

# The S-Files

Von abgemeldet

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## Prolog: And So It Begins! The Task

### A Scientific Treatment on Structure and Workings of Athena's Saints

#### And So It Begins! The Task

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Doctor Shizukawa Himiko sighed. It seemed she always got the worst jobs at the Research Labs of the Graude Foundation. Okay, she was new in the department, but couldn't they find someone else for this task?

Professor Asamori Hakase - the guy who had constructed the mechanical Cloths of the three Steel Saints - had decided it might be a nice thing to start a thorough examination of the real Saint Cloths, and of course it was an ultra secret assignment (What else?). She had the suspicion that it was a pet project of her boss, and it wasn't fully sanctioned by the big heads of the Graude Foundation to boot.

But then, as long as she got paid for it properly, she would go along with it. Unfortunately, the information she had gotten in advance was pretty scarce.

"Be creative!" were the Professor's encouraging words, when he introduced her to her two colleagues Terada Makoto, a red-haired, tall young medical doctor and psychologist who had just left the university, and Honda Akira, a big game hunter who gave up Saint training in Greece after some defeats too many (although he managed to come back alive which was a wonder in itself).

"I hate him for giving me such stupid jobs," Himiko grumbled and tugged at her blonde ponytail.

"I agree," Makoto nodded.

"Ah well, with my anaesthetic rifle they're prey like any other," Akira said.

"I wouldn't be that sure," Himiko said darkly. "But unfortunately it's our job and we have to do it. Where do we start?" She distributed the photographs of their targets on the table and looked at them properly for the first time. Some of the prints were of pretty bad quality, but they would have to do until they got better pics to add to the files.

Makoto frowned and ordered the armoured persons in her mind according to their probable danger level.

"I must admit I'd like to examine *this* guy! Even on this bad pic he looks absolutely cute!" Himiko pointed at a grainy, heavily magnified photo of a man with long, dark blue hair in golden armour.

"*Cute* isn't the issue," Makoto chided. "We're doing scientific research, if you have forgotten already." Discreetly, she let the photos of the ugly looking guys disappear

nonetheless.

"Cute or uncute don't matter to me," Akira shrugged. "I'll shoot everything."

"Oh no! I don't want *him* to be shot! - Hm... On the other hand, if he can't move he won't be able to resist," Himiko said thoughtfully.

"I prefer they don't have any chance to put up resistance, then it's less dangerous for us to examine them." Makoto tugged a handkerchief from her labcoat and began to clean her thick glasses. Now one could see that she had green eyes, albeit very near-sighted ones.

"Probably." Himiko sighed and adored another example of cuteness, this time in blond. "Okay, *you* say where we begin."

"With someone who isn't so dangerous..."

"Why don't we start with one of the chicks?" Akira pointed at a blonde girl with spiky shoulder pieces.

"Naa, she looks dangerous, too. Look at the nasty whip!"

"Exactly. Let's take something smaller." Makoto rummaged through the photos.

"Let's get this cute green-haired chick first", Akira said and picked up the photo of a petite Saint in pink armour.

"Okay," Makoto nodded.

"If you insist - But I want *this* guy next!" Himiko pointed at a blond guy with a rubberduck on the headpiece of his armour.

"Yes, yes..." Makoto pinned the remaining photos to the wall of their headquarters at the Graude Foundation Research Lab.

# Kapitel 1: File BS01-And-T001 - Andromeda Unchained! The Secret of the Pink Cloth

## File BS01-And-T001

### Andromeda Unchained! The Secret of the Pink Cloth

"We know this one's location - the Andromeda Saint currently stays at the mansion of Kido Saori together with some more of the younger Saints who are supposed to fight in some tournament." Terada Makoto grinned inwardly. Akira obviously didn't read newspapers, or he would have known that his 'green-haired chick' was a boy.

"Akira, you're the hunter - hunt!" Shizukawa Himiko ordered.

Akira took his anaesthetic rifle and went to the van they were allowed to use. It was a black vehicle with a red stripe at the sides and a discrete Graude Foundation logo at the driver's door.

The two women followed him and hoped that the Professor really had called the guards of the Kido Mansion that they were there on (more or less) official business, or they'd get more fun than they liked.

"By the way, Mako-chan, I volunteer to assist you for the physical examinations..."

"I bet... - But okay, why not?"

"Great!" Himiko grinned. She really had chosen the wrong subject. Her job at engineering only left her with the armours, and that was definitely unfair.

Finally they arrived at the mansion. Much to their relief no one tried to stop them, and so they parked at a lot next to the house. Looking carefully around, Akira left the car.

"And when we have finished examining the little one, we can find us some real guy," Himiko said.

"Yeah, someone nice," Makoto nodded eagerly. "A guy who's a real treat to look at!"

"The Rubberduck Saint!"

"As you wish - I hope it's worthwhile to examine him..."

"Haven't you looked at the photo?" Himiko pulled another print out of her pocket.

"This is secret material!" Makoto chided.

"Need some copies, too?"

"No... I asked Michiko from the lab to make some pin-ups of the cutest guys."

"Shame on you! - Hm, why haven't I had this idea?"

"Oh, Akira's coming back!"

"Obviously he caught his 'chick'. Yes, this spinach-coloured hair is fairly unique. It's the Andromeda Saint," Himiko commented.

Makoto opened the rear door of the van, and Akira gently laid down his catch.

"It wasn't a girl after all," he said poutily.

"We know," the women grinned.

"But where's the armour of his?" Himiko wanted to know.

"He didn't wear it. And it was difficult enough to catch him anyway. Boys, he is *fast*! - By the way, it's no armour, it's a *Cloth*."

"It's not made of cloth, thus it's an armour," Makoto stated, and Akira sighed.

"He's really cute!" Himiko admired the beautiful face of the boy. "Look at those long lashes!"

Makoto inspected them. "They are real, even though the colour doesn't match his hair. I guess I have to examine this in detail in the lab. - Akira, let's return!"

"But we still need his armour. Hm. Maybe we can ask him when he's awake again." Himiko marvelled at the strange green hair of the boy. "I really need another copy of *his* photo, too!"

"Ts. I hope he stays unconscious for a little longer, so that I can complete the examination in the lab."

Finally they reached the Research Lab, and Akira carried Shun into the examination room and laid him onto the table.

"He looks so petite - I wonder how he managed to survive this horrible training. I mean, Akira is at least twice his size and he didn't make it..."

"You don't need to rub it in," Akira growled.

"Okay, okay. You can go now, by the way. We'll call you when we need you to hunt down another Saint."

"That's fine with me." Akira left the lab complex and the women began to examine the small Saint.

"He *is* small," Makoto observed and wrote down Shun's measurements before she took a blood sample.

While Makoto did some real work, Himiko decided that she needed to take some more photos for her collection - err, research file.

"We definitely need to take some more pictures when he's conscious again."

"It won't take much longer, I'd say." Makoto frowned. She should invent some story to explain Shun how he got here. She took his hand and checked his pulse.

"How is he?"

"Perfectly well."

Suddenly Shun blinked. "Hm? Where am I? What happened?"

"Beautiful!" Himiko commented the fact that he had really large, bluish-green eyes.

"Hello Shun. How are you?"

"Well, fine - but where am I? And who are you?"

"It seems you suddenly fell unconscious," Makoto claimed. "You're at a Graude Foundation lab, and I'm Dr.Terada."

"I'm Dr.Shizukawa," Himiko managed to say. It was too bad that she was so easily distracted by cute guys - but then, Shun was too young anyway. But *really* cute.

"Maybe you trained too much," Makoto said.

"Can't be. I only did some really light training - running around the mansion and stuff like this."

Himiko looked thoughtfully at the boy. How could she ask him for the armour without arousing suspicion?

"Well, then we have to examine you once more to be sure. Could you get up, please?"

"Sure." He sat up. "Ouch! My bu- back hurts."

"So? Then let's check it," Makoto said.

"But - you can't..." Shun blushed slightly.

"I'm a doctor. Lie down there!"

"Maybe your armour doesn't fit properly?" Himiko found an opening.

"It's no armour - It's a Cloth!"

"Ah, yes, but maybe we should check this nonetheless. Where do you keep it?"

"It's already at the Colosseum with the others of course."

"Fine. We'll see to it that someone gets it here, and in the meantime I'll check where you're hurt. Now lay down, or do I have to get angry with you?"

"Okay, okay..." Shun gave in, while Himiko called Akira to fetch the armour. In the meantime, she put another film in the camera.

"Hm, Shun, you only have a big bruise there. It probably happened when you fell down." Makoto could hardly tell him that it was the spot where the anaesthetic dart of Akira's had hit him... "Probably it'll hurt for a couple of days, but it'll be over soon."

"Fine..." Shun sighed. But then, he had survived far worse things during his training.

"Here's the Cloth, gals," Akira said when he entered the lab with the huge storage box.

"Thanks, Akira. - Shun, would you please be so kind to don it, so that we can check if it really fits properly?" Himiko started the surveillance cameras of the lab via remote so that she wouldn't miss a single instant.

"Sure, although it always fit me perfectly. You see, the Cloths *always* fit their wearers, no matter if one grows taller or else. I don't know how it works, but it *does*." Shun pulled the handle, and one could see a pink statue of a well-chained woman in the box until it dissolved and magically reformed as armour around Shun. "See?"

"Cool!" Himiko marvelled. "I read about this but never saw it live! By the way, how long are those chains?"

"Dunno." Shun shrugged. "Pretty long, I guess. I never bothered to measure them."

"May I?" Himiko fetched a tape measure.

"Be my guest..." Shun held out the left arm, and Himiko began to measure it.

"20 metres..." Himiko laid down the length of chain on the floor of the lab. "50 metres..." She decided to use the length of the corridor, too. "Ahm, now I have 350 metres and there still doesn't seem to be an end to it..."

"I told you I never bothered to measure them. They're just *long*." Shun couldn't stifle a grin when Himiko opened the door to another corridor to lay out the chain.

Makoto looked tragically up to the ceiling. By now the whole floor was covered by the chain. And it was only one of them...



"Hm... And the other chain is as long?"

"Sure. Wanna try to measure it, too?" Shun blinked innocently.

"Forget it, Himiko! I guess we can assume they are of the same length." Makoto lifted some of the chain and discovered that it was pretty heavy. How on Earth could Shun run around with this? And where did all the stuff come from anyway?

"Unfortunately I haven't even found out the length of the first one," Himiko called from the lab next door. "I have 780 metres now, and there is still no end in sight!"

"I really wonder where all of this comes from." Makoto inspected the bracer on Shun's left arm, but there was no hint.

"It's a Holy Cloth. Maybe you should ask Athena." Shun smiled sweetly when Himiko entered the lab again and stumbled over some coils of chain.

"Well, I think we should try to put it all back from where it came," Makoto suggested.

"Indeed. I give up. I'll put it into the file as *chain of immeasurable length*."

Shun grinned, and suddenly the chain retracted to ...wherever.

"If I hadn't seen it, I wouldn't believe it," Makoto marvelled.

"Actually, there's something else of mysterious length," Himiko pointed out. "I'm sure you had short hair without the helmet on."

"Sure. This happens all the time. I got used to it..."

"Just a moment..." Makoto fetched another tape measure. "Now we have 81 centimetres. Please take off the helmet..."

Shun complied.

"Now it's 37 centimetres. Fascinating! A difference of 44 centimetres. This is incredible! May I cut off one strand?" As Shun shrugged, she cut off a dozen hairs of either length and examined them under the microscope.

"Can you see anything strange?" Himiko asked. She took off the helmet and put it back on Shun's head. "This is amazing!"

"Are you done?" Shun asked after the fourth time.

"Oh, sorry, Shun. - But look, when I put on the helmet *nothing* happens."

"It's *my* Cloth after all."

"Sure." Himiko smiled her best winning smile at Shun, and the boy blushed.

"I wonder if the other Cloths work the same way," Makoto said. "What's the sense in it?"

"Maybe it's to make them look even cuter," Himiko grinned.

"Hm." Makoto examined Shun thoughtfully with a gaze. "I thought those armours were made for battle, not for a beauty contest."

"But weren't the Samurai of history supposed to stun their opponents with their beauty as well as with their fighting skills?" Shun pointed out. "Maybe it's the same with our Cloths."

"Good point. By the way, we are finished here. You can go now."

"But what about this brief period of unconsciousness?"

"I'll make some more tests and tell you when I got the results."

"Fine. It would be really embarrassing if I fainted during the tournament."

"Indeed. We'll see to it that it won't happen."

"You can check in here anytime," Himiko offered.

"Where exactly is 'here', by the way?" Shun wanted to know.

"Graude Foundation Research Labs," Makoto replied.

"Hm. Not the medical department?" Shun frowned.

"We were faster within reach."

"I see," Shun said, even though he didn't. Very strange. But then, when they belonged to the Graude Foundation, it should be okay.

"And be careful that you won't get hurt again," Makoto told him.

"I'll see what I can do about this..." Unfortunately being a Saint wasn't the safest occupation in any case.

"Shall I drive you back to the mansion?" Himiko volunteered. "But before I drive you home, I'd love to take one or the other photo for my collection, if you allow..."

"Sure." Shun was used to the fact that people loved to take photos of him - especially his fan clubs in Tokyo. He didn't mind - as long as they didn't want any autographs, too.

**- File BS01-And-T001 Closed -**



## Kapitel 2: File BS02-Uni-T001 - Are You Pure in Heart? The Hunt for the Common Unicorn

### File BS02-Uni-T001

#### Are You Pure in Heart? The Hunt for the Common Unicorn

"So - and who's next?" Akira wanted to know. He was still disappointed that the Andromeda chick had turned out to be a guy after all.

"Hm..." Makoto considered the possible choices at the notice board.

"I still want the Rubberduck," Himiko declared.

"Well, wouldn't it be better to choose one of the guys who are already in Tokyo? The less we have to travel around."

"You're probably right. What about this one? He's cute, too." The blonde engineer pointed at the photo of a brown-haired guy with a horn fixed to the helmet of his armour. "Let's see... Ah, Unicorn Saint Jabu," she read the caption.

"A Unicorn - this sounds magic," Makoto commented.

"But he has short hair even with the helmet," Himiko observed. "I hope he isn't bald without it."

"We'll see! - Well, Akira, it's your turn. Do you have any experience with Unicorns?"

"I hope you're pure," Himiko giggled.

"On the other hand - aren't the true magical unicorns supposed to be white? Then this one is surely of the common kind..."

\* \* \*

The Graude Foundation Research & Examination Team entered the harmlessly looking black van, and Akira checked his hunting gear amidst the several pieces of equipment for the preliminary examinations.

"I wonder if we need a bridle for him," Himiko grinned.

"I have my anaesthetic rifle. It's good for elephants, so why should I worry about a unicorn?"

"Well, we'll have to find out if you are able to see it in the first place..."

"But now let's go on the hunt!" Himiko put a new film into the camera. For Shun she

had used up 5 films - or were it 6? - and now she needed to fill out more of those damned Graude Foundation Research Center's order forms in duplets, triplets and worse to get even more films.

The guys in the photolab would be pretty amused when they had to develop around 200 pics of the cute little Andromeda Saint and make three prints of each in the first run. But then, it was all in the name of science - well, mostly...

"Maybe we could use the photos to make a little money," Himiko said thoughtfully. "I'm sure the fan clubs will be excited."

"Sounds like a good idea to me. I wonder if the Unicorn has a fan club, too..."

"I have my camera ready."

Finally Akira returned, but without his intended victim.

"Hey, where's our Unicorn?" Makoto asked with a frown.

"He saw me. And then it got difficult," Akira grumbled. He had a black eye and looked really annoyed.

"Is that a *knot* in your rifle?" Himiko looked at the weapon in utter fascination. "It seems the Unicorn is pretty strong..."

"Oh, really?" Akira said acidly.

"Maybe we should rethink our strategy." Himiko examined Makoto's outfit. "I think your skirt is shorter than mine."

"I can change that," she replied aggressively.

"Get your hands off my clothing," Himiko hissed.

"Who wanted a shorter skirt?"

"Nice legs," Akira commented, when Himiko's skirt got a redesign by Makoto. Unfortunately this led to a fierce punch no one would have expected from the petite engineer, and Akira received a second black eye and went down as he was already pretty battered from the fight with Jabu.

"Oops," Himiko said, blushing.

"And how are we supposed to get him back into the van?"

"I won't go out like this!" Himiko tugged at the tattered skirt. "By the way, you are going to *pay* for this!"

"Yes, yes..." Makoto sighed and heaved Akira into the back of the van. This guy was

heavy!

"I know what you'll give me as compensation: Thirty films plus development!" Then she could take a couple of photos for a totally private collection, Himiko thought.

"Okay - but now let's try once more to catch the Unicorn!"

"As soon as I have changed. I won't leave the car like this."

They drove back to the Research Lab.

**- File BS02-Uni-T001 Closed -**

## Kapitel 3: File BS02-Uni-T002 - To Catch the Unicorn! Bring on the Girls!

### File BS02-Uni-T002

#### To Catch the Unicorn! Bring on the Girls!

"Are you *serious*?!" Himiko looked at her mirror image.

Makoto nodded eagerly. "Sure."

"This outfit is *embarrassing*! I'm a scientist, not a ...*girl* like *this*!"

"*You* wanted the Unicorn, and Akira refuses to go after him once more."

"But I thought *he* was the big game hunter," Himiko protested.

"Yes, *big game* - but no one said anything about any unicorns!" Akira grumbled. It hurt his pride deeply that Jabu had made a knot in his rifle.

"Well, there's one dead sure way to catch a Unicorn, if you ask me," Makoto grinned and examined Himiko's scanty, deep red outfit with satisfaction. The blonde engineer pouted.

"But don't you dare take any photos of me in *this*!"

"What, *me*?" Makoto said innocently and hit the camera behind her back.

"I'll kill you if I ever discover any pics of me in this outfit!" Himiko hissed and tried to walk on the 4-inch-heels. When she turned the back to her colleagues, they grinned and took some more photos of the alluring backside of Himiko's.

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Himiko tried to put a convincing story together while she stumb- err, *walked* toward the Kido Mansion. Akira said that she'd certainly find Jabu somewhere around here.

Suddenly Shun jogged along. "Oh, Dr.Shizukawa - nice to see you! Do you want to give me the result of the examination?" He wondered why the scientist wore such an ...unusual outfit, but then, maybe she was here in her free time.

Makoto, who watched the scene through a pair of binoculars, grinned broadly when Himiko's face turned the same colour as her dress - and with the telephoto lens she got some really nice shots. Unfortunately she had forgotten to put a bug somewhere on Himiko, so she couldn't hear what they were talking about.

"Ahm, Shun, err, yes - I mean... Everything's fine with you", Himiko stuttered.

"Great! - But you on the other hand look rather unwell... Why don't you come into the house and rest for a moment?"

"Ahm, no thanks - there's an emergency back in the lab..." Himiko only wanted sink into the earth. This outfit was just too embarrassing!

"Is there? You don't look as if you are on duty right now." Shun examined the scantily clad legs of the young woman with interest, before he, too, blushed.

Makoto wondered if red was currently in fashion. But she definitely needed a poster of this cute look of the boy.

"Ahm, okay - bye, Shun!" Himiko slipped out of the high heels and ran back to the van.

Shun looked after her with very big, deep blue-green eyes. He didn't understand girls at all, he mused, and the worst thing was that it only got worse the older he got. If only his brother were here - nii-san certainly could explain this to him.

"Back already?" Makoto shook the head and opened the door of the van.

"Graaaaaa!!!!!! Next time - *your* turn!"

**- File BS02-Uni-T002 Closed -**



## Kapitel 4: File BS02-Uni-T003 - One Hit Too Many! All Disasters Come in Threes

### File BS02-Uni-T003

#### One Hit Too Many! All Disasters Come in Threes

Makoto pondered over a blank sheet of paper. "I need a plan."

"Well, neither brute force nor seduction worked. Ah well, I admit that plan B only failed because we never actually tried it as I had to employ a tactical retreat... But why don't *you* try to ask him out for a date?"

"I don't like the idea. I'm sure he'll say no."

"Then bring forth a plan of your own!"

"I'm thinking," Makoto sighed. "It's got to be something where one doesn't have to get too close to him."

"The closer you get, the better the pics... Why don't you write him a fan mail?"

"You sure?"

"Of course," Himiko nodded. "You think he's great, you hope he'll win the tournament, and why can't you meet him somewhere to wish him luck, or something like this. And when you sit together in some caf&eacute; or ice cream parlour, you just put some knock-out drops into his drink."

"I don't find a proper start," Makoto complained.

"Be creative!"

"Okay, okay..." About half an hour later, she jumped up. "It's finished! I just asked him to meet me at the caf&eacute;."

"Okay, Akira - you'll bring it to the Kido Mansion. Then it's there as fast as possible."

"Fine. That's certainly faster than the mail service."

\* \* \*

When Akira wanted to drop the letter at the Kido mansion, the entrance door opened, and Jabu left the house.

"Hello. Here's a letter for you," Akira told the Unicorn Saint.

Jabu frowned and opened the envelope. Hm... There was only a note about a meeting and no signature. He examined Akira whom he had beaten soundly only a while ago. Obviously it was a challenge letter by him.

"So, you want to challenge me?" he asked aggressively. "Why don't we settle this here and now?"

Before Akira could utter only one word of explanation, an uppercut sent him flying backwards. Jabu smiled in satisfaction. "I guess that should suffice," he grinned and went towards the city where he wanted to buy some nice present for Saori-san.

\* \* \*

"No, forget it," Akira growled when he returned to the Research Lab.

"But Akira, you can't leave us to this dangerous task alone!" Makoto pleaded.

"Of course I can. I decided to go back to Greece and keep up the training to become a Saint again - there I haven't been beaten up this often in such a short time!"

He stormed out of the lab, and Makoto and Himiko looked helplessly after him.

"Dear me, I fear we won't find another guy who's insane enough to try and catch some Saints," Makoto sighed.

"Then it's left to us alone. Just as the Professor said - we've got to be creative!"

**- File BS02-Uni-T003 Closed -**

## Kapitel 5: File BS02-Uni-T004 - The Arrow Of Justice! Two vs. the Unicorn

### File BS02-Uni-T004

#### The Arrow Of Justice! Two vs. the Unicorn

"I'm glad that I allowed for a three digit number of attempts in the file names," Himiko sighed when she opened the next file.

"I hope we won't need it, though," Makoto said.

"I only wonder how many attempts we'll need for the more difficult Saints! You see, there's still this absolutely kawaii Gold Saint with the long, curly dark blue hair whom I want to examine," Himiko looked dreamily at the notice board.

"I'll leave him for you to hunt him down and catch him all on your own!" Makoto was sure that he was dangerous as he gazed pretty darkly from the photo they had.

"Sure I will! But don't think I'll leave you one little piece of him in this case! Hm... Maybe I can keep him or one of the others? Or do you think I really have to give him back?"

"Of course you have to give them all back!"

"That's unfair. I'd be content with only one of those cuties..." She gazed at the notice board. "Or maybe this cutie with the long, blond hair..."

"We haven't even caught the second of the little ones!"

"I have an idea how we'll get the Unicorn for sure. We'll simply shoot him!"

"We do *what*? Remember, we're supposed not to damage them!"

"Don't worry, I think he's robust enough to survive a little arrow coated with a narcotic."

"As you say. You do it and I watch."

Makoto fetched a bow and some arrows. "Just keep out of my line of fire," she cautioned her colleague.

They went into their van, and Himiko inserted a CD that played Ennio Morricone's main theme of *Once Upon A Time In The West*. Shortly after, they parked next to the Kido mansion again.

"Okay, let's look for cover and wait for the Unicorn to come out," Makoto said and

cleared herself a way through the bushes.

Himiko followed her in some distance and readied her camera. She didn't want to miss this, especially as Makoto refused to put on her glasses as she did ever so often. Stupid vanity!

Makoto stormed in the direction of the house. As she had problems to see properly, she put on her glasses for some seconds to orient herself.

"*Left!*" it thundered from the headphones Himiko had given her. Startled, Makoto jumped into the next bush and her glasses fell to the ground.

"Shhht," Himiko hissed via the headphone. "They might see you!"

"But I can't see anything - my glasses are gone."

"Why don't you keep them on in the first place?" Himiko asked tragically.

"Be cause I look horrible with glasses on."

"Then I suggest contacts."

"But they are much harder to find when I lose them."

"Oops, hurry up, the Unicorn is at the door of the house!"

"Where? I don't see anything."

"Approximately 30 metres in front of you. Now he's closing in... I guess he discovered you."

"Damned, where are those cursed glasses?"

"Hello? Who are you?!" Jabu asked the tall redhead who rummaged through the bushes. She had bow and arrows slung over her shoulder and looked somehow peculiar with it as she was dressed in a lab coat. "Are you looking for something?"

"Yes. I don't find my glasses."

"Why have you lost them here in the first place? And moreover - what are you doing here with bow and arrows?"

"Ahm, I wanted to shoot a little with it, but I can't aim without my glasses." Makoto squinted her eyes and tried to figure out to whom she was talking. Was it really the Unicorn?

"So you're on the hunt? But *what* do you intend to hunt?" Jabu was more than a little amused.

"Dunno. I guess I'd have found something..." She crawled still through the underwood.

"In the garden of the Kido Mansion?!"

"Yeah, why not?" Ah, finally she found her glasses.

"Maybe I should introduce myself first - I'm Jabu. And who might you be?"

"Makoto." Finally she could see again. She sighed in relief.

"Hello Makoto," Jabu grinned. The young woman was rather weird, but not absolutely uncute. No comparison to Saori-san, though, of course...

Makoto got up and fidgeted around. She felt awkward with the silly bow on the back, and from this distance she couldn't shoot Jabu anyway. Slightly confused, she started to pull some stray leaves from her long braid.

"Mako-chan, why don't you ask him to go with you into a cafe?" Himiko thundered through the headphone.

"Waaaaaa," Makoto squealed and cursed that she still hadn't turned the volume down.

Jabu lifted an eyebrow and looked to the weird woman. Probably she had escaped from some funny farm.

"Ahm," Makoto began. She really made a mess of this attempt... She ripped the headphone from her head and threw it behind her, bow and arrows followed, before she tried to brush the dirt from her clothes.

Jabu scrutinized her from head to toes. Well, now that she had gotten rid of the stuff she looked at least half sane. "And other but hunting ...whatever you had no intentions here?"

"I forgot what I wanted to do," Makoto said miserably. She was so embarrassed, especially when she saw Jabu looking at her like this!

"Maybe you should come in and freshen up a bit before you tell me exactly why you sneaked in here!"

"I think you may be right..." Makoto was sure that Jabu wouldn't let her go without a thorough interview, and so she began to clean her glasses with a point of her lab coat, as usual when she didn't know what to do or say.

Himiko almost got a fit when headphone, bow and arrows hit her on the head, How was she supposed to tell Makoto what to do without the device? Her colleague had probably already forgotten about their intent when she talked to the cute Unicorn Saint.

"Where's the house?" Makoto wanted to know. She was still occupied cleaning her glasses.

Jabu looked at her quizzically and pointed in the direction from which he had come. Then he reconsidered, grabbed her arm and tugged her in the proper direction. "Over there!"

Makoto put her glasses on at last to see where Jabu led her.

Himiko sighed and went back to their van. At the moment she could neither help Makoto nor take any interesting photos.

Finally they entered the house, and Makoto, again without her glasses, looked nearsightedly around. She didn't want to know how she looked like, it was certainly horrible.

Suddenly she could hear light footsteps coming down the stairs.

"Oh, hello Doc Terada! What are you doing here? Your colleague already told me the results," Shun chimed.

"Oh, hello Shun. My visit has another reason."

"Ah." He grinned. "Do you want to play with my chains again?"

"Me? No, that's Himiko's domain..."

Jabu stared openmouthed at Shun, then at 'Doc Terada' and back. What had this green-haired boy that he didn't have? He'd never have suspected...

Makoto put her glasses on once more and examined Shun with interest. "And how's your backside?"

"Better, just as you promised."

Now Jabu was *really* fascinated. Shun certainly didn't tell everything of what he did in his free time.

"Ahm, I still want to know what you wanted back in the garden," Jabu asked the 'Doc'.

"Ahm, I was there for a research project..."

"With bow and arrows and a headphone?"

"Don't worry, Jabu," Shun saved Makoto. "The Doc is okay. She loves to take photos, but otherwise I can't complain."

"Ah well, taking photos is a hobby of mine," Makoto claimed.

"Want to take some of me, too?" Jabu offered with a broad grin.

"Sure!" Makoto's eyes lit up. This got better than she had hoped for!

"Be my guest."

"Fine," she said and pulled camera and films from her lab coat.

Jabu posed for her with Cloth and without, and even agreed to accompany her for some further examinations in the Research Lab. Probably they should rethink their 'hunting down' approach, Makoto mused afterwards.

**- File BS02-Uni-T004 Closed -**

## Kapitel 6: File BS03-Dra-T001 - Easy Prey? The Dragon Trap

### File BS03-Dra-T001

#### Easy Prey? The Dragon Trap

"Nice photos!" Himiko admired Jabu's poses. The guy sure had had fun with the photo session!

"Just my sentiments", Makoto nodded.

"And who's next? It seems my Rubberduck Saint is still not in Tokyo..."

Makoto leafed through today's newspaper to find another article on the 'Galaxian Wars' tournament. The reporters certainly knew first when another of the Saints arrived.

"What about *this* looker?" Himiko pointed at the pic of a guy with really long, black hair who was featured as one of the most promising candidates to win the prize of the tournament.

"I don't understand how one is able to fight with such a long mane!"

"We'll ask him when we have him on the examination table."

"I'd love to brush this magnificent hair", Makoto said dreamily.

"No problem - as long as we're able to catch him in the first place."

"He does look pretty strong and dangerous", Makoto said thoughtfully.

"Well, the newspaper says he has 'the strongest fist and shield'. I'd really love to put this stuff into my test vats to analyze its structure."

"But be careful with taking your probes. I don't want to experience his fist and shield first hand. And don't expect me to hunt anyone with bow and arrows again!"

"I shall try to design a proper trap", Himiko declared, and her light blue eyes sparkled adventurously.

"A Dragon trap? But it'd better be sturdy."

"We need some bait, too."

"What about some sheep", Makoto grinned. "In ancient times it supposedly worked with dragons..."



"I thought they used virgins... Any takers?"

"Only if *you* know some." Makoto sighed. It's too bad that we don't know too much about those Saints. Can't you check the Graude Foundation's database on them?"

"I wish I could... But unfortunately it's pretty well safe-guarded, and the professor *insisted* that we do our examinations devoid of any information that might lead to prejudices. You know he's weird."

"I don't know nothing... He's *your* boss. I was only transferred to your department for the research project."

"Hm. Why don't we join the fan clubs of the Saints? I'm sure new members will get welcome kits with some information and photos and the stuff," Himiko suggested.

"I guess we still have enough petty cash to apply for all of the fan clubs. Wasn't there a list in yesterday's newspaper?" Makoto rummaged among the papers of the desk. "Ah, there it is!"

Himiko grabbed for the newspaper. "Cool! There are 23 different fan clubs. And the little cutie Shun has five of his own..."

"So we are supposed to write 23 letters?"

"I'll write the letter, you write the addresses on the envelopes and put the stamps on", Himiko decreed. While Makoto sighed and scribbled down addresses, the engineer wrote one general appliance letter and printed it 23 times. "Which reminds me - we could sell them a couple of our photos for a good price."

"Indeed..."

"I want some really nice autographed photos from those cuties!"

"You'd better devise this Dragon trap of yours instead of drooling over those guys."

"Okay, okay..." Himiko let the photos she had just admired disappear in her pocket. "What about sending him a letter and inviting him to the Research Lab?"

Makoto stared at her. This plan was so simple, it actually might work. "Indeed, Jabu was very cooperative when I just asked him, too."

"See! - Now where's the official stationary of the GF Research Center..." Himiko rummaged around until she tugged a not too crumpled sheet from the messy heaps of paper on the desk and inserted it into the printer. When the letter was ready, she gave it to one of the couriers of the internal postal service of the Graude Foundation to see it delivered to the Kido Mansion. "They *all* seem to live at the Kido mansion", she said. I wonder if we could convince someone to let us stay there, too..."

"So that you can sneak in on the poor guys whenever you wish? Naa, we'd better stay where we're supposed to stay. - Let's tidy up the desks a bit. I don't want to have all the photos lying around when the Dragon Saint gets here."

"Sure... Ah, these two are for my personal collection." Himiko let two nice Jabu poses disappear in her pocket, while the other photos found their way into the file cabinet.

"Hm, many more pics won't fit in there", Makoto observed.

"Unfortunately. I shall select the best ones for continuous admiration... Why don't we have a better pic of *him*", she sighed disappointedly and waved the grainy pic of her favourite around. "I want to have a nice portrait of him - preferably one on which he *smiles*!"

"Which one was this?" The doctor frowned. "This pic is just bad."

"That's the problem... The lab tried to magnify it for me, but obviously it was shot from too great a distance. I guess whoever took the photo was afraid to get much closer. I heard some rumours that those Golden ones were *really* dangerous..."

"Yes, wasn't there something that the Goldies are the strongest, followed by those Silver ones, and the Bronze guys are the weakest ones?"

"I must admit the latter ones are already pretty strong for my taste! But I want to examine that guy after we're through with the Dragon."

"You go first!"

Himiko grimaced. "I will think on a perfect camouflage."

"And what do you think of? Those temples are supposed to be pretty empty, aren't they?"

"Well, what about putting on a holographic projector and posing as a column? - I *want* to catch this guy for our examination project!"

"You want to catch this guy for your collection", Makoto corrected. "But I think we should examine the Dragon first."

"If you say so." Himiko cut out the portrait from the newspaper and pinned it to the wall. "We have to wait for the courier to deliver the invitation."

"This might take some time." Makoto threw some darts at a life-size poster of a wrinkled little fellow with a weird hat that hung at the door.

"What's with that poster? I thought we wanted to collect Saints, not mushrooms."

"I can't do target practice with a poster of some cute guy", Makoto grinned.

"Agreed. I wonder if this Roshi-guy is somehow related to Yoda..."

Makoto looked from the Roshi poster to the Star Wars poster at the other wall and back. "True, except for the colour of his teint, he could be his brother." She fetched the darts from the target and threw them again. "We need to find some occupation for the free time between the examinations."

"Well, the Dragon isn't due before tomorrow, so why not take one of the Foundation's jet planes and fly to Greece in the meantime? I have a nice telephoto lens for my camera, and there are still some photos missing. Or we could try to contact the other guys already in Tokyo and set up a schedule for their examination. After that's finished, we could move to the Research Lab in Greece and continue our work there."

"Let's wait and see..."

"Yeah. We still need to catch the rubberduck."

Makoto laughed. "You and your duck!"

"Haven't you seen the that promo pic? He's soooo cute! Those light blue eyes, and the blond mane, and that *body*..."

"...and the utterly ridiculous duck on his head..."

"Ah well, it is not as if it would be glued to him."

"True," Makoto grinned. "I only wondered who had the idea to call this a *swan*. I think I never saw such an ugly rubberduck."

"I guess it's because there's no Duck constellation, only a Swan. But at least the content of the Duck Cloth is absolutely droolworthy."

"I'm looking forward to it."

"It's absolutely unfair that *you* are the M.D.! I should think about a change of profession."

Makoto's grin broadened. "No way. You get the trappings, and I get the contents."

"But I want some of the contents, too," Himiko sulked. "When I manage to catch that Goldie I showed you I will keep him for me alone."

"When? If!"

Himiko sighed and looked at the watch. "Okay, work time is over. I think we should get something to eat now, and tomorrow we'll inspect the Dragon."

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When the two scientists entered their lab the next morning, Himiko shook her head. "It looks as if some bomb exploded here. We should put all of those photos away before our appointment. Oh, the photo lab already sent the developed films of the Andromeda cutie. Hm, it seems I shot 6 films instead of the 5 I thought..."

Suddenly, the telephone rang. "That's the Dragon!"

"Why don't you answer the phone?" Makoto had her hands full of photos that she put into an already stuffed drawer.

"If you insist.... - This is Graude Foundation's Research and Examination Laboratory, Dr.Shizukawa Himiko."

"Hello. This is Shiryu speaking - I got some letter of your organization, but I'm not exactly sure what you want of me..."

"Oh, it's a simple examination, Shiryu-san. Would you please be so kind to visit the R&E lab as soon as possible?"

"What kind of examination?" Shiryu's voice sounded slightly suspicious.

"Medical, psychological and so on. Ah yes, and don't forget to take your armour with you."

"It's no armour, it's a Cloth", Shiryu corrected her.

"Ahm, sorry, yes, of course... But bring it anyway."

"If you insist... When?"

"What about right now? Then we are absolutely sure you are fit for the tournament."

"Okay. I'll be there."

Himiko hung up the phone. "He's on the way."

"Why haven't we tried this from the start? It's very practical that the guys here in Tokyo are more or less the property of the Graude Foundation. I only fear it'll be more difficult with the others."

About half an hour later, the Dragon Saint arrived. Himiko ran to the door and opened.

"Oh hello!" She had to look up to him and cursed the fact that she was so small.

"Hi." Shiryu looked questioningly down to her. What was she staring at?

"Ahm, please come in," she hurried to say. "The lab's over there." She only hoped that Makoto had put away all of the photos by now. "May I introduce you to MD Terada

Makoto?" Himiko pointed at her colleague. "Please put the arm- err, Cloth onto the trolley."

Shiryu lowered the box onto the trolley. He held it only by one hand, even though it looked pretty heavy.

"Hello Shiryu", Makoto greeted him.

"I'll be right back", Himiko chimed and went to the lab next door to examine the armour. She only hoped she missed nothing of importance while she was occupied with it.

Curiously she opened the box and peered into it. The armour looked absolutely fascinating in its presentational form - like some abstract green dragon sculpture. It was amazing that it was possible to put this on.

Makoto busied herself with the physical examination in the meantime, while Shiryu watched her every move.

Himiko finished her job about the same time as Makoto, but with far less success. The material of the armour withstood every tool when she tried to take a sample, and putting it under the microscope was beyond her strength. The thing was indeed very heavy, and she had to remain checking it with a magnifying glass while it still stood on the trolley. So she finished by taking some photos of the armour and pushed the trolley back into the other lab.

"Okay, it looks fine to mine", she declared. "I haven't discovered any dents, fissures or other damage. - Could you please put it on so that we can take some photos for the archives?"

"Why not?" Shiryu complied, and the women marvelled at the process. How did all of those parts know where they belonged? And what happened to Shiryu's civil clothing in the process? They would have to review the video tapes of the surveillance cameras in slow motion to find out.

Makoto circled Shiryu curiously. She wondered whether the donning of the armour caused similar strange happenstances as it did with Shun - but no, his hair still seemed to be the same length as before.

The Dragon Saint waited similarly curiously. What was the red-haired woman looking at?

"It seems his hair doesn't grow longer when he puts on the armour", Himiko observed.

"Indeed", Makoto agreed and caught a strand. "The same length as before."

"Why does this surprise you?" Shiryu wanted to know.

"Well, when we examined the Andromeda Saint, we discovered that his hair suddenly

is about 40cm longer when he puts on his armour."

"Indeed? I never noticed." Shiryu went through some exercises because he felt slightly bored. Himiko only hoped that the tape of the surveillance camera was long enough.

Makoto was more fascinated about the fact that Shiryu's hair stayed absolutely orderly even though he moved around. 'Absolutely mysterious,' she thought. Her hair was much shorter, and still a single gust of wind succeeded to turn it into a disaster.

"Okay, I think we're through with the examination", Himiko decreed. "By the way, would you mind to go through some of those exercises again without the armour, so that we can take some more photos for our coll- err, archives?"

"Sure," Shiryu shrugged. He wondered what the two women were up to with all of the photos, but when they insisted? Himiko was delighted.

"I guess that's all now", Makoto said finally. "You don't need to worry about your health *before* the tournament. But maybe you should be a bit careful *during* the fights - it would be a shame if you got hurt."

"Is that so?" Shiryu looked at her with amusement. "I will see what I can do."

Himiko sighed in relief. The Dragon was soooo cute, and she absolutely didn't want him damaged.

"Am I allowed to leave?"

"Sure", Makoto nodded. "And good luck in the tournament."

"Indeed. And try not to be so hard on the cute little Andromeda Saint if you have to fight him", Himiko added.

Amused, Shiryu shook the head and left. He wondered why all the women and girls were so obsessed with this Andromeda guy...

**- File BS03-Dra-T001 Closed -**

## Kapitel 7: File GS01-Aqr-T001 - No Photos! Strike One for Aquarius

### File GS01-Aqr-T001

#### No Photos! Strike One for Aquarius

"The Rubberduck Saint still isn't in Tokyo yet", Himiko pouted. "Is there any cute guy left to examine?"

Makoto browsed through the current newspapers. "Well, according to the news we won't find any more interesting Saints here at the moment. I'm not willing to touch any of *these* here!" She pointed at portrait photos of Hydra Ichi, Lionet Ban, Bear Geki and Wolf Nachi who were featured in another article about the upcoming tournament.

"What about the Pegasus and the Phoenix guy who are supposed to attend, too?"

"The Pegasus Saint hasn't arrived yet either, and no one seems to know anything about the Phoenix one. So we should rather wait until we see if he's suitable for our 'study'."

"But what can we do then?"

"Let's devise a plan to catch some of the hunks in Greece in the meantime."

"At least there are several of them in one place. I hate it to hunt after them in all corners of the world." Makoto sat down on the table and studied the world map that was lying there as a desk pad.

Himiko looked at some photos of the Greek landscape that probably were made by Kido Mitsumasa about 13 years ago when he visited the country. The shots of the Gold Saints were obviously done more recently, though. "It's too bad that who ever took the pics had to use a strong telephoto lens and wasn't able to get any closer," she sighed. Even the best enhancement methods had to fail with such bad source material. "I would still suggest that we start with that guy from the 11th house. But unfortunately it's high up that mountain, and there seem to be quite some stairs to get there."

"I hate stairs!" Makoto groaned. "Especially if they reach up a whole mountain."

"We might use a helicopter", Himiko suggested. "Just a moment..." She disappeared into a store room and came back with a model helicopter of about one metre length. "I guess we should first survey the area anyway."

"That's a good idea. If we know the area we can far better devise a plan to catch them for the examination. Maybe we could use the model to mount a little cannon that we

could arm with anaesthetic darts and collect the victim when he's unconscious."

"Sounds good to me. Then we don't have to get too near them while they are still able to strike back. Unfortunately we have to aim very precisely as they seem to be far better armoured than the Bronze ones. And don't forget that we mustn't damage them!"

"I don't think they are easily damaged", Makoto assured her colleague. "The results I got from the Bronze Saints were already astonishing, and when the others are supposed to be even stronger..."

"I only hope they won't destroy the lab once they wake up from the anaesthetic and discover what happened. It might be pretty difficult to convince them to stand for some photos when we hunted them down like this."

"Unfortunately they don't have any ties to the Graude Foundation, so we can't simply order them to the lab."

"Well, we need to survey the area first and then think on some appropriate measures." Himiko packed the heli in its transport box and fetched some other important tools that she wanted to take with her, while Makoto decided to trust that the Greek lab was outfitted as well as the one here in Tokyo.

"When the tournament starts we should return to watch the guys in action," Himiko said. "But until then let's prepare the next stage of our research project."

They went home to fetch some clothes for the trip and took one of the GF jet planes that brought them to the lab in Athens. After they had sampled the Greek cuisine, they decided to sleep off the jetlag and went to their task in the next morning.

\* \* \*

With a rented car, they drove as near to the place where the Saints stayed as possible.

"It doesn't look very modern here", Himiko pointed out with a frown.

"Well, it seems to be a pretty rural area, so don't expect any large shopping centers or the like. Is it that mountain over there?"

"Yep! I think it should be no problem to fly the heli there and record everything with the surveillance camera." Himiko freed the little helicopter from its box and flew it in direction of the Sanctuary. Makoto sat down next to her and joined her in watching the monitor that showed everything the camera recorded.

"It's a really desolate landscape", she commented. "There's not much chance to hide amidst the naked rock."

The helicopter circled the mountain on which the temples flanked the stairway from the bottom to Athena's statue at the top.



"Everything looks pretty desolate, if you ask me. I wonder whether the Goldies are on a vacation."

"Well, probably they are in their temples and pass their free time watching TV or something like that."

"Well, then they have to have cable - I don't see any antennas or satellite dishes." Himiko steered the helicopter farther up the mountain. She had passed the 10th temple now and couldn't believe her luck when she saw the lone figure standing in front of the next one. He had long, indigo blue coloured hair that blew in the wind just like his blue and white cape did.

"He's *gorgeous*!" Himiko sighed when she watched the monitor, and Makoto agreed. "I need to fly nearer to get some close-ups!"

Suddenly their victim looked directly into the camera, and a frown appeared on his face.

"Oops, I guess he discovered the heli... - What's he doing? He points at the camera?!" In the next instance *something* hit the helicopter, and the monitor went to static.

"It seems he is a private person", Makoto stated dryly.

"But he's definitely *gorgeous*", Himiko repeated and rewound the tape to the first appearance of that guy. "I will get him into the lab, no matter the cost!"

"Well, then good luck to you..."

**- File GS01-Aqr-T001 Closed -**

## Kapitel 8: File GS02-Sco-T001 - It is Uncovered! Milo's Best Kept Secret

### File GS02-Sco-T001

#### It is Uncovered! Milo's Best Kept Secret

"Can you tell me why we have to fill in *ten* forms to explain the loss of the spy helicopter?" Makoto whined. "It was only a *model helicopter* after all."

"I think they want to discourage anyone to waste Graude Foundation property unnecessarily. But this time it definitely was necessary." She had printed out half a dozen of the best shots of the first Goldie in her collection and stuck them to every free space of the walls. Unfortunately their lab in Athens was comparatively small as they were given only a free little storage room on the Athens lab.

"It seems the direct approach is no option with the Golden ones. They are just too tough and aggressive."

"But on the other hand they are worth any effort!" Himiko looked dreamily at the close-up she had gotten just before the helicopter was destroyed.

"If you say so..."

"We only need a good plan to catch him."

"We should rather wait a while and turn to another one of them who isn't warned yet", Makoto suggested and leafed through the few grainy pics that they had of the other Goldies. "I think this one looks pretty harmless, although I'm not sure whether it's a man or a woman..."

"Wasn't there something that female Saints wear face masks? In that case it has to be a guy. - This one doesn't look too dangerous either." She pointed at a slender looking young man with closed eyes and really long gold-blond hair.

"If one could be sure that they are really harmless..."

"Well, I fear 'Gold Saint' and 'harmless' are mutually exclusive expressions - but these two at least look cute and not too fierce."

"Hm." Makoto didn't sound convinced.

"I like the dreamy looking one best of the remaining Goldies."

"Pretty tough choice. It's too bad that we can't simply sneak in there. These temples are not suitable to hide in there."

"Why don't we claim to belong to some take-out service? I wonder if any of them likes pizza..."

"This one seems to like eating well." Makoto pointed at the pic of the Taurus Saint who looked huge and massive in comparison to the others. "Why don't we just go to the bottom of the stairway and wait until one of them comes down? We can try to find some cover among the rocks, even if it isn't too comfortable."

"Well, we could bring some cushions, then it should be bearable."

A short while later they had outfitted their hiding place to that they could wait comfortably. Himiko had her camera ready and chewed on some softcakes, and Makoto watched the stairway intently as well. After half an hour of uneventful watch, she leaned against one of the sun-baked rocks and yawned.

"I agree", Himiko sighed. She had put down the camera and sipped from some diet coke she had brought with some other supplies in a cold bag. "I demand that my number one cutie walks down right now!"

"Be glad if he doesn't. I'm sure you won't survive it if he sees you with the camera. But you're right, this futile waiting gets on my nerves, too."

But they had to wait some more hours, and it was almost sunset, when a cloaked person came down the stairs.

"A victim!" Himiko whispered in disbelief. "Finally!"

Makoto peered out out their hiding place, but she couldn't discern who it was.

"Who is it?" Himiko promptly asked in low voice.

Makoto shrugged. "Dunno. I can only see a hooded cloak. Judging from the size it can neither be the Taurus nor the Libra Saint. Let's pursue him!"

"But very carefully... Let's see where he goes, and maybe we can even convince him to accompany us to the lab out of his free will."

They kept as silent as possible and followed the figure quite a while down into the town where he entered a large building.

"Huh? What does he want *there*?" Himiko asked amazedly.

"In an advertising company? Dunno!" Fortunately it seemed to be located in the ground floor, and so they walked around the building and peered through the windows. "There he is", Makoto finally discovered.

"Can you see anything?" Once more Himiko cursed her size. While Makoto could look through the window, she was just too small.

"Give me the camera", Makoto demanded. "I *have* to take pics of *this*!"

"What's going on there?" Himiko sulked. She wanted to take a look, too.

"It is the Scorpio Goldie, I'm pretty sure."

"Now tell me! What's he doing there?"

"Gosh, he has *long* legs..."

"If you don't tell me right now, I will kill you", Himiko threatened.

"Wee-ell... You have certainly heard that men have longer legs than women and thus the ad companies prefer *male* models for nylons..."

"You don't want to say that -" Himiko clapped her hands over her mouth to stifle her laughter. "He actually works as a model for nylon tights?"

Makoto could only nod, or she would have burst into laughter, too.

"Makoto, do you think you have taken some good pics?"

"Sure."

"Great. I just had a perfect idea to get the Scorpio Saint into our lab."

"So?"

"Don't you think he'd find it utterly embarrassing if we distributed those pics among the others? We'll simply blackmail him."

"Indeed, this could work! I want to examine him very thoroughly."

"And while we're at it, we can interview him about the others. Maybe he knows some weaknesses of them we could exploit as well."

"Very well. I think I have enough photos now. Let's develop them, and then we can start the blackmail attempt."

They silently went back to their lab.

\* \* \*

Two days, a thorough examination, an interview and a photo session later...

"Isn't he absolutely kawaii?" Himiko adored the large heap of freshly taken pics of Milo, the Scorpio Gold Saint.

"Indeed, he is", Makoto agreed. "I still find it unbelievable how long his legs are."

