on out to liberate the rest of the Island. They came closer to Luna Park; however, they see heavy security around the park, making it a bit harder than the school they had just taken.

“OK Charles, what’s the plan?” Mark asked after seeing the activity at Luna Park.

“OK, here’s what we’ll do..” Charles suggests that he and the others will scout ahead for any weak points in the park’s security.

“Good, and hopefully, we’ll roll in with the tanks we’ve just captured,” Mark added.

"But don't get cocky with them, this isn't Halo 3 or any of those games, they're no respawns...." Charles said.

“And no second chances,” Mark added. They headed out to scout ahead to see if they could find any
weaknesses to exploit to their advantage.

“See anything?” Charles asked in the hushed tone.

"Aside from the Islamics? Not much..." Mark reported. They took closer looks at the activity at the park, to see a dozen Islamic soldiers patrolling.

“Think that we should create a distraction?” One of the resistance fighters asked.

“Sounds like a good idea.” Mark approved before asking if they’re other ideas. The other than said about sneaking in and finding the weapons that are hidden away and use them against the invaders; given that they don’t have any digital palm-readers on the weapons.

Charles thought about it before asking. “Anything else?”

“The only thing that we know that charging their head-on is suicide.”

"Then, let’s try the plan that won’t be charging in head-on," Charles suggested. The others agreed and they set off for the mission. Getting into position, they carefully looked over the opposition and suck in like night reapers.

They have to wait until the patrol passes by so that they’ll sneak in. When the patrols pass, the groups make their move.

“Let’s go,” Charles whispered as he leads the way carefully across the darken streets to their targets. They approached one of the manhole covers that’ll lead them underneath Luna Park. After checking it quickly, they popped it open very carefully and quietly.

“OK, it's open, gotta move quickly and quietly,” Mark whispered. The group then descended into the tunnel and went onwards very carefully. Mark was the last to go under and pulls the manhole cover over the opening as they descended down the ladder. Once that was done, the group headed to Luna park right under the noses of the UIR. They managed to dodge the patrols and surveillance of the Grand Islamic Army, hiding from stands to snack stands and behind amusement rides. Avoiding the enemy without the enemy themselves knowing the Americans where there for now.

“This is insane.” One of the resistance fighters whispered.

“Cut the chatter,” Charles ordered while keeping his tone very soft as he can so no one could hear them and give them the gift of a bullet shower. After what seemed like hours, they’ve made it through the shacks and made their way inside the buildings. Not raising any attention to them yet.

“We made it.” He then said. They looked at what they could see; they see that the room is filled with crates of weapons, ammunition, and explosives that supply the Islamics.

"Shall we seize them?" One of the fighters asked.

“First we need to check them,” Charles said. The others agreed as they took close inspections of the weapons and they’re more advanced than they were in the past. They also had to check for any features that could make them unable to be used like a DNA-like lock.

“Just as I thought,” Charles said as he sees the lock on the guns. There were means to keep rebels from using the guns, but that didn't mean that they could be bypassed.

“I’m sure we’ll be able to hack these locks,” Charles commented.
“Yes indeed.” Mark agreed.

"Same..." Charles said. “Once we secure this park, we’ll get to work on them.” Mark and the others agreed and they begin to take point on liberating the rest of the park and seizing the weapons they had found.

“They should have some tanks here,” Mark suggested. Looking around very carefully, it didn't take that long to find them.

“Over there.” The fighter pointed towards a large building where they see several UIR personals escorting tanks inside the loading entrances.

“Good job.” Charles thanked him before they set off to them while avoiding detection. It didn't take very long to evade and dodge detection from the UIR and to the tanks that were not only fully armed but fueled up as well.

“These are definitely Chinese-made,” Mark concluded. “There’s no way these could come from the UIR.” And when Charles questioned him, Mark shows the differences between the current tank of the UIR, the T-72s and T-80s as well as the Chinese Main Battle Tank, the Type-110A.

