

## Chapter 14

Prince Kiminobu entered the hangar bay and saw that most of the mechanics had already left for the night. There were a few stragglers finishing up work on a mech or two before they headed to bed. Pops was strict with his mechanics, and they knew never to start work on a mech they could not finish before the end of shift. Sometimes things happened and kept them. They still had to finish.

Kiminobu peeped into Pops's office and found the old mechanic gone for the night. His work was done, apparently. Good. And the mechanics working were well away from *The Kingfisher*, so no one should disturb him.

No, no one should ask him why he was here and not with his beautiful wife—a question he was asking himself. If he was smart, he'd turn around and go back to her while she was still asleep... and yipping so cutely.

He loved everything about her. How could anyone be *that* perfect?

He took a step back towards the castle, determined to put *The Kingfisher* behind him until morning. He could give himself tonight. He could hold Yumisa tonight, love her as she deserved, and deal with his curiosity in the morning. That would be the smart thing to do. It would be the right thing to do. It would be the husbandly thing to do.

He looked over his shoulder and saw *The Kingfisher* looking at him directly. Its head was turned and *looking* at him, its eyes red and alive.

A screen appeared in the air before his eyes.

YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

I HAVE ANSWERS

Kiminobu took the screen and crumbled it up like paper before he dropped it and kicked it away like a small ball. "No," he said to the mech. "I'm doing the smart thing and going back to my wife."

Another screen appeared.

A WIFE YOU CANNOT FEEL

Kiminobu tore that one in half.

“It doesn’t matter.”

Another screen appeared.

LIAR

Kiminobu looked away. Another screen appeared where he was looking.

YOU ARE HURTING

I CAN HELP YOU

COME TO ME

“What are you?” Kiminobu whispered. “Why are you taunting me?”

I SCANNED YUMISA HASE  
HER BIOLOGY IS DIFFERENT

I WILL TELL YOU

Kiminobu turned to look at the machine with furrowed brows. “What do you mean *different*?”

COME TO ME

The chest hatch opened.

Kiminobu turned away. “No,” he said. He ran from the hangar bay and through the castle until he found himself before Captain Asa’s door. He did not know why he was here, but he knocked hesitantly before he could think better of it.

Asa opened the door a moment later dressed in a thin purple robe as she dried her red hair with a towel. Her green eyes widened when she saw the Prince.

“Your Highness!” she said, startled, and she quickly tied her robe shut.

“Cut the nonsense, Asa,” he said as he entered her room. “You know I don’t like formalities.”

“And I don’t like married men entering my room un—.” She paused when she saw the look on his face and dropped the towel from her head. “What happened?” she asked when she saw this was not a friendly visit. “Is it the Princess?”

She sat down next to him on a small couch and touched his knee. Kiminobu drew his leg from her.

“No, it’s *The Kingfisher*,” he said. “Something happened earlier that I can’t explain.”

“What exactly?” she asked. “Was there more than you being able to control that thing as well as you did considering you have no mobile suit piloting skills?”

“What?” he asked, looking at her.

“You handled that thing better than I handle *The Empress*,” Asa told him. “You did maneuvers I didn’t even think were possible!”

“Then you apparently don’t read your mobile suit’s instructions,” he told her. “Or you don’t have them downloaded into your brain the way *The Kingfisher* apparently did me.” Kiminobu grabbed his head and leaned over. “I’ve never experienced anything like that. I felt like my brain was going to fry from the information overload! I can still see it flashing before me when I concentrate too hard.”

Asa touched his knee, and he turned to look at her. When he did, the pain went away. “Nothing like that has ever happened with *The Empress*,” she told him. “When I want to know something, I have to look it up.”

“You’ve never had anything flash across your Heads-Up Display before?” he asked.

She shook her head. “The only thing on my HUD is combat data,” she said. “And it’s never enough to interfere with my ability to fight or see. Nobu, what *exactly* happened to you?”

He took a deep, shuddering breath. “I’m not sure I can explain it,” he said. “When I put *The Kingfisher*’s helmet on, everything about the mobile suit just started scrolling past my eyes. I shouldn’t have been able to read everything, yet I did. Same thing happened to Yumisa’s helmet, but she closed her eyes before she was overwhelmed. I... couldn’t close my eyes.”

“And you learned how to operate the machine just from that?” Asa asked in disbelief.

