

S-Files: Next Try

The New Saint Dossiers

Von abgemeldet

Kapitel 10: Dossier 7: Aquila Marin

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Thursday, 1987/08/20 -- 6:00 a.m.

Himiko yawned. Three hours of sleep just weren't enough. But still, she had to prepare breakfast for her boys and some bentou, too. And while she was at it, she could also prepare a strong coffee for Makoto who wasn't exactly a morning person.

Makoto shuffled into the kitchen. She hated to get up that early in the morning, especially after only three or so hours of sleep. She slumped down onto a wooden chair and laid her head onto the table. "Why do I have to get up every morning?"

"Because otherwise you wouldn't have anything left of the day," Himiko chimed.

"I wouldn't mind if only I could sleep a little longer."

"*You* didn't want to take today off."

"I never said I didn't *want* to."

"Who is in turn anyway? Is there still a Saint left with 'A'?"

"You ask me to think before I had my first cup of coffee?"

"Well, then drink!" Himiko sipped at her miso soup.

Makoto downed the coffee. "I think the last Saint with 'A' is Aquila Marin."

"Oh, a female Saint! I never met one of them."

"When we were at Sanctuary last year I saw two of them from afar," Makoto remembered. It was when Shura had brought her into that arena to watch the fight between Seiya and some other guy for the Pegasus Cloth.

"I have to admit I'm curious."

"I'm interested in the reason why they wear those impractical masks."

"Masks? So far I only *heard* about this. How do they look anyway? Like Zorro?"

"Not at all. The masks of the female Saints cover the whole face, even their eyes. They look a little like the masks at the carnival of Venice."

"Is that not absolutely impractical during a fight?"

"I think so, too."

"We really have to ask her about this."

In this moment, Milo, Hyoga and Shun came down the stairs. Breakfast called them faster than anything else.

"Milo, could you do me a little favour?" Himiko asked.

"Yes, don't sit down in my vicinity," Makoto grumbled. The garlic odour from yesterday's late night dinner was a bit ...heavy on him.

"It depends. What do I get in return?"

Himiko pondered. "A home made dinner." 'Without garlic,' she added mentally.

"Okay. You cook well enough... What am I supposed to do?"

"Please teleport to Sanctuary and fetch Aquila Marin for today's examination."

"You sure? Aiolia might be suspicious if I fetch her. He's very jealous, especially since he has only Marin left as girl-friend." Milo put a finger to his lips in thought. "Maybe I should try to talk to Shaina again. She would deserve a cool guy like me as her companion." Milo still couldn't understand why on earth Shaina had decided to choose DeathMask as her boy-friend after the battle against Persephoneia.

"We need Marin here. You just have to tell her and Aiolia that it's Athena's orders. And about Shaina -- I'm sure she has better taste than to fall for *you*!"

"Pah! If she had good taste she'd have chosen me right from the start." It definitely rankled him that she had turned to DeathMask of all men and he decided he'd better not mention that to Makoto or she would get even better ammunition to tease him.

"If you had the same class Aiolia has, maybe..."

"I have *more* class than he."

"There is only *one* man with real class and style among the Saints: my Camus-sama!"

"Even though I don't like him, I have to agree with her," Makoto nodded.

"Class? Camus? He's a grumpy ice cube," Milo sulked. "He eats only in expensive restaurants and drinks exclusive wines... So what? And he reads boring books -- does that make a man of class?"

"Among other things, yes," Makoto told him. "But *you* are cute when you sulk."

"I'm *not* cute!"

"Yes, you are. And that's not my opinion alone."

"Indeed," Himiko nodded. "You're adorable. If there weren't my Camus-sama, I might consider *you* as my future husband."

"But of course there *is* Camus," Milo sighed.

Makoto giggled. "Exactly. And I don't think you can match him in Himiko's eyes or heart..."

"Why do I have to stay alone all the time?" Milo exclaimed. "It's unfair!"

"Life is rarely fair."

"But to me it's more unfair than to others."

"Actually, I wouldn't mind having Milo as a kind of uncle," Hyoga whispered to Shun. "Why not organize a double marriage? Mama and Camus-sensei and Makoto and Milo..."

"As long as they let me live here and cook delicious meals I'm content," Shun said.

"Are you nuts or what?" Makoto exploded. "I'm not going to marry, especially not Milo!"

"Why not?" Hyoga wanted to know. "You two are a perfect match, as much as you quarrel."

Makoto gave Hyoga a deadly stare. "We are no match at all!"

"Sure we are," Milo nodded eagerly.

