Summary

AU where Commander Jane Shepard is forced to marry turian soldier as a term for ending First Contact War. My second Mass Effect fanfic. Rated M for language and maybe later for sexual themes. Also on ff.net. Beta-reader: Razzberry31 (Thank you so much!)
Chapter 1

UPDATE (22.03.2017): Few changes in this chapter with Jack's dialogue (due to some comments) and added some spaces in the paragraphs so it would be easier to read.

UPDATE (30.03.2017): Thanks to Erin Primette from I got to know that Garrus' father's name is Castis and I decided to change Akteon to his canon name. Although I write AU fic I try to stick to as much canon stuff as I can. So that's it. Thanks again, Erin for your message :)

My second ME fic. This time First Contact War ended by Shakarian marriage AU. I've read some fics with that AU and I really liked what I read. So here is my version. Hope you enjoy and please leave comment as I don't know if I should continue ;d

My beta reader for 'Successful Therapy' edited this one too, big thanks Razzberry! Your support means alot to me :*

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"Jack! Did you see that?! Blue armor! He's here!" An armored woman - Commander Jane Shepard - screamed to another one from her cover, a less armored woman - Jack - appeared above the pile of debris. Two of them were guarding a human outpost on an abandoned Turian colony, used by human scientists to gain knowledge about their enemy.

If there wasn't a war going on, Jane would have liked to know about this species. They showed up out of nowhere after humanity activated another relay and without warning they almost decimated those vessels that were near the relay. Jane often mused that it wasn't how she imagined the first meeting of aliens. She always dreamed about travelling through the galaxy, having adventures.

Yet life had for her a slightly different scenario - she had to fight aliens, who she was really interested in. She had fought them so many times she forgot to count. But there was one alien whom she remembered well. Blue armor. They called him Vakarian, from what she could understand. Her translator was up to date but still a lot of words from the turian language was missing.

By this point he was her obsession, irking her nerves on the battlefield. Always the finding weak spots in her spotless, she thought, tactics. She also was getting on his nerves, she could tell. So by this point when they met on the battlefield, and that happened surprisingly often, they forgot about the others, fighting only against themselves. A lot of times it ended in huge explosions. One of the main reasons Shepard was considered the best of the Alliance fleet. Now wasn't an exception, she wanted to get that sneaky turian.

"Take care of it from here, will ya?" The woman asked and Jack frowned in response.

"Fuck, not again. Don't tell me he's here. Is he following us or something?!" Jack's hand touched her ear. "Alenko, Vega, we're going to the rendezvous point. Come here. Shepard is staying. Her blue, turian boyfriend showed up again."

Jane and Jack could hear sighs on the other side of the comm-link. That wasn't anything new for her ground team. They were stationed in a devastated skyscraper, which they used as a vantage point across the old turian colony. Minutes later, two soldiers came up to their floor. The smaller one approached Jane to voice his concern.

"Commander, you should come with us. Orders were…" She raised her hand to shut the man up.
"I know what the orders are, Alenko, but he's here. Vakarian is here. I'll show him this time." The one named Alenko shut up, a fire of determination in the woman's eyes told him there was no point in arguing.

"Yes, ma'am." The men prepared themselves and left. Leaving Jane with Jack. The latter approached her Commander and friend and patted her back.

"I hope he makes you come today, you are so sexually frustrated lately. Go and have your fun, remember that our shuttle arrives in 2 hours. You gotta be at the LZ or I'll kill you." Jane nodded, while changing the thermal clip and checking her sniper rifle. She moved her head up and smirked at Jack.

"Don't worry, love, I'll be there. Now, my beautiful, wish me good luck and get the fuck out of here," In response she got the middle finger from Jack. The woman left Jane to have her little game. She laid on the pile of debris and searched the colony for the blue armored alien. "Where are you turian? Where are you?" She didn't have to wait long, as he appeared with his squad of two other turians. She had him in her sights when she got a call. "Yes?" She asked angrily.

"Commander, a turian vessel showed up. You need to come back ASAP. No hunting today." Said her pilot - Flight Lieutenant Jeff "Joker" Moreau - through the radio. "Shuttle will be waiting at the rendezvous point in 20."

"Shit! Fuck! Shit! Alenko commed you, right? It's his revenge." She barked at Joker. "Okay, I'll be there in 10."

"Aye, aye, Commander. Joker out." Jane crawled backwards and then stood up, defeated. She wanted to kill something, someone. Quickly she jumped into the elevator shaft and slid down on the wires holding up the non functioning elevator. She left the building from the back and saw them, the turians were not moving and it seemed as though they were talking through the radio.

"What?" Vakarian said while holding a hand to side of his head. "But she's here… this human, Shepard, yes. What? No! Fuck! I saw her! She's close… Peace talks? Bullshit." Jane cocked her head to the side. What? My translator is malfunctioning… Can't be… "Okay boys, we're heading to the shuttle. HQ's order." The squad of turians turned and started to walk back in the direction they came from, only Vakarian stood in place and watched the skyscraper Shepard was in minutes ago. Jane bent and picked up a piece of debris. She tossed it at him to get his attention. The turian looked at her with wide eyes, his mandibles spread wide as well, utterly shocked.

"See ya around, big guy!" Jane waved at him and activated the stealth mode in her armour. "Bye!" She started to sprint. She had only a few minutes to get to the shuttle. His face… priceless! All in all her mood brightened up. Even though she didn't get a good fight, she could still fuck with this nerve racking turian. Soon she was at the rendezvous point. Jack turned around when she heard her footsteps.

"How was it? You climaxed already? Or you needing another R&R with Blue?" Her mischievous smile made Jane giggle. God, I love her.

"Sadly, no. But I got under his skin anyway. I overheard their talk, Jack. They said something about peace talks. Heard anything about it?" Jack looked shocked and shook her head. This was a first for her too. "Nevermind, our ride is here. Come on guys, I need a drink."

"You buying, Lola?" Vega asked with stupid grin, fanning his brows. The shuttle landed and they jumped in.
"You wish, Vega, you're buying. Let's say it's punishment for your behaviour." Shepard replied when she sat down and locked her belts.

"Dios, I already lost all my salary, have some mercy."

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The red haired woman was walking along the corridor leading to the main war room in Alliance HQ. Her olive skin scarred from battle, her green eyes registering everything and everyone with the precision of a sniper, which in fact she is. Each person she passes stopped, saluted and looked at her in awe, she did that to people. Aura of a born leader, her confidence and strength so visible. And she was famous. Everyone knows her name, Commander Jane Shepard. One of the best of the N7 program, a great leader with hawkeye sight. She was one of the reasons they had pushed the turians away when they appeared.

Seven years ago humanity discovered and opened a mass relay, driven by curiosity they searched for more relays, that's when a war with the aliens began. A so called First Contact War. Humanity learned about the other galactic species the hard way. Within those seven years they had to learn about mass relays, the Citadel, Council and the alien races: asari, salarians, turians. From what the Commander had learned, the war would soon be over. The Citadel species along with their Councillors, offered a hand with peace negotiations. Shepard didn't know any details though. She was ordered to come to Earth without any knowledge of why and if it was connected to the negotiations. The woman stopped in front of the big doors leading into war room. She grazed her fingernails over her short shaved right side of her head then brushed her long hair on the center and left side. *Still wet, fuck. They didn't give me time to properly dry my hair.* The Commander shook her head and straightened up, entering the room. Admiral Steven Hackett, Rear Admiral Kahoku, Captain David Anderson and to her surprise, Captain Zaeed Massani, her foster father, were waiting for her. Jane walked to them and stopped just a few feet in front of the men to straighten her back, stand to attention and salute. "Commander Jane Shepard reporting back, sirs."