"And those light blue eyes... Marvellous! And it's even more cute that he looks slightly pouty all of the time."

"Well, I'm sure he wasn't very happy about the fact that we know his little secret."

"It's a pity, though, that he couldn't tell us any weaknesses of the Aquarius guy."

"Maybe he doesn't have any?"

"No, he has to have at least some weakness to exploit - or how should I get my photos?"

"You will have to be even more creative then."

**- File GS02-Sco-T001 Closed -**

## Kapitel 9: File GS01-Aqr-T002 - Freeze! In Hot Pursuit of the Coolest Saint

### File GS01-Aqr-T002

#### Freeze! In Hot Pursuit of the Coolest Saint

"Who's the next one on the list?" Makoto wanted to know.

"*He* of course!" Himiko replied with a faint blush on her cheeks.

"Who?"

"The Aquarius guy of course - what was his name... Ah yes, Camus."

"Ah. And you have a new plan already?"

"Well, I think the idea with the pizza take-out service could work. I'll get some pizza and just bring it to him. And when I'm close enough, I can take my pics and try to convince him to submit to my examinations."

"Good. - Hey, wait a moment, you're not supposed to examine him. That's *my* job. You will only get the armour."

"*What?!* No way! I want *all* of him."

Makoto shook her head vehemently. "No, you're the engineer, and I'm the medical doctor."

"Weeeeelll... I don't think I need to be an M.D. to do the examinations I want to do," Himiko said dreamily.

"You don't take your job serious enough," Makoto chided. "Play 'doctors and nurses' in your free time and remember that we have to do some work."

"Ah well," Himiko blushed. "But he *is* the cutest of them all. I hope he'll like Pizza Vesuvio..."

"I guess I'd better stay under cover when you try to give it to him."

"I don't think he'll be angry when he gets something to eat. Maybe I could volunteer to act as dessert..."

Makoto sighed tragically. Himiko hurried to the phone and called a pizza take-out. No one answered.

"What time is it? Oh dear, it's only half past nine... I fear we have to wait at least two

hours until they open. Hm. Maybe we can devise some plans to catch the others in the mean time."

"I'm listening."

"Well, pass me some of the photos of the Scorpio guy. I need some inspiration."

Makoto gave her some magnified pics of him.

"Kakkoi!" Himiko sighed.

"Have you already devised a plan?"

"It depends. I just wondered if I could blackmail him to go to a dinner with me."

"Well, the photos from the ad company were compromising enough, and a date with him is tempting," Makoto agreed and fetched some more pics from the drawer to admire him.

"Well, if I manage to get the other one, you can keep *him*."

"Hm." Makoto pulled out some pics of the other cuties. "And what about these guys?"

"The choice is truly hard," agreed Himiko. "We might ask them all, one at a time..."

"The idea isn't bad." Makoto laid the pics onto the table to get a better overview. "And where do we start?"

"*Him* of course! - But remember, he's mine!" Himiko pointed at the Aquarius Gold Saint.

"It depends. Maybe he doesn't like pizza."

"I don't mind. I really do want him!"

"Awwww," made Makoto. "But there are so many other cuties..."

"Agreed, but look at these beautiful eyes of his - such a marvellous deep blue! -, his cute snub nose, his fascinating eyebrows, his gorgeous mane and that *body*!" Himiko sighed.

"Hello..." Makoto waved a photo in front of Himikos eyes. "Earth to Himiko..."

"Huh?!"

"Remember, you still have a pizza to deliver."

"Pizza?!" Himiko looked at her in bewilderment. "Ah, yes, the pizza! But the take-out is still closed."

"I only wonder how you are going to deliver the pizza still hot."

"I will try my best."

"Okay, when you deliver the pizza, I will follow you and take the photos," Makoto decided.

"Fine. I want some really beautiful pics of him - not that I would think a picture featuring *him* could be anything else but beautiful..."

"If we get close enough to him, that is."

"I sincerely do hope it."

They decided to drool a little longer over the other cuties, until it was time and Himiko could order the pizza. She took the box and began the long way upstairs.

'It's so unfair that he lives in one of the temples highest up the mountain,' Himiko thought sulkily, when they way seemed to get longer and longer. Makoto followed her in some distance and watched her through her telephoto lens.

Himiko panted. She long had lost count of the steps. Fortunately, the other Gold Saints let her pass when she claimed that she had to deliver a pizza to Aquarius Temple. She got some really strange looks, but obviously it was plausible enough.

Only Milo wasn't so easily convinced that she really wanted to deliver a pizza, but a short mentioning of the blackmail pictures silenced him, too.

Makoto cursed horribly as she had to run up all the stairs as well. If it would have been for her, she would have waited for another one of the Saints to come *down*. The worst thing was that she slowly but surely ran out of excuses why she followed Himiko. She really should have taken a pizza with her, too.

Finally, Himiko reached the Aquarius Temple. She pitied the poor Goldie when he had to walk these stairs all the days.

"Pizza service!" she called.

Himiko's voice echoed through the interior of the temple, and Makoto looked for a good hiding place so that she could take the best photos.

Suddenly the Aquarius Gold Saint appeared in front of Himiko. She stared at him. In reality, he looked even more gorgeous than on the photos, she discovered and couldn't utter a single word.

"What do you want?" Camus asked and frowned. "I didn't order anything."

Himiko simply gaped at him, while two large hearts in her eyes clouded her vision.



"Pardon?" Camus looked at her.

Still no answer.

The Aquarius Gold Saint shrugged. "I don't have the time to wait until you learn to talk. The exit is right behind you." He shook his head and went back to where he had come from.

Himiko's gaze followed him, and suddenly she felt how her legs gave way under her.

Makoto couldn't believe it. Now her colleague had even fallen down in a swoon! This was highly annoying. And she had thought that Himiko wanted to convince him to come into their lab for an examination!

She sighed and threw the petite engineer, who still clung to the pizza box, over her shoulder and went back the thousands of stairs.

When she passed Scorpio Temple, she was intercepted by Milo who gave her a *really* strange look.

"What have you done *now*?" he wanted to know.

"I did nothing," Makoto replied. "She simply swooned when she saw this guy."

"Whom are you talking about? Shura?"

"No, the guy with the dark blue mop."

"Camus?" Milo grinned. 'Dark blue mop', that was a good one. He certainly could use this to make fun of his friend. "I didn't think that Camus would frighten some girl to swoon..."

"I don't think she was frightened - he appeared, she gaped at him and she swooned. And now I have to carry her down all the way to our lab!"

"That's unfair. Why aren't there any girls swooning because of me?" The Scorpio Gold Saint sulked.

"Aren't there?" Makoto examined him thoroughly. Seeing him live was more fun than admiring mere photos. She shoved Himiko in a better position, even though she was small, Makoto began to feel her weight.

"No," Milo grumbled. 'What has he that I don't have?' he thought.

"Well, on the other hand there aren't so many women nowadays who swoon because of cute guys."

"Well, *she* did, obviously. By the way, do you still need that pizza? I'm sure I could use

it to feed my pet scorpion."

"You can have it if you like. I'm sure it's cold by now anyway."

"I don't think Camus-chan will mind," Milo grinned and grabbed the pizza box which caused Himiko to wake up again.

"Gods, he's so *gorgeous*!" she sighed.

"Oh thanks," Milo said.

"Not you! Camus!" Himiko corrected. Makoto let her crash down.

"Ouch!"

"Fine that you're awake at last."

"Why did I sleep anyway? Oh dear, don't tell me I swooned?"

"What else. I had to carry you down all the way." Makoto straightened with a moan.

"Oopsie..." Himiko blushed. "But in reality he's so much more gorgeous than on the photos.." She grinned sheepishly, then blushed even deeper. "Oh dear, what will he think of me now?"

"He'll probably think you're a little daft," Milo grumbled, his pride severely injured because she didn't talk of him that way.

"Without any doubt," Makoto agreed. "Imagine her standing there, pizza in hands and gaping at him..."

"I did *what*?!" Now Himiko looked like a blonde tomato.

"I'll show you the photos I took."

"You mean you took photos of *me* and not of *him*...?"

"You were so much funnier..."

"Makoto, I'll kill you! I wanted photos of *him*!"

"Don't you have enough photos of *me*?" Milo asked acidly.

"To be truthful, we never have enough," Makoto told him. "But there's no space left in the drawer where we keep your photos."

"As if I didn't know," Milo grumbled.

"But we have almost no pics of the cutest one!" Himiko sniffed.

"Better luck next time..." Makoto grinned.

"Well, even more than photos I want *him*," Himiko sighed.

Milo wasn't amused at all. He was sure he was far more attractive and interesting than Camus, but these young women simply ignored him.

"It seems you need to devise a new plan."

"Of course!"

The women went down the stairs and left a slightly peeved Scorpio Gold Saint behind.

**- File GS01-Aqr-T002 Closed -**

## Kapitel 10: Interlude I - Move Over, Milo! New Headquarters for Makoto and Himiko

### Interlude I

#### Move Over, Milo! New Headquarters for Makoto and Himiko

Finally, the photos were developed, and Makoto returned with the envelope. Himiko looked at her.

"Now show me what you have shot!"

"What do I get in exchange?"

"Well, you'll stay sound and sane - which I couldn't guarantee if I don't get them *right now*!"

"Okay - one after the other..." Makoto gave her one of the funny shots on which Himiko stood with the pizza box and gaped at the Aquarius Saint.

"Waaaaaaaahhhh!!! I want pics of *him*!"

"You wanted *pics*. Well, here are some more..." Makoto had put the cute pics of Camus immediately away when she received them from the lab. Otherwise she'd never gotten one single look at them.

"I don't want any more embarrassing pics of me - oh dear, I don't want to know what he will think of me now! - I want exciting pics of *him*!"

"I guess he'll think you're silly."

"I want to die... - And now give me the pics of him or *you* will die!"

Makoto shook her head. "No. They're mine."

"Your life expectancy drops dangerously..."

"Okay... They're in my closet."

Himiko stormed to the corner and ripped the door open. About two dozen pics of Camus looked at her, and she stared back in rapture. "Gosh, he's *incredible*!" she sighed.

"They are cute, aren't they?"

"He's divine!"

"But still we need some better pics. He was gone so fast..."

"Much too fast..." Himiko sighed again. "Next time I'll try ice-cream instead of pizza."

"I'm sure he'll try to escape as soon as he sees you again. You looked so ridiculous with the pizza and mutely staring at him."

"You're mean! Well, then I will simply wear a disguise."

"As long as you don't play a statue again... But I hate the idea of having to climb all of these steps once more."

"What about suggesting them to build in some escalators?"

"I don't think they like such modern technology. We'd better find a place to stay somewhere halfway up that mountain."

"But where? I refuse to camp outside."

"I also want a real roof over my head, don't worry."

"Then we might have a problem - the temples are all occupied, if I remember correctly."

"Can't we throw someone out?"

"I would *never* want to throw out my number one cutie Goldie... I'd rather move in with him." Himiko plucked one of the Camus pics from the closet wall to examine it a bit more closely.

"Hey, you ruin my composition!"

"Never mind - remember, he's *mine*! Why don't you choose one of the others?"

"You can keep him. I only want the photos."

"I want him *and* the photos!"

"You're insatiable", Makoto sulked. "But your idea with the moving in wasn't so bad. Why don't we move into Milo's temple?"

"Hm, then I'm far closer to the Aquarius Temple. You're right, I guess I have to work slowly to convince *him* to join me for some thorough examinations."

"Hm, but how can we convince Milo to let us stay with him? Maybe we could tell him we think he's just great etc..."

"It wouldn't even be a lie," grinned Himiko. "I think he *is* great. But Camus is just sooo much greater."

"Then let's go to Milo fast - before I feel silly because of this idea."

"Fine. Why don't we fetch some pizza and wine and try to convince him. Or do you think he prefers something else to eat?"

"Dunno. I guess I forgot the questionnaire again when we took the photos of him."

"Well, then we should stay with pizza." Himiko called the take-out and ordered the pizzas.

"Let's pack our things, then we can go as soon as the pizza arrives," Makoto suggested.

"I only hope we can convince him. Then we don't need to run up all the stairs all the time."

They started to throw some clothes and devices into two bags. They had just finished when the guy from the pizza take-out rang the bell.

"*Four pizzas?*" Makoto asked.

"Well, I hope we can convince Milo to invite Camus, too."

"First we have to go to Scorpio Temple..."

They began the arduous trip again.

"Why did I have to pack so many things", Makoto groaned.

"Think of our research project!" Himiko looked up to the small and round Aquarius Temple.

"You only think of your cutie - and what is there for me?" Makoto complained.

"Isn't there any suitable guy for you among all of them?"

"I haven't found one who fascinates me as much."

"Hm... What about the beautiful blond guy?"

"Which blond guy?" Makoto put back her glasses onto her nose to see the stairs.

"The elegant, slender Goldie with the looong, straight mane and the likewise long, dark lashes."

"You mean the Goldie who looks as if he sleeps all the time? He's too dull for my taste."

"Hm, and what about the guy with the lilac mane?"

"I'm sure he's pretty dull, too. And I don't like his hair colour to boot."

"Then there is this beautiful Goldie with the light blue hair..."

"I'm still not convinced that he's a *he*."

"Well, let's do a thorough examination."

"How many stairs are there still?" Makoto whined. "My feet feel like lead."

"I think this is the last temple before the Scorpio one. Which reminds me - what about Milo?"

"Milo? Yes, he is pretty cute."

"I think he's a close runner-up for Camus."

"Let's hope we can move in there. - Ah, finally, there it is. The way felt much longer this time."

"We had a lot of luggage and 4 pizzas to carry."

"Well, I won't go any step further," Makoto said when they reached the entrance.

"*You* again!" they were greeted by Scorpio Milo.

"Hi Milo," replied Himiko. "Do you like some pizza?"

"Well, if I don't have to pay for it... Pope refused to grant us a pay rise the last time we asked."

"You're invited - if you do me the favour to invite Camus as well."

"Dream on. Camus certainly won't eat any fast food like this."

Makoto grinned at Himiko's sad face. "Ah well, the more is left for us."

"But I wanted..."

"Camus is a Frenchman. If you want to invite him for lunch or dinner, you'll have to be a bit more creative," Milo grinned.

"This sounds difficult. I guess there's no take-out for stylish food..." Makoto pondered.

"Of course not," Milo said. "There's a nice French restaurant at Athens that Camus likes very well. I must admit that I'm not so fond of it - you're still hungry when you leave there. I prefer *real* food, not two peas with half a carrot and a bit of parsley on a salad leaf with a one ounce morsel of some meat and a marble sized boiled potato..."

"That's the cue! We should eat before the pizza gets cold. Where's the dining room?"

They stormed into the temple, and Milo lead the way to a room next to the huge hall they reached after entering.

"Where are the dishes, forks and knives?"

Milo pointed at some cupboards, and Makoto began to lay the table.

"Ready!" she said finally. "I'm starving after climbing all of these stairs."

They sat down and attacked the pizza.

"By the way, we have some wine, too," Himiko said.

"That's nice. All I could offer you would be either beer, water or some stronger liquors..."

"Bah, beer!" Makoto shook the head. "That's disgusting. We ordered some nice Greek wines with the pizza. In Japan you mostly get German or French wines. But the Greek wines are so nice and sweet most of the time."

"Well, whenever I invited Camus for dinner and offered him our wines, he held long lectures about the inferiority of the Greek stuff compared to 'proper French wines'. I got so fed up with his talk of Ch&acirc;teau whatever that I decided to stay with beer. At least he refuses to comment on beer altogether."

"So Camus does like wine?" Himiko piped.

"Yeah, he puts lots of his money into his wine cellar. He showed me what he has collected, but I'm sorry, I can't remember all the 'Ch&acirc;teaus' and 'Grand Crus' and whatever he told me about. There were some bottles among them that cost more than 100 US Dollars!"

"Well, I can't stand French wines," Makoto said. "I prefer sweet wines from Germany or Greece or Eastern Europe."

"What did you bring?" Milo looked at the bottles. "Ah! Imiglykos! I haven't had this for a while. Pour me a glass, too, please."

Makoto filled Milo's glass with the deep red, sweet wine and he took a deep sip. "Great!"

Himiko sighed. It was a pity that Camus wasn't here. She wouldn't have minded even if he complained about the wines or the food. Maybe then she could have convinced him to accompany her to this nice French restaurant Milo talked about and she had him all for her alone...



"By the way - is there anyone who wants this poor, ownerless pizza?" Milo had already finished his pizza and looked for a second helping.

"No, just take it."

"Thanks. By the way, where did you get them? They're great."

"I think the take-out's called 'Da Giovanni'," Himiko supplied.

"I like them, too," Makoto nodded.

"Well, we can order them tomorrow at Giovanni's as well," Himiko suggested. "Though I must admit I would prefer to try and invite Camus to that French restaurant."

"It depends. If you wish to *eat* you shouldn't go there. The price is of reverse proportion to the portions. I'd rather eat a huge gyros plate with souvlaki and biftecki and tons of salad..."

"Well, we can also order something like this tomorrow," Makoto suggested.

"Pardon? You don't want to imply that you want to visit me tomorrow again?"

"Well, actually we thought of something else..."

"That's good to know."

"We will *stay* here," Makoto told him.

"*What???*"

"Don't you have enough space here? And we won't bother you. And we'll order food..."

"No way! *No way* you'll move into my temple."

"Why not?" Makoto looked sadly at him. "Tell the truth - you don't like us?"

"Well, I wouldn't say that..."

"And it's only until we finish our research project," Himiko added.

"We'll try not to disturb you..."

"We'll even get lots of yummy food for you and Greek wines," Himiko promised.

"Hm... Do you want to bribe me?"

Himiko nodded vigorously.

"With whatever you wish!"

"Whatever I wish...?" Milo examined them thoughtfully.

"Sure - whatever you wish for food, we'll get you," Makoto qualified.

"Oh, that was only about food? I thought you would volunteer to clean my whole temple."

"No way. Hire a cleaning lady."

"Well, if you want to move in that's my condition."

"Himiko will clean the temple."

"Moi?! Actually, I want to move into *Aquarius* Temple!" She pulled out some of the Camus pics she had taken away from Makoto and gazed at them in utter rapture.

Makoto sighed. "You really want me to clean your temple?" she asked Milo.

"Yes. That and the food and wine stuff."

"You're pretty tough when it comes to negotiations," Makoto complained.

"Sure. Do we have a deal?"

"I'm not 100 percent convinced that it is worth it."

"Well, you can try to convince Camus to let you move in, but I can assure you he won't be as easy to deal with."

"I guessed so. But she thinks quite differently about it." Makoto pointed at Himiko who drooled over the photos of Camus.

"Well, fat chance. Camus isn't convinced easily - if ever, that is. By the way, you can start with washing the dishes."

"Pah, I haven't said 'yes' to the deal!"

"Well, you may leave my temple, if you so wish. But don't expect me to carry your bags."

"I can carry my bags on my own," Makoto grumbled.

"Fine. The exit is over there."

Makoto looked darkly at Milo. "Don't think it's so easy to get rid of me!"

"Well, you heard my conditions," Milo shrugged.

"We haven't discussed it properly."

"Do you have another offer? I'm listening."

"I'm still thinking about it," Makoto said. "In any case, I will not clean the huge hall."

"But I think it really does need cleaning. There are still so many blood stains left..."

"Aha - but who's the one who is responsible for them?"

"Well, some deceased opponents of mine. Unfortunately they're dead, so I couldn't force them to clean my hall afterwards."

"Why haven't you beaten them outside?"

"It was winter, and I hate to duel outside in the winter. That's Camus' domain."

"And why do you have to battle anyway? It only causes stains and damages to your temple."

"Well, it's my profession."

"And you never learned anything else?"

"I had to train to become a Saint all the time. When should I have found the time to get apprenticed for some ordinary job?"

"You have a point. But still I don't want to clean your temple."

"Well, it's *my* temple and *you* want something of me. So I can dictate the conditions. It's as simple as that."

"You're mean!"

"I'm Scorpio Gold Saint. I'm not supposed to be nice."

"Pah. Then I don't have to be nice either," Makoto said. "What would you say if I glued some of the nice pictures of you in lady's tights to the other temples around?"

"That's blackmailing!"

"Is it? Oh, I guess it is. But you don't want to be nice either."

Milo sulked. "Well, I guess I have to give in. But still you'll have to provide some decent food and wine."

"Well, as we don't want to starve we would do that anyway."

Milo grumbled something. Himiko was still totally absorbed in the admiration of her beautiful Camus pictures.

"Don't look so grumpy, that's bad for the teint." Makoto grinned, and Milo sulked even more visibly. "Now you look *really* cute..."

"I don't want to be cute," Milo protested. "I'm bad!"

"Whatever you say. / think you are cute. Where can we stay?"

"Well, I guess you could use this room." Milo pointed at a dusty storage room.

"This isn't overly clean," Makoto observed.

"Why did you think I wanted you to clean my temple?"

"Ah well, it'll do. I only want to avoid all of those stairs..."

Milo sighed tragically. This was going to be hell. After all, *he* was the one always teasing Aiolia to be a bigamist because the Leo Saint was often seen with Marin and Shaina. And when these two ladies now stayed at his temple, Aiolia certainly would take revenge. Milo wasn't sure whether *this* was worse, or if someone saw the photos of him in ladies' tights.

**- End of Interlude I -**

## Kapitel 11: File GS03-Vir-T001 - Blond and Beautiful! Or Mad, Bad and Dangerous to Know?

### File GS03-Vir-T001

#### Blond and Beautiful! Or Mad, Bad and Dangerous to Know?

"Sniff," said Himiko. "So you *really* want me to abandon my attempts to catch my gorgeous Aquarius Saint? Whom else should we examine, if not the cutest of the cute?"

"You'd better give him some time until he has forgotten your embarrassing entrance," the red-haired M.D. sighed. "What about the guy with the long, blond hair? He doesn't look too dangerous."

"Didn't I suggest that a while ago? If I remember correctly, it was *you* you said he's dull. I always thought he's really kawaii. Not as gorgeous as Camus, of course, but still..."

"I don't mind as long we don't go to your personal cutie."

"You're almost as mean as Milo!"

"Really?" Makoto grinned. "Then I have to exercise a bit more."

"But don't use me or *him* for your exercises!" Himiko sulked and admired her favourite Camus pic which she had in about five different sizes now.

"Okay... But now let us go to the cute blond guy."

"I hope he has light blue eyes. I *love* blond hair plus light blue eyes."

"So? I thought you'd prefer something else..."

"It depends. I always liked blond hair best. Camus is just the exception from the rule. But what an exception he is!"

"I see." Makoto started to pack her things for the examination and Himiko followed suit.

"Are you ready?" Makoto wanted to know. "Where do we have to go, by the way?"

"Virgo Temple is the sixth of the temples and we're at number eight."

"Finally we only need to walk downstairs!"

"On the other hand it means we have to go upstairs afterwards."

"I want someone who carries me!" Makoto groaned.

"Ask Milo."

"He doesn't even want to carry my bags."

"Try to convince him."

"But how?"

"Be nice to him," Himiko suggested with a grin.

"Nice *to him*? He's a mean guy and doesn't deserve it."

"Hm..." Himiko put on a dreamy look.

"What are you thinking of again?"

"Nothing... I just thought I'd love to be *very nice* to my Aquarius cutie..."

Before Makoto could respond something adequately mean, they stood at the entrance of Virgo Temple.

"Himiko - you go first!"

"Why me?"

"I prefer taking photos from a safe distance. It might be that he isn't as harmless as he looks...."

"Coward." Nevertheless, Himiko entered the temple. Shaka was cute, too, after all, and when she got him first, she would certainly keep him.

Makoto cleaned her thick glasses. She didn't want to miss anything.

When Himiko made the first step into the temple, she found herself in a beautiful garden. The sky was light blue and feathery clouds chased themselves along high above a wide green meadow with colourful flowers. "Wow! This temple seems to be like a Tardis," Himiko exclaimed. "It's far larger from the inside..."

"Fascinating," commented Makoto and took some photos of the ethereal landscape.

"But where is Blondie?"

"I can't see him. We should search for him."

"Well, I'll continue straight forward. There has to be an end to this garden somewhere." When Himiko went on, Makoto chose a slightly different direction.

"I think there's some strange golden light emanating from somewhere over there," Himiko called to her friend, and Makoto joined her.

"You think that could be him?"

"Well, he *is* all golden, isn't he?"

"Then let's go there." They went towards the golden light and Makoto hoped they found the Virgo Saint soon. She didn't feel like running much farther.

Suddenly the garden made place for a standard issue large hall with high columns at each side. In the back of the hall was a dais crowned by a lotus flower made of stone. The slender young Virgo Saint floated about one meter above the stone flower.

"How on earth can he fold his legs like that when he wears this armour?" Himiko was amazed.

"Dunno. But I'm sure it's horribly uncomfortable."

"Just look at his marvellous hair! It shimmers like spun gold."

"Beautiful," Makoto nodded.

"Shht! We should be a bit quieter - he seems to sleep peacefully."

"You're probably right. Let's get a bit closer."

"I wish I could admire his mane without the silly helmet," Himiko whispered.

"Indeed! His hair is incredible! It looks so silky and it's so long!"

"If he'd only open his eyes! Just look at these lashes!"

"I can't believe they're not artificial. Hm. He might use this new super mascara..."

"You mean the one for the 'dramatic look'?"

"Exactly that." Makoto examined Shaka and pulled out her camera. "We really do need good photos of him."

"Sure." Himiko shot another film in rapid succession. "That's good - not even the flash wakes him up."

"Fortunately. And as long as he's asleep he won't defend himself."

Suddenly, the Virgo Saint unfolded his legs and floated down until he stood in his lotus flower. "I never sleep, little ones," he said haughtily. "I meditate. And you dared to disturb my meditation. I shall punish you for this."

"I hate people who make fun of me because of my size," Himiko grumbled. She hated it that she was only 5 feet tall.

"I don't mind," Shaka said soulfully. "You disturbed my peaceful meditation and you will pay for it." He only hoped that the Pope wouldn't reprimand him for punishing common people because of such selfish reasons. After all, he even had ordered the Aquarius Saint to send his disciple to kill the other Bronze Saints, for they fought in the Galaxian Wars, a tournament that was simply for show.

"See?" Makoto said to Himiko. "They're all the same!"

"Yeah. Mad, bad and dangerous to know," Himiko nodded. But she was sure that Camus was different.

"If you insult me, the punishment will only be harder," Shaka stated. He'd better not tell them that he probably wouldn't punish them at all for *fe- err, respect* of the Pope.

"It seems they all have some problems," Makoto said. "We really should have taken Milo with us."

"Yeah, I guess he's mean enough so that he could take care of that guy."

"I'm not used to being ignored," Shaka sulked.

"You're right. When Milo would have done the dirty work, we could have done our job without being disturbed," Makoto said.

"This armour looks really cool, though. Matches his hair perfectly," Himiko admired.

"But I hate the ugly helmet."

"True. Maybe we can convince him to take it off."

"*Hey! I'm here!*" Shaka complained. "Don't talk *about* me - talk *to* me!"

"Only if you do us the courtesy to wake up fully and open your eyes," Himiko demanded.

"Exactly! We don't talk with people who refuse to look at us," Makoto added.

"It's dangerous when I open my eyes," Shaka warned.

"Ts... Do you have such an evil eye?" Makoto wanted to know.

"Don't mock me. My powerful cosmo will eradicate whatever I look upon."

Makoto sighed. "Slowly but surely I have the impression that our task isn't as easy as the professor wanted to make us believe."



"It seems that Akira had a point when he quit."

"Indeed. Those golden Saints are quite difficult to examine properly."

"After all, we Gold Saints are the strongest of all of Athena's Saints!" Shaka tried desperately to get the attention of the two reckless intruders. He would have understood it if someone challenged him to a fight, but they had obviously entered his temple only to ignore him openly. This was truly evil.

"Be quiet! I'm talking to Himiko," Makoto reprimanded him.

Shaka turned his head towards her, but kept his eyes closed as usual. "*You* are the intruders in *my* temple!"

"He still refuses to look at us," Himiko complained.

"I think we should return to Milo. The Virgo Saint *is* dull, after all."

"But I still would *love* to see his eyes," Himiko sighed.

"I don't want to wait an eternity until he finally opens his eyes. Besides, I'm hungry, and we wanted to order gyros and souvlaki so that we can invite Milo to a yummy Greek lunch."

"Good idea. We can try it again tomorrow. Maybe then he's a bit more cooperative."

"We shouldn't forget to order some nice wines, too..."

"Yes! I thought of a Samos wine for dessert..."

Makoto sat down on one of the stairs of the dais and searched through her large handbag. "Would you like a sandwich, too?"

"Sure, if you have a tuna sandwich."

"Of course." She passed Himiko the food.

Shaka couldn't believe it. Now they even had a picnic in his temple?! It was too bad they weren't a threat against Athena or Sanctuary so that he could kill them without hesitation. He pondered whether an attack against his dignity and pride constituted a threat against Sanctuary.

"Thanks. And now a cup of green tea and I'm content..." Makoto poured her a cup.

"Okay, and when we're strengthened, we can return to Milo's temple," Himiko suggested. "I have only one pic of Camus with me and I wanted to admire the rest again..."

"Only one?" Makoto gazed at her in surprise and tugged at the little photo album with at least two dozen pics of the most handsome Saints.

"Well, I have this..." Himiko unfolded a 25"x40" poster.

"This pic is *really* cute," Makoto admitted.

"I know. He's simply magnificent." Himiko smiled dreamily.

Shaka still couldn't believe it. They did not only picnic in his temple, now they even admired posters of Camus and other Gold Saints? And worst of all, *they completely ignored him!!!*

"Have I already showed you the pic of Milo just after he got up?" Makoto asked.

"You mean the one of him with the uncombed hair? Kawaii! I want one like this of my beautiful Camus!"

"I fear that's going to be more difficult. After all, Milo doesn't struggle anymore..."

"Ah well, it's only a matter of time until I convince Camus to be nice, too."

"Well, I wish you luck."

"Thanks." Himiko sighed. "He's sooooo gorgeous, even though he isn't blond."

"I'd say he's gorgeous *because* he isn't blond."

"Hm. I think blond is beautiful."

"That's a matter of taste."

"True. *Some* blonds are just annoying. And I don't look at a certain someone."

Shaka stared at them and gave them a withering gaze. Maybe he should kill them after all. Even Pope would understand murder committed in the heat of the moment. On the other hand - he probably wouldn't believe *him* this excuse...

"You're right." Makoto had finished her meal and put the remains away. Himiko passed her the empty cup. "Thanks. - Now let's return to Milo and order some real food. We promised him some decent meals and should keep it, or he might throw us out after all."

"We should order a large grill plate for four persons..."

"You still haven't given up trying to invite Camus?"

"Of course not..."

"Then let's go."

The two women left the temple, leaving a thoroughly frustrated Virgo Gold Saint behind.

Wasn't he, the Man Closest to the Gods, due a little more respect?

**- File GS03-Vir-T001 Closed -**

## Kapitel 12: Interlude II - Never Give Up! Of Ice Saints and Scorpions

### Interlude II

#### Never Give Up! Of Ice Saints and Scorpions

Makoto sighed. She really did hate these stairs. Fortunately it wasn't so far back to Scorpio Temple.

Himiko was so absorbed in her thoughts that she went on in the direction of Aquarius Temple, and Makoto managed only barely to grab her at the hem of her shirt.

"Himiko, *this* is the way!"

"But we aren't at Aquarius Temple yet," the blonde protested while she admired the poster of Camus that she didn't want to put out of her hands.

"We don't want to go to Aquarius Temple. It's time for dinner, and dinner is at Scorpio Temple."

"Ah yes, sure..." Yearningly, Himiko looked up to the eleventh temple. "I hope Milo has a phone."

"I fear he hasn't. Or have you seen a telephone line?"

"Hm. I guess we have to give him the money so that he can fetch the gyros."

"He's certainly fast enough," Makoto nodded. "But where *is* Milo? I'm starving, and I don't want to fetch the gyros myself!"

"Neither do I."

Suddenly Milo stomped into the temple. "He did it again!" he grumbled.

"What? And who?" Makoto wanted to know.

"Camus, of course." Milo held up an iced scorpion. "Poor Aiolia-chan!"

"Oh, a scorpion ice-lolly!" Makoto exclaimed. "The poor little thing!"

"Indeed," Milo nodded. "Unfortunately, Camus is a very private person and he usually reacts very badly to disturbances of any kind."

"Thanks for telling us," Makoto said.

"Well, I tried to warn my pets over and over again not to run away, especially not to

Aquarius Temple, but sometimes they just don't listen. And whenever Camus sees a scorpion, it's iced. You see, he has this damned phobia..."

"I see," Makoto sympathized. "By the way, what about food?"

"Well, actually, I don't have so much of an appetite right now." Milo looked sadly at the murdered Aiolia-chan. "Ah well, but I have to eat, haven't I? What did you have in mind?"

"We wanted to order some Greek stuff. What about this little bugger?" Makoto pointed at the dead scorpion.

"I will have to bury him behind my temple among the others."

"You mean there's a veritable scorpion graveyard behind your temple?"

"Well, as I said - Camus has this phobia, but nonetheless many of my pets love him and run into Aquarius Temple."

"How sad! The poor scorpions."

"I will bury him next to Hyoga-chan. You see, Camus even killed the scorpion I named after his favourite student."

Milo went outside the temple in the backyard and the two women followed him. In a small, fenced square there were about a dozen little gravestones with Greek script on them. Milo fetched a little shovel and dug a tiny hole in which he lay the frozen animal. Then he looked for a fitting piece of rock and scratched the name on it with his fingernail.

Makoto was amazed. This fingernail was harder than rock?! Fascinating!

"Rest in peace, Aiolia-chan," Milo finally said with a sad mien. This was the 14th scorpion Camus had killed. He really had to talk to his friend. Why couldn't he simply catch them and put them outdoors again?

"Well, Milo now that you have buried it, you have to organize a funeral meal. The best would be that you go and fetch the food. Makoto, you certainly have some money so that he can buy something fitting."

"Sure." Makoto dug a considerable amount of Greek drachmas out of her purse and gave it to Milo.

"Yes, you're right. Thanks." Milo flashed her a quick smile, took the money and disappeared at light speed.

"Fine," Himiko grinned. "So we don't have to run for our food."

"Indeed. What's next?"

"Well, I think we should figure out which Saint to examine next. I vote for my Aquarius Saint."

"As usual," Makoto sighed.

"Sure." Himiko started once more to list all the advantages of her personal victim, and Makoto grimaced.

"I think we should make a list..."

"No problem," Himiko giggled. "Let's start with his beautiful, indigo coloured mane that shimmers deep blue like the sky seen from a high mountain when the sun pours its light on him..."

"I meant a list of the Saints that still have to be examined," Makoto sighed exasperatedly.

"Oh, *that*. Well, do you have a piece of paper? Then start to write it down."

Makoto dug for a notebook. "Let's start with *a*."

"Aquarius Camus!"

"Sigh! - Ah, well, but I have to admit that you're right. He does start with an *a*."

"Exactly. And as we have already examined Andromeda Shun, he *has* to be next."

"I won't hold you back."

"He's all mine, after all."

"You can keep him. - So who's next on the list? Aquila Marin?"

"Nope, that's a girl!"

"Then Aries Mu."

"Doesn't he live somewhere around Tibet?"

"I think so. Okay, let's keep it in mind to examine him when we're through here."

"What do we have for *b*? Oh, only one - Bear Geki. Do you really think we should examine *him*?"

"Better not." Makoto scribbled down some notes. "The next one would be Cancer DeathMask."

"You mean the spiky guy with the storm-hairdo?"

"Yeah, that's him. There are many more Saints starting with c, but I think they aren't of interest except for Cancer, Cepheus and Cygnus."

"Oh yes, I still want my cute rubberduck!"

"Last reports said that he's still somewhere in Eastern Siberia."

"Which of the cuties are here in Sanctuary? Except for my Camus-sama, I mean."

"Cuties? Let's see... That'd be Cancer DeathMask, Lacerta Misty, Leo Aiolia, Perseus Algol, Pisces Aphrodite and the two Triangulum Saints."

"Then let's start with Cancer DeathMask. He's alphabetically first when we don't count Aquarius Camus. I like these extravagant spikes of his Cloth. I wonder why he's called 'DeathMask', by the way. He doesn't look ugly. Actually, he has a beautiful smile and a cute nose."

"Yeah, he's cute but spiky."

"He'll sure need tons of hairspray every morning!"

"I don't want to see his bills ..."

"I'm ba-ack!!" Milo shouted. He carried two large bags in his hands.

"Fine. I'm very hungry." Makoto finished scribbling down her notes.

"I brought gyros and suzukakia and souvlaki and biftecki and rice and salad with sheep's milk cheese."

"Don't *tell* me - I want to *eat*."

"Okay, okay! I think it will be a worthy funeral meal for my poor Aiolia-chan."

Himiko laid the table and Milo distributed the food while Makoto poured the wine, a sweet white Samos. The Scorpio Gold Saint drank not only one glass of the wine to mourn his poor deceased scorpion.

"Gosh, I'm completely full," Makoto finally said.

"So am I. This souvlaki was simply divine." Himiko put the fork down and drank some water which she had fetched at the wine alone was far too strong. Milo, who stuck to the wine alone, was slightly drunk by now and began to sing some bawdy songs.

"I think you had enough," Makoto said and wondered what she could do to silence him. His voice was nice, okay, but somehow he managed to hit all the wrong tones.

"I merely started," Milo protested.

"You sing horribly wrong," Makoto groaned.

"If you'd drink two or three more glasses of wine, then you would join me."

"Never," Makoto shook her head. "I'd *never* sing songs like *this*."

"Don't you like them?" Milo began another one, this one even bawdier than the first.

Makoto blushed deeply. "Hold it! This is far worse than only R-rated!"

Milo stopped and seemed to think for a moment. "Indeed, it is," he admitted. "But isn't that what such songs should be?"

"Humph."

"One doesn't sing stuff like this in polite company," Himiko pointed out and flashed him a smile. She was sure that Camus would *never* sing something like this.

"If you were truly well-bred, you wouldn't do something like this."

"Well, as I'm an orphan I never got the chance to get well-bred."

"It seems I have to start now with your education," Makoto threatened.

"Pardon?! I don't need to be educated. I don't *want* to be educated. I'm a Saint of Athena."

"So what?"

"Athena's Saints are bred to be fierce fighters. We don't have time for small talk and courtesy."

"You've got time enough. So we'll start your education right now."

"*Right now* I'm mourning poor Aiolia-chan."

"*Right now* you're drinking too much."

"Not true. I need it to get over the pitiful death of my late favourite pet."

"Awwwwwww," Makoto said.

Milo sniffed. "You see, most people think I'm simply cold and unfeeling and cruel, only because my Scarlet Needle attack is a bit painful until it finishes off my victims, but in truth I have a very large and sensitive heart, especially for my beloved little pets. It's all so unfair."

"I see, you're a really mean guy..."



"Well, that too, actually. But I'm still not so unfeeling and cruel as the other people claim. - And if you ever tell that to someone else, I'll have to kill you!"

"Really?" Makoto grinned. "You're absolutely, perfectly cute."

"I'm not cute! I'm dangerous and mean!"

"Sure, but I like it."

"You really do?" Milo looked at her with his large, bright blue eyes.

"If I say so. You're really cute," Makoto repeated.

"I only hope that no one else notices this. If they think I'm cute they won't fear me anymore."

"And they won't stay away from you?"

"Exactly! I want my privacy, too. Not as badly as Camus does, but still."

Makoto examined the Scorpio Gold Saint thoughtfully and Milo sighed deeply.

"But I still think that's no excuse for Camus to kill my darling little scorpions!" He stood up and went into one of the adjoining rooms. When he came back, he carried two large scorpions with him. "Meet Hyoga-II-chan and Shaina-chan!"

"Nice," Makoto said tersely.

"Aren't they?" Milo looked proudly at his pets.

"You sure they won't bite?"

"Well, if you don't startle them..."

When Himiko saw the scorpions, she tried to get as far away from them as possible without giving her panic away.

"Such little pets and so dangerous," Makoto pondered aloud.

"Just like me. I'm not Scorpio Gold Saint for nothing."

"Right, you have a dangerous sting, too."

Milo smiled smugly. "Indeed I have."

"But Camus doesn't have any weird pets, has he?"

"Camus? Are you kidding? The only animals that could live with him would be polar

bears or penguins. He is *the* Ice Saint, after all - the 'Magician of Ice and Water', as people say. Only Crystal Saint and Cygnus Hyoga are really comfortable around him."

"I think these ice guys are weird," Makoto stated.

"And *I* think he's *perfect*," Himiko sighed.

"That's only because you haven't spent any time near him yet," Milo told her.

"I suggest you dress in warm clothes when you want to meet him."

"So he's really cool - but actually that's what fascinates me about him. I think I shall pay him a surprise visit one day or the other."

"I'd rather stay here in the warm and cozy Scorpio Temple."

"Only because Camus is a little icy?"

"I don't think he's only *a little* icy..."

"Well, Camus' powers enable him to reach absolute zero," Milo said. "But other than that he's okay. You see - he *is* my best friend after all. If he just wouldn't kill my cutey scorpions as soon as he finds them in his temple..." Milo stroked Hyoga-II-chan.

"Absolute zero? That's really cold," Makoto shuddered.

"Indeed. Whenever I train with him I get a bad cold afterwards."

"Then I will certainly stay as far away from him as possible."

"I don't mind a little cold if I can stay with him for a while," Himiko sighed with the usual hearts in her eyes.

"Well, good luck to you," Milo grinned. "Camus doesn't wait long before he deep-freezes people who annoy him."

"Well, I'll take the risk. Tonight when it's dark I'll try to surprise him and take some cute pics when he's asleep."

"I don't think that will help - Gold Saints have very sharp senses, no matter whether it's day or night."

"I'll go and buy some cold medicine for her," Makoto said after she had rummaged through her bags and discovered there were no tablets against the flu left.

"You'd better fetch an electric blanket to thaw her," Milo suggested.

"I've got a good hair-dryer."

"That might suffice, too," Milo nodded.

"But Camus wouldn't freeze me! He's far too cute to do something mean like this."

"Famous last words," sighed Makoto.

"Pah, I'll show you!"

"I'll wait here and tend to your remains..."

"Humph. - By the way, have you finished your 'Saints to do' list?"

"Sure." Makoto gave her the piece of paper with the scribbled notes.

### **Currently Known Saints of Athena**

- \* Albatross Arythar (Bronze) - known to be very elusive; guess we need a butterfly net
- \* Andromeda Shun (Bronze) - done; cute little fellow
- \* Aquarius Camus (Gold) - struggles fiercely, but Himiko insists that we get him
- \* Aquila Marin (Silver) - girl, not of interest
- \* Aries Mu (Gold) - lives pretty far away, but is still worth an examination
- \* Bear Geki (Bronze) - better not
- \* Cancer DeathMask (Gold) - spiky, but cute
- \* Canes Venatici Asterion (Silver) - only as last resort
- \* Canis Major Sirius (Silver) - not exactly a worthy specimen
- \* Capricorn Shura (Gold) - mostly uncute
- \* Centaurus Babel (Silver) - also uncute
- \* Cepheus Albiore (Silver) - lives pretty far away, but worth an examination
- \* Cetus Moses (Silver) - no thanks
- \* Chameleon June (Bronze) - again a girl
- \* Corvus Jamian (Silver) - don't think that I touch this!
- \* Cygnus Hyoga (Bronze) - Himiko's rubberduck, she'll sulk if we don't examine him soon
- \* Dragon Shiryu (Bronze) - done; nice hair
- \* Gemini Saga (Gold) - no one ever saw him in the last time
- \* Hercules Algethi (Silver) - there are lots of other Saints more worth an examination
- \* Hydra Ichi (Bronze) - dangerous, poisonous and ugly
- \* Lacerta Misty (Silver) - kawaii
- \* Leo Aiolia (Gold) - cute, one of the next to be tamed
- \* Libra Dohko (Gold) - the mushroom, best as dart target
- \* Lionet Ban (Bronze) - not interesting
- \* Lotus Argora (Silver) - no thanks
- \* Musca Dio (Silver) - even worse
- \* Ophiuchus Shaina (Silver) - another girl
- \* Pavo Shiva (Silver) - ridiculous Cloth, only if there is no one else around
- \* Pegasus Seiya (Bronze) - moderately cute
- \* Perseus Algol (Silver) - nice hair
- \* Phoenix Ikki (Bronze) - hasn't been seen for a while
- \* Pisces Aphrodite (Gold) - still have to find out whether that's a guy or a girl

- \* Sagitta Tremy (Silver) - not really interesting for our examination
- \* Sagittarius Aiolos (Gold) - unfortunately dead
- \* Scorpio Milo (Gold) - done; currently my personal pet
- \* Taurus Aldebaran (Gold) - too large and too heavy for our examination table
- \* Unicorn Jabu (Bronze) - done; pretty tame for a unicorn
- \* Virgo Shaka (Gold) - blond and dull
- \* Wolf Nachi (Bronze) - far too ugly

"So this means we will examine the Cancer Saint tomorrow when I came back from Aquarius Temple. Any hints, Milo-kun?"

"DeathMask is cruel and dangerous," he warned them.

"Aren't they all?" Makoto replied. "After all, you always stress that you are mean, too."

"Well, there are different classes of mean, and DeathMask is mean-mean."

"We'll see." Makoto began to clear the table.

"Well, if your friend really wants to visit Camus, she has to survive *that* first, of course..."

"I guess I prefer someone who's a bit hotter..."

"I heard the Phoenix Saint is supposed to be *hot*," Himiko pointed out.

"Well, I didn't say I want to burn my fingers!"

"I'm still surprised that someone won the Phoenix Cloth at all," Milo pondered. "Rumours say that the Phoenix Cloth drives people insane. Or was it that one could only get it *if* one was insane? Something like that..."

"Hm, nothing for me, then. Tonight I'm trying to get some private shots of my Camus-sama."

"It seems there's no way to change her mind," Makoto sighed.

"Obviously," Milo agreed. "I suggest you prepare this hair-dryer of yours plus the electric blanket."

Himiko blew them a raspberry and went into the room Milo had given them to style herself properly. If she looked really hot she would be able to thaw the Ice Saint, she vowed.

Makoto looked after her colleague. "I think she *really* wants him."

"So it would seem. What I doubt, though, is that *he* will want *her*."

"That's the point. I'm sure he thinks she's a bit silly."

"Very likely. Unfortunately for her he hates silly girls who run after him." Milo grinned. "When we went to Athens some time ago he was chased by at least a dozen crazy girlies who obviously thought he was just their type. And that happened *every* time we went somewhere public. That's why he decided he'd better stay alone in his temple from then on."

"I assumed something like this."

"Well, he doesn't look like it, but he's a bit shy around others."

"He's very cute," Makoto admitted.

Milo frowned. "The girls seem to like him, that's true. It's a bit unfair - he's got far more admirers than me, and I really wouldn't mind dozens of girls chasing me..."

Makoto grinned at the image. "Awwwww... But I think, you are pretty cute, too."

"Indeed?" Milo smiled at her winningly.

"You have a cute smile," Makoto said and examined him more closely through her thick glasses.

"Thanks." His smile broadened. If he thought about it, he had to admit that Makoto was pretty cute, too. Maybe she wouldn't run away after only one or two days as it seemed to happen to him all the time. Absently, he tickled Shaina-chan, and the scorpion run up his arm and settled down on his shoulder.

"I think I'll take another glass of wine," Makoto said and eyed the scorpion still sitting on the table with distrust.

"Here you are." Milo poured her another glass of the Samos wine.

"Thanks." She hummed a little melody. The wine was stronger than it tasted and she was glad that she wouldn't have to accompany Himiko to the 11th temple.

Milo fetched some morsels of left-over food from the kitchen and began to feed the two scorpions. This was nice, he thought, sitting together with both a cute girl and his pets, while drinking tasty wine.

Makoto hoped the little beasts stayed where they were.

"Okay, now I can go on the hunt!" Himiko chimed when she returned from their room. She was clad in a skin-tight deep red mini-dress, high-heeled shoes and had her long, gold blonde hair made up in a very elaborate style.

Makoto cleaned her glasses and put them back on. Yes, that was indeed Himiko! "How do you expect to climb the stairs with these shoes?"

"I will manage somehow - I hope..."

"I hope you'll survive."

"You're lucky that you have your cutie right here! Hm, but maybe you're right about the shoes." Himiko changed into a pair of sports shoes. "I guess it ruins my outfit a bit, but this way Camus won't be able to run away from me!"

Milo decided not to point out that Gold Saints were able to move at light speed.

"Okay, see you later - or maybe tomorrow," Himiko chirped and stormed away.

"Or never again," Milo commented dryly.

"Don't be so mean to her," Makoto chided him.

"For once I wasn't mean - I was only honest."

"I think you are only ill-bred."

"Pah!" Milo sulked and played with Hyoga-II-chan.

"Now you look absolutely cute."

"I'm not cute!" Milo sulked even more visibly which only added to his cuteness.

Makoto took out her camera and shot a couple of photos featuring Milo sulking plus his scorpions.

"Didn't you have more than enough photos of me?"

"Never. And by the way, this time I'm taking pics of your pets."

"Oh, my scorpions! Of course!" He positioned Shaina-chan and Hyoga-II-chan on the table. "And now sit up and beg!" he demanded.

Makoto closely watched the animals. "And they really obey you?"

"Sure." The scorpions did something that one might interpret as sitting up and begging.

"Fascinating!"

"These two are already pretty tame. The dozen young scorpions in the terrarium in my bedroom aren't as well-bred yet."

"There are scorpions even in your bedroom?" Makoto squeaked.

"Of course. They are still young and I have to look after them all the time." He looked

around. "I only wonder where Camus-chan is hiding. I haven't seen him for the last two days."

"You mean one of them runs around *somewhere*?" Makoto asked in horror.

"Actually, two, but Pope-chan uses to return in the late evening, so I don't have to worry about him yet."

Makoto looked carefully around. Where the hell were the missing beasts? She hoped sincerely that there was none of them in her room.