"Seriously..." Charles muttered, it was bad enough that the Islamics continues to pour into the country by large numbers, but armed with China’s tech is another thing. It only further showed a clear and obvious sign; once the United Islamic Republics was done, China would backstab them and throw them away or it’ll happen the other way around and spark off a cold war between the UIR and China. To the point, it would make the one between America and the Russians and the Second Cold War against China look like tea parties.

They also found another set of tanks that were different than the others. According to the Recon scouts, these are definitely the Unmanned Tanks that the UIR was receiving.

“We should be able to use them to surprise them,” Mark suggested.

“Agreed.” Charles agreed. ‘*But would we be able to use this tank?’ He thought with worry, this also went for the Unmanned Tanks. He decided that they’ll find a way to use them in the future. For now, they’ll guard them and get back to current events at the moment.

“Alright, what should we do now?” Mark asked.

"Focus on taking back Luna Park right now," Charles said. “Then we’ll figure out how to operate these tanks.”

“Right.” Mark agreed. They continued down the park using cover and the shadows whenever they could until they came to where they needed to be at.

“OK, we’re here. This is where they send out commands throughout Coney Island.” Mark concluded.

"Time to knock it out." Charles agreed.

“Alright, the others should create diversions very shortly.” Mark also added.

"Good." When the others hear the shots, they’ll send out scouts to investigate them, leaving them a window for them, which will then let them take them out.

Suddenly, a series of explosions are heard, alerting the entire base, just as the American Rebels had
planned.

“OK, they’re leaving to check it out.” Mark pointed out. It was all going according to the plan and the rebels lead on the raid. The Grand Islamic Army, on the other hand, they were oblivious to the trap they were walking into. With final preparations, they’re ready to hit the command post.

“Ready?” Charles asked.

“We’re ready when you are,” Mark replied.

Charles nodded before taking up his SOCOM 16 battle rifle. “OK, let’s do this.” Everyone made their way through the command post while making sure that they still had the element of surprise. At any moment, they’ll take everyone by surprise. Eventually, the group was ready to unleash hell.

“We’ll wait for the signal,” Mark whispered. Charles held his hand up a bit, ordering the others to hold their ground.

"Wait for it....wait for it...." Charles murmured. Seconds passed as the others become edgy.

"Stay calm and wait for it..." He says again. More time passed, the leader decided now is the time to strike and he fired the first shots.

“Head them off!” Charles shouted. The group moves in without hesitation, taking down several Islamic soldiers with extreme prejudice. Charles picks them off with the SOCOM rifle with ease.

“Like shooting fish in a barrel,” Charles said to himself, he ducks behind cover to reload before coming out of cover and continue shooting, Mark was blasting them away with the shotgun, giving the enemy a serious case of lead poisoning and shooting them up like it was Open Season.

“Yeah! I’m feeling the burn!!” Mark shouted as he unloads two more slugs against the soldiers in close range, sending them down to the ground dead. He ducks back and reloads shells into the shotgun.

“They just keep on coming,” Mark said to himself while reloading and jumping back into action. It took some time, but after at least thirteen minutes, the numbers of the enemy began to die down.

“Push forward!” Charles ordered. “Onward!!” Everyone begins to head out of the Command Post, Islamic soldiers scrambled around to lead a counter-attack on the resistance, only for them to fall down one by one.

“We got them on the run!” Mark shouted. It wasn't long before then that the enemy got decimated, the resistance begins to show up to join the fight to add further damage to the Grand Islamic Army’s strength. However, it was then they see the tanks showing up to aid their Islamic infantrymen.

“Tanks!!!” One of the resistance fighters shouted. Both Charles and Mark knew that they have to act fast, fortunately for them, they managed to obtain Rocket Propelled Grenade launchers, and hopefully they should even the odds against them.

"Let's rocket the Hell out of them!!" Mark shouted as he fires an RPG at one of the tanks which hits it directly, but didn’t take out the tank. It’ll have to take more than one RPG shot to take out the tanks.

