

E14 - XM3

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SIGN December 10th, 2001

[00:05] Yuuko

Congratulations on your promotion.

[00:07] Takeru

Thank you, ma'am.

[00:09] Yuuko

Moving forward, once you've finished tomorrow's exercise,

[00:12] Yuuko

you'll be assigned to A-01, a special unit directly under the Yokohama Base's command.

[00:19] Takeru

Um... what exercise?

[00:23] Yuuko

One I've got big hopes for.

SIGN December 11th, 2001

[00:27] Kasumi

Good morning, Lieutenant.

[00:34] Takeru

Thanks. But I want you to treat me the same as ever, okay, Kasumi?

[00:39] Kasumi

Sir. Yes, sir.

[00:51] Chizuru

We all actually ended up in the same unit...

[00:54] Tama

And after that tearful goodbye!

[00:56] Marimo

Excuse me.

[00:58] Tama

Sergeant!

[01:00] Marimo

Allow me to brief you all on the trial you'll be participating in.

[01:05] Marimo

The purpose of this exercise

[01:07] Marimo

is to compare the proof-of-concept prototype of the next-gen OS, XM3,

[01:13] Marimo

against the current release candidate version.

[01:16] Marimo

Flights composed of elite pilots

[01:19] Marimo

representing different TSF units from the base will be participating.

[01:25] Takeru

This trial will decide whether or not the OS we created gets adopted.

[01:25] Marimo

To put it simply, it's going to be a battle between the flights.

[01:31] Marimo

Additionally, the other units have been made aware of Lieutenant Shirogane's participation

[01:36] Marimo

as the original architect of XM3.

[01:39] Marimo

I should add that the aggressor force for the exercise will consist exclusively

[01:44] Marimo

of veteran TSF pilots who have flown over twenty combat missions.

[01:47] Tama

That sounds kind of like they'll be gunning for us!

[01:51] Mikoto

It's not gonna be easy.

[01:52] Chizuru

Can we convince a bunch of vets who are used to the old OS of the new one's benefits?

[01:57] Chizuru

How we win will be just as important as winning.

[02:01] Takeru

It sounds like fun.

[02:03] Takeru

I mean, we've already survived an actual combat mission against a bunch of aces!

[02:07] Takeru

Let's show these old-timers what we can do!

[02:09] Mikoto

Takeru!

[02:11] Meiya

It's as you say.

[02:13] Meiya

And we can hardly let the other flights outperform us.

[02:18] Takeru

Okay, let's do this!

[02:20] Girls

Yeah!

[02:22] Takeru

What's going to happen when battle-proven veterans are given the new OS?

[02:25] Takeru

And how well can we perform against them?

[02:28] Takeru

I want to see.

[02:30] OS

XM3 online.

[02:34] Takeru

It's got sound now?

[02:48] Takeru

They're veterans for a reason.

[02:49] Takeru

This won't be easy.

[02:55] Takeru

It's hard to believe we're up against Gekishins!

[02:58] Mikoto

Takeru?

[02:59] Takeru

I'm okay!

[02:59] Takeru

Let me handle this one!

[03:03] Takeru

Come on, asshole!

[03:08] Takeru

They dodged that?! Can't let them get away!

[03:11] Takeru

Ayamine!

[03:13] Ayamine

Bandit-1 in range! Engaging offensively!

[03:17] Takeru

Good!

[03:17] Takeru

*Once you've got him on the ropes,
pull back to this clearing!*

[03:21] Takeru

I'll circle around for the kill!

[03:23] Ayamine

Roger that.

[03:42] Takeru

Now!

[03:44] UN Pilot 1

I don't think so!

[03:46] Takeru

How about this?!

[03:49] UN Pilot 1

That's... impossible!

[03:52] Takeru

Got you!

[03:57] Takeru

An A rating?

[03:59] Ayamine

The best anyone else managed was a B-.

[04:02] Takeru

*I guess this shows we've got a handle on the
new version of the OS, even in its first use.*

[04:06] Takeru

*Everything's going according
to Yuuko-sensei's plan.*

[04:10] Takeru

Kind of a shame, though, y'know?

[04:13] Takeru

We had a harder time than I figured.

[04:15] Takeru

*I mean, imagine if we had
totally dominated them!*

[04:19] Mikoto

You really are something, Takeru.

[04:22] Mikoto

I mean, we were up against a team of aces!