"Just tell me when you find one of them or both," Milo said.

"You won't be able to overhear it."

"Fine."

Makoto poured herself another glass. She definitely needed some more booze. Milo smiled at her again, and she sighed. He was so cute - if there weren't those horrible pets of his...

**- End of Interlude II -**

## Kapitel 13: File GS01-Aqr-T003 - Sneak Attack! Trying to Thaw Mr.Freeze

### File GS01-Aqr-T003

#### Sneak Attack! Trying to Thaw Mr.Freeze

Himiko virtually floated up the stairs. This time she wouldn't make a mess of her meeting with the gorgeous Aquarius Saint.

When she reached the 11th temple, she discovered that she had completely forgotten the large package of ice cream that she wanted to offer him. Oh dear, what could she tell him now why she had come to his temple?

Himiko blushed. She wasn't so good where pick-up lines were concerned, and according to Milo, Camus was very hard to convince anyway.

Hesitantly, she stopped in front of the entrance. Her heart beat so loud that she feared even Makoto would be able to hear it down in the Scorpio Temple.

Summoning all of her courage, Himiko entered the temple. In the same instant, she was intercepted by the Aquarius Saint. He looked at her and frowned, his beautiful features stern as ever. Himiko was totally enraptured by his incredibly deep blue eyes.

"You again!" Camus said. "Haven't you forgotten something? Maybe a pizza?"

The colour of Himiko's teint equaled the colour of ripe tomatoes.

"Actually I wanted to bring along some ice-cream this time," she stuttered.

"I'm not interested. You may go now."

"But I don't want to go! You see, you are so gorgeous - I mean, you look really nice and..."

Camus sighed tragically. "So you are another one of those obnoxious groupies. If you haven't disappeared in three seconds, I won't guarantee for anything. One..."

"But I don't want to -"

"Two."

"Camus-sama, I haven't climbed all these stairs to be sent aw-"

"Three." Camus lifted his arm, and icy light streamed out and collected around Himiko. Within seconds, she was imprisoned in a Freezing Coffin.



Camus shook his head and transported the ice block out of his homestead and set it down next to the entrance of it. Now the silly little girlies even chased him up to his temple! He really should do something about this.

**- File GS01-Aqr-T003 Closed -**

## Kapitel 14: Interlude III - Himiko on the Rocks! On the Use of a First-Class Performance Hair-dryer

### Interlude III

#### Himiko on the Rocks! On the Use of a First-Class Performance Hair-dryer

Scorpio Gold Saint Milo and M.D. Terada Makoto sat in Scorpio Temple and drank some more in silence. The red-haired doctor looked for stray scorpions while Milo fed Hyoga-II-chan some morsels of food.

Suddenly Milo sat straight.

"Oh. Camus just told me telepathically that there is a certain ice cube standing in front of his temple, waiting to be removed."

Makoto looked at him in confusion. "What ice cube is he talking about?"

"I guess it'll be about 3 meters high, 1.5 meters wide and just as deep."

"So what?"

"I'm pretty sure it's the Freezing Coffin in which your colleague will spend the rest of her existence."

"You sure? I'd say we have to put this to the test." Makoto hiccupped. She shouldn't have drunken so much of the wine, she thought dizzily.

"Not even the power of all Gold Saints combined can break a Freezing Coffin created by Camus."

"Hm," Makoto frowned. "And what about a first-class performance hair-dryer?"

"I don't know. I don't own a hair-dryer."

"But I do."

"Well, you can try."

"Hm-hm... Just where can I get an extension lead for it?"

"I'd say you should first think of *any* means to get energy for it."

Makoto sighed. "I always forget that you live far beyond the civilized world."

"It's very civilized in its own way," Milo protested. His gaze fell to the ground. "Ah, *there* you are, Pope-chan!"

Makoto squealed in horror. "Where? Where?"

"Next to your left foot. Careful! Don't step onto him!"

"Graaaaaa!" Makoto lifted her feet and looked panicky down onto the ground. Pope-chan swiftly crawled towards Milo and the Scorpio Gold Saint grinned happily.

"Now only Camus-chan is missing..."

Makoto sighed. She didn't trust these 'pets' at all. "I only hope I'll get Himiko out of this ice cube."

"Fat chance. Camus' Freezing Coffin is pretty final."

"I only believe that when I have tried it and failed."

"Well, *if* you succeed, there are still fourteen Freezing Coffins in which he imprisoned my poor little pets."

Makoto tried to get up from the seat, but immediately sat down again. This Samos wine had been stronger than expected.

"Are you unwell?"

"No, not at all. I'm feeling fine, really - I just can't stand on my own, it seems."

"Well, don't expect me to help you." Milo didn't want to admit he had had slightly too much of the wine, too.

"Did I ask for your help?" Makoto retorted aggressively.

"Fortunately not," Milo grinned and let Pope-chan crawl up his arm to join Hyoga-II-chan, who sat on his shoulder.

Makoto grumbled something unintelligible and stared angrily at Milo and his scorpions. "I'm going to examine this Freezing Coffin now."

"I won't hold you back."

"I hope so." Slightly unsteadily, Makoto stumbled up the stairs to Aquarius Temple.

Milo shrugged and returned his pets to the terrarium in his bedroom.

\* \* \*

Makoto climbed the stairs until she stood in front of the Himiko ice cube.

"Hm." She began to examine the Freezing Coffin. It seemed to be impossible to

scratch the ice, not even with hammer and chisel, thus she decided to return to Scorpio Temple and fetch the remainder of her supplies.

"Makoto?" Milo asked. He kneeled on the floor and looked for his last missing pet, but when the scientist returned, he stood up. "So it was futile after all?"

"I haven't even started yet!" She rummaged through her toolbox.

"And what are you going to do now?"

"I'm going to melt the ice."

"Good luck..."

"I *am* going to do it!" Makoto packed all of the needed things into a backpack and returned to the 11th temple.

Milo waited for a moment until he followed her. He really wanted to know if she succeeded. In that case the deep-frozen scorpions in his backyard might still be thawed.

When Makoto reached the Freezing Coffin in front of Aquarius Temple, she put down her backpack, tugged free a little generator and put it onto the ground before she plugged in the hot-air dryer and positioned it on a tripod in front of the ice block.

Camus stood in front of his temple, his cape blowing in the wind, as he watched the strange, red-haired woman working on his Freezing Coffin. He wondered if anyone had ever told her that it was futile to try and break such an ice sarcophagus created by him.

Now she put up a folding chair and sat down next to Freezing Coffin and hot-air dryer and began to eat some cookies while she waited.

Camus watched her silently, a slightly increasing frown appearing on his forehead when he discovered that small rivulets of water flowed down the ice block. This was outrageous!

Suddenly Milo stood next to him, a broad grin on his face. "Worrying about your reputation, Camus?"

Camus return the gaze levelly, and the temperature around seemed to drop several degrees. "Me? - By the way, I think this belongs to you." He gave Milo a small ice cube with a scorpion enclosed.

"Camus! How could you! This was your namesake Camus-chan!"

"He sat in my salad bowl."

"That still doesn't give you the right..."

"We had an agreement - I won't ice your horrible pets while I visit you in Scorpio Temple, but when they creep into my territory, they're fair game."

"But still..." Milo sulked. "Poor Camus-chan... You're cruel, Camus! That's supposed to be my domain. I'm sure the poor little thing was only hungry."

"If you neglect your duty to feed him, you can't hold me responsible." Camus shrugged and watched Makoto's progress. "Maybe I should enclose her in a Freezing Coffin, too. She's an intruder and should be neutralized."

"No! You can't do that!" Milo said hurriedly. He didn't want his embarrassing photos to be published, as would be the case if Makoto and Himiko died.

"Why not? Do you have some ...interest in her?"

"No! - Er, I mean.. Ah, gods... It's none of your business." Milo looked at the scientist. Makoto seemed to have fallen asleep while her hot-air dryer continued to slowly melt the Freezing Coffin.

"But Milo, you can tell *me* - aren't we best friends?" Camus allowed himself one of his rare grins.

"Ahm, Camus, you see, there are some things that are *really* private..."

"Such as the fact that you wish to imitate Aiolia and keep two girl-friends in your temple? As a matter of fact, not even Aiolia went so far as to allow Marin and Shaina to move in with him."

Milo's face turned a vivid crimson. "It is not how it seems to be..."

"It isn't? So how *is* it?"

"I can explain everything! - You see, they are two scientists from Japan who want to examine the Saints of Athena."

"I see. And obviously you volunteered to be the first to be ...examined really thoroughly."

"Certainly *not*!"

Camus grinned again when Milo stormed downstairs back to his temple. (He should be more careful, he thought, he might ruin his reputation if someone else saw him like this.)

\* \* \*

When Makoto woke up, it was already early in the morning and the Freezing Coffin had almost completely dissolved. There was still a thin layer of ice covering Himiko.

Carefully, Makoto removed the slush from her colleague and put her down onto the ground. She was still ice cold, and Makoto slapped her in the face.

"Wake up!" Himiko didn't move and Makoto sighed. She threw the petite engineer over her shoulder and carried her down to Scorpio Temple.

Milo sat at the table (or rather slept there with his head cradled on his arms), and the tiny Freezing Coffin with Camus-chan in it stood next to him.

Makoto emptied the table and put Himiko down on it.

"I hate it," she groaned.

When the wine bottle and cup shattered on the stone floor, Milo woke up. "What? Where? Who? - Oh dear, my head..." He made a face and massaged his temples.

"So it's impossible?" Makoto said triumphantly.

"What?" Milo yawned.

"To break Camus' Freezing Coffin."

"Huh?" Milo grabbed Camus-chan in his icy grave. "But he's still in there," he sniffed.

"I talk about Himiko and not about this stingy beast!"

"Oh, yes. Her. - Indeed, you did it! How? - And can you free my beloved little pet, too?"

"Whether I'm able to do so or whether I *will* do it is a different matter."

"But you ruined my reputation! You *have* to do me a little favour."

"I have to? When you are always so nice and helpful," she said acidly. "I don't think so."

"Then you can very well find another temple to put your things into and ruin that guardian's reputation."

"Thaw your pet yourself!"

"I even saved your life yesterday night," Milo grumbled. "Maybe it wasn't such a good idea after all."

"Of course it was a totally altruistic deed," Makoto said ironically and rubbed Himiko dry with a large towel. "I won't thaw any scorpions. I don't even know if it would work, after all, they aren't so big."

"Ahm, but..." Milo fought with himself until he managed to utter: "Please..."

"I will consider it."

"I hope so."

Milo still watched Himiko in amazement. She was really free of the ice!

"Come on, wake up," Makoto urged. She should carry Himiko into her bed. There it was warmer than on the table. The blonde engineer was still comatose.

Suddenly Camus stood in the hall. When he had checked on his Freezing Coffin in the morning, he had discovered it gone. And now his victim was freed from the ice?

"Incredible!" he said instead of a greeting.

"Hello Camus," Milo grumbled. "If you dare to freeze any of my pets *here* in my home, I will forget that you are my best friend and you will make the acquaintance of my Scarlet Needle attack."

Makoto glared at the Aquarius Saint while she enveloped Himiko in several blankets. Her clothes were wet after having to carry Himiko around all the time. She really should change into something dry. She took Himiko and went to her room.

Camus ignored Makoto completely.

"If your pets don't attack me I won't have to defend myself, Milo," he shrugged. "By the way, the woman seems to be very familiar around here, wouldn't you say?"

"But that doesn't mean any of them is my girl-friend," Milo grumbled.

"Who claims something stupid like this?" Makoto asked when she returned, freshly changed.

"No one needs to tell me anything. It's quite obvious," Camus replied amusedly.

"Indeed?"

"Sure. The Temples are sacred. Only persons very close to the guardians are allowed in."

"Who says this?"

"It's tradition."

"Tradition doesn't count," Makoto waved it away.

"It counts at Sanctuary. Not even Aiolia's girl-friends are allowed to live in his temple."

"I don't mind," Makoto said. "I always do what I want."

"I only wonder why Milo hasn't killed you if you intend to stay here while you aren't his

girl-friend." Camus lifted one of his exotic eyebrows. "I mean, he even *protected* you."

"He doesn't have a choice."

"He doesn't?" Camus examined Milo thoughtfully and the Scorpio Gold Saint obviously wished to be able to sink into the ground.

"It's obvious, isn't it?" Makoto grinned smugly.

"Indeed." Camus managed successfully to fight a broad grin, even though his voice sounded highly amused.

"Phew!" Milo made a face.

"Does she blackmail you?" Camus looked quizzically at his only friend among the Gold Saints. Milo's face reddened visibly.

"Sure, what did you think?" Makoto chimed.

"Interesting. So *how* does she blackmail you?"

"That's none of your concern."

"Don't tell me she has pics of you, say, in a frilled dress and with make-up on?" Now Camus couldn't suppress a grin. This idea was utterly ridiculous.

Makoto grinned, too. "I won't tell anything..."

"A wise decision. If you'd tell him, I'd kill you slowly and surely, no matter the consequences."

"I'm just glad that there's no way to blackmail me," Camus said smugly.

"That means only that no one hasn't found one *yet*," Makoto pointed out.

"Well, I wouldn't know anything either," Milo sulked. It was so mean that Athena's Saints weren't paid properly, or he wouldn't have to work in that agency. He wondered how Camus managed. It couldn't just be his uncanny luck in their poker games. Maybe there *was* something to be found out as well...

"Let's wait and see." Makoto watched Milo closely. He looked so cute when he sulked. Camus, on the other hand, looked as if he had just acquired a freshly polished halo. "I will find out, one way or the other. After all, I have my sources."

"Sources? Who'd tell about *me*? And who might that be?" Camus was sure he had frozen every trespasser who tried to sneak into his temple uninvited.

"Of course my sources are secret and protected."



"Ah. Good. 'Secret sources' certainly means 'no sources at all'."

"Don't be so sure about yourself," Makoto warned. She *had* to find something, only to annoy this oh-so self-confident Aquarius Saint.

"Well, well." Camus shrugged. "You may ask around, but prepare to be disappointed."

"Actually I don't think I'll ask anyone. You're simply not interesting enough," Makoto told him slightly annoyed.

"Good!" both Camus and Milo said in unison.

Makoto looked from one of the Saints to the other. "You sound a wee bit too relieved for my taste..."

"My privacy is my utmost concern" Camus stated.

"Well, and I was just concerned what might happen to you if you continue to harass Camus," Milo claimed.

"That's how you call it? Don't panic, I won't disturb his privacy."

"Then you might still stay alive," Camus said matter-of-factly.

"Thanks for your kind permission," Makoto snapped ironically. "I will give your Aquarius Temple a wide berth - there are lots of Saints who are more interesting than you."

"That's a relief to hear." Camus appeared indeed highly relieved.

"And who will be your next vic-, I mean, experimental subject?" Milo inquired.

"I don't know. I'd have to check my list."

"I suggest you leave out the remaining Gold Saints. They aren't fond of intruders either," Milo told her. "That is, unless you find something to blackmail *them*, too."

"Well, there are enough Silver and Bronze Saints left. There were quite some cute guys among them. Furthermore, they should be more easily to catch."

"That should be really safer. Although you shouldn't underestimate them either. I mean, they are no match for *me*, but you are only an ordinary human," Milo pointed out.

"Until now I had almost no problems with them."

"Try me," Camus said and looked at her with his level, ultramarine blue gaze. The air temperature dropped several degrees.

"Camus! How often have I told you that my pets don't like the cold?"

"Ahm, sorry, Milo..." Camus made a face. In *his* territory, he could do what he wanted to do, but as long as he visited Milo's temple he had to submit to Milo's wishes.

"But you are a Gold Saint - and Milo said I'd have to be careful around them."

"Well, we are Athena's elite guard."

"I don't mind. I only want to know how Saints function, no matter if they are Bronze, Silver or Gold."

"That's easy. We concentrate and then use our Cosmo to perform virtual miracles."

"And where do you get the Cosmo from?" Makoto was surprised that Camus actually answered a question of hers.

"Our Cosmo comes from both within us and from the universe outside. It's a tremendous power, just like a piece of the big bang."

"I want to know how it works. Every tiny detail!"

"Like this." Camus looked for something. It was quite a mess here - on the ground he could see the splinters of a bottle of cheap wine (the still intact label read 'Imiglykos', some horribly sweet Greek stuff that cried for major headaches) and at least two glasses had met the end of their existence, too. But there was the frozen scorpion on the table. Camus pointed at the iced beast. "Look!" Golden light seemed to shimmer around the Aquarius Saint, and the layer of ice around the scorpion thickened visibly.

"Hm." Makoto circled around Camus. He hadn't even touched it! "I really would like to examine this a bit more closely."

"I'm not some specimen to be examined," she was told.

"That's a pity. The faster I find out how everything works, the faster we can return to Tokyo."

"I don't care how long you stay here as long as you don't bother me."

"But I do care!" Makoto complained. "I hate to be here."

"That's none of my concern." Camus shrugged. "If you would excuse me now. I have important matters to attend to. - Milo, don't forget the poker match tomorrow! Aiolia insisted - he wants to win back some of the stuff he lost last time."

"Sure, I'll be there - at Aiolia's Temple this time?"

"Yes. Until then." Camus walked out of Scorpio Temple, his cape flowing nicely after him.

Makoto sniffed angrily. Camus was really an utterly icy guy. She couldn't understand why Himiko found him so interesting.

"Well, Camus *is* a very private person," Milo observed.

"I can't stand him!"

"If you would know him a bit better, you would come to realize that he is in fact a very nice guy. Well, at least sometimes..." Milo said.

"Who would want to know him better? I'm pretty sure no one wants to get near his ice temple..."

"Gold Saints are different from ordinary humans anyway," Milo explained. "Camus is very serious and very devoted to his job, and much of his time he's in Siberia anyway. He's one of the few Gold Saints who are good in teaching other Saints."

"I pity his pupils."

"Well, as far as he told me he's very proud of his current disciple Hyoga."

"Hyoga? Isn't that the blondie with the 'Rubberduck Cloth'?"

Milo laughed out loud. "That's a good one! But don't let either Camus or Hyoga hear that... Hyoga just won the *Cygnus* Bronze Cloth."

"Hm. Himiko told me she wants to add Hyoga to her collection, too."

"She likes the cool types, eh?"

"She can have them. I take the others."

"Don't you think that's quite a lot of Saints?" Milo grinned.

"Well, I put together a certain selection of course."

"I see. And I'm on your list, too?"

"Sure."

"Hm. I don't like to be a number on some list."

"You should rather be happy that I elected you as being worthy," Makoto responded.

"Who else is on it?"

"Why do you want to know?"

"I want to see if I'm in good company."

"Of course! I chose only the cutest ones," Makoto smiled cheerfully at him.

"Do I have to remind you that I'm not cute?! Handsome, yes. Imposing, of course - but *not cute!*"

"Whatever you say... Let's see... I added Shaka to the list and Shun... Perfectly cute and cuddly."

"Humph. Shun - isn't that this girlish Andromeda Saint?" Milo frowned. He knew only a few of the Bronze Saints, because he outranked them by far and they were of only little interest. But he remembered that Cepheus Albiore, who was probably one of the strongest Silver Saints next to Lacerta Misty, talked about his disciples a while ago. Albiore complained a lot that he only got weaklings and less than proposing material to turn into Saints, but obviously he had been successful anyway, and two of his disciples actually won a Bronze Cloth, one of them Shun.

"Right." Makoto nodded.

"Humph." Milo wasn't sure it was complimentary to be included on a list with Shun and Shaka.

Makoto grinned broadly. "You're not pleased?"

"Not at all. I mean, if you would have mentioned Camus or Aiolia or even Albiore, that would have been more proper."

"Why?"

"Both Shaka and Shun look so ...effeminate. You don't want to imply that I belong to this category, do you?"

"Don't panic, I don't think you're effeminate. After all, you're mean and everything, aren't you?"

"Exactly!" Milo straightened. "I certainly don't want to be some Mister Nice Guy."

"But you're still cute."

How often do I have to tell you that \*I'm\* *not* \*cute\*? Cute is for little boys, but I'm a *man*."

"You sure?"

Milo nodded emphatically.

"Ooooh.... My head!" Finally, Himiko returned from the dead. "What happened? Why am I here?"

"Nothing of major importance. Camus deep-froze you, and I thawed you."

"Camus? My beautiful, gorgeous Camus? How could he do something mean like that?" Himiko sniffed.

"Because he's a totally mean guy. By the way, he was here while you were out. I can't stand him at all."

"He was *here*? And I was unconscious? I want to die!" Himiko looked like she would faint. "And why don't you like him? He's soooooo cute!"

"Okay, he's cute, but he's more than icy."

"I don't mind. I want him anyway!" Himiko sulked.

Milo just shook his head.

"But I won't help you to find a way to convince him. I'm not going near his temple again."

"Fine. That means he's *mine alone*!"

"But don't think I'll thaw you every day."

"I'm sure he won't freeze me a second time."

"No. He'll probably use his Diamond Dust attack on you and catapult you directly through the wall of his temple if you dare to disturb him once more," Milo told her.

"No. He's so cute, he won't do something mean like that," Himiko was sure.

"Famous last words," Milo commented.

"I'll manage to win his heart for sure!"

"I'm sure he doesn't have a heart. The only thing he has in that location is a large ice cube," Makoto surmised.

"No, I won't believe it," Himiko said.

"Remember, the cuter some things look, the more deadly they are."

"Like my scorpions," Milo interjected smugly.

"Well, I don't think scorpions are cute. They are too hard and have far too many legs."

"I think my scorpions look very cute," Milo defended the honour of his favourite pets.

"Well, in one case you're right. There are worse things," Makoto nodded.

"For example?" Milo inquired.

"Don't say 'Camus!'" Himiko threatened.

Makoto closed her mouth in surprise. "How did you know I wanted to mention him?"

"Pah. He's just perfect. I really can't see what's there not to like about him."

"That he's totally icy and freezes everything at the first opportunity? And of course it's only his fault that we have to spend even longer in this desolate place."

"Oh! What did he do?"

"He didn't let me examine closely how his freezing technique works."

"But he *showed* you? Why hasn't he showed *me*?"

"But he did. Only you were right in the middle of it..."

Himiko sighed. "I can't get over it that Camus was here and actually talked to you. *My* Camus!"

"Hm, it's too bad that we don't have any hidden cameras here."

"What? You mean that you haven't even taken any photos while he was here?" Himiko squeaked.

"I didn't have time for photos. I was occupied thawing a rather large ice cube."

"I'm going to die..."

"Don't you dare die so easily! You have to help me with this job!"

"But I still don't have any more pics of my Camus-sama..."

"Why does it always have to be Camus?" Milo grumbled. "Am I not enough?"

Makoto grinned at him. "Do you really wish for Himiko to run after *you* like this?"

"Well, actually, I think it might please my ego."

"I don't want Milo, I want Camus," Himiko sulked.

"I know, I know," Makoto sighed. "You have to think on something to convince him."

"I'm working on it."

"Forget it," Milo told her. "Camus is a faithful Saint of Athena without any vices, who only lives for serving the Goddess and training his disciples."

"And what about this poker stuff?" Makoto raised an eyebrow.

"Well, ask him, if you dare," Milo grinned.

"Ahm, rather not... I don't want to meet him anymore, remember?"

"Well, I might ask him," Himiko said.

"If you wish to turn up as another ice-cube..." Milo shook his head.

"She likes to be iced," Makoto surmised.

"Actually, I'd rather try to thaw him a bit..."

"Good luck," Milo said dryly.

"I suggest we examine somebody else first. Preferably somebody nice and easy."

"Hm, what about that cute rose guy?"

"You don't want to examine Aphro," Milo warned. "He's pretty mean."

"Hm, I'm sure he's more pretty than mean," Himiko said.

"Just stay away from his roses," Milo suggested.

"Who cares about roses?" Makoto asked. "We have to get on with our scientific studies."

"Okay, let's go. And on our way I might even see my Camus again. After all, we have to pass Aquarius Temple on our way to the goldfish."

"Good luck," Milo grinned. He really had to remember that 'goldfish' thing for his next encounter with Aphrodite.

"I hope we'll be lucky this time," Makoto said. "Until now we don't have to many results."

"Indeed. Let's see - it's 10 a.m. now, maybe we'll manage to examine the Pisces Saint before lunch."

They packed their things and went upstairs to Pisces Temple.

**- End of Interlude III -**

## Kapitel 15: File GS04-Pis-T001 - Beautiful Roses! I'm Gonna Get You, Little Fishy...

### File GS04-Pis-T001

#### Beautiful Roses! I'm Gonna Get You, Little Fishy...

"I hate these stairs!" Makoto grumbled.

"It depends," Himiko mused. "I don't mind them at all when I'm on the way to Aquarius Temple. But in all other cases I hate them, too."

"I think they're all the same!"

"Well, but with Aquarius Temple I have a goal that lets me forget all obstacles..." Himiko paused and looked at the columns of the eleventh temple. Somewhere in there dwelled the most gorgeous guy of them all...

"Himiko, *this* way!" Makoto tugged her colleague along. "Remember, we wanted to finish the examination of the Pisces Saint before lunch."

"Okay, okay..." Himiko sighed and followed Makoto upstairs.

"I really hope we'll finish this one fast", the physician said. "These Gold Saints are definitely more difficult than the other ones."

"But also more handsome and interesting."

"Indeed, some are really cute."

"Why can't we just pack them up and take them with us?" Himiko thought especially of a certain guy with deep blue eyes and a gorgeous dark blue mane.

"I'm sure they'd struggle hard if you'd try to fit them into some parcel..."

Himiko sniffed. "Unfortunately."

Finally, they reached Pisces Temple, where they were greeted by a shining Saint in glittering golden armour. It looked as if he spent quite some time to polish it every day. But he certainly needed as much time to style his light blue curls properly and apply his perfect make-up.

"Great! There's someone at home," Makoto commented. "I would have been really peeved if I had climbed up all the stairs in vain."

"So you are the two girls who like to pester us Gold Saints?" Aphrodite talked absolutely clearly even though he carried a beautiful red rose between his lips.



"How does he do this?" Makoto exclaimed. "Or is he a 'she' after all?" She examined the slender Pisces Saints thoroughly after she had cleaned her glasses.

Aphrodite creased his forehead. "I heard that!" He sulked, and suddenly he started, "ouch!" He took the rose out of his mouth.

"Hm... He can talk with it, but obviously sulking is another matter," Himiko grinned.

"Pah." Aphrodite played elegantly with the rose to cover his little fauxpas. "But I can assure you - I am a *man*, albeit the most beautiful man in the world."

"The most beautiful man is my Camus-sama," Himiko pointed out.

"Camus? Do you want to mock me? He's never seen a hair-dresser's from the inside in all of his life!"

"Because he doesn't need to!"

"You'd better give up," Makoto told Aphrodite. "You can't argue with her about Camus."

"Oh. I see. Then I shall ignore her ridiculous statements." Aphrodite shrugged. "Someone who thinks that another person could be more beautiful than me can't be fully sane anyway. - So, what do you want of me?"

"We're here to examine you Gold Saints," Makoto explained.

"Examine? What kind of examination do you have in mind?"

"Lots of different tests... But don't panic. We just want to find out how your abilities work and the like. And of course we have to determine which place on our ranking list we should give you."

"Is there any question that I'm somewhere else than on top of the list?"

"Hm. You have to prove it first that you're the number one," Makoto demanded.

"No problem." Aphrodite waved them in with his rose. "I'll show you."

The scientists followed him into his temple.

"But he can't be better than my Camus-sama," Himiko muttered.

"Shhhh," Makoto silenced her. "Be quiet, or he might get angry."

"Okay, okay..."

"So what's the first of these tests?" Aphrodite asked. He put his helmet onto a table

and looked curiously at the two women.

"Himiko - that's my colleague. I'm Makoto, by the way - would like to examine your Cloth."

"Actually, I would like to examine *you*, too", the blonde engineer pointed out. "But Mako doesn't let me."

"Of course not. You are not qualified for that."

"Pah. I know a lot about practical biology."

"That doesn't count."

"Aehm, ladies, I should mention that I'm not exactly interested in you in any case," Aphrodite said. Nonetheless, he willed his Cloth to return into its presentational form. Now he only wore a pair of navy blue tights.

"Great, we aren't either - well, actually we *are*, but only scientifically," Makoto grinned. But she had to admit that these Saints were really a sight - not an ounce of fat on their perfectly muscled bodies... She started with taking a couple of photos.

"Good." Aphrodite seemed greatly relieved. He didn't want any fights with Misty. "By the way, may I get some prints of the pics as well? They'd be a perfect present for my beloved."

"No problem. - But could we now begin? We'd like to be through before lunch."

"Sure. I have a date this afternoon, so I'd like to get it over with, too."

"Fine." Makoto examined his flowing mane. "Is your hair-colour genuine?"

"Of course! *Everything* about me is genuine."

"I think the colour is way cool." Makoto fished for a strand and admired it thoroughly.

In a corner of the hall, Himiko knelt in front of the Cloth that looked like a large, golden fish and tried to gather some information. She sulked that she didn't get as nice a look at the content of these things as Makoto always did.

"Thanks." Aphrodite beamed a smile at her and played with a shimmering strand of his sky-coloured hair as well.

"Almost all of you Saints have really gorgeous hair", Makoto marveled.

"Well, we are Athena's Chosen after all. Athena seems to prefer her warriors beautiful. Although there are some exceptions... Aphrodite thought of Jamian and shuddered. Whoever chose and trained *that* as a Saint certainly had been out of his mind. And worst of all - that guy had tried to stalk Misty! Aphrodite frowned. There

were some Saints too many who were interested in Misty, he thought with slight irritation.

"I noticed that as well," Makoto agreed. "And I'm really not angry about it..."

"I'm finished here," Himiko called. "I will assist you in taking some more photos..."

"Today you were really fast," her colleague observed amused.

"Well, there's not so much difference between the Scorpio and the Pisces Cloth..."

"But there is," Aphrodite corrected. "My Cloth has far better protective capabilities. Milo doesn't even have a real helmet."

"True. I spent quite some time to figure out what keeps his 'tiara' on his head," Himiko told him.

"And? What is it? I always wondered about that, too."

"He uses tons of hair pins."

"Indeed?" Aphrodite grinned. "Well, my helmet has some drawbacks, too. It usually ruins my hairstyle. That's why I prefer to carry it around under my arm. You can't imagine how long it takes to get my hair back in order after I had the helmet on my head. But unfortunately I haven't managed to convince it to stay off when I call my Cloth to me in the first place."

"It seems all Saints have this problem," Makoto nodded. "Have you noticed that the helmets sometimes influence the length of the hair?"

"No, not yet. But I will certainly pay more attention to this. But my hair stays the same length, I think."

"Maybe it's something that only affects Bronze Saints... - By the way, is this genuine, too?" Makoto pointed at Aphrodite's beauty spot.

"Of course!"

"Hm..." Makoto fetched a cloth and some water, while Himiko put the 4th film into the camera. Aphrodite was no match for Camus, but nonetheless, he was beautiful.

"Don't you dare! I have very sensitive skin," Aphro protested.

"Sssst, don't move!" Makoto scrubbed at the beauty spot. "Hm. At least it's waterproof."

"I told you it's genuine," Aphrodite sulked. "My beauty is absolutely perfect!"

"If you say so... - By the way, way do you always play around with this rose of yours?"

"I love my roses. They are just like me - beautiful and deadly. Don't tell me you haven't heard of them?"

"Not yet. Why don't *you* tell me?"

"Well... Roses are my favourite means of attack. I have red roses - Bloody Roses -, black roses - called Piranhian Roses -, and white roses - Royal Demon Roses. The red ones are poisonous and kill their victims by their pollen. If you inhale the scent you fall asleep and never wake up anymore, unless the roses are taken away. The black ones virtually eat up the victims, and the white variety sucks up the victim's blood."

"Interesting. And where do the roses come from?"

"Well, I can conjure them up, of course. Although I also have lots of the red roses in my garden, where they grow and multiply like weeds."

"This red rose is really beautiful." Makoto looked at the flower. "And it seems it smells great, too."

"Thanks." Aphrodite smiled like an angel. "But be careful!"

Suddenly Makoto fell unconscious to the ground. Himiko ran to her colleague and slapped her into the face.

"What? Where?" Makoto shook her head dizzily.

"You breathed in too much of the fragrance of this Bloody Rose," Aphrodite explained.

"May I have it?" Himiko asked. "I'd like to examine it a bit more closely in my laboratory."

"Sure. But keep in mind that it's dangerous."

"Of course. I'll be careful," Himiko promised and looked for a plastic bag to stow it away safely.

Makoto got to her feet again. "Pretty effective," she moaned.

"I guess you should better not visit my rose garden then," Aphrodite grinned.

"Probably not - although I would love to see them nonetheless."

"You might come back in a pressure suit some day... You really *have* to see my black Piranhian Roses!"

"Hm. If they bite, wouldn't it be better if I'd return in an armour?"

Aphrodite laughed. "May be a good idea."

"This sounds really dangerous," Makoto pondered.

"I am the most dangerous of all of the Gold Saints."

"Hm... Several other persons claimed the same. But you are certainly the most beautiful of them," she admitted.

Aphrodite beamed. "Didn't I tell you? I *am* the number one among the Saints."

"Up to now - but we haven't examined all of the Saints yet," Makoto pointed out.

"So? And who would dare to dethrone me?" Aphrodite frowned.

"Dunno. I haven't seen all of you Saints."

"Trust me - there's *no one* more beautiful than me."

Himiko opened her mouth to say "Camus!", but decided against it. They should keep the Pisces Saint in good humour when he was really that dangerous.

"I think we will leave you now and see to it that we find some proper protective clothing so that we can admire your roses," Makoto decided. "I love roses!"

"You do?" Aphrodite smiled beatifically. "That's nice. But if you wish to visit me again, tomorrow would be perfect. Today I'll be fully occupied."

"I see. Then we won't disturb you any longer. We'll try to come back in the next days."

"Fine. Until then!"

Makoto and Himiko packed their things, said good-bye to the Pisces Saint and returned to Scorpio Temple.

**- File GS04-Pis-T001 Closed -**

## Kapitel 16: Interlude IV - Dangerous Delivery! A Rose for Camus

### Interlude IV

#### Dangerous Delivery! A Rose for Camus

"Hi Milo! We're baaa-ack!" Himiko chimed.

"I'm hungry," Makoto complained. "And I'm still dizzy from the fragrance of that rose."

"I'm surprised that you survived your encounter with Aphrodite in the first place. Our 'beauty queen' can be really nasty..." Milo said with an amused grin.

"Why? I think he's a really nice guy."

"Indeed. Absolutely cute," Makoto added.

"*What?!* You have to be kidding me!! Aphro is an arrogant, effeminate, dangerous egomaniac!"

"I disagree. He's nice and helpful and was a real pleasure to examine. He's got absolutely gorgeous, soft hair," Makoto said dreamily.

"Aphrodite is a pain in the a...backside! I really can't stand him!"

"Well, he isn't as cute as my Camus-sama, but he's cute nonetheless," Himiko said.

Milo grumbled something that sounded like "Why do so many women like this girlish, boy-loving son-of-a-bitch?!"

"Tomorrow we will probably visit him once more," Makoto chimed. "We have to find a nice present for him..."

"I don't get it. I really don't get it! You should better invest your interest in a manly man like me!"

"Why?" Makoto asked in surprise.

"Because *I hate to be ignored! That's it!*"

"Since when have we ignored you?"

"You constantly wound my male pride! You, Himiko, drool only about Camus and even hang his posters all over my temple, and you, Makoto, think that even Aphrodite is more preferable than me!"

"I thought you are proud to be mean and don't want to be considered cute by us? You haven't even invited us to stay here, we had to find our own means to ...convince you..."

"It's a matter of principle and a matter of pride! I may be mean, but I'm a *man*! And I think it's very frustrating that you always drool over other men right before my eyes - and one of them can't even exactly considered to be a *man*."

Makoto grinned at him. "I examined Aphrodite, and I can assure you that he is indeed a man..."

"Under all of this make-up is truly a male person?"

"Yep. And by the way - his beauty spot is either genuine or a tattoo."

"Pah. A real man wouldn't hide behind tons of make-up."

"Indeed? I think men should have the same rights as women."

"Pah. But Aphro looks decidedly unmanly. He ruins the reputation of us Saints as fierce protectors of Athena - He and his 'Misty-dear'!"

"I think he can be pretty fierce," Makoto said thoughtfully. "His roses are really dangerous."

"I don't mind. I just don't like him."

"There has to be more than this," Makoto said curiously.

"No, *nothing*," Milo hurried to say.

"Now tell us!"

"I don't say anything."

"Hm." Makoto examined Milo thoughtfully. "Maybe I should ask Aphrodite."

"You will *not* ask him!"

"Why not? You can't hinder me."

Milo growled something unintelligible.

"You're so cute when you growl like this..."

"*I am not cute!*"

"You can't convince me of the contrary," Makoto said with a grin. "I think you're cute."

Milo gave up to contradict her. He couldn't understand why she failed to recognize him as the real macho man he was.

"That's nice." Makoto gave him a slap on the back. Fortunately he didn't wear his Cloth at the moment, but a pair of tight black jeans and a likewise black, long-sleeved shirt.

"I'm not nice, I'm mean," Milo said wearily.

"Awwwwwww..." Makoto gave him a bright smile.

Milo sighed and hung his head.

"That's a pitiful sight..." Makoto stroked the blue-violet hair of the Scorpio Saint.  
"Don't look so sad!"

Milo mumbled something. But at least he had her full attention for once.

"You Saints are all very complicated, it seems," Makoto observed.

"Indeed!" Himiko sighed. It was sooo unfair. Makoto had Milo, and she, Himiko, had only a handful pics of her Camus-sama. She looked at Aphrodite's rose in the plastic bag.

Makoto looked to Himiko. "Why did you take the rose along, by the way?"

"To catch my Camus-sama."

"Hm. Admittedly, it seems to be very effective, but do you think Camus will fall for it?"

"I can at least try it... - I want my Camus-sama!"

"Well, I can't hinder you..."

"But it will be too obvious if I try to give it to him myself. But whom could I send?" Himiko wondered.

"I'm slowly but surely getting *really* hungry," Makoto said when her stomach growled.

"Milo, didn't you want to fetch some food from some fast food restaurant in Athens?" Himiko looked questioningly at Milo.

"Did I?"

"Sure! And while you're at it, couldn't you fetch some innocuous guy for me, too?"

"Why should I do *that*?"

"Because otherwise *you* would have to give this rose to Camus!"



"I will not give roses to *any* guy!" Milo shouted angrily. "Or do I look like Aphrodite?"

Makoto laughed out loud. "That's a picture I'd *love* to see!"

"Well, then fetch a messenger for Himiko. And don't shout so loud, I'm getting deaf."

"Ahm, sorry... Ah well, what the heck, I'll bring you someone."

"And don't forget the food, please." Makoto gave him an adequate amount of the Greek currency.

"Okay. I'm back in a sec!" Milo jogged down the stairs.

"I hope he doesn't tarry too long. Or rather the food doesn't take too long. *He* can move at lightspeed, after all."

"I'm not that hungry..." Himiko gazed at a photo of Camus.

"Poor Himiko. We will try to catch your Camus for you."

"I do not only want to catch him, I want to *keep* him!"

"I don't think he wants to be kept as a pet..."

"Well, keeping him as a pet isn't exactly what I had in mind," Himiko said dreamily.

"And what *do* you have in mind?"

"Something more pleasurable of course..."

"I see..." Makoto looked at the pic as well. "I have to admit that he looks pretty cute. Especially when he doesn't look so serious."

"Don't tell me you have seen him smile?"

"Smile? Hm, I think it was more of a grin..."

"That's soooo unfair," Himiko sighed.

"I'm sure you will see him smile sooner or later. We only need to find a weak point of his."

"Maybe I can tickle him?"

"As soon as he wears his Cloth - fat chance!"

"I would *love* to get him out of his Cloth!"

"Why am I not in the least bit surprised? But you're right, it's very exciting to peel

those Saints out of these Cloths of theirs..."

"Hey, up to now they let their Cloths disappear themselves when you wanted to examine them," Himiko pointed out. "Suddenly these things stood next to them, neatly ordered in their presentational form, and you haven't done anything. To my chagrin, I haven't seen any zippers or other means to open the armours either."

"Unfortunately. And each of the armours seems to work differently! - Yikes, I wonder what keeps Milo? I'm starving!"

"Here I am," Milo called. He wore a large bag with food under one arm and a wildly struggling man under the other.

"Please give me the food and Himiko the guy!"

"Okay." Milo distributed his gifts evenly.

"Let me go!" the young man protested. "Or I'll call the police!"

"Shut up! You're elected to be my messenger in an important love affair! Take this rose and give it to the gorgeous guy in the eleventh temple. Then you can go home. - By the way, you will be duly paid for the delivery."

Himiko gave the young man a considerable amount of money and the rose. As the price was right, the guy decided to comply and started up the stairs.

"And now I'd like to get something to eat, too," Himiko chimed. Soon Camus would be hers alone!

Milo munched some roast mutton and passed her another spit. "Help yourself!"

They ate in silence.

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About half an hour later, the young man returned. "Okay, I delivered that rose and told the guy it's a gift from a silent admirer, as you told me. Then something strange happened - he took a sniff, and suddenly he fell down unconscious..."

"Perfect! Thanks - you can go now. - And I will finally get my Camus-sama!"

The young man virtually fled downstairs. He didn't trust these weird people here at all.

"Now you only need to go and collect him," Makoto said.

"Indeed!" Happily, Himiko jumped up the stairs. When she reached Capricorn Temple, though, she discovered *Shura* lying unconscious in front of the temple, the rose next to him.

"Oh *shit!*" Himiko shouted and raced back to Scorpio Temple.

"Well?" Makoto asked.

"Never let others do the important work for you... The guy gave the rose to *Shura!*"

Milo couldn't help but giggle hysterically.

"Hm. So why don't we change plans, take the opportunity and examine Shura then?"

"Indeed, why not... I only hope he doesn't think we want something else of him..."

Makoto shrugged. "Who cares? But at least this means we get on with our job for once."

"But what will my Camus-sama think of me? I don't want anyone else but *him!* - It's so embarrassing..."

"But somehow the idea with the rose was pretty effective..."

"Hm, if we want to examine him, you have to carry him to our lab here. Or we have to carry our stuff upstairs again."

"Why do I always have to do the heavy work?"

"Because you're the strong one. Hm... Which reminds me... This time we'll *have* to find a way to get him out of his Cloth."

"When in doubt, use a can opener."

Milo just shook his head when he listened to their conversation.

**- End of Interlude IV -**

## Kapitel 17: File GS05-Cap-T001 - Stunned Shura! Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood...

### File GS05-Cap-T001

#### Stunned Shura! Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood...

"He still seems to be unconscious," Makoto observed when they arrived at Capricorn Temple.

Well, then don't let us tarry too long and carry him down to our field-lab." Himiko inspected the Capricorn Saint. "This Cloth is pretty ugly. And whoever thought a Capricorn has horns like *this*! He looks more like the Longhorn Saint."

"I'm sure he's as heavy as an ox, too," Makoto complained and tugged at Shura.

"Is he?"

"Almost."

"Well, you'll manage."

"I don't have much of a choice, do I?" Makoto examined her slim colleague who was about a head smaller than her, then she tried to heave Shura over her shoulder. "Without this bulky Cloth everything would be far easier."

Himiko looked at the Cloth and tugged at the helmet. "At least this goes off easily," she discovered. "And it's pretty heavy..."

"Do you want to take my place?"

"Nope, you're stronger!"

Makoto stuck the tongue out at her. "When I signed the contract with the Graude Foundation, I didn't know that they'd hired me as pack mule."

"Well, we have a job and you're suited. I'll carry the helmet and you'll carry the rest."

Makoto sighed and walked downstairs with her heavy load. Fortunately, it was only two temples down, and Sagittarius Temple was void, so they didn't have to answer any awkward questions.

When they entered Scorpio Temple, Milo frowned deeply at them. "I thought you wanted to examine him in *his* temple?"

"Well, it was carrying our instruments upwards or Shura downstairs. I decided on the downstairs version." Makoto let Shura crash down to the ground. Those Saints were

robust, so she didn't have to be too careful.

"But I don't want that anyone gets any wrong ideas," Milo grumbled.

"Who might get any wrong ideas?"

"Certain inhabitants of Sanctuary, of course. After all, Shura was given a rose and now he's *here*."

"I carried him here, not you," Makoto shrugged.

"But there are already certain people who spread certain unsubstantiated rumours about me and Camus - the Goddess only knows why - and I don't need any more rumours along that line. Especially as I'm still looking for a suitable *girl*-friend."

In the meantime, Himiko tugged at Shuras Gold Cloth. "It refuses to come off," she complained.

Makoto gave Milo an amused look. "I don't think your reputation will suffer too much..." She turned to the still unconscious Capricorn Saint and examined the Cloth, too. "Hm. I'm sure there has to be a trick to get it off..."

"Sure - but I haven't found any opening yet. I fear I really have to fetch a can-opener." Himiko knocked at the breast-plate. "Sounds pretty massive."

Makoto tugged at the high boots, but they fit as if they were forged on to him. "Maybe we should try a cutting torch..."

"I'm not sure this will work. The Gold Cloths are supposed to be more durable than the Bronze ones, and I haven't even managed to get samples from the Bronze Cloths. We have to find another way."

"And it would be best if we'd find it before he wakes up."

"Indeed. Although I brought the rose with me again, just in case."

"Good. This might give us a little more time," Makoto nodded.

"Yes. But there's still that little problem..." Himiko tugged at one of Shura's bracers, but to no avail.

"I don't think we will succeed like this."

Milo grinned broadly. "Certainly not. Our Cloths are there to protect us, and if they could be removed that easily, they wouldn't be much of a protection."

"But still one has to be able to remove them somehow!"

"Sure," Milo said. At the moment, he wore some light clothing in Greek style (white,

blousy tunic and brown, laced-up leather trousers), so it was really possible for the Goldies to get out of their Cloths.

"Don't grin like this! We *are* going to solve this riddle!" Makoto threatened.

"Good luck," Milo grinned even more impudently.

Himiko fetched a hammer and hit one of the joints of the Cloth with it. It rang loudly, but nothing else happened. "Milo, why don't you help us for a change?" the petite engineer demanded.

"Me? I'm not here."

"Indeed?" Makoto threw a screw-driver at the Scorpio Saint, but Milo caught it effortlessly.

"Don't expect me to help you strip Shura! Hm... I *might* help you if you decide to examine Shaina..."

"Well, she isn't exactly on top of our list..."

"Well, I guess, I wouldn't say no to Marin, either. It's still unfair that Aiolia managed to get them both!"

"A true lion needs a pride."

"Obviously. It's too bad that Marin didn't like my cutey pets... She told me it's either her or my scorpions. But I won't throw out my scorpions for any girl!"

"Poor Milo..."

"It's so unfair - not even my best friend likes my pets!" He sighed tragically.

"Well, that's sad to hear, but it doesn't solve our problem with Shura's Cloth." Makoto circled around Shura, who still lay on the marble floor. "At least this armour isn't spiky, but it also gives no target where to open it. It's really frustrating."

"Well, we could try something completely different," Himiko mused. "Why don't we wake him and ask him to cooperate?"

"I will not hinder you if you wish to try..."

"Why me? *You're* the doctor and psychologist? I'm only the engineer."

"My job is only to examine Saints without their shell."

"But what if he gets angry?"

"Then he'll kill you and not me."

"You're really nice today," Himiko grumbled. "Which reminds me - why don't *you* wake him, Milo? You're more robust than any of us."

"That may be, but I don't want Shura to be mad at me either. He's got a very nasty attack called Excalibur, you know..."

"I guess then we have to wait until he wakes up on his own."

Makoto lifted Shura onto Milo's table, and the two women sat down next to it and waited. Milo kneeled on the ground and tried to teach Pope-chan and Marin-chan some new tricks.

About one and half an hour later, Makoto yawned heavily. "Slowly but surely he could really wake up, or I will fall asleep right here."

"Why don't you clear my dinner table now? I'd like to eat here and not on the ground!" With a frown, Milo looked at the unconscious Capricorn Saint.

"No chance as long as he stays asleep," Makoto said. "Hm, why don't you put one of your pets onto him? I'm sure he would wake up immediately."

"Not bad," Himiko agreed. "He certainly couldn't move fast with a scorpion sitting on him, lest it might sting. - Milo?"

"No! I won't put any of my sensitive little pets onto Shura! He might startle them, or worse, cut them in two!"

"Spoilsport!" Makoto sulked, and they waited in silence a little longer.

\* \* \*

Fortunately it didn't take *too* much longer, and Shura's lids fluttered.

"Look! He's waking up!" Himiko peered at the Capricorn Saint, safely hiding behind Milo.

Shura gazed around disorientedly. Where was he here?

Milo looked as innocent as he could. He wasn't responsible for anything.

"Why can't he be my Camus-sama?" Himiko sighed. She really would have preferred to examine the Aquarius Saint.

Shura discovered Milo and sat up. "How did I get here? What happened?"

"Don't ask me - I'm absolutely innocent. Ask *them*!"

Shura directed his gaze at the two scientists, who unsuccessfully tried to hide behind

Milo.

"I'm innocent as well," Makoto claimed.

"Do / look as if I could have carried you here?" Himiko asked.

Shura frowned. "And who *is* responsible?" He rubbed his temples. "The last thing I remember was this guy with the red rose..."

"Well, I have to admit that this rose was actually a present for my dear Camus-sama," Himiko said and blushed deeply. "I wasn't aware that it might have such side-effects," she lied without missing a beat.

Shura climbed from the table. "I have the uncanny suspicion this was one of Aphrodite's roses. But this doesn't answer my question why I awoke *here*. Well?" He examined the three culprits with an icy glare.

"Ahm, you see, when I saw those beautiful roses in the 12th temple, I just had to pluck one to send it to my Camus-sama. But obviously the delivery guy got it wrong and gave it to you instead," Himiko explained, her teint now the colour of ripe tomatoes.

"Don't look at me, Shura. I just happen to be here by chance," Milo defended himself.

Shura folded his arms. "Wasn't it rather that you wanted to knock out Camus to kidnap him for whatever sinister plots you have in mind?"