"Hey, kiddo, good to see you back in one goddamn piece. I heard we fucked up your little date with that alien." Captain Massani snorts while closing the distance and hugging her firmly. Kahoku huffs in exasperation but doesn't comment on his colleagues behaviour. "We have had a little dispute here, I tell ya. I'm so close to smashin' those goddamn morons faces, shit you not." Jane relax as he talked. Zaeed wasn't polite at all, even as a renowned captain of the Alliance Fleet, regardless he was an efficient and smart strategist with lot's of successful missions on his record. Jane was lucky to be his protegee, she had learned a lot from him. She just regretted that Zaeed was too straightforward and couldn't contain his swearing, he could have been an Admiral.

"Good to see you, dad." She replied with a small smirk gracing her lips. Yet it vanished as soon as she faced the rest of the men. "Admirals, Captain." She dipped her head to each man. "You called me, Sir?"

"Yes, Commander." Hackett started. She could tell the man was stern and tense. The news had to be bad. *Shit, something's wrong. Something's really fucking wrong.* "As you probably already know, the Council offered it's help in brokering peace between the turians and us." Jane only nodded, acknowledging the news. "The thing is... They ordered our best soldier to marry their best turian one. As a proof of the peace between the races. Ekhm. You specifically."

"Shit." She could only say, shocked by his words.

"Like hell, I'll let my goddamn kiddo to be with one of those assho…" Zaeed started but one look from Hackett made him fall in line and shut up.
"Anyway, I really don't want to order you to do this. But we don't have a choice. High price is at stake here, Commander. If we accept the offer, humanity will gain an embassy on the Citadel. Maybe we will have a seat on the Council. And, let's face it, this war is consuming too many resources. Another thing is humans will gain access to the vast range of council space systems, where, as I was told, have colonizable planets." Shepard regarded the Admiral in silence, calculating the pros versus the cons. Yes, she was forced to do something unimaginable. But let's face it, she had been forced to do so since she had joined the Alliance forces. Especially the N7 program. Jane turned to look at Captain David Anderson, she had served under him for many years. He was the one to push her toward the N7 program. With one glance in his eyes, she understood it was serious. "What do you say, Commander?"

"I understand, I will accept the offer." Jane stated quickly, before Captain Massani could say anything about it. Later she left with him and went straight to their apartment in the Alliance base. They both entered the house to be greeted by Dr Karin Chakwas, Zaeed's forever fiancee'. The woman was like a mother to her. 'Her patchwork family' Jane called them.

"Karin, you won't fucking believe what those goddamn morons did. Fuck!" The man tossed his jacket on the hanger then rushed to the kitchen to sit by the table. "They want to marry our kiddo to one of those turians. Goddamn imbeciles." Karin entered the kitchen, her eyes wide in disbelief.

"No… you're joking. That's not possible. That's unethical." The older woman closed the distance towards Shepard and checked her from one side to another. "Nothing to patch up this time, huh? My dear child, what did you get into this time?" She asked while hugging Jane.

"If that's what is necessary to end this stupid war, Ma, I'll do it." The Commander replied with a sigh. "I don't like it, but to sacrifice one for the millions isn't a big price to pay, really."

"You say that, but…"

"No buts. Please, I don't want to talk about it now. Better tell me what's for dinner?" Jane asked with a small smile.

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Garrus Vakarian was pissed, lightly speaking. This fucking, cunning human messed with him again. He still had in his head the flash of her smirk just before she vanished right in front of his eyes. Nothing much to do about it, orders were orders, even if he wasn't a good turian in the first place. There were times when he had disobeyed orders to end a mission successfully, that's why he was the best soldier the turian military had. His supervisor, General Victus, was always praising him for his strategies. Maybe because Victus wasn't good at following orders too. Now, by the orders, he was entering the Hierarchy HQ in Cipritine, Palaven. He just had a few minutes to change into his Commander's uniform and was quick to leave to find out why he had been summoned. When he reached the last floor and was in front of the doors leading into the War Room, he stopped. Garrus checked if he looked decent to meet with the Generals and Primarch Fedorian. "Spirits, I'm so tired. I look like shit. His hand brushed over the scar on his right mandible. Fuck, I'll never look good anymore. Because of that human. He growled. Shepard. Things got so intense one time that he got shot with a rocket to the face, almost dying as a result. Vakarian was pleased with his look before the accident, he was considered handsome by female opinion. Now his mother was literally crying over her baby boy's face. He shook his head with dismay and entered the room. Six turian generals and the Primarch turned to him and they greeted each other. "Commander Vakarian. Good you came so fast."

"It was kind of sudden but I managed to finish my assignment and return." Garrus nodded.
"We are also pleased that you didn't engage in any attacks during your mission. I've heard your nemesis was there." General Oraka said with a smirk. "The Council helped us broker peace with the humans."

"So I've heard, General."

"Commander Vakarian." The Primarch stepped up to Garrus with a stern look on his face and a trill of his subharmonics. Garrus started to feel uneasy. Something's up. I don't like it. "There is one condition for peace though. I know we have much to ask of you, but we need to ask anyway. The Council condition is: you have to marry one of the Alliance's best soldiers."

"What?!" Vakarian roared angrily. "Why?! Why me?"

"Council orders said specifically it has to be you, Commander. The two best soldiers of humanity and the turians have to marry." Garrus stepped back and leaned on his heel. Breathing heavily. It was something unbelievable to ask for. The Hierarchy's demand was too much for him. "What will you say, Commander?"

"Spirits, why me? Please, choose someone else." Garrus keened helplessly, trying to save himself, to get himself out of it somehow.

"It has to be you, Vakarian." The Primarch said firmly, frowning at the turian in front of him. "Listen, I can only imagine how you feel right now, but think about the turians. Casualties are too high, we need to stop this war. Besides pirates are starting to spread like a disease everywhere. Our position as the galactic police is shattering. We can't maintain peace in the galaxy and protect it while being at war with the humans. It's just impossible." Garrus mulled the Primarch's words, trying to find any flaw and way out of it but there was none. The turians well being was up to him now and he would turn traitor if he refused. "What is your answer, Commander?" Vakarian sighed heavily and nodded slowly in agreement.

"I'll do it. When and where?"

"Next month, on the Citadel."

"And who will be the bride?" Garrus asked sarcastically.

"We don't know yet. The Council haven't said anything about the human female that will marry you." General Victus replied.

"At least it's a female." Vakarian snorted, feeling defeated. I wonder what my dad and mom will say. Spirits. As if the turians in the room could sense his thoughts they said they had already informed his parents. With that, the meeting was ended. Garrus returned home in a gloomy mood trying to understand why he was so unlucky. When he entered the Vakarian mansion he was greeted by his parents.

"Son, I take it you know already?" Castis Vakarian came to him and patted his arm. "Don't be in such a foul mood, son. You will help the turians, you will be a hero."

"A hero, dad?! Seriously?" Garrus yelled at his father. Unshackling all of his anger, tossing it at the older turian. "A hero because I married a human? Oh! That's good. I'd feel better achieving something spectacular on the battleground... not... this." In the meantime his mother came to him and hugged him warmly. Soothing his anger with a subharmonic hum.

"Shhh, my child." His mother's hand stroked his cowl, making him calm at the gesture. Kalea Vakarian, his mother, was always was good at making him at peace, she was always there when
Garrus was feeling sad, angry, or defeated. She always had a way of making him feel better. "I'm proud of you, Garrus, and I'll always be. Remember that. Now come, let's eat. Solana and I made something delicious for you."

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A month later Commander Jane Shepard was standing with Ambassador Udina, Admiral Hackett and Captain Anderson in the Council Chambers on the Citadel. She was overwhelmed, being there for the first time, seeing all these aliens and their technology. The woman was watching everything with round eyes, she felt utterly happy to witness such a marvelous thing so few humans had seen so far. With an updated translator, thanks to the Council, she could understand everyone and that was amazing.

Jane was feeling a bit uneasy though, Udina ordered her to wear a dress and heels. *Me?! A dress? Fucking high heels? Fucking Christ, what a joke. I never wore a dress in my life. I should be in my Alliance uniform, not this. Ugh.* She thought to herself every time she looked at her reflection. She looked at herself again, her long red hair pinned was in a bun, a few lose strands out of it, it made her look sexy. Simple dark make-up she adored, deep purple on her lips. The black dress flushed her body, exposing her nice curves and thin waist. She felt miserable. She agreed on such an outfit, not having the strength to argue with the sleazy guy that Udina certainly was.