[04:25] Mikoto

*Forget having a hard time, most
people would be totally helpless!*

[04:28] Takeru

*Still, we're just out of training and
managed to hold off these veterans,*

[04:34] Takeru

and even wipe them out!

[04:36] Takeru

Is it really that weird to wish

we could've done even better?

[04:40] Ayamine

How we win is important.

[04:41] Takeru

Exactly!

[04:43] Takeru

The new OS has a lot of potential.

[04:46] Takeru

Enough to maybe turn the tide of the war.

[04:49] Takeru

Let's aim for total victory
out there this afternoon!

[04:51] Charlie

Are you Shirogane from A-207?

[04:55] Takeru

He must be from the aggressor unit.

[05:00] Takeru

That's me, Lieutenant.

[05:02] Charlie

Come with me for a chat.
Don't worry, it won't take long.

[05:06] Ayamine

Shirogane...

[05:07] Takeru

Sorry. Go join up with
the others ahead of me.

[05:12] Mikoto

Takeru...

[05:20] Charlie

All right, here he is.

[05:23] Bandanna

Huh, this is Shirogane?

[05:26] Myung

Sure doesn't look like the top of his class.

[05:29] Dread

Hell, I'm having trouble believing
he can even fly a TSF.

[05:35] Takeru

What is this?

[05:36] Bandanna

So, Lieutenant Shirogane, I hear
you're the one behind the new OS?

[05:43] Takeru

I am unable to share any
information between flights,

[05:45] Takeru

to avoid any effect it could

have on the evaluation.

[05:50] Charlie

Get a load of this guy!

[05:52] Charlie

Love that rookie energy.

[05:54] Dread

You've still gotta answer a superior officer's questions, though.

[05:57] Dread

So, how about it?

[05:59] Takeru

Yes, it was me.

[06:12] Charlie

Hell of a thing you did, kid!

[06:14] Myung

We're trying to say that your brain is awesome!

[06:16] Bandanna

I seriously can't imagine how you thought some of this stuff up.

[06:20] Dread

If this thing gets adopted, people are gonna go nuts!

[06:24] Takeru

U-Uh... is the new OS really that useful?

[06:28] Charlie

A buncha baby rookies managed to take us on and win!

[06:32] Charlie

What better proof could there be?

[06:36] Charlie

What's wrong? Aren't you happy?

[06:38] Takeru

I-It's not that...

[06:40] Takeru

I just didn't expect the OS I created to be... welcomed like this.

[06:45] Dread

Why would you think that?

We're out to get the BETA, not you.

[06:51] Myung

It doesn't matter how long you've been in the fight,

[06:53] Myung

if you've got what it takes, then you'll be a big help.

[06:56] Myung

Who wouldn't appreciate that?

[06:57] Banadanna

Have you ever thought about how this new OS of yours might even save the human race?

[07:02] Charlie

You've earned the right to be proud.

[07:04] Dread

Catch you later, genius.

[07:06] Myung

Don't expect to win the afternoon trial, though.

[07:09] Myung

Get ready to lose.

[07:11] Charlie

Okay, let's do this.

[07:11] Bandanna

Better get it together, okay?

[07:13] Myung

I'm not going down without a fight!

[07:14] Dread

Oh, yeah!

[07:15] Takeru

*Everything I've done...
wasn't for nothing.*

[07:19] Takeru

It really wasn't!

[07:25] Chizuru

01 to 02, move forward to the tower at H-23.

[07:28] Chizuru

06, cover her.

[07:30] Meiya

02, roger that.

[07:31] Shirogane

06, roger that.

[07:32] Comms

02 and 06 are moving through H-21.
3,000 meters until contact with aggressor force.

[07:39] Takeru

We can do this!

[07:41] Takeru

*Between the new OS and
my skills as a pilot...*

[07:45] Takeru

I might finally be able to save the world!

[07:51] Takeru

I've got a ping on my sonic sensor.
They're trying to circle around us.

[07:53] Chizuru

Stay on your toes, 02.

[07:55] Meiya

I'm going to try and draw them away.

[07:56] Meiya

Keep an eye out for other units.

[07:58] Takeru

06, copy that.

[07:59] Chizuru

06, continue providing cover for 02.

[08:01] Chizuru

*I'll try to pincer them
from the other direction.*

[08:02] Takeru

06, copy that.

[08:04] Takeru

*01, keep your eyes peeled.
Make sure to stay behind—*

[08:09] Takeru

What was that? An explosion?

[08:10] Chizuru

It was over in area 2.