"Stuff it," Makoto growled. "Your opinion concerning this topic doesn't count at all!"

"Hey, as your future husband, my opinion has to count!"

"Before I marry you, I will strangle you," Makoto threatened.

"A pity," Hyoga sighed. "You look so cute together."

"He gets on my nerves, that's all! Milo, why don't you look for someone who *is* a match for you?"

"But I do! It's so unfair -- neither Shaina nor you want me..."

"Well, most women don't like to be part of a harem -- and you seem to like this idea, too... Which reminds me, I wouldn't mind having a harem of male Saints..."

"Really? And who should belong to it?"

"Every Saint I like, of course."

"But my Camus-sama is mine alone," Himiko stated forcefully.

"Sure. You get Camus, and I'll take the rest. I thought we already agreed on that."

"Good. But my Baby Saints aren't free for the taking either."

"They are too young for my taste anyway."

"Hey, I'm fifteen!" Hyoga protested.

"You are still my Baby Saint," Himiko contradicted and tousled his hair.

"Fifteen, that would be like robbing the cradle," Makoto stated.

"I'm almost 22," Milo offered with a winning smile.

"I know. That's not much older than the little ones."

"*I'm a man!*"

"Okay, you are of age, but that doesn't say much."

"Pah! I'm a real macho guy who should be *the* choice for every woman!"

"That's what *you* think. / think you are at best cute and cuddly."

Milo gave her a scandalized look.

"Cute and good-looking, yeah," Makoto laughed.

"Himiko nodded. "But..." she began.

"Yeah, Mom, I know," Hyoga grinned. "My Master is of course far better looking..."

"How did you know?" Himiko asked in surprise.

"He has precognitive talents," Shun claimed deadpan.

"If you say it only a couple more times, I'll probably start believing it, too, that Camus is Mr.Perfect himself." Makoto sighed.

"Because he *is*!" Himiko smiled soulfully. " And the best about it is ...he's *mine*!"

"Don't you think *he* has a little say in this, too?"

"Well, I'm working on it."

"Why can't I be Camus?" Milo exclaimed exasperatedly. "All this hype about him is really enervating!"

"If you ask me -- one Camus is more than sufficient," Makoto told him. "Be glad you are yourself!"

"But everybody wants Camus and no one wants me," Milo sniffed.

"Poor Milo -- all alone... Do you want me to comfort you?"

He nodded strongly.

"Okay, if it helps you to feel a little better..." She tousled his hair.

"If only you would really mean it," Milo sighed.

"You are never satisfied, aren't you?"

"I want you *really*," Milo said, for once sincere.

"Then you have to put some more effort into your attempts."

"I'll do!"

"And then you'll live here together with him?" Shun asked curiously.

"Just wait and see," Makoto said.

"Cool! For once she didn't say 'no' right away." Milo grinned like a Cheshire Cat.

"Who knows what for I might need you in the future."

"I'm useful for a lot of things," he bragged.

"Indeed. Fetching the food, keeping the house and stuff like this."

"Pah! I thought of other activities."

"And what would that be?"

Milo whispered her his (x-rated!) ideas in the ear.

Makoto laughed. "You seem to be full of ideas."

"I hope so." He grinned seductively.

"You're really cute," Makoto said in amusement.

"You don't take me serious," Milo accused her.

"I do, I do -- but why don't you fetch Marin now? I want to get this examination over as soon as possible."

"Only if I get that homemade dinner you promised me."

"Himiko promised that, not I."

"And what do *you* offer me?"

"What about another meal?" Makoto was sure Milo was best baited with food.

"Yes! Lunch!"

"No problem."

"That's perfect! I'll be right back!" He teleported away in an exuberant flash of gold. It took him only 15 minutes until he returned together with Marin.

"Oh, already back?" Makoto was amazed. "Ah, hello Marin."

She examined the newcomer. Aquila Silver Saint Marin was a medium-sized, slim woman with a shock of red, shoulder-length hair, wearing a plain silver mask that hid her whole face. Even the eyes couldn't be discerned, as the mask covered them, too.

"Hello," she replied in a pleasant voice that hit an edge of steel behind. "So why exactly do you want to see me?"

Makoto and Himiko exchanged a short glance, determining who was to relate their cause this time. It was Makoto.

"We conduct an examination in the name of Athena," she explained patiently. "We are ordered to check your health and examine your Cloth."

"How long will this take? I don't want to leave Aiolia for too long. Who knows which ideas he might get when I'm not there to look after him..."

"So he's always up to some mischief?" Makoto inquired.

