

Over Tea & Other Things

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Over Tea & Other Things

by [QMC](#)

Summary

The first fan-fiction piece that I wrote back in 2010 on FF.net. I've edited it a little. "Tea" is the first of a series I decide to write about general moments and life rather than on any significant story line or plot point. They're all stand alone pieces so I'll keep them here as chapters rather than in separate posts. Comments are welcome. :)

Tea (6, R)

It was awkward to start. Zechs, not knowing what to say to his little sister he hadn't had the courage to speak to, or the will to approach, in fifteen years, said nothing. Relena, not knowing what to ask of an older brother she hadn't known she had and wasn't sure she wanted, also said nothing. The little round table with its little round saucers and little round cups was indifferent to its being the center of in-attention.

Relena noticed how surprisingly natural Zechs looked balancing the cup in his hand; his thumb through the tiny golden handle and the base cradled in his aristocratic hands. It was not proper, but it looked like it could find a permanent home there. Heero always held his teacup by the tiny gold handle. To Relena, he always seemed something like cat holding a mouse and more than one servant on more than one occasion seemed to suffer from sudden compulsions to rescue the little cup from its immediate and mortal peril. Relena's own teacup suspended from four of her fingers, hovering midway between the little table and her chin. Through the chestnut coloured drink, she could see its pearly bottom. She was seated across a man who was arguably one of the most dangerous individuals in the earthsphere, with the image of the man who was arguably the other most dangerous individual in the earthsphere, and she was contemplating teacups. She chuckled.

Relena was looking into her teacup, so Zechs looked out the window. Should he say something? Catching Relena taking a sip he realized that this was the first time he had ever had tea with his sister. They had sat at tables before. They used china cups with saucers made for tiny hands, but they never had tea. She had never liked it the odd time she took a sip from their mother's cup. She would always make a face. He called it her tea face in his young mind. He wasn't looking out the window. In his peripheral vision he watched her serene and schooled features as she sipped her tea. He wondered if, underneath her calm expression, part of her was still put off by the taste, and wouldn't have preferred something else. The image of tiny Relena's face rumpled in distaste flashed across his mind. He snapped his eyes shut as he chuckled.

Relena was startled by Zech's voice, and he was startled by hers. "Pardon me," collided with "sorry" at the same time as "what is it?" and "what's so funny?" Zechs looked cautiously at Relena and Relena looked curiously at him. She smiled.

"You first."

Coffee (4, D)

Chapter Summary

Dorothy pays Quatre a casual visit.

He smiled when he saw her standing on the other side of the door, and she wondered if he would ever allow himself to look at a guest as though they were unexpected.

“How very nice to see you, Miss Dorothy.”

Dorothy smiled and allowed herself to be shown into the home. The aroma in the air was apparent; had been so even from the other side of the door.

“I hope you're going to offer me some. It's been ages since I've had a properly decadent cup.”

She followed him to a private corner kitchenette where a couple of pots were on the stove, one boiling lightly. They made small talk while he tended to the pot and then insisted she take a seat at his table as he fetched two delicate cups from the cupboard.

“How do you take it?”

“Just a bit of sugar,” she paused before adding, “and some cardamom.”

He laid her cup of dark brew across the table, the pot with it, and a chocolate stick garnishing the side of the plate. She smiled.

“Quatre, I do believe that you know more than you let on sometimes.” She savoured the first sip as Quatre took his own seat across from her. She glanced up at the boxes of leaf tea that he had apparently been organizing in the cupboard when she timed her arrival. She looked across the table and raised one eyebrow. “You are entirely too accommodating, Mister Quatre.”

Quatre followed her gaze to the stack. He sighed, slightly.

“I suppose, but I wouldn't want to appear rude, and I do like it.”

“But it is never your first choice, is it?”

Quatre only smiled.

Anxiety (6X9, B?)

Chapter Summary

Enter Brutus!

It was a slow morning and Zechs was in no hurry as he dressed for an early afternoon appointment. He yawned as he pulled on his uniform jacket, encountering some trouble sliding his arm into the left sleeve. Hardly needing all his intellectual faculties to put on a jacket, Zechs woke up a little more at the sudden impediment. He looked down to his side where a large mastiff had the end of the sleeve clamped in his mouth. All of its wrinkled features were pulled up in the most imploring face the dog could probably manage. Zechs sighed.

