

Title: Who Death Chose to Live for.
Major pairing: Duo X Hilde
Author: The Fablespinner
Rating: NC17+
Genre: Romance

Disclaimer: The characters in this yarn sadly do not belong to me. I wish they did but they belong in total to Sotsu/Sunrise and Bandai entertainment. I am only borrowing their colorful personalities for the sake of this story. I promise to return them, only slightly rumbled when I'm finished with them so the next writer can use them as their muse.

I normally write original fantasy works, but sometimes, characters like these come along and I get inspired to make up my own little musings involving them. Usually these tales stay rattling around my brain, here's one I decided to put down on paper. I hope you enjoy my little story as I have enjoyed all of yours.

AC 201

It was 2 a.m. and she just couldn't sleep. She laid there looking at the dark silhouette of the man asleep beside her. His long chestnut hair out of it's usual braid spilled over the pillows and down to the floor. He had been the cutest boy she'd ever seen when they had met, now he was just plain gorgeous. A perfect specimen of a man in her very biased opinion. But then again he had been the first and only love of her life. Hilde was restless so rather than wake Duo up she crawled out of bed and went over to the chair by the window. She looked up at the stars and let the memories of the past six years of her life play through her mind as she stared up at the stars. Or rather the limited vision of stars the colony afforded. It was more like a huge video display across the outer hull of the colony. Virtual reality mixed with genuine windows opening to the view of outer space. The illusion worked in any case.

As she lost herself to the night sky she remembered the first time she'd met Duo. She had just turned fifteen and had instantly signed up with OZ without really considering her reasons why. All she knew is that she loved her colony and she loved outer space and she wanted to do something, ANYTHING, to keep her narrow little scope of the greater world in tact. Then she met Duo, free spirited, free speaking, persuasive Duo. He had provoked her to consider the choices she had made in his fun loving way. He was only fifteen, just six months older than herself, but something in the way he spoke, something in the way he looked at her told her behind the mask of youth, was a mature thinking, innocence lost individual. Admittedly, as all teenage girls go, she at first only noticed this cute guy with hair she would kill for. A potential recruit. Then after the initial attraction faded and she began to truly listen to what he was saying, she realized he made a good point. Then he was gone, but only temporarily.

The next time she saw Duo all hell broke loose. He shook the world around her, she tried to be a good soldier, she'd tried to ignore what he made her feel, what he made her believe. But she couldn't he forced her to see the truth, he had made her a believer in his ideals. "We're both fighting for the colonies! We're not enemies!" He said breaking down the last vestiges of her resistance. She'd made her choice, she'd fight with Duo not against him. She'd die for her colonies future and trust that future in this boy's hands. Once Duo escaped, Hilde's death didn't come as expected. She was captured, tried, and sentenced to life in prison for treason. Had she been eighteen her sentence would have been death. She shuddered as she found herself alone in a tiny cell. Her home for the rest of her life. She being only fifteen, life meant this cell would be hers for a very, very long time.

She'd forgot who was now a part of her life. Duo Maxwell was many things. A pilot, a joker, a soldier, and a man who repaid debts. He owed Hilde a big one and he planned on thanking her properly. Hilde was asleep on her bunk in her cell. When the door opened, instantly she was awake and the sight of him standing in the doorway nearly made her faint. "The cavalry is here!" He said with a wink as he stepped in and grabbed her hand. "Let's high tail it outta here babe. You can thank me later." He said smiling as they ran down the corridor. He had the route planned perfectly and before she knew it, she was

sitting behind him on a motorcycle speeding away from the prison. Just before the facility disappeared from view she saw Duo flip a switch on a remote that appeared from his pocket. Explosions began going off throughout the prison. "Babe, you're dead. Life sentence Complete." Duo said looking over his shoulder with a wink at his passenger. "Why?" She finally was able to ask when she found her tongue to speak again. She was in shock. "I owe you one. Now we're even." He said as they slowed their pace and stopped in front of a small cafe. "Here put this on. Can't have you sticking out. But I'll tell ya, you're the only person I know who can wear bright orange and look good in it." He said tossing her a bundle of clothing from out of a saddlebag. His ever present smirk on his face. "Was that a compliment?" She asked and he shrugged saying nothing. She sighed and smiled and ducked into the alley to change.

