

# 3 - The Children's Echelon

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**[00:01]** ---

So, Sir Trillram.

**[00:04]** ---

My Landing Castle is about  
to take its meal,

**[00:07]** ---

so this laser transmission  
will be terminated soon.

**[00:10]** ---

Let's wrap this up quickly, shall we?  
What is the status of our rat extermination?

**[00:24]** ---

Are we awake?

**[00:26]** ---

Oh, no you don't.  
You need to stay in bed.

**[00:32]** ---

Where am I?

**[00:33]** ---

The school. The enemy hasn't  
figured out we're here yet.

**[00:37]** ---

We've managed to give them  
the slip for the time being.

**[00:40]** ---

What about the others?

**[00:43]** ---

Inaho and his friends,  
you mean?

**[00:46]** ---

They say they're  
going to fight.

**[00:49]** ---

Using the equipment here.

**[00:52]** ---

Against that Martian Kataphrakt.

**[02:30]** ---

Hey! What's the deal with this?!

**[02:33]** ---

Orders from HQ, sir.

**[02:35]** ---

As soon as the citizens are evacuated, we're to abandon this base and pull out.

**[02:39]** ---

We have someone still fighting out there!

**[02:42]** ---

You're the only one left.

**[02:46]** ---

Lt. Koichiro Marito.

**[02:49]** ---

And you are?

**[02:50]** ---

Darzana Magbaredge.

**[02:52]** ---

Captain of the amphibious assault ship Wadatsumi, 4th Fleet Escort Force.

**[02:58]** ---

This is Kaoru Mizusaki, my XO.

**[03:01]** ---

One of our people is still fighting in the northern district!

**[03:04]** ---

The only reason we're still secure here is because she's holding them off!

**[03:07]** ---

"She"?

**[03:08]** ---

Warrant Officer Yuki Kaizuka.

**[03:11]** ---

A radio jamming field is covering the entire Shinawara area.

**[03:14]** ---

GPS is down, too.

**[03:16]** ---

Even if we went out to rescue her, we wouldn't be able to pinpoint her location data.

**[03:19]** ---

But, ma'am!

**[03:20]** ---

Our responsibility is to escort and protect the ferries that are carrying refugees.

**[03:24]** ---

There are still people who  
haven't made it out!

**[03:27]** ---

My kids' names weren't on  
the passenger manifest!

**[03:30]** ---

My students.

**[03:35]** ---

All right. I'll put in a request  
to HQ to form a rescue party.

**[03:39]** ---

I'll leave you one  
landing craft.

**[03:43]** ---

However, if you can't put together  
enough people to crew her,

**[03:46]** ---

then I expect you  
to let this go.

**[03:52]** ---

Nao? You're here, right?

**[03:54]** ---

Nao!

**[03:55]** ---

I'm in here.

**[03:56]** ---

I know that,  
that's why I'm here.

**[03:58]** ---

Do you have any idea what you kids  
are getting yourselves into?

**[04:02]** ---

I'm perfectly aware  
that it's crazy.

**[04:04]** ---

Then why are you...

**[04:05]** ---

For some reason, that Martian is  
obsessed with trying to kill us.

**[04:10]** ---

In other words, as long as  
we stick to the school,

**[04:13]** ---

his attacks won't spread to the  
city proper or the harbor.

**[04:16]** ---

Luckily, everyone who lives  
around here has been evacuated.

**[04:19]** ---

Even so, that doesn't mean...

**[04:28]** ---

Okisuke is dead.

**[04:31]** ---

"Make decisions as circumstances dictate. If you  
have to, trust your gut and make the call."

**[04:36]** ---

Isn't that what you  
always tell me, Yuki?

**[04:41]** ---

I'm pretty sure that this  
is one of those times.

**[04:44]** ---

I'll do it.

**[04:46]** ---

I can't let an injured  
person do this.

**[04:48]** ---

Nao!

**[04:51]** ---

Everyone is on edge.

**[04:54]** ---

That's why I want you  
to keep them safe.

**[04:57]** ---

I want you to cheer up and reassure  
the people who are scared.

**[05:02]** ---

That's something  
that we just can't do.

**[05:08]** ---

*Princess... You wished for peace  
more than anyone, and yet...*

**[05:15]** ---

*Who would do such a thing?*

**[05:18]** ---

So what you are saying is that not  
only did you fail to kill the rat,

**[05:22]** ---

you have even lost track of where  
it may have gone to hide.

**[05:25]** ---

With all due respect,  
Milord Saazbaum.

**[05:27]** ---

She has not eluded me just yet.

**[05:33]** ---

*From that tunnel she fled into,  
she could only go to one area.*

**[05:37]** ---

Namely, Shinawara's  
northern district.