They waited for the turian representatives and her soon-to-be husband. *God, I'll be marrying a turian in a few days. What a joke.* She shook her head while regarding the trees in the Chambers. The place was nice, calming. Turians, salarians, asari and other races roaming around, waiting for their turn to have a meeting with the councillors. They had waited for some time when an asari came to them and led them to the meeting room where everyone was supposed to meet and debate over the terms of peace.

When Jane entered the room she saw four turians already there, three in military uniforms and one in a black robe with deep red stripes, one asari in a fancy dress and one salarian also in a robe, dark blue with a red stripe embroidered with golden ornaments. They greeted the humans, she learned who they were, the asari - Councillor Tevos, salarian - Councilor Valern and for the turians - Councillor Sparatus, Primarch Fedorian, General Victus and Commander Garrus Vakarian - her biggest surprise.

She was regarding him with round eyes and he responded in kind when he heard her name. The two of them looked at themselves in disbelief. Just recently they had tried to kill each other every chance they got and now they would get married? What a joke it was for them.

When the Councillors, Generals and Captain Anderson began their peace talks, Jane and Garrus sat in the room next to the meeting room, in awkward silence. Jane turned her head in the other direction, desperately trying to collect herself and not suddenly combust. She could feel Vakarian was trying the same thing.

After a moment, when she had calmed a bit she turned toward the turian offering her hand. "Umm, I'm Commander Jane Shepard, Alliance Navy, N7. Nice, ugh, to meet you." The turian, after a moment, turned to woman and regarded her stretched out hand in surprise. He mulled her words then shook hands with her.

"Commander Garrus Vakarian, human. And I know your name, as you know mine." He said and turned away again. Jane looked at the side of his face then sighed heavily. *That will be a tough one.* She played with her fingers for a moment, debating internally if she should keep on talking or shut the hell up. But silence was weighing on her so she turned to Vakarian again.
"The Citadel is a marvelous place. It's the first time for me being here. I feel like a kid receiving the best Christmas gift ever." She said, her hand moved up to curl a finger on one of her strands. He turned to her again.

"What is Chris...-" He asked while turning to her but stopped. "What are you doing with your fringe?" He asked abruptly, watching her fingers in disbelief.

"What fringe?" Jane replied with a shocked question. Then she waved with her hair strand. "This?" Garrus nodded, still looking at her red hair. "This is hair not a fringe. I'm curling it on my fingers. It calms me down a great deal. Sorry if that's making you uncomfortable." Vakarian regarded the human for a moment then turned to look in the other direction. "God, how long will this take?"

Shepard asked herself, losing any faith in having any conversation with the turian beside her. "It's funny, just a month ago we tried to kill each other. Now they want us to marry."

"Tell me about it." Garrus said back shortly. Jane returned to curling her hair on her finger and staring out the window. Some time later, the Council and the human and turian parties agreed on every term and they called Shepard and Vakarian to join them in the main room.

"Terms of peace have been agreed on. The Council won't punish any side of the conflict, assuming that whole war began from a huge misunderstanding and lack of knowledge about Council laws on humanities part. As for you two, you will marry in two weeks and remain in the marriage for ten years at least." The asari Councilor was interrupted by Garrus' growl.

"What?! Ten years?! You gotta be kidding me... seriously." A turian calmed Vakarian down and the asari called Tevos continued.

"As I said, you will remain married for at least 10 years to prevent war and achieve real peace." Then she turned and with one flick of a finger on the console in front of her, she displayed photos of the apartment. "This is where you will live after you get married. It's an apartment on one of the interspecie Wards. It's small, one bedroom, living room, kitchen is big. Cooking spaces for both dextro and levo so you won't, uh, mix things. There is a also bathroom and small office room. It's nothing luxurious, just a normal, standardised apartment. For half a year you'll be living there without any jobs to worry about as you will be on vacation. Get to know each other... and don't kill yourselves."

"Easier said than done..." Garrus snarled. Jane looked at him from the side, wondering if it was a good idea after all. She remained silent, concluding if she was to say something it would cause war to break out again. Tevos coughed and looked at Councillor Sparatus.

"Vakarian, calm down." The turian councilor barked at Garrus then turned toward the humans. "I hope you are as pleased at what we have negotiated, as I am. Now please excuse us, we have much to prepare. We will send you the ceremony details soon." Everyone left the meeting room, humans and turians parted in silence, leaving in different directions. Shepard with the the other human, took a skycar and flew toward the building the Council offered to them. The woman leaned to Anderson and whispered to him.

"What did he mean by ceremony details?"

"Your ceremony will be a mixture of human and turian traditions. The Council will plan everything, every minute. I hope turians don't have any ritual dancing and sacrifices." Jane snorted at the remark, imagining turians dancing around a lamb then killing it to please their gods. "That's not funny, Shepard."

"It is. I just hope it will be quick. Quick ceremony and then I'll just hide myself in that apartment. Six
months without doing anything, Anderson, six months." She emphasised bitterly the last two words. Jane gritted her teeth at the sole thought of spending half a year without a job, just sitting at home.

"It will be fine. There are a lot of shooting ranges here on the Citadel, and, Shepard please, you will have the whole Citadel to see, I bet you won't visit even half of it during the six months. Better tell me how's your papa taking it?"

"Zaeed's good. Karin is watching over him so he won't do anything stupid like starting a war or something... Pa's may be an impulsive son of a bitch but Karin knows how to handle him. She will calm him down or she just glares at him, either is good and works." Anderson started to laugh. Zaeed was always like that. The two men were best friends after all, David knew him too damn well.

"Same, old Zaeed. And how's Lieutenant Alenko?" David asked and waved his brows at her meaningfully. Jane winced at his question.

"I don't care. Listen, I know some... idiots... are talking. But I'm not involved with the guy. Not my type." David leaned even closer to her.

"We're talking privately here Shepard, screw the regulations."

"Yeah, I always screw them anyway, David. It's just that I don't want to have anything with him. Regulations or not. And there is no one else, trust me. Sometimes I feel like a kid that needs to try a little bit harder in school. Especially when you look at how Pa's behaving." David nodded, understanding. Massani had been watching over Jane ever since he had brought her to the Alliance base. The image of two-year-old Jane desperately clutching to him flashed in his mind. At least now Jane will have a bit of freedom, maybe even meet some nice man along the way. All in all, soon the Citadel would welcome humans as new inhabitants. "But I'm not complaining, Pa and Ma are the best people I ever met, they look after me. Because of them I'm here, just where I want to be."

"They love you very much."

"I love them too." She replied with a warm smile. Soon they arrived at the place. Jane went to the apartment where Zaeed and Karin were waiting for her. Barely stepping in the door, Zaeed grabbed her the second she entered and started questioning her.

"How was it? What did they say? Who will you marry? Kiddo, I couldn't sit on my goddamn ass, that worried I was." Chakwas shoved him to the side, letting Shepard free from his grasp.

"God, calm down, sweetie." Then she smiled at Jane. "Don't mind him, Janey. Now change and we will talk later." Jane smiled back and kissed her step-mom's cheek, she rushed to her temporary room where she grabbed her civvies and then went to wash herself. When she was ready she said what happened during the meeting. Zaeed was furious when he heard Jane had to stay married for 10 years. Later she left the apartment and went a few floors lower, where Jack and the girls shared their apartment.

"Yo, girls. I'm back!" Shepard entered the room only to see Jack, Kasumi, Sam, Ashley and Gabby sitting in front of a huge holo screen and watching some vids. Their eyes wide, looking at the screen like it was a miracle. "I thought we could party tonight. Where is everyone?"

"Shhh, we're watching, idiot." Jack hissed at her and waved her hand to silence Jane. "Come here." She patted the pillow next to her. Jane sat next to Jack and took an unopened beer from the floor.