She came out wearing an oversized, two-toned purple top and dark leggings. They were a little big for her, but Duo's guess at her size was pretty close to perfect. He smiled at her as she emerged from the alley. "Hungry?" He asked nodding his head toward the cafe. "Starved, but I..." She was about to say she was broke but Duo interrupted her. "Duh, I know. My treat." He said throwing his arm casually around her shoulders. As if they been friends all their lives and not virtual strangers. "It's Hilde right?" He asked as they stepped inside. "Yes. Ah, thanks Duo. I don't know what to say, about all this." She stammered coming slowly back to reality. "Don't mention it. Like I said, now we're even. Now we start fresh from here on out." Duo said as they sat down in a corner booth. She smiled as she sat down across from him. He really was very cute, and she could tell by the look in his eyes, he meant what he said. All debts were paid and they were on even ground now. It was the start of a beautiful friendship.

Her attention was brought back to the here and now when she heard him stir across the room and his sleepy voice break the silence of the room. "Hilde?" He asked softly half asleep. "Go back to sleep Duo." she said from the chair by the window. No good he sat up. "Can't sleep again babe?" He asked moving to get up. "Don't worry Duo. Just a bout of insomnia is all. Sally said sometimes this happens and it's perfectly normal." Hilde said, but he still got up and padded across the darkened room to her. She watched his tall form stride across the room. Overnight it seemed he suddenly sprouted. He was lean and well defined clean musculature built from his dealings with mobile suits. He had been honed into this near God-like form from his Gundam days now into using his civilian suit in his salvage business, to his part time work with the Preventers. He was strictly an Undercover part of that organization. To be called upon only if he was really needed. He wanted to live as normal a life as possible. Duo leaned over her slipping his hands over her shoulders and planting a kiss on the top of her head. He gently kneaded the muscles in her neck and back "You should try to sleep anyway. Come back to bed." Duo entreated and Hilde just kissed his hand where it rested on her shoulder. "I was just tossing and turning. I didn't want to wake you up. Go back to sleep, I promise I come to bed when I get sleepy. Quit being such a worry wart." Hilde chided Duo just shook his head. "I can't help it beautiful. You should be used to that by now. Especially now." He said sliding his hands down from her shoulders down to the large mound in her mid-section. "Not when the count down had started." He said patting that mound lovingly. "Just a few more weeks to go." he said proudly. The day he had found out Hilde was having his baby he nearly had a heart attack. They had only just started trying, he hadn't expected the good news so soon.

He then proceeded to call each and every one of his friends and gloat. Quatre had been pleased as punch with the news. Demanding there and then that under no circumstances was anyone else going to give Hilde a baby shower. He wanted the job and would not take no for an answer. In the background Duo had heard Trowa's groan. "You don't mind if I make myself scarce for that do you?" He'd heard Trowa ask Quatre. "You can keep Duo out of our way." Quatre had replied eliciting a "Hey! I'm not fifteen anymore thanks. I'm not that bad anymore." Duo protested. On the com screen Trowa appeared over Quatre's shoulder. "Yes you are. You just got Taller. But by all means you and I can stay and play those cutesy baby games. Or would you rather go out for the day." Trowa asked and Duo groaned. "Okay, Okay. Anything but baby games." Duo said thinking of those silly games women always played at baby showers. He shuddered. His next call had been to Heero. Heero was slowly getting a sense of humor, his response to the news was "Heaven help us. You're reproducing? One is bad enough." He'd said it and actually smiled slightly at his friend. "It'll be your turn one day Pally." Duo said and Heero shook his head. "Not anytime soon. I'm too busy and when your wife's in politics, there's not much time for a family. Besides you've met my nephew. How sweet quiet Noin produced that little monster I'll never know. Even Zechs throws his

hands up in defeat over that hellion." Heero had said and Duo laughed. "Yeah, Julian is a pretty wild kid. He may look like Zechs but god knows where he got that personality from." Duo said and Heero smiled again. "Noin. She's just learned self control. I bet as a kid, our soldier was one little spitfire herself. I dread to see what your kid is going to be like. You and Hilde both are too much already." Heero teased and Duo gave him a very rude hand gesture. "Video phone. I saw that. I rest my case." Heero said ending the call. His next call went to the Preventer's headquarters. He could kill four with one call. Zechs gathered Noin, Sally, and Wufei into his office "Okay Duo, what's the news then." He'd asked over the vid screen as Wufei tramped into the office. "I was busy Duo. This had better be good." The ever pompous Wufei said. "Hilde and I are having a baby." He'd said simply. Noin and Sally cheered, Zechs smiled and just said "Good Luck." Wufei rolled his eyes and left the room muttering something about the poster-child for pro birth control having a baby meant certain doom for all of man-kind. "Ignore him Duo." Sally had said and Duo grinned. "Always do." He had answered. "Okay, put Hilde on the line now." Sally had ordered. Once he got Hilde on the com, he'd heard Sally go into doctor mode. He had promptly left the area. The only female anatomy he cared to know about was already well explored. Proof of that was the condition his Wife was currently in.