“Noin, I think we need to find Brutus something to do.” Zechs abandoned his jacket and walked towards the kitchen where he could hear the usual domestic breakfast noises. Brutus followed with the uniform in tow.

* * *

Noin clicked her keys into the door, happy to be out of the car and home early. It was only a little after noon and she was going to take full advantage of the rest of the day. Right now, that meant fondue for lunch. She pushed in the door and nearly walked into it when it came to an abrupt stop after a few inches. Working her head and one shoulder through what was open, she looked down to see Brutus lying behind it, his head resting on his paws, his paws resting on Zechs' old red uniform. Her old white cape was in a heap not too far away.

The next hour had Noin sitting on the couch with her feet on the ottoman that Zechs normally commandeered, and Brutus with his chin resting on her shoulder as his eyes watched every small movement of the fondue fork. Once and a while, the little fork moved his way, and he would wrap his tongue and lips around the cheesy bread, smacking in delight. Noin eventually nudged his head off her shoulder, and the rag she had draped there to catch the drool. Brutus protested when she used the rag to wipe off his face. “Don't tell Zechs I let you on the couch.”

* * *

The night was loud, and the pair had only just started to fall asleep. The lightning had stopped and with it, the thunder, but now it was raining hard and the angle was perfect to hit windows and the side of the house. Hot and heavy breathing finally forced Zechs to pry open his eyes. He stared directly into a black nose and a black wrinkled muzzle. He blinked; “No,” then attempted to bury his face in his pillow.

Noin lifted herself from the bed, mostly, and leaned across Zechs' back to point the dog in the direction of the over-large cushion by the foot of their bed. "Brutus, go to your bed. This one's mine."

An indecipherable muffle came from Zechs' pillow, before Noin flopped dramatically back onto the actual bed and Zechs lifted his head up. He glared at Brutus.

Brutus looked at him.

He kept glaring at Brutus.

Brutus looked between him and Noin and then him again.

"No." A sharp gust slammed more rain into the side of the house.

Brutus let out a barely audible whine.

Zechs closed his eyes and leaned back into the pillow. "Fine." He waved in the general direction of the bed.

Wagging his tail, Brutus rushed to ensconce himself between the two, half-asleep people, making dainty efforts not to step on anyone, and mostly succeeding.

Eventually, Noin spoke. "What happened to not letting him on the bed?"

Zechs was re-sprawled on his stomach with an arm draped over the side of the bed. "I can't help it" came his sleepy voice. "He has your eyes."

Making Things Clear (6X9, B)

Chapter Notes

More Brutus!

Noin set a pile of folded laundry on the living room floor before turning her exasperated expression to her stubborn lover.

“Zechs, just sit down and let me talk to you.”

“Noin, I know I haven't been around that much lately but-”

“Zechs...”

“Relena asked me to go with her to this conference and-”

“*Sit.*”

Brutus sat.

Seating herself on the sofa, Noin dragged Zechs to her by the hem of his shirt.

“I'm not complaining about the conference, Zechs.”

He looked at her with eyes that had a hint of sheepishness.

Noin smiled, her own eyes looking like she had patiently resigned herself to constantly repeating this conversation in several fashions.

“One of these days you are going to have to realize that this relationship thing is two sided, and that matters of privacy do occasionally involve two people.”

Zechs held his forehead in his hands. “I know, Noin. It's just...it's not easy...still...”

He leaned forward a little, about to get off of the couch.

“Come back here and sit.”

Brutus walked over and sat quietly in front of Noin. She pushed his investigating nose away from her face before taking hold of Zechs' again, by his belt loop this time. He was steered back towards the couch but wasn't in much of a different mood. “Would you prefer I stay? I'm sure Relena would understand.”

Noin stood up now, and leaned over to look him directly in the eyes. “No. She said. “I understand what you two are trying to do and I’m happy for you.” She kissed him on the forehead. “But, if you stay you feel bad for neglecting Relena and for cancelling on such short notice.” She kissed him again. “Then, you will sulk- don’t make that face, you do so;” on the cheek, “and that will make you moody;” the forehead again; “and it will bother me;” the cheek, “and you don’t like to bother me;” a slightly longer kiss on the lips. “Right?”

Brutus barked.