"What I'm looking at?" Jane asked, looking at the holo screen where a turian was obviously flirting with some... em, woman? The woman was covered with an environmental armor from head to toe.
"Fleet and Flotilla. This chick is a quarian. Quarians wear suits that cover their whole body." Jack explained to which she was hissed at by the rest of the girls. "Shut up idiots, our beloved Commander is here. And I said we should wait for her. Anyway, this turian dick is in love with her. Nasty piece of shit."

"You're eyes are glued to the screen Jack, you are so full of shit yourself." Jane replied, whispering to Jack. "You won't believe who I'm marrying in two weeks." Jack abruptly turned to Shepard. She blindly paused the movie, eyes still locked on Jane.

"You gotta be kidding me, Shep! I don't believe that." Jack yelled, she realised immediately who might be Shepard's future spouse. "Your blue turian boy? Ohhh! That's fucking A! And maybe you will come at last, you ache for him, don't ya?"

"Jeez, Jack. But yes, I'm marrying that Vakarian guy."

"Guys you won't believe who I'm supposed to be married to!" Jane said with a mischievous grin.

"Listen, listen! I'm marrying that blue-armored turian I almost killed a few times! Garrus Vakarian is his name. How crazy is that?" She exclaimed while laughing. "Seriously though, he seems like a complete douche. I tried to talk to him but... ugh." Lieutenant Alenko growled and stepped to her, grabbing her by the arms.

"Commander Shepard! Jane! You can't marry that turian bastard, please! Let's run away somewhere... I'll take care of you. I-" Jane punched the man right in the face and shoved him to the side with a mighty blow. Everyone started to laugh.

"Eh, Alenko. You are brain damaged beyond repair. I said a hundred times already - NO!" She shook her head and jumped on the pillow next to Jack, sitting beside her best friend.

"Seriously, Alenko, you're such a deaf dick." Jack snorted. "Leave a girl be, she's interested in my cunt only, don't you see that? Oh, and maybe the blue dick of her turian guy she almost killed." Jack said merrily and hung her arm on Jane's neck. "Let's go to a club and have some fun."
"As if I'd friggin' want to, Jack, we can't. Steven forbade anything till it's safe for humans. And that means we can't go as we please. I don't like it either, but shit, better stay put for the time being… and when it's alright… oh, God, my sweetheart, we will rock this piece of junk!"

"Hell yeah!" The two women smacked their hands in a high five. The rest cheered at Shepard's words, wishing it would happen soon. They didn't have time for fun either as the preparations for the wedding, which turned to be galaxy-wide sensation, took up most of their time.

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**How was it? Good? Bad? Crappy as hell? Please share your thoughts :)**
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Edited by Razzberry, check her fanfic on Ao3: 'Dawn of a New Era' /works/4978891

UPDATE (30.03.2017): Thanks to Erin Primette from I got to know that Garrus' father's name is Castis and I decided to change Akteon to his canon name. Although I write AU fic I try to stick to as much canon stuff as I can. So that's it. Thanks again, Erin for your message :) 

Chapter 2 is heeeere! Thanks for comments and reviews! I could change few things due to your fantastic support. I hope some things got to be clarified. If not, then you have to wait till it will be explained in later chapters ;3

Edited by Razzberry, check her fanfic on Ao3: 'Dawn of a New Era' /works/4978891

Enjoy! Comments and reviews will be appreciated!

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"You look beautiful, Jane." Karin checked for the last time, if Shepard's wedding dress, makeup and hairstyle were perfect. The older woman orbited around Shepard like a planet around it's sun, looking for any imperfection but she found none. "All set, you're ready."

"I don't need to look good, Ma, my soon-to-be husband won't even notice." Jane sighed at her reflection in the mirror. The simple white dress that she had picked on Earth, for the event, was really stunning but Shepard felt nothing at that moment. It was just a farce for her anyway. Normally, she would have felt excited. Weddings were supposed to be the most important day for every girl. Especially after the girls had watched vids of beautiful princesses and their Prince Charming's.

"What you are saying, idiot, is complete bullshit." Jack said when she entered the room. The biotic was also ready for the ceremony, wearing a simple blue dress ending just slightly above her knees. Jane picked her as her bridesmaid, her best friend. "You're representing humanity and you need to look smokin' hot, which you are. If I could, I'd get a boner just looking at you."

"You look sexy too, my lovely." Jane smiled at Jack and winked. "Let's get on with it. And later we will drink. A lot."

"That's the spirit, Shep!" Jack started to laugh with Jane. Chakwas just grunted in dismay, not bothering to say anything to them. She knew far too well how those two behaved. The three women made their way outside the room to where Zaeed and Admiral Hackett were waiting.

"Oh, kiddo, you're gonna give me a heart attack." Massani grinned to Shepard. "You look great. Such a shame you're marrying one of those goddamn bastards." Admiral Hackett turned toward Zaeed and frowned at him.

"Please, Captain, try to hold your language at the ceremony." Hackett was afraid of his colleague's behaviour. He promised himself that he would watch over the Captain closely. He didn't need any interspecies incidents to occur when everything was going in the right direction for a change. "Let's
go, Commander, everyone is waiting for us in the hall where you'll get married." Jane nodded and
they left.

The journey in the skycar wasn't long and they were soon stood in front of a nice white building,
where the press and a lot of aliens and humans had already gathered. Shepard could hear both cheers
and words of dismay or anger but wasn't bothered in the slightest. When she entered the hall, she
could see Vakarian already waiting with another turian, his groomsmen, as far as she could tell. She
wondered if it was also a turian tradition to have witnesses of the marriage.

Jane waited with Zaeed till everyone sat down and the officiate, a salarian in a dark blue and grey
robe, gave them a sign to come closer. She felt like she was walking down the path to her doom.
There was no way out now, so she walked with a small smile to please everyone else. Internally, she
screamed. This was too much to handle even though she had tried to look neutral since learning
about the whole marriage deal. When they reached the podium where Garrus Vakarian was standing,
Jane looked at him for a moment and she could have sworn he was angry. His mandibles were shut
tight, his eyes looking at her like she was a piece of shit and his brow plates were furrowed.

Great, fucking great! My future husband is the king of douchebaggery. God, I should have just killed
him when I had the chance… The ceremony began. The salarian said a few words about peace,
marriage and responsibility, then they exchanged vows. As the human tradition went, they also
exchanged wedding rings, and as the turian tradition went, they had to touch their foreheads in front
of everyone. It was a bit strange for Shepard but she did it anyway, leaning toward Vakarian. He
quickly touched his forehead to hers and retreated quickly, like he was afraid of the woman in front
of him. Like she was contagious. Jane had never felt worse in her entire life.

After that Admiral Hackett, Ambassador Udina, Primarch Fedorian and lastly, General Victus gave
their respective speeches and that was it. Jane was officially, Jane Vakarian. That feels strange, oh
god. The wedding ring weighed on her finger, like a burden she'd have to carry from now on. When
the ceremony was over, Jane, Garrus and their guests went into another part of the building for the
wedding reception.

There, Vakarian presented her to his parents, and she presented Zaeed and Chakwas to Garrus and
his parents. Soon after, they ate a luxury dinner and then their guests gathered in small groups to
chat. Jane was mingling between the humans when one of the turians walked over to her.

"What a pity that bride is looking so sad on her wedding day." He said and dipped his head as a
greeting. His plates were reddish brown, with white facial markings. "Specter Nihlus Kryik, at your
service." Nihlus outstretched his hand toward Jane. She gave him her hand but they didn't shake,
instead Nihlus took her hand and leaned in to mimic a human kiss on it. Jane was utterly shocked.

"Uhm, Commander Jane She-... I mean Vakarian." She stuttered, not believing what had just
happened.

"I know, of course I know. Such a beauty, Jane, I'm absolutely stunned. No asari or turian female
can be a match for such a marvelous creature that you are." Jane blushed, trying hard to come up
with a good reply. Out of the corner of her eye she saw Garrus Vakarian walking to them, which
actually helped in the matter.

