

Much Deliberation

By roguehobbit

Submitted: January 27, 2006

Updated: January 27, 2006

Oneshot. Various people's thoughts on the undeniably odd (but very entertaining) Dio. Takes place during the 14th episode, "Etude Lavie" when Dio and Alister rescue Claus and Tatiana.

Provided by Fanart Central.

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Claus looked up. He could hear the faint humming of a vanship.

Wondering if he was hallucinating, he asked, "Tatiana, do you hear that?"

Tatiana looked up from fiddling with the Claudia unit of her vanship. She paused and searched the sky. "Yes, it sounds like a vanship! Can you see it?"

"No, not yet....wait! There it is!"

Claus heaved a great sigh of relief. A vanship meant they were rescued. More importantly, it meant that the Silvana had survived, and was able to send a search team for them.

Tatiana continued watching the vanship with growing anticipation and Claus started waving his arms.

Then the vanship did a curious thing. It abruptly flew straight up into the air and then switched to a horizontal trajectory.

Claus blanched.

An Immelmann Turn.

Damn.

Of all the people they could have sent to save them...

"That show off," muttered Tatiana. Apparently she had realized who was piloting their rescue vehicle.

The vanship was circling now, looking for the best place to land. "Can you see who's with him?" Claus asked, hoping for the answer to be Lavie.

Tatiana saw a blonde braid hanging out of the helmet of the navigator. "It's Alister."

Tatiana's voice cracked. She had conducted a lot of soul searching while she and Claus had been stranded. She had not been behaving like a friend to Alis lately. She had been treating her like a subordinate, like one of the mechanics. And yet Alis had stuck with her.

As soon as they reached the Silvana Tatiana was going to have a long talk with her.

The vanship landed. Tatiana immediately ran towards it. Claus stayed back, observing the pilot.

Dio Elaclair had to be the strangest person Claus had ever met. He didn't really know what to think of Dio.

Claus, like most people, had a bubble. A personal space around his body that he was used to maintaining, and that he did not wish people to encroach upon without warning. Because of his kindly, socially geared personality it was a relatively small bubble, but a bubble all the same.

Dio was constantly invading this personal space. And apparently oblivious to how this effected Claus.

Claus's reactions to these invasions of his bubble had been varied in response.

Struggling didn't accomplish much. Pushing Dio away didn't either. Dio never took offense. Sighing heavily and just submitting to the hug was the way that expended the least amount of energy, and had been the choice of action Claus had taken lately.

He had also taken to bracing himself. When Dio was sighted, Claus immediately tensed up his body and waited for the inevitable collision. He was going to get hugged, might as well be prepared for it.

Lavie, who at first had done her best to defend Claus from these invasions of personal space, now found them very amusing to behold. If she saw Dio coming she would comment on it ("Incoming, Claus") right before the event, but she didn't try to interfere like she used to.

Claus decided that it must have been when Dio complimented Lavie on her skills in the Eight-hour Endurance Race when her opinion of him changed. He would have to talk to her concerning how influenced she could be by flattery.

Alister finished the landing check and climbed out of the cockpit. Tatiana hugged her as soon as she reached the ground. Claus was too far away to hear what they said to each other.

Dio climbed up on top of the ship and jumped down, smiling brilliantly while watching Alister and Tatiana. Then he turned his attention to Claus.

Alright, brace yourself Claus thought to himself, his body tensing, his eyes closed, ready for the impact.

But nothing happened.

Claus opened his eyes. Dio stood about a foot away from him, peering into his face curiously. "Immelmann? Are you injured?"

"Uh, no, I'm fine," Claus answered haltingly, not letting his guard down.

"Okay," Dio then turned and looked at Tatiana's beat up vanship. "Tsk, tsk, Immelmann. I would have expected a better landing from you."

Claus didn't hear the banter in this comment, and felt the need to defend his piloting skills. "I was only the navigator, remember?"

Then he realized how that made Tatiana sound. "Not that it was Miss Tatiana's fault! She did her best-"

"Oh, I know. That girl isn't one to not give it her all."

For someone so oblivious to some things, Dio was remarkably perceptive in others.

Dio made one more round of viewing the busted up airship and then climbed up into the navigator's seat.

Claus shook his head, not knowing if he wanted to know what Dio was up to. He truly did not understand Dio. And he understood even less about Dio's fascination with him.