**[05:40]** ---

When she grows impatient and pokes  
her head out of her hidey-hole,

**[05:44]** ---

my Nilokeras' vaunted eagle eyes  
will immediately spot him, and-

**[05:47]** ---

*Fool.*

**[05:49]** ---

Do you think we have the luxury  
of playing the waiting game?

**[05:53]** ---

If we do not have the rat's  
exact location, so be it.

**[05:56]** ---

We shall simply blow the entire  
city to kingdom come.

**[06:00]** ---

We shall conduct a  
meteor bombardment.

**[06:03]** ---

*M-Milord Saazbaum! Count Cruhteo's  
Landing Castle is too close!*

**[06:09]** ---

*Would he not view that  
as an attack against him?*

**[06:11]** ---

There are times when sacrifices  
must be made.

**[06:13]** ---

*Orbital corrections  
will take several hours.*

**[06:16]** ---

*To ensure that the rat does not  
flee elsewhere in the meantime,*

**[06:19]** ---

*maintain a close watch.*

**[06:21]** ---

Yes, Milord!

**[06:23]** ---

What's that?

**[06:25]** ---

I've been collecting all we know  
about that Martian Kataphrakt.

**[06:34]** ---

The bullets you fired at it didn't bounce off,  
they were all absorbed, weren't they?

**[06:42]** ---

How's the signal?

**[06:44]** ---

Borderline.

**[06:48]** ---

Such impudence!

**[06:50]** ---

Here goes...

**[06:55]** ---

It's not just bullets. When active sensor  
pings hit it, they don't come back.

**[07:01]** ---

Meaning what, exactly?

**[07:02]** ---

Infrared, acoustic detection, lasers,  
they're all useless.

**[07:08]** ---

There was no echo return.

**[07:10]** ---

It doesn't just absorb kinetic energy,  
but also radio waves and lasers.

**[07:15]** ---

I think that's the special  
characteristic of that wall.

**[07:19]** ---

Wall?

**[07:20]** ---

The energy field  
that covers its surface.

**[07:24]** ---

Call it a barrier, I guess.

**[07:26]** ---

A barrier...

**[07:28]** ---

A barrier that absorbs  
anything that touches it:

**[07:31]** ---

Matter, light, sound,  
radio waves, everything.

**[07:34]** ---

But if that's the case, how can he see  
what's on our side of the barrier?

**[07:41]** ---

Huh...

**[07:42]** ---

All information from the outside  
is blocked by the barrier.

**[07:46]** ---

It's possible that he can't see or hear anything  
on this side through the barrier.

**SIGN** Barrier Absorb

**[07:53]** ---

In my opinion, the inside surface of that  
barrier appears completely black.

**SIGN** Light

**SIGN** Light Sound

**SIGN** Light Sound Radio Waves

**[07:59]** ---

But if that's true,  
why do his attacks hit?

**[08:02]** ---

You're right. How can he hit  
anything if he's not looking?

**[08:07]** ---

He precisely targeted us from the other side  
of a building when we were running from him.

**[08:16]** ---

But then, even though he'd been  
chasing us so relentlessly,

**[08:19]** ---

he gave up the chase the instant  
we ran into the tunnel.

**[08:26]** ---

I bet that he wasn't the one who was looking  
at what was outside the barrier.

**[08:31]** ---

I think that he's using some separate cameras  
to allow him to see, probably in the sky.

**[08:40]** ---

Something like this.

**[08:42]** ---

That's how he kept managing to  
track us no matter how far we ran,

**[08:46]** ---

and why he didn't want  
to go into the tunnel.

**[08:49] ---**

It's because he can't see what's in front of him when that barrier is up.

**[08:54] ---**

He's probably searching for us from overhead right now.

**[08:58] ---**

That makes sense.

**[09:00] ---**

And conversely, it means we're safe as long as we stay under cover like we are now.

**[09:05] ---**

But the instant we go out, he'll spot us.

**[09:09] ---**

We'll probably only get one chance at this.

**[09:14] ---**

Oh come on, we're out of backup batteries...

**[09:17] ---**

And whose turn was it to check them this week?!

**[09:21] ---**

Frigging Marito...

**[09:23] ---**

Say, Inaho..

**[09:24] ---**

It'll be us three heading out in the Kats.

**[09:26] ---**

So we need two more people for the decoy truck, right?

**[09:29] ---**

Who do we ask?

**[09:31] ---**

Please, allow me to help.

**[09:35] ---**

Princ-

**[09:37] ---**

A Scandanavian babe...

**[09:38] ---**

I feel that it is my duty to go through this time of crisis, this trial.