"Nihlus! What, for Spirits sake, are you doing?" He growled at Kryik. Jane saw that the brown
turian was a bit smaller than Garrus, who towered above them with angry growls erupting from his
subharmonic.

"Just praising the beauty of your wife, Garrus. Nothing to be concerned about. Ah, I hope we will
have some time to talk more, Mrs. Vakarian. Soon." He pulled Jane's hand that he was still holding,
up, dipped his head and kissed it again. Both turians left a speechless Shepard, looking at them as they were walking away. Seconds later, Kaidan Alenko came to her, worry all over his face.

"Everything good, Shepard? Did those ba… Turians do something to you?" Jane shook her head in negation and turned toward Kaidan.

"No, Alenko, and you don't have to pull the 'knight in shining armour' show. It's grossing me out, really. God, I need a drink. Where is Jack when I need her." Jane left the man, who was clearly defeated by her words. She found her best friend quite quickly, as she was at the bar. "Give me something good, please." Shepard said to bartender, an elderly looking asari.

"Right away, sweetie." After a moment Jane was holding a glass with something bright green inside it.

"God, Jack. I wanna go home… can I go home?" She asked helplessly. In return the biotic only smirked. "You're not helping here."

"What do you expect me to do? I can throw some fucking biotics if you want but I don't think it will help." A mischievous grin appeared on Jack's lips. "Shit happens, baby girl, and you are in deep shit right now. Don't worry though, if anything happens, I'll charge that fancy apartment you got and get you out of there. Deal?"

"Deal." The pair were soon accompanied by James and Ashley.

"This is loco, Shepard, they gave us free booze." He ordered a strong drink for him and Ashley. "Come on chica, grab a stool and we'll have a drinking contest."

"Scratch me out, Vega, it would be highly inappropriate if I finished the wedding under the table." Jane laughed, her mood brightened up a bit. After a few hours the guests began to leave. Jane and Garrus were taken to their new apartment. Shepard's belongings had already arrived. They entered the apartment and Jane decided to look around. She didn't know what Vakarian was doing so when she had finished she went to him to ask about a few important things. "Umm, Commander Vakarian, I have…."

"Shut up!" He roared at her while walking around the apartment with an orange hologram around his right hand.

Shepard shut her mouth and just sat on the couch, she didn't even notice when the tears of utter sadness began to fall on her cheeks. This was the last straw. For weeks she had managed to show her friends that everything was fine. That she accepted her task and was eager to do it. She faked all of it but this was it. Her commander mask, emotionless and professional, crumbled and shattered like glass. She lay on the couch and started to cry from the misery she felt right now. She couldn't remember the last time she actually cried. That was even more depressing. I shouldn't have accepted it after all. Me and my fucking sense of duty. Me and my fucking desire for adventure. Her reasons were childish and she knew that. Dealing with the consequences wasn't a strong feature of hers.

Some time later the turian came to her. "Okay all done, there were bugs in this condo I had to neu-... You're, um, crying? Human?"

"None of your business, bastard! Leave me alone." Garrus regarded the lying woman, sobbing and gasping for air. He had seen asari crying a few times and now he saw this human female crying. Feeling that he was at fault made him uneasy.

"Ehh, I'm sorry I yelled at you, human. I didn't want any of our conversations to be recorded."
Vakarian explained, trying to make her see his reasons. She stood up and turned to him. Her eyes red from crying but burning in anger, black ink falling along with tears on her cheeks, hair falling down from the bun it was tied in. She looked like a spirit of hatred in that moment.

"Human... human... Human! I have a name, Garrus Vakarian! And it's not human! It's Jane, motherfucking, Vakarian from today! You asshole!" She dashed to him and pushed him aside to run into the bathroom. Her wedding dress fluttering behind her dreadfully.

He froze in his spot, not daring to move even a bit. This was the first time he was at the receiving end of a female's fury. He had witnessed a few times when his mother had had an argument with his father. Not nice. Not at all. After a short minute he sat heavily on the couch, thinking. I don't know how it's supposed to work. Spirits... I don't know anything about females... not to mention human females. Garrus had girlfriends but those were shallow relationships based on sex mostly. Now he was head deep in a serious thing... To hell with that. I don't have to like her, she doesn't have to like me. Period.

The turian stood up and went to the pile of his boxes to unpack them in the bedroom. An hour later the woman left the bathroom, passed him quietly to get her stuff from the boxes piled next to the front doors. She took what she needed and returned to the bathroom again just to emerge from it fifteen minutes later. Garrus regarded her in shock, her make-up had vanished, her hair was falling loosely on her arms and she was just in a tank top and shorts. He regarded her hair, now so different from before. "What are you looking at?" Jane asked, narrowing her eyes.

"Nothing."

"Good." She passed him, saying nothing more and took her boxes. She went to and fro a few times until all of the boxes were in the bedroom, where she started to unpack her things. It took an hour. Once she had finished she approached him. "I'm going to sleep in the office, you can take bedroom. Goodnight." She turned on her heel, took one pillow and blanket from the bedroom and locked herself in the office. Vakarian regarded those doors for a moment then went to sleep. It had been a tiring day for both of them.

xXx

For the next few days they had to attend meetings with various people and press, having little time to rest. Luckily Shepard could meet with her friends before they had to leave the Citadel to return to Earth. She went to the building the Alliance had gotten from the Council, to Jack's apartment specifically. "Fuck this shit!" She yelled just after she passed the doors.

"Oh, that good, huh?" Jack came out of the kitchen with a mug of coffee in hand. "Want some?" Shepard nodded eagerly.

"Kasumi, you get what I asked you for?" The woman asked when her other friend came into the room.

"Of course, Shep. I managed to get two. Newest tactical cloak, no need for armour. It will make you completely invisible." The Japanese woman approached her with a broad smile, small box in her hand. "They give me those all the time, you know. I just have to say the last one was broken."

"Good. At least I'll be able to have some fun. God! This Vakarian is a total asshole!" Shepard said with anger on her face. She jumped on the couch, Kasumi handed her one of the tactical cloaks. "Whoa. It's really new. Thanks, Kas. Anyway, I swear to fucking God, I tried to be nice to him, talk. But he turned out to be an utter douchebag. I'm done."
"So you won't get laid in the near future then?" Jack sat next to her, feigned sadness on her face and in her voice. The biotic gave Shepard a cup of coffee, which the latter drank eagerly. "Wanna relieve some tension, Shepard?"

"Fuck you, Jack. Just send me a few dildos from Earth and I'm good." Jane leaned her head on the backrest, regarding the ceiling. "When you are going back by the way?"

"Tomorrow. Can I use those dildos before I send them to you?" Jack asked but Shepard disregarded her stupid question.

"Tomorrow?! Well… shit. Who will I hang with now?" Jack shrugged. She knew too damn well that Shepard was the best at finding things to occupy herself with. She wasn't worried at all. The three women talked for an hour then Jane went to her step parents. She left them after a few hours, asking them to come to her place before they had to leave. The next day Zaeed and Karin came to the apartment. Garrus hid himself conveniently in the bedroom.

"Remember kiddo, if he or anyone does something to you… I'll come here and even that goddamn turian won't be able to stop me from wrecking this shithole." Zaeed said pointing his finger at her meaningfully. "And call us, for goddamn sake, you always leave us worried. Karin is worried!" Chakwas looked at him under her brows, displeased.

"You are worried, hun. You. She's a woman you know, not the child you took from that pile of rubble long ago." The silver-haired woman turned to Jane. "Janey, sweetie, just be safe and try to be happy, okay?" The two women hugged firmly. Jane wanted to howl, she didn't want to be left by everyone in this unfamiliar place, without her job, with an asshole for a husband. But she stayed silent, not voicing her wishes.

"I'll will, Ma, don't you worry. And you, Pa… just shut the fuck up and hug me." Massani snorted and embraced Shepard in his strong arms.

"One thing I forgot to teach you were goddamn manners, kiddo. Goddamn shame." Zaeed pushed her away to arms length and regarded her. "But seriously, I want you to stay on guard and watch over yourself. Is that clear?"