Sure, he was a good pilot. As Dio had clearly noticed, he had the Immelmann Turn down pat. He also performed the "rolling scissors" quite well. *Be grateful for small favors*, Claus mused, *I could be stuck with an even weirder nickname.*

"...Dusis migration capsules...." Claus heard, the words drifting over from where Tatiana and Alister were talking. "We saw them too...."

Thump! Dio had vaulted down from the vanship, nearly landing on top of Claus. Claus jumped away, clutching at his chest as his heart lurched painfully. "Ah!"

"We can tote the vanship," Dio informed him. He held grappling cables in his hand, which he had retrieved from the cockpit. "It can fly a little bit more with assistance."

"Are you sure that's safe?" Claus asked, "it might be better if we all go in one vanship...."

This would overburden the vanship somewhat, but the Silvana couldn't be that far away, and that option was slightly less dangerous than a vanship pulling along a half working one.

Dio raised a thin eyebrow.

"What?" Claus asked. Then he thought about how the arrangement would be. Tatiana and Alis would sit together, probably in the navigators' seat. That left him squished with Dio in the pilots' seat.

"No, never mind, toting would be better," Claus said hurriedly, trying not to think about how incredibly uncomfortable that would have been.

Dio nodded, and began attaching the cables to the vanship. "There's more in the other vanship," he said, tossing his head over his shoulder to indicate the craft that he and Alis had arrived in.

Claus quickly ran over to the vanship and climbed aboard, rummaging for the grappling cables. He didn't ask Alis where they were, she and Tatiana were still talking animatedly to each other and he didn't want to interrupt their reunion.

After returning with the cables, he attached them while Dio stood and watched, swinging the ends of the cables he had attached around in small circles.

"Okay, all set," Claus said, bending down to pick up the ends. Dio stopped swinging the cables and started walking towards the other vanship.

He seemed to think he was tight-rope walking, as he wobbled slightly as he tried to walk in a single line, one foot in front of the other. His arms were held straight out from his body, the cables clutched in his hands.

He must be playing some sort of imaginary game, thought Claus. There was no way this boy, who Claus had seen run along the edge of the Silvana's deck at break neck speed, couldn't walk in a perfectly straight line if he wanted to.

They were walking extremely slowly, because of Dio's game. Claus walked beside him, wondering how anyone could be so weird.

Dio's previous antics, that would probably have killed anyone else, recalled to Claus who was always following Dio around, to make sure he didn't get himself killed.

"Hey, Dio," he said.

"Mmm?" Dio replied, not taking his eyes off the imaginary tight-rope on the sand.

"Lucciola, he's your bodyguard, right?"

"Among other things," was the response.

"Wha-...err, what do you mean by that?" Claus asked, wondering if he wanted to know.

"So curious, Immelmann?" Dio continued his tight-rope walk.

"Uh, no..." Claus stuttered.

"He's my bodyguard. He's my valet. He's my navigator. But most of all, he's my friend."

"Oh," was all Claus came up with.

"What about him?"

"Uh, I was just wondering why he didn't come with you, instead of Alis." What Claus really meant was 'How come he allowed you out of his sight?'

"The Captain suggested that the girl and I should be the ones to rescue you. And 'Miss Tatiana' of course." Dio replied, poking fun at what Claus called her.

"Oh." Alex was another person who confused Claus. His motives were always hard to gauge.

"The little one wanted to come though," Dio added, looking slyly at Claus, out of the corner of his eye. "But the Captain told her she might have to fight, if she went."

At first Claus thought that he was referring to Alvis. Then he realized he was talking about Lavie, and her reluctance to fight using a vanship.

Claus didn't respond, and continued walking, looking at the ground as his feet trudged through the sand.

There was a slight movement of wind, and Claus looked beside him. Dio was no longer there. *Now where'd he go?*

Claus looked in front of him, and barely missed smacking his face into the vanship. They had finally reached it, and Dio had sprung from the ground onto the aircraft and was now already securing the cables.

How does he do that? Claus wondered, remembering his second encounter with Dio and Lucciola, and how they had bounded through the air like there was no gravity to hinder such leaps.

Maybe it's something in their uniforms, he guessed.

Tatiana and Alister stopped talking and looked at Claus. "We're just finishing up linking the two vanships together. Dio thinks that one towing the other is the best way."

Tatiana nodded, looking up at Dio, who was humming to himself as he worked. "You flew all the way here with him? And you actually found us?" she whispered to Alis.

"He's quite a good pilot," she said in response.