"Hit the tanks with lots of rockets! One won't do it!" Charles shouted the others to turn their attention on one of the tanks and fired three to four rockets at it; it was starting to show damage.

"Keep it up!!" Charles ordered before firing a rocket at the tank, it finally took heavy damage as thick
smoke and flames begin to pour out of the tank, soon after it exploded in a fireball. The victory was short lived as more tanks were still around, the Resistances will have to keep at it while avoiding the tanks and trying to attack them head-on as well as hijack them is suicide. Not helping matters were Islamic soldiers helping the tanks.

Then suddenly more tanks appeared, the scene looks very grim for Charles and the resistance.

“More tanks.” One of them shouted.

“Crap,” Charles muttered, they’re outnumbered by 20 to one with the tanks, it was all over. But just as he was about to order a retreat, half of the tanks were hit from behind. What Charles and the others saw were that the tanks that showed up were attacking the other tanks and the Islamic soldiers.

“What the…?” Charles was stunned from what he’s witnessing, so is Mark and the others. Soon after the tanks and the Islamic soldiers are either wiped out or retreated.

“What’s going on here?” Mark was confused.

“Don’t know, but we’ll find out for sure.” Charles lamented on the situation after it died down. The tanks then approached the resistances and stopped inches away. The hatches on the tank turrets opened up and climbed out a man in his late-fifties.

"Who or what is that?" Mark asked again, stupefied by the older man. Charles could tell that he’s an American as he wore a uniform similar to US soldiers.

"Never seen you before," Mark commented.

"That's because you pups haven't..." The older man replied.

“You got a name?” Charles asked. The older man introduced himself as Arnold Rambo.

"Thanks for that save..." Charles.

“No problem...” Arnold replied. When Mark asked him how he’d managed to hijack and drive a tank, Arnold explains that he used to drive and command tanks during the War on Terror back early in the 21st century as well as the short Second Korean War back in 2016.

“Nice work,” Charles commented before adding. “We could use someone like you.”

Arnold looked around a bit before looking at the group. “I see that you’ve managed to take Coney Island.”

“Indeed we have.” Mark smiled. Everyone was getting everything all organized and settled for their next base of operations. The UIR flag was torn down from the flag pole and the Stars and Stripes rise to the top. With a mysterious, but new ally on hand, it was looking good for the rebels.

“So….we’re getting it all good so far,” Mark added.

“Yeah, …we sure are.” Charles lamented. It was then one of the resistance recons came up and reported what they’ve found in the homes and stadiums of Coney Island as well as the parks.

When Charles asked him, they told him that the Grand Islamic Army was holding civilians hostages in cages while they used the stadiums and parks as mass graves. But the most disturbing part of it was what they were doing to the captured children, turning them into mindless child soldiers or suicide bombers while some suffered worst fates as they were subjected into slaves to satisfy the
soldiers.

“Demons…” Charles muttered.

“Monsters…” Mark growled.

“I know, right?” He asked. Arnold nodded sadly; it wasn’t new as he’d seen it back during the days in the Middle East against Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and insurgents. "I know, it is a sight I’ve seen again and again."

Charles figured it would happen…..no, he knew. But the truth was so horrifying that it’s almost surreal, but it was the cold harsh reality of war. But now that they have knowledge that the United Islamic Republics and the rest of the Hegemony are trying to dehumanize everyone and they’ll use what they’ve found against them. They will speak for the dead as they have names and will be avenged in the future as they will never be forgotten as long as they have someone to speak for them.

“We’ll tell this to the world,” Charles said at last. “And that is this….is what we’re fighting for, to free the rest of America from the evil nations of the Hegemony.”

"Yeah! To bring honor back to our nation once more." Mark exclaimed. Charles, Arnold and the others look out onto the sea where the resistance has raised the Stars and Stripes over there as well. The war may be in its darkest hours, but they will overcome them and take back their country. For that is the iron will of America.

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