"Crystal clear. Now off you go! You don't have much time." Jane pushed them toward the exit. When they left she sank to the floor, trying not to cry. She had never felt so completely lonely. She hit the floor with her fist in desperation. Garrus came out of the bedroom upon hearing the sound of something hitting the floor only to see Shepard on her knees, beating the floor with her fist.

"Are you alright?" He asked while approaching her carefully.

"Yes! Now fuck off!" She roared and stood up. She rushed away from him and went into the office. Vakarian was considering if she had gone nuts but then he realised that her crew and friends were going back to the human homeworld, Earth. That she was left alone in this new place without anyone. Better leave her be. He decided and sat on the couch to watch some vids.

xXx

Two days later Jane was sitting on the couch, reading a book she had brought from Earth when the doorbell rang. She stood up and went to the console which opened the doors. When they swooshed open, three turians came inside. Two females and one male. Shepard regarded them in confusion. "Um, hello…"

"Good day, Jane." The older female greeted her and that's when Shepard realised it was Vakarian's
mother. Kalea her name. Another realisation hit her even harder, that was her mother-in-law. "How are you? I heard that your parents and crew went back to Earth. You must be lonely. I hope my son is taking care of you."

"Um… um…” That was only thing she could reply, as she and Garrus weren't even talking to each other.

"Where is my son?" The turian male asked, Castis Vakarian. His voice was harsh and he regarded Jane with displeasure. "Let's go, Kalea, don't waste your time here." He passed Shepard and went further inside. That behaviour meet with Kalea's angry growl.

"Castis! You are rude! This is your son's wife, for Spirits sake!" She yelled at her husband. "Sorry, dear, don't mind my husband. This whole situation is just too fresh a thing and he needs to grasp the whole idea of peace. But I'm really happy that the war has ended and we can change our relations with humans." Jane smiled faintly, at last one turian that treated her well.

"I think so too. It was just a big misunderstanding. I hope everything will be good from now on." Kalea flared her mandibles and nodded in approval. She pulled the younger turian female to the front.

"Remember Solana? This is my daughter and Garrus' younger sister." Solana watched Shepard's face in confusion, she had just recently seen humans and it was new to her. Then her eyes stopped at Jane's hair, widening in shock.

"What's with your fringe? It was different on your wedding day!" She said to Jane, puzzled.

"Oh, he-he, your brother was also shocked by my hair. It's not a fringe but hair. See?" She grabbed one red strand and pulled it up. "I can shape it into different hairstyles. Hair is made from thousands of little… um… hairs? Like thread."

"Oh. Can I touch it?" The younger turian asked, at which her mother huffed.

"Solana!" Castis yelled at his daughter.

"It's nothing, of course you can touch it." Jane took even more strands in her hand and offered them to Solana. The younger female touched her hair and flared her mandibles in amusement.

"It's so soft. I like it." Jane smiled broadly at the remark. She decided she liked this young turian.

"Where is my big brother?"

"Garrus!" Kalea yelled and Vakarian stuck his head out of the bedroom. "There you are! Why are you hiding in the bedroom, Garrus?" Vakarian left the bedroom and come to his mother, bending down to touch his forehead to hers.

"I'm sorry, mother, I was reading. How are you?" He said, his subharmonic trilled a hum of happiness at seeing his mother.

"We're good son." Castis replied instead of his wife. "We came to say goodbye. We're leaving to visit a few colonies and meet with family. Your aunts and uncles want to see the vid from the cursed wedding." Jane winced at the remark.

How rude... Now I know who Garrus took after. Kalea growled again at her husband. Jane could tell she was furious and that she was a good woman.

"Castis, one more time and you will go straight to Palaven. I don't want to be embarrassed by you
and your xenophobic behaviour any further." Castis turned his head from his wife and shut up.

"I'm sorry Jane, we can't stay longer. When you have more time I'd like it if we could get to know each other better. But I'd like to invite you to our home on Palaven when we get back." Garrus and his father turned to Kalea and said in unison.

"She can't go to Palaven!" That was too much for the turian female, she passed by Jane and Solana and smacked Garrus and her husband's fringes. Both males howled in pain.

"I have had enough of this! If you treat your wife like that then I'm fairly disappointed in you Garrus. And you, Castis, you are even more disappointing. Ah, let's go. I'm too ashamed to look into Jane's eyes anymore." Yet she turned toward Shepard and dipped her head. "I'm so sorry, child. Ehh, men." The human woman nodded, understanding, it was probably typical for men of every species. At least the women were decent. "Anyway, please stay safe, both of you. Take care of each other and come to Palaven when we get back. Goodbye," Garrus' mother hugged Jane and later Garrus, after her Solana did the same. Castis only waved his hand at his son and left. Shepard regarded their leaving then jumped on the couch again, retrieving the book in her hands.

"They are nice. And your sister is very sweet." She said quietly while riffling through the book. Only the sound of ruffled pages sounded in the living room. For one tense moment they looked at each other just for Garrus to break their locked gazes and turn away. He hid himself in the bedroom again.

For next week they had to attend various events and meetings again. The storm of events calmed a bit and they weren't needed by the Council and the press. Garrus went somewhere so Jane was sitting alone in the living room, reading again when the doors opened. She turned expecting to see Garrus coming but the turian that entered through the door wasn't Vakarian at all. She recognised the turian quickly - Specter, whatever that meant, Nihlus Kryik.

"And here is the most beautiful woman on the whole Citadel!" He exclaimed happily. With a few big steps he was at the couch, grabbing a shocked Shepard, into a hug. She could swear she felt him sniffing crook of her neck. "Jane, why are you sitting here all by yourself?" The woman took a few steps back when he put her on the ground. To be honest, she wasn't really sure what she should do. Should I kick him out or just talk to him? She debated internally. "Don't be afraid, let's sit and talk for a moment." Without any invitation he sat on the couch, one leg propped on his knee.

"Umm… What are you doing here?" Shepard asked in the end. She sat on the other side of the couch in the best spot to run if things would go wrong. And that tended to happen around Shepard way too often.

Nihlus leaned to her and stretched out his three-fingered hand. In the center of it, she saw a bracelet. "I came to give you this. Council orders." Jane regarded the big turian, who was as happy as a dog who fetched a stick or maybe like a cat which brought a dead mouse to his owner. Because this thing he had could turn into a dead mouse.

"What is it and why should I take it from you?" She asked suspiciously. With one finger she touched the bracelet. It was smooth and cold, made from some kind of metal. Jane picked it up carefully with two fingers and to her surprise, the bracelet turned out to be really light. "So light."

"It needs to be light. The one who wears it, shouldn't really feel it." Jane nodded but still didn't understand. The turian sensed her perplexion. "This is like private terminal, computer, whatever you want to call it. You can send and receive emails, messages, calls, even vid-calls with it. This omni-tool is brand new and... " He flared his mandibles in what Shepard could only guess was a turian smirk. "... in the human common language! Here, I'll show you." Nihlus took her hand gently and placed the bracelet on her wrist, admiring his handiwork. "Good. Now place your hand like this."
His other hand touched her elbow and placed it in the right position. "And you need to touch this part." Kryik touched a small, round button in the center of the omni-tool. It opened, wrapping a hologram around her arm.

"Whoa!" Jane watched as the hologram circled around her arm. Multiple options and programs were shown on the display. Messages, Contacts, Weather, Music. Nice, I like it. She touched the Weather option and a table appeared. "26 degrees on the Citadel, humidity… blah blah. That's convenient."

"You can download other programs like what movies and plays are currently being shown… Uhm, security programs. Stuff like that." Nihlus wanted to show her when suddenly the human's belly made a sound. Jane blushed red. Nihlus looked at her flushed cheeks with wide eyes. He knew well that that was a sign of embarrassment for humans and asari as well. "You feel all right, Jane?"

"Um, just a bit hungry." The turian caught her hand with omni-tool on it and pushed the button again, closing the holo-screen. They locked eyes for a moment. "Why are you so nice to me?"

