

BEYOND THE SPIRITS OF AN IRON HEART

S01 E04 - "Emotional Rescue"

Bull Armor's interaction with Silver Castle's biggest fans.

An imperfect full moon, past its prime by fifteen nights, lit the night's scrap yard a pale white. Bull Armor, who had come in with a box of junk parts, looked up at the pile of wreckage that cast shadows down to his feet. Among the swirling high piles were air cars and machinery that hadn't yet become obsolete, but there was no one to turn them on anymore. Now that they had no place to go, they were just lumps of steel.

Bull Armor ended his day's work here, but each time he heard the sound of the dumb machine's shell creaking in the wind, he couldn't help but feel a sense of longing. He unloaded his things and turned to leave as quickly as he could. Then he heard the voices of children at the top of the scrap. This was not the time and place for children to play. Bull Armor turned on his heel and climbed up the wreckage. He looked up. Three boys in hats and one girl, peering under the scrap.

"You guys..." Bull Armor said quietly. "You're not safe here..."

The children were momentarily startled by the voice, but when they realized they were dealing with a robot, they called for help.

"Bezbez has fallen!" From the chasm indicated by the boy in the hat, he could see a face looking up at him heartily in the hollow, unreachable space.

Bull Armor nodded and used his monstrous strength to toss aside the scrap and dive into the cavity himself. As the children watched, stunned, Bezbez popped up on Bull Armor's head.

"Hiroshi, Gerus, Pot, Mariko, and Bezbez." The kids, who called themselves the "Silver Castle Cheering Squad," said they were looking for parts that they could use for the ever-losing and impoverished Silver Castle. Bull Armor's face softened at the meeting with the adorable Iron League fans.

"Isn't that the mark of the hospital?" Hiroshi pointed to the markings on the body of Bull Armor.

"What's a hospital?" Bezbez asked.

"It's where we fix broken-down and crashed leaguers. You can't exchange for a new model so easily just because one part of the body is broken," replied Bull Armor.

"Why?" Hiroshi and the others turned their eyes in agreement to the Bull Armor at Bezbez's question.

"Here's the thing..." Bull Armor said, pointing to his head. "The electronic brains of the Iron Leaguers go through a lot of matches and learn how to deal with tactics and oddball plays that aren't part of the basic program. That's how they accumulate data, and as

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the AI grows, they replace the broken parts and fix them." As he said this, Bull Armor dropped his gaze. "That's why we need the hospital."

"Hmm, I see." Bezbez looked unimpressed.

Bull Armor and Hiroshi and the others left the scrap yard and went back to the road together. Hiroshi and the others spoke of Silver Castle with joy. Never play rough, no matter how much they hurt you, to fight fair and square even if you don't stand a chance of winning.. there was no end to the topics of conversation. Bull Armor gazed tenderly at Bezbez, who was beaming at the words of Hiroshi and the others as if they were his own.

Before he knew it, he had arrived at the front of the hospital as he was talking to the children. "You should come watch Silver Castle practice sometime." Hiroshi invited him altruistically. Bull Armor didn't reply, but nodded with a vague expression. The children waved and ran off. After seeing Hiroshi and the others off, Bull Armor shook from his trance and walked through the gates of the Hospital.

"I don't care about the Iron League anymore," he muttered as he turned his back to the moon, which climbed high in the night.