[08:13] Meiya

*This wasn't supposed to
be a live-fire exercise.*

[08:16] Meiya

Is it an accident?

[08:18] Takeru

It happened again.

[08:19] Takeru

Should we keep going?

[08:21] Chizuru

I'll call and find out.

[08:25] Chizuru

A Code 991?!

[08:27] Meiya

That's... It can't be...

[08:28] Takeru

But... why?

[08:31] Takeru

What the hell are the BETA doing here?!

[08:36] Hornet 1

This is Hornet 1 to headquarters!

[08:38] Hornet 1

*Requesting permission to
return to the hanger!*

[08:40] Sword 1

Sword 1 to headquarters!

We need artillery support—

[08:45] Takeru

This is a BETA attack?

[08:47] Takeru

This is what humanity's enemies can do?

[08:49] Radio chatter

Pull back to the hanger!

[08:50] Takeru

*What is this? Why are you
getting beat so easily?*

[08:51] Radio chatter

I'm not getting any confirmation—

[08:55] Takeru

*You're combat veterans, right?
And you've got my OS, too?*

[08:59] Takeru

You have to do better than this!

[09:05] Bandanna

Shark 1 to headquarters, rendezvous complete.

[09:08] Bandanna

*I'm integrating the A-207
flight under my command.*

[09:11] HQ

*Copy that. A combat-ready team
is on their way with weapons.*

[09:14] HQ

Stand by.

[09:15] Bandanna

Shark 1, copy that.

[09:17] Bandanna

The faster, the better!

[09:18] Bandanna

*You heard HQ! You guys need
to fall back to the rear!*

[09:20] Bandanna

Shark 1 and Shark 2 will take point!

[09:23] Chizuru

Everyone... No, 01 to all 207th units,
commence withdrawal.

[09:28] Meiya

02, roger.

[09:30] Ayamine

04, roger.

[09:31] Mikoto

03, roger.

[09:33] Tama

05, roger...

[09:35] Takeru

06... roger that.

[09:37] Bandanna

Shark 1 to headquarters, the rookies need some encouragement.

[09:41] Bandanna

Requesting authorization.

[09:42] HQ

Copy that. Permission granted.

[09:44] Bandanna

Okay, A-207 units, connect to the encrypted channel.

[09:49] Recorded Audio

*O soldiers under the rain of blood,
the black mist, the night rainbow.*

[09:54] Takeru

This is the posthypnotic trigger...

[09:55] Recorded Audio

*O soldiers whose souls are guided by the
white water's surface, the drops of the moon.*

[10:02] Recorded Audio

*Sing the praises of those names
carved into a steel grave,*

[10:08] Recorded Audio

*and sound all thousand bells
on this rotting land.*

[10:13] Recorded Audio

*May we all one day go with joy to the
promised land of death and victory.*

[10:16] Bandanna

Next comes the stim. Try to relax.

[10:20] Bandanna

Treatment complete.

[10:22] Bandanna

Welcome to hell, rookie lieutenants.

[10:25] Takeru

I could've done without all this.

[10:28] Takeru

But now I can get back to it...

[10:32] Takeru

*Lieutenant Shirogane, the hero,
is back in action!*

[10:35] Bandanna

*Your unit was able to push us pretty
hard during the combat exercise.*

[10:39] Bandanna

Have some faith in yourselves!

All units, got that?!

[10:41] A-207

Yes, ma'am!

[10:42] Bandanna

*Then I want your flight to head
towards the hanger and come back here*

[10:45] Bandanna

with all the live ammo you can carry!

[10:47] Bandanna

We're going to hold this spot until then!

[10:49] Takeru

*Lieutenant, I thought they were
going to bring the weapons to us?!*

[10:55] Charlie

*Are you really dumb enough to take what
HQ says at face value at a time like this?!*

[10:58] Charlie

*Emergencies mean thinking with
your own head and judgment!*

[11:01] Takeru

*Then we should all fall back
to the hanger together!*

[11:04] Takeru

*Splitting our force at a time
like this is too dangerous!*

[11:06] Charlie

Someone has to hold this spot!

[11:09] Takeru

Are you saying we wouldn't be any help?!

[11:12] Chizuru

Shirogane, what are you doing?!

[11:12] Takeru

At least we're not in Gekishins!

[11:14] Bandanna

What the hell did you learn in the academy?

[11:17] Bandanna

Don't you get the logistics?