Wife, just the word hung in his mind like the brass ring on a carousel. He'd reached for it, and won. From the moment he'd met Hilde, something inside of him changed. She gave him a reason to fight for, she became the object of his goal and purpose. Everything and everyone he had ever cared about in his life had died or left him. He would not let this escape his grasp, not now that he had the power to control his destiny. The God of death had found a person worthy of salvation. He had found a reason to live for. That was what Hilde meant to him, a person to come home to, a person he could find the will to live for. Her belief in him gave him a strength he hadn't known he possessed. He hadn't even realized his own feelings until much later either. He had felt something for her instantly, but he hadn't known just how deep those emotions would run until it was almost too late. It had started with Friendship a working partnership as it were. After they had helped each other in escaping OZ, he had taken her to his safe house and Salvage yard. His business had suffered due to his involvement with the war. Hilde proved a computer genius. She cleaned up his books, organized his ledgers and files and got his business functioning beautifully. She also set about ordering his supplies and necessities for his Gundam, sending them in so many routes that it would be impossible for anyone to trace the goods and technical supplies he need here. She had a criminal mind he'd found out, she laundered his needs flawlessly. "Hilde, I am glad you're on my side." He'd said as he looked over all she'd done for him. "You're a real crook." He'd added to tease her. "I'm not stealing anything for you Duo. Everything is technically legal. It's just untraceable." She said in defense of herself. "Yeah, but what I meant was, even if it weren't legal. You'd pull it off without anyone being the wiser. It was a compliment Hilde." Duo said as he had lounged on the couch. A bag of chips in his hand which she promptly snatched from him. "You'll spoil your dinner." She'd scolded. She was always after him to eat healthier. She was still nagging him about it six years later.

As he laid his head against her swollen abdomen and listened to the life he'd created within her, he thought back to the time he'd almost lost her. Still today the memory chilled him to the bone. Had he been a minute later, he would have lost her. It wasn't that she had been a bad pilot, she was terrific. But she had been fighting Mobile Dolls fed with fighting data from Trowa and Heero. It had just been too much for her to handle. He remembered the stomach churning moment when he'd heard her voice over the distress signal calling his name. It was that moment he realized how much he loved her. That somehow, she meant more to him than just a friend. He knew in that instant that life without her in it would be meaningless. "Go get her Duo!" Came Quatre's voice over the com link. Duo wasted precious few seconds to get to her. How he had held her mobile suit to his as if the suits represented their own bodies. He'd deflected the final strike by shielding her with his Gundam. "Hilde? Are you still alive?" He'd asked terrified he'd get no response. Her shaky voice answered over the static of her battered mobile suit com link. She didn't look much better either when the video link was established. His heart sank and his fear for her manifested itself and anger. He'd berated her and insulted her even though he hadn't meant it. He had thought her safe at home when in fact once again she was risking her life for him. Not for the colonies or earth or space. But for him, to help him. The thought shook him to the core. She was prepared to die for him. The truth was, he'd die for her too.

By the time he'd destroyed the mobile dolls that had attacked her and gotten her back to

peacemillion. She'd lost too much blood and had slipped into a state of unconsciousness. He couldn't tell her he was sorry for what he'd said. The data she'd brought to them from Libra proved to be exactly what they'd needed. Tipped the scale in their favor as Quatre had put it so eloquently that night as he comforted his friend. "But at what cost Quatre?" Duo had asked as he sat looking at a battered and bruised Hilde. He had no time to sit and ponder, things had gone completely out of control. In a final frenzy of what seemed to be a never ending stream of battles, suddenly, without warning, the war was over. It had taken him nearly a week to track down where they had evacuated Hilde to before they had crashed peacemillion into Libra.

He'd never forget her face when he'd walked into the hospital room hidden behind a wall of flowers. He'd laid them on her lap as a peace offering. "I'm sorry I called you a stupid idiot." He'd said and she laughed at him. "I deserved it. You're forgiven. But Duo do me a favor?" She asked and he looked up to her eyes. "What?" He'd asked. "Move the flowers, they're pretty and I love them, but I'm allergic." She said and he'd laughed and tossed them out into the hall. "Sorry Babe." He'd said back to his old self. "So, when are they gonna spring ya from here? When do I get to take you home?" He'd asked and with those words they met each other's eyes and a strange understanding fell between them. Home, not just a word, but a place that they had made together. They still technically were just friends, they had not acknowledged a deeper relationship. That would come later. They were both young still, both a bit reluctant to admit their true feelings to other. Knowing that they would be together was where they left it for now. "I don't know, Soon I hope. I'm bored." Hilde said and Duo laughed. "Well, stay bored. I don't like it when you get busy. You scare the shit out of me." He said taking her hand. "I'll shoot you myself next time if you try that again." He warned and Hilde smiled. "Deal. I've had enough of being shot at." Hilde said weary still from her ordeal. Duo then did something that he hadn't done yet. He hugged her to him and just held her tight against his chest for a long time before he spoke. "I am so glad you're all right. I really thought I'd lost you there for a while. Promise me, you'll not fight anymore. Please." He asked and Hilde nodded. "I promise, I won't fight anymore." She said feeling euphoric as the boy she loved held her. "Thank you. Now then, I know hospital food sucks. what can I sneak in for you?" He said once more slipping back into his jovial nature. Giving her only a glimpse of his feelings towards her. But it was enough for them at that point in time.

The end of the week saw Duo helping Hilde walk into the house they now shared. He helped her to her room. "The Doc said to take it easy. That's an order Hilde. If you need anything you let me know." Duo said helping her settle down. "I want to look at the books. I don't want to go to bed Duo." She said and Duo shook his head. "No. One more day won't hurt. Want to order a pizza?" He said firmly changing the topic to dinner plans. "I guess. I really wish you'd stop babying me. I'm just a little slow, the more I do, the stronger I'll get." Hilde said and Duo shook his head. "Tomorrow. A little at a time. We've got some of it for a change. Let's use it." He said picking up the phone to order the pizza.

It would be a few months before Hilde regained all her former strength. She really had been to the brink of death. Duo had been stuck to her like glue. But eventually things returned to a sense of normality. Save for the fact they were still hiding their love from one another. Still sleeping in separate bedrooms. She loved him, and he loved her, but neither of them able to confess it, for fear of losing the friendship they did have. Then once again, peace was threatened and Duo was called upon once more to become the God of Death. The sixteen nearly seventeen year old once again had to become a soldier and fight for what he believed in. This time, as promised Hilde stayed at home. The year they had together had flown by, and everyday Hilde ran the business with one eye on her computer and one eye on the news. Waiting and watching to see what happened. Every time she saw the Gundams on the screen he heart stopped beating. Until she saw the Deathscythe Hell, If it was moving, she stopped worrying for a moment. It meant Duo was inside and Alive. She'd buried herself in the business to keep herself occupied as best she could. Duo's sweeper friends always stopping by to check on her and ask about Duo. One of them stopping by more than needed. A man by the name of Franklin Cobb. He was probably around eighteen and not bad looking, but he wasn't Duo and that's who her heart belonged to. One afternoon Frank popped his head into the office that was connected to the house. "Any word?" He'd asked and Hilde had looked up. "No. But it's not like he can just up an call. It's not like he has to." Hilde said and Frank's eyes flashed. The warning alarm went off in the back of her mind. "I'd call. I wouldn't make you worry like this." He said moving closer. Hilde backed up, this could be trouble. Just then the vid com lit up and Duo was on the other end. He saw Frank and the look he was giving Hilde and Duo's jealousy bit him. "Hey Frank. Are you bothering my Girl?"

Duo said lightly, but his eyes were deadly serious. The acknowledgment had finally been stated. He'd called Hilde, his girl. Hilde did not miss the implication and her heart soared. "No, just seeing if you'd called." Frank said backing up. He knew better than to piss Duo off and now that he knew Hilde was his girlfriend and not just a friend he backed off. Duo then turned his attention to Hilde. "I don't have a lot of time. I just called to let you know I'm still okay. How've you been Babe?" Duo said smiling like he did. "Fine. I miss you. You be careful." Hilde had said smiling back at that face she adored. "Hey, I'm always careful. I miss you too. Not long now. I gotta go." He said and the message ended. It wasn't an I love you, but it was one step closer to the admission of those feelings.