"What else? My proud lion is very difficult to tame." Marin smiled invisibly behind her mask.

"Okay, we will try to hurry," Makoto promised.

"Good."

"Then let's go to our laboratory."

"And what about me?" Milo asked.

"You'll be a good boy and stay here," Makoto replied.

"Watch some TV, maybe you can learn a little Japanese that way," Himiko suggested.

"Japanese? I'm Greek and proud of it!"

"Then do something else." Makoto thought a moment. "Yes, the floor needs vacuuming again."

"I'm not your maid!"

"You're a freeloader who stays at our house," Makoto mercilessly pointed out. "Do something to earn your stay!"

"Okay, okay," Milo gave in. Before they threw him out, he would have to comply a little. But only a little bit.

"And when you did all the chores, we will cook something really nice for you."

Milo smiled angelically.

"And you, my boys, will go to your lessons right away," Himiko told Hyoga and Shun sternly. "Makoto and I will earn our money now."

"Okay," Shun nodded. "We are already pretty late." The young men went on their way, too.

"And now that all the ruckus has calmed down, we can go, too."

They took their car which looked pretty old and didn't sound much better. But it brought them safely to the lab.

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Finally the three women arrived at the Graud Foundation Research Laboratories, and Makoto prepared everything for the upcoming examination.

"Okay, let's get it over with ASAP. The faster you'll get back to your Aiolia," she said.

"So what am I supposed to do?" Marin looked around.

"Please take a seat." Makoto pointed at the stool next to the examination table. "I'll take some blood samples, then you'll be thoroughly measured..."

"Would you please take off your Cloth and this mask so that I can have a look at them?"

"My mask?" Marin let out a sharp breath of indignation.

"Yes, your mask -- or is it some kind of taboo with you?"

Marin hesitated a moment and looked carefully around. "There are no men barging into this lab by accident?"

"Usually not." Himiko shook her head. "What is it about these masks anyway?"

"Wearing a face mask is a tradition among the female Saints," Marin told her. "In the past, when Athena first assembled her Saints, there were no women at all among their ranks. Athena refused to admit them, because they reminded her of the Amazons. You know the Amazons? They were a female warrior tribe fathered by Ares -- and he belongs to the Gods Athena dislikes most. The women who wanted to join the Saints never gave up, though, and one day Athena gave in, but only under one condition: her female warriors had to hide their femininity and cover their faces with those masks."

"I think that's pretty chauvinistic," Himiko accused. "I definitely wouldn't comply with having to wear such a thing!"

"Among the female Saints it became a tradition," Marin explained. "In fact, the masks give us several advantages. The material filters the air we breathe and thus we are not affected by poisonous gases. And as it can even filter oxygen from water, we can dive as long as we wish without drowning. Furthermore, our eyes are protected from all kinds of dangerous radiation, while infrared light is being enhanced so that we can see in the night, too."

"Hm, *this* does sound cool indeed," Himiko admitted. "But still I wouldn't want to wear such a thing! You can't simply take a snack or drink something without taking it off -- and if you don't take it off as long as any guys are around, that should be highly annoying!"

"You get used to it," Marin shrugged. "And it does have even further advantages. No one ever beat me in poker -- not even my beloved." Her voice sounded like a broad

grin, but the mask looked unmoving as ever.

"So do you do me the favour and give it to me for examination?" Himiko inquired a second time.

"Okay. But only because you are a woman..." Marin took off her mask, and a stunningly beautiful face looked at the scientists. Marin had deep blue eyes, long, dark lashes and a radiating smile.

"It's a shame that you hide such beauty behind this mask," Makoto observed.

"My face is only for Aiolia to see."

"Aren't there any lady Saints who want to get rid of these masks?"

"Some, yes," Marin nodded. "But it's generally frowned upon. So far there is only one female Saint who defies Athena openly by not wearing her mask anymore -- and that's Ophiuchus Silver Saint Shaina."

"And what does Athena say?"

"So far she hasn't punished her for this insolence. But Shaina is a bit shameless in any case."

"Shameless?"

"Of course! Being seen without mask is far worse than being seen naked!"

"Is it?" Himiko asked incredulously.

Marin nodded.

"But why?"

"That's just the way it is," Marin replied. She couldn't really explain it, but the constant drill of her Master had so deeply ingrained this fact, that it had become a part of her self. In fact, she even looked with some contempt at the bare-faced women around who weren't Saints.

"And why did Shaina get rid of her mask then?"