"Because you are the most unfortunate person to have married the biggest asshole this side of the galaxy could have offered. But that's just my opinion, so don't go spreading it around, okay?" Kryik got up, she could admire his broad cowl and long fringe on the top of his head. Although he wasn't as tall as Vakarian, he was still an impressive sight. Kryik's reddish brown plates and hide were marked with scars, which interested her. "There is an asari restaurant nearby. I don't think they have anything similar to human cuisine but they offer both levo and dextro dishes. So we can eat there together. Come on." He pulled her up and almost hugged her but she stepped back in time. "Nice. You are really flexible and agile. Humans are great."

Shepard took her credit chit and ID and she was ready. 15 minutes later, they were sat in the restaurant. The asari waitress had jumped toward them when she saw Specter Kryik, offering the best wine on the house. Oh, he's someone important here. But he's a strange turian. She wondered when the waitress had shown them to their table. "Nihlus?"

"Yes?"

"Can you tell me why you are nice to me? You are a turian after all. The war just ended. While we were walking down here, I saw turians that looked like they wanted to rip my heart from my chest." Jane asked looking above the datapad with the menu, with names of dishes that meant nothing to her anyway. She put it down and openly looked at the turian in front of her. "Let's play fair and square, and be honest."

"Heh. I'm starting to fall in love here, Jane." He wanted to say more but the waitress brought the wine. When the asari had finished pouring the wine and left them, Jane reached for the filled glass. It smelled sweet and had a strange purple colour with a blue tint. Taking a small sip, she opened her eyes wide.

"That is so good!" It tasted like nothing on Earth. It was different but good. Surprisingly good.

"They brought us one of the best wines you can get on this piece of junk. Anyway…" The turian straightened up, adjusting on the chair. "You asked why I am nice to you. There are three reasons. Two you already know."

"And they are?"

"First: you are beautiful and I have thing for beautiful women. Second: you married Garrus Vakarian. I've been his friend since we were 3. Believe me, he's an asshole. For woman, that is." Shepard started to laugh. "I'll order something for you, okay? I think this dish will be to your liking."
Jane agreed as the name of the dish and what it was made of, meant nothing.

"Your third reason is...?"

"You are really persistent, aren't you?" Nihlus replied, clearly amused. His mandibles fanned, Shepard noted it as amusement. "Third reason is that I really, really don't care what other turians think. Or the whole of Palaven, so to speak."

"Don't you follow the orders of, what was the name... um... the Hierarchy?" Shepard knew that turian's were a militaristic based species ruled by elders and admirals called the Hierarchy - a hierarchical meritocracy of Primarchs. Turians were categorized by tiers that were strictly connected to military grade and their abilities. The turian military, as she had learned, was the most strict and disciplined. Although she knew they could fraternize with fellow crew members and use recreational drugs. Weird but efficient.

"No. I was an outsider, born outside of Hierarchy space. Although my mother forced me to join the military and thanks to her I'm where I am now, I don't feel any connection or obligation toward the Hierarchy and they can shove their orders and beliefs up their asses." He replied, quite seriously. "I was a good soldier but let's face it, my easy-going attitude made my superiors furious. That was funny, believe me. Thanks to my mentor, Saren Arterius - also a Specter."

"What is a Specter?"

"Special Tactics and Reconnaissance of the Citadel Council. We are agents that serve the Council when they need us. Only the best of the best become specters. And Saren is the best of the Specters." Kryik explained but Shepard was almost sure he had tensed a bit when mentioning this Saren guy. "Anyway, look, our food is here."

Shepard received her plate with some kind of meat that tasted like chicken, even the purple tint didn't discourage her, and the vegetables were so tasty that she almost forgot the meat. It was the first time she had tasted food from another species, ingredients from another planet. Different colours, shapes and textures. So exotic for her but also with familiar tastes.

"That was great, Nihlus. Thank you. It's the first time I've eaten alien food... umm, sorry if that offended you." The turian shook his head and again flared his mandibles. She took it as a good sign.

"You're welcome, Jane. Let's go to your apartment and I'll show you some programs for your omni-tool. Deal?" The woman smiled at the turian and agreed, nodding her head eagerly. She wanted to pay for the meal but the waitress didn't even look up when the Specter stood up and pulled her toward the exit.

"We have to pay..." She said. Kryik snorted and went outside with her.

"No we don't. Come on." While they were walking, there were aliens that greeted Nihlus with a smile, or just shook his hand. Turians tended to growl at her but they didn't say anything while in the Specter's company.

*He must be a really important fellow. Everyone seems to know him. Huh. She wondered as she was walking toward her residential flat. They went up in the elevator talking and laughing. But I like him, he seems to be a nice guy. Though I should be careful nevertheless.* Shepard entered the apartment first, Nihlus behind her, laughing from a joke, just to be confronted by one very angry turian - Garrus Vakarian to be exact.

"Nihlus! What the hell are you doing?! Where have you been both of you?!" He roared as he
approached them. The smile vanished from Shepard's face. She quickly turned toward Kryik and looked at him. For a moment silence weighed heavily in the room.

"Thank you for the omni-tool and dinner, Nihlus. I will leave you two alone. See ya!" Jane left quickly, hiding in the office.

Garrus and Nihlus watched her until the door had closed behind her. Kryik flared his mandibles and growled lustfully. His head cocked to the side, eyes narrowed. Garrus could almost hear him purring. "Look at that ass, Garrus, just look at it. And that waist. And those lean legs. How I'd love to touch her skin… You're one lucky bastard."

"For real, Nihlus? Seriously? You took her for dinner? Bought her an omni-tool?" Vakarian closed the distance between him and the Specter, stopping an inch from his face. He was taller, towering above Kryik and growling dangerously.

"Council gave me the newest version, with the human common language and a connection to Earth's extranet, buddy. They told me to bring it here. And she was hungry so I took her outside. She could see a bit of the Citadel for herself at last."

"What is your game here, huh?"

"No game, Garrus. Just admiring a beautiful woman. You don't even realise what jewel you have under your roof. You treat her like a piece of furniture instead of a living being. That's low, Vakarian, even for you." He spat the last sentence, looking at his friend with displeasure. "Ahh, I will leave you now, don't need that scowling look from you. I had fun and intend to keep my mood that way. Bye." Kryik turned toward the doors, stopping for a moment, not bothering to look at the other turian. "Just think about what I said." And he left, leaving an angry Garrus behind.

"Yeah, right." Garrus said to himself.

xXx

Phew, that's it for now :) Hope you liked it.
Chapter 3

Behold! Chapter 3 is here! :D Some action and drama included.

Advertisement:

My beta-reader Razzberry wrote brilliant fic about her OC - Josephine Clark, and our beloved Normandy crew that accidentally jumped to another dimension and meets Josey there. Shepard takes Josey for an exciting ride to ME universe. Here's link: /works/5330642/chapters/12308438

She used my take on Nihlus <3 hand kiss included!

I'd sooooo want to meet Garrus like that :_; pretty please, Shep, jump to our dimension and take meeee!

Ekhm... enjoy, hurr!

xXx

After the incident with Nihlus, the atmosphere in the Vakarian apartment became even more tense. They hadn't spoken much to each other, narrowing their interactions to the bare minimum. Shepard felt like she was in a cage so she began to walk around the ward they lived in, using the tactical cloak. Kasumi had provided her with the newest gear, allowing her to become near invisible, for almost three hours.

Shepard liked to walk around. Especially in the market where she observed aliens buying groceries - exotic vegetables and fruits, various kinds of meat in different colours and shapes. Strange looking fish made her smile, while they hung, dead on the hooks. She was overwhelmed by the different scents that emanated from those things.

To her enormous surprise, some parts of the ward were dark, like the night and some bright - illuminated by artificial light. The darker areas contained places for entertainment - cinemas, restaurants, casinos and a shooting range - in the last she was really interested in. The brighter areas were full of shops, cafes, offices and marketplaces. She wondered why it had been set up that way.