Nothing else to say, Zechs looked up at Noin again before fully noticing the pile of laundry that had been at her feet.

“Isn’t it a bit late for washing?”

“Linens. You are sleeping on the couch tonight.” She picked up the sheet and began unfolding it.

Zechs looked a touch annoyed.

“Noin, is that necessar-”

“Zechs, I have personally seen you sleep folded in half in an armchair, one night on a couch is not going to kill you.” She fluffed the blanket up, so it floated neatly over the cushions. “I fully intend to enjoy being in bed tomorrow morning, and I know the gentleman you are would not want to disturb a lady by getting up for an early flight and disturbing her sleep.” She looked him straight in the eyes. “I still expect a goodbye kiss though.”

He smiled, just slightly. “Of course.”

He gave Noin a kiss on the cheek as she stood sharply upright and put her hands on her hips. “At least there’s one man in the house that understands precisely what I tell him without making me repeat myself. Come on, Brutus. You can have *his* side of the bed tonight.”

Photographs (9X6, B)

Chapter Summary

The second piece of fanfiction I ever wrote, if I recall correctly, and Brutus' first appearance.

“Zechs, Brutus is not a footrest,” Noin called from across the room. She sat at the bar counter in their tiny apartment retreat.

“He doesn't seem to mind.”

Zechs was sitting on the couch, reading, with his feet propped up on the large dog wedged between the couch and the coffee table.

Brutus responded with an intake of breath and a loud snort, his eyes closed and a little bit of baby pink tongue protruding from his ponderously wrinkled face. A mechanical ‘click’ stuttered and Zechs turned to see Noin smiling from behind her small camera. He merely shook his head and continued reading while she turned back to her scattering of photographs on the bar.

Where Noin sat, the countertop in front of her was covered in pictures: pictures of old friends and new friends in a timeline of her life from the academy at Lake Victoria to her current private retreat in the north of Sank. A certain blonde individual currently seated on a couch with his feet propped up on a mastiff appeared in nearly all of them. She arranged the picture into clusters; photos to keep, photos to frame, photos to copy and send to friends, photos to use for self-serving blackmail....

Directly in front of her was a simple black frame, the back removed with a number of small, cropped photographs overlapping each other. Noin smiled. The photos were from her days in Lake Victoria, discreet snapshots of Zechs during their training. In each one he wore his trademark red uniform and mask. Leaving the old photographs where they were on the back of the frame, Noin began pulling others from a small pile to her right. They were all of Zechs but these pictures weren't from the military. Zechs was wearing civilian clothing more often than not, and his face was uncovered and occasionally looking at the camera. In some of the pictures he was smiling.

Noin chuckled at herself as she put finishing touches in her little photo tribute to her best friend and partner. She still wasn't entirely sure that Zechs was even aware of it. Unless something involved his little sister, Zechs could be too good at leaving well enough alone. Another loud snort from Brutus and she looked up to see Zechs still absorbed in his book and Brutus still filling the gap between the couch and coffee table. Despite his size, the dog was remarkably well suited to apartment living. Noin turned back to her photographs.

Laying the black frame, now reassembled, aside, Noin picked up another photo. This one was a larger portrait of Relena at her last birthday. She wore a vintage outfit from the days of the old royal courts, and on a small table in the background sat her brown teddy bear, a gift from Heero for her birthday two years before. Relena had never told Zechs where the bear had come from. It was a secret she intended to keep, if only because keeping secrets was more fun with an older sibling to keep them from. Noin slipped the photograph inside a hinged silver frame. In the other side she slipped a picture that Relena has insisted be taken. Zechs stood next to, and slightly behind, Noin while Relena stood next to the pair with her mother and Pagan. Heero had taken the picture. Noin knew that there was a third photo of Relena and Heero but there was only one copy of that one and she imagined it to be sitting somewhere in Relena's private rooms.

Noin looked at the clock. It was just after two in the afternoon and she decided it was well past time to think about lunch. Brutus seemed to think so too, as he chose that moment to wake up, lifting his head and pink tongue from the floor. Zechs was slowly lifting his feet from the dog. Noin could not resist.

“Walk?”

Zechs was caught off guard as Brutus immediately stood to his full thirty-four inches, leaving him nearly folded double on the couch as the dog walked up to Noin, who was cursing for not having the camera ready.

Musings #1 (6+9)

Chapter Summary

Last meddled with in 2010. I started to edit this and then quit because I'm pretty sure I would have the urge to re-write it entirely with half the word count. I'm just going to leave it here, perhaps as a representation of ways I no longer want to write.

* * *

Zechs stood before the empty grave that he knew was his own. It was the first time he had visited it. Before the Barton crisis and his interlude on Mars he never bothered, considering it nothing more than a headstone etched with a dead name placed arbitrarily on a patch of grass. It still felt that way now. Though, in some small way, it helped: seeing his original, violent name confined permanently into marble and the symbolic grave beneath.

“It doesn't change much, does it?”

The statement came from the dark-haired woman at Zechs' side. His gaze remained on the cold headstone.

“Not really, no.”

Noin leaned gently against Zechs, and quietly wrapped an arm about him, tucking it under his arm on the other side. He removed one hand from his pocket and wrapped his fingers with hers. After a few more empty moments she shifted her attention to the other grave.

“Did the two of you make your peace in the end?”

Zechs said nothing, but Noin could hear the deep hum in his throat he sometimes made when he was considering something, or didn't have anything else to say. He shifted his gaze to the gravestone marked Treize Khushrenada. There were more long, unspoken moments before he simply shrugged. “I'm not sure. I'm not even sure that it would matter.”

“You two were good friends.” Noin played with the fingers of his hand that was still entwined with hers.

This time Zechs did smile. “Treize had a funny way of picking friends. He didn't always care how the other party felt about him, personally. Being something of a fellow spirit was often enough.”

“The Gundam pilot?”

Zechs didn't say anything but seemed to be just thinking.

“He had his grand battle. I think he would be satisfied.”

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Noin looked at her long-time friend and love. He didn't have what had been the customary stern expression, or the stiff line to his jaw when his thoughts directed to his past and the people in it. Instead he looked almost accepting. He still kept too much to himself in Noin's opinion, but the volatile rage and hate that had broiled within him for over the past decade was gone. He had been like a star, shining on the outside to the observer but fiery and dangerous beneath, until the eruption. The explosion had been his final choice to attack Earth. Thereafter, his anger and pain had snuffed itself out, leaving just the cold embers to pick through. It was a spectacular ending to the image of a man, but the human remained to try and pick himself up.

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They returned to the car. Noin promptly slipped into the driver's seat without invitation and without asking for one. She pulled the seat belt from over her shoulder and heard the door on the passenger side close before clicking it into place and putting the keys into the ignition.

“So, how does it feel to be back on Earth?”

Zechs lay back in his seat with his arms crossed and his eyes closed.

“Heavier.”

Outfit (6, 13)

Chapter Summary

Originally written August, 2010. Minor edits June, 2018

Zechs sat cross-legged on his bed, reading from a new book. He was not anticipating an intrusion, but neither did he look up when his door opened and Treize walked in.

“Some people knock,” he said without lifting his eyes from the pages.

“Some people take their friend's word for it when they say they will be reading.”

Treize tossed a black clothes bag over the bed before lying himself across its foot, his head propped up on his left hand and elbow. He looked at Zechs for a moment, waiting for acknowledgement.

Eyes looking over his book for a few more moments, Zechs finally gestured to the garment bag.

“What's that?”

“That's your outfit for tonight” Treize responded with a grin.

Zechs looked back at his book, genuinely this time. “Treize, you know I don't go to parties, it's too risky.

Treize waved off his friend's concern. “That won't be a problem. It's a costume ball.” He opened the bag with one hand and began nonchalantly leafing through its contents, still lounging on the foot of the bed.

“Doesn't everyone take their masks off at midnight?”

“You just have to be gone by then.”

Zechs quirked an eyebrow at him. “Oh, am I Cinderella now?”

“No,” was the drawn out response. Treize smirked ever so slightly, “but keep growing your hair like that and you'll well enough look the part.”

“Hey!” Zechs raised his book sharply, but dropped it behind his shoulder and launched himself instead. Though he was still smaller than his friend, Treize's languid sprawl was not conducive to fast reactions and Zechs' cat's leap was followed by wide eyes and a satisfactory 'thud.'

After a brief pause, Treize's voice emerged from behind the foot of the bed. "That was probably not the most honourable thing you could have done."