Marin chuckled. "Well, Shaina said her mask was shattered so often that her face was no secret to the men anyway. And if she had to kill all the men who had seen her face by now, then she would be occupied for years and Sanctuary would be emptied of Saints."

"Sounds reasonable," Himiko nodded.

"Please hurry with your examination of my mask. I feel naked and vulnerable without

it," Marin admitted. She felt so much safer with her mask on; it had become almost a part of her body.

"Okay." Himiko went to her examination table and tested it thoroughly. It was really amazing, she thought. Everything Marin told about the filtering capabilities of the material was true. In fact, the strange metal was very light, left oxygen through so that one didn't even sweat under it, and it seemed to be inherently adhesive to skin, too. Whoever created these things must have been a genius. The only drawback was that Himiko wasn't able to determine what kind of alloy or other material it was as it stubbornly withstood every examination method. Himiko sighed. It was the same as with the Cloths. She really wondered how much use she was in this project when all of her test objects were so reluctant to reveal any information. She returned the mask to Marin who breathed in relief and put it back on.

Makoto finished scribbling down her findings. "Height 1.67m; weight: 52kg; blood type: A," she mumbled and turned over the sheet. Pen ready at the top of a pristine new sheet, she said, "now we can start with the interview! Birth place and date?"

"I was born in Japan; March 14, 1970."

"What about your parents and childhood?"

"My parents died in an accident when I was still a baby, and my Grandma took me in and raised me. When I was about five, a strange man appeared and abducted me. I was brought to Sanctuary, where I was taught Greek and everything about Athena and her Saints..."

"Were you trained together with the boys?"

"Of course not! That would not be proper -- sometimes it happens that we lose our masks during the training, and that would have been a catastrophe if there would have been boys around."

"How many girls were there when you started your training?"

Marin frowned and tried to remember. Shaina, Verdandi, Nimue Omiklea, Ariana, Alineth, Astara, Esther and Idurah were the girls who began with her. "Nine except for me. But only Shaina and Verdandi survived to attain a Cloth."

"What about this Verdandi? I don't remember seeing her on the list of Saints."

"Verdandi challenged our Master Regina for the Cassiopeia Silver Cloth and won. But this year she formally retired to found a family. As the Holy War against Hades was won for this cycle, the Kyoukou didn't see a reason to decline her wish."

"So this Cassiopeia Cloth is vacant now?"

"It is. Shaina took over Verdandi's job to teach the girls now. She already helped her in the past. I only hope she won't introduce her ideas to the girls that wearing a mask is

nonsense..."

"Well, if they don't have to take up these masks, there might be some more girls willing to become Saints," Makoto pointed out. "I would refuse such a silly tradition, too."

"But it was good for generations," Marin defended herself. "Why should it be abolished now?"

"Well, times change, and sometimes traditions, too."

"Why is it anyway that there are far more male Saints?" Himiko wanted to know.

"I don't know. You might ask Astreya -- he's the one who chooses the candidates. Except for Dohko, Saga and Aiolos every single one of the current Saints was found by him."

"Well, that speaks for his tastes -- most of the guys are really cute."

"Indeed," Marin smiled. "Especially my Aiolia."

"Indeed," Makoto grinned. "He's cute like a kitten..."

Marin laughed. "Don't let him hear that. He's pretty touchy about being called something else but a proud lion!"

"Milo obviously doesn't care," Makoto pointed out.

"Milo, yes. But they know each other from the first days of their training. Even nowadays they often go out together and tour through pubs and bars. But if others call him a 'kitten' he gets pretty upset..."

"I'm sure he'll scratch and bite then," Makoto giggled.

"Only seldom -- he prefers to use his Lightning Bolt. And mind you, he is one of the strongest Gold Saints around."

"I see. Back to your curriculum vitae... How did you attain your Cloth?"

"The Aquila Cloth was hidden somewhere near the top of the highest mountain here. I had to climb up there together with three more of my fellow trainees and compete with them for it. I won." Marin still remembered vividly how Alineth, Esther and Omiklea had fallen to their deaths during their fights.

"And what about this mask of yours -- does it belong to the Cloth?"

"No. The female candidates get their masks right at the beginning of their training. After our introduction, we were lead to the Hephaesta who named us and who gave us our masks."

"Named you? So you don't get to choose your own names like the male Saints?"

"No. It's tradition, too."

"And what was your name originally? Or aren't you allowed to tell that?"

"It's not a secret. My former name was Sanae. But Sanae doesn't exist anymore -- I'm Marin, Aquila Silver Saint."

"I see. Back to the masks once more... Why exactly were they introduced?"

