

In the early morning they clung damply to the paths between the stones. Interspaced with the thin blanket of pine needles, the leaves turned her footfalls to whispers. Even if she had been in powered armor, Yuzuki doubted that she would have made much sound in this place.

## Miharu Shrine

In the center of Kyoto, the roar of traffic and the constant yammer of people was muffled by the proliferation of plum and wisteria trees, and the coniferous pines climbed high enough to blot out the skyline of towers and the passage of hovercraft. When she had first come to the site of the Miharu family shrine, Yuzuki had not known what the names of the plants were; she had simply chosen them for their beauty. Now they stood stark and gaunt, skeletons clad only in glittering morning dew. Their color had been replaced in the fall by pink nadeshiko blossoms, low to the ground, and a wild growth of purpling haai grass choking every spare section of unsanded dirt. Even with winter coming, the shrine was beautiful.

The thirteen squat stone shrines were separate from the rest of the world. They were the closest things that the Miharu clan had to ancestor spirits - each bore the likeness of a passed sprite. Mara and Ichigo, Ozuno and Hisa, and on and on. In the center, a small pavilion had been raised to represent the Miharu herself, the MEGAMI that had created them from nothing, and then given everything. There was a bell, and beneath the bell were the offerings, such as they were. This, too, Yuzuki had been completely

in familiar with, but the Yamataian crewmembers had been very helpful and so here it was, complete.

The Star Army had paid for the memorial, in the same bill that they had paid for the repairs on the Hoshi and the commissioning of a new Miharu-class escort. Whether they knew the significance that the act had held, or not, the money had been set aside.

Standing in the middle of the thirteen, Yuzuki felt awkward and out of place. It wasn't the shrine itself, she knew; just standing beneath the open sky made her stomach turn slightly, and the wind was something she could hardly abide or account for, too random and wanton for a ship-born Nekovalkyrja. |

## List of the Dead

- Ittô Hei [Mizuno Yoroko](#) - Infantry (Killed In Action)
- Jôtô Hei Mizuki Azumi - Nurse (Killed In Action)
- Jôtô Hei [Takuma Kimura](#) - IT Specialist (Killed In Action)
- Shoi [Miharu Mara](#) - Starship Operator, Miharu's sprite avatar (Killed In Action)
- Nitô Heisho [Miharu Ichigo](#) - Senior Technician (Killed In Action)
- Santô Hei Miharu Eiko - Technician (Killed In Action)
- Santô Hei Miharu Etsu - Technician (Killed In Action)
- Santô Hei Miharu Junko - Technician (Killed In Action)
- Santô Hei Miharu Kichi - Technician (Killed In Action)
- Santô Hei Miharu Kuni - Technician (Killed In Action)
- Santô Hei Miharu Maya - Technician (Killed In Action)
- Santô Hei Miharu Miko - Technician (Killed In Action)
- Santô Hei Miharu Ozuno - Technician (Killed In Action)
- Santô Hei Miharu Rei - Technician (Killed In Action)
- Santô Hei Miharu Sanri - Pilot (Killed In Action)
- Santô Hei Miharu Tama - Technician (Killed In Action)

## OOO Information

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