Himiko looked as if she would faint right on the spot.

"So I'm not so wrong about it after all," Shura grinned. "But why have you brought *me* here?"

"Ask *her*!" Milo pointed at Makoto. "She actually managed to carry you downstairs to my demesne."

Makoto boxed Milo in the side. "Are you kidding? I can't carry such heavy things."

Shura's gaze wandered bemusedly from one to the other. Of course he had already heard the rumour that Milo tried to compete with Aiolia in the girl-friend department, and somehow there seemed to be quite some truth about it.

"Well, actually it's only that we would really like to examine you, Shura-san," Himiko said.

"What?"

"You see, it's our job to find out how you Saints function."

"And why should I agree to become your guinea pig?"



"Not our guinea pig - after all, we already had some of them - we'd like to verify our findings."

"And what would I get in return?"

"Hm..." Himiko thought hard. "What would you like to get as reward?"

Shura hesitated only one moment. "The Murasame blade!"

"Huh? This sounds pretty difficult." Himiko had heard of the famous Murasame blade, of course, but she wasn't 100 percent sure whether it was real or only a legend.

"No sword, no examination," Shura said, and it sounded pretty final.

"Don't you know anything that might be easier to obtain?"

This time Shura pondered a little longer. "Maybe you could convince me if you'd treat me an exclusive dinner."

"Why not? Do you like Japanese cuisine?"

"I haven't tried it yet," Shura replied.

"Well, then I will treat you to a proper Japanese meal with everything that belongs to it. I only have to go to the town and buy the ingredients," Himiko said.

"How long will that take? I'm hungry right *now*."

"Ahm, this *will* take a while... But if you don't want to wait, we could go to that Japanese restaurant I saw in Athens."

"But I want a *genuine* Japanese meal," Shura demanded.

"Well, we have a small jet-plane here, but it takes about 12 hours to fly to Tokyo," Himiko pointed out.

"We could teleport."

"What?" Himiko looked open-mouthed at the Capricorn Saint. It seemed that these Saints had even greater abilities than she would have dreamed of.

"Well, this should be the fastest way. Where's my helmet, by the way?"

"Ahm, here." Himiko pointed to one of the chairs.

"Good." Shura took his helmet with one hand, Himiko with the other and teleported away to his temple.

"Eh!" Makoto shouted. "Where are they gone?"

Milo closed his eyes and traced Shura's Cosmo signature. "Capricorn Temple."

"That's unfair. Now I won't know what they are going to do," Makoto complained.

"We can join them, if you like. But then I want to be invited, too."

"When this research project is over, we will be totally broke," Makoto sighed. "But before I die of curiosity..."

Telepathically, Milo asked Shura for permission to enter Capricorn Temple and jumped as well. They almost landed on Himiko who stood disorientedly in the middle of the vast hall.

"That's an absolutely weird sensation," Makoto commented and shook her head dizzily. While they were waiting for Shura to change into more inconspicuous clothing, they looked around. The main hall of Capricorn Temple was dominated by a large statue of Athena, who gave a young man a huge sword.

"That's Excalibur," Milo explained. "Shura is a formidable fighter, and his arms and legs cut like the legendary sword."

"I always thought Excalibur was King Arthur's sword that was given him by the Lady of the Lake," Himiko wondered.

"It's only symbolic," Milo told her. "And anyway, Greek history is older than the British, so we were first."

"If you say so..."

Finally, Shura returned. He was clad in an elegant black suit, although his hair still looked like he had just come out of a storm.

Himiko examined him closely. "Wow! This looks impressive - Ahm, but could you please return me to Scorpio Temple, so that I can change into something more befitting an elegant dinner, too?"

"No problem." Shura looked to Milo who nodded permission, then he took Himiko and materialized in the 8th temple.

"I guess we should follow them once more," Makoto sighed, and Milo took her along via teleport. "By the way," she continued when they arrived at Scorpio Temple, "It just occurred to me that it is early morning in Tokyo right now."

She looked around, still not believing that she had been transported to Capricorn Temple and back within instants. Obviously this was why the Saints didn't have any problems with the myriads of stairs - they simply didn't climb them when they didn't want it.

"You don't want me to get a proper Japanese meal, it seems," Shura commented. "Ah well, we could also visit my native country and go to a restaurant in my hometown."

"And this would be...?" Makoto looked at him.

"Sevilla in Spain."

"Well, I haven't been to Spain yet," Makoto said thoughtfully. "Why not. - But I should change into something more proper, too." She hurried to their room.

"Well, the other girl wanted to dress up a bit, too," Shura shrugged.

"Oh. Sorry. I forgot to introduce the two," Milo said. "The petite blonde is Himiko and the tall red-head is Makoto. They are a bit weird, but also somehow pretty cute."

"I noticed."

"But don't think they are my girl-friends!"

"They aren't?" Shura asked with a grin.

"Of course not! I'm no bigamist like Aiolia!"

"I see. Ah well, I never thought you'd be..."

"You didn't?" Milo made a slightly disappointed face. "I hope you don't want to imply that I'm not man enough to be together with two girls?!"

Shura's grin broadened. "I didn't want to imply anything."

"Good."

"But of course one hears a lot of things..."

"Oh. And what might that be?" Milo looked questioningly at the Capricorn Saint.

"The two girls are the conversational topic number one in Sanctuary at the moment..."

"Oh dear, oh dear... - And the worst thing is that they decided to move in with me."

"Indeed, this led to quite a lot of interesting rumours."

"Ah. Would you care to elaborate?"

"Well, the main rumour is that they know something about you and blackmail you to let them stay here... Another is that you decided to found a harem to outdo Aiolia..."

"Number two is pretty flattering," Milo said smugly. "Especially since Shaina seems to have decided that she wants to conquer Aiolia's heart to spite Marin."

"Don't tell me you're still after Shaina?"

"Well, she has quite a lot of fire," Milo said dreamily. "But unfortunately it seems that she cares more for Aiolia. Although there are recent rumours that she has an eye on that disciple of Marin's - but that's ridiculous, if you ask me. He's only a boy!"

"Women!" Shura shook his head. "Ah, there's another rumour about your two ladies. I heard someone say they might be two agents of Athena's who are sent to investigate the fidelity of Sanctuary's Saints."

"Make that 'to test their mental stability'," Milo sighed. "One of the girls is hopelessly in love with Camus, but he isn't overly enthusiastic about it."

"Indeed, I heard that Camus imprisoned someone in a Freezing Coffin - and moreover, that someone else managed to free his victim from it."

"That's true. Camus was totally shocked! - On the other hand, this means there is still hope for my poor iced pets."

Shura grinned. "Did Camus freeze some more of them?"

Milo nodded sulkily. "As if they would do him any harm! The poor little ones are perfectly tame."

The Capricorn Saint shrugged. "They haven't bitten me yet when they were on their way to Aquarius Temple."

"Scorpions don't bite!" Milo pointed out.

"Well, if they would they'd be cut in halves."

"You're cruel!" Milo complained.

"It's in my job description."

\* \* \*

"We're back! I hope it didn't take too long." Makoto and Himiko returned. The engineer was clad in a colourful traditional yukata and had her hair done up in a stylish knot. The doctor wore one of her usual outfits, but slightly more elegant.

"Nice," Milo commented.

"Fine. Let's go!" Telepathically, Shura sent Milo the coordinates, and each of the Gold Saints took one of the women with him. They materialized in a remote corner, and it seemed as if Shura knew the area very well. He led them to a more lively region of the town.

Himiko looked around. "It looks nice here."

"I like this teleportation stuff. It's very practical," Makoto said.

"Do you think you could teach me how to teleport?" Himiko asked Shura.

"That's highly improbable. Saints learn how to use their Cosmo from their earliest childhood on."

"That's a pity! I would love to be able to teleport!"

"Being a Gold Saint encompasses far more than only being able to teleport," Milo told her. "From ten children who start the training, maybe one might survive."

"Ahm, I guess, then I'd rather not begin this training..."

"It's safer, really," the Scorpio Saint nodded. "Until now none of the disciples whom I trained, so that one might become my successor, managed to survive his training. So far only Camus and Dohko were lucky enough to find a suitable candidate."

"It seems to be really difficult to become a Saint," Makoto marveled.

"Indeed! Although some of the Silver Saints seem to be a bit more lucky with their disciples - Cepheus Albore even had two disciples who won a Cloth, and Aquila Marin's disciple also succeeded. Unfortunately it's even more difficult to become a Gold Saint. It's too bad that I haven't found a worthy candidate yet."

"Sooner or later you will, Milo," Makoto tried to assure him.

"I hope so. - By the way, have *you* already found a possible successor, Shura?"

"Nope. I mean, there is Canis Maior Sirius, but he's simply not Gold Saint material. And Lionet Ban is far too weak. I have to find someone else, but you know how difficult it is."

"Sure. But I guess we should better hurry, the next Holy War is coming up soon."

"Huh?" Makoto looked at the Gold Saints. "What Holy War?"

"Well, every two or three hundred years, Athena reincarnates to lead the Holy War against the evil powers that threaten Earth. We're just on the eve of another War, as Athena reincarnated thirteen years ago."

"Hm. Maybe this is why we are sent to research the Saints and their Cloths," Makoto mused.

"If your goal is to help our Goddess, then we will certainly support you," Milo promised.

"But nonetheless I want that dinner," Shura demanded.

"Okay, okay, I'm hungry, too," Himiko grinned. They entered a very expensive looking restaurant.

"I'm curious how Spanish food tastes," Makoto said.

"It's delicious, of course," Shura promised.

As everybody around spoke Spanish, and Shura was the only one of them who was able to communicate in this language, he ordered a table for them. The menu was the next challenge.

"I'm really hungry, but I just don't know what to choose," Milo sighed.

"Well, if you wish to eat something traditional, then you should go for a Paella," Shura suggested.

"Sounds fine enough to me," Milo said. He had no idea what exactly a Paella was, only that it seemed to be some Spanish national dish.

"Good. I will eat one, too. I really need some change from the usual Greek stuff one always gets at Sanctuary."

"Don't tell me you don't like Greek food?" Milo frowned at his fellow Saint.

"I like it - but it gets a bit boring if you don't get anything else."

"Well, I think we will also try this Paella stuff," the Japanese scientist agreed. Shura ordered for them all.

When the food arrived, they looked distrustfully at the bowls.

"Ahm, there's fish and clams in there and also chicken and some sausage - are you sure this is edible?" Milo inquired.

"Just try it! Paella always consists of a wide variety of different ingredients. The colour is from genuine saffron!"

"Hm." Milo tried it tentatively. "Hey that's *great!*"

"Didn't I tell you?"

"Yes, yes..." The Scorpio Saint munched the whole plate empty in almost no time (being able to move at lightspeed helped a lot). "Do you think they would mind if I'd order another helping?"

"Those Saints are uncanny," Himiko commented. "I haven't eaten the first bite yet and he already calls for second helpings!"

"I told you I'm hungry..."

When they had finished, Milo and Shura had eaten themselves through half the menu, from *croquetas de bacalao* over *atùn con salsa romanesco* to *besugo al horno* and *suquet de pescado*, and as dessert a *crema de albaricoques*.

"I love it to be invited into a restaurant," Milo grinned.

"If the people know how much you eat you will certainly not be invited too often," Makoto sighed.

"Unfortunately not. But it's only a proper payment - after all, you still occupy my temple. If I would ask rent, you'd have to pay more."

"I must admit I'm not 100% sure about this," Makoto said when she looked at the numbers on the bill. "Although I don't know the exchange rates between Pesetas and Yen..."

"Me neither," Himiko admitted. "Ah well, the Graude Foundation pays for everything..."

"So why don't you just rent an appartement and leave my temple?" Milo wanted to know.

"Oh no, it's more interesting to live in your demesne."

Milo sighed tragically.

Shura grinned. "Don't you feel lucky to have two cute girls in your temple who even pay your meals?"

Milo made a face. "If you'd know..."

"What should he know?" Makoto inquired. "Aren't we always very nice to you?"

Shura's grin broadened. "Very nice, obviously..."

Milo blushed. "It's not what you think it is!"

"And what do you think that I think?"

"Ahm, you look as if you think - ah, never mind!"

Shura laughed, and Makoto leaned against Milo's shoulder. "I would really like to know what you think what others think," she said seductively.

Himiko giggled. "He's almost as cute as my Camus-sama when he looks like this!"

"Of course I think that you only think the worst," Milo tried to wiggle out of the interrogation. "And remember one thing: *I'm not cute!*"

"We know, we know," Makoto said. "But it doesn't change anything."

"Really," Himiko mused. "If there weren't my Camus-sama, *he* would be my first choice."

"Well, thanks for your consideration, but I'm not used to be second best," Milo said gruffly.

Shura was highly amused by the exchange. They almost sounded as if they were a happy couple (or was that triple?) for quite a while now.

"You *always* wish to be the number one, do you?"

"I *am* the number one!" Milo sulked.

"Can't be. You live in temple Nr.8," Himiko pointed out.

"And you refuse to be considered cute," Makoto added.

"I don't need to be cute to be the number one!"

"But you do - at least according to my specifications."

"Well, then I'm the uncute number one."

"I think this needs some further discussion."

Shura almost burst from laughter. "Are they *always* like this?" he asked Himiko.

"Sure," the engineer nodded. "I think Mako and Milo make a really cute couple."

"We are *not* a couple!" Milo protested.

"Exactly," Makoto agreed. "How on earth did you get this absurd idea? He isn't even my type!"

"Finally- er, *what?! I'm not your type? What's there *not* to like about me?*"

"You are not cute."

"Ah yes. Finally you admit it. Although... On the other hand I think it's a bit demeaning that you think Camus is cute and I'm not...."

"Just a moment," Himiko interrupted. "Camus is *mine*. I think he's cute. Mako can't stand him."



"Does Camus know that you think he's yours?" Shura asked curiously.

"Well... Er... Actually..." Himiko blushed furiously. "I'm still in the process of convincing him of the fact."

"I see."

"Currently he only gives her the cold shoulder," Milo grinned.

"I always said he's an icy guy." Makoto shuddered. She still couldn't understand what Himiko saw in this unapproachable and in more than one way utterly cold Gold Saint.

"How can you say something mean like this?" Himiko sulked. "I'm sure deep within he has a heart of gold."

"Make that a heart of cold... I'm sure it's just a block of ice."

"I should mention that he can even be considerably colder than normal ice," Milo pointed out.

"Isn't normal ice cold enough? You Gold Saints always have to go to such extremes..."

"We *are* Gold Saints, after all - the most powerful men in the world." Milo grinned smugly. He liked to be powerful - it was an exhilarating feeling to have all of this power at his fingertips, even though he wasn't supposed to use it for personal matters.

"I would really like to know if you have to be born to be a Saint or if training can teach any person these powers," Makoto mused.

"Well, we Gold Saints were always something special, even when we were only kids. But the training was essential, too, to develop the full potential of our powers."

"I'm so curious what I will find out when I analyze the data of our examinations," the doctor said.

"What kinds of examinations exactly do you have in mind?" Shura asked with a slight frown.

"The usual."

"And what is 'the usual'?"

"Nothing harmful. Milo survived it, too."

The Scorpio Saint growled something.

"Well, and I want to take a look at your Cloth," Himiko told Shura.

"And what information do you hope to gain?"

"Information about your armours, your abilities and the like. You see, our department wants to create some better artificial armours for some additional fighters who will support Athena," Himiko explained.

"Don't you think the Saints currently at Sanctuary will suffice?"

"Well, we got the job and we have to do it, or our boss will get angry and fire us."

"And moreover, it's a lot of fun," Makoto added.

"Sure?" The Capricorn Saint looked doubtfully at them.

"It depends. But I'm still alive," Milo told him.

"We're very careful and don't break anything," Makoto promised.

"And I only get the Cloths," Himiko sighed.

"Right. Then content is mine."

"But you will *not* get my Camus! He's all mine!"

"Don't panic, I don't want him anyway. He's way too cold."

"Oh, I will see to it that he will warm up a bit," Himiko promised.

"Dream on," Milo grinned.

"Yeah, I would love to see that. I'm sure he'd melt away." Makoto only shook her head.

"Exactly that's is what I have in mind," Himiko said dreamily.

Shura laughed. "I'm convinced there's *no* way to thaw Sanctuary's coldest icicle."

"Pah! You will see," Himiko declared.

"Well, I have already reserved a space in my backyard among my poor frozen pets where I will put the Freezing Coffin Camus will eventually imprison you in."

"Himiko, I won't thaw you a second time," Makoto warned her. "It's tedious and takes a lot of time. You should better think twice what you are going to do next."

"I'll ask him out for a dinner."

"If you manage to convince him to listen to you in the first place..."

"Could be a problem. Camus hates girls who run after him," Milo said.

"You're so mean!" Himiko sniffed.

"Exactly," Milo grinned.

"Poor Himiko," Makoto tried to comfort her. "Why does it have to be *this* guy anyway?"

"Because he's simply *perfect*!"

"You'd think differently if you'd know him," Milo said. "Okay, he's a very good friend, but he also has some far less likeable sides."

"Pah."

"I have the impression all Saints have some pretty dark sides," Makoto mused. "And if you ask me - I don't want to explore them at all."

"I don't mind," Himiko continued stubbornly. "I want him, no matter what.."

"Then your life-expectancy has just dropped several decades," Milo commented dryly.

"At least this means the other Saints are safe from her." Shura grinned. "But what about you, Makoto?"

"I don't want to settle on one certain Saint."

"Unfortunately," Milo sighed. "And she doesn't like my pets either."

"Well, it's not easy to get used to scorpions..."

"Does this mean you don't think you might get used to them one day?"

"Well, somehow I got used to you, too, didn't I?"

"Fine!" Milo beamed.

"I see that she is not your girl-friend," Shura said ironically.

"Of course not!" Milo and Makoto said in unison.

"Obviously." Shura lifted one eyebrow in amusement.

"So you don't believe me?" Makoto wanted to know.

"No."

"Pah! You are all the same!"

"Are we?"

"No, they aren't," Himiko contradicted. "*No one* is like *him*."

"I am not like the others either," Milo sulked, "You forget that I'm *better* than them."

"Men," Makoto sighed. "Why haven't we stayed in Tokyo? I guess the almost complete lack of female Saints is due to the fact that they can't stand all of this machismo."

"Camus is different," Himiko claimed. "And anyway, I'm Aquarius, too, so he *has* to be mine. I'm entitled to move in with him."

"Very logical reason," Makoto said ironically.

Shura grinned. "If some Cappy girl decides to move in with me only because she thinks she's entitled to, she will find herself flying down the stairs faster than she can think."

"I don't think the Zodiac Signs are so essential," Makoto said.

"Well, for us Gold Saints they are."

"Even for the choice of a girl-friend?"

"I haven't thought on that." Shura admitted. "But no one who isn't Cappy can become Capricorn Gold Saint. Insofar, the Zodiac Signs *are* important."

"Why can only someone born under a Capricorn Sun become Capricorn Saint?" Makoto inquired.

"Every Saint has a Guardian Constellation. As the Cloths are each attuned to one of the constellations, one can't wear another Cloth. If you're, say Libra, your energies are incompatible with the Capricorn Cloth."

"Interesting."

"What would happen if I would try to wear the Capricorn Cloth?" Himiko asked curiously.

"It would look ridiculous," Makoto grinned. "You're at least one head too small."

"Hm. This brings me to another question," Himiko mused. "Are your Cloths 'one size fits all', or is there a new Cloth created for every new Saint?"

"The Cloths adjust," Shura told her.

"And what about male/female versions? I mean, the design of your Cloths isn't exactly fitting for a woman."

"They adjust to that as well."

"Cool! These Cloths are a true marvel."

"I think they are much too impractical. Don't you feel like canned food in there?" Makoto asked.

"Sometimes... But the Cloths are very important. They protect us from attacks and a lot of other things."

"I don't have to like them, though."

"I like my Cloth," Shura said. "It's a great honour to wear the Holy Cloth of a Saint of Athena." Shura smiled when he remembered how proud he had been when he had won it so many years ago.

"But they are bulky and heavy," Makoto complained.

"The weight is neglectable," Shura told her.

"I don't think so..." Himiko thought about the Cloths she had examined. She almost hadn't been able to lift them.

"You are no Saints, that's all. We have trained from our earliest childhood on to become stronger, faster and more agile than normal human beings. Although it's the Cosmo that defines a true Saint."

"Hm. I still haven't completely understood what this Cosmo is all about," Makoto commented. "I haven't even managed to measure it."

"It's difficult to explain to a Non-Saint," Shura said with a deep frown.

"It seems we still have a lot of work in front of us," Makoto sighed.

"Hm, so why don't we start now?" Himiko asked.

They paid and teleported back to Sanctuary.

\* \* \*

"Well, what are we going to do first?" Himiko wanted to assist Makoto with the physical examination this time. She had seen enough of the Gold Cloths for the moment - they were all heavy, and they withstood any material tests anyway.

"Hm..." Makoto looked thoughtfully at Shura. "The Cloth isn't here at the moment..."

"Exactly that's the point," Himiko beamed. "I'm going to assist you in the documentation of the examination and take the necessary photos for our files."

Makoto looked at her with amusement. "If you insist..."

"So you say it's okay? Wonderful!" Himiko fetched her camera. The only drawback was that Shura wasn't Camus, she thought. Okay, he looked quite nice, but he was definitely no match for her Aquarius Saint.

Shura and Milo watched the two scientists when they prepared their 'field lab'. The Capricorn Saint looked questioningly to his colleague, but Milo shrugged.

"Just do what they ask you to do and you will survive it intact," he grinned.

"If you say so..." Shura looked at the girls.

"Why don't you start while I supervise you?" Makoto suggested.

"Cool." Himiko looked at Shura. "Okay, I'd like to take these pics for our files now, please."

"Okay."

"Fine!" Himiko directed Shura to a corner where she asked him to pose a little - first in his suit, then with slightly less clothing. The Capricorn Saint also had a really nice body, she thought. Actually all Saints had, it seemed. Why couldn't she get any such photos of her Camus-sama?

Makoto thought it was nice that Himiko did some of her work for a change and simply 'supervised' her. So she had a nice view, too, but far less work.

"How many more pics do you want to take of him?" Milo asked with a slight frown, when Himiko inserted at least the fourth or fifth film into the camera. She shouldn't consider to take more pics of Shura than of him, Milo!

"Dunno... But I think he's definitely a sight, too."

"Indeed," Makoto nodded. "Really cute."

"But not as cute as my Camus-sama, of course. - By the way, Shura, you might consider another hairstyle," Himiko suggested. "I think longer hair would suit you perfectly."

"Nope. Long hair is far to impractical", Shura disagreed.

"But I'm sure it'd be far cuter," Makoto told him.

"Shaka has really long hair, too, and he doesn't seem to have problems with it either," Himiko observed.

"Shaka doesn't move much," Shura told her.

"Hm. That's true. But what about my Camus or Milo? They don't have short hair either."

"Nice that you remember me once in a while," Milo said gruffly. "And even if it's only second to Camus again..."

"You see, I tried to grow my hair long once, but when it had reached a certain length it got in the way when I did my Excalibur move - and then it was a real mess! So I prefer to wear it short now. As I said, it's more practical."

"Well, but when your current hairstyle gets wet, you can't see anymore, so I think it isn't 100% practical either," Himiko pointed out.

"I see to it that I don't get wet during a fight."

"And what if it rains?" she wondered.

"I'm sure he puts cute little bows into the strands," Makoto grinned.

Milo laughed out loud while Shura sulked. "What do you take me for? Of course I don't do anything this ridiculous!"

"But you really should try to grow your hair longer," Himiko said.

"We'll see."

"You won't manage to replace Camus in her heart anyway," Milo commented. "Not even I managed to do this."

"And that means something?" Shura asked amused.

"Pah!"

"Okay, now it's my turn," Makoto said. "Here's the examination table, please take place!" She waved Shura to the makeshift examination table. "First we'll check on your condition..."

"I'm in very good condition," Shura assured her.

"That's for me to find out." She turned on several surveillance monitors and began a very thorough examination.

"That tickles!" Shura complained when she put on some gel for the electrodes on certain skin areas.

"Pull yourself together!"

"But I hate to be tickled!"

"Indeed?" Makoto put the statement to the test, and Shura squeaked in protest.

"Stop that"

"No, that's fun..."

Shura hung his head.

Milo grinned. It was fun to see someone else examined, he thought.

"Don't grin like this, or you're the next," Makoto threatened.

"I'm not ticklish," Milo claimed.

"You aren't?" Himiko put on an insidious grin and walked towards Milo. The Scorpio Gold Saint decided to take no chances and fled, closely followed by a giggling Himiko.

Makoto left Shura alone for the moment and watched the wild chase. "No chance, Himiko. Milo is definitely faster than you."

"Unfortunately," Himiko panted and stopped. "Ah well, never mind, he's not my Camus-sama anyway."

Milo stopped, too, and looked exasperatedly at Himiko. "Camus is my best friend, yes, but slowly and surely I come to hate him," he grumbled.

"So you actually liked to be chased by her?" Makoto asked with a grin.

"I think it's *always* nice to be chased by some cute girls," Milo admitted. "But I really hate to be dumped for someone else."

"Awww, poor Milo!" Makoto said. "I really do pity you."

"Me, too," he sighed.

"Poor boy. Unfortunately I'm occupied right now." She turned back to Shura and the monitors.

"I really hate to be ignored," Milo sulked.

"Gotcha!" While he was distracted, Himiko had stalked him from behind and now tickled him thoroughly.

Milo started violently. "Ieecks!!! - I really do hate this!"

"Awww..." Now Makoto just couldn't ignore him anymore and went to him to tousle his gorgeous blue-violet mane.

"Now *that* is far better," he grinned at her with his best winning smile.

"Hey, and what about me?" Shura complained. He still lay on the table within a tangle



of cables and electrodes.

"You're free to go now. I'm occupied otherwise," Makoto told him.

"Just a moment..." Himiko freed him from the electrodes. She didn't want him to ruin the expensive instruments he was plugged in.

When he was unlinked from the cables, Shura sat up and fished for his shirt, after he had gotten rid of the gel of the electrodes. He watched Milo and that girl. 'No, they were *not* a couple,' he thought ironically, while Makoto continued to tousle Milo's hair.

Himiko watched them, too. "I want my Camus-sama," she sighed tragically.

"Hey, and what about *me*?" Shura asked.

"My heart belongs only to the noble Aquarius Saint!" Himiko told him dramatically.

"Actually your heart isn't exactly what I'm interested in," Shura said with an impertinent grin.

Himiko looked scandalized at him. "Pardon? - You are at least as impudent as Milo," she said haughtily.

"Well, without being a little forward one seems to be ignored here."

"Well, you see, it's not that I want to ignore you," Himiko said and blushed. "I mean, you are quite cute in a way, but frankly, I'm only interested in my Camus-sama."

This wasn't exactly what Shura wanted to hear. "I really don't understand how you could prefer such a frosty guy to me!"

"But he's simply *perfect*! His regal bearing, his coolness and the fact that he seems to be so fully centered in himself - and of course there are his gorgeous looks..." The hearts that blinked in her eyes were hardly to overlook.

"Humph."

"I hope I'll manage to convince him to like me at least a little bit," she said wistfully.

"Camus? Never." Shura shook his head. "Camus is very choosy."

"He is? And what type of women does he like?" Himiko wanted to know.

"Am I an information desk?" Shura asked her. He certainly wouldn't help her to conquer another man.

"But you know him, do you?"

"Well, it's not very easy to get to know Camus anyway. But don't think I'll give you any hint."

"You're mean!" Himiko sulked.

"Of course."

"Somehow I get the impression that *all* Gold Saints are really mean," she sniffed. "Except for my Camus, that is."

"Have you finished this examination? I want to go now." Shura said.

"Sure, sure, I've finished," Makoto told him.

"And I want to pay my Camus another visit," Himiko said. Talking of *him* always made her wish to take at least a little glimpse of him.

"Good luck," Shura said ironically and teleported away.

"Do whatever you wish. I'll try to remember to collect you tomorrow morning when he put you on ice again." Makoto commented.

"You're soooo mean, too!" Himiko sniffed and went upstairs again.

**- File GS05-Cap-T001 Closed -**

## Kapitel 18: Interlude V - Rise and Shine! Breakfast at Sanctuary

### Interlude V

#### Rise and Shine! Breakfast at Sanctuary

Only twenty minutes after her departure from Scorpio Temple, Himiko returned.

"Already back?" Makoto asked in surprise. "He wasn't there, was he?"

"No!" Himiko sniffed. "I only found a note at the entrance that said

*I'm in Siberia right now. Possible intruders, please proceed to the following temple so that you can be eliminated by Pisces Gold Saint Aphrodite instead of me.*

*Sincerely,  
Aquarius Gold Saint Camus"*

"Sounds like Camus," Milo commented.

"This reminds me - we wanted to visit Aphrodite once more to admire his rose garden," Makoto said.

"Well, by now it's really dark outside; I almost fell down the stairs. We should better go tomorrow morning."

"True." Makoto agreed.

"Why did he have to go to Siberia?" Himiko sighed.

"Why haven't you chosen someone else? It seemed that Shura would have been perfectly willing..."

"No! I want my Camus, and I want him alone!" Himiko said stubbornly. "Who else is there worthy of my full attention?"

"If you ask me, there are several Saints worthy of *my* attention as they are really cute."

"But they're not cute enough for *me*."

"You *are* far too picky, if you ask me."

"Sure. I want only the very best for me. It's so unfair that Shura refused to tell me

some more about Camus' preferences..."

"You could have been a little nicer to him, then he'd probably have told you everything."

"But he just wasn't my type."

"You have to make little sacrifices for your success."

"But that's not my style! Hm... Maybe I should have given him some truth drug," she pondered.

"I'm sure this wouldn't have had any effects. Saints seem to be very resistant in every respect."

"But I won't flirt with any guy I don't really like!"

"Why not? It's easy as long as he's cute."

"Well, if you say so..." Himiko said.

"I know, I know, you *only* want Camus."

"Exactly!" Himiko looked for some nice Camus photos. "I'll go to sleep then. Maybe he's back tomorrow."

"Who knows... Have some nice dreams," Makoto grinned.

"Sure." Himiko went to their room.

\* \* \*

"She really doesn't want to give up," Milo marveled.

"Himiko *never* gives up when she really wants something."

"Well, with Camus she made a really tough choice. - Poor Shura, I think he was interested in her."

"Indeed. And he is pretty cute, too, I have to admit. Far more than I first thought."

"Yeah, he's okay," Milo agreed.

"Most of you Saints look pretty cute," Makoto said thoughtfully. "There's quite some variety."

"And who's your first choice?"

"I like those who are tall, nicely built and handsome."

"Like me?"

Makoto examined him closely. "Yes, you fit in."

"Hm. And what about your number one? I mean, Himiko's decision is widely known by everybody now..."

"I don't have a number one. I take whoever is available of the cutest."

"Hm." Milo frowned deeply. Did this mean she only flirted with him because he was available right now?

"Did you expect something else?"

"Sure! I expected that I'd be Nr.1 on your list!"

"But you are - at the moment."

"Hm."

"What's up? I thought this was what you wanted to hear?"

"I want to be your all-time number one!"

"Well, you have to convince me first that you are good enough for that."

"What would you have in mind as proof?"

"Be creative!"

"Hm." Milo thought hard. No. He *was* the number one, he finally decided. He didn't have to prove anything.

Makoto was highly amused about Milo's thoughtful expression. Milo, on the other hand, wondered what might keep Makoto from realizing that there was no one better than him.

"What are you thinking about?" she asked.

"I can't understand how you can even consider that there is someone better than me. I'm Scorpio Gold Saint, and thus I'm one of the most powerful men in the world!"

"That's what *all* the Gold Saints say."

"But I *am*. I can destroy a whole mountain with the tip of my finger!"

"As far as I know the others can do that, too."

"Pah!"

"But you're right - in sulking you *are* the all-time number one." Of course this only meant that Milo sulked even more profoundly.

"You're simply irresistible if you look like this." Makoto once more tousled his hair, and Milo enjoyed her attention. "Actually I should work right now and look into the results of Shura's examination, but somehow I'm always slightly distracted since we put up our lab here."

"I don't complain that you don't look after your work."

"I'm astonished that you don't resist when I tousle your hair..."

"Why should I? I like it."

"But this makes it difficult to stop."

"I don't mind. You're free to continue."

"You're impossible! I really should have stayed in Tokyo."

"But then I wouldn't have anyone to tousle my hair..."

"You are absolutely hedonistic!"

"I'm *Scorpio* Gold Saint. Scorpions are supposed to be passionate and sensual."

"Indeed? Ah never mind. At least this means I have something to play with."

"But I'm no toy!"

"But your hair is simply gorgeous."

"I don't consist only of hair," he said suggestively.

"And what would you want to say with *that*?"

"Well..." He smiled at her seductively. "Do I really have to spell it out?" He looked deeply into her green eyes and decided to kiss her.

"Eh, what got into you?" Makoto asked indignantly.

"Well, you looked so inviting."

"I guess you need a pair of glasses, too?" Makoto adjusted her glasses.

"Hey, I'm perfect!"

Makoto gazed thoughtfully at the Scorpio Saint. Okay, he really was cute, but he was also pretty impertinent. To claim she had looked so inviting... Was it her fault that she was so near-sighted?

"Okay, okay, I understood. It's late and I will retire to my rooms now. I need to feed my pets, and I have to do some training as well."

"Yep, I have to work, too."

Milo stormed into his bedroom. Makoto shrugged and went to her analysis of Shura's medical data.

\* \* \*

When Himiko woke up, she sighed. She'd had such a nice dream of her Camus-sama, but unfortunately it had only been a dream. Sniff! Her resolve strengthened that she *had* to conquer him somehow, she washed and dressed and went into the kitchen.

Makoto had fallen asleep at the table and lay within a heap of papers, diagrams and pencils.

"Good morning, Mako-chan!"

Makoto only mumbled something unintelligible and slept on. Himiko searched the cupboards and finally found the ingredients to prepare a strong coffee. Green tea certainly wouldn't help here.

When she smell the coffee, Makoto finally woke up.

"Oh, is it morning already?"

"It is. Rise and shine!"

"Makoto yawned. "After I had three cups of coffee, I might consider to do so."

"Well, help yourself."

While Makoto gulped down the coffee, Himiko searched shelves, cupboards and fridge for something edible.

"Now an opulent breakfast, and I'm content," Makoto declared.

"Well, if you like canned olives, sheep's milk cheese, canned octopus stew, or canned pork with broad beans, I can help you."

"Yikes, do you want to poison me?"

"I don't, but it seems this is Milo's idea of food."

"Slowly but surely I come to understand why the Saints are so resistant against anything.

"I'm sure Camus would have croissants, soft rolls and jam and other stuff like this for breakfast. Even though I wouldn't say no to a proper miso soup with rice either. But somehow I got to like the continental European foods for breakfast, I have to admit."

"I'm starving," Makoto complained.

"I really consider climbing up to Aquarius Temple and asking my Camus-sama to invite me for breakfast."

"Good luck... But we should rather organize some food to store it here so that we don't have to starve in times like this."

"Well, but until we have that I will ask *him*."

\* \* \*

Himiko ran up the stairs to Aquarius Temple and was stopped right at the entrance.

"You again!" she was greeted gruffly. Obviously, her Camus-sama was grumpy in the mornings.

"Good morning, Camus-sama," she managed to say, no small feat when she examined her Prince Charming. At the moment he didn't look so absolutely perfect, though, she had to admit. He was clad in loose dark blue trousers, an open white tunic, and his hair wasn't too well groomed either. But the cutest thing were his 'slippers' which looked like plushy tiger's paws.

"What do you want *now*?!"

"Well, I thought maybe you would consider inviting me for breakfast?"

"No." He turned around and shuffled away.

Sadly, Himiko returned to Scorpio Temple.

\* \* \*

"Let me guess - he wasn't there or he said 'no'?" Makoto said when Himiko returned.

"He simply said 'no'!" A single tear run down Himiko's cheek. "How could he?"

"I told you he's mean, just like all of the other Saints."

"He's not mean. I'm sure he's simply no morning person."

"You *always* find an explanation, do you?"



"Sure. My Camus-sama is perfect, after all."

"Whatever..."

"Can you imagine - for once he didn't wear his Cloth! You really should have seen him..."

"I thought he wore his Cloth all day and all night..."

"Obviously not. He looked totally kakkoi!" Himiko described what she had seen, and Makoto couldn't suppress a giggle.

"Too bad that you haven't taken a photo of this! - But I'm still starving..."

"Why don't you wake Milo and tell him to fetch something. He can do this teleportation stuff, after all."

"Great idea. I wouldn't want to walk all the way to Athens on foot. Okay, I'll wake him."

"Good. I'm waiting."

Makoto went to Milo's bedchamber where she carefully searched the floor for certain buggers. The Scorpio Gold Saint slept peacefully in his bed, and one of his pets sat next to him on the pillow.

Slowly and carefully, Makoto went nearer at the scorpion-free side of the bed. "Hey, wake up, Milo!"

"Mmmmmmm..."

"Wake up!" Makoto shook him lightly, careful not to startle the scorpion.

"I don't want to get up," Milo yawned and turned once more. "Oh, good morning, Marin-chan," he said to the scorpion.

"How can you tell who's who of these buggers?" Makoto asked in amazement.

"Oh, that's easy. Marin-chan has those beautiful eyes, just like her namesake. Okay, she's got some more than the real Marin, but what the heck..."

Makoto examined the beast as closely as she could from the distance. She wasn't even sure she saw any eyes, albeit beautiful ones.

"There, there, Marin-chan. Now it's back to your fellows." Milo put the scorpion into the terrarium. Now that he had gotten up, Makoto could see that he only wore red boxer shorts and a pair of white socks. He stretched lazily.

"Are you finally fully awake?" Her stomach growled audibly.

"Sure. But you seem to be hungry. Why haven't you prepared our breakfast yet?"

"Because I'm not your servant. And there's nothing edible in the kitchen anyway."

"Hey, there should be some cans of olives, some feta, a bowl of tzatziki and some other stuff in the fridge. And there's bread in the cupboard."

"That's not edible!"

"I like it," Milo defended himself.

"But I want some proper breakfast!"

"And what do you consider to be 'proper breakfast'?"

"Well, Himiko said she wants croissants and soft rolls."

"Then she should ask Camus. He likes this kind of stuff."

"She did. He said 'no'."

"Of course, he prefers to eat alone."

"If he always looks so ridiculous in the morning as Himiko described I can perfectly understand it."

Milo laughed. "You mean she saw his cute tiger plush slippers and he let her live? Interesting!"

"I guess he wasn't completely awake yet."

"Probably. I was rarely successful when I tried to invite him for breakfast. He always complained about the garlic in my tzatziki."

"I wouldn't eat stuff like this for breakfast either."

"But if Camus decides to live in Greece, he should respect the Greek cuisine."

"Maybe that's why he's so often in Siberia? - But I'm here, and I demand something edible *now*."

"Why don't you go and buy something that pleases you?"

"Because I would need hours to get down to Athens and back."

"And this means you want *me* to go?"

"Well, that's why I woke you."

"And I thought you wanted to play a little with me..."

"As long as I'm hungry - certainly not."

"Okay, okay... As you won't stop nagging until I comply, I will go." Milo sighed, dug for his clothes which were evenly distributed through the room and dressed. "Now give me your list and some money, and I'll get you your breakfast."

"There you are!" Of course Makoto had already prepared everything.

"Be right back!" Without any further ado, Milo teleported away.

Makoto went back into the kitchen, and the two women waited for Milo's return. Fortunately it didn't take long and he materialized with a heavy bag of food stuffs.

"Here you go, ladies!"

"Thanks." Makoto smiled at him.

"But now you'll prepare me something yummy, too," Milo demanded. "I want some bread with feta cheese and a strong coffee."

"As you wish." Makoto grinned. "At least I didn't have to go shopping by myself, so you're entitled to get something to eat."

"Fine." Milo sat down and waited for his breakfast to be served. Makoto prepared some bread with the sheep's milk cheese and even put some olives on top of it. Milo was delighted. This was something he really could get used to. The only drawback was that she refused to feed him the bits.

**- End of Interlude V -**

## Kapitel 19: File GS04-Pis-T002 - Aphrodite Revisited! Treacherous Beauty

### File GS04-Pis-T002

#### Aphrodite Revisited! Treacherous Beauty

"And what next?" Makoto asked. "Shall we visit Aphrodite's rose garden today?"

"Oh yes! I'll fetch the gas masks." Himiko went to their room and rummaged through the boxes. About ten minutes later, she returned.

"Great. Let's go! I have a question to ask of Aphrodite..." Himiko looked thoughtfully at Milo.

They stormed up the stairs again, and once more Himiko only went past Aquarius Temple because Makoto dragged her along.

"I demand some escalators," Makoto panted when they finally reached the twelfth temple.

"I agree." Himiko sighed and looked wistfully down to Aquarius Temple.

"Hey, it's *this* way!" Makoto tugged Himiko into Aphrodite's realm. "Anybody here?"

"Just a moment!" Aphrodite looked out of the door. He allowed them only a glimpse of a millisecond, but that was enough to see that he wore his hair curled up with large pink hair curlers and that he had some white cream in his face that was decorated with cucumber slices.

"Did you see that, too?" Makoto asked incredulously and cleaned her glasses.

"You mean the alien with the cucumber mask?"

"Yep. - Let's go and look!"

"Do you think that's wise? I prefer to wait here."

Makoto sighed, but complied. They leaned against a column and waited for about 15 minutes, before the door opened again. Now an absolutely beautiful woman (?) man (?) whatever (?) with gorgeous middle blond hair exited.

"Bye-bye, Aphro-dear!" the man (the voice identified the apparition as male) called and disappeared.

"What was that?" Makoto marveled.

"Dunno. But whatever it was, it was really beautiful!"

"Incredibly so!"

"I guess this might be this Misty-person Milo mentioned. If I remember correctly, he's a Silver Saint - we should put him a little higher on our list of Saints-to-be-examined."

"I agree."

"Hello, girls. Here I am. Sorry you had to wait." Now that he had washed off the mask, Aphrodite looked even more beautiful than the day before, if that was possible.

"Hi!" Makoto admired him duly. She couldn't decide whether he or Misty was more beautiful.

"Good morning," greeted Himiko. "You look really pretty today. - Who was the other ...person?"

"Oh, that! That was Lacerta Silver Saint Misty, my significant other."

"He's also really pretty," Makoto said.

"I agree," Aphrodite smiled. "I hope you brought some protective gear if you wish to look at my roses now."

"Sure."

They put on their gas masks and followed Aphrodite who led them to the garden behind his temple. It consisted of hundreds and thousands of red, white and black roses.

"Beautiful!" Makoto said in awe. "Are there only these three colours, or do you have some others, too?"

"Well, I tried to cultivate blue roses, too, but somehow they didn't work."

"But there *are* blue roses, so what was the problem?"

"I wanted to create a deep blue variety that completely disintegrates a victim on impact, but I haven't succeeded yet."

"Sounds like quite a problem you have to solve there."

"That's the point. But I'm working on it."

"By the way, Aphrodite, is there a specific reason why Milo can't stand you? I had the impression there is, but Milo refused to answer."

"Milo?" Aphrodite laughed heartily. "Oh, that's easy. You see, Misty and I wanted to

have a little fun and we dressed up as girls. We went to Athens and sat in a nice little cafe, when Milo and Aiolia showed up, intent on chasing some pretty girls. Well, obviously they didn't realize that it was Misty and me whom they desperately tried to convince of their advantages. You really should have seen their faces when they finally realized who we were..."

Makoto grinned. "I can see that! No wonder that Milo almost explodes whenever he hears your name."

"I guess he still hasn't forgiven me that I couldn't resist to kiss him..."

"Oh-oh... And that happened to Milo who always stresses that he is a 'real man'..."

"Exactly," Aphrodite giggled.

"I think that's perfect ammunition to tease him with!"

"Feel free to do so!"

"Why did Aiolia accompany him on such a tour?" Himiko wondered. "Didn't Milo say that Camus is his best friend?"

"Well, Camus doesn't like to tour the bars. He prefers stylish restaurants and a more refined company."

"Camus really seems to be *perfect* in every respect," Makoto said amused.

"Didn't I say so?" Himiko pulled out one of her pics of Camus and admired it.

"Well, Camus is a bit boring, if you ask me," Aphrodite said. "And the worst thing is that the restaurants he prefers serve only absolutely tiny portions. *Nouvelle cuisine*, or how he calls it. Otherwise I would have tried to set up a 'date' with him, too."

"Is that a hobby of yours?" Makoto grinned.

"Well, once in a while..." Aphrodite tried to look as innocent as possible. "It's too bad that I haven't found any weak spots where Camus is concerned. I think I have to dig a little deeper."

"Would you care to elaborate a little more on my Camus-sama?" Himiko asked. Obviously Aphrodite was a bit more talkative than Shura in that respect.

"What should I say... He's got a great wine cellar, he loves to dine in expensive restaurants, and he hates to be chased by girls. Or boys, which I regret..."

"He knows what he wants, it seems," Makoto observed.

"Indeed! But on the other hand that's what makes him pretty interesting." Aphrodite looked dreamily in the direction of Aquarius Temple.

"Obviously Camus has a lot of fans," Makoto marveled.

"Indeed. And there are likewise lots of people who are pretty envious of him..."

"Tsk," Makoto commented. "It's all his own fault. If he weren't so extravagant, no one would think he's that interesting."

"Poor Milo... He's so desperate to find *any* girl-friend, and Camus is someone who could have ten at every finger but doesn't want them..." Aphrodite laughed. "Maybe you should suggest Milo to behave a little more like Camus."

"I don't think that's a good idea," Himiko cautioned. "Milo already said that he hates to be only second best to Camus, and if we suggest that he should now also *act* like him... No, better not. His poor little ego wouldn't survive. And anyway, my Camus-sama is absolutely unique."

"Milo's poor little ego suffered enough injury in the last time," Makoto giggled.

"Indeed." Aphrodite grinned. "Maybe I should send him some flowers to cheer him up."

"He'll get a heart attack, if you do that," Makoto laughed.

"Exactly that's the point," Aphrodite said cheerfully.

"Hey, he has to fetch us our food!"

"Okay, okay, I won't do it...today."

"Good. We have enough problems to convince him to assist us."

"Well, then use him as long as you find him useful," Aphrodite suggested. "I can still tease him when you're back in Japan."

"Right," Makoto nodded. "Until then I need something to play with."

"And what about me? I want someone to play with, too," Himiko sighed.

"Well, *you* want no one but Camus. It's not my fault that he's difficult to catch."

"There *has* to be a way," Himiko insisted.

"Well, if you don't mind to pay a lot of money for almost nothing to eat, you might send him an invitation to one of the most expensive restaurants in Athens that serves nouvelle cuisine. I'm sure he will come because he usually never finds anyone who is willing to accompany him there."

"You mean this might work?" Himiko saw a small ray of light at the horizon.

"Possibly," Makoto agreed. "Who would go voluntarily into a restaurant that you leave as hungry as you entered it?"

"I will do it!"

"Why am I not surprised...?"

"Hm... But I need some nice stationary - yes, some handmade paper with deckle edge would be perfect... I hope Milo is willing to fetch me some from Athens."

"Ask him!"

"Sure!"

"So, and what's up now?" Makoto asked.

"Let's write a love-letter to Camus... - Okay, okay, just kidding," Aphrodite grinned. "Misty certainly wouldn't like it."

"I can understand if he gets a bit jealous when you flirt so freely with other people."

"It depends. As long as he's around he doesn't mind. He doesn't like it when I flirt around while he isn't there."

"Well, who would like to be deceived that way?"

"Oh, but I wouldn't do that. I love him too much to make him cry."

"I see. But I think we should go now. I'm sure Himiko wants to write her letter."

"Oh, yes!" Himiko beamed.

"Well, tell me how it went," Aphrodite said.

"Sure."

"Promise!" Himiko chimed and danced down the stairs. She almost stormed into Aquarius Temple to invite Camus personally, but Makoto dragged her along.

"Not now!"

"Sigh!"

When they passed Capricorn Temple, Shura intercepted them.

"Well, did you reconsider and decide to visit me after all?" he asked Himiko. He still thought that the petite blonde woman was really cute. She looked at him in puzzlement.



"Why should I - oh, sorry, nope. I just got *the* hint by Aphrodite how to conquer my Camus-sama!"

"By Aphrodite?! Now that's interesting..."

"I'm curious if it will work," Makoto said.

"It will! - Bye, Shura, I need to prepare some stuff..."

They left a slightly disgruntled Capricorn Saint behind.

**- File GS04-Pis-T002 Closed -**

## Kapitel 20: File GS03-Vir-T002 - Shaka! Meditating Or Asleep?

### File GS03-Vir-T002

#### Shaka! Meditating Or Asleep?

"I hate these stairs," Makoto sighed when they finally entered Scorpio Temple. "I'm sure only people who are able to teleport can think of something like this..."

"I agree."

"Oh, Milo isn't at home." They searched the temple, but to no avail.

"But I don't want to walk down all the stairs to go to Athens and buy the stationary," Himiko pondered. "Why don't we pick one more Saint to examine?"

"Whom do we have left on our list?"

"Well, we still need to examine Aries Mu, Cancer DeathMask, Leo Aiolia, Virgo Shaka and my Camus-sama of the Goldies. I mean, of the *cute* Goldies."

"Why don't we go and look who's home? I'll pack some things and of course something to eat, and then we can start."

"We're in temple 8 right now, so we only need to go downstairs. Shaka is 6, Aiolia 5 and DeathMask 4. As far as I know, Mu is currently in Jamir - and my Camus-sama still needs to be convinced."

"Well, as Virgo Temple is nearest, we should go to Shaka first."

"Oh yes, he has such wonderful golden hair," Himiko sad dreamily.

"You're right. I'd love to get it into my hands."

"Maybe we can even convince him to open his eyes!"

They stormed down to Virgo Temple. When they entered it, they found themselves in the colourful garden-dreamland again.

"I really do like it here," Himiko marveled at the myriads of flowers.

"The garden is absolutely beautiful," Makoto nodded.

"If you ask me, Shaka has to be totally lazy. Aphrodite's garden is genuine, but he only creates an - albeit stunning - illusion that needs no care."

"Well, he doesn't seem to do much more than sleep all the day."

"I wonder what he does during the night..."

"Sleep?" Makoto proposed. "He doesn't look as if he would do something else."

"He would make a nice statue. One should only keep him under glass so that he doesn't collect any dust."

"Indeed! It would be a pain to dust him, especially his long mane."

"Do you *always* have to insult the people you visit?" The illusion of the garden disappeared, and they stood in front of Shaka, who floated with crossed legs over his lotus flower of stone.

"Well, not *always*," Makoto told him.

"So why *me*?!"

"Because we didn't want to run through your garden for all eternity without ever meeting you."

"Hm," Shaka made thoughtfully. "I guess you have a point. But I hope you will refrain from taking a picnic this time."

"Actually, we wanted to *invite* you," Makoto offered.

"Yeah, we have tea and cakes and some other yummy sweet things!" Himiko added.

"Invite me? Now this is something different." Shaka landed on his feet. No one had ever invited him to anything before.

"Where can we put our things?"

"Hm. My temple is pretty empty, but what about my garden?" In the next instant they stood on the sun-bathed, flower-covered meadow again, next to two large trees. To their surprise, Shaka didn't wear his Cloth anymore, but a plain white sarong.

"Great!" Makoto tugged a blanket from her bag and spread it on the ground in the shade of the trees. Food and beverages followed.

"You really need to eat a little more," Himiko told the Virgo Saint. "You look far too thin!"

"Exactly," Makoto supported her. "A little more weight would become you better."

"But I mustn't eat too much to keep my body and soul pure. After all, I'm the Man Closest to the Gods."

"No matter how close you are to the Gods, it's unhealthy not to eat properly." Makoto shook her head.

"Yes! Just look at *him* and *him*!" Himiko showed Shaka some of the pics of Milo and Shura (she still needed a couple of good photos of Camus without his Cloth). "They just are in *perfect* shape. You have to work out a little more and eat a bit more to look as perfect as well."

"But I don't need to work out. My cosmo is far more powerful than that of these two together."

"But you would look far better." Makoto offered him a plate with sweets. Tentatively, Shaka took a piece of candy.

"This tastes nice," he said in surprise. "But it's not important how I look like."

"It's a pity if you think it's not important. You do look already striking, but you could look totally gorgeous with a little more meat on your bones," Makoto told him.

"Open your mouth, Shaka!" Himiko ordered. When he complied, she fed him some more pieces of the food. "Yes, be a good boy!"

"Shura was right, Shaka really doesn't move much," Makoto grinned.

"Why should I?" Shaka asked while he munched the bits Himiko fed him. This was something he could get used to, he thought.

"I'm sure you're the laziest Saint around," Himiko giggled.

"Not true! I'm not lazy. I meditate."

"That's clever. And if you keep your eyes closed *all* the time, no one can tell whether you truly meditate or sleep."

"I'm not asleep! That's defamation!"

"Well, it would be difficult to prove the contrary..."

"No one ever surprised me. Isn't that proof enough?" Shaka asked indignantly.

"I'm sure you feel someone approaching even while sleeping."

"Of course," he smiled.

"I thought so..."

"May I have some more tea?" Shaka mumbled between two bites, and Makoto poured him some more of the hot brew.

"You really should join us at Scorpio Temple for a proper lunch," Himiko said.

"I don't think that's a good idea."

"Why not?"

"Gold Saints rarely visit each other."

"But why? Isn't it absolutely boring to stay all alone in these temples?"

"It's tradition. Maybe to prevent fights between us."

"Is there nothing else but fighting on your minds?" Makoto shook her head.

"Well, Aiolia and Milo like to tour the bars in Athens once in a while, but that's not my style."

"Probably it's too strenuous for you, hm?"

"It's *unbecoming*! I'm the Man Closest to the Gods and I don't chase girls like certain other Saints!"

"Indeed? Does this mean you meditate all day and all night?"

"Indeed. And sometimes I teach my disciples meditation and the proper use of their cosmo."

"Obviously you live a fully satisfying life," Makoto said ironically.

"You're right." Shaka smiled like an angel, his golden hair virtually shining like a halo.

"For me this would be far too boring." Makoto played around with the stunning shimmering strands. They were absolutely amazing - long, soft and thick, like silken sunshine.

"Would you please tell me why you are so obsessed with my hair?"

"It's gorgeous!"

"Just don't get any knots into it."

Himiko dug through her bag and tugged out a brush. "I'll take care of it!" She began to work on Shaka's hair, and he endured it stoically.

"Doesn't this hurt?" Makoto asked concerned.

"Well, I will survive."

While Himiko was occupied combing part of the mane, Makoto began to braid small

strands.

"Hey, what are you doing there?" Shaka asked suspiciously.

"I spend my time with meditative exercises."

"Oh." Shaka turned his head into her direction and curiously opened one eye a slit.

"Is something?" Makoto asked.

"Just checking on your ...exercises."

"My progress is thoroughly satisfactory."

"And what exactly do you wish to accomplish?"

"I need something to occupy my hands with - and your hair is so soft and golden... Absolutely perfect!"

"Don't you see my inner values, too? Appearance is transitory..."

"So I appreciate it while it lasts." She continued to braid his strands.

Shaka sighed and opened his mouth to receive another tasty bit from Himiko.

"This is a really relaxing picnic for once," Makoto commented, and Himiko nodded.

"Yep. Why can't my Camus-sama be so compliant?"

"*Your* Camus-sama?" Shaka asked amused.

"You can't talk her out of it."

"I *will* get him, sooner or later!"

"Good luck," Shaka told her.

"That's what I tell her, too..."

"He'll be mine," Himiko sulked stubbornly.

"If you talked about Aiolia, Milo or Shura, I'd agree - but Camus?!" Shaka shook his head. The tiny braids felt strange, he discovered.

"She doesn't like it easy."

"Obviously."

"Pah!"

Makoto giggled. "I'm really curious if you will succeed after all."

"Of course. I will try it with Aphrodite's suggestion."

"You even asked Aphrodite for advice?" Shaka grinned broadly. "Then you have to be truly desperate..."

"She needs all the help she might get."

"I agree." Shaka nodded and was glad he wasn't the target. The young woman seemed to be really persistent.

"And what about you?" Makoto looked at the Virgo Saint.

"What about me?"

"What kind of guy are you?"

"I'm not sure I understand your question. I'm Virgo Gold Saint and the Man Closest to the Gods. I'm the most powerful among the Gold Saints - that's all."

Makoto sighed. "Okay, I understood. No further questions..."

"May I have some more of the food?"

"Sure - there's enough of it, wouldn't you say?" Makoto pointed at the plates on the ground.

"I thought it was nice to be fed..." Shaka looked invitingly at her.

"Ask Himiko. I don't feel like it."

"Well?" Shaka turned to her, and Himiko complied.

"Why can't you be my Camus-sama?" she sighed. "You are cute, yes, but..."

"Do you compare *everyone* with him?"

"Yep, she does. Everything and everybody..."

"Seems to be a hard case."

"Pah!"

"I still don't understand what she sees in Camus. There are so many *cute* Saints..." Makoto wondered.

"That's because he's *perfect*!"

"Camus isn't perfect. *I* am," Shaka told her.

"Can't be," Makoto contradicted. "You're far too thin."

"I'm not *thin*. I'm merely an ascet."

"So you're too thin." She examined him closely. In the white sarong he looked half-starved.

"I *know* I am perfect. I'm not interested in other people's opinions, it's sufficient that I know what I know."

"If you say so - I don't want to fight with you."

"You wouldn't survive it anyway."

"The cuter they are, the meaner they are," Himiko commented. "Except for my Camus-sama, that is."

"He's mean, too," Makoto reminded her.

"He's not mean. He's just a bit grumpy in the mornings."

"Was this everything?" Slightly disappointed, Shaka looked at the empty plates.

"Well, these were only some appetizers. You might assist us a bit in the preparation of a proper meal..."

"Yes," Himiko agreed. "Why don't you go to Athens and fetch *this*?" She gave him a shopping list and a sufficient amount of money. "If you have bought everything on the list, you can join us at Scorpio Temple where we will cook something truly delicious."

"Hm..."

"Hey, we *can* cook!" Makoto said.

"Something like these appetizers?"

"Some things that are even more delicious," she promised.

Shaka looked thoughtfully from the empty plates to the girls and back. "I'm tempted," he admitted.

"It's now or never!"

"Okay. I guess I will do it. - But where do I get all of this stuff?"

"Why don't you try a supermarket?"



"Hm. And where do I find such a thing?"

Makoto looked at the Virgo Saint in utter confusion. "Have you ever left your temple?"

"Of course. I went to India to teach my disciples."

"Am I correct that you didn't visit any larger town?"

"Of course not. Towns are detrimental to meditation."

"Then we have a problem..."

"Can't you take one of us with you to Athens?" Himiko asked. "We could show you."

"I could take both of you with me. This would be no problem."

"Not?" Himiko marveled. Shura and Milo had only been able to take one of them along on their teleport.

"No. Why should it?"

"Well, then let's go!" Makoto described where she wanted to be transported, and Shaka teleported all of them into the town.

"Oops - this is always so surprising..."

"Well, now you have to show me where this 'supermarket' is."

"Follow me." Makoto guided him to a large supermarket. Shaka looked fascinated around. It was so full of people here, so noisy and overwhelming that he wished himself back to the solitude of his temple.

"Come on, Shaka," Makoto urged and tugged him along. "Himiko, get a trolley, please."

The people looked at Shaka in awe. Indian gurus with golden hair weren't that common in Athens. Himiko grinned when she noticed the looks. Maybe they should have asked Shaka to put on some more inconspicuous clothes than the snowy white sarong.

"You'd better stay close to us," Makoto advised him. "We don't want you to get lost." She pulled the first food stuffs from the shelves and threw them into the trolley.

Himiko guarded Shaka on his every step. He drew quite a lot of attention to them. Not very much later, Makoto declared the purchase to be finished. They paid and put the goods into several bags.

"I think we should return to Sanctuary now," Himiko said. "Shaka, can you transport us *and* the stuff?"

"Of course. - Is it always so hectic here?" he marveled.

"Compared to Tokyo it's really quiet here," Himiko grinned. "I think you'd be in for quite a shock if you ever went *there*."

"I prefer the solitude of my temple or my training place in India."

"It's probably better anyway - you draw quite a lot of attention to you!"

"Did I? I haven't noticed."

"You are obviously not of this world..."

"I have the same impression. Another alien..." Makoto giggled when she thought of the Aphrodite-alien with the cucumber mask.

"We are Saints of Athena. Our duties aren't those of ordinary men."

"But some of the Saints are weirder than others..."

"Indeed," Shaka nodded. "Libra Dohko, for example. Fortunately / am just a perfect example of a Saint."

"Of course. As soon as we have managed to feed you up a bit."

"But not too much!"

"A little bit..."

"Well, it depends how your food tastes."

"Bring us to Scorpio Temple, then you will see."

"I have to ask Milo first whether I'm allowed to enter his temple."

"I don't know if he's already back."

"I don't sense him there," Shaka said with a frown.

"Why don't you ask him when he returns?"

"This might get a bit awkward. To enter another temple without permission is a severe breach of protocol."

"Don't panic, we can cope with Milo."

Shaka looked at them with fascination. "How? Milo isn't exactly the weakest among the Gold Saints."

"But he gives in as soon as he is threatened with food withdrawal. Or if he doesn't get our attention anymore..."

"Oh. I see." He shrugged. "Well, then I shall teleport you directly to Scorpio Temple, and you will take care of Milo, should he complain." In the next instant they were in Milo's demesne.

"Fine!" Makoto carried the food stuffs into the kitchen. "Do you have any ideas what you wish to eat?"

Shaka thought a moment. "Can you cook some vegetable curry?"

"No problem. Any appetizers?"

"Some pieces of naan would suffice."

"Naan?" Makoto shook her head. Simply bread, this was boring. "I know something better." She began to assemble the needed ingredients.

"But I'd like to have only some naan..."

"No, no." Himiko shook her head, too. "First you'll get some fried eggplants and a little bit of vegetable tempura, and then we will see..."

"You don't need to cook something complicated for me..."

"Did we invite you or not? Now sit down, be quiet and wait for the things to come!" Himiko seated him at the table, while Makoto fried the vegetables in the tempura dough.

Only a few minutes later, a can of green tea and a bowl of the hors d'oeuvres plus tempura sauce was put in front of the Virgo Saint.

"Eat!" Himiko encouraged him, after she had poured him some of the aromatic green tea. "You eat *only* vegetarian food?" she asked.

"Of course!"

"Did you expect something else?" Makoto asked and fried the vegetable curry in a pan. The basmati rice needed at least ten minutes more, she thought.

"Well, this means 'no o-sashimi'", Himiko sighed and put her banno-bouchou away.

"I guess you have to find another victim."

"O-sashimi is very complicated - at least if one wants to cut it properly and everything."

I will only make it for someone who appreciates it!"

Makoto shrugged. "You'll find someone."

"I really do hope that my Camus-sama likes it."

"I thought he was a fan of the nouvelle cuisine?!"

"Probably he has just to try the Japanese cuisine to find out that he loves it."

"Good luck..." Makoto put the next dish in front of Shaka.

"Oh, thanks. You really wish to feed me up, it seems..."

"Yep." Makoto chewed eagerly as well - after all, she had to try the foods she cooked.

"The next dish is a hot vegetable curry with coconut milk," Himiko announced and served Shaka a steaming plate of rice and vegetables.

"I think it's great that we currently have the ingredients for proper meals and not just fast food," Makoto said. "But what shall we do with the remains?" Of course they had cooked for at least a small army.

"I'm sure Milo will return soon, then the matter of any remains will be solved in no time."

"If you ask me, we shouldn't feed Milo so well. He has put on some weight, and he wasn't so thin in the first place."

"I could try to cook some low-fat stuff like my o-sashimi."

"I'm sure Milo will whine and complain - after all, he is such a fast food fan."

"I really should teach him to appreciate the more refined cuisine." Himiko looked at Shaka's plate. "Some more of the curry?" Before he could answer, the next portion landed on the plate. "Be a good boy and eat everything!"

"If you insist..." By now Shaka felt dangerously stuffed.

"I hope you have some place left for the other main course." Makoto looked at the Virgo Saint.

"I hope I haven't come too late," another voice could be heard. "You cook something really yummy here, I could smell it up to Capricorn Temple!"

"Hello, Shura. Would you like some vegetable curry with coconut milk, tempura and fried eggplants?" Himiko asked.

"Oh, hello Shura..." Shaka blushed. "I'm only here because of the food..."

"I'm almost inclined to believe you." Shura sat down at the table. "So where's the food?"

"I hope you don't mind it's all vegetarian - or would you like me to prepare you some proper o-sashimi?"

"Dunno. How does 'o-sashimi' taste like?"

"O-sashimi is artfully cut and arranged raw fish," Himiko explained and brandished her banno-bouchou. "It's very difficult to prepare properly, and I will only make it if it is truly appreciated."

"Can you cook the fish before cutting it artfully?" Shura asked.

"Philistine! Okay, no o-sashimi for you either..." Himiko sighed. "What about some buri teriyaki? That's baked fish."

"Sounds better. I just wouldn't want to eat raw fish."

"Okay, okay... There are lots of recipes with fried or baked fish, too."

"Fine." He looked expectantly at her.

"And what about me?" Shaka was stuffed, but on the other hand it was so tasty that he simply had to continue.

"Don't panic." Makoto served him the next course and put another plate in front of Shura.

"Smells great!" The Saints cleaned their plates in record time.

"It seems we should cook some more," Himiko proposed and distributed some o-mochi - sweet rice cakes - between the two men.

"I think I'll bake some fruit cakes as dessert," Makoto said.

"Good idea. I will serve some yudeazuki in the mean time."

"I'm really happy to have some guests who appreciate all of my cooking  
."

"Indeed. But they seem to be more gourmands than gourmets," Himiko commented.

"I don't like the real gourmet cuisine anyway. The stuff is complicated and still it isn't filling."

Shura and Shaka munched in silence. Suddenly Milo materialized.

"Huh?! What's this?! I didn't invite you!" he told his colleagues.

"But we have," Makoto said.

"How could you? This is *my* temple!"

"You weren't here, and they were hungry."

"I'm hungry, too..."

"Then be quiet and eat something!" Makoto shoved him onto a chair. "It'll get cold if you don't start now."

"But..." Milo began, but as soon as he opened his mouth, Himiko put a piece of tempura into it, while Makoto saved her cakes from the oven.

Milo didn't even manage to sigh, and every attempt to say something was efficiently blocked by another bite of food.

"When we are fed up with natural sciences and the Graude Foundation, we should consider opening a restaurant," Makoto said thoughtfully.

"Yeah, right here in Sanctuary for all of the thin Saints. I'd love to offer some French cuisine, too," Himiko grinned.

"Low-fat would be better, because they probably wouldn't stay thin," Makoto pointed out and gave Milo's belly an amused look. Nonetheless she distributed her fruit cakes equally between the three Saints. Now she had to find something to convince them to wash the dishes, she thought.

"I hope you will help us to clean up everything," Himiko said with a treacherous smile to the three men.

"Me?!" Shaka asked scandalized.

"You ate the most of the stuff," Makoto told him. "But I don't want to leave you two out, Shura and Milo..."

"Wash the dishes? Us?" Shura looked at her in shock.

"Of course."

"Hey, I only had two or three of the cakes," Milo complained.

"You had six," Himiko corrected him. "And you have put on some weight, so you will have to get rid of it, and washing the dishes is a fine training."

Milo sighed.

"Do they cook such delicious stuff every day?" Shura asked him.

"Mostly they let me fetch some stuff from the take-away. I like this even better, if you ask me."

"That's only because you are a philistine," Makoto chided him.

"If only my Camus-sama would let me cook for him..."

"Well, you have to convince him."

"But he doesn't even let me talk to him!" Himiko sniffed.

"Why don't you cook something and invite him?"

"Hm... Might be an idea." Himiko imagined herself stuffing Camus with appetizers whenever he opened his mouth to throw her out.

"Why don't you start washing the dishes?" Makoto ordered.

"Pardon?" Milo looked at her with puppy eyes.

"I don't know how to wash dishes," Shaka said soulfully. "I never needed to do anything like this."

"It's easy. Pour some water and washing-up liquid and wash the dirty plates, pans and cutlery and then dry the stuff with a towel."

"I refuse to do something debasing like this," Shura moaned.

"You will do it, or there's no dessert for you," Himiko threatened.

"No dessert? What dessert do you have in store?" Shura asked.

"Fried pineapples, bananas and apples with honey."

"Hm..."

"I'll clean the dishes," Shaka said with an angelic smile. "For nothing in the world I would pass on fried pineapples with honey!"

"You have a point," Shura nodded, and Milo concurred, too.

Makoto supervised the Saints, while Himiko fried the fruit pieces in oil. When they had finished, she had produced a large heap of the fried fruits.

"So where's the dessert?" Shura asked eagerly.

"Here. You really have earned it." Himiko passed him a large portion.

Suddenly Camus materialized in Milo's kitchen. "Hi Milo - oh, Shura and *Shaka*?! - I just wanted to remind you of the poker - Hm... This smells *dee-licious*!"

"My Camus-sama!" Himiko squealed and promptly fainted.

"Why does this not surprise me at all?" Makoto sighed.

"Does this happen often?" Shura asked in amazement.

Camus looked at the unconscious blonde. "She's a very strange one, it seems."

Milo grinned. "Well, you came just a tad too late. We've just finished eating."

"It was truly delicious," Shura nodded.

"I'm just here by accident," Shaka claimed. "Actually, I'm still meditating."

"Of course. We had to force you to eat all the stuff," Makoto laughed.

"Sssst! You ruin my reputation," the Virgo Saint hissed.

"By the way, didn't Himiko want to conquer Camus' heart?" Milo wondered. "So why does she always faint whenever he appears?"

"He's just too overwhelming," Makoto shrugged. "But it is nothing to worry about."

"It's flattering that I have such an impact," Camus said with a lifted eyebrow. "At least it means I don't have to chase her away myself."

"Fortunately she's not awake, or she would be really sad to hear this," Makoto said.

"I didn't ask her to chase me. I have more important things to do than date some silly girl."

"Of course," Makoto commented ironically. "And what would that be?"

"Guard my temple and train my disciples. What else?"

"That's all?"

"What else is important?"

"Camus, you haven't tried their cooking yet," Milo told him. "Then you would know the truly important things in life!"

"I agree," Shura nodded.

"Hm." Camus looked at the women. "Do they know how to cook nouvelle cuisine?"



"You might ask Himiko. It's not my type of cooking."

"Currently she's unconscious." Camus looked impassionately at her.

"True. Hm. We should wake her, or she'll be really mad at us when she learns that she missed your visit again."

"It's not *my* fault that she fainted."

"But it *is*!" Makoto contradicted. "She only faints when you show up."

"But I haven't done *anything*" Camus tried to defend himself."

"Maybe *that's* the problem," Milo laughed.

"Huh? And what do you think should I do? Freeze her *before* she falls unconscious?" Camus looked at the blonde girl. He really didn't understand what kind of problem she had. Maybe she should consult a shrink.

"Well, I don't understand it either why she had to fall for you - literally." Makoto shook her head.

"So do I. And the worst thing is - she's not the only one."

"/think this is absolutely unfair," Milo complained.

"Be glad that you aren't chased by hordes of lovesick girlies," Makoto said.

"But I *want* to be chased by lots of passionate girls who'd love to fulfill every single wish of mine..."

"I have some dozens to spare," Camus told him dryly.

"Great!" Milo sighed. "Just imagine - one girl to my left to feed me sweet grapes, another to my right to serve me alcoholic beverages, another two or three to massage me..."

"Dream on," Makoto giggled.

"Hey, I'm at least as desirable as Camus, so why is it so absurd that I'd get dozens of girlies, too, to spoil me a little?"

"Because you are simply not refined enough."

"You are mean, did you know that?"

"Well, you are a shining example..."

Milo sighed and Camus looked from Milo to Makoto and back. "You seem to have quite a lot of fun," he observed.

"Sure," Makoto grinned.

"Hm." Camus examined the still unconscious Himiko and wondered whether she really could cook something edible for him. "And you really don't have any food left?" he asked wistfully.

"It depends. What would you like?"

"Well, some exquisite hors d'oeuvres like some vol-au-vents or other tasty bits..."

"Hm. I could try this," Makoto said with a frown. Camus really liked the complicated stuff.

"Well, then do so."

"Why should I?"

"You are available and you have cooked for the others. Why should you exclude me?"

"Because I don't like you."

Camus stared at her open-mouthed. This was outrageous. *All* girls were after him and would do whatever he wanted them to do - but why did *she* refuse?

Milo smiled smugly. This served Camus right for once. Finally there was a girl who didn't immediately fall for him - and the best thing was: she was his, Milo's!

Makoto looked at the Aquarius Saint's incredulous expression and giggled. He was really cute, she had to admit, but only as long as he didn't say anything.

"Camus, why don't you wake up Himiko? I'm sure she'd cook whatever you wish," Milo suggested.

"I fear she would immediately faint again as soon as she becomes aware of me. It could turn out to be quite tedious." He looked accusingly to Makoto. "But I'm *hungry*!"

"Okay, I'll cook something. But only something small and for Himiko's sake. Milo, why don't *you* try to wake her?"

"As you wish." Milo looked at the engineer and shook her soundly. "Rise and shine!"

"Huh?" Himiko groaned. "Hey, I'm no rag doll."

"Milo, keep in mind that she's not as robust as a Saint is."

"Ooops, sorry. You still alive, Himiko?"

"Uh, I guess so. What happened?"

"The usual," Makoto told her. "Turn slightly left, but very carefully!"

Himiko did as suggested. "Oh! My wonderful, gorgeous Camus-sama," she sighed. "I have to be dreaming..."

"I think I'm going to be sick. I'm not *your* Camus-whatever!" he said gruffly.

"Oh! He actually *talked* to me!"

"I have to get out of here..." Camus turned to the exit.

"No way!" Makoto called. "You won't leave when I cook for you!"

"Huh?!" Camus looked from Himiko to the oven and back. One could see it was a real fight. "Okay, you won. I'll stay," he decided when his stomach growled audibly.

"You are *really* hungry," Makoto observed amused.

"Didn't say so? Otherwise I would have retired to my temple already." Camus frowned when he examined Himiko who openly stared at him with large hearts in her eyes. "I wonder whether this is painful."

"It'll pass..."

"Probably when she faints again," the Aquarius Saint commented dryly.

"You may be right." Makoto grinned and waved her cooking spoon in front of Shaka's face. "He seems to 'meditate' very soundly..."

"Obviously." Milo examined the Virgo Saint amused. "That's why he's never invited to our poker games. His deep 'meditation' makes him always miss his turns."

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## Kapitel 21: Interlude VI - A Powerful Bait! On the Path to Victory?

### Interlude VI

#### A Powerful Bait! On the Path to Victory?

"My Camus-sama is here!" Himiko sighed, totally lost in her thoughts.

"Just ignore her," Makoto advised the Aquarius Saint and served him a plate of the hors d'oeuvres.

"Thanks." Camus gave her a fleeting smile and devoured the appetizers. When he smiled, he looked really stunning, Makoto had to admit.

"I wish I had someone as devoted to me," Shura commented. "You really should appreciate it, Camus."

"What are you all doing here?" Leo Aiolia asked, who had suddenly appeared in the kitchen. "I thought we wanted to meet at my temple at 8 o'clock? I hope you haven't begun and forgotten to notify me?"

"No, we haven't started yet," Milo told him. "My temple merely experiences an invasion."

"The food is delicious!" Camus said while munching with astonishing appetite.

"Isn't he simply divine?" Himiko couldn't put her eyes away from her Aquarius Saint.

"It's getting pretty crowded in here," Makoto complained.

"Indeed. Why don't we move into my living-room and begin our weekly poker game here? After all, we're all together now."

"Why not? I'll just fetch the crates of beer and the cards." Aiolia disappeared in the same instant.

"Beer!" Camus shook his head and frowned disgustedly. "I will fetch some wine to drink."

"But no French wine," Shura demanded. "I want a Rioja."

"Of *course* French wine. I thought of a nice Château La Mission Haut Brion Pessac-Léognan Grand Cru Classé and for starters a nice Château La Blanquerie Bordeaux Supérieur..."

Shura made a face. "As much as I admire you for memorizing these names, I'd prefer

something *tasty*, like a mild Tinto Novel Mallorca..."

"There is nothing like a good French wine," Camus replied. Sometimes he had the impression he was surrounded by philistines. They went into the larger room that served as Milo's living room (Shaka was teleported by Milo, so that he couldn't complain of being left out) when Aiolia returned with three crates of beer and several bags of snacks.

Makoto looked at the Saint assembly. She had never seen so many of them in one place, and one of them was more handsome than the other. Shaka floated idly in a corner; obviously this was his favourite sleeping position.

"Are we going to begin now?"

"I'll fetch the wine - and then I'm still waiting for my food." Camus looked at Makoto, and she hurried into the kitchen. She had almost forgotten to save the vol-au-vents...

When she returned to the living room, Camus ceremoniously opened a bottle of wine and poured it into a beautiful crystal decanter.

"Well, I'll try it anyway," Shura decided. "Pour me a glass of the wine, too."

"Not yet!" Camus told him in shock. "You have to wait at least one hour until the wine is ready to be drunken."

"Aiolia, pass me a bottle of beer!" the Capricorn Saint sighed.

While Makoto served the food, Himiko collected all of her courage, stepped behind Camus and tousled his beautiful indigo blue mane. To her disappointment he still wore his Aquarius Gold Cloth, while the others were dressed far more comfortably.

"Can someone please pluck that off me?" Camus asked exasperatedly.

"Nope." Shura grinned. This was a sight for the gods.

"Why me?!" Camus sighed and stoically continued to eat.

"He doesn't resist!" Himiko said gleefully.

"Is it always so entertaining around here?" Aiolia asked curiously.

"Yep," Shura nodded.

"And why haven't I been told before?" the Leo Saint sulked. "I would have come far sooner if I had known."

"I don't consider this to be exactly enjoyable," Camus commented. "But the food is great."

"Thank you." Makoto served him another helping.

"Is there something left for me, too?" Aiolia asked.

"Do you really expect me to cook *all day long*?" Makoto grumbled. "And I didn't even get anything in return for it!"

"I might invite you to my temple," Aiolia said seductively. "I have some ideas what to give you in return..."

"And what might that be?" Makoto asked him with a grin.

"Well, I can be pretty creative. Ask Marin..."

"I'll keep that in mind."

"It's so unfair," Himiko complained. "Why do I have to lose my heart to the only Saint who doesn't seem to be interested in girls?" She put her arms around Camus.

"I'm really glad I kept my Cloth on," Camus commented.

Shura almost died from laughter. "So you're really not interested in girls at all?"

"I should qualify that to 'I'm not interested in groupies'," Camus grumbled.

Makoto had found some remains in the kitchen that she served Aiolia. One should keep every option open.

"I'm no groupie," Himiko sulked. "I simply decided that you are the coolest guy around and that I want *you* and no one else!"

"Cool' is the word," Shura laughed.

"I don't have time for girls."

"I could cook for you..."

"Hm..."

"It seems this works with all of the Saints," Makoto said amused.

"You see, I can cook pretty well," Himiko promised him.

"Hmmmmmm...."

"You finally seem to have hit his weak spot," Makoto grinned.

"That would be marvellous!" Himiko gave Camus a kiss on his head (this 'tiara' was really annoying!). "You'll see!"

"Iiiiiecks!" Camus squealed.

"This is better than any sitcom," Shura found.

"Indeed," Milo agreed. "I wonder who's steadfaster - Camus or Himiko?"

"Wanna bet?" Shura asked.

"Sure! 10000 Drachmas on Camus!"

"I bet on the girl."

"Me, too," Aiolia said. "What about you, Shaka?"

A slight snore was the answer.

"I see."

"I almost feel sorry for him." Makoto gave Camus a compassionate look.

"Why, thank you," he said dryly.

"He'll be mine, *mine*, MINE!" Himiko declared.

"I think he's well advised to keep his Cloth on," Aiolia laughed.

"As long as she doesn't fetch a can opener," Makoto giggled.

"I really wonder why he fights her so hard," Aiolia wondered. "I would invite her to stay with me anytime."

"Hey, but I have the older rights," Shura protested. "I saw her first!"

"No chance, guys, I only want *him*!"

"Well, if you continue to strangle me, the matter will be irrelevant anyway." Camus tried to loosen her grip around his neck.

"I thought it's difficult to kill a Gold Saint," Makoto wondered.

"I'm not sure if I'd rather welcome death before she gets her hands on me."

"You're mean!" Makoto told him.

"I'm a perfectly nice girl," Himiko sulked. "Just let me show you *how* nice I can be!"

"I would think about it, seriously," Aiolia advised him.

"Yeah, go for it, Camus!" Shura added.

"Don't! If I lose the bet, I'm broke!" Milo contradicted.

"Hm..." Camus said thoughtfully. "It depends. Do I get a part of the winnings?"

"Why not?" Shura laughed.

"I'm tempted. There's this wonderful expensive Château Latour Pauillac I wanted to buy..."

"You would really let yourself be bought for a bottle of wine?" Himiko frowned.

"If you'd know the wine, you would do it, too."

"Graaa! I don't want you if you only give in to get the money for a bottle of wine!"

"She doesn't know what she wants, it seems," Aiolia commented.

"I have to remember this," Camus said thoughtfully. "It might be a way to get rid of all of the silly girls."

"What?! No! Not with me!" Himiko grumbled. "I'll get you, you'll see!"

"Sorry, you lose, Camus," Aiolia grinned.

"/lose," Milo complained. "I'll go hungry for the next two months if I lose that bet."

"First, you haven't paid anything for your food for the last days, and second, you are on diet, effective immediately," Makoto told him.

"Diet? Why should I be on diet?"

"Because you put on weight - especially around the middle."

"What?!" Milo looked down to his belly. "My body is *perfect*!"

"*Was*," Makoto said mercilessly. "You put on at least two kilograms."

"Can't be!"

"You're lucky that our Cloths always fit, no matter the size of the wearer," Aiolia commented.

"*You* have put on weight, too, since Marin cooks for you," Shura pointed out.

"Not true," Aiolia shook his head. "I have quite a lot of additional training since then."

"But not on the training place, huh?" Milo laughed.



"There are no regulations where exactly we have to train..."

"Admit it, Milo, you would love to ...train like Aiolia, but you just haven't found any willing ...training partners yet," Shura teased him.

"Pah!"

"When Milo hears 'training', it only means for him that he teaches his scorpions tricks," Makoto mused. "I never saw him train otherwise."

"I asked him to accompany me to Siberia for some serious training, but he only complained it was too cold there," Camus said. "By the way, would you please keep your hands to yourself, Himiko?"

"Oh, Camus-sama, as long as you have this Cloth on there's nothing I can do anyway," she sighed.

"Don't expect me to abandon my most important means of defense against you!"

Makoto giggled. It was so funny - as if petite Himiko was any danger for the mighty Aquarius Gold Saint.

"What do you fear anyway?" Aiolia wanted to know.

"Hm." Camus frowned. If he was honest, he hadn't actually thought about this up to now.

"Perhaps he fears for his reputation," Makoto suggested.

"Probably," Aiolia grinned. "I never worried about my reputation - at least not in this respect. I would worry far more if one would not take me for the proper *Leo* Saint."

"Oh, I see - you mean because a lion has his harem - er, pride?" Makoto said amused.

"Sure. Poor Virgo Saint Shaka..."

"He sleeps anyway," Shura commented after a short gaze in the floating man's direction.

"Are the Saints truly living up to their zodiac signs?" Makoto asked curiously.

"It depends. With Camus I'm not so sure - he should be Icicle, not Aquarius, but most of the other Saints are pretty fitting," Aiolia explained.

"Fascinating!" Makoto said. "I really have to look into my horoscope book, maybe then I can understand you all better." Recently she had bought such an interesting book, *Love and Life Under the Stars*, which told her who fit to whom and all the other important things.

"Shouldn't Aquarians be friendly, sociable and so on?" Himiko wondered (Makoto had read all the important passages about her zodiac sign aloud to her, of course).  
"Camus, you really should act more according to the books!"

"Which reminds me - two Aquarians don't fit together," Makoto lectured.

"I don't mind. I want him and I will get him!"

"Don't I have a say in this, too?" Camus frowned deeply.

"*No!*" it came simultaneously from Himiko, Shura and Aiolia.

"Then it is almost settled. And this horoscope stuff is rubbish anyway," Makoto stated.

"This means I will move in with you tonight," Himiko declared.

"*What?!*"

"Great! This means I'll have more space here," Makoto said.

"I will not allow anyone to move in with me. Ever!"

"No chance, buddy. I said about the same thing," Milo told him.

"Don't say you don't like it that we live under your roof?" Makoto asked.

"Of course not! My temple is a real mess because of you."

"Fine. Then we will leave you both tomorrow."

"Pardon? And who will cook for me???" Milo wanted to know.

"If I remember correctly, you said you'd prefer fast food anyway..."

Milo sulked. "You are really mean, did you know?"

"But you won't move in with me," Camus said.

"Wrong. I *will*," Himiko contradicted.

"Somebody save me..."

"Only if I get something adequate in return." Makoto smiled at the Aquarius Saint.

"And that would be...?"

"Money, of course. What else should I want?"

"I'm doomed."

"No, you're *mine*!" Himiko beamed at him, and Camus looked desperately at the other Saints. But they only grinned back impertinently.

"I'll just pack my things and we can go, my beloved."

Silently, Camus took the decanter with the rich, ruby coloured wine and took a deep sip. To hell with the fact that it hadn't aired long enough.

"It seems you don't have any choice." Shura grinned broadly.

"I'm a single, and I do love this kind of lifestyle!"

"Your single times seem to be over now..."

"Help!"

"Hm... I cannot allow it that Himiko goes alone," Makoto said suddenly. "She'll only do silly things."

"But he is *mine* alone!" Himiko declared.

"Tell me it's only a nightmare - now there are *two* girls who want to move into my temple?" Camus squealed.

"You won't leave me alone," Milo protested. "I will join you, too."

Unfortunately 'Milo' usually meant Milo plus at least a dozen obnoxious scorpions, and this was too much for the Aquarius Saint.

"He fainted," Makoto complained, "and we haven't even discussed the terms of our move properly."

"Hm..." Himiko looked at Camus and decided to kiss him. It had worked with Sleeping Beauty. The success was overwhelming, and Camus' hair virtually stood on end.

"*Waaaaah!* She took advantage of me while I was out cold!"

"You seem to have some things in common after all," Makoto commented.

"I don't have anything in common with *that*!"

"Why don't you two move into *my* temple?" Shura asked. He would love to get such delicious food every day.

"I wouldn't mind, but *she* wants to go to *him*," Makoto told the Capricorn Saint.

"Well, what about you let her move in with Camus while you stay with me? Then you

would still be neighbours," Shura pointed out.

"Yes, and I would have my Camus-sama for me alone."

"No! Don't leave me alone with her!"

"I don't understand why you're so afraid of little Himiko..."

"She threatens my reputation!"

"Au contraire, mon ami," Aiolia grinned. "This would finally put an end to the rumours that you and Milo are a couple..."

"I'm not so sure about that - especially when he really decides to move in, too..."

"You may be right - this could be the start of a whole new selection of rumours... Orgies, orgies!" Aiolia almost burst from laughter. "Mind if I join you then?"

"Me, too!" Shura added.

"I won't let anyone but my Camus-sama touch me," Himiko declared.

"Then you'll be totally safe..." Camus said.

"So *is* there any truth in the rumours about you and Milo?"

"*No, it isn't!*"

"Who believes it..."

"Pah! I want only girls. Lots of them!" Milo told him.

"Who asked *you*?" Aiolia grinned. "It's well known that you never say no."

"Or rather that he *would* never say no if he had the chance," Shura added.

"You're only envious of my good looks and power!" Milo sulked, but of course he was simply ignored.

"Oh, I'm so excited," Himiko said. "I'll move in with my gorgeous, wonderful Camus-sama!"

The Aquarius Saint hung his head.

"I almost pity him," Makoto commented. "Almost."

"Just don't you dare threaten my reputation as the greatest womanizer of Sanctuary," Aiolia warned the Aquarius Saint.

"I don't think Camus would want a reputation like this," Makoto giggled.

"Anyway, I would never allow him to have another girl beside me. He's mine *alone*."

"She sounds as if you were already married," Milo grinned.

"Which reminds me - can't we ask the Pope to marry us?" Himiko wanted to know.

"I need to get out of here - now!" Camus said desperately.

"I'll follow you wherever you go," Himiko declared.

When he saw Camus' fatalistic grimace, Milo almost died from laughter and didn't think of the danger of losing his bet.

"It's such a pity that we won't find a way to please *everybody*," Makoto commented.

"Why don't we simply take a vote?" Himiko suggested. "As Camus is in the minority, everything is settled immediately."

"You wouldn't dare..." Camus began, but was interrupted by a pitiful moaning that came from the corner where Shaka floated.

"Oh, it seems Shaka woke up," Makoto discovered.

The Virgo Saint looked dangerously green and held his stomach. "My belly aches!"

"You ate too much."

"But it was soooo delicious," Shaka groaned.

Himiko still didn't let go of Camus, but hugged him happily and tried to pry off his tiara.

"I feel soooo sick," Shaka whined.

"Poor Shaka." Makoto patted the Virgo Saint.

"He really sounds awful," Aiolia sighed and closed his eyes. Only seconds later, a new Saint appeared in a green light effect. He wore civil clothing and had long, lavender hair that was tied together in a ponytail.

"Hups, where did this guy come from?" Makoto examined the newcomer in surprise.

"What's up?" Aries Gold Saint Mu asked.

"Hi Mu," Shaka greeted him weakly. "I've got a tummy ache..."

"You should ask an entrance fee, Milo," Shura said with a grin.

"Wanna join the poker game?" Milo asked.

"Poker? I'm sure I remember that Pope said you should refrain from such base entertainment," Mu replied.

"Mu, can't you heal my aching tummy?" Shaka asked him pitifully.

"Can you really cure him?" Makoto asked curiously.

"Of course I can. I'm a Healer. If I may introduce myself - I'm Mu of Jamir. And who would you be?"

"My name is Makoto."

"And I'm Himiko, Camus' girl-friend."

"She's *not* my girl-friend!"

"Ah, yes. I'm Camus' fiancée."

The Aquarius Saint grumbled something unintelligible.

"Now that's interesting," Mu said with an amused grin. "I always thought Camus was a dedicated single."

"*I am!*"

"You *were*," Himiko contradicted with a sweet smile.

"He doesn't have the slightest chance," Shura told him.

"Nope," Aiolia grinned broadly.

"You're right," Mu nodded. "I think it's about time for him that someone saves him from his voluntary isolation."

"Look who talks," Camus growled.

Makoto circled Mu curiously. This day was so interesting - so many cute Gold Saints...

"Oh, Camus-sama, you're sooo cute when you act angry," Himiko sighed and played with one of the long, bushy strands of hair that framed his face. He was so stunningly beautiful, she thought. If only he would get out of this impractical armour.

"You *always* think he's cute, no matter what he does..."

"Of course. That's because he's absolutely *perfect*."

"*Perfect?* Camus?! Are you talking about the same person I know?"

"She's 100 percent serious," Makoto said and continued to watch Mu.

"She should observe him for one or two days, then she would be cured of her faulty opinion."

"I don't think so," Milo told him. "Camus even put her into a Freezing Coffin, and she *still* adores him."

"A Freezing Coffin?" Mu was perplexed. "And how did she get out of it? Not even a Gold Saint is able to get out of Camus' Freezing Coffin."

"I thawed her." Makoto tugged at Mu's lavender coloured hair.

"Hey, what are you doing with my hair? - Er... You *thawed* her? *How?*"

"With a hair-dryer of course. Is this colour genuine?"

"A *hair-dryer*?! - Of *course* is the colour genuine!"

"I never saw a colour like this anywhere," Makoto was highly intrigued.

"Well, I belong to the last descendants of Atlantis," Mu told her.

"Oh, *really?*" She admired him duly.

"Really."

"Why doesn't anyone help me and free me from this menace?" Camus asked exasperatedly.

"I still have a tummy ache," Shaka whined and held his stomach.

"Okay, okay..." Mu stepped towards him and touched Shaka's belly. A golden glow surrounded his hand and spread over Shaka. Suddenly the Virgo Saint's face lit up.

"It's gone! I'm fine again! Thank you, Mu!"

"Can't you cure me of her, too?" Camus pointed at Himiko who gleefully tousled his indigo curls.

"I'm sorry, this isn't my job," Mu grinned. "But why are you so opposed to her anyway?"

"Because... - Well, just *because!*"

"Very concise," Makoto commented.

"I just want to be left alone."

"Poor Camus! How could fate punish you so harshly," Makoto giggled.

"Yes - why can't fate punish *me* this way?" Milo complained.

"I guess you don't deserve it."

"That's unfair! I would love to have a willing girl at hand..."

"And what would you do with her?"

"Oh, I have some wild and passionate ideas..."

"And where did you get them from?" Makoto asked with a broad grin. Shura and Aiolia followed the discussion highly amused.

"I'm a Scorpio. Scorpions are known for their deep passions and dark desires - and of course for their interesting ideas in the erotic department..." He smiled seductively at her.

"Hm. I'm not so convinced," she told him.

"You never gave me a real chance," Milo complained.

"Himiko, why don't you put your attentions to Milo? I'm sure *he* would appreciate them," Camus suggested.

"But he isn't *you*, my beloved!"

"It's fascinating how different they are," Makoto stated and looked from Camus to Milo and back.

"Indeed." Mu nodded sagely. "It's almost unbelievable that they are such good friends."

"Probably their interests simply don't clash and so they don't need to argue."

"I still think it's unfair that all the girls run after Camus, but not after me," Milo sulked.

"I agree," Shura nodded.

"I feel so sorry for you," Makoto giggled.

"I feel far more sorry for *me*," Camus said.

"If I only knew *why* you feel so sorry..."

"I want my quiet and solitude, like the cold of the icy plains of Siberia..." Camus looked



wistfully in the distance, as if he could see the snow covered Siberian landscape there.

"Hm." Mu frowned while looking at Camus. "Why don't you simply give in to her? Then you would immediately be rid of all of your other admirers. And don't tell me you can't manage *one* girl?!"

Camus vigorously shook his head. "Just imagine, what she would do to me! She would supervise my every single step, would complain whenever I came late from my training..."

"...would cook delicious meals for you," Himiko whispered seductively.

"Hm... You would *really* cook for me?"

"I would do even more for you..."

"It seems all of you Saints don't get enough to eat," Makoto laughed. "Why else should he waver when he otherwise struggles so hard."

"Well, I wouldn't think twice if someone made me such an offer," Shura said. "Makoto, you look like someone who loves to cook, too - and you wanted to move out of Scorpio Temple. I have some space left for you at Capricorn Temple."

"Well, it's true that I love to cook - but only for people who deserve to savour it."

"And you think I do not deserve it?"

"I haven't seen any hint that you do."

"How can I prove it to you? Tell me!" Shura looked at her with puppy eyes.

"I expect your creativity."

"I will create a statue of you to adorn my temple with it."

"Should I take this as a compliment?"

"Of course!" Shura finally wanted a girl all of his own, too. It was unfair that Aiolia was the one who always got the girls - and Camus could, too, if he just wanted to.

Makoto grinned. "I think I will wait until I heard all of the offers and could examine them."

"You have to stay with me," Milo demanded.

"I have? Why?"

"Because I have the older rights."

"You have *what*?"

"You heard me." Milo looked at her. "And haven't I been absolutely nice to you all the time?"

"No," Makoto replied.

"*No*?! Pah. I *was* nice to you. Just compare my attitude to Camus."

"He doesn't count. He's always mean."

"He isn't," Himiko protested. "He's gorgeous, perfect and simply divine!"

"If I knew what to do how to convince you of the contrary," Camus sighed.

Makoto laughed. "It seems that no one ever gets what he or she wants."

"Isn't it always like this?" Mu said unctuously.

"That's why I keep to my meditation," Shaka said. "Who needs carnal desires anyway?"

"I do," Aiolia laughed.

"Isn't meditation boring after a while?" Makoto asked. "When I try it, I always get cramps in the calves and my legs go to sleep."

"Then you're doing it wrongly. Shall I teach you how to meditate properly?"

"So you're after girls, too, after all," Shura grinned. "Nice pick-up line. Mind if I borrow it once in a while?"

"I'm willing to try everything," Makoto said with a grin, too.

"I don't get it - what has he that I don't have?"

"Wonderful, long, golden hair and beautiful eyes."

"Pah. He's blond - so what?"

"Blond is beautiful," Makoto stated.

"If I dye my hair blond, would you consider to join me *then*?" Shura asked, almost a bit desperately.

"It would look a bit strange, I think. And anyway, I want to keep all the options open for me."

"I still think you should stay with me," Milo grumbled.

"And I have still some spaces open in my harem," Aiolia offered.

"Thanks, but no thanks. I hate to share," she told the Leo Saint.

"Well, you wouldn't have to share *me* with a bunch of scorpions," Shura pointed out and gave Milo a nasty grin.

"Shura, you're mean! I thought being mean was *my* department!"

"In love and war all means are allowed."

"We'll see who will be victorious," Makoto said gleefully. "I think this is all too funny."

"Indeed," Mu said amused. Shura and Milo were obviously still in dire need of a girl-friend. He only wondered whether Camus would remain steadfast if Himiko could really cook.

Makoto examined all of the Saints in the room with great interest. She wondered whom she might choose, but this wasn't easy as they were all really cute (except for Camus, whom she couldn't stand, but he was Himiko's anyway).

"Don't you dare mock me," Milo grumbled. "I'm the most eligible guy here. I'm dangerous, I'm good-looking, I'm strong - what else do you need?"

"You aren't conceited at all," Makoto said ironically.

"Of course not."

"Why should I ever concern myself with you? You are mean, nothing else."

"Not true! I'm perfectly handsome, powerful and very manly," he declared and gave her a winning smile.

"Do you really want to know what I think of you?"

"Of course." Milo looked at her and waited for her praise.

"I think you are chauvinistic, mean, greedy, conceited, a philistine and slovenly."

Milo simply gaped at her. This had to be a bad joke... Shura laughed.

"So this means it's settled and you move in with me?"

"No."

"*What?*"

"I haven't decided yet."

"After all what you said about *him*?!"

"Well, I know his faults - but what about yours?"

"I don't have any faults of course!"

"Just like Milo, hm?"

"Well, I think this means you should move into Capricorn Temple to get to know me better."

"Hm..." Makoto examined Shura from head to toe. He had a point. The Capricorn Saint put on a smug smile and looked at Milo. "It's a really difficult decision."

"You had several days to observe Milo, and now it's my turn."

"I guess you're right. Everybody has a right to a fair chance."

"You mean you'll do it?"

"Yes, yes..."

"*Yippieh!*" Shura beamed like a nova, while Milo sulked.

**- End of Interlude VI -**

## Kapitel 22: File GS05-Cap-T002 - Close Examination! A Heart for Capricorns?

### File GS05-Cap-T002

#### Close Examination! A Heart for Capricorns?

"I won't let you simply go!" Milo protested.

"Why not?" Makoto wanted to know.

"Because you belong *here*!"

"Who says this?"

"Me. Who else?"

"I see." Makoto looked at him in amusement.

"If you really decide to join Shura in Capricorn Temple, I will not let you stay there alone. I'll move in, too."

"Didn't you want to save me from Himiko?" Camus asked desperately.

"When I thought about it, it occurred to me that you would only ice my poor pet scorpions. Shura never had any problems with them."

"That's because they simply ran straight through my temple towards Camus' and never actually bothered me," Shura pointed out.

"Why don't you stay here in *your* temple?" Makoto wondered. "Wouldn't your pets like it best in their usual environment?"

"I refuse to be bereft of the food you provide."

"You are greedy!"

"Your duty is to defend Scorpio Temple," Shura reminded him.

"Pah. There are seven other temples before anyone reaches mine."

"Why is it always *me* who is supposed to get rid of all the enemies?" Mu complained.

"That's because you protect the first temple," Milo grinned.

"Pardon? Mu is the one who spends all of his time in Jamir!" Aiolia shook his head.

"Be glad that DeathMask always wants to expand his collection and never lets anyone through who has hostile intent. Well, and sometimes even others who aren't enemies..." Milo said.

"Hm, have you already encountered any enemies since you are here?" Makoto inquired.

"Well, not in the last time," Aiolia admitted.

"But we're well prepared," Shura said with conviction.

"Indeed. If anyone tries to attack my temple, he's toast," Aiolia promised.

"You mean if you were actually guarding it instead of chasing girls down in the town," Shura teased.

"You're only envious because I'm more successful with women than you are. And anyway, I can move at lightspeed as you should know."

"Even when you're in deep clinch with Marin?" Shura teased.

"I seriously doubt it," Milo laughed.

"I doesn't sound so difficult to conquer Sanctuary," Makoto pondered. "One only needs to wait until all the Saints are occupied otherwise - and this seems to be the case pretty often!"

"Hey, I'm mostly in my temple," Milo said. "And I'm very dangerous to boot!"

"If you say so - I will pack my things now," Makoto declared.

"Me, too," Himiko chimed. "And then my Camus-sama and I will be happily together until death doth us depart..."

"Happily, huh?" Aiolia almost burst from laughter when he noticed Camus' desolate mien.

"Sure!" Himiko beamed at him and tousled Camus' hair.

"She seems to be happy enough for both of them," Shura grinned.

"Don't worry, I will convince him that I only want the best for him!"

"Why can't there be a major attack at Sanctuary so that I can die a meaningful and heroic death right now?" Camus sighed.

"You're a coward," Makoto accused him. "Preferring death in battle instead of facing Himiko!"

"It would be at least a clean death." Camus tried to shake off Himiko, but she kept her arms around him like a vise. "I hope she gets off when I want to go to the bathroom..."

"Fat chance," Makoto grinned.

"My life is ruined."

"Let's put it like this - it's enriched by one thing..."

"Why can't she enrich someone else's life?!"

"Dunno. It simply hit you."

Camus sighed and laid his head on the table.

"I can bear to watch this any longer," Makoto said. "Let's go, Shura."

"Help!" Camus muttered.

"Nope, pal!" Shura grinned and teleported Makoto and him to Capricorn Temple.

"I think I will leave now, too," Mu said. "There's this broken Hercules Cloth, and Albiore just brought me the Cepheus Cloth to fix... He told me the little Andromeda Saint he trained shattered it with one hit. I would never have believed this possible, especially not by a Bronze Saint!"

"Well, and I have to watch Shura so that he can't do anything unbecoming to my Makoto," Milo said and fetched his terrarium before he teleported after Shura.

"I shall return to my temple to continue my meditation," Shaka said soulfully and disappeared.

"Hey, and what about the poker game?" Aiolia protested. "Ah well, with Milo and Shura gone, we'd better move it to next week..."

"You can't leave me here alone," Camus pleaded.

"Sure I can. Marin and Shaina will be eagerly waiting for me... So why don't you enjoy the evening, too?" With a broad grin, Aiolia disappeared as well.

"Oh, my Camus-sama, now it's only you and me!" Himiko sighed, and hearts blinked vividly in her eyes.

"Exactly that's what I feared..."

\* \* \*

Curiously, Makoto inspected Capricorn Temple. Everything was astonishingly clean and totally tidy - and even the stone floor gleamed as if it was freshly polished.

Makoto was impressed.

"Hi, Shura, where can I put my pets?"

"In your temple, what did you think? - What are you doing here anyway?" The Capricorn Saint frowned.

"Moving in of course. I won't let you take Makoto and vanish with her."

"You are quite persistent. Is there no way to get rid of you?" Makoto wondered.

"Not this easily! I'm a man and I don't let any woman simply leave me!"

"Pardon?! We have never been together, if I may remind you."

"Pah. You lived in my temple, didn't you?"

"So what? Himiko lived there, too."

"Himiko is not eligible. She's after Camus, and I wouldn't want any girl who's involved with my best friend."

"Hm... What would be if I told you that I also think that Camus is my kind of guy?"

"I wouldn't believe you. You already told me that you don't like him."

"What if I told you that I'm already taken?" Makoto asked.

"I'm better than any other guy," Milo told her. "After all, I'm Scorpio Gold Saint."

"And *I'm* Capricorn Gold Saint and if I might remind you - Makoto chose me over you."

"That's right." Makoto smiled.

"Your cruel words tear my heart like a butcher's knife," Milo declaimed.

Makoto giggled and put an arm around Shura who grinned broadly.

"Sorry, you lose, Milo," he commented.

Milo gaped at Makoto. "You hug him?! You who didn't want to kiss me?! That's soooo unfair."

"I think it's perfectly alright," Shura smiled.

"And what's up next?" Makoto wanted to know.

"Wanna see my stamp collection?"



"Sure!"

"Great! I have a lot of very nice stamps with a wide variety of motives..."

"This is the oldest pick-up line in the world," Milo muttered incredulously. "I can't believe that she falls for *this*!"

Makoto grinned at him. "Well, I have a stamp collection, too..."

"Really?" Shura looked at her with doubled interest.

"Yep. Mainly stamps with flowers, animals and landscapes."

"Great! You have to show them to me."

"But they are in my apartment in Tokyo."

"No problem. We could teleport there."

"Cool. But first I'd like to see your collection."

"Follow me." Shura led her into another room and rummaged through the drawers of a large cupboard.

Milo followed them. "By Athena, it's even worse - he really *has* a stamp collection," he grumbled.

"Of course. He wouldn't lie about something like this, I'm absolutely sure," Makoto said.

"You bet..." Milo had tried this pick-up line himself more than once, and he didn't have a stamp collection. Unfortunately most of his targets weren't amused when he had to admit that he maybe did not have a stamp collection, but told them that certainly his pet scorpions were a nice collection, too.

Makoto sat down on a chair. "Now show me your stamps, please. I'm really curious."

Shura presented her a heap of at least two dozen albums. "Here we go."

"So many? Wow!" Makoto took the first album which was bound in dark blue leather.

"These are Spanish and Portuguese stamps with flower images," Shura told her.

Milo sat down on a sofa. This promised to be really boring, but he wouldn't give Shura the satisfaction to teleport away.

"Don't wrinkle the cushions!" Shura told him with a frown.

Makoto browsed carefully through the albums. Each stamp was meticulously placed

and aligned with the others. "This is a great collection," she said.

"Thanks," Shura smiled. "Milo, don't you dare put your feet on the table!"

Milo sighed and sat down properly. This was getting more and more uncomfortable here.

"If you really intend to stay in my temple, you have to adhere to some rules," Shura lectured. "First - everything has to be kept tidy and clean. Second - if you take something from its place you have to put it back exactly where it was..."

"Yes, Mom..."

Makoto laughed when she saw Milo's grimace as Shura added some more guidelines.

"I prefer everything to be well kept," Shura apologized.

"I won't complain," she grinned. "What would you say if I'd prepare some food?"

"Sure," Milo beamed. "Always."

"I'd be delighted," Shura agreed.

"Where's your kitchen?"

"There." Shura led her into the kitchen of his temple. Like all of the other rooms and halls it was perfectly clean and well outfitted. He showed her where to find ingredients, tableware and cutlery, and Makoto went to prepare some perfectly designed exquisite hors d'oeuvres.

"That's *perfect*," he said in awe. "Do you need something else?" He made a note on the list of his storage room that one package of bread and one package of cheese needed to be resupplied ASAP.

"A bottle of wine would be a good idea."

"What about some Rioja?" According to the list there were four bottles in the storage room.

"Perfect. Where do we eat?" She arranged everything nicely on an elegant plate. "It might be a good idea if you would lay the table."

"Of course." Shura led them into a large dining room that was empty except for a round table with twelve high-backed chairs and a cupboard containing dishes and cutlery.

"Looks like King Arthur's Round Table, if you ask me," Makoto said in amusement.

"Well, Shura's famous attack is Excalibur, after all. Although I haven't seen it myself

yet."

"If you'd see it, you would know how to counter it," Shura said. "After all, no attack works twice against a Gold Saint. But I admit it - I'm a fan of King Arthur's..." Shura arranged the dishes on the table. They were simple, yet elegant, like everything in Capricorn Temple.

"Nice tableware," Makoto admired.

"Pah! Paraphernalia!"

"You wouldn't know style if it hit you right in the face!" Makoto accused the Scorpio Saint.

"Pah, if you like 'style' so much, why haven't you taken to Camus?" Milo snorted.

"Because Himiko wants him all for her own."

"It's always best when *one* man and *one* woman pair up," Shura nodded sagely.

"I refuse to be left out," Milo protested.

"But this wasn't what I meant - it's just that I let Himiko have Camus so that I can keep all of the other Saints..."

"*What?*" Milo shouted. "I refuse to be one among many!"

"As long as you stay here with me I'm content," Shura told her with a winning smile.

"Graaa!" Milo grumbled.

"Awwww..." Makoto tousled Milo's stunning blue-violet mane, and the Scorpio Saint's smile returned.

"And what about me?" Shura wanted to know.

Makoto complied and tousled Shura's hair as well. Now the Capricorn Saint grinned like a cheshire cat, too.

"Somehow you are all cute," Makoto found and tousled both of them simultaneously. Milo purred, until he noticed what the girl had said.

"I'm not cute!" he protested.

"But you are!" She sat down in his lap. "And now be quiet." To her surprise, he complied.

"Hey, but what about me? This is my temple!" Shura sounded so poutily that Makoto grinned and went to him for a change.

"Why don't you continue to put your attention to me? I feel severely neglected," Milo said. "After all, I'm the most powerful among the Gold Saints."

"Pah! I'm at least as powerful - and furthermore, this is *my* temple!"

Milo sulked visibly.

"Don't pout!" Makoto giggled. "I can't bear to see you sulk."

"That's why he does it in the first place," Shura pointed out.

"Do you think I could convince you to spend the rest of the night with me?" Milo smiled seductively at her.

"I don't believe it - you're in my demesne and try to seduce my guest?!" Shura was pretty peeved.

"Pah! I have the older rights anyway, and we could return to Scorpio Temple..."

"It's so cool that you two fight for me," Makoto said amused.

"Well, you haven't answered my question. *Would* you like to accompany me tonight?" Milo asked her.

"This would be pretty impolite, don't you think?"

"Just what I said," Shura nodded. "And by the way, you haven't seen all of my stamp collection yet." He fetched the albums and put them in front of him onto the table. "Well?"

Makoto chuckled. They seemed to be all alike... She decided to take place in Shura's lap so that he could show her the remainder of his stamp collection.

"Oh, fishes," she exclaimed.

"Fishes only remind me of Aphro," Milo grumbled.

"They are from the German Democratic Republic," Shura lectured, totally ignoring Milo. "The GDR published a lot of very colourful stamps of animals and plants, not to forget the space motives. Although the USSR had even nicer space stamps."

"Hm, Aphrodite only reminds me of roses and not of fishes," Makoto said.

"Well, Aphrodite is the Pisces Saint after all..."

"Aphro is a pain in the a...backside," Milo growled.

"I think he is very nice," Makoto contradicted him. "Just because he managed to trick

you once..."

"Shut up!" Milo exclaimed.

"Hm... would you care to elaborate?" Shura looked curiously at the red-haired girl.

"What do I get in exchange for this information?"

"What about a nice bottle of Spanish wine?"

"Hm... And what do I get when I keep my silence?" she asked Milo.

"My gratitude of course!"

"Then I prefer the wine."

"You are bribable!"

"Of course."

Milo hung his head.

"I'm waiting," Shura said.

"First I want to see the remainder of the stamps."

"Hm." Shura decided not to press her too much, lest he would chase her away. It was really nice to have her so close.

Finally she closed the last album. "And what are we going to do now?"

"Well... Would you like me to show you my weapons collection?"

"A weapons collection?" Milo said with a frown. "Athena doesn't want us to use weapons, or did you forget?"

"Athena didn't say anything about *collecting* weapons..."

"Sure I'd like to see them," Makoto said.

"I really need to start collecting something, too," Milo sighed.

They went into Shura's weapons chamber. It was a large room that was decorated with swords, halberds, spears and similar weapons. Makoto looked at the walls in awe.

"May I take one of the swords down?"

"As long as you handle them carefully..."

"Of course." She took an exquisitely worked Spanish sword made of Toledo steel. "That's beautiful!"

"Yes. That's why I obtained it."

"Swords fascinate me very much," Makoto admitted.

"My major attack isn't Excalibur for nought," Shura smiled.

Milo wondered what he could collect. He really needed something to lure the girls into his temple. Hm. If he decided to collect empty bottles of beer, he would already have a collection to boast about...

"Weapons are always exciting," Makoto said. "I have some at home, too. Not as many as you have, of course..."

"Swords, too?"

"A handful, yes."

"I guess Japanese ones?"

"Actually only two. The others are two-hand swords. Tanto and katana are a bit to delicate for my taste."

"Shura, would you assist me to assemble a weapons collection, too?" Milo asked.

"Why would you suddenly want to collect weapons?"

"Well, the girls seem to like it..."

"*Some* do," Makoto laughed. "But I love to collect stuff anyway."

"Me, too," Shura grinned. "Are you mayhap a Capricorn, too?"

"Yes. Is this so obvious?" Makoto asked in puzzlement.

"Oh, a fellow Cappy," Shura beamed. "Then you're really perfectly right in my temple."

"Hey, she isn't perfect for you but for me! Capricorn girls and Scorpio guys are the perfect match!"

"Forget it, both of you! I don't believe in this astrological nonsense!"

"But we do. I mean, we are not Saints of our constellations for nought," Milo said. "Everything is ruled by the stars."

"Where have I heard that before?" Makoto mused. "Ah well, but I still don't believe it."

"The truth can't be denied. But of course, Capricorns rarely believe in the occult."

"Graaa!" Makoto threatened Milo with the sword she still held in her hand and Shura laughed.

"You wouldn't want to hurt me, would you?" Milo looked at her with puppy eyes.

"If you continue to tease me..."

"Pah. You can't hurt me anyway. And sooner or later you will see the truth in the stars as well. I mean, we are Saints of Athena, who is a living Goddess..."

"Okay, okay," Makoto groaned. "I won't say any more..."

"Milo can get a bit touchy about occult stuff," Shura explained. "But that's probably because he's a Scorpio."

"Pah, I'm not like all Scorpions. I'm special!"

"You are conceited."

"I only know what I'm worth."

Makoto shook her hand and turned to Shura. "What kind of sword is this?" She pointed at a very large weapon.

"It's a Germanic two-hand sword." Shura elaborated a bit on usage and origin, and Makoto listened with interest.

"Well, you're right, it looks a bit crude."

"It's from far before the time of the medieval knights."

"And it looks pretty heavy," Makoto observed.

"Well, the Germanic tribesmen didn't care much about the weight and design as long as it was useful to kill their enemies. - Ah well, as Saints of Athena we don't need such weapons anyway. Our bodies are far more powerful weapons than simple swords."

"Well, I guess I would feel safer with a sword..."

"That's because you are no Saint of Athena."

"Indeed, you seem to be really robust compared to normal humans."

"We're all trained to be. It's a great honour to be chosen to be one of the protectors of the Goddess."

"Well, she isn't my Goddess."

"Hm, so whom *do* you serve?"

"No one at all."

"That sounds strange." Shura looked bewildered at her. He was brought up with the belief of the reality of the Goddess Athena and deemed it very curious that someone could *not* believe in her or the other Greek Gods. "Well, maybe you'll meet Athena one day, then you will have to acknowledge her, too."

"Perhaps." Makoto yawned. It was getting late. "By the way, where can I put my stuff and everything? I'd like to retire for the night now."

"Just follow me..." Shura led her to one of the empty rooms in his temple. Contrary to the empty rooms in Scorpio Temple, everything was absolutely clean and tidy. Shura constructed a bed for her from two mattresses that were stored in another empty room.

"If you want to know what I need the stuff for," Shura said, "you see, sometimes certain Saints are so drunk after one of our poker matches that they would neither dare to teleport nor walk down the stairs to their temples..."

"Don't look at me!" Milo grumbled.

"Who does?"

"*You* do! - But I have to remind you that Camus drinks far more than I do," Milo grumbled.

"Probably you never noticed in your beer stupor that Camus drinks at least as much water as wine," Shura laughed. "He could never afford to drink too much of his expensive wines, or he'd be totally broke in no time."

"I really wonder how you can stay in such good condition when you drink so much," Makoto wondered.

"I'm in good form because I'm perfect!" Milo claimed. "And anyway, sometimes I just *have* to drink, or I wouldn't survive here. You are all sooo mean to me!"

"This says the guy who strives to be the meanest guy in all Sanctuary?" Makoto laughed.

"It is all pure self-defense." Milo sniffed. "No one understands that scorpions aren't that bad..."

"Well, prove it," Makoto demanded.

"Wait a sec..." Milo disappeared and returned with Shaina-chan and Pope-chan in his hands. "See? They are soooo cute!"



"Milo, get those monsters back into their box, or I'll cut them into slices." Threateningly, Shura lifted his arm.

"Indeed, hold them really tight, I wouldn't want them to crawl into my bed." Makoto eyed them suspiciously.

"But they are absolutely tame!"

"Only if you hold them. And I'm sure you're immune to their poison."

"Well, of course..."

"Get those scorpions back into their terrarium, into Camus' temple or into yours - but *get them out of mine!*"

"I agree."

"As I said - you *are* all totally mean..." Milo sulked and returned his pets into their terrarium.

"Finally I can sleep peacefully," Makoto sighed.

"I hope you have some space left here for me?" Milo asked on his return and fetched another mattress that he laid next to Makoto's.

"May I kindly inquire what exactly it is that you are doing?" Makoto asked acidly, arms akimbo.

"Well, I thought you might enjoy my company..."

"In *my* temple? Milo, you are a pervert! Get out! Now!" Shura fumed.

"Shura, would you please lend me one of your swords? I need to get rid of some insect..."

"No problem." Shura returned almost at the same second with the Germanic two-hand sword and handed it to her.

"Get lost!" She threatened Milo with the impressive blade.

"I'm no insect," Milo protested, but decided that it might be the time for a tactical retreat. Shura certainly wouldn't want his temple to be turned into a mess when he chased Makoto a bit around.

"You, too!" Makoto demanded and stared at Shura. "I want some quiet and solitude right now."

The Capricorn Saint sighed, but complied as well. He really had hoped that Makoto

would be a little bit nicer to him as her saviour.

Makoto took a deep breath and put the sword next to her bed before she went to sleep. At last she could sleep without being threatened by certain obnoxious stingy pets.

\* \* \*

The next morning, Shura was up with sunrise as usual. He showered, dressed and occupied himself dutifully with an early training session.

"*Excalibur*," he shouted and let his arm crash down onto a large chunk of rock. It turned to dust immediately, but not without a loud thunder.

"Waaaahhh!" Makoto was ripped out of her sleep, and her hair stood on end. What was up? Did the temple break down? Was there an attack? Still in her white nightgown, she shot out of her bed and decided to check on what was going on.

Outside she discovered Shura, who turned further rocks to dust and did some other exercises as well. He looked pretty impressive with his well-trained body, but this was no excuse...

"Did you have to wake me with this ruckus?" she grumbled and tried to smooth her unruly red hair that was totally messed up from the night.

"Oh, good morning, Makoto. Wanna join me and train some, too?" he asked in good humour.

"Do I look like this?" If looks could kill, Shura would be at least twice dead now.

"Well, now that you mention it..." He grinned at her.

"I guess I'd better get dressed now..." She didn't feel 100 percent comfortable barefoot and dressed only in the nightgown.

"Well, I don't mind if you stay like this..." Shura thought it was a pity that her nightgown was so long, but it was nicely low-cut nonetheless, and so he examined her with interest.

"Humph." Makoto's gaze turned into daggers. "Don't tempt fate," she grumbled. "I'm absolutely no morning person, and I'm particularly grumpy when I'm ripped from my sleep like this."

"There's some coffee in the kitchen," Shura offered. Since he had encountered Camus in the morning once when the Pope had asked them for a meeting at a pretty early time, he was wary of non-morning persons. Not to mention that the Pope decided to call in meetings only after lunch-time from then on.

Wordlessly, Makoto turned and went straight into the kitchen of Capricorn temple.

Shura shrugged and crushed another rock, before he decided to join her for breakfast.

Makoto sat at the kitchen table, a large mug of coffee in her hands and wondered whether it was better to brave some tiny scorpions than this horrible noise in the middle of the night.

Shura hummed a happy melody when he dug out some slices of toast bread and strawberry jam.

"Why are you so horribly awake at this time of the night?" Makoto groaned.

"Do some morning exercises, and you'll feel much better, too."

"I hate sports in the morning."

"But it's healthy." Shura stopped humming, but began to sing some arias from his favourite operas. Unfortunately his singing was far more enthusiastic than he was hitting the right notes.

Makoto pressed her hands against her ears. This was torture. "Please stop, this is terrible!"

"But I like to sing..."

"But I'm not even awake, and you try to kill me with this acoustic torture."

"Hey, you should be fresh awake for at least an hour now. The sun is up, the birds are singing..."

"Do me one favour: Leave the singing to the birds, yes?"

"If you absolutely insist..."

"I do. And now pass me the bread and some of the jam, please. I need to eat something." Shura complied, and Makoto ate silently before she poured another mug of coffee. "Do you always get up so early?"

"Of course. My motto is 'Rise and shine!'," he grinned.

"But do you have to cause such a noise so early in the morning? Next time wake me before you start, or I might not survive the shock."

"I'll try to keep that in mind. So what are your plans for today?"

"Dunno."

"What about if I show you a bit around in the town? Sanctuary isn't exactly exciting, but maybe you like sight-seeing."

"Oh yes, that would be nice. But I think I should dress for the occasion."

"Might be a good idea." Shura grinned. He had to change into fresh clothes as well after his training.

About half an hour later, Makoto wore jeans and a T-shirt while Shura was dressed in black trousers, a grey shirt and some pieces that looked like brown leather armouring.

Shura teleported them into the town that had a slightly Mediterranean look and feel with white houses, narrow streets and a market where fresh food stuffs of all kinds were offered, mainly colourful fruits and vegetables. The sun shone brightly from a clear blue sky and the temperature was already pretty high.

"So and what are the town's special attractions?"

"Hm..." Shura looked around. "Well, there's the market, over there's a spring, and from there you have a nice view at Star Hill. I think that was it... By the way, I need to buy some supplies at the market."

"Okay," Makoto complied. "But I'd really like to see some more entertainment."

"Well, we could visit the arena. If I remember correctly, today is the final fight to decide who wins the Pegasus Bronze Cloth."

"Huh? I thought this Cloth had an owner already!"

"Who says *that*?!"

"Well, there were these posters announcing the Galaxian Wars all over Tokyo..."

"Pardon?! And who should be the owner of the Pegasus Cloth according to them?"

"The name given was Pegasus Seiya."

"What?" Shura almost burst from laughter. "The little Japanese boy has not the slightest chance against Shaina's disciple!"

"Well, it was on the posters."

"Then we should really attend the fight. Cassios is a Titan and at least twice the size of this Seiya guy."

"Hm, but size does not always matter..."

"I saw once what Cassios did to Seiya during the training. He can crush him in one hand!"

Makoto shuddered in disgust. "This doesn't sound as if I needed to see it."

"But I want to see who wins the Cloth. It's always a nice entertainment as there are not so many Cloths around."

"If you insist..."

"Fine. I'll buy some food and then we can visit the arena." Shura bought some seafood, fruits and vegetables that he teleported into his temple, before they entered the vast arena.

Makoto looked around with interest. A lot of people - mainly men - in the light leather armours, which seemed to be the common clothing in Sanctuary, crowded the ranks. "Are these all Saints?"

"No." Shura's gaze examined the spectators. "They are almost all normal humans. The woman over there with the green hair is the Ophiuchus Silver Saint, though. She's Shaina, Cassios' Master."

"Oh, that's the first female Saint I've ever seen!"

"Indeed, female Saints are pretty rare. Ophiuchus Shaina and Aquila Marin are very apt warriors, though. Unfortunately, Aiolia managed to win them both..."

"They seem to be pretty well-liked, hm? I remember Milo sulking about the fact that they are already taken, too."

"Ah, but you should see them fight! That's poetry in motion..."

"If you like to watch fights, that is..."

"Well, but they are really impressive. Especially Shaina... She may very well be the strongest Silver Saint after Lacerta Misty." Shura sighed. "Oh, Cassios and Seiya have arrived!"

"This will be a really unfair fight, if you ask me," Makoto frowned. "This guy is almost thrice the size of the other one!"

"Both of them vanquished nine opponents each. Today it will be decided who is worthy of the Pegasus Cloth. - Over there, the man with the white cloak and the mask, that's the Pope, Athena's High Priest in Sanctuary and the leader of all of the Saints."

"He looks funny," Makoto commented.

"He's the most powerful man in all Sanctuary. Some people worship him as if he were a god himself. - Ah, the fight begins!"

Makoto watched the event doubtfully. She wasn't overly fond of fights. Shura was far more interested.

"They are *both* pretty good," he observed. "Marin's disciple shows an agility that

Cassios lacks."

When the first time blood began to fountain of the ground, Makoto turned away in disgust.

"I'm impressed," Shura exclaimed. "Now Seiya actually managed to hit Cassios!"

"Great..."

The spectators shouted wildly around, and the two trainers called words of encouragement towards their disciples.

"I hope it's over real soon."

"We'll see. Hm, it seems there are quite some people who don't want the Japanese boy to win the Pegasus Cloth."

"Why?"

"Some people say the Cloths should stay in Greece as Athena is a *Greek* Goddess.

"But there are so many Saints who aren't from Greece..."

"But still they belong here. I heard that Seiya wants to win this Cloth only to return to Japan with it."

"Haven't they finished yet?" Makoto nagged.

"Not yet. Currently Cassios gets quite a beating from Seiya. It's really intriguing."

Makoto sighed.

"Why don't you look yourself? It's an exciting fight! Hey, this hit let Cassios fly at least twenty metres!"

"I hate such gory battles. Why do you have to report everything anyway?"

"Well, it seems you were right and Seiya really wins! Ouch, this must have hurt. Now Seiya managed to cut off Cassios' left ear! I wonder whether he'll recover..."

"I want out of here," Makoto demanded.

"But the fight isn't over yet!"

"I don't mind. I want to go *now*. If you refuse to let me go, something terrible will happen." Makoto looked pretty green in the face.

"If you *insist*..." Shura directed a last wistful look at the fight before he teleported them back to Capricorn Temple. They materialized right in front of it.

"Thank you very much."

"No problem." Shura sighed, and one could see that he really would have preferred to watch the whole fight to see its outcome."

Makoto shuddered. "Tell me, how can you *watch* this?"

"Hm? What's the problem?"

"I think it's utterly disgusting!"

"What is disgusting in an honourable fight?" Shura couldn't understand her problem. He had fought since he was a young boy. This was all completely normal, wasn't it?

"I'm not used to see such bloody fights."

"I see. Well, Saints fight from their earliest childhood on. And you don't have to worry, if they survive, they usually heal very fast."

"I really don't care as long as I don't have to watch."

"You seem to be pretty squeamish for a physician."

"Actually, I'm not very squeamish," Makoto contradicted. "I just don't like senseless brutal battles."

"They're not senseless. And if you intend to stay at Sanctuary, you will probably see a lot more of them."

"Yuck," Makoto looked disgustedly at the Capricorn Saint. "But I think we'll soon return to Tokyo anyway."

"You will? That's a pity." Now that he had found some cute girl for himself, she wanted to leave already. Shura thought that this was very unfair.

"We've got a lot of work left in our lab there."

"Hm. Maybe Pope gives me free for a couple of weeks. I'd like to see a bit more of the world."

Makoto grinned. "It would be cool if I could pack up some of you and take them with me to Tokyo..."

"I volunteer!"

Makoto laughed. "Let's wait and see... What are we doing now, by the way?" She wanted some entertainment, but it had better not be any fight in the arena.

"Hm... You cook so well - so what about some lunch?"

"Again? Do you want me to cook all day and all night?"

"Well, you don't want to train, you don't like to watch fights - so what else is left?"

"It seems my demands are far too high for the people living here at Sanctuary."

"What were you thinking of?"

Makoto shrugged. "I don't know, but I really don't feel like cooking right now."

"What a pity..." Shura sighed, then he took a look at the Fire Clock which could be easily seen from every of the twelve temples. "Oh, it's time for my second training session of the day."

"Feel free to work out..."

"Yep." Shura changed into a training outfit and started once more to do heavy exercises and destroy innocent rocks in front of his temple.

Makoto sat down onto a safe rock in the vicinity and watched Shura. These Saints were simply incredible - jumping dozens of metres up and down, pulverizing stones with their fingertips and more...

After a couple of minutes, Makoto got bored nonetheless, especially when the air was filled with the dust of the shattered rocks. She left Shura to his devices and looked for another piece of entertainment.

**- File GS05-Shr-T002 Closed -**



## Kapitel 23: File GS01-Aqr-T004 - Stay Cool! A Duel of Wills

### File GS01-Aqr-T004

#### Stay Cool! A Duel of Wills

Makoto began to climb the stairs from Capricorn to Aquarius Temple. She was curious how Himiko and Camus fared.

When she arrived at the round building, she pried into it. The whole temple looked slightly iced - it seemed that Camus had tried to make it as uncomfortable for Himiko as possible. But he hadn't expected Himiko's utter stubbornness. She was clad in a thick, warm coat, sat in front of a door and sulked.

"Hi Himiko, what do you guard there?" Makoto asked with interest.

"I don't guard anything. He tricked me! He is soooo mean! Er, I mean, he's not mean, he's gorgeous, but..." Himiko sniffed. "You see, it's my Camus-sama's bedroom, which is behind this door."

"So what?"

"He didn't let me stay there with him!" A tear rolled down Himiko's cheek.

"That's a pity," Makoto felt sorry for Himiko and patted her shoulder.

"Indeed! After we arrived here, he asked me to cook some coffee for him, and when I returned he had barricaded himself in his bedroom and didn't let me in."

"He's meaner than I thought."

"He isn't mean. He's just a very private person."

"He's a coward to barricade himself in like this - after all, what threat could you possibly pose to him?"

"He is no coward, I'm sure! He's certainly the most handsome and attractive of all of the Saints..." Himiko stood up and pounded violently against the door. "Now get out of there immediately! You are mine, *mine*, *MINE*, and hiding from me won't change that!"

"I don't think you'll be able to convince him like this," Makoto said.

Suddenly the door opened and a *very* tired looking Aquarius Saint (in full armour) looked out of it. "Have you *still* not given up?" he asked wearily.

"Didn't I tell you she's really stubborn?" Makoto told him.

"I don't mind whether she's stubborn or not - I only want her to go away!" Camus yawned heavily.

"You won't get rid of me this easily," Himiko declared haughtily.

"Could it be that you're somehow tired, Camus?" Makoto asked with a grin. A poisonous gaze from deep blue eyes hit her.

"Just *look* at these eyes!" Himiko sighed dreamily.

Makoto dared a closer look despite the angry glare that greeted her. "Indeed. Marvellous colour."

"Why can't this simply be a bad dream; and when I wake up, she is gone?" Camus groaned.

"Because in real life nothing is as simple as this," Makoto replied sagely.

"I'm doomed..."

"Do you want me to cook a cup of coffee for you now?" Himiko chimed.

"Why not. Then your presence is good for *one* thing at least."

"I wouldn't do it," Makoto told her colleague.

"Why not? He's my Camus-sama after all."

"I don't belong to *anyone*," Camus stated tiredly.

"He doesn't deserve it that you do him such favours," Makoto said. "Let him cook his coffee for himself."

"But I want to please him," Himiko sulked. "I will show him that he will miss something when he turns me away."

"I will only miss the constant fear of being attack by some love-sick girl," Camus grumbled.

"And I thought Saints feared nothing," Makoto wondered.

"I don't fear any *enemy*. But she is *worse*."

"Is she? She's petite, harmless and nice!"

"She's a severe threat for my mental health and psychic balance." Camus yawned again and leaned against the door frame for support.

Himiko disappeared to cook the coffee for him.

"She *never* gives up, doesn't she?" the Aquarius Saint asked.

"Nope."

"Oh mighty Gods, why do you have to punish me so harshly?" Camus exclaimed.

Makoto laughed. "You punish yourself. If you would give in to Himiko, she would be happy and you'd have your peace."

"What peace is there when she continuously wraps her arms around my neck and worse?"

"She decided in favour of you. Although I have to admit I cannot think of any reason *why*..."

"Why can't I simply pass her on to Milo or Aiolia or whoever else is interested to get some girl-friend?!"

"Because my decision is made, Camus-sama - you are to be my man." She offered him a cup of milky coffee - a proper café au lait, to be precise.

"I refuse! - Er, I mean, I take the coffee, but I refuse to be your man!" Camus took the coffee and sipped from the cup.

"Is he a bit grumpy in the mornings?" Makoto asked Himiko.

"Yes, he is. But isn't he cute?"

"He looks terribly tired."

"Indeed. I would *love* to comfort him a little..."

"I'm sure he'll bite."

"He won't! - Camus-sama, you won't, will you...?" She made a step in his direction.

Camus stared fiercely at her. "You keep your hands away from me!"

"See?" Makoto said. "Moreover, he's constantly in a very bad mood."

"If he would just let me..."

"*No!*"

"You have no manners," Makoto chided him.

"I can't stand it anymore..." Camus turned, went back into his bedroom and slammed the door shut.

Makoto almost burst from laughter. "He's pretty much at the end of his tether!"

"My poor, wonderful Camus-sama..." Himiko pounded her fists at the door. "Please let me in! My Camus-sama!!"

"Shut up," a tortured voice sounded from within.

"I think it won't take much longer," Makoto pondered.

"Do you think I will finally be able to hold him in my arms?" A ray of hope lighted Himiko's ice-blue eyes.

"He *has* to give up somewhen. Even Saints have a limit of their endurance."

Himiko pounded against the door once more. "I love you, my Camus-sama! You *have* to let me in!"

"Have mercy and let me sleep at least for five minutes!"

"Don't give up," Makoto encouraged her colleague.

"I won't," Himiko promised and continued to pound at the door. "Now let me in! I have nothing but your best interest in mind!"

"Good luck," Makoto said and left Aquarius Temple.

**- File GS01-Aqr-T004 Closed -**

## Kapitel 24: Interlude VII - Return to Scorpio Temple! The Way to a Man's Heart is Through His Stomach

### Interlude VII

#### Return to Scorpio Temple! The Way to a Man's Heart is Through His Stomach

Makoto ran down the stairs once more. When she passed Capricorn Temple, she saw that Shura still trained in the backyard. She decided to fetch her stuff and continue to Scorpio Temple. Milo would certainly be a good remedy against her boredom.

When she entered Scorpio Temple, she found Milo in his living room, where he tried to teach Shaina-chan and Pope-chan some new tricks. The two scorpions were apt students, it seemed; they played a kind of table soccer with a grape.

"Hi there!" Makoto greeted him.

"Oh, Makoto, you're back?" He looked hopefully at the red-haired scientist.

"I'm bored," she sighed.

"Me, too!"

"Great. So what do we do to change this?"

"I'm hungry - why don't we cook something?"

"You're able to cook?" Makoto asked amused.

"Well, *you* can!"

"Why don't *you* cook and I watch?"

"Because I'm a man and you're a woman. You have to cook while I supervise you."

"You're dreaming." Makoto tousled Milo's deep blue-violet hair. She really had missed this. "I'm not your personal cook."

"Then I won't allow you to tousle my hair anymore."

"How do you want to hinder me?"

"That's simple." Milo took Shaina-chan and Pope-chan and put one of the scorpions onto his head and the other onto his shoulder.

"Pah." Makoto shook her head. "You won't get rid of me that easily." She tugged at one scorpion-free strand.

"Either you cook or you leave my hair!" Milo made a step aside.

"Do you want to blackmail me?"

"If nothing else helps - yes, of course!"

"Don't get on my nerves - I had enough of that today already," Makoto warned him.

"Hey, I'm Milo, the mean Scorpio Gold Saint - I can't be too nice, lest I ruin my reputation."

Makoto grumbled. "Slowly but surely I begin to understand why some Saints love to pulverize large chunks of rock!"

"And why?" Milo asked innocently.

"Graaaaaa!!" Frantically, Makoto looked for something to throw at Milo, who grinned impudently at her.

"Pah." Makoto turned his back to him.

"You only need to cook some delicious meal..."

"But I don't want to!"

"Awwww, Makoto," Milo pleaded.

"No chance." She folded her arms in front of her breast.

"*Puhlease!* I'm *really* hungry!" He tugged at her braid.

"I'm not."

Milo sulked, but Makoto took special care not to look at him. If she looked into his large, bright blue eyes, she'd give in in no time. But she wasn't Milo's servant, she told herself.

Milo tugged at her braid again. "Makoto? Why do you turn your back at me?"

"Because you made me angry. And no, no, no - I *won't* cook for you!"

"Awwww, Makoto..." Milo added some truly desperate sounds.

Carefully, Makoto looked over her shoulder. The Scorpio Gold Saint winked at her.

"You are terrible!"

"And...?"

"I still think it's not right."

Suddenly Milo's stomach grumbled, and he looked desperately at her.

"You use very mean tricks," she complained.

Now she was met my a gaze out of bright blue puppy dog eyes.

"You *know* that I can't resist a look like this," Makoto grumbled. "Okay, okay, you win."

"Fine." Milo put his scorpions back onto the table. "Have you heard, Shaina-chan, Pope-chan? We'll get something to eat after all."

Makoto sighed and hung her head. Now she was supposed to cook for these monsters, too...

Milo smiled at her. "You are really nice, Makoto. Sometimes."

"I'm weak," she lamented. "Why can't I ever say no?"

"I think that's very practical."

Makoto sighed and went into the kitchen. Milo followed her.

"What do you want to eat?"

"Something yummy of course."

"Okay." She rummaged through the cupboards and collected some ingredients for a hopefully tasty stew. Milo's temple wasn't as well stocked with food stuffs as Shura's was. It took a while until the stew was ready. Finally she served Milo a large plate full while she began to eat from the pan. She really wondered who was worse - Milo or Shura.

"That's great!" Milo declared after the first spoonful and devoured the whole portion with great enthusiasm. "May I get another helping?"

"You can have the remainder." There was still a large portion left in the pan, and Makoto heaped it onto Milo's plate. She sat down onto a chair and watched Milo thoughtfully.

"Awww, now everything's gone..."

"Don't tell me you're still hungry?"

"Only a little bit..."

"You are very demanding!"

"In what way?"

"In *every* respect."

"I always thought I'm very easy going as long as I'm not mean..."

"And when are you not mean?"

"As long as I'm eating." He grinned at her, and Makoto shook her head.

"I hope you don't want to imply that I have to cook for you all day and all night?"

"All day would suffice. Actually I have some other ideas for the night..."

"I guess it's about time for me to return home."

"No! You have to stay, or I'll starve!"

"Why should I care?"

"Because I'm overwhelmingly handsome and the perfect choice as your boyfriend!"

"You're dreaming."

"You're so cruel! How can you turn down my absolutely irresistible offer to let you stay at my side?"

"Well, I'm mean, too."

"Ha! So we *are* the perfect match after all!"

"Indeed? Only as long as you don't consider me to be your servant!"

"As long as you cook for me, I'm content."

"I only cook for you if you deserve it."

"And *when* do you think I deserve it?" He gave her another puppy dog look.

"When you are nice for a change - at least to me."

"Haven't I *always* been nice to you?"

"Well, if you don't blackmail me or use other improper means..."

"Hey, I never hit you with any of my attacks. For me that's being *very* nice."

"That's not enough for me."



"What else do you demand of me?" Milo sulked.

"Hm, I have to think about it. But the most important thing is that you do not annoy me."

"I would *never* do such a thing!" Milo grinned at her.

Before Makoto could voice her doubts, Leo Aiolia appeared via teleport. "Hi Milo!"

"Oh, Aiolia... What's up?"

"I thought I might remind you that today's our usual visit to Athens' interesting nightlife..."

Makoto looked from Milo to Aiolia and back, but refrained from a comment.

"Is it?" Milo frowned. Since the two girls were at his temple he hadn't noticed the time fly by. It certainly wasn't boring anymore at home.

"It is. I really need some entertainment for a change," Aiolia told him.

"Sounds like a good idea," Milo agreed.

Makoto wasn't exactly amused. She stormed into her room and banged the door shut. Milo looked after her. "Hm... Does she have some problems, or what?"

"Didn't she want to stay at Shura's temple?" Aiolia wondered.

"Well, she had to admit that I'm the better choice and so she returned to me."

"I see. And what about that other girl?"

"Well, she's still with Camus. I guess he needs some time to relax, too..."

"Why don't you ask him to accompany us?"

"Camus?" Milo frowned. Camus wasn't exactly fond of any nightly tours through certain ...establishments. But then, he might want to get out of his temple anyway. "Ah well, asking him won't hurt." He concentrated. «Camus?»;

«What's up?» came the gruff response. Milo grimaced. "He's in a very bad mood," he told the Leo Saint.

"Did you disturb him during some ...important activities?" Aiolia laughed.

"Who knows?!" Milo focused his attention at the mental conversation. «We thought you might like to accompany Aiolia and me on a visit to Athens.»

«Do you think I might find some strong liquor on the way?»

«Of course.»

«When?»

«Join us in two hours at my demesne.»

«I'll be there.»

The connection broke. "He'll accompany us," Milo said somewhat perplexed. "In two hours he'll meet us here."

"I'm astonished. He didn't comment on 'such base entertainment' as usual?"

"No. He only wanted to get some strong liquor..."

"Hm... Is it because of that girl?" Aiolia put on a dirty grin. "Maybe she's a bit too much for him..."

"I had the impression that Himiko is mostly harmless," Milo said. "I mean - she's tiny, she's weak and she doesn't look any dangerous."

"You could say that of Aphrodite, too..."

*"Don't mention that name in my temple!!!"*

"There, there... Calm down!" Aiolia made a calming gesture. It seemed that Milo still was pretty furious at the Pisces Saint. Somehow he couldn't understand why Milo took the little prank of the two 'beauty queens' of Sanctuary so badly. Actually he wouldn't have minded to add Misty to his collection. "Don't you think you should find something nice to wear?" Aiolia also wanted to get out of the usual leather armour he wore in Sanctuary as long he wasn't on official duty as Leo Gold Saint.

"Oh, yes, you're right."

"Okay, I'll be back in two hours."

"I still don't understand why Marin and Shaina never object when you tour the bars once a week..."

"Well, they know what I'm worth and think it's best to humour me..." Aiolia teleported away.

"I still wonder what he has that I don't have," Milo grumbled. He had been interested in Shaina for a while, but instead of giving in to him, she suddenly said she was together with Aiolia. This was so unfair!

\* \* \*

Two hours later, Aiolia arrived at Scorpio Temple. The Leo Saint was clad in a washed-out denim suit, while Milo wore *very* tight black jeans (he *had* put on weight, even though he didn't want to admit it) and a frilled white silken shirt that he left partly unbuttoned at the front.

Much to their surprise they were really joined by Camus, who was clad in an elegant midnight blue suede suit.

"You look tired," Aiolia observed. "Was the night that straining?"

"I haven't slept a single minute," Camus yawned miserably.

"Indeed?" Aiolia asked highly interested.

"No what *you* think," Camus told him. "She pounded against the door all night and tried to get in. I seriously consider moving into Libra or Sagittarius Temple."

"But why didn't you let her in?"

"I wanted to sleep."

"Well, I could imagine more interesting things to do with a willing cute girl at hand..."

"I guess so. I suggested her she might better try her luck with you or Milo, but she refused."

"How can *any* girl refuse me?" Milo said sulkily and ran his hand through his blue violet mane.

"I heard there were some who did," Aiolia grinned.

"Well, I for once am glad that I managed to escape her for now," Camus sighed. "Maybe I should consider moving to Siberia permanently."

"I bet she'll follow you wherever you go."

"I'm really looking forward to the next Holy War."

"Ah well, let's go now," Milo urged. "I want to amuse myself."

The three Gold Saints teleported into Athens City. It was early evening now, and so there was not much going on yet.

"Why don't we get something to eat first?" Milo suggested.

"Why doesn't this surprise me in the least?" Aiolia laughed. "Be careful or you won't fit into your clothes anymore."

"Indeed. You should better keep a diet." Camus examined the precariously tight fit of Milo's trousers. "I'm sure they weren't *that* tight the last time you wore them."

"Pah!"

"I'm sure you're simply fed to well," Aiolia teased.

"Look who talks!" Milo pointed at the likewise more than tight fit of Aiolia's trousers.

"The perfect fit is well intended," the Leo Saint grinned.

"But I *am* hungry," Milo's stomach grumbled.

"You're *always* hungry. You were hungry since we started training here together," Aiolia pointed out.

"Well, we should eat something anyway," Camus said. "I hate to drink something before I have eaten."

"Well, I saw a McDonald's over there..."

"Milo, you can't be serious!" Camus was shocked. "Of course we will look for a *real* restaurant."

"But I won't agree to visit a restaurant that only offers nouvelle cuisine," Aiolia protested. "I need some real stuff between my teeth."

"Well, if you don't want to go to McDonald's, what about the Pizza Hut around the corner?"

"Milo, you're a culinary philistine," Camus declared.

"Well, I suggest a steak house," Aiolia tried to find a solution they all could live with. To his relief, Camus decided to agree.

"Okay," Camus nodded. "If Milo had suggested Burger King as next resort, I'd have gotten truly sick."

**- End of Interlude VII -**

## Kapitel 25: File GS06-Can-T001 - Deadly DeathMask! The Horrors of the Fourth Temple

### File GS06-Can-T001

#### Deadly DeathMask! The Horrors of the Fourth Temple

At Aquarius Temple, it was deceptively silent. When Camus didn't react at all for an whole hour, Himiko sniffed and decided to go to Makoto to tell her about the cruelties of life and love.

With hanging head, she trod down the stairs to Capricorn Temple. Shura was likewise slightly depressed and admitted that Makoto was back at Scorpio Temple now. So Himiko went there and found Makoto in their old room.

"Hello Himiko. Is he still steadfast?"

"He is. And currently he doesn't even react anymore when I try to lure him out of his room..."

"Well, this is very much the effect of him going on a tour through the bars with Aiolia and Milo..."

"No, Camus would *never* do something like this!"

"He *does*. He seems to be pretty desperate if you ask me."

"Oh dear! I really should try to save him from the bad influence of Milo and Aiolia. Especially Aiolia with his tons of women!"

"I don't think they'll let you rescue him. We'd better get on with our work and inspect another Saint."

"Sniff. But then, you're right. There are still several of them missing in our collection. I vote for the cute Cancer Saint."

"Cute? He's looks scary, and what I overheard from the other Saints did not sound very favourable either."

"But what else should we do?"

"Okay, you have a point. Let's visit the crab."

They put together their instruments, cameras and other important things before they went to face the Cancer Gold Saint.

Cancer Temple was built like a cross when observed from the upside. Superficially it

didn't look very threatening. The scientists entered the temple. It was scarcely lit, and Makoto shuddered.

"I don't like the feel of this thing," She stated.

"I agree." Himiko kept close to her colleague, but took care that she was always mostly hidden behind her.

Makoto dug out a torch and lighted it. The the beam fell onto an agonized face of stone, and both women couldn't suppress a cry of shock and disgust.

"Yikes! His decorator must have had a very bad day!" Himiko shuddered.

"Let's get out of here," Makoto urged and turned to the exit.

"No so fast!" The voice of the Cancer Saint froze them in their tracks. When they looked in the direction of the voice, they discovered a man with a blue violet storm hair-do and a really spiky armour. "I'm Cancer Gold Saint DeathMask. I see you have just admired my little collection..."

"'Admire' is not exactly the word," Makoto replied dryly.

"So you are the two scientist women who like to get on the nerves of us Saints?"

"It's our job - it's nothing personal," Himiko defended herself.

"I heard Camus thinks differently..." DeathMask grinned. "I have to congratulate you for annoying Mr.Icicle that thoroughly. I would never have dared that myself..."

"But, I don't want to annoy him," Himiko sniffed. She still hid partly behind Makoto.

"Whatever... And why would you want to visit me?" DeathMask put on a winning smile. He didn't get many visitors, and today he had two, and they were rather pretty to boot. He wondered whether he should let them stay alive or if he should add some new deathmasks to his hall to admire.

"Well, we wanted to examine your fitness and your Cloth..." Makoto listed and studied the extravagant Cancer Cloth that couldn't hide the fact that DeathMask was very nicely built, just like about all of the other Saints.

"By the way, I'm Himiko, and that's Makoto," the blonde chimed. She wondered how DeathMask styled his hair every morning. Or was this hair-do natural? She couldn't believe it.

"And why would you want to examine my fitness? Don't you see that I'm perfectly trained?"

"Sure... But still, just for our study," Makoto said. "Please?"

DeathMask put on a winning smile. It was nice to be admired for a change and not only feared, he thought. Okay, his enemies still should shake in terror whenever he appeared, but actually he wouldn't mind to induce something different in the members of the other sex.

"I will consider it. What do you offer me in exchange for my cooperation?"

"Hm... If I knew what you want I could offer you something," Makoto told him.

"What do I want? I want to become the most powerful man in Sanctuary of course. I'd like to be the High Priest of Athena so that my word becomes law and my deeds deal out justice..."

"Hm... That's difficult. Don't you have any other wishes?"

"Well... I don't think you could fulfill any of them," he sighed.

"But you could let us do our studies anyway, could you? I would love to take some photos of you," Himiko told him. "You have an absolutely cute nose."

"Huh?" DeathMask looked at her in amazement. That was definitely news for him. "A cute nose?"

Himiko nodded vigorously. "Yes. And beautiful eyes."

"And why don't I have a girl-friend then?" DeathMask grumbled. Somehow power and justice was nice, yes, but it would be even nicer if he had someone to impress with his power.