"Yeah, I know..." Tatiana remembered how he had infuriated her with his flying skills at the race, and had nearly caused her to fail her mission, because of her desire to teach him a lesson.

Claus began fixing the cables, and Alis asked Tatiana "Do you want to be the pilot?"

Tatiana laughed slightly. "We have three pilots, but only one navigator. Let's have Dio and Claus be the pilots, I'll try being a navi."

"Alright," Alis said, surprised that Tatiana would give up her coveted spot. *She's changed,* she thought, smiling.

"Finished!" said a chipper voice. Tatiana and Alister looked up to see Dio sitting on the vanship, elbows on his knees and face cupped in his hands, swinging his legs while watching them.

Tatiana glared at him, but didn't say anything. She was going to be different from now on, even if it killed her. *But why does he have to be so annoying?*

It wasn't like he did any particular thing that annoyed her. No, it was everything he did.

It was the way he watched everyone, like he knew something they didn't. The way he always popped up at an inopportune time.

Even his voice grated on her nerves. And she had to listen to it whenever he was in her vicinity, since he never shut up.

The fact that he acted so immature, and yet could fly circles around her, really bugged her. And his refusal to call Claus by his name, for some unaccountable reason that irritated her to no end.

"I'll fly with Claus," she said, knowing that if she was going to let someone else pilot, it better be someone she didn't feel like strangling half the time.

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Alister prepped the craft for take off. Dio was slumped in his seat in front of her, with his head tilted back, staring at the sky. He tilted his head farther back, so now he could see her.

Alister ignored him and continued prepping. She didn't ask how he managed to do that without hurting his neck.

"Did you have a pleasant chat?" he asked, his head still in that unnerving position.

Assuming he meant her talk with Tatiana, she replied, "Yes, thank you. And you?"

"Oh yes. Talks with Immelmann are usually pleasant."

Alis nodded, and looked over at the other vanship. Tatiana was also prepping the ship, but talking to Claus while doing so.

She really has changed, she never would have done that before.. Tatiana never allowed small talk while preparing for take off.

"Good for her," Dio said. He sat up, but twisted around to look at the other vanship.

"What do you mean?" Alis turned back to look at him.

"She's not as rigid now." Dio paused, then sing-songed "And I think I know why..."

"I think I know why too." Alis hoped she was wrong though. Claus was very nice, but she didn't think he had any romantic interest in her friend. She hoped Tatiana wouldn't end up feeling hurt.

Dio started humming, and if it had words to it, Alister was not familiar with them. "What is that you're humming?"

"Mm?"

"What you're doing, humming a song. What is it?"

"A very special song."

Alis continued to listen to the Guild heir even though she wasn't that curious as to what Dio was humming, but diverted most of her attention back to finishing preparing the vanship.

"I made it up just this moment." The humming continued, then reached a loud crescendo, and then abruptly stopped.

"Finished."

"What?" Alis looked up from the navigators controls. "Oh, your song."

"Yes. It still needs some work though. Do you think Immelmann would help?"

Alister smiled. He had to know the answer to that.

She knew that one of the reasons Tatiana disliked him so much was because he said, and did, peculiar things just to see what the reaction would be.

Alis mused on the thought that Dio was much like a small child, goading an animal with a stick to get it to move for his entertainment.

While others would have found this analogy infuriating, Alis, with her mild nature, was slightly entertained by it.

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"Did your rescue mission go well Lord Dio?" asked Lucciola, while simultaneously observing that Tatiana and Claus were alive, and still in one piece after being rescued by the capricious Guild scion.

The flight back to the Silvana had been, surprisingly, without incident.

Dio had resisted any urge he might have felt to perform aerial stunts, and the cables had held. The vanship that carried Claus and Tatiana had something of a bumpy ride, but nothing that the two pilots weren't prepared for.

The landing was difficult, but was pulled off without loss of life, limb, or bits of vanship.

"Very well indeed, Lucciola!" was the response, as Dio undid his seat belt and leaped out of the craft, leaving Alister to deal with the final docking requirements.

"They couldn't have done it without me," he continued, proceeding Lucciola off the Silvana's deck to the elevator, and throwing one more comment over his shoulder, in the direction of Claus. "See you later Immelmann!"

Claus sighed wearily, Tatiana glowered, and Alis's mouth quirked in a smile.

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Hope you enjoyed reading this as much as I did writing it. :) Please tell me if you did, or didn't. I like feedback.