[11:19] Bandanna

*You're retrieving the ammo because
you're more maneuverable!*

[11:22] Takeru

*What's that supposed to mean?
In the end, they still treat us like rookies!*

[11:25] Takeru

*You think you're hot shit?!
We could buy way more time than you!*

[11:29] Takeru

*We're not like you losers,
who got your asses kicked!*

[11:33] Charlie

We don't have time for this stupid debate!

[11:36] Charlie

If any Laser-class show up, we're all dead!

[11:38] Takeru

But—

[11:39] Meiya

Takeru, enough!

[11:40] Tama

Takeru-san, you have to calm down!

[11:41] Takeru

*All of them getting on my last
damn nerve! Shut the hell up!*

[11:45] Charlie

Get moving, now! That's an order!

[11:47] Takeru

Roger that!

[11:48] Chizuru

01 to all units, formation Delta 2!

[11:51] Chizuru

*Proceed to the hanger, but keep
an eye out for any pursuers!*

[11:54] All 207th

Roger that!

[11:56] Takeru

God damn it, what the hell am I doing?

[11:58] Takeru

*They got me pumped up on hypnosis
and drugs just to run errands?!*

[12:02] Takeru

*I'm better than this! I am!
I am better than this!*

[12:07] XM3

Warning, warning, warning, warning...

[12:14] Chizuru

All units, scatter! Full speed evasion!

[12:16] Chizuru

Head for the hanger!

[12:18] All 207th

Roger that!

[12:21] Chizuru

06?

[12:22] Takeru

There you bastards are!

[12:26] Takeru

Out of my way!

[12:28] Chizuru

Shirogane?!

[12:29] Meiya

This is bad... the stimulant
is affecting him adversely!

[12:33] Shirogane

Son of a bitch! You're dead!

[12:37] Shirogane

I'll kill you all!

[12:42] Chizuru

You can't fight them without real ammo!

[12:45] Shirogane

Damn it, why won't they die?!

[12:48] Shirogane

It's because of you! Shit! Shit!

[12:54] Shirogane

Get off of Earth!

[12:56] Shirogane

Give us...

[12:58] Shirogane

our lives back!

[13:01] Chizuru

Shirogane! Shirogane, snap out of it!

[13:03] Tama

Takeru-san, please!

[13:04] Mikoto

Takeru!

[13:06] Meiya

Everyone, hurry to the hanger!

[13:07] Meiya

Sakaki, I need 06's command authorization!

[13:10] Meiya

I'll deal with him!

[13:16] Meiya

*Don't do anything rash until
the sedative takes effect!*

[13:19] Takeru

I'm not gonna lose to you bastards!

[13:23] Takeru

I'm gonna save the Earth!

[13:34] Takeru

It's gonna take...

[13:35] Takeru

more than that to stop—

[13:45] Takeru

Shit, what now?! Move! Move,
damn it! I'm gonna die!

[13:49] Takeru

Move, move, move!

[13:51] Takeru

I can't die in a place like this! Not now!

[13:59] Takeru

Are the monitors down?

[14:12] Takeru

Am I actually going to die here?

[14:15] Takeru

Weren't things going great a second ago?

[14:19] Takeru

I haven't saved humanity yet...
and Alternative IV...

[14:26] Takeru

I mean, come on! Yuuko-sensei still
needs my help! And the new OS!

[14:36] Takeru

Sumika... I still haven't seen Sumika...

[14:42] Takeru

It doesn't make any sense!
Dying without seeing Sumika...

[14:46] Takeru

It's just wrong!

[14:53] Takeru

I don't wanna die... No...

[14:56] Takeru

I don't wanna die! I don't
wanna die! I don't wanna die!

[15:02] Takeru

Someone! Anyone! Save me!

[15:15] Bandanna

Shark 1 to headquarters.

[15:17] Bandanna

BETA mop-up in Areas 2 and 3 is complete.

[15:20] HQ

Copy that. Have the remains disposed of ASAP.

[15:33] Tama

Takeru-san's been sitting
there for a long time.

[15:37] Chizuru

Let's give him some space.

[15:40] Chizuru

If that were me over there, I think
Shirogane would say the same thing.

[15:45] Meiya

The same thing could've happened to any of us.

[15:54] Chizuru

Come on.

[15:55] Chizuru

The best thing we can do for Shirogane is to act like nothing happened,

[15:58] Chizuru

once he gets back.

[16:17] Marimo

Lieutenant Shirogane...

[16:20] Marimo

Have you calmed down some?

[16:24] Takeru

Please, leave me alone.