"Could be your taste in interior decoration," Makoto commented. "I wouldn't want to live in a house like this with all the gruesome faces staring at me."

"But they are the symbols of my power," DeathMask explained. "I'm Sanctuary's best assassin -- no matter what Milo says! -- and every single one of these faces is the sign of another of my victories!"

"Even those of the children?"

"Ah well, shit happens once in a while." DeathMask grinned sheepishly. "But even if you don't count them, I was pretty successful, wouldn't you say?"

"Couldn't you find a sign that is aesthetically more pleasing to the eye?" Makoto wondered.

"Well, to be truthful... These faces just ...happened. I mean, when I took care of the first targets the Pope asked me to eliminate, they just popped up at the walls. I mean, I don't like them too much either -- look at the insolent look of *this* face!" Annoyed, DeathMask pointed at one face that stuck the tongue out at him, before he smashed his fist into the relief. "I still don't understand why Milo's temple isn't decorated with

such things as well. I mean, he's the secondary assassin of Sanctuary and gets the jobs that are too base to be given to me."

"Milo's Temple is a mess already - no need to worsen it by adding such silly deathmasks," Makoto stated.

"They aren't silly! They help to intimidate my adversaries!"

"Not only your adversaries. *Everybody* who enters your temple is intimidated. Especially women!"

"And what if I would paint them in some agreeable colours?"

"Forget it. Get rid of these faces first. *Then* you could consider painting the interior in more friendly colours. And adding some flowers would be a nice touch too," Makoto enumerated.

"But I'm the terrible Cancer Gold Saint - Aphrodite is the guy with the flowers!"

"Sure, but you might try to lighten the oppressive atmosphere a bit..."

"I'm sure the others wouldn't take me serious anymore," DeathMask sighed.

"You don't look like someone who needs the approval of other people," Makoto said.

"Well, that's true, but still..."

"Please, let me take these photos," Himiko begged. Maybe she could try to make Camus jealous when she managed to get some nu-- err, *newly* taken pics of DeathMask.

"Why not? So take your pics," DeathMask shrugged, before he decided to put on his best winning smile.

"Kawaii!" Himiko was glad that she had taken an ample amount of films with her, because DeathMask proved to be a very agreeable model as she discovered with surprise. Probably he got scarcely any favourable attention otherwise, and how much he claimed he liked to be feared, there seemed still to be a part that liked to be simply admired.

"He's really cute when he smiles," even Makoto had to admit.

"*Cute?*! I'm supposed to be mean and dangerous," DeathMask contradicted her with a slight frown.

"No way, Milo claims the same thing and it's just not true."

"Milo is a bigmouth anyway," DeathMask said derisively. Why the Pope gave Milo most of the interesting assassination jobs all of the time was simply beyond him. He,



DeathMask, was definitely more efficient as a killer - Milo always tended to leave quite a mess behind.

"May I take some pics of you without the Cloth, too?" Himiko asked with a shy smile.

"Without the Cloth?"

"Well, not without all clothes, but without the Cloth would be nice," Himiko told him, although she wouldn't have minded the first either.

"Especially without this unbecoming thing," Makoto pointed at the spiky mask.

"Well, if you insist..." The girls were no danger anyway, so he didn't need his Cloth. After all, he was a Gold Saint and his power did not lay in the Cloth alone but in his mastery over his Seventh Sense.

DeathMask willed the Cancer Cloth into its presentational form, and Himiko stared openmouthed at the armour. She really wanted to know how the parts knew where they belonged!

"This armour looks funny," Makoto commented. "A giant crab!"

"The armour, okay, but look at *him*!" Himiko admired the well-trained body of the Cancer Saint and was immediately sad that Camus hadn't shown himself without the Aquarius Cloth yet.

"Not bad at all," Makoto admitted. "It seems all of the Saints are in perfect condition."

"Of course. We always train a lot," DeathMask said smugly. He crashed his fist into a face in the wall that stared at him defiantly.

"Yeah, I noticed. Shura never seemed to tire in his training," Makoto nodded.

"Neither do I." DeathMask performed some stretching exercises and Himiko took photos in rapid succession. She really needed such pics of her gorgeous Camus-sama!

"Why can't I get Camus to let me take such photos?" she sighed.

DeathMask laughed. "Camus? You'll never see him move too much because he's in truth a living icicle. It's said he doesn't have blood in his veins, but red antifreeze." The Cancer Saint grinned insolently. "You see, he was lazy from the beginning of our training, and I'm pretty sure he won't have changed much."

DeathMask shook his head. He didn't like the Ice Saint from the 11th temple. But then, he couldn't stand most of the others either, in varying degrees. One Gold Saint he grudgingly respected was Mu, because the Aries Saint held far greater powers than one would think at first. The others, though... Aldebaran was a stupid bull(y), Aiolia a vain womanizer, Shaka... Shaka was *weird*. DeathMask preferred not to come too close to him at all, lest his weirdness was catching. Dohko was an insignificant dwarf who

probably didn't even fit into his Cloth, Milo was a nuisance - it still rankled that the Pope mostly preferred the Scorpio Saint as assassin... Aiolos was mercifully dead - DeathMask almost got sick to the stomach when he thought of the oh-so-heroic Sagittarius Saint who tried to save that screaming worm Athena. This left Shura and Aphrodite. Well, he could cope with the Capricorn Saint, after all he carried out Pope's orders to kill off Athena and Aiolos nicely, and Aphrodite was sufficiently evil to be reckoned with, too, even though he was decidedly queer.

"I absolutely do agree!" Makoto nodded in emphasis. "I really don't understand what's so interesting in this Mr.Freeze."

"Pah," Himiko pouted sullenly. "I'm sure I will manage to make him melt..."

"Be careful or he'll only leave a puddle."

"Ah no, I would see to it that he keeps his proper form," Himiko sighed.

"Good luck..."

"He just needs to be given the proper attention."

"I'd like to see that," Makoto grinned.

"Me too," DeathMask laughed.

"I guess you could sell tickets."

"Oh no, I wouldn't want anyone else see such private things!"

"Don't panic, I'd say there are very few persons who voluntarily would want to get too near our Icicle Saint anyway." DeathMask was surprised - he actually had a good time at the moment. Sometimes it was nice to relax a bit, he thought.

"So I'll get my Camus-sama for me alone?!" Himiko chimed, hearts blinking in her eyes.

"Is this painful?" DeathMask asked curiously, not aware that he echoed Camus' question from a while ago.

"No," Makoto told him. "It's completely normal for her." DeathMask could not help but shake his head. Women were a truly strange species, it seemed.

Makoto watched in fascination how his spiky hairdo bobbed around. She couldn't help herself and touched one of the strands to see whether it was elastic.

"Hey, what are you doing there?"

"I would love to examine your hair more thoroughly. Don't worry, I'm very careful," Makoto promised.

DeathMask eyed her suspiciously, but didn't fight her either when she put her attention to his deep blue-violet mane. If he was truthful, it was not too bad a feeling when she tousled his hair. Actually, it was pretty nice.

"Milo likes to be tousled, too," Makoto observed.

"Hm." DeathMask frowned. He hated to be compared with Milo. After all, he was a much better assassin than the Scorpio Saint, and it was about time that the Pope acknowledged this publicly.

Himiko continued to take photos when Makoto tried to straighten the funny spikes of DeathMask's hair.

"What the heck are you doing now?" the Cancer Saint asked and wished for a mirror.

"I let my play instinct run free."

"With my hair?" DeathMask tried to peer upwards, but to no avail.

"Do you have other suggestions?" Makoto asked frivolously. DeathMask was more fun than she had expected, especially in view of his ugly temple.

"Well... If you ask me like this..." He put on his winning smile again. Maybe he should rethink his strategy of merely frightening others into respecting him. If they did it out of their free will, it wasn't so bad either.

"Exactly that's what I do." Makoto returned his grin.

"Feel free to find other things to play with."

Himiko giggled. DeathMask was *really* cute. Then she sighed. She wanted to play with her Camus-sama, here and now! Where might he be?

"And you won't resist?" Makoto asked curiously.

"Resist? I might consider to conquer you." DeathMask studied the red-haired woman thoughtfully.

It was a good thing that none of the others suspected that he was not only the terrifying Cancer Gold Saint - but that deep in his heart he longed for a family and everything, like it had been in his hometown Napoli in Italy where he had grown up with four brothers and two sisters until he was abducted by this Silver Saint who had promised him heaven and earth when he complied and followed him.

"Well, as long as you handle me carefully when conquering me? You Saints are all so incredibly strong!"

"Well, that's part of our job description. But of course I would try not to be too ...forceful with you," DeathMask promised.

"He's quite bold," Himiko observed. "Why did I have to choose the only guy who keeps totally to his privacy?"

"Well, you just let your heart speak," Makoto told her.

"So it seems." One large pink heart formed over Himiko's head and cracked.

"Oh-oh..." Makoto watched her worriedly.

"This is a bit distracting," DeathMask frowned. Flirting with Makoto was a lot of fun, and Himiko was definitely one person too many. Maybe he should kill her and add her to his collection and then concentrate on the red-head.

"Don't panic, it'll pass."

"You sure? I wouldn't mind spending some time with you alone," DeathMask told her.

"Himiko, why don't you develop the films you have shot so far?" Makoto suggested.

"You want to get rid of me, huh? Okay, okay, I'm already gone..." With hanging head and a bag full of films, Himiko went upstairs to Scorpio Temple.

"So, now we're alone," DeathMask said gleefully. Finally he had a girl around that should become his alone!

Makoto studied him thoughtfully. Suddenly she wasn't so sure whether it had been a good idea to send Himiko away.

"Wanna drink something with me?" DeathMask wasn't 100% sure how to open any courting rituals. Killing his opponents was far easier.

"Sure. What do you have to offer?"

"Let's see... There's Grappa, Ouzo... and I think I have some Chianti, too."

"Don't you have anything *without* alcohol?"

"If you'd like some genuine espresso?"

"Ahm, not exactly..."

DeathMask frowned. Now it was getting complicated. "I hope there's some aranciata or lemonata left in the fridge..." He wasn't so fond of the orange or citrus lemonade, but sometimes he liked something sweet nonetheless.

"What about some plain and simple water?"

"Of course, water is always available." He usually didn't drink his Chianti unwatered.

"Fine."

DeathMask lead her into the living quarters of his temple. Interestingly they were the total contrast to the main hall. Okay, dark colours prevailed as well, but everything looked decidedly comfy, with a thick black plush carpet and a likewise well-cushioned dark blue sofa.

"This looks far more comfortable than I would have expected." Makoto was amazed. There were not even any horrid faces on the walls.

"Make yourself comfy," DeathMask invited her, and she sat down on the sofa. "You like it here?" The Cancer Saint smiled at her and sat down pretty close to her.

"Sure. It's nice - contrary to this ugly hall outside."

DeathMask watched her and pondered on the best strategy to conquer her. Maybe he should play around with her hair, too? Makoto seemed to have quite a hair fetish, and her long braid was tempting.

"Hey, didn't you offer me something to drink?" The Cancer Saint's close proximity was disconcerting.

"Oh." DeathMask stood up and brought a carafe of water, a bottle of Chianti and two glasses. He poured Makoto the water and himself the deep red wine, before he took place next to her again.

Makoto fished for one of the deep blue cushions and made herself comfortable. DeathMask smiled at her and tried to put an arm around her. She only looked questioningly at him.

"Hm? Didn't you want to play around with me?"

"Sure, as long as you tell me what *you* wish to play..."

"'Conquering the fair damsel'," DeathMask grinned.

"Well, then begin!" Makoto demanded.

"Huh?" DeathMask looked at her in confusion. "I thought *you* wanted to play *with me*?"

"Well, I already do..."

"Hm." He frowned and wasn't sure he liked the tone of hers. Makoto found his facial expression majorly amusing.

"Totemo kawaii," she commented.

"Pah. You *are* going to be mine," DeathMask declared and pulled her closer.

"You sure?" Makoto tousled his cute hair-spikes. "To play with you is more fun than I thought."

"Why, thanks." DeathMask decided he would keep her in his temple. She was fun.

"And what's next?"

"Well, you are going to be my woman, of course."

"Err, don't you think that's a little fast?"

"If you insist we could prolong the courting ritual with some kissing or so..."

"What?!" Makoto looked at him with a mixture between shock and amazement.

"I thought it was settled that you'd become my mate?!"

"Ahm, I wanted to *play* - this is getting a bit too serious for my taste..."

"But I just chose you to found a family... You see, I would provide for you, kill all the people who'd try to hurt you..."

"Found a family?" Makoto squeaked. "Are you kidding?!"

"Of course not. Okay, I'm really mean where my enemies are concerned, but then, I really want a nice and comfy home..."

"Don't look at me!"

"Why not? You're cute."

"But I don't want a family! I'm a career woman!"

"No family? No children?" DeathMask hung his head.

"Especially no children!"

"But I would like at least half a dozen strong sons!"

"Ahm, I guess it's time for me to go now..."

"So soon?"

"Well, you are not satisfied to play with me, and such a serious thing like founding a family can't be decided in five minutes."

"Ah, I see. You need some more time until you finally agree to stay with me..."

"Exactly." Makoto nodded vigorously.

"Well, then take your time. But hurry!"

"Yes, Yes, I'll think it over carefully. But now I have to go!"

Makoto fled from the fourth temple while DeathMask looked after her, a single heart floating upwards from his head.

**- File GS06-Can-T001 Closed -**

## Kapitel 26: Interlude VIII - Shaka's Teleport Service! Chasing the Night Prowlers

### Interlude VIII

#### Shaka's Teleport Service! Chasing the Night Prowlers

Makoto stormed upstairs to Scorpio Temple.

"Himiko? Where are you?" she shouted breathlessly.

"Here, where else," the voice of the blonde engineer came from their quarters. "Wait outside for a moment, I'm almost through developing the photos."

"Sure, but hurry!"

"I can't speed up the developing process, sorry. Gosh, this guy looks gorgeous!"

"Humph."

"Which reminds me -- why are you already back? Didn't you want to ...play with him for awhile?"

"Ahm, we had slightly differing views in this respect..."

"In what way?" Himiko had finished and opened the door. "Tell me!"

"He decided he wanted to found a family with me with at least a dozen sons!"

"How cute!"

"You can have him if you like..."

"Thanks, but no thanks. I only want my Camus-sama. -- Hm, I wouldn't have thought that DeathMask is such a family person..."

"He seemed totally serious about it!" Makoto shuddered. "I' m lucky I escaped..."

"You mean, he really wanted to *marry* you and everything?"

"I fear so."

"Well, you can still consider it when you want to quit your job at the Graude Foundation Research Labs," Himiko suggested.

"I'd rather not... Just imagine - a dozen children or more!"



Himiko laughed.

"I need to be comforted *right now*. I have a severe shock."

"And who is supposed to comfort you?"

"I don't mind - as long as he doesn't want to marry me and have children!"

"But don't think about Camus! He's *mine*."

"He's too icy anyway. I don't think he'd be able to comfort *anyone*." Makoto sniffed.

"It's too bad that both Milo and Camus are in Athens right now..."

"Indeed."

"Hm... Why don't we go and look where they are?" Himiko suggested.

"And how are we supposed to find them?"

"Why don't we ask one of the other Goldies? What about Shura?"

"Better not. He's still peeved that I didn't stay at his temple."

"Tsk tsK tsK. First you leave Milo, then Shura, then DeathMask - who's next?"

"Dunno. I'm open for anything..."

"If I ever get my Camus-sama I will *never* leave him! I'd even build some comfy igloo for him..." Himiko sighed dreamily. She *had* to see Camus again, as soon as possible. "Why don't we ask Shaka? He's so strong that he could even teleport both of you to Athens at once."

Makoto agreed and they went to Virgo Temple. Shaka was deep in sl... *meditation*, as usual.

"Hi, Shaka!" Makoto tugged at his cape that he had draped around himself like a sarong.

Shaka floated upwards and unfolded his legs and cape. "Who dares to disturb my meditation?" he asked indignantly.

"Open your eyes, then you don't need to ask." Makoto shook her head.

"This insolence can only have been uttered by two certain girls," Shaka commented. "Okay, what do you want?"

"Please do us a tiny favour!"

"And what do I get in return?"

"What do you *want* in return?"

"You will cook for me tomorrow!"

"No problem," Makoto smiled. "But don't complain if you overeat and get a belly ache again."

"I won't. And in the worst case I will call Mu again."

"Okay. Tomorrow you'll get a truly delicious meal if you teleport us to Athens to Milo and Camus."

"Hm. Why don't you simply go there? It's not that far," Shaka wondered.

"It's farther than we like, and anyway, we'd never find Milo and the others."

"And I shall work as your teleport service? You know, that's somehow demeaning!"

"Please..." Makoto looked at him. "Think of Bengali eggplant and yogurt with mustard seed, or a berried avocado grapefruit salad, or green beans with scraped coconut..."

"Okay, I'm convinced!" Shaka put on his best angelic smile and homed in on Milo. In the next instant they materialized in a steak house, fortunately next to the table where Milo, Aiolia and Camus dined.

"Thank you Shaka. You are really nice."

Shaka's smile intensified, and he teleported back.

"How did you manage to do *this*?" Milo marveled. "Shaka would never do anything for any of *us*!"

"Probably you don't offer him the right things in return," Makoto grinned.

"By Athena, it's *her* again!" Camus looked at Himiko in shock and downed the glass of Château Beau Rivage he had ordered to accompany his steak with green peppercorns. Slightly irritated, he looked at the empty glass. It was a pain that this girl brought him to finish his wines in such an unbecoming manner.

"Camus, how could you!" Milo pointed in mock horror at the empty wine glass.

"I'm sorry," Camus said with hanging head. The poor wine...

"It seems you have a lot of fun here," Makoto observed.

"I haven't," Camus stated dryly and watched Himiko's every move. He hoped she wouldn't come closer.

"I have," Aiolia contradicted.

"Fine," Makoto smiled. "I need a little entertainment."

"We're almost done eating," Aiolia said, "and as you can see, Camus has even finished his wine already."

"Yeah, usually one has to wait quite a while until he has enjoyed it to the fullest," Milo grinned.

"At least this shows he's a gourmet and not a gourmand like certain other persons," Himiko gazed at Milo and Aiolia. "And I don't look at anyone."

Camus grumbled something unintelligible, only the word 'groupie' could be understood.

Aiolia laughed. "Hey, I wouldn't mind having a personal groupie around!"

"Camus seems to have another opinion about it." Teasingly, Makoto tousled the Aquarius Saint's hair.

Camus gave her a deadly stare, especially as Himiko squealed, "Don't you dare! He's *mine*!" before she jumped at him and clutched her arms around his neck. He never had the slightest chance to escape.

"Don't panic, I don't want him. But these strands are so cute." Makoto pointed at the two thick strands of indigo hair that framed Camus' face.

"I know..." Himiko sighed and twirled one of them around her index finger. "But it's not only the hair..."

Makoto gave Camus a thoughtful gaze. If he wouldn't always look so darkly! His gaze could easily freeze an active volcano.

Camus decided not to move at all. Maybe Himiko would go away on her own if he ignored her actively.

"I really don't get it," Milo grumbled. "What has he that I don't have?"

"Hm. Let me think about it," Makoto said.

"I'm listening!"

"He looks so cute when he tries to resist temptation," Himiko giggled.

"That's one point," Makoto nodded.

"Hear that, Camus? Give in and she won't be interested anymore," Milo suggested.

And then maybe *he* would become the object of her infatuation, he added mentally.

"I'm not so convinced," the Aquarius Saint said tragically. If he would give in, he probably would *never* have any single moment for himself again.

"Himiko chose you. No matter what *you* do or want, you have lost anyway," Makoto told him.

"Well, then he really should give in, then he can at least enjoy the situation," Aiolia grinned and gave the waitress who just passed the table a winning smile.

"Not everybody is as varied in his interests as you are," Makoto commented.

"If you ask me -- I think his attitude is somehow unhealthy," Aiolia shook his head.

"Chacun son goût," Makoto shrugged. "And you Saints are pretty robust anyway, aren't you?"

"Fortunately," Camus said dryly as Himiko still clung to him and squeezed him like her favourite teddy bear.

"It's a shame that Himiko wants you all for her own, or I would love to find out how robust you are..."

"Hey, *one* groupie is already more than enough!"

"I would like *any* amount of groupies, but they just don't come to me," Milo sulked.

"I think it's very comforting that you aren't besieged by groupies," Makoto grinned.

"So you want me all for your own?" Milo asked eagerly.

"Sure. Where else should I move in?"

"Well, you could go back to Shura," Milo grumbled. "Or worse -- DeathMask..."

"Thanks, but no thanks! I will never set a foot in DeathMask's temple again, if I can help it."

"Hm? Did he do something to you?" Milo wanted to know.

"I never want to meet him again!"

"Good," Milo said with satisfaction.

"Even though he looks very cute..."

"Hm."

"So what did DeathMask do?" Aiolia asked curiously.

"Well, he was very nice, but he had some strange ideas about family and marriage..."

"DeathMask? *Nice*?! Can't be! He's a cruel monster. Just look at his temple!" Aiolia exclaimed.

"Yeah, the great hall is ugly, but his private rooms are really nice."

"Huh?!" Aiolia uttered perplexed.

"Absolutely comfy. I loved his big sofa."

"DeathMask has comfortable private rooms?" Milo asked incredulously. "I thought he'd sleep on a bed of nails..."

"Himiko, would you please stop nibbling at my earlobe?" Camus said grumpily. "If you are hungry, order a meal."

"Don't they look adorable?" Makoto asked.

"I think it's interesting that he doesn't simply teleport away," Milo pointed out.

"Indeed," Aiolia grinned. "I'm sure he likes her despite all of his protests."

"Pah. If I'm still here it's because, first, I haven't paid for my meal yet, and second, she would follow me anyway."

"True, but it would take a while until she reaches you again."

"I suspect it's only that he downed his wine in one gulp," Milo laughed. With an evil grin he ordered another glass of wine for his friend, this time a strong, red Greek brand.

"Maybe you should just give him enough wine to drink and he'll do whatever you want him to do," Makoto suggested to Himiko.

"Ah no. I want him to want me out of his free will and not because he's drugged." She buried her face in the silken indigo mane, and a pink heart floated idly above her head.

"I really wish I knew how she does this," Makoto wondered. "I don't have the slightest explanation for it."

"Must be some weird kind of Cosmo," Aiolia suspected. Well, if they didn't have any Cosmo at all, they would never have been able to pass the Veil around Sanctuary.

"I think it has a certain appeal," Milo commented with a broad grin. "Camus, just *look*! It's all because of you icicle..."

"I want to have something like this, too," Makoto sulked. "I feel so normal around you."

"Well, someone who is so eagerly after *Camus* can't be normal in the first place. *I* would be a far more likely candidate for thousands of willing young women. It's too bad that there are only a handful of girls available at Sanctuary," Milo sighed.

"So that's why you compete for everything that resembles a female person?"

Milo gave her a dark look. He was sure she wanted to tease him because once he fell for Aphrodite's disguise.

"Well, aren't we all very eligible young men who just have to be admired by the fair sex?" Aiolia asked. And of course, he was the number one eligible young man.

"Yeah, and Camus is the all time number one," Himiko sighed. "My perfect Prince Charming!"

The Aquarius Saint rolled his eyes.

"To me he has more of the frog in the story," Makoto laughed.

"No problem, I volunteer to kiss him anyway," Himiko chimed. Camus almost fell into a state of shock.

"That's something I would die to see," Aiolia laughed.

"Me too," Makoto nodded.

Himiko left her place behind Camus' chair, walked around it and took place in Camus' lap. The Aquarius Saint decided to ignore her stoically. If he wished her away hard enough, maybe she would simply disappear.

Makoto positioned her chair so that she could watch Himiko and Camus. This was better than any movie.

The waitress brought the wine Milo had ordered for Camus. The Scorpio Saint pushed the glass towards his friend. "I guess you need it..."

"Indeed..." Camus took a long gulp, then coughed. His face turned an unhealthy green. "What's *this* vile stuff? Do you want to poison me?"

"It's a Mavrodaphne."

"It's sweet and cheap. Disgusting!" Camus shuddered.

"I *have* to comfort him," Himiko decided and gave him a tentative kiss on his lips. Immediately, Camus' hair stood straight up.

"How cute! Aren't the two a perfect match?" Makoto giggled.

Milo nodded. "And I can't convince you to become *my* significant other so that we could make up another dream couple?"

"You are dreaming," Makoto told him.

"Oh yes, of you," he sighed.

"It seems you all have certain mental problems," Makoto observed.

"Not me. I'm a perfectly normal guy," Aiolia said.

"Hm..." Makoto examined him from head to toe.

"You see, I still have some free space left in my temple..."

"I'll consider it."

"Makoto! You can't leave me *again*," Milo lamented.

"Why not? You only want me to cook for you"

"Pah. That's only because you refuse to accompany me the other times... I'm a Scorpio, you know," he said seductively.

"So what?"

Milo sighed. "Ah yes, I remember. You don't believe in astrology. Otherwise you'd know that Scorpios are sensual and very passionate..."

"Scorpions are poisonous and sting -- that counters all of the positive traits."

Aiolia followed the dialog with great interest.

"Humph. Okay, I may sting -- but I assure you there are various ways..."

"And what?"

"You!"

Now Aiolia burst from laughter. These two were as interesting as Camus and his 'groupie'. He turned to the Aquarius Saint whose hair had assumed his normal style again, even though Himiko had put her head against his shoulder. Obviously the strong Greek wine had dulled his perception. The young woman was delighted - for once he didn't wear his uncomfortable Gold Cloth.

"He's soooo cute," she sighed dreamily and rubbed her cheek against his shoulder. Camus sighed. She was still here...

"And what are we going to do now?" Makoto asked.

"I enjoy being so close to my beloved - especially when for once he doesn't try to flee."

"But I begin to feel bored," Makoto nagged.

"You only need to accompany me to my temple to spend a nice evening there," Milo suggested seductively.

"I bet you only want another dinner."

"That, too. But afterwards we can ...relax a bit."

"While we clean the dishes and tidy up, yes. We had that before."

"Actually I thought of something more entertaining," Milo grumbled.

"The only thing of real importance for you is food!" Makoto pricked him into the side.  
"You're getting fat!"

"I had hoped to convince you to ...train a little with me."

"Sorry, that's not for me. Senseless stone smashing and the works..."

"That's Shura. I have other things in mind."

"And what?"

"I will show you tonight..."

"I want to know in advance what I have to expect!"

"A love-starved Scorpio Gold Saint, what else?" Aiolia laughed.

"I'll kill you," Milo threatened.

"I *knew* that was what he was up to," Makoto sighed.

"I *almost* had her," Milo grumbled.

"As if I would trust you even one tiny bit!"

"But I'm absolutely honest," Milo claimed.

"Yeah, you admit that you only think of one single thing," Aiolia teased.

"Look who talks!"



"You are absolutely cute," Makoto commented.

"I'm *not* cute," Milo said exasperatedly.

"Of course not," Makoto grinned.

"But *he* is," Himiko sighed and snuggled closer to Camus. One heart floated up from here and hit his nose where it burst into myriads of tiny heart shaped particles.

"I think it *is* pathological," Makoto commented.

Camus watched the tiny hearts in utter bewilderment. And he was the reason for this?

"I have never seen anything like this." Aiolia shook his head.

"Isn't there any potable wine around?" Camus asked desperately.

"Well, we saw a wine bar when we strolled through the town a while ago," Makoto said.

"Then let's get going!" He stood up and Himiko almost fell to the ground. She sulked. Obviously, Camus had decided to regard her as nonexistent.

Makoto led them to a wine bar and they found a nice place in a more or less dimly lit corner. As soon as Camus sat, he was immediately occupied by Himiko again. He sighed. He *really* needed a good wine now.

Milo and Aiolia exchanged a meaningful look. Camus struggled less and less. Should this mean that Himiko slowly but surely eroded his defenses?

Makoto fetched the menu and ordered a bottle of Domaine de l'Abbaye Santenay Gravières for Camus. He looked as if he needed something like this.

When she passed him a glass, he inhaled in the bouquet, and his face brightened visibly. "Now *that's* a wine!" he said with a smile.

"He smiled!" Himiko sighed.

"Well, I know something about wines, too. If you know how to cook, you should know which wines go best with your meals."

Camus didn't say anything but enjoyed his wine. Makoto ordered wine for herself, too, but hers a sweet Greek liquor wine that she loved dearly.

"Camus-sama," Himiko looked at him. "I would also see to it that you only get the best to eat and drink..."

Camus returned her gaze thoughtfully while he sipped the deep red wine. It was truly

delicious - velvety, full-bodied... If Himiko really would see to it that he got good wines whenever he wished, he *might* let her stay in his temple. But nothing more.

Makoto was satisfied that Camus looked somewhat happier. His former icy stare had been almost unbearable. She really wondered how Himiko could stay so close to him without turning into an icicle herself. Makoto sipped from her glass and immediately felt warmer. This was a really yummy wine, even though it was very strong, she thought. If only she wouldn't get too tipsy.

Milo watched her with interest. Maybe she would get a little drunk, then he could certainly convince her to accompany him the remainder of the evening and the night.

"Why are you looking at me like this? Do you want to try the wine?"

"Oh yes, please." Milo beamed at her. She wanted to share her wine with him. This was a good start. He took the glass from her and helped himself to a deep sip. "Delicious!" It was a Samos wine, a Greek specialty he also liked very much - as long as he didn't get a beer, that is.

Makoto decided to order a whole bottle of it as Milo seemed to like the stuff. She poured him one glass after the other, and much to her relief she only got a little bit of it. When the bottle was empty, another followed and another... Milo was slightly tipsy and directed seductive smiles and suggestive looks at Makoto.

"I'd say it's time to go now," the red-haired woman said after a look to her watch.

"No problem. I only hope you'll pay." Milo smiled at her.

"Yeah, I'd better return to my temple, too," Camus said and hiccupped. "Oopsie. I shouldn't have drunken the whole bottle..."

"Well, no one but you likes this vile dust-dry wine," Aiolia shrugged.

Makoto paid for everything (the credit card of the Graude Foundation Research Labs was very practical), and they left the wine bar.

Himiko clung close to Camus and for once he was even glad about it as he didn't walk to steadily anymore. Normally he enjoyed smaller amounts of wine as the ones he kept at his wine cellar were far to expensive to gulp them down like this.

Aiolia looked at his colleagues, laughed and decided to teleport home at once. Milo and Camus should be able to cope for themselves.

When Makoto looked at Milo, she thought it would be better not to trust his teleport abilities in his current condition, so she called a cab that brought them into the vicinity of the Veil that shut out unwelcome visitors.

The rest of the distance they had to walk, which was quite a feat with the two slightly drunk Goldies. Makoto sighed and tugged Milo upstairs.

Himiko had similar problems -- and she had to drag Camus up to the eleventh temple.

Finally, Makoto and Milo arrived at Scorpio Temple, and Makoto directed him into his bedroom. He was sleepy enough right now.

"Do you stay with me tonight?" he asked her with his dangerous puppy dog gaze.

"Well, I'm here right now..."

"Fine!" He pulled her closer and they fell onto the bed.

"Not so fast - I want to get rid of my shoes first..."

"Oh. Of course..."

Makoto put off her shoes before she helped Milo with his. He giggled and pulled her close again. Finally she would be his!

Makoto sighed. "You are pretty drunk. It's amazing that you can still look straight. How many fingers do you see?" She held up three fingers.

"Hm. Enough..." He caught her fingers and kissed them.

"Hey, that's cheating," Makoto protested and tousled his stunning blue-violet hair. "Are you sure you're okay?"

"Very much so," Milo grinned like the proverbial Cheshire cat.

Makoto propped herself up on one arm and watched Milo. Shouldn't he fall sleep soon? The Scorpio Saint yawned. He felt just perfect right now. Maybe a little drowsy, but otherwise fine. He turned around and lay on his back. Makoto played with one of the strands of his hair, and he enjoyed her attentions. Right now he was definitely too lazy to move.

"You are pretty lazy," Makoto observed.

"Well, it's just that I'm entitled to get all of the attention."

"Is that so?" Makoto laughed.

"Yep."

"That's enough now."

"Hey, you can't do that!"

"Sure I can. Look for someone else who pampers you!"

"But you are convenient," Milo sulked.

"*Convenient?! Pah.* See you tomorrow." Makoto stood up.

"Makoto, you cannot simply go now. You're here in my temple, so you have to act according to my wishes."

"Well, in that case I'll move out tomorrow."

"And where would you go?"

"Aiolia said that there is some space in his temple."

"You can't tell me you want to move in with Sanctuary's best known womanizer and macho!"

Makoto giggled. "Look who talks... I'm sure he's really nice." She started towards the door.

Milo grumbled something unintelligible and tried to jump up to stop her. Unfortunately, he got totally tangled in the cover and crashed down.

"Are you looking for something down there?"

"Only my shoes," Milo claimed, while he tried to get up. Maybe he shouldn't have drunken so much, he thought when his head began to spin.

"And I thought Gold Saints are able to move at light speed..."

"Well, I can do that... only not now..." He merely managed to tangle himself worse.

"Oh dear, I can't bear to watch this picture of miserable suffering." Makoto helped Milo out of the cover, and he immediately took the chance to pull her into an embrace.

"See - you're mine, and so you have to stay."

"Dream on."

"Hey, I'm the perfect match for you!"

"I strongly disagree."

"Where do you find one single fault in me?"

"I can find so many of them that I don't know where to start! You are conceited, and that's only the beginning."

"You are cruel - and I always thought that was *my* domain..." He yawned again.

"I suggest you go to bed now." Makoto shoved him backwards, and he fell onto the mattress.

"But you stay with me!"

"Only if you promise that you sleep now." She sat down on the edge of the bed and gazed the Gold Saint who looked still slightly poutily. Somehow he was just big boy, incredible powers or not. Must be the fact that none of the Saints was brought up like a normal child.

"If you insist..." By now, Milo was too tired anyway. He curled up and began to snore. Makoto sighed and decided to find a comfortable spot, too.

\* \* \*

When Himiko and Camus reached Aquarius Temple, Camus was too tired to manage to shut her out. He collapsed onto his bed and fell asleep, and Himiko grasped the opportunity to cuddle close to him.

**- End of Interlude VIII -**

## Kapitel 27: File BS04-Cyg-T001 - Enter Hyoga! Surprising Discoveries

### File BS04-Cyg-T001

#### Enter Hyoga! Surprising Discoveries

For the hundredth time, Hyoga looked at the letter that ordered him to report to Aquarius Temple at once. With the paper in his hand, he climbed the stairs towards the temple of his Master. It was still early in the morning, the sun had just risen and shed golden rays over the beautiful white temples.

Finally he reached the small round building with the symbol of the eleventh Zodiac Sign on the front. To his surprise, Camus didn't await him on the steps. Tentatively, Hyoga entered the temple. The great hall was empty, so Camus was probably somewhere in his private rooms which were located next to the hall.

"Master?" His voice sounded hollow in the spacious room.

Suddenly an unintelligible sound came from one of the doors, followed by a shocked exclamation.

Bewildered, Hyoga looked in the direction of the noise. What could startle Camus like this? He remembered his teacher as being calm and reserved, just like the eternal glaciers of Eastern Siberia.

The Cygnus Saint decided to save his Master from whatever had befallen him and stormed into the room. The picture that spread before him made him stop in his tracks, and Hyoga gaped at the scene.

Camus sat upright in his bed, his indigo coloured hair standing on end, as he stared in horror at a gold-blonde young woman who returned his gaze in rapture.

"Master?!"

"Er..." Camus blushed deeply when he became aware of his favourite disciple. "It's not how it looks like," he stuttered in utter embarrassment. Not only that he wasn't 100 percent sure what had happened that night and how Himiko had managed to sneak into his bed, it grew even worse as Hyoga had seen this ...groupie in here!

"You called me, Master?" Hyoga said, diplomatically ignoring the compromising situation, although he examined the woman closely. She looked very much like Mama, he thought. His wonderful Mama who had drowned on the ship that should bring them both into the Land of the Rising Sun to his father, who later on had turned out to be a cruel bastard... Mama! He missed her so much...

"Ah yes." Camus glanced at Himiko and decided to tug the coverlet over her so that he

didn't have to face her for now. If he only knew what had happened after they left Athens...

"So what are your orders, Master?"

Camus let out a deep sigh. "Actually I wanted you to take care of *her* and see to it that she returns to Japan and *stays* there!"

"Hm." Hyoga lifted one corner of the coverlet and looked right into Himiko's eyes.

"The cute rubberducky!" Himiko chimed.

Hyoga let the coverlet fall down again. "Huh?" he asked perplexed.

Himiko wiggled out from under the coverlet. "But you are the Rubberduck - ahm, *Cygnus* Saint, aren't you? You're really high on my list of Saints to be examined, too!"

"You want to examine me?" Hyoga asked and eyed her suspiciously.

"Sure. I'm Dr.Shizukawa Himiko from the Graude Foundation Research Labs..." She explained her job to Hyoga, while she tried to keep as close to Camus as possible. The Aquarius Saint, on the other hand, moved away until he fell out of his bed.

Hyoga watched this in great confusion. Was Camus truly afraid of this petite woman who looked so much like his Mama? "And why should I agree to this examination?" he wanted to know.

"Because it's for the good of Athena's Saints," Himiko claimed. "My Camus-sama, why don't you return here?" She gave him a dazzling smile.

"What's your opinion to this, Master?" Hyoga asked.

"Well, it's okay..." Camus said. When Himiko examined Hyoga, he would be rid of her and she wouldn't harass *him*.

"It's okay? You make me a very happy woman, my Camus-sama." She pointed at the empty space next to her.

With great interest, Hyoga looked from Camus to Himiko and back. He still missed his Mama sorely, but then, Himiko looked a lot like her - and if his Master and she were truly a couple, maybe they could live as a happy family in Eastern Siberia when these silly Galaxian Wars were over.

Camus hung his head, but recovered fast. He shouldn't show weakness in front of his disciple. On the other hand, if he sat down right there, his reputation would be totally ruined. It was a lose-lose situation, he concluded and sat down after all. At least it was more comfortable there.

Himiko looked raptly at Camus and suddenly a large, pink heart appeared above her

head and floated towards the ceiling. Hyoga's eyes followed the rise of the incredible object unbelievably.

"What is this, Master?"

"A heart." Camus said matter-of-factly. He was almost resigned to his fate. "What else does it look like?"

"Is this some kind of Cosmo, too?"

"Well, I suspect it is indeed a strange kind of Cosmo. After all, she managed to pass the Veil without help. On the other hand it's totally useless, or can you imagine a Saint fight someone with a pink heart attack?"

"Not really," Hyoga admitted with a grin.

"The only thing they do is tickle," Camus reported. It had been a weird feeling when he was hit by one of the things.

"Well, I would *never* hurt you, my Camus-sama!" Himiko assured him and wrapped her arms around him. The Aquarius Saint sighed.

"Would you please refrain from doing so?" He tried to pluck Himiko off. Hyoga silently stared at his Master. "Hyoga, you see, it's not as you might think... I'm still a dedicated single - *she* chose to do this..."

"Whatever you say, Master." Hyoga could barely stifle a grin, especially when Himiko put her head against Camus' shoulder and another heart floated upwards. They would certainly be nice new parents for him.

Camus frowned deeply when he saw Hyoga's wistful smile. Whatever the boy was thinking about, the Aquarius Saint was sure it would certainly not be to his liking.

"Why don't you get up and dress properly?" Camus asked Himiko gruffly.

"I guess I'd rather wait outside..." Hyoga left the bedroom.

"You totally ruined my reputation," Camus grumbled at Himiko.

"Did I? Why don't we just marry, then everything is legally settled."

"Graaa! Marry whomever you want but no *me*!" Camus jumped up and stormed into the bathroom. At least *there* he had his solitude. Himiko's gaze followed him lovingly. If he would just realize that it was destiny that they should end up together.

Hyoga waited patiently in the hall, until Camus appeared, now properly attired in his shining Aquarius Gold Cloth. His tiara he carried in his hand. Finally. Hyoga had already begun to count the stone tiles of the floor.



Camus gazed behind him. "Good. She's still in the bathroom... I wanted you to come here to get her out of Sanctuary, as far and as fast as possible..."

"But why me?"

"Because I have more important matters to attend to," Camus said coolly.

"Whatever you say..." Somehow Hyoga still believed that Camus somehow feared Himiko.

"Fine." Camus breathed in relief, which immediately evaporated when the door opened and Himiko steered directly towards him. She was dressed in an orange-flowered yukata and had her hair put up in a classical Japanese hair-style. Even Camus had to admit that she looked quite pretty in it, but he wouldn't change his opinion.

Hyoga, though, admired her duly. "Are you ready?"

"Oh, yes. Please accompany me to Scorpio Temple where my colleague and I have set up our lab."

"At Scorpio Temple?"

"Exactly," Himiko nodded. She stood on her toes and gave Camus a kiss on the cheek. "Itte mairimasu, Camus-sama. See you."

"Hopefully never again," he grumbled sotto voce.

Himiko and Hyoga left for the eighth temple, a couple of pink hearts trailing the woman.

Camus only shook his head and returned to his living-quarters. He needed at least one glass of good wine to cope with the current happenstances.

\* \* \*

"Tadaima!" Himiko chimed when she entered Scorpio Temple. "I'm back."

Hyoga followed her and wondered why Himiko had her lab in Milo's demesne. Was she actually two-timing Camus? Then he could understand why his Master acted so coldly towards her.

"Makoto? Where are you?" Himiko called when she didn't find her colleague in their old room. The physician was still deeply asleep in Milo's room and thus didn't hear her. "Makoto? - Hm, she isn't here... But where else might she be?"

Hyoga shrugged. "Why don't you ask the Scorpio Gold Saint? It's his temple after all."

"Good idea. He'll probably know." Himiko steered towards Milo's bedroom. At the door she hesitated. "I really hope his pets don't run around..."

"I don't see any here."

"Fine. I do hate scorpions!"

"So do I," Hyoga nodded.

"Yeah, and my Camus-sama, too... - Hm... Hyoga, why don't you open the door? Just in case..."

"If you insist." Hyoga knocked at the door. A deep snore answered him.

"Milo seems to be asleep," he commented amused.

"Well..." Himiko tried her luck and knocked a bit louder than Hyoga before.

"What's up?" A sleepy female voice asked. "Don't break the door!"

"Makoto?!" Himiko asked incredulously before she turned to Hyoga. "She's in there!"

"Well, then tell her to get out," Hyoga said impatiently. He wanted this examination to be over soon so that he could carry out his orders and return Himiko to Japan, before he'd kill the other Bronze Saints who had decided to participate in this Galaxian Wars tournament.

"Makoto, does this mean that Milo managed to seduce you after all?"

"Pah, what do you think of me?" Makoto left the bedroom, already fully dressed, even though her clothes looked slightly wrinkled. "Oh, you brought someone with you?"

"Yeah, the cute Rubberduck Saint," Himiko piped.

"I'm the *Cygnus* Saint and no rubberduck," Hyoga complained irritatedly. "And if you didn't know - *Cygnus* means *swan*!"

"Hm. But the thingy on your tiara looks more like a duck than a swan, if you ask me," Himiko pointed out. "But other than that you're really cute."

Hyoga frowned at her, wondering whether it had been an insult or a compliment. Makoto looked closely at Hyoga, too. He was truly very kawaii.

"Where did you manage to get him, Himiko?"

"My Camus-sama gave him to me!"

"Really?" Makoto was surprised

"That's not true," Hyoga told her. "Actually, my Master gave me the order to return her to Japan."

"Well, if you put it like this," Himiko conceded. "But he also said it's okay that we examine you."

"That's why I accompanied you," Hyoga nodded.

"That's great!" Makoto said delighted. "Finally I get to do something again." She examined him closely. "This will be a pleasure," she smiled. He was really nice to look at - the unruly gold-blond mane, the clear, light-blue eyes and the nicely built body...

Hyoga gazed from Makoto to Himiko and back and wondered whether it was truly such a good idea to submit to their examination. But then, he was a Saint and he had survived worse - he hoped.

The women ushered him into the laboratory and asked him to get out of his Cloth. Hyoga shrugged and willed the Cloth off his body. It reassembled in the presentational form as slightly abstract kind of swan.

"Okay, what exactly do you wish to examine?" he asked. It occurred to him that it might have been prudent to ask this *before* he agreed to it.

"Well, a) your Cloth and b) yourself," Himiko explained. "It's all absolutely okay, I can assure you!"

"Never mind, we need the examination data," Makoto told him. "Sit down here, please, I'll begin with taking a blood sample..."

Hyoga sighed, but complied.

"*Ouch!*" The scream came from Himiko. "It bit me!" she shouted in surprise.

"What? One of the scorpions?" Makoto asked in alarm and tried to remember where she had put the antidote.

"No. The swan!"

"Huh? I thought these things are immobile when they are in their presentational state?"

"Me, too," Himiko whined. Hyoga tried to look as innocent as possible. He was sure the Cloth took its revenge because Himiko had called it a rubberduck.

"Iliecks!!" The scenery that now unfolded in front of Hyoga and Makoto was utterly amazing. The Cygnus Cloth beat its wings aggressively and chased Himiko through the room, while trying to bite her wherever it could reach her.

Hyoga almost burst from laughter. He hadn't known what his Cloth was able to do other than protect him as armour.

"Fascinating." Makoto scribbled down notes while Himiko was running around.

"So *help* me, anyone!" the engineer screamed panicky.

"Sorry, I don't know how to stop it," Makoto told her and continued with her notes.

"Something like this never happened to me," Hyoga said and watched his Cloth with great interest.

"But it *bites*!"

"Bite back," Makoto suggested.

"Pah! - *Ouch!*"

"Well, I could try to call it back," Hyoga pondered.

"Yes, *please* - *ouch!*"

"But only if you answer me some questions, too. Truthfully!"

"I'll do anything, but save me from this rabid thing!" Himiko pleaded. She shrieked when the swan bit her once more, this time in the backside.

"Truly anything?" Hyoga asked curiously.

"Well, I'll answer your questions. But I'll never do anything that might harm my Camus-sama!"

"Okay." Hyoga concentrated and directed his Cosmo at the Cloth. To his relief it calmed down. Himiko fell into a chair.

"I'm dead!"

"Okay. And now you'll tell me what I want to know," Hyoga demanded.

"It was a deal... So ask."

"What's your relationship with my Master?"

Himiko blushed deeply. "I love him."

"And what's his opinion on this matter?"

"Well, I have yet to convince him that he loves me, too..."

"I see." Hyoga wasn't exactly surprised anymore when Himiko's statement was accompanied by another pink heart.

"We are destined to be together," Himiko said dreamily. "He's soooo gorgeous!" Now a steady stream of small pink hearts emitted from her.

"It's getting worse," Makoto observed. "Poor Himiko!"

"You'd better say 'Poor Milo'," the Scorpio Gold Saint groaned. The ruckus in the lab had woken him to a monumental hangover.

"Why?" Makoto wanted to know.

"I have a very bad headache and you are so loud that my whole temple shakes!"

"It's your own fault that you drank too much," Makoto said mercilessly. "And we weren't *that* loud."

"So? And what was that shouting about the Cygnus Cloth chasing Himiko?"

"That was fun," Makoto grinned. "It ran after her, furiously beating its wings and biting her."

"I didn't think it was funny," Himiko grumbled. "I'm black and blue all over!"

"Awwwww, don't panic, this will pass."

"But it *hurts*!"

"My head hurts, too," Milo groaned. "Don't be so loud."

"That bad?" Makoto asked with false sympathy.

"Don't ask!"

Hyoga still sat on the examination table and let his legs dangle. He wondered whether he could convince his Cloth to attack people he didn't like. Some paper rustled. Hyoga looked into the direction of the sound and saw Himiko sitting in her chair and unfolding a poster of Aquarius Camus.

Milo held his head. "Could anyone give me an aspirin?"

"I thought Saints don't know any pain," Makoto grinned.

"I don't mind, my head feels as if it explodes anyway."

"Camus didn't have a hangover," Himiko observed. "My wonderful Camus-sama..."

"No wonder. Milo drank at least three times as much than he did." Makoto shook her head.

"And Camus drank some *good* wine, not this cheap stuff that Milo seems to prefer."

"Pah. Cheap stuff," Milo snorted. "It was good enough."

"Yeah, good enough to give you this hangover."

"Humph."

When Makoto looked to Himiko, she discovered a new batch of pink hearts floating over her colleague's head.

"She's an absolutely hopeless case," she said to Milo, to distract him from his headache.

"Indeed. We should find a way to relieve her from the pain - but first you might relieve *me* of *my* pain, too!"

"Okay, I guess a little massage won't hurt. Sit down here, so that I can reach your neck!"

Milo sat down next to Hyoga, and Makoto began to work on his neck. It didn't take long and Milo purred like a cat.

"Why can't my Camus-sama let me comfort him like this," Himiko sighed, and one of the hearts above her head burst in two.

Hyoga looked slightly envious at Milo. Obviously Gold Saints lived a very comfortable life. He wondered what it might take him to attain Gold rank, too.

Himiko unfolded another large photo.

"Don't you dare hang all these Camus posters in my temple," Milo shouted at her. "If anyone sees them and thinks I'm responsible, there might be some serious misconceptions about our relationship!"

"Oh dear, who would think there's something between you and Camus when you so desperately try to chase the girls..."

"Maybe it's because he doesn't get any?" Hyoga snickered.

"If it wouldn't feel so great being massaged by Makoto, I would challenge you for a duel here and now," Milo grumbled. "But I'm sure there'll be another time and then I will pay you back for this comment! - *If* there are posters in my temple, they will be pin-ups of cute girls in short skirts or even less!"

"So why haven't you any?"

"Hm... Unfortunately the Pope isn't so fond of such ...distractions."

"By the way, are you finished with the examination?" Hyoga asked. It sure wasn't

prudent to keep sitting next to the Scorpio Saint when he teased him like before.

"Yeah, I *am* finished." Himiko rubbed her backside again.

"And so am I," Makoto nodded.

"Fine. Then I can bring Himiko back to Japan as ordered."