"To show that we are different from the accursed Amazon warriors."

"And that's so important?"

"Of course! Since mythological times, the Amazons were great enemies of Athena. After all, they have twice Ares' blood in their veins! But I have to admit, in my opinion the advantages of the masks outweigh the disadvantages by far. Aphrodite, for example, always gets very annoyed that his poisonous roses don't have any effects on the female Saints."

"I can imagine that! -- Talking about attacks, would you please show us yours now?"

"Sure. Do you want to see them here? That might be a bit unwise, though."

"Please follow me to our test range outside." The women left the laboratory and went to the test area. Marin looked curiously around.

"Did you deliberately freeze it, or have you already examined Camus and Hyoga?"

"The ice is courtesy of Camus," Makoto sighed. "But on the other hand, it's not impractical. None of the other Saints' attacks could ruin the test range after he so thoroughly froze it."

"Indeed. But it's still cold." Marin commented.

"I'm sorry, I don't feel like thawing it."

"It might be difficult in any case if it was *Camus* who froze it... -- So what exactly do you wish me to show you?"

"All of your attacks, please. We have a camera running so that we can put it to our files."

"Okay." Marin took her pose and shouted "*Eagle Tough Lash!*" A large eagle shape could be seen through the Cosmo she activated before the energy crashed into the frozen wall.

"Oh, a bird!" Makoto observed.

"The eagle is my guardian constellation," Marin explained.

"Ah. Do you have another attack?"

"Sure." She struck the proper pose. "*Ryu Sei Ken!*"

"This looks just like Seiya's attack!" Makoto commented.

"It was me who taught it to Seiya," Marin said proudly. Then she showed *Kuu Ken*, her third attack, before Makoto declared the examination finished.

The women returned into the lab to get out of the cold.

"By the way, why do you wear such strange leggings?" Makoto asked the Aquila Saint. Marin looked down to the strip of bare flesh that showed above the left leg.

"Oh... You see, in one of my first great battles I ripped my tights like that. And as I won it even though everybody thought I would never make it, I left it like this as a kind of good look charm. And you see. I'm still alive."

"If you say so..."

"Indeed! One time I put on some new tights, and promptly I slipped and broke my leg. Since then I never wore whole tights, and it helped."

"It definitely looks unique."

"Yeah." Marin grinned, but only her voice showed her amusement. "And it distracts my male opponents, too."

"I can imagine that," Makoto laughed.

Suddenly Aiolia stood right in the middle of the laboratory. "Marin? What are you doing here? I missed you back home!"

"I was ordered to submit to an examination. Didn't Milo tell you that?" Marin sighed. Aiolia's protectiveness towards her sometimes was a bit much.

"Sure. But I don't trust Milo where you are concerned. And anyway, I'm a little hungry and thought you might cook something for me..."

"Saints are *always* hungry, it seems," Himiko giggled from her corner. "But it's true -- it's lunch time right now."

"In Greece it was breakfast time," Aiolia corrected her. "And I thought of a nice breakfast in bed..."

"You are impossible as always," Marin giggled. If she didn't wear the mask right now, she would have kissed him. "But I'm a bit tired and wouldn't mind relaxing a little, I have to admit."

"Why don't we just examine Aiolia, too, now that he's here?" Himiko suggested. "In the other room there is a bench where you can lie down a little, Marin."

"I won't submit to an examination before I haven't gotten my breakfast!" Aiolia told them.

"You should better comply," Marin warned them. "Hungry lions are dangerous."

"You heard her?" Aiolia asked Makoto. "So you'd better prepare something nice and tasty for me."

"Do you want some tea first?" Himiko offered him a cup of steaming green tea.

"No thanks. With that colour it can't be healthy," Aiolia shuddered.

"Try a large cup of hot cocoa," Marin suggested.

"Oh, he likes sweet things," Makoto commented.

"Sure. They give energy," Aiolia told her.

Himiko rummaged through a drawer and came back with a *Lion* bar. "Wanna have one?"

"Sure," Aiolia grinned. "Always."

Marin couldn't help but laugh. "They are his favourites -- how did you know?"

"Well, I thought *Mars* wouldn't be fit for a Warrior of *Athena*..."

Aiolia had just finished the *Lion*. "It's okay to destroy Mars, though," he pointed out.

"I see." So he got the *Mars* bar, too.

"It's always amazing how easily they can be tamed with the proper food," Makoto wondered.

"That's true," Marin nodded. The threat of not giving his lunch or dinner was also the best threat to convince Seiya to train hard.