[16:30] Marimo

Gotta say, you really got your butt kicked.

[16:33] Marimo

Surviving something like this is honestly impressive.

[16:39] Marimo

I saw the record from your unit.

[16:41] Marimo

You managed to stall several BETA with nothing more than TSF maneuvers.

[16:45] Marimo

The 207th was able to deliver weapons to the frontline thanks to that.

[16:50] Marimo

If it wasn't for you—

[16:52] Takeru

Please, don't.

[16:54] Takeru

I... I was so deluded.

[16:57] Takeru

I thought I was going to be the big shot who saved humanity.

[17:02] Takeru

But... when the BETA actually showed up, I freaked out and was so scared.

[17:10] Takeru

And without even realizing it, I thought I could still fight.

[17:13] Takeru

But it was so obvious to the vets...

[17:16] Takeru

Not only did they use the post-hypnotic cue, but the stimulants, too.

[17:21] Takeru

And the way I overreacted to that...

[17:25] Takeru

I was shouting about how I was going to kill
the BETA when I was shooting paint balls!

[17:29] Takeru

How much of a joke is that?!

[17:33] Takeru

If I had died, I might've been a hero.

[17:38] Takeru

But I didn't want to die.

[17:43] Takeru

When the lights went out in the cockpit,
all I could do is cry while I pissed myself.

[17:49] Takeru

I'm just a coward!

[17:53] Marimo

I don't think there's anything
wrong with being a coward.

[17:59] Marimo

People who understand fear
become more sensitive to death.

[18:04] Marimo

And when people sense their death coming,

[18:07] Marimo

they can dedicate all they have left to
making sure their death is one to be proud of.

[18:13] Marimo

But...

[18:14] Marimo

If there's something you can
accomplish with your life,

[18:16] Marimo

you have a responsibility to see it through.

[18:23] Marimo

It doesn't matter if you're a coward.
You don't have to be considered brave.

[18:27] Marimo

I'd rather you live as many decades as you can,
protecting as many people as you can.

[18:33] Marimo

And in the very end,

[18:36] Marimo

as long as you can show what makes you strong,
Shirogane, that's good enough.

[18:43] Takeru

But... I...

[18:46] Marimo

Y'know, when I was a cadet,
I worked hard like you.

[18:51] Marimo

Thanks to that, I was put in charge
of a squadron once I was commissioned.

[18:55] Marimo

I was ready for a fight when
I headed to the front lines.

[18:58] Marimo

I thought I could handle anything.

[19:03] Marimo

But... the results were a mess.

[19:08] Marimo

The operation failed, and in my confusion,

[19:11] Marimo

I got my subordinates—the classmates
I had trained with—all killed.

[19:17] Marimo

At first, I tried to distract myself
from how bitter I felt by fighting.

[19:23] Marimo

But over time... I started fighting
while thinking about what it meant

[19:27] Marimo

that I was the one to survive.

[19:31] Takeru

What it meant?

[19:33] Marimo

I wanted to put my experience to use

[19:36] Marimo

to help as many pilots
live for as long as possible.

[19:39] Marimo

I think that's the reason I survived...

[19:42] Marimo

The purpose I found in my survival.

[19:46] Marimo

Because there's no other way I can make
it up to my comrades, who didn't make it.

[19:53] Takeru

Marimo-chan...

[19:55] Marimo

Shirogane, here's something interesting:

[20:02] Marimo

In my first battle... I wet myself, too.

[20:08] Marimo

Just a little though, okay?
Don't let your imagination run wild.

[20:12] Takeru

Why would you tell me that?

[20:14] Marimo

Because it's the same way for everyone.

[20:17] Marimo

Probably the rest of your flight, too.

[20:19] Marimo

You don't have to forgive
yourself right now.

[20:23] Marimo

But by the time you're able to laugh
while talking about your failures,

[20:28] Marimo

I think you'll have found
what it is that you're missing.

[20:32] Marimo

Oh, but don't tell the
others about this, okay?

[20:33] Takeru

Marimo-chan... thank you so much.

[20:36] Marimo

I'm a lady, after all.

[20:36] Takeru

I'm so pathetic.

[20:39] Takeru

*I thought I had my head on straight,
but then got conceited... and then depressed.*

[20:44] Takeru

*It might not be right away,
but I promise, I will do it.*

[20:49] Takeru

I'll get my act together.

[20:51] Takeru

It might take a while, but some day,

[20:55] Takeru

I'll get over this like you did—

SIGN This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents
either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously.