



Reminiscence

Things have changed so much that Kamille's own face is hardly recognizable from what it used to be. Mainly, that expression he wears. There's something that isn't quite the same, despite being so difficult to pinpoint.

What should be teenagers getting an education are soldiers fighting a war larger than themselves. It's pitiful that conflict has devolved to this point. It's hard to even remember the circumstances of how he got wrapped up in something like this. Something that never should've involved him.

It's like his memories are fading into obscurity. There are bits and pieces still left in his palms, but most has slipped through the gaps in his fingers, like sand. It begs the question: What's going to be left for him to hold once this war is brought to its end?

The pieces that he clings onto, at the very least, create a photo without its frame. Fragments, like a childhood friend. That's one of the things he may never forget—just because of the sheer length of time she's been around. And the fact that she's still nagging at him, all these years later.

School also moves to the forefront of his mind. He thinks he was a decent student. Head shoved into the books to avoid a situation at home he resented. Naturally gifted, too. It led to him skipping a good amount. More than he reasonably should've.

More than anything, he remembers a rage. A hate, aimed at the group occupying his home colony. That feeling's embers still sizzle somewhere in his heart, and the flame ignites at the sight of inhuman cruelty.

At the time, that hate felt justified. It still does, for the most part, but it was some stupid, impulsive action that led him to where he is now. Those negative emotions flared up for the wrong reason. A petty reason. And—...

Well, now the murky layer of film enveloping his memories becomes a lot more clear. For better, and for worse.

Either way, it gave him an opportunity. A chance that he wouldn't get anywhere else. In the moment, vengeance was within reach, and tunnel vision forced him to focus in on that fact.

There was finally a way to get back at the Titans, and punish their unchecked misuse of authority.

Nothing virtuous comes without its caveats, though. He'd have to leave the past in the past, and never look back. Forget everything he's known, and abandon it in favor of joining a fight on the side of a resistance movement.

To the idealistic mind of a child who's never known war, there was never a second thought. Why wouldn't you want to fight back against those who have wronged others, especially if it's for the betterment of the entire cosmos?

Now, that decision weighs on him. A weary soul, tied down by all of the choices that led to this. This very moment. All of the lives taken, whether it be by his own hands or by the enemy's—... How many more will it take for peace? And aren't they all worth the same?

It's not like he can turn back time, anyway, so maybe it's better to just repress it. Detach from it all, and try to justify it where you can.

"If you didn't want to die, you shouldn't have come near me!"

That's one he's said before. Maybe more than once.

"If you fight, I have to shoot back...!"

There's another. Like they're not all fighting. Like he really ever gave them a chance to lay down their weapon. Hesitation gets you killed, after all.

The only language some people know is violence. So, when they speak, you have to answer in kind.

Right?

That seems to make sense at first glance, but as the sound of rifle fire, detonations, and beams rings in his ears and echoes in his mind, it begins to break down.

Why can't things be solved through diplomacy? If those stubborn tyrants could've accepted they had overstepped—that they weren't enforcers of justice, but rather oppressors of those without voices—then this whole thing could've been avoided! Is overwhelming power and influence really so tantalizing that mankind is willing to trample over itself in order to obtain it?

The Titans were never going to surrender, though. Never going to admit they were wrong, and that they deserved what was coming to them. No, they were always going to fight until the bitter end. That type of mindset is why these useless battles continue. One after the other. Again. And again. And again.

So, maybe that statement is right. Maybe the only way to defeat those who resort to violence is to come to blows with them.

Frantic comms chatter snaps Kamille to his senses. When his eyes open, they're wide with shock, like he doesn't even realize where he is. How often does he look so shaken? It's like being awoken from a nightmare that you were unaware of being in.

The scene in front of him is reflected in the visor covering his face. It's nothing he hasn't seen before, but a bead of sweat still rolls down his temple all the same.

The vastness of space stretches out further than he can comprehend. The sparks of a struggle shine in the distance. Explosions from destroyed mobile suits resemble dying stars.

Has that always been the case...?

And has the Zeta always been this hot? Why's it so stuffy?

A deep breath. In. Out.

If you bring that type of anxiety into the middle of a firefight, you'll just get killed. This isn't the time or place to start questioning your own will to continue.

Then again, it may never be the right time or place.

Another deep breath, just for good measure. The immense amount of information on the screens in front of him drown out the thoughts that would interfere with his performance. It's just like before. Keep it all pushed down. Suppress it. It'll eventually spill out of one of the cracks in his psyche again, but at least it won't happen when his life is on the line.

Reluctantly, his hands reach for the yokes of the Gundam.

"Kamille, ready to launch...!"