"Hey, the girls are *mine* - I'm going to keep them," Milo frowned. "Especially Makoto."

"Huh? Why should you bring Himiko to Japan - and on whose orders?"

"My Master's, of course. Camus told me to remove her from Sanctuary."

Makoto laughed. "Ah, so now Camus needs support to get rid of her?"

"Actually, this puzzled me too," Hyoga pondered aloud. "Do *you* have any idea what might cause my Master to be afraid of her?"

"Other than that he wouldn't want to suffocate in pink hearts, no," Makoto grinned.

"Did you know that she looks a lot like my mama?" Hyoga suddenly changed the topic.

"Your mama?" Makoto looked at him in amazement.

Hyoga nodded. "Yes." Now he looked profoundly sad. "My mama died in a ship wreck when I was only six years of age..."

"That's bad. And Himiko looks like her?"

Hyoga nodded again. "It would be marvellous if my Master would decide to marry her - then I would finally have a family again..."

"Somehow I have the distinct feeling that Camus wouldn't like this idea even a little bit," Makoto said and flexed her hands.

"Hey, don't stop massaging," Milo complained.

"You had enough - and my fingers, too."

"You're mean!"

Hyoga was deeply lost in thought and didn't notice the little exchange between Makoto and the Scorpio Saint at all. "For seven years, Camus trained me in the icy landscape of Eastern Siberia. He was like a father to me. But I still do miss my mama!" A silent tear run down his cheek.

Makoto tousled Hyoga's blond mane. "That's really sad."

"And you really couldn't convince my Master that marrying Himiko might be a good idea after all?"

"Why me?"

"Well, whom else could I ask? - *Please!*"

"He won't listen to me," Makoto told him.

Hyoga sighed. "But I long so much for a real family."

"Well, who doesn't?" Makoto examined Hyoga. He seemed to have quite a problem with it, she thought.

"You see, most Saints are orphans from their earliest childhood on, but at least I had my mama when I was little. But I can't forget the picture of her drowning right before my eyes..."

"That's terrible," Makoto put her arm around him. Hyoga was indeed awfully traumatized.

"Well, that's pretty bad to hear," Milo said. "But whatsoever, it's not Camus' place to send my girls away!"

"*Your* girls?" Makoto asked him incredulously.

"Well, as you live here with me, of course you are *my* girls!"

"Never! I'm only Camus' girl," Himiko protested.

"And *I* definitely belong to no one but me," Makoto told him. "And certainly not to *you*."

"Well, but I got the order from my Master..."

"That's too bad. You see, if Himiko has to return to Japan, I have to go, too."

"No way," Milo protested. "You will stay here! - Please..."

"Himiko!" Makoto snatched the Camus poster out of her hands. "Why don't you say anything?"

"*He* wants to send me away..." A tear ran down Himiko's cheek. "It's so terrible..."

"And I want to keep you here," Milo said.

"You really start to get on my nerves," Makoto grumbled. "If I only knew how to convince Camus..."



"Oh yes, please do so," Hyoga pleaded.

"Why don't you try to devise a plan, too?" Makoto asked exasperatedly. "I'm pretty sure there's no way to force him..."

"Hm... This is a difficult choice for me," Milo pondered. "If I help you, then I'll lose my bet, but I keep Makoto. If I don't help you, I'll keep my money, but I will lose you two..."

"I guess you'll have to make a decision."

"You're right," Milo nodded. "I prefer not to lose my bet. I can still visit you in Japan, after all."

"So you're stingy, too!"

"Hey, Athena doesn't pay us much in the first place," Milo defended himself. And of course he didn't want to fall out with Camus either.

"Well, then let me take you to Tokyo now," Hyoga said.

"I'm very well able to get there on my own," Makoto replied.

"And how?"

"With the jet plane that we used to get here of course."

"A jet plane? Would it be possible that I could take it, too?"

"Why?"

"Well, otherwise I'd have to shoulder Himiko and jog to Tokyo."

"No, I can't allow that. I'm sure Himiko would get sick from such a transport. Okay, you come along anyway."

"Cool." Hyoga smiled at her. Carrying Himiko to Japan certainly wouldn't have been fun at all, especially if she'd have kicked and screamed all the way to get down.

"This means we'll be on our way back tomorrow morning," Makoto decreed.

"*Tomorrow morning?*" Milo squealed.

"Why delay longer? And anyway, we have to turn in our results to Professor Asamori."

"But..."

"Okay," Himiko sniffed. "I have to work on a plan to conquer *him* anyway. And maybe he'll find out that he misses me after all, when I'm not around."

"Then let's pack our equipment and carry it to the plane," Makoto suggested.

"Makoto! Don't leave me! Who else will cook for me?"

"Either you learn to cook, or it's back to fast food," Makoto said mercilessly.

"You're cruel!" Milo sighed. This was so sad... Finally he had found a girl with whom he could consider to share his life, and then she simply left him. "And who will comfort me in the evenings?"

"What about your 'cutey little pets'?"

"I prefer you for things like this."

"No way." Makoto fetched the first pieces from their makeshift laboratory.

"I can help you with your things," Hyoga offered.

"Fine," Makoto smiled. "Then I don't have to carry everything alone." Her petite colleague was not much help in the muscles department, and so all the heavy duty stuff usually fell to her.

"No problem," Hyoga said.

"At least I have some photos of *him*," Himiko sighed.

"Oh dear, we have to pack the photos, too," Makoto exclaimed. They had taken literally hundreds of them, if not more.

"But be careful with my Camus-sama!"

"If you're so worried, you can pack them on your own."

"Of course!"

"I will help you to get my Master's love," Hyoga promised her. "But I have yet to devise a plan to do so."

"You would really do this?" Himiko asked hopefully.

"Sure. I want a proper family again..."

In the meantime, Makoto had packed the first boxes of their equipment and passed them to Hyoga. With some directions where to find the plane, she sent him away.

Himiko packed her things, too. Now that Hyoga had promised to help her, she was immediately in a far better mood.

"Hey, you could help us a little, too," Makoto scolded Milo who stood in the way.

"But I don't want you to go..."

"Don't whine around." She gave him two large boxes. "You can visit us in Tokyo, remember."

With a sigh, Milo complied, and with the help of the two Saints they had their things in the jet plane in record time.

"But we still haven't examined *all* of the Goldies," Himiko pointed out.

"I think the professor will be satisfied with the results so far."

"Although I didn't get my Camus-sama. In either way..."

**- File BS04-Cyg-T001 Closed -**

## Kapitel 28: Interlude IX - Sun, Summer, Sea! ...and an Ice-Floe

### Interlude IX

#### Sun, Summer, Sea! ...and an Ice-Floe

"And what are we going to do now? We have more than half a day left," Makoto said.

"Please cook me a final meal," Milo begged.

"You are simply insatiable!"

"My mama also cooked very yummy things," Hyoga said wistfully.

"I am *not* your mama!" Makoto told him, just to be sure. If Himiko didn't mind to be taken for his mother, this was one thing, but *she* certainly didn't need a teenage son with an oedipus complex.

"Of course not," Hyoga shook his head. "*Himiko* looks like her. -- By the way, can you cook, too?" he asked the blonde woman.

"Sure."

"Great!" Hyoga gave her a dazzling smile. This settled it; she was adopted as his new mama.

Makoto and Himiko disappeared in the kitchen, and the two Saints watched them with awe.

"The first course is ready," Makoto announced. With lightspeed, Milo sat at the table, fork and knife in his hands. "Are you *that* hungry again?"

"Well, I want to sample your delicious food one last time."

Makoto grinned and gave him a large helping which disappeared in record time.

"Don't I get some, too?" Hyoga asked wistfully.

"Sure." Makoto saw to it that he didn't starve either.

"That's *yummy*," the Cygnus Saint said appreciatively.

"It seems I can fetch the second course already..."

"Yes!" Milo and Hyoga said in unison.

"I really wonder where you put all the food..."

"Well, we train a lot," Hyoga explained.

"Well, I haven't seen Milo train during the whole time I stayed at his temple," Makoto wondered.

"We Gold Saints can set our own schedule."

"I see. And your schedule consists mainly of relaxing?"

"Well, my abilities are so far above those of the other Saints that I'm entitled to a little holiday once in a while."

Now Himiko came with the next course, that was attacked with the same ferocity.

"One almost feels like in a tiger's cage," Makoto observed amused.

"Indeed. Although scorpions and swans aren't typical beasts of prey," Himiko grinned. "On the other hand, thinking of the Cygnus Cloth, I might change my opinion..."

"By the way, do we get some dessert, too?" Milo asked.

"Sure." Makoto fetched a bowl that she divided evenly between both. Of course it didn't last long either.

"And you can cook this, too?" Hyoga asked Himiko.

"Of course."

"Cool!" Hyoga smiled. Yes, he *would* convince Camus to marry her, and then they would find a nice hut somewhere in Siberia, and everything would be perfect.

Finally the feast was over.

"And what are we doing with the remainder of the afternoon?" Milo wanted to know.

"Anything, if I don't have to spend more time in the kitchen," Makoto sighed.

"Our last afternoon together," Milo said sadly. "Hm... What about going to the beach?"

"Hey, that would be something. We haven't managed to go swimming so far. -- Hm, if only I knew where I have put my bathing suits..."

"Well, I wouldn't mind if you'd bathe nude," Milo grinned.

"You're a lecher!"

"Only a little bit..." He examined her from head to toe.

"No way!"

Milo sighed. "Well, I could lend you one of my swimming trunks..."

"Thanks, but no thanks. I think I just remembered where I put my things..." Of course they were in the bag with her clothes that she hadn't stowed away in the plane.

"A pity. Topless would have been nice, too."

"Then I prefer a full-body diving suit!"

"Awwwww... You wouldn't have a string tanga?"

"You *are* a lecher. But you'll have to live with me wearing my normal bathing suit."

"If only my Camus-sama would join us," Himiko said longingly.

"I'm sure he would only freeze the water."

"I don't mind. I would *love* to see him in swimming trunks."

"I could ask him to accompany us," Hyoga volunteered.

"Just don't mention that Himiko is there as well," Makoto cautioned.

"Sure." Hyoga smiled and stormed upstairs to Aquarius Temple. He was back only seconds later. "My master told me he needed to relax a bit after he got harassed by this groupie-girl -- he wouldn't mean Himiko with that? -- and so he'll join Milo and me..."

"If he knew," Makoto laughed and closed the bag with her swimming equipment. "I'm ready."

"I guess it's best if I teleport you, then Camus won't suspect anything until it's too late," Milo grinned. "You'll see to it that we get a nice spot near the sea, while I will wait for Camus."

"Okay." Makoto looked for a nice place with a sunshade, while Himiko jumped merrily up and down.

"I'll see my gorgeous Camus-sama once more before we leave!"

"Just try not to chase him away immediately," Makoto warned and spread the large blanket.

"Certainly not!"

Suddenly, Camus, Hyoga and Milo appeared. When Camus (who looked absolutely

cute only wearing some night-blue swimming trunks with the Aquarius symbol all over) discovered Himiko, he gave Hyoga a deadly glare.

"You betrayed me! I should kill you for this!"

Milo put an arm around Camus and grinned. "You don't want to show weakness in front of your disciple and flee, will you?"

Makoto almost died from suppressed laughter when she watched the Aquarius Saint's face. Obviously Camus wanted nothing more than to escape, but somehow Milo's words had struck a nerve, too.

"Very well," Camus decreed gravely. "I will stay." He sat down on the blanket, as far away from Himiko as possible.

"Fine," Himiko grinned.

Slowly but sure, Himiko started to move towards Camus.

"I guess I will swim a little," the Aquarius Saint decided and fled into the water.

"And he is afraid of her after all," Makoto said.

"It appears like this," Hyoga nodded. "I guess I should tell him that she's totally harmless and can cook wonderfully, too."

"You can try it..."

When they looked at the water, they discovered that Camus had created a little ice-floe that he used like an air mattress.

"He has something of a penguin," Makoto giggled.

"My Master is really cool, isn't he?" Hyoga admired.

"Oh yes," Himiko sighed.

The other people on the beach stared at the ice-floe in utter amazement.

"This looks to funny." Makoto shook her head.

"Indeed," Hyoga grinned.

"I wonder whether the water is cold around the ice-floe."

"Of course it is," Hyoga grinned. "There -- the first people take a wide berth around Camus."

"Phew, I surely don't want to go near it."

"Hm... Do you know where I might get an insulated diving suit here?" Himiko asked. "As far as I know there are people who dive with them even in the Polar Sea."

"I think it's rather uncommon to find one of those here at the Mediterranean Sea."

"But as long as Camus is around it might be prudent to have some in stock," Milo laughed.

"When he is around every swimming vacation is ruined."

"I'm sure he's perfect to take along on a skiing trip. Even if there's no snow at all, he will help it for sure," Himiko said.

"But right now I don't want to ski."

"Well, so far he didn't use his Diamond Dust attack, and the water isn't frozen either," Hyoga told her. "Mind if I supply a little snow?"

"Don't you dare! I'll kill you."

"Awww..." Hyoga looked as innocent as he could.

"I'm not so fond of all that snow in the summer either," Milo said. "Keep your snow for yourself or I'll fetch my scorpions!"

"I wonder what's worse, snow or scorpions?"

"What about iced scorpions?" Himiko giggled.

"No way! You won't ice my cutey pets again!"

"I thought there are still some left in the fridge," Makoto pointed out.

"Don't remind me! Poor little Hyoga-chan..."

"Pardon?" Hyoga looked questioningly at the Scorpio Saint.

"Ahm, nothing..."

"*Hyoga-chan?*"

"Well, I named my pets for the Saints that came to my mind," Milo admitted.

"You don't need to feel special," Himiko said. "Milo also has scorpions called Marin-chan, Pope-chan, Aiolia-chan, Camus-chan..."

"Aiolia-chan and Camus-chan are dead, ruthlessly killed by being put into a Freezing Coffin," Milo sniffed.



"Can't we talk about another subject? I'm getting cold," Makoto complained.

"Yeah, and I *hate* scorpions," Hyoga shuddered.

"Hey, they are totally harmless," Milo assured him.

"As long as one is Scorpio Gold Saint, I guess. *You* don't get stung."

"Hm..." Himiko looked yearningly towards Camus on his floe. "I really would like to join him there. Has anybody got an icebear hide for me to shield me from the cold?"

"Sure, I always carry one in my handbag in the summer."

Himiko sighed. "This is so unfair... There he is, and I can't even sit down next to him..."

"You have to harden yourself."

"Okay, back home I'll try to sleep in the freezer."

"That must be really uncomfortable."

"I wouldn't mind if *he* would be there, too..."

"I don't think my Master would sleep in a freezer," Hyoga laughed.

"It would be futile, he is already frozen."

"My Camus-sama isn't frozen! Okay, he likes it a little bit colder than others, but otherwise he looks pretty hot. Especially in his swimming trunks."

"I'm sure, you mean cool."

"That too..."

"It is really hopeless to argue with you about him."

"Well, he *is* perfect after all..."

Makoto looked to the floe with Camus. He was indeed cute, especially his dark blue mane. "You're right -- look-wise."

"Yeah... His hair, his cute snub-nose, his wonderful eyes -- and that body," Himiko enumerated dreamily.

"You don't have to list every detail, I can see it for myself."

"Pah", Milo snorted. "I'm at least as handsome as he is. You'd better look at me!"

"*You* stress that you're not cute."

"I don't have to be cute to be handsome."

"I have seen enough of you, it is more difficult to get a good look at Camus."

"Indeed..." Himiko fetched her camera and grasped the chance to take some photos of him without the Aquarius Cloth. "His swimming trunks are cute -- there's the Aquarius symbol all over them."

"Really?" Makoto took out her binoculars.

"And I have some neat little scorpions on mine," Milo stated.

"I noticed." Makoto took another look at Camus.

"But remember, he's mine," Himiko reminded her.

"I don't want to touch him."

"Good," Himiko and Milo said in unison.

Makoto looked at them in surprise.

"Well, you're mine, after all," Milo said.

"Well, he's mine, after all," Himiko explained.

"Sigh."

Hyoga followed the dialogue in wonder. So who belonged to whom? And his Master certainly belonged to no one...

"I think I'll go swimming before Camus decides to freeze the sea."

"He would never do that," Himiko defended him.

"Well, at least not on purpose," Hyoga added.

"I hope so."

Himiko wondered whether she could get an air mattress somewhere. If she wanted to get adequately near Camus it might be prudent.

Makoto stayed in a safe distance from Camus' floe. Himiko, on the other hand, wanted to get into a practical distance to him. As there was no way to get an air mattress, she decided to step into the water, too. Even near the beach it felt slightly colder than it was usual at this time of the year.

After a few minutes, Makoto left the water. She had the impression the temperature dropped slowly but surely towards absolute zero.

It didn't take long, and the beach was crowded with people who watched Camus in awe, among them at least three reporters.

Milo slapped his hand to his forehead. "Why me? When Camus is around stuff like this happens all the time, and I have to cope with it..."

"Hm, I don't see that anyone is interested in *you*," Hyoga said.

"That's what he dreams of," Makoto grinned.

Milo grumbled something unintelligible.

In the meantime, Himiko had reached a pretty close distance to the floe. She was almost frozen blue and her teeth clattered. "M-my C-c-camus-s-sama!" she said shivering.

"Even *here* you can't leave me alone?" he moaned.

"Neither heaven nor hell will let keep us apart," Himiko promised, her teeth still clattering.

At the beach, the people whispered. "Have you heard? Isn't that romantic?"

"Himiko, get out of the water at once," Makoto shouted. "You'll freeze to death there and I won't rescue you from this ice water."

"But my Camus-sama is over there!"

"Get her out," she ordered Milo.

"Why me? The water's *cold*!"

"Sure, that's why I don't go," Makoto said. "I will get a cold."

"I will go and rescue that damsel in distress," Hyoga declared. "I won't watch her die in front of my eyes..." Heroically, he ran into the water. When he had reached Himiko, he turned around to the others. "Hm... The water is pretty *warm*, if you ask me. You sure that I have to rescue her?"

"Absolutely, she isn't used to such temperatures."

"She's pretty fragile, hm?" Hyoga shook his head. But then, not everybody dived daily for about two hours in the water of the Eastern Siberian Sea. He shrugged and grabbed Himiko and rescued her, no matter how much she struggled. It was only to her best, he told himself.

Makoto fetched a big towel to wrap her immediately. Sometimes Himiko was so careless with her health. If she died from freezing she'd never get Camus.

Himiko sneezed. "Why did you part us so cruelly? I was already so close..."

"Close to death..." Makoto said and began to rub her dry.

"He would have revived me," Himiko was sure.

"I'm not so sure."

"He'd probably put her into a Freezing Coffin, just to be sure," Hyoga surmised. "After all, once in a Freezing Coffin, nothing could touch her anymore, neither cold, nor warmth, nor anything else."

"I didn't understand why everyone thinks these ice-cubes don't thaw."

"That's because normally they don't," Milo told her. "The scorpions he iced are in the Freezing Coffins since they were put there and the ice never melted."

"Hm, that's weird. I thawed the one with Himiko without problems."

"You *really* thawed a Freezing Coffin created by my Master?" Hyoga asked incredulously. "But that's impossible!"

"I don't think so. In my opinion nothing is impossible. One only has to figure out how it works."

"Indeed," Milo nodded. "With one's Cosmo one can surely produce a miracle."

"It's no miracle," Makoto said and wrapped Himiko in another towel. "You will never do such stupid things again."

"Atchoo!" Himiko sneezed.

Makoto passed her a handkerchief. "I'm sure you got a cold."

"Well, *she* wanted to get near Camus. If she'd stayed with me this wouldn't have happened," Milo said.

"Camus is surely not good for the health of ordinary people."

"If I'd get a single kiss of him, I'd be immediately okay again," Himiko sighed.

"I think you better take an aspirin," Makoto said.

"But I want a kiss of him!"

"What if I'd kiss you?" Milo volunteered.

"You're not Camus," Himiko sulked.

"You bet I'm not. I'm a hot-blooded Scorpio and would immediately warm you."

"I guess she'll pass out at once."

"Then she's just not used to something good."

"No chance, she's fixed on Camus and no one else has a chance."

"That's cruel," Milo complained.

"You can't give up *one* girl?" Makoto asked.

"No. I should be able to conquer *all* girls! Each girl I'm not able to get is a serious defeat for me."

"Wouldn't this mean that you had to suffer an awful lot of defeats so far?" Hyoga wondered. "I heard that about Shaina and Marin..."

"Some day I'll kill Camus for telling everybody stuff like this!"

"My Master told me it's important to know what's going on in Sanctuary..."

"Everybody should know what's going on around him."

"But my love life shouldn't be the issue!"

"You mean your not existing love life, according to my Master," Hyoga grinned.

Makoto giggled. "These rumours are very interesting. Saints are very creative in this respect."

"Well, between the Holy Wars there's not much else to do," Milo sighed.

"Ts, I'd have better things to do."

"And what would that be?" Milo looked astounded at her.

"I'd open a restaurant for example."

"Cool. If you'd do, I'd visit you every day!"

"I've got no time for such things."

"That's a pity." Milo sighed. A restaurant like this in Sanctuary would be heaven.

"I'm sure there is no way to open a restaurant here anyway. Saints don't need any

comfort, they'll get weak..."

"Pah. Food is not comfort, it's necessary!"

"They will only get fat."

"We train enough, so we won't get fat," Milo claimed.

"Camus isn't fat either. -- Which reminds me, why doesn't he save me with a single kiss," Himiko sighed.

"He doesn't know you want one."

"Well, why doesn't anyone here tell him? I'm half dead because of him, so I'm entitled to be saved by him!"

"It's cold out there."

"Well, I could try," Hyoga volunteered. "I would like them to marry anyway."

"Then go and tell him, I want to see his reaction."

"This will be tricky. I fear I can't broach this subject directly..."

"That's true, he would try to escape."

"My Master is a very complicated person," Hyoga nodded.

"*Very* complicated."

"Okay. I'll try it anyway." Hyoga went to the shore, dived head-first into the water and swam to Camus' personal floe. "My Master..."

"Yes?"

"Your help is needed. Please follow me!"

"My help...?"

Hyoga nodded. "It's very important!"

Camus frowned. He didn't want to leave his comfy floe. But if it was true and his help was in demand... "Okay." Camus jumped from the floe and accompanied Hyoga to the beach. The blond boy lead him to the others.

"I'm sure the people are happy you left the water," Makoto said.

"Well, there was one guy who wanted to hire me for an advertising campaign for Coca Cola," Camus said with an amused grin.

"You don't look like an icebear to me."

"Neither to me," Himiko said and tried to look even more ailing than she was.

"*She* is still there?!" Camus made a step backwards.

"Well, my Master..." Hyoga stood behind him and shoved him a little towards her.  
"That's what I need to talk about with you..."

"Pardon...?"

"It's your fault she got a cold."

"My fault? *She* went into the water."

"*You* made it cold."

"Hm."

"My Master, please do me the favour and save her!"

"Why should I do this? She doesn't look as if she was in any danger."

"But she is! I'm a doctor, I can tell," Makoto lied without missing a beat.

"And just because of me? What am I supposed to do to help her?"

"Everything that makes her feel better."

Camus looked suspiciously from Makoto to Himiko to Hyoga and back. This felt very much like a conspiracy. "And this would be?"

"I don't know, ask her."

"No, no! I can very well imagine what she would want!"

"My Master, maybe you could attempt to resuscitate her..."

"But she *is* alive!"

"Well, you might try it anyway..."

"This feels very much like a set-up to me."

"But my Master, I would never..."

"You *would*, I'm absolutely sure."

"It's your decision, but you've got to live with the consequences."

"Hm."

"Come on, my Master. Give her a kiss!"

"Gaa!"

"Please, my beloved!" Himiko looked at Camus from her large, light blue eyes.

Makoto looked from one to the other. This was really thrilling. Milo couldn't watch this. Why didn't she beg to be kissed by *him*?

"And you're sure it might help?" Camus asked doubtfully.

"Absolutely sure," Hyoga nodded.

"Well, even if it is a set-up -- so be it!" Camus said fatalistically and gave her a light kiss on the lips. Himiko sighed and fainted. "Hey. *Now* she is unconscious!"

"Well, then you need to revive her again," Hyoga told him, almost dying from suppressed laughter.

"Go on, get her back." Makoto urged him.

"I'm doomed!"

"My Master, see it the other way -- your life gets thoroughly enriched..."

"What is it that all people want me to get together with *her*?"

"You are a perfect match."

"Pardon??? What makes you think a thing like *this*?"

"It's my opinion."

Camus sighed. The whole world was against him. Okay, The groupie-girl *did* look pretty nice, but he just had no intention to settle down and found a family or something like this. He was a Saint of Athena, he had his duties towards the Goddess and there was no place for any woman. Although, if he was truthful, sometimes he had deplored the fact. But Athena was the most important person for him.

"I agree with Makoto," Hyoga told him. "Come on, Master!"

With a further sigh, Camus bowed down and gave Himiko another kiss.

"She didn't wake up," Makoto observed. "Once more!"



"She does this on purpose!" Camus accused.

"Why don't you let *me* try," Milo offered.

"No way," Makoto said. "You will only ruin everything."

"You're mean!"

"I agree," Camus nodded. He would have loved to let Milo do the job for him.

"Sure," Makoto grinned. "But he made her faint, so he has to wake her."

"She wouldn't have fainted if I hadn't been forced to kiss her in the first place," Camus grumbled. "And so it's all my fault, huh?"

"Hm. I like this point of view."

"Great." Camus gave her an icy stare. "Ah well..." He kissed Himiko for the third time and hoped he wouldn't get too used to it.

"I'm sure he starts to like it."

"I hope so," Hyoga agreed.

"I'll kill you both," Camus growled.

"Himiko is right, you're really cute."

"But I have neither the time nor the intent to get a girl-friend," Camus moaned.

"Tomorrow we'll be back in Tokyo."

"What a relief!"

"A pity," Hyoga contradicted.

"Indeed," Makoto nodded. "Somehow I'm not very inclined to return into our boring lab in Tokyo."

"So stay," Milo pleaded.

"Don't!"

"Well, and whom should I listen to?"

"*Me*," they said in unison.

Makoto grinned. "You have to decide on one choice."

"I don't want to have *her* around anymore! She disturbs my peace of mind and my duty as Saint of Athena," Camus blurted out.

"Is she?"

"Yes! She always tries to be near me and occupy my time so that I'm not able to train and meditate as would be proper..."

"Why don't you simply ignore her?"

"How when she always follows me everywhere and clings to me like a barnacle? I mean, she *is* pretty and somehow cute, but she does get on my nerves!"

"Well, she's hopelessly in love with you."

Suddenly Himiko moaned and tried to sit up. "Where is he?"

"There." Makoto pointed at the Aquarius Saint.

"My beloved!"

"It starts again," he groaned when the next pink heart formed above Himiko's head.

"Did you expect anything else?"

"I had hoped," Camus said weakly.

"Sensei, why don't you just marry her and adopt me?" Hyoga asked and looked at him with puppy dog eyes.

"Exactly! Then everyone had what he or she wants," Makoto nodded.

"Except for me," Camus grumbled.

"Well, that's negligible. After all, they outnumber you."

"Camus, if you insist, I'll be your best man," Milo grinned. "Although I fear you have to lend me a suit as I'll be totally broke after losing the bet..."

As Camus still knelt on the blanket, Himiko took the opportunity to put her arms around him.

"Yikes, someone pluck her off," Camus squealed. Of course he was ignored.

"Why should I?" Makoto wondered. "You two look cute together, especially with this large pink heart floating above you. As if you were made for each other."

"The heart has got nothing to do with me," Camus claimed. "It's hers alone."

"Isn't he sweet?" Himiko smiled and gave him a light kiss on the cheek. "My beloved..."

"My new parents!"

"My doom..."

"Poor Camus," Makoto said. "Your fate seems to be sealed."

"I'll be the best wife for you," Himiko promised. "I'll care for you, I'll comfort you, I'll cook for you, I'll keep your temple clean and tidy..."

"It seems this is not enough for him," Makoto pointed out.

"What else do you want?" Himiko gazed raptly at his deep blue eyes.

"My freedom!"

"Are you sure Saints have something like freedom in any case?" Makoto asked.

"Well, not exactly," Milo admitted. "We have our duties as warriors for Athena and they always have to take precedence over anything else."

"That's true. We fight for her, and if need be we even die for her," Hyoga stated.

"You hear! I think it's enough to belong to *one* woman," Camus said.

"Although I'm sure you could do a lot of things with Himiko that you could never do with Athena," Milo laughed.

"Milo, you're totally depraved," Camus said scandalized.

"Nope. I'm a Scorpio."

Himiko buried her face in Camus' soft, dark blue mane and the steady stream of pink hearts continued.

"Makoto, please stay with me," Milo tried once more. "Even when Camus doesn't seem to appreciate having a cute girl of flesh and blood around - I certainly do!"

"Dream on!" Makoto laughed and tried to catch one of the incredible hearts. It burst like a soap bubble.

Slowly but surely the sun approached the horizon. Himiko still clung to Camus, Hyoga was happy about his self-elected adoptive parents and Milo sulked as he didn't get the girl he had chosen, just as usual. It was so unfair, Milo thought. He was better looking, stronger and more interesting than Camus, and still his friend got the girls and not he. That is, the ones Aiolia didn't get. Milo sighed. It was more than unfair.

"What are you thinking about?" Makoto wanted to know. "Your sighs sound terrible!"

"I'm sooo lonely," he sniffed.

"Why this?"

"You still haven't given in to me."

Makoto grinned. "Well, it's not as easy as you would like it to be."

"Just *look* at *her*! Camus doesn't even have to do *anything* and yet she clings to him like glued on!"

"I am not Himiko and you are not Camus."

"In this case I really regret this. I'm sure she'd do *everything* from cooking to mending his cloths to comforting him..."

"And you would like to have a woman like that?"

"Sure!" Milo said with conviction. After all, *he* was the man, and his woman had better tend to his needs.

"Well, good luck in finding such a woman. And remember, a good house-keeper is expensive if you wish to hire one..."

"I don't want to hire a woman! I want one who is totally devoted to me just because I am me!"

Makoto laughed. "Fat chance! And women like Himiko are rare..."

"To think that Camus rejects her! It's too bad that none of the female Saints would do anything like this. If you'd ask one of them to cook for you, you'd get a challenge for a duel in return..."

"I admire these women!"

"Do you? I think they're a nuisance most of the time. And they always hide their faces behind these obnoxious masks - even though I'm sure there are at least some among them who are beautiful! In any case, they may be fun, but they are nothing for a real relationship..."

"Because they don't play the faithful and obedient housewife for you?"

"Well, I am the man after all," Milo declared poutily.

"It's getting cold," Makoto changed the subject. "We should go back now."

"Cold? I haven't done anything," Hyoga hurried to say.

"I could warm you," Milo offered.

"You don't give up, do you?" Makoto laughed.

"Never."

"I want to be warmed, too," Himiko said, and despite Camus' protests, she cuddled closer to him.

"They look so cute together," Makoto stated, and Hyoga nodded.

"Let's get out of here," Camus insisted. He tried to get up, but Himiko managed to cling to him still.

"Do you have any problems?" Makoto asked amused.

"Problems? Me?" Camus sighed and pried Himiko's arms free from his neck. In the next instant, she wrapped them around his waist.

Makoto found the picture utterly amusing. "I'm sure this will become a serious and long-lasting relationship," she commented.

"I hope so," Hyoga smiled. "I'm sure my Master will get used to it over time."

Camus gave them a deadly stare, before they returned to Scorpio Temple.

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"Do I get a final meal?" Milo asked wistfully.

"You are totally greedy," Makoto complained.

"Why don't *you* let me cook something for you, my Camus-sama," Himiko piped and beamed at him.

"Do you take your hands off me then?"

"Well, I fear I couldn't cook otherwise."

"Then do so, please!"

"Great..." Himiko smiled. "After all, the way to a man's heart is through his stomach!"

"How true," Milo nodded.

"Well, with you not only your heart is connected to your stomach," Makoto chided.

"Pah! I'm a gourmet!"

"To me you look more like a gourmand. I have yet to find something that you *don't* eat..."

"Well, I hate crabs and related food..."

"Because they remind you of scorpions and not because you don't like their taste, I bet," Makoto grinned.

"Well, yes," he admitted sheepishly. "I can't eat anything that reminds me of my cutey pets."

"Which reminds me - where are they right now?" Makoto looked suspiciously around.

"In my bedroom, of course."

"Ah, that's good."

"So what are you going to serve me for dinner?"

"You'll never give up, will you? Maybe I should try whether a certain Scorpio fits into the pan..."

Milo looked indignantly at her. "Don't even think about it! - I want you to cook me a dinner. Now."

"You are a little too used to getting what you want."

"I'm a Gold Saint. We're entitled to get what we want."

"Indeed? But I refuse to cook. I'm not your servant."

"But you're my girl-friend!"

"Whom are you kidding?"

"Hey, I chose you -- you should feel honoured."

"And *you* wonder why the girls don't run after you..."

Milo looked at her with his best 'lost puppy' gaze.

"You really know how to get the better of me," Makoto sighed. "Okay, okay, I'll prepare the dinner. But only some bread."

"Awwwwwww..."

"You're too fat anyway." Makoto pricked him in the side.

"I'm not fat," he protested. "My Cloth still fits perfectly."

"Sure it does," Camus grinned. Now that Himiko was occupied with cooking and didn't cling to him anymore, he immediately felt better. "Your Cloth fit when you were only seven years of age and grew with you ever since."

"So that's no proof," Makoto laughed.

"But look at my body - it's all muscles and no fat!"

"Hm." Makoto pricked him into the belly with her index finger.

"lecks! This tickles!"

"Indeed?" Makoto put on an evil grin.

"Ahm, no, it doesn't tickle at all," he hurried to say.

"Well..." Makoto couldn't resist to tickle him in earnest now, and Milo was a perfect victim.

"And what about you?" Himiko asked while she looked up from her cooking. Camus looked at her in shock.

"Don't even think about it!"

"What do you give me in return if I promise not to tickle you?"

"What do you want?" Camus wanted to know with a worried mien.

"Just another kiss," Himiko beamed.

"Only one?" Makoto inquired while she still tickled Milo.

"For starters..." Himiko giggled.

"I would not sell me so cheaply," the red-haired woman said.

"One kiss is definitely not *cheap*," Camus contradicted.

"I would kiss anyone anytime, but stop tickling me," Milo squealed.

"Who wants to be kissed by *you*?" Makoto grinned.

"Who would *not*?" Milo asked, eyebrows raised.

"I!" Himiko and Makoto replied both. Milo sighed.

"Well, Camus?" Himiko cocked her head.

"Do I have a choice?"

"Nope." With an angelic smile, she stepped towards him and traced a line along his spine. Camus shivered from the sensation.

"So Saints have weak points after all," Makoto discovered.

"Of course they have," Hyoga said. "They correspond to the stars of their constellations..."

"Well?" Himiko asked and looked at Camus.

"Ave Caesar, morituri te salutant," the Aquarius Saint murmured.

"It can't be *that* bad," Makoto shook her head.

"It's even more difficult if everybody stares at me!"

"Don't tell me you are shy?" Makoto examined him thoroughly.

"I'm not shy," Camus replied sulkily. "This is a very private thing."

"Shall we leave you two alone?"

"Oh yes, my beloved, let's go to your temple so that we can have a real private tête à tête..."

"Arrrglll..."

"He doesn't seem to like it," Makoto observed. "Camus is very difficult."

"I noticed," Himiko nodded. "But that makes him so much more attractive!"

"I really don't get it," Camus sighed. "Whatever I say or do - she manages to turn it against me."

"Now the kiss, my Camus-sama," Himiko demanded and stood in position.

Camus sighed once more and lightly touched her lips with his.

"Do you call *this* a kiss?" Himiko protested.

"You haven't specified how I should kiss you," he said smugly.

"Why don't they just marry and get it over with?" Hyoga asked no one in particular. "They are a *perfect* match."

"Dunno. Ask *them*," Milo suggested breathlessly. At least Makoto had stopped tickling him.



"I won't marry her because my duties lie with Athena," Camus grumbled.

"As long as only your duties lie with her I'm content," Himiko said dryly, and Makoto couldn't suppress a giggle.

"Maybe I should kill her," Camus pondered and looked at the blonde.

"No!" Hyoga squeaked. "I want her as my new mama!"

"Indeed, this wouldn't be nice," Makoto stated. "I think it's sufficient that Milo is mean."

"Yep. Scorpios are mean. Aquarians are supposed to be nice and friendly," Milo tried to be helpful.

"Have you heard?" Himiko asked. "Now be a little nice to me and kiss me properly."

"Why are you *all* against me?"

"My master, I'm always with you," Hyoga contradicted.

Himiko rubbed her cheek against Camus' chest, and he hung his head. "Hey, this tickles," she giggled, when a strand of indigo blue hair hung into her face.

"Feel free to leave me alone," Camus suggested, but she continued to squeeze him like a teddy bear.

"No, now that I have you I won't let you go."

"I really wonder whether they will do it after all..." Makoto wondered. "Or do we have to help you?" She began to circle the two.

"You'd better prepare my dinner," Milo nagged.

"Not now! -- Don't you think this is a little boring, Himiko?"

The other woman still stood snuggled against Camus, who wore a fatalistic facial expression.

"Of course not. Being so close to my beloved Camus-sama - I could stay here forever!"

"She *adores* you, sensei, you really should consider giving in to her."

"This would mean I'd lose a desperate fight right in front of my disciple - Hyoga, you can't be serious!"

"A *fight*?" Makoto giggled. "I wouldn't call this a *fight*." She opened a box of pralines and began to decimate them slowly but surely.

"Well? Do I get my kiss now? And I mean a *real* one!"

"I have to prepare mentally for it first," Camus tried to stall for some time.

"I'm sure he hopes that she'll forget about it in due time," Hyoga said with a lifted eyebrow.

"Camus, don't hesitate - go for it," Milo urged.

"Do I have to remind you that *she* wants me to kiss her and not the other way round?"

"Well, then Himiko, go for it!"

"Do you need a stool?" Makoto asked helpfully.

"That would be a good idea," Himiko nodded. After all, Camus was about 35cm taller than her.

"No problem..." Makoto fetched a stool and put it down next to Himiko.

"Thanks." Himiko smiled and stepped onto it. Now she was still a littler smaller than Camus, but it was manageable. She looked right into his deep blue eyes and sighed. "He's so gorgeous!" She put her arms around his neck.

"If she repeats it often enough he might start to believe it, too," Milo commented with amusement.

"That's how brainwashing works," Makoto grinned.

"You really think she might manage to brainwash my sensei?"

"Sooner or later certainly," Milo mused with an insolent grin. "Yeah, go for it, Himiko!"

"And I thought you were my best friend..."

"I have only your best interest in mind," Milo promised.

"As we have all," Hyoga added. "And a loving wife and a little hut in Siberia to settle down with your family, wouldn't that be perfect?"

"I'm not so convinced."

"Well, you haven't moved out of her embrace, so it can't be *that* bad," Makoto laughed.

Camus blushed furiously and immediately moved away from Himiko.

"How cute," Makoto observed.

"And you are sure that you don't like her?" Milo teased.

"Of course not," Camus tried to sound convincing. "I can't stand her, she gets on my nerves and everything - what more do I have to say?"

"But you tolerate quite a lot from her, wouldn't you say?"

"Do I have to remind you that we are not allowed to use our powers for personal matters?"

"That's a good excuse," Makoto giggled.

"Pah!"

"Isn't he cute?" Himiko sighed and produced another pink heart that drifted slowly in Camus' direction. Camus tried to evade it, but it followed him anyway.

Milo laughed and burst the heart with the pointed nail of his index finger.

"But tomorrow we'll go back to Japan," Himiko sniffed and hung her head.

"We can't help it Himiko-chan," Makoto tried to console her.

"But I want my Camus-sama!"

"You can return to Sanctuary when you have a vacation," Milo suggested.

"I'd prefer you to stay in Japan," Camus contradicted.

"If you come back you can stay with me in Scorpio Temple anytime!"

"But I want to stay in my Camus-sama's temple."

"I don't run a hotel," Camus protested.

"That's perfect, after all, I want you all for my own," Himiko told him.

"But I would like to move in, too," Hyoga said. "Then I would finally have real parents again..."

"Exactly," Himiko nodded. "I would cook for you, polish your armour and everything."

"It's no armour, it's a Cloth," the three Saints corrected simultaneously.

"And anyway, I don't need anyone to polish my Cloth," Camus said. "It's self-cleaning."

"And what about cooking? Can you cook for yourself, too?" Makoto wanted to know.

"Well, I go to a restaurant once in a while..."

"Just let me cook for you and you will never want to go into a restaurant anymore," Himiko promised.

"We should go *now*," Makoto suddenly changed the topic. "The plane is ready, and I guess it's best if we keep the goodbyes as short as possible, or Himiko won't go at all."

"I really don't want to go," Himiko sniffed and a big tear rolled down her cheek. "My Camus-sama, will you accompany me to Japan?"

"Certainly *not*."

"Awwwwwwwwwww..."

"You would like that, hm? But as soon as he's in Tokyo, all the girls there would run after him, too."

"He's my personal property. I wouldn't allow any other girl to get near him. - Hyoga, you would help me, would you?"

"Sure," the Cygnus Saint beamed.

"But Camus doesn't want to. Now come, let's get to the plane." Makoto grabbed Himiko's arm and tried to tug her along.

"I'm really looking forward to being back home," Makoto said. "Finally we'll return to the civilized world..."

They walked down the stairs towards the plane and the three Saints accompanied them: Milo, who wanted to try and convince them to stay; Hyoga, who would join them on the way to Tokyo, and Camus to be sure that they were really gone.

"Well, I agree that I'd love to sleep on my futon at home again... But I would love to have my Camus-sama with me to share my pillow."

The Aquarius Saint only shook his head.

"Well, I'll be happy enough if I finally have electricity for my devices again."

"Okay, having my TV set and my radio again would be a nice thing," Himiko admitted.

"And I want to visit my favourite Game Center again to break some high scores!"

The Saints looked at them in utter confusion. What were they talking about?

Finally they reached the plane. The pilot and co-pilot had decided to sleep a little in their cabins, but they were fit enough for the flight, they said.

"And I really can't convince you to stay a little longer?" Milo asked.

"Farewell," Camus said hurriedly and hoped that it truly would be the last goodbye.

"Well, we have to go and evaluate our data," Makoto said. "Why don't you visit us once in a while?"

"You, too, my beloved!" Himiko said to Camus, stood on the tips of her toes and gave him a kiss on the cheek.

"I prefer to stay here in my temple."

"I thought so," Makoto said. "Okay, let's get into the plane!"

Himiko gave Camus another kiss, this time on the lips (he looked as if he had bitten into a lemon) and waved him a tearful farewell.

"Bye, Milo!"

"And why don't I get a farewell kiss?" the Scorpio Saint sulked.

"You're not *him*!"

"Himiko has her principles," Makoto grinned.

"And what about *you*? I want a goodbye kiss, too!"

"If you insist..." Makoto gave him a kiss on the cheek.

"That's *all*?" he asked, a little disappointed. He pulled her close to kiss her a little more thoroughly.

"Hey, this was enough," Makoto shook her head. "Bye-bye!"

"Bye," Milo said sadly.

Himiko looked tearfully at her Camus-sama. "Sayounara..."

The plane took off and got onto the way to Tokyo.

**- End of Interlude IX -**

## Epilog: The End of the Job! Return to Tokyo

### Epilogue

#### The End of the Job! Return to Tokyo

When they reached Japan several hours later, it was mid-afternoon in the big city.

Himiko was still thoroughly depressed that she had to leave the love of her life behind and covered one kawaii portrait photo of him with kisses. Hyoga had decided to sleep through the flight. It was always best to sleep whenever possible so that one was ready for a fit the other time. And Makoto hadn't been able to take the perpetual tragic sighs of Himiko and preferred to sleep so that she didn't hear them anymore.

When the plane touched down, she woke up.

"Finally back home," she sighed joyfully. "Civilization, here I am!"

"But it'll be so lonely without him," Himiko sniffed.

"Why don't you try to find someone else?" Makoto suggested.

"But I want only *him*. He's simply *perfect*!"

"I'll try to convince him of your advantages the next time I see him," Hyoga promised. "After all, he's my master and he should do everything that's good for me as his disciple, shouldn't he? And it's really obvious that I need a real family..."

"I don't think that he'd agree that his duties towards you go this far," Makoto said.

"But I could at least try..."

"Well, that's doesn't hurt," Makoto nodded. "It seems to me that most of you Saints are pretty lonely."

"Well, with our powers we stand apart from the mundane people. And we are to serve Athena alone, too."

"I knew there was a reason I can't stand this Athena."

"It's not proper to say bad things about *her*," Hyoga said with a frown. "She is the law! You see, currently I'm on a mission to punish those who break her laws."

The Cygnus Saint sighed. He wasn't exactly looking forward to this job to kill all the Bronze Saints who took part in the Galactic Tournament. After all, some of them had been his friends when they trained in the Kido Mansion before they went to their training camps all over the world. But when they decided to violate the sacred laws, it

was their fate to die.

"I don't understand this anyway," Makoto told him. "But then, fortunately I'm not one of Athena's Saints."

"Well, with powers like ours it's certainly a good thing that there are laws that we have to adhere to. One single Saint is able to defeat a whole army of mundane people."

"Probably. You are all mercilessly drilled to fight and don't know anything else, it seems."

"Not only... I know that I want my mama back!"

"Aren't you a little old to cry for your mama all the time?"

"Too old?! My mama was taken from me when I was but a little boy. I never had a real family."

"Hm, most of the Saints didn't have a family, if I understood it correctly..."

"Indeed." Hyoga looked at her with large, sad eyes, and Makoto couldn't help but tousle his blond hair.

"You are so cute, I'm sure you won't stay alone too much longer," Makoto laughed.

"You sure? Do you think Himiko might really adopt me?"

"Yeah, I'm sure she'll do it. She has a big heart for lost children. And of course she will be even more inclined as you want to help her win Camus."

"This would be fine. She even looks a little like my real mama. I would love to have a home to return to..." Again Hyoga felt this empty spot within him.

"Your life seems to be really hard," Makoto sympathized with him. "So without a home."

"Indeed." Hyoga nodded and his blond mane bobbed up and down.

Makoto caught some of the strands. "I really could become a hair fetishist with all of you Saints," she said.

"Maybe it comes with the Cosmo?" Hyoga grinned.

"This would be worth an examination..."

"Haven't you examined me thoroughly enough?"

"Well, you could visit me in the lab anyway. I like to have nice visitors."

"Okay, then I'll visit you in your lab once in a while. Ahm, where is it?"

"Oh, here's the address." Makoto gave him a visiting card.

"Thanks. -- Err, that's *Japanese*! I can't read kanji, I'm sorry..."

"Oh..." Makoto scribbled down the address in roomaji at the reverse side.

"Thanks!" Hyoga hoped that someday he would find the time to learn reading and writing Japanese. Talking was okay, even if he wasn't perfect in it, but the symbols escaped him. Greek and some basic Russian was okay, though. "Well, I guess I have to say goodbye now," Hyoga said. "I have to go to the Coliseum now."

"Ah yes, this Galactic Tournament..."

"Exactly. I have to punish the Saints that take part in this forbidden spectacle."

"Why is it forbidden to join it anyway?"

"Well, it's that we are not allowed to use our powers for our personal gain. And competing in some tournament is certainly not serving Athena."

"I think you're fights are silly anyway."

"So you would just stand there and watch when someone threatens to destroy the Earth?"

"Well, probably not - but I think fighting for this armour as prize is silly."

"Well, that's why I'm sent to punish them. We Saints have to defend Earth against evil Gods and their minions and not fight for fun."

"Well, fights should never be for fun. But don't you think it's a lot of Saints for you to take on at the Tournament?"

"I'm Cygnus Bronze Saint. I can handle them."

"Take good care of yourself!"

"I'll do." Hyoga took his Cloth Box. "Dosvidanya!"

"Ja mata!" Makoto waved him farewell, and Hyoga jogged away.

"Now he is gone as well," Himiko sighed and put the photo of Camus away.

"Well, we have to get back to work."

"Yeah, I'll work all day and night to try forgetting *him*..."



"Working is always a good cure," Makoto nodded wisely.

"Yep. And I already have a cool idea for the Earth Steel Cloth."

"First we should return to our homes and sleep off the jetlag," Makoto suggested.

"Yeah, sure. And I want to glue all the Camus posters to the walls of my home and the lab..."

"This won't help you to work, I fear. You'll only stand in front of the pictures and dream of him."

"But I need a little look at him once in a while."

"One poster in your locker should be enough."

"But I can't decide on *one* poster of him! I want to put up *all* of him!"

"That's torture," Makoto protested.

"Awww, there's nothing bad about him!"

"Okay, okay, he is cute - but you exaggerate hopelessly!"

"I can't help it, I'm sorry," Himiko sniffed.

"Okay, okay... But let's get home now."

Himiko nodded. "And what about going to a restaurant after we put our luggage there?"

"Good idea! I'm starving! And for once I don't have to cook..."

"Indeed. I think I'll order a couple of professionally prepared nigiri sushi. I really missed them in Greece.

"I agree. I'm really looking forward to tempura and sashimi - and of course a proper miso soup!"

They put their bags in their apartments and stowed their things away.

"So where do we start?" Himiko asked.

"Doesn't matter. It should be good and near."

"Fine." Himiko took a notepad and pencils so that she could start to sketch her new ideas for the Steel Cloths before they stormed into the next restaurant.

"Ah, finally proper tables and chop-sticks again," Himiko smiled. They kneeled down on the tatamis and ordered a large meal with several courses. In Greece one just didn't get the proper ingredients.

They ate silently until they couldn't get anything down anymore.

"I'm totally stuffed," Makoto declared.

"So am I," Himiko laughed. They went to the cashdesk and payed before they went back home. "It's really nice to be back, even though I sorely miss my Camus-sama."

"Well, I can't help it, I'm sorry. We just have to get back to work tomorrow."

"Indeed..." Himiko sighed. "But we really should return to Greece for the next holidays!"

**- The End -**