**[09:45] ---**

Middle schooler syndrome?

**[09:47] ---**

Please.

**[09:51]** ---

He killed my father.  
Let me take part.

**[09:57]** ---

Our own lives will  
be on the line.

**[09:59]** ---

I understand that.  
You can count on me.

**[10:06]** ---

We carry out the plan tomorrow morning.  
We leave at first light.

**[10:12]** ---

We're going to drive off  
that Martian Kataphrakt.

**[10:24]** ---

Still working?

**[10:27]** ---

What about you, Inko?  
Can't sleep?

**[10:29]** ---

The student council office  
is pretty cold.

**[10:32]** ---

Yeah, the heat is turned off. We want to  
minimize any signs of human habitation.

**[10:37]** ---

Calm is sleeping like  
a baby, though.

**[10:40]** ---

I hope he doesn't  
catch a cold.

**[10:44]** ---

What?

**[10:45]** ---

I mean, you're worried  
about a cold

**[10:48]** ---

when you guys  
might die tomorrow.

**[10:55]** ---

Sorry.

**[10:59]** ---

It's okay.

**[11:01]** ---

It's not like I'm fearless

or anything.

**[11:05]** ---

I thought we were going  
to be rescued.

**[11:07]** ---

But then they were all...  
Like they were nothing.

**[11:12]** ---

If that happens to us, we probably  
won't even know what hit us.

**[11:17]** ---

What kind of regrets will  
I have in that moment?

**[11:20]** ---

I can't bear to just sit around doing  
nothing as I think about that.

**[11:24]** ---

That's how I feel.  
Calm probably does, too.

**[11:33]** ---

If you're not  
up for it, Inko...

**[11:35]** ---

No, I'm fine.  
I'll go rest up for tomorrow.

**[11:44]** ---

Inaho. Don't catch a cold, okay?

**[11:50]** ---

Same to you, Inko.

**[11:56]** ---

Allow me to thank you again.

**[11:59]** ---

We five will now  
carry out the mission

**[12:03]** ---

to rescue friendly forces and civilians still  
remaining in Shinawara's northern district.

**[12:07]** ---

Make that we six.

**[12:10]** ---

Captain Magbaredge?

**[12:12]** ---

I've delegated our ferry  
escort duties to XO Mizusaki.

**[12:15]** ---

They're to rendezvous with us  
after the op is complete.

**[12:19]** ---

Let's get a move on.

**[12:21]** ---

I've taken an interest in you,  
Lt. Koichiro Marito.

**[12:29]** ---

Look at that!

**[12:32]** ---

A signal round...  
Three reds.

**[12:34]** ---

That's in the direction  
of the school!

**[12:36]** ---

"Commencing attack"?!

**[13:02]** ---

All right, rat...  
Time to finish you off!

**[13:06]** ---

We're moving out!  
Follow me!

**[13:15]** ---

Damn it!  
This road's so narrow!

**[13:19]** ---

*Don't worry about it! You won't  
have points deducted today!*

**[13:23]** ---

*I see it! 10 o'clock!*

**[13:27]** ---

There you are, pillbug!

**[13:35]** ---

Commence operation.

**[13:56]** ---

Why you little...  
It can't be!

**[14:01]** ---

It's stopped moving!

**[14:03]** ---

Just like Inaho said!

**[14:09]** ---

Look. Release the safety.  
Raise it. Fire.

**[14:14]** ---

Simple, huh?

**[14:31]** ---

You stinking rats!

**[14:38]** ---

You okay, Kaizuka?!

**[14:39]** ---

Lt. Marito!

**[14:41]** ---

*Sir Trillram!*

**[14:43]** ---

*What in the world is that?*

**[14:45]** ---

Hey, this wasn't  
part of the plan!

**[14:47]** ---

The trailer!

**[14:48]** ---

*Milord?*

**[14:49]** ---

Give me its position!  
Where is it?!

**[14:52]** ---

*T-To your southwest,  
heading towards the city center.*

**[14:57]** ---

That guy is crazy...!

**[14:59]** ---

*Cover me! That bat's wake  
is dispersing the smoke!*

**[15:04]** ---

*We have to shoot it down!*

**[15:05]** ---

*Wait, Calm!*

**[15:10]** ---

Terran Kataphrakts...!

**[15:18]** ---

Forgive me!

**[15:23]** ---

*Calm!*

**[15:30]** ---

Damn!

**[15:31]** ---

*Are you okay?*

**[15:33]** ---

*Yeah. My stabilizer's gone,  
but I can still run, barely.*

**[15:38]** ---

Rockets seem to work fine  
on that one.

**[15:41]** ---

A sky carrier...

**[15:43]** ---

It's a Vers tactical transport.