Duo was dozing until a kick in his cheek revived him. "Hey, no kicking your dad." Duo said into Hilde's middle looking up to notice she too had dozed off in the chair. He stood and gently picked her up and carried back to their bed. He laid her down on her side and crawled in next to her. She never woke up, only stirred slightly to nestle up to Duo. He kissed her forehead lightly as he closed his eyes and drifted back into his memories. It seemed they were both strolling down memory lane in their dreams tonight. His mind took him back to the day he had come home after the mess Dekim Barton had stirred up. Hilde had been here waiting for him. There to come home to, he'd never been happier to see this place. She made it home. That had been the night of their first kiss. He'd just held her for what seemed hours. He never wanted to let go. She had felt so right there and he noticed then she seemed smaller. He'd hit another growth spurt in the time since he'd held her like this before. He had thought he'd finished growing, little did he know it had only paused momentarily. He'd stepped back and looked down at her. "I missed you. It's good to be home." He'd said and she smiled at him. "I missed you too. I'm glad you came home in one piece. Tell me it's over." She said and that's when he did it. The time just felt right, he leaned over and kissed her. Tenderly, unsure and sweet. When their lips parted he said. "It's only just begun." He said smiling at her with a wink. She laughed and threw her arms around his neck. He spun her around laughing until they both fell down dizzy. Both from spinning and the new feelings welling up inside between them.

They still slept in different rooms, both a little unsure how far to go, but they had definitely taken the relationship one step further. He openly acknowledged to friends and anyone who asked she was his girlfriend. He stole kisses from her like a boy raiding a candy dish or cookie jar. Whenever he thought he could get away with it, he would snatch her lips with his. Then one evening, just after her seventeenth birthday, and just before his eighteenth they went all the way. He'd never forget that night, ever. They had been curled up on the couch watching something mindless on the telescreen. when the power went out in their sector. "Some moron's plowed into the converter again." Duo had said with a sigh. "I'll get some candles." Hilde had said going to get up but he caught her around the waist and pulled her back down. "I have a better idea. Come here beautiful." He'd said before assaulting her mouth in a kiss unlike any he'd given her before. If she'd been wearing socks, he'd have kissed them right off. He moved and had her pinned underneath him on the couch, pressing his now much taller form against hers. He'd grown like a weed over the past year, he was now about to breach the six foot mark. He released her lips just long enough to whisper three magical words into her ear. "I love you." He'd said it and didn't give her a chance to echo his words before he seized her lips again and made his second attack on them. Darting his tongue in and out tasting her kiss. They were kissing so passionately now that they were gasping for air but refusing to end the kiss. He carried his kiss to her neck, just under her ear. He began to nibble as he kissed. Hilde sighed his name as he devoured her neck in earnest. He'd never been so bold before, she knew where this was headed and had no intention of stopping him. He'd never pressed or pushed, even though she knew he'd wanted to do this for a long time now. His hands now dared the waters, he slid them up under her shirt and began to fondle and tease her breasts. She moaned and he became bolder still. He pulled his hands out from under her shirt and began to remove her shirt. Once he'd slipped the shirt from her, he removed her Bra. Now exposed to him, he dared bring his never ceasing assault from his lips down to her breasts. He nipped and suckled until her nipples were almost painfully aroused. Every gasp and every moan she made urged him wordless forward. Duo was in a haze, he was mad with longing and desire. He devoured her, his own arousal begging to be set free from the constriction of his pants. He felt her hand grasp him through the material and he groaned, but it brought him back to reality. "Are you sure?" He asked in a shaky voice. "I love you too Duo." She replied just a shaky, just as needy. "Not on the couch." He said picking her up and throwing her over his shoulder. She laughed as he practically bolted for his bedroom with her. He tossed her onto to bed playfully and once again began covering her in kisses. He

wasted little time in divesting himself and her of the rest of their clothing. His fingers exploring new territory and hidden treasures. She writhed under his touch, crying out in pleasure when his kisses reached her hidden jewel. His fingers darting in and out mercilessly. Her cries of pleasure nearly sending him over the edge before he'd even begun. He couldn't stand it anymore, he was through teasing. He kissed his way back up to her lips. "I'm sorry if I hurt you Hilde." he whispered as he gently pushed his aching manhood into her womanly embrace. He felt the constriction of muscle and the breaking of her barricade as he pushed gently. She stifled a cry and he kissed her softly. He stayed still until she let go of the breath she held. Then slowly, he began to make love to her. His thrusts long and gentle to begin, to get her over her initial discomfort. When she began to move with him, his thrusts became heated. Until in mutual thrusts, they met a thunderous tempo. Together they climbed to the pinnacle of ecstasy, together they toppled over the cliff. First Hilde cried out her muscles gripping Duo, pulling him deeper. He let out a strangled cry, half pleasure half pain as he released his pleasure within her. Together they fell boneless into oblivion. That was the night that ended the separation. From that moment on, whether they made love or not. They slept in the comfort and warmth of each other's arms. The denial was over, they loved each other, they both had finally admitted from the heart what they truly felt. Duo rolled over and pulled Hilde into his arms as he slept, dreaming of the night he had first made her his own. He'd never forget the first time they made love, it had been magical.

His dreams then wandered down the path of memories to the search for her engagement ring. He'd enlisted Quatre's help for that, knowing absolutely nothing about jewelry. He remembered wrapping the ring up for her eighteenth birthday present and waiting nervously for her to open it. His heart catching in anticipation, praying she'd say yes. Then his mind flashed over to the wedding. It had been, or rather she had been beautiful. Over the three years they been together, he'd grown to love her so deeply it was almost painful. She'd looked stunning walking down the aisle. She had let her hair grow out since they met, and it hung just past her shoulders. It was straight and nearly black, a crown of white flowers sat atop her head. Her dress flowed out behind her, she looked like a princess out of a fairy tale. Even Heero who stood beside Duo commented as such. He said simply, just loud enough for Duo to hear "You're a Lucky man." Duo smiled and looked to his best man "I already knew that, you didn't have to tell me."

Quatre was crying already, Trowa beside him smiled indulgently handing his little one a tissue. Then turning to his other side and handing his sniffling sister a tissue as well. Trowa was stoic as always as Catherine and Quatre cried on either side. Noin too teared up a little. Her and Zechs sharing glances at one another in remembrance of their own nuptials. Sally looked beautiful as Hilde's maid of honor. Wufei spared her glance of approval, other than that he just looked bored. Duo grinned wickedly. He and Hilde had conspired together privately. When it came time to throw the bouquet, she was going to lob it at Sally. When Duo threw her garter, he was going to throw it at Wufei. It was a done deal, and everyone was in on the conspiracy so it wouldn't fail. Everyone that is except Sally and Wufei.

His dream then rushed through the ceremony to the reception. Heero was much more fun to be around when you got him drunk. Zechs too for that matter. Half way through the reception the two had resumed their battle but this time instead of shooting at each other with mobile suits, they arm wrestled. The loser doing shots. Noin and Relena just rolling their eyes knowing that at least they'd come to some sort of understanding and had stopped trying to kill each other. Especially since Relena loved them both. One her brother the other her on again off again boyfriend. It wasn't long after the reception Heero had finally decided to live a little and asked Relena to marry him. Sally was glowing as she held the bouquet she'd caught and Wufei shot daggers with his eyes at Duo. "Woman, I'll marry you when I damn well feel like. I'll not let a bunch of flowers and a bit of lingerie dictate a date. You know damn well I have every intention of making you an honest woman." He'd said and Sally let his words bounce off her as usual. Trowa was a sought after dancing partner that evening. His natural grace and acrobatic skills had every woman in the room, including the bride, lining up for a dance. Quatre just watched him dreamy eyed as he spun Catherine out around the floor. That had been a night to remember, unfortunately neither Heero or Zechs remembered much. But a video of them Drunk and spouting apologies as they arm wrestled was enough to make both men cringe from the display they made. But ever since that night, the animosity between them had vanished. Now they truly were friends as well as family. Heero did end up marrying Zechs' little sister.

Duo woke up from his dream and sat up. He looked down to the woman sleeping beside him. They'd been married a little over three years and had been together for over six. He couldn't believe how much she'd changed his life, how much he loved her. He rested his palm against the rounded mound of her belly. He'd never seen her look more beautiful than she was now. Pregnant with his child, a life that the once God of Death had created. There had been a time before he'd met her, he would have embraced Death as surely as he would have fled from living. Then Hilde came and gave him a choice. Death chose to live, and live he did. Everyday was faced with a new hope for a lasting peace. He'd only been called on a few times by Zechs and Wufei to work for the Preventers. An those were only minor uprisings, easily suppressed with little risk of injury. Well, little risk when you were a man like Duo Maxwell. Even less of a risk when you looked at who was always by his side. They no longer fought as lone wolf soldiers, but as a team. An unstoppable team. Duo, Heero, Trowa, Quatre, Wufei, and Zechs. Six men, one a former enemy now stood as friends and allies. Nothing would break them or the trust they had in one another. Peace would reign, these men made every effort to insure it. Some worked in the spotlight, Others like Duo, Trowa, and Quatre worked behind the scenes. All had gained at least a semblance of a normal life and all were grateful for it. Duo was the first of the young Gundam pilots to take this step into the realms of normalcy. He was only twenty-one and he questioned if he was ready to be a father. Then he looked at Hilde and knew the answer. Yes he was, he knew six years ago he'd found his soul mate. He was beyond his years in maturity, he had a stable home, a good business, a wonderful wife, and a damn good life. This would only make it better. He leaned over and kissed her stomach before getting up out of bed. His tall six foot two inch frame stumbled into the bathroom as he stretched and turned on the taps in the shower. His long mane of hair loosely fell over his shoulders to brush the back of his knees. He brushed out the tangles before climbing into the steaming shower.

He washed and wrapped one towel around his head and another around his middle as he stepped from the shower. He had just stuck his toothbrush in his mouth when he heard his wife call out. "Oh, Shit! DUO!" He rushed out "Wha?" toothbrush still sticking out of his mouth. His eyes went wide when he saw the state of her. "My water broke, it's time." She said trying to get out of bed. The warrior panicked. "Shit! Don't move." He said and Hilde frowned at him. "I have to move, just get dressed Duo. I'll meet you in the car. Calm down." she said waddling over to change herself. she just put on a clean, and dry nightgown and shuffled her way to the car, clutching her stomach as the next contraction hit her. "Oh, Shit! That hurts." She said grimacing. Duo, hair a wet mess, half dressed and in a state of near hysteria bolted to the car. "Just drive sensibly, don't get us killed on the way to the hospital Duo." Hilde said as Duo tried to place the key in the ignition his hands shaking violently. Somehow through the blur, Duo managed to get them to the hospital. While they were getting Hilde settled into a room, Duo called Quatre. He'd made Duo promise to call when Hilde went into Labor. "H-H-Hello?" Came the sleepy voice. "Quatre! It's Duo. We're at the hospital now. St. Bernadette's. Promise kept. gotta go. Bye." Was all Duo said before hanging up. Quatre bolted awake. He nudged Trowa. "Wake up, we're going to be uncles." He said hoping out of bed. "Great, wake me when it happens." Trowa said sleepily. Quatre frowned. "You don't mean that grumpy. Get up, I don't wanna miss this. Besides, we gotta spread the word. It's not like Duo is in any state to do it. You heard him, he's frantic." "When isn't Duo frantic?" Trowa said tossing his long legs out of bed. "But you're right, we should spread the word." Trowa said through a yawn.

Fifteen hours later, everyone had been contacted and were now all waiting patiently for Duo to come out and give the good news. Finally, he came out looking exhausted, but grinning like an idiot. His eyes red from crying "It's a boy." He said and cheers erupted from all his friends. "You guys can come in now." He said as his back was heartily thumped by Wufei of all people. He looked thrilled for once. Hilde looked like she'd been through a battle, but lovely nonetheless. In her arms was a tiny bundle. Noin, Sally, and Relena rushed in awing and cooing at the tiny baby. "He's so cute! He looks like Duo." Relena said looking at the baby longingly. "What's his name?" Quatre asked as he leaned over to get a look himself. "Peter Jay, PJ for short." Hilde said kissing her newborn son's downy brown hair. "PJ Maxwell, sounds like a name that belongs in a soap opera." Heero teased and Duo shot him a glare. "Hilde's father's name was Peter Jay. I like it." Duo said and Heero grinned. "I'm teasing lighten up Dad." Heero said and Duo smiled. "Dad, Geez can you believe it I'm a dad." He said wistfully as he gazed at all the people he loved most in his life. All his friends, his wife, and now his son. The God of Death had hung up his scythe of loneliness

and despair and had found love and hope, and people to live for, at last.