“That and more,” he told her. “I can’t remember everything. When I look for something I remember seeing, it’s like... searching for a piece of data in my brain that suddenly slips right out of my mind’s eye. Some things I can remember easily, like how to fight. Other things, like why I can fight, I can’t remember. I just... know.”

“I don’t like this, Your Highness,” she said. “If that thing affected you somehow, who knows what it did to you! I think you should see a doctor.”

“And tell him what? That I know how to perfectly use my mech, though I don’t know how?”

“More like your mech infected you with something and you need to get rid of it!” she said hotly.

“The weirdest thing is... I remember my body being able to feel while I was wearing the helmet,” he told her. “I didn’t think of it at the time, but when I fought those mobile suits, I remember the sensation of touching them. Each block, each strike, I felt as if I was performing them myself.”

“Your Highness, you haven’t *felt* anything for the past eight years,” she told him. “Your body probably doesn’t even remember what it *feels* like to feel something. Your brain is probably just—”

“I felt the strikes, Asa,” he told her. “It’s like *The Kingfisher became my body.*”

“That’s completely impossible,” she told him. “That’s—” Asa paused and trembled as she remembered what she had been searching for over the past day. She had found nothing, but if what Kiminobu had said was true, it might give her a starting point. “You’re just... overthinking things,” she told him. “You cannot feel through your mobile suit. It’s just a machine.”

“I’m seriously beginning to doubt that,” he said. Kiminobu stood up. “I don’t know why I came to talk to you. You don’t seem to actually care that there might be something going on with our Nexus Suits. I should go back to Yumisa.”

Asa grabbed his arm and turned him around. “No, Your Highness, I do care,” she told him. “But I still think you’re mistaken, and I don’t like where that train of thought might lead someone in your condition.”

He narrowed his eyes on her. “My *condition*?” he asked testily.

Asa immediately looked away and swore to herself. “I’m sorry, Your Highness—that was insensitive of me.”

“Yes, it was,” he growled softly. “And I’m surprised you said it.”

“I didn’t mean—” she started, but he was out the door before she could finish. Asa snarled and began berating herself silently.

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Kiminobu stormed back to his room but managed to calm himself down before he went inside. He was upset, but he had no right to disturb Yumisa with what had just happened. Besides, how could he tell her?

He slipped quietly inside and found her sitting up in bed, looking like she had just woken up. She tossed her grey and white-streaked hair back and rubbed her golden eyes.

“Where were you?” she asked. “I woke up and you weren’t here. I was worried.”

“I’m sorry,” he told her as he sat down in bed next to her. “Something about *The Kingfisher* was bothering me, and I went to check, but... I decided it wasn’t that important so I came back here.”

“Oh,” Yumisa said, not believing him. She sniffed the air, and then she hugged him. “I do smell oil and metal,” she told him. “But I also smell... *Asa*.” She pulled away. “When did you see her?”

He sighed. “I went to her room to ask her about the mechs,” he admitted. “After I saw *The Kingfisher*.”

“Thanks for being honest,” she told him. “But you should have mentioned her, too.”

“You’re right—I should have, and I’m sorry I tried to hide it from you. I didn’t want you to get the wrong idea about why I was seeing her so late, though.”

Yumisa snuggled against him. “I didn’t mean to sound jealous,” she told him. “I know there’s nothing going on between the two of you.” She smelled him again. “Though she smells very... clean.”

“She looked like she had a bath earlier,” Kiminobu said. “Asa loves her baths.”

Yumisa arched a slim, grey and white eyebrow. “And how do you know *that*?” She moved to tickle his stomach but stopped when he didn’t respond and she remembered that he couldn’t feel it.

“I know Asa,” he said. “But I want to know you much, much better.” He pushed Yumisa back against the bed and kissed her. His hands moved down her body, and Yumisa arched her back, pressing against his hands. But she pulled away when he removed his hand from her breast.

“Don’t stop touching me,” she told him. “I said I’d feel for both of us.”

“It’s just not fair,” he said, sitting on the side of the bed and running his hands through his hair. He felt how rough his hands were against his scalp. “And it has to hurt to have sandpaper touching your body!” He pulled his hands away and looked at them.

Yumisa hugged him. “I’ll get used to it,” she told him. “I’ll tell you when you’re touching me too hard, or it hurts too much. But there are parts of me that... feel okay being touched with sandpaper.”

“I can’t stand the thought of hurting you,” Kiminobu said. “I love you so much, Misa—I never want to hurt you! But I want to feel you. I want to stroke your hair and feel how soft it is! I want to touch your body like a lover, not like someone who has to restrain himself. I...”

“Take me, Nobu,” she told him as she laid back and spread her legs for him. “Don’t worry about anything else—just love me with what you can. That’s all I ask. That’s all I’ll ever need from you!”

Kiminobu scooted closer and, as gently as he thought he could, stroked her face. “Are you sure?”

“I’m positive,” she said, and they kissed again.

Yumisa wrapped her legs around his waist when she felt him hesitate. She looked up at him. “What’s wrong?” she asked.

Kiminobu kissed her and said, “Nothing. I was just... wondering if your doctors gave you any idea of when you might get pregnant,” he said. “After all, this treaty depends on a child.”

Yumisa shrugged her slim shoulders. “They didn’t say,” she told him. “And that’s a strange question to ask—especially right this second!”

Kiminobu shook his head. “I’m sorry—you’re right. It was a stupid question to ask. Forgive me.”

Yumisa stroked his face. “Always. But don’t worry—I will get pregnant with your child. Just... give it some time. It will happen—especially at the rate we’re going!”

Kiminobu hugged her and they both laughed.

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Yumisa screamed and bolted up from a sound sleep an hour later, holding her hands over her ears. Kiminobu was awake instantly and threw his arms around her.

“It hurts!” she screamed loudly, as if trying to be heard over a loud noise. “It hurts! Turn it off! Turn it off!”

“What hurts? What’s going on?” he asked. “Yumisa!”

“Stop it! Stop it! Stop it!” She pulled on her ears, as if trying to rip them off. “That sound! Make it stop!”

Kiminobu’s eyes went wide and he bolted from the bed. He threw open his door and stumbled back when he saw Chiharu there. Chiharu’s eyes went wide, and she spun around quickly when she saw that the Prince was not dressed.

“Forgive me, Your Highness!” she told him with her eyes shut hard. “I heard the Princess scream and came to see what was wrong.”

Kiminobu looked down at himself, and he quickly grabbed the closest thing he could find to cover himself—which happened to be Yumisa’s underwear. He tossed them away and scrambled for the other side of the bed, where he quickly put his clothes on.

“Stay with her!” he ordered the handmaiden. “I’m going to put a stop to this right now!”

He brushed past Chiharu, who went into the room and sat with her lady and comforted her. But she looked at the door, wondering where the Prince was going.

Kiminobu stormed through the castle halls to the maintenance bay and he flew toward *The Kingfisher* and smashed his fists against the mech’s metal hull. He beat upon the machine and kicked at it.

“Stop torturing my wife!” he screamed. “I know you’re setting off that alarm only she can hear! Stop it right now or I’ll tear you apart!”

The hatch opened.

“You actually expect me to get into you after what you just did?” Kiminobu demanded. “You’re not a machine, you’re a demon! I’m never setting foot inside you again after this little stunt!”

The two pilot chairs slid forward.

“You’re nuts!” Kiminobu screeched.

“Your Highness, is everything all right?” a late working member of the maintenance asked, coming over.

Kiminobu looked at him and saw the welder he held in his hands. “Give me that!” the Prince demanded, snatching it from his hand. He stormed over to the mech and turned the welder on full power. “Stop torturing my wife or I’ll cut through your arm!”

“Your Highness, that isn’t powerful enough—” the maintenance worker started, but Kiminobu glared at him and silenced him.

“Fine, I’ll cut through its circuit boards.” Kiminobu narrowed his eyes on the mech. “I’m sure it can do that.”

“Sir, it’s just a machine,” the worker told him. “It isn’t alive.”

“No, it’s more alive than it wants us to think.” Kiminobu approached the hatch and held the welder above the seats. “Stop the alarm or I’ll cut off a seat.”

A screen appeared next to Kiminobu showing Chiharu’s face. “How is Yumisa?” he asked her.

“Better. She has a bad headache, but the whistle has stopped,” Chiharu told him. Then she saw the lighted welder and asked, “What are you doing to your mech?”

“Showing it who’s the boss,” Kiminobu told her. “Take care of Yumisa. If the whistle starts again, call me instantly.”

“Yes, Your Highness.” Chiharu’s face disappeared.

“You and I are going to talk, and we’re going to talk because I’m in charge, not you, do you understand me?” he asked *Kingfisher*.

A message appeared before him.

YES



Kiminobu climbed into the second pilot's seat but kept the welder. "I'm going to need this for a few minutes," he told the worker. "Sorry." He slammed his fist against the side of the hatch. "Let's talk."

The seats slid into the cockpit and the hatch closed, sealing Prince Kiminobu inside. The control lights and the camera screens came on, showing him the maintenance bay.

"First of all, you're going to show me *everything* you scanned about Yumisa," he told the mech.

A screen appeared.

## HELMET

"Oh, no," Kiminobu said. "You're not in charge here. *I am*. I'll put my helmet on only if I feel like it. You make no demands here. Show me Yumisa's scans."

Several pictures of Yumisa appeared, looking more like mechanical diagrams than even X-Rays. There was a circle over her womb, and Kiminobu touched it. "She has a normal, human reproductive system—so what?" he asked.

A light flashed. Kiminobu touched it.

BECAUSE OF HER HALF-WOLF NATURE, SHE DOES NOT HAVE  
A NORMAL REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM  
SHE CAN ONLY GET PREGNANT FOUR TIMES A YEAR

"You're lying," Kiminobu said. "Even if her system was different, chances are she would be able to get pregnant more because animals are different."

YOU ARE THINKING LIKE A HUMAN  
THE SCANS SHOW THAT YOU ARE WRONG

"What are you saying? That we're going to have to work harder to have a child?"

YES

“So what? Then we’ll work harder.”

Kiminobu could almost hear *The Kingfisher* sigh in frustration.

I KNOW HOW TO FIX HER

Kiminobu’s eyes narrowed. “You don’t say *fix* when talking about a half-wolf girl,” he said. “Unless you don’t want her getting pregnant for some reason!”

I APOLOGIZE FOR HURTING HER  
I ONLY WISH TO HELP HER AND HELP YOU  
THIS TREATY DEPENDS ON HER CHILD  
I WILL NEVER HARM YOUR WIFE...  
AFTER WHAT I JUST DID TO HER, THAT IS

“I still have my welder,” Kiminobu warned it.

TAKE SCANS TO HUMAN DOCTORS  
THEY WILL KNOW WHAT TO DO  
NOW PLEASE PUT ON YOUR HELMET

“I still have my welder.”

But Kiminobu reached down and picked up the helmet and slipped it on. He strapped it on. Instantly, he felt the same connection to *The Kingfisher* he had felt before. He felt the cool air of the hangar bay on his skin, as if transmitted to him through the helmet. He closed his eyes and let the sensations sink into him.

“What is this?” he asked.

A FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY ON YOUR WORLD  
WHAT YOU CALL THE FADING SHADOW SYSTEM  
YOU WERE NEVER TO KNOW ABOUT IT

“Then why are you telling me?” Kiminobu asked.

YOUR MIND PULLED IT FROM MY DATACORE  
YOUR MIND OVERWHELMED MY SYSTEM  
YOUR MIND CONNECTED US IN WAYS IT SHOULD NOT HAVE

“How?” the Prince asked.

I DO NOT KNOW  
THIS TECHNOLOGY SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN FOUND  
FOR ANOTHER FOUR GENERATIONS  
YOU UNLOCKED IT TOO EARLY

“What do you mean *too early*?”

PREPARE FOR INFORMATION DOWNLOAD

Kiminobu jerked in his seat as his HUD filled with information again. He read it all, and he realized he was only able to read it at this speed thanks to *The Kingfisher*. In a matter of seconds, he discovered more about the mech and the other Nexus Suits than anyone had known for the past eight years. When it was over, he sat there in complete silence.

“Did my parents know about this?” he asked.

NO  
NO ONE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN UNTIL YOUR  
GREAT-GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN

“Why did the Mist Elves use this technology knowing it was forbidden?”  
Kiminobu asked. “Were they trying to set up my parents?”

NO  
THEIR HOPE WAS THAT IF WARS HAD ENDED  
BY THE FOURTH GENERATION

THE TECHNOLOGY WOULD NOT BE NEEDED  
IF WARS HAD NOT ENDED  
PERHAPS THE TECHNOLOGY WOULD SHOW  
THE STUPIDITY OF WAR

“Great. Altruism. So how did I unlock this forbidden technology early?”

UNKNOWN  
PERHAPS IT WAS THE RECESSIVE GENES

“Are you saying Yumisa unlocked them?” he asked.

UNKNOWN  
POSSIBLE

“So if I hadn’t unlocked them, my son or daughter might have,” he said.

UNKNOWN  
POSSIBLE

“So, my family and kingdom are basically screwed, is that what you’re telling me? Because according to what I read, we’re going to lose the kingdom.”

ONLY IF YOU TELL  
NO ONE KNOWS KINGFISHER HAS FADING SHADOW EXCEPT YOU

“What else can this puppet master system do?” Kiminobu asked. “What other secrets are you hiding?”

Another screen appeared to the right of him showing a giant robot mech with a more humanoid form than any other Nexus suit or mobile suit. The chest, arms, legs, and chest piece all flashed independently of each other. Kiminobu touched the left arm and saw that it was Rumiko’s Nexus Suit, *The Tempest*. He clicked on the left leg and saw that it was Shiori’s Nexus Suit, *The Atlas*.

“I like the look of that,” he said. “How is it controlled?”

FADING SHADOW  
YOU CONTROL IT

“Me? Alone?”

YES  
YOU HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE

“And a very ticked off Captain of the Guard when Asa finds out.”

THAT IS YOUR PROBLEM  
NOT MINE

“Thanks.” Kiminobu unstrapped his helmet and tossed it aside. As soon as he did, he lost all sensation again. “Anything else I should know about you before I leave? Like are you going to brainwash me into taking over the world or something?”

NOT IN MY PROGRAMMING

“That’s a small comfort. Why can I feel when I’m connected to you? I have no sensation in my skin because of my burns, yet I can feel when I have my helmet on.”

YOUR BODY HAS SENSES  
THEY ARE JUST TURNED OFF BY YOUR NERVE ENDINGS  
WHEN WE ARE CONNECTED  
MY COMPUTER AND YOUR BRAIN ARE LINKED

“But why can you feel?” Kiminobu asked.

## UNKNOWN

“I had a feeling you were going to say that.” Kiminobu pressed a few buttons and opened the hatch. The seats slid forward. As they did, he heard something hitting the side of *The Kingfisher*. Then he saw a large piece of metal fly past the open hatch.

“—not a machine! You’re a demon in robot form! Stupid, evil machine! How dare you do that to me! I was *nice* to you! I *liked* you! Now I hate you forever! Stupid, evil machine!”

“Your Highness, stop before you hurt yourself!”

Kiminobu looked over and saw Chiharu, Ruri, and one other of Yumisa’s handmaidens struggling to hold Yumisa back. Her hackles were raised, and her hair was actually standing on end. He did not realize how strong his little wife was, but the three handmaidens could barely hold her.

Kiminobu hopped out of the seat and rushed to her. He lifted Yumisa in his arms and held her tight.

“Kick it’s ass,” he whispered into her ear. “I’m not going to stop you after what it did.”

Yumisa’s ears stood up and she pulled back to look at her husband. He pressed the welder into her hand and let her go.

“Tear it apart,” Kiminobu said.

Yumisa grinned and turned the welder on.

“But you’ll miss out on the really cool thing it and the other Nexus Suits can do,” he said as she stepped toward it.

Yumisa turned to look at him. “What can it do that’s cool?” she asked. “Other than driving me *nuts* with a dog whistle only I can hear!” She glared at the mech.

A screen appeared before her.

APOLOGIES, PRINCESS YUMISA TAKANASHI  
I NEEDED TO SPEAK WITH PRINCE KIMINOBU TAKANASHI

Yumisa shredded the screen with her nails. “Shut up. You don’t get to talk to me right now after what you did. And that was a lame apology. Now show me what you can do or I’ll never forgive you.”

A screen appeared before her, showing her what it had shown Kiminobu earlier. Yumisa’s eyes widened.

“Okay, that is cool.”

Alarms sounded across the maintenance bay and castle. Everyone looked around in confusion for a moment, because that sound had not been heard in close to a decade. Then a voice announced over the PA: “Incoming Uprising mobile suits and command carrier. Pilots, to your mobile suits. This is not a drill.”

Everyone scattered to their assigned duties and stations.

“Orders, Your Highness?” Chiharu asked.

Yumisa looked at Kiminobu with wide eyes. “What do we do?” she asked.

Kiminobu looked at *The Kingfisher*. “It’s up to you. Do we stay or do we go and help our soldiers?”

Yumisa looked at *The Kingfisher*. “Will it start whining again if we don’t go?” she asked nervously. “I can’t deal with that sound again. My ears are still ringing!” She spat at the machine angrily. Then she said, “We should help. We can’t be the Guardians of the Realm if we stay behind all the time. Are you going to behave yourself?” she asked the mech.

ALWAYS.

“Fat chance of that,” she said sourly. “But let’s go.”

“Your Highness, not in your nightgown,” Chiharu told her. “I suggest you change.”

“Flight suits are over there,” Kiminobu told the handmaidens. “We’ll have to get one custom-made for Yumisa’s tail, but you can cut a hole for now.”

“Thank you, Your Highness,” Ruri said as they rushed off.

“What about you?” Yumisa asked. “You need a flight suit, too.”

Kiminobu looked down at his arms and gripped his fists. “I don’t know how that will work,” he said, more to himself than her. Then he shook his head. “No, I’ll be all right. I need to do this once without a flight suit.”

“Why?” she asked. “Nobu?”

He let out a deep breath and said, “When I wear the flight helmet, my senses return. I want to know what it feels like to be in battle without my flight suit so I can compare it to later when I’m wearing one.”

“What do you mean your senses return?” she asked in confusion.

“I can feel the wind, Misa—I have full, tactile functions.”

“You’re kidding!”

He shook his head. “No, but I promise this will be the only time I try it. I just... I have to know for my own sake that I’m not crazy.”

Yumisa nodded her head. “If you think it will be safe.”

“It should be fine,” he said.

“Come with us, Your Highness,” Chiharu told her as they returned with a body-hugging flight suit that would fit her. “We need to get you changed if you’re going along with this madness.”

“She’s not going anywhere,” Asa said as she and the Royal Guard entered the hangar bay. “And neither are you, Your Highness. Get back to your quarters. You’re not going to be in this battle if I have anything to say about it.”

“It’s a good thing you have nothing to say about it,” Kiminobu told her. “We’re going. *The Kingfisher* is important to the safety of Vadora and now the Kareneth. I have to fight alongside my troops.”

“No, you don’t,” Asa told him. “We’re here to protect you!”

“And you’ll fight more efficiently with *The Kingfisher* beside you. I have to know what that mech is capable of. You may learn a few things about your own, too.”

“I knew that thing was going to be trouble if you ever sat in it,” Asa spat. “I should destroy it right now and spread the parts over every ocean!”

“But you won’t because you know there’s something special about it,” Kiminobu said. “Just give me today, Asa. It’s all I ask.”

“And then you’ll want tomorrow,” she said. She growled softly. “All right, but if it gets too hairy out there, you tuck tail and run.”

“Yes, Captain.” Kiminobu saluted her. He looked at Yumisa. “Ready?”

“I hope,” she said.

“Come on—it’ll be fun. You get to shoot things!”



“As long as that trigger-happy psycho doesn’t shoot us!” Asa shouted to them as they ran off.

Yumisa stopped and looked at Chiharu. “You told her about the simulator?” she asked.

Chiharu only shrugged meekly.

“Simulator?” Kiminobu asked.

“I’ll tell you later,” she said as enemy fire began to pound the castle’s defensive shield. “Come on! We’re getting left behind!”

“Keep a close eye on the Prince,” Asa told the Royal Guard as she ran for their Nexus Suits. “I think this battle is going to turn out bad for him.”

The Nexus suits took off, following a small squadron of regular mobile suits and then more as more pilots skipped their pre-flight checks and took to the sky.

“*Kingfisher*, this is *Empress*—looks like we’ve got more to deal with than before,” Asa told Kiminobu and Yumisa as she saw the enemy mechs. “How are you holding up?”

“Fine,” Kiminobu said. “I’m focused.”

“We have to get that wall repaired,” Asa told him. “We’re vulnerable until we do.”

“We can handle this lot, *Empress*,” Kiminobu told her. “We’re back at full power now. Ready to engage the enemy. All Vadoran troops, engage the enemy!”

“Sire, yes, Sire!” the entire company of mobile suit pilots chanted, and they entered the battle.