Tilting his head down to see where Treize had fallen, Zechs couldn't help his grin. "I believe you told me that it's important to consider the terrain when planning an attack?"

Another pause. "Touche."

After some fussing, Treize stood upright once more, with a minor ruffle in his shirt and approximately three hairs out of place. Tucking them neatly back where he decided they belonged, he promptly emptied the clothes bag and spread out what looked to Zechs to be a glossy mound of red.

Treize held up an embroidered red shirt. "It's your colour, don't you think?"

Puppy Eyes (6x9, B)

Chapter Summary

Originally written March 2011. Some tweaks.

Lucretia Noin always slept with the window open. It was a new luxury she could afford herself now that she didn't need to code herself in each night for security from living on an active military base. The fresh air this morning however, was oddly cloying and somewhat warm. She had a good idea of the cause of this and her suspicions were confirmed when she opened her eyes: black nose, black mask, fawn forehead gathered in uptight wrinkles, and two brown eyes: very large and very round brown eyes.

“No breakfast yet, Brutus. It's Sunday, you can wait.”

Closing her eyes, she pulled her shoulders up and tucked her arm under her pillow, ensconcing herself further into the down puff. She heard his shuffling paws as he paced in one circle. She opened her eyes again. Brown eyes were still looking imploringly into her face. She closed her eyes, willed the dog away, then opened them again. Nope. Still there.

She huffed, settled onto her back and looked up at the ceiling. She turned back to the edge of the bed.

Still there.

She closed her eyes again, trying not to squeeze them shut and stayed that way. There was the smallest, almost imperceptible whine. No movement, no paws. She cracked open one eye.

Still there.

“Arrrrgh! *Fine*. I'll get your breakfast you shameless animal.”

She hauled her protesting body out of bed and grabbed her nearby robe while Brutus bunny-hopped after her in anticipation, wagging his thick tail.

A few minutes later, Noin walked back upstairs without Brutus and slid herself back into bed. She sighed, and relished in the fresh morning air that came in through the window. Eventually turning away from the breeze, she let her eyes flutter a little, and found herself face to face with a haphazard fall of blonde bangs and large, round blue eyes.

Masquerade (6x9)

Chapter Notes

Originally written, summer 2011.

Very few edits to this, though I left in the stylistic attempts I tried to make. Not really sure if they worked out or not.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Close your eyes.”

Zechs did and felt Noin's fingers touch just under his chin, unconscious perhaps, and he imagined the look of concentration she might have had on her face. He fought to keep his own face straight as the brush tickled over his eyelids, then in the crook of his eye; just under his brow; by the bridge of his nose...

“And just what am I going to be?”

“Nothing in particular.”

“Is that your way of saying you don't know?”

“I haven't decided yet.” He felt her fingers on one side of his chin. “Perhaps an animal?”

“What about a Phoenix,” he said by way of suggestion. “Seems appropriate.”

“I thought I would try something other than red.”

“Ghost?”

“You're pale enough already.”

“A zebra.”

“Quit it...and hold on a moment.”

“Mm.”

He heard Noin leave the chair that she had been sitting in, next to the couch where Zechs propped his elbows on the armrest and his chin on his folded hands. He kept his eyes closed, hearing Noin's steps on the carpet as she returned; the creak of her chair as she sat down. He felt the presence of her hands around his face and twitched a little bit when he felt fingers brushing his fringe back again; the light scrape of a metal clip against his scalp where she pinned wayward pieces of his hair.

He twitched again with the cold application of new paint following his brow line. He felt Noin's palm over the line of his jaw, just below his cheek where some paint applied earlier was drying.

“What's so funny?”

Noin was giggling lightly. “I can feel you twitching” she said and Zechs felt a long stroke of the brush up by his hairline, and tried to stifle his frown. “You're sensitive.”

He felt the brush strokes move down his forehead from his hairline to just above his eyebrow. He opened one eye a little and saw the amused smile on Noin's face. “This was your idea.”

“You're the one who didn't want to wear another mask.”

Zechs resumed watching Noin with his chin cupped in one hand, smiling just a little.

“Close your eyes, and hold still.”

Chapter End Notes

A basic scene here, but one of the shorts I'm more fond of. Still not perfect, but I should probably be looking more into original writing and less at old things.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!