**[15:45]** ---

I'm given to understand that it has  
no special equipment or capabilities

**[15:48]** ---

beyond machine guns  
and missiles.

**[15:59]** ---

Smoke screen!

**[16:00]** ---

Right away!

**[16:06]** ---

Voltage, check.  
Oil pressure, check.

**[16:09]** ---

Temperature, check.  
RPMs, normal.

**SIGN** Nao,

Good luck!

-Yu

**[16:12]** ---

Force feedback  
checking program, start.

**[16:16]** ---

Ejection seat functional.  
IFF confirmed.

**[16:20]** ---

Tactical datalink, activated.

**[16:23]** ---

It's here.

**[16:24]** ---

All systems green.  
Hold open.

**[16:31]** ---

There's no escape.

**[16:45]** ---

1200 meters to destination. Estimated time  
to rendezvous, 93 seconds.

**[16:50]** ---

I'll buy some time.  
Be quiet for a minute, okay?

**[17:00]** ---

You dare mock me?!

**[17:15]** ---

You've led me

on quite the chase...

**[17:21]** ---

Run, it's me he's after!

**[17:24]** ---

I will not. It is 54 seconds until  
our estimated rendezvous time.

**[17:31]** ---

I shall buy us that time.

**[17:37]** ---

*How pathetic... You are going  
to beg for your lives?*

**[17:41]** ---

*Restrain yourself!*

**[17:43]** ---

In the name of the Vers Princess Royal, I shall  
not tolerate this outrageous behavior!

**[17:58]** ---

Her Highness Asseylum  
Vers Allusia? It can't be!

**[18:03]** ---

Leave at once, you ill-mannered ruffian!

**[18:05]** ---

Impossible! That's not possible!

**[18:12]** ---

Fire all missiles!  
Target: enemy Martian Kataphrakt!

**[18:22]** ---

How can you be alive?!

**[18:25]** ---

Let's see...

**[18:26]** ---

Master arm switch. Fire control.  
Lower dampers...

**[18:30]** ---

*Inko, hurry!*

**[18:31]** ---

Oh, fine!

**[18:35]** ---

You waste your time! My Nilokeras'  
defenses are impregnable!

**[18:38]** ---

The likes of you  
could never scratch it!

**[18:39]** ---

Targeting correction!  
0-1-6, 0-1-2!

**[18:42]** ---

Fire!

**[18:46]** ---

*Fire, fire, fire,  
fire, fire!*

**[18:59]** ---

The water, it's...

**[19:03]** ---

Why, you little...

**[19:05]** ---

Calm.

**[19:06]** ---

*Let's see...*

*The soles of its feet?*

**[19:09]** ---

Anything else?

**[19:13]** ---

Found it!

**[19:14]** ---

The water isn't being sucked in!

**[19:15]** ---

Rear armor! Below and to the right of  
the intake! The gap between the claws!

**[19:33]** ---

Impossible!

**[19:35]** ---

We knew that your  
barrier had gaps.

**[19:39]** ---

Ground contact surfaces, for instance.  
You can't put up a barrier under your feet.

**[19:42]** ---

If you did, you wouldn't  
be able to stand.

**[19:46]** ---

The very invincibility of your  
barrier makes it impossible

**[19:49]** ---

to completely cover  
yourself in it.

**[19:53]** ---

The receiver for your external cameras.  
That's one of the barrier's gaps.

**[20:01]** ---

This is for my friend.

**[20:20]** ---

They did it?

**[20:26]** ---

Oh, yeah!

**[20:31]** ---

It can't be...

**[20:35]** ---

The Martian princess...

**[22:17]** ---

Sir Trillram! You're alive!

**[22:20]** ---

Are you being sarcastic?!

Where have you been all this time?

**[22:23]** ---

I have been making temporary repairs  
to the sky carrier...

**[22:26]** ---

Take me to it! We're leaving  
this place right now!

**[22:30]** ---

Sir, wait! Princess Asseylum...

She is alive! I don't understand!

**[22:35]** ---

I know she is!

**[22:37]** ---

That's why I'm going to kill her  
and make certain this time!

**[22:43]** ---

How big a fool are you,  
you inferior scum?

**[22:45]** ---

If I let her live, my entire clan and its  
followers will be branded as traitors!

**[22:56]** ---

Let's go.

**[23:05]** ---

You bastard, what do you  
think you're doing?

**[23:13]** ---

Give me tha-

**[23:23]** ---

That parade, it was you...

**[23:25]** ---

You were the ones who tried  
to assassinate the Princess!

**[23:29]** ---

You'll... regret this...

Updated 2025-12-07 18:17:23 UTC by whimsee