One on her way she met Nihlus buying groceries in the marketplace. She deactivated her cloak and approached him. "Hi, Specter!" She patted him on the cowl, at which he turned abruptly. For a moment he regarded her with suspicion just to widen his mandibles in a toothy grin.

"Jane! More gorgeous than Palaven's sunset! You are like Menae, Palaven's moon, within her full glory, surrounded by myriads of glowing stars. Let me say, tha-" Jane shook her head, starting to laugh.

"Stop, Nihlus, please. You're going to make me blush and I won't let you, this time. What are you buying?" She peeped into his shopping bag. "What's that?"

"Sweets, fruits, meat and veggies. I love to cook, you know? Maybe I'll drop by your apartment and cook something for you, hmmm?" Jane nodded and patted his arm.

"Definitely. I'm looking forward to it. Just send me a message of when."
"Okay, here's my omni ID. Give me your hand." He opened his omni-tool and pushed a few holo-buttons, he then touched his bracelet to hers. "Here you go." Kryik said when Shepard's omni-tool pinged. "Hey, I know a nice pastry shop just a few meters from here. My friend owns the place and they have such good cakes and cookies. Want to come?"

"You're spoiling me… I'm a sucker for sweets. Come on or I'll drool all over myself." Nihlus again, grinned at her, showing all his spiky teeth. Two minutes later they entered the shop, now almost empty except for one turian behind the counter.

"Nihlus! Came for your usu-... um?" The turian said and stopped when he spotted Shepard in front of Kyrik. "Um… hello."

"Hi, Li! How are you, you lazy turian? You got my stuff ready? I know you saw me 20 minutes ago when I passed this shitty shop." Kryik pulled Shepard by her hand, toward the counter, acting like he was oblivious of any turian and human tension. "This is Commander Jane Shepard. Jane, this bad excuse for a turian, is Lilihierax. He used to be a shuttle mechanic on some hellhole of a planet, Noveria I think, but he was so bad at it they fired him. Now he's here, being bad at whatever he's doing."

"Haha! Very funny." The turian named Lilihierax started to laugh with an obvious fake sound. "Nice to meet you, Commander Shepard. I've heard you married Vakarian. My deepest condolences."

"Why do both of you pity me?" Jane smiled and sat by one of nearest tables.

"Because it's Garrus we're talking about. If you hadn't noticed yet… you will see what we are talking about soon. Trust me on that." Li said and smiled. Again a turian, toothy grin flashed in front of Jane's eyes.

Jane nodded then shrugged. He is a bit of an asshole but... Whatever… I bet that's just their opinions. Like I've never said shit about Jack. A pang of pain hit her, she missed her friend a great deal. But at least she was making new ones. Aliens, but that hadn't discouraged her so far.

xXx

It took Garrus almost three months to notice that Shepard was disappearing somewhere for two to three hours at a time. He didn't want to ask her directly so he decided to check it out for himself. Before that he had secretly established a link with her omni-tool, with his own, to know her exact position. Hacked, truth be told, but she wouldn't even notice that. Vakarian waited until she had gone outside, pinged by his omni-tool. He put his visor on and went outside as well. The turian followed the woman, not seeing her but his visor indicated where she was.

Jane led him by the marketplace, now empty, to a small pastry shop just behind it. She went into a back alley and deactivated her invisibility, then she entered the shop. "Hello, Li! Got something tasty for me today?" He could hear her merry voice from outside. Also a turian voice that was so familiar to him - Lilihierax! So she knows him too. I bet all my credits that Nihlus introduced them.

"I've got some human sweets, Shepard. Freshly delivered from Earth." Then Garrus could hear ohs and 'that's yummy, I've missed donuts sooo much!' 20 minutes later Jane returned outside and again to the back alley. From there she emerged in her tactical cloak. Vakarian hid himself behind the booth so she couldn't see him, then proceeded to follow her again.

To his surprise she went toward the Silversun Strip. It was loud and full of the various species that inhabited the ward. They were gathering at the plaza square where the asari had some kind of festivities. Ah, yeah… Damned asari and their festivals. Still, he had Shepard's position locked, so
didn't have problems following her around. When she was approaching the plaza, she turned and went up on the catwalks. *She wants to watch festival from above, smart. No one's there anyway.*

Garrus watched as she deactivated the cloaking device and sat on an abandoned crate. From his vantage point he could see her smiling face, observant eyes watching the dancing and singing asari, with interest. What he saw as well, were three turians approaching her from two directions, surrounding her in her place. She seemed not to notice them as the loud music and the buzz from the lower floor was distracting.

*This might be good, they'll catch her and maybe kill her. Oh! I'll be free from this shit at last!* Garrus thought to himself. Of course things became more interesting with every minute. He watched the turians as they caught the human female and hit her hard on the head. She passed out and one of them tossed her on his arm. Vakarian decided to follow them and see what would happened.

Garrus followed the turians and an unconscious Jane, to a small abandoned warehouse by the dark backstreets, that connected the marketplace to Silversun Strip. They weren't gentle with her, the woman's head banged on the turian's armor repeatedly as he made each step. Vakarian could hear their pleased talking, describing what they will do with the human. When they arrived at the warehouse, Garrus leaned carefully by the doors and watched the whole scene.

"Let's wait till she wakes up. No fun if she won't beg us for mercy." One of them said with a nasty laugh at the end. They didn't have to wait long till Shepard regained her consciousness.

"What the hell…?" She mumbled and sat to look at where she was and who was with her. To Garrus' surprise, she wasn't frightened at all. "Who are you idiots?" She asked and got a mighty kick in the stomach in return. She only grunted, and another shock to Vakarian, she started to laugh. "That's it? That's all you've got?" One of the other turians, pulled her up and punched her face. Jane spat with blood, still giggling.

"Laugh all you like, bitch, soon you will be begging us to stop." Jane started to laugh even more. Her lips and teeth were covered in blood, she was bent over slightly, covering her stomach with one hand.

*She looks...* Garrus thought to himself while regarding her, as she was laughing merrily in such a dangerous situation. Then, in a blink of an eye, she attacked the turian that had punched her face. Knocking him hard to the ground with a mighty blow and then jumping toward the second male. She was at a disadvantage nonetheless, fighting three big turians... *kind of impressive.*

The third turian rushed at her but she gracefully evaded his charge and hit him on the back of his neck.

*Whoa, nice, Shepard, nice.* Garrus was really stunned, and, even though he wouldn't admit that, started to cheer for her. The fight became more brutal. All three turians began to attack her at once, soon she was too overwhelmed by their power to evade. Her movement became more clumsy and the woman was visibly tired. They cornered her by the wall and punched her a few times.

"See, bitch? You humans are no match for us. And you married one of our best! Poor guy, that Vakarian." A turian said while grabbing her hair and pulling up. Her face a few inches from his. She wanted to break out of his grasp, trying to pull her hair out of his hand. Garrus could hear his angry growl from his hiding place. He also scented human and turian blood, which hyped his senses. "But don't worry, human scum. We will help him by taking this little burden off of his back." Then he tossed her at the wall. Jane hit it with loud thudding noise and fell on her knees, coughing up blood. Still, she started to laugh again.
"If all turians are similar pieces of trash, like you three..." Again she coughed, spilling blood all around. "Then I'm really glad I met my husband... and Specter Nihlus Kryik. At least I'll die with the knowledge that I met the best the turians have to offer."

"What?!!"

"You heard me, asshole. Garrus Vakarian at least was better on the battlefield. Fighting with him was a pure pleasure, and an honour. So not like you... *cough* motherfuckers. And Nihlus? One of the best Specters? He's so great." The turians stopped, a bit confused by the humans talk - Garrus was confused as well. "You can dish whatever you want on me, I don't care. Pity, that if you kill me, the war will start again and Vakarian, probably, will have bigger problems. But that won't be my concern anymore so... yeah, bring it on!"

Realisation hit Garrus hard. The war will burst again. Shit! Shiiiit! And it will be my fault! They will blame me for sure! Shit! Fuck! I have to rescue that idiot now! He saw the turians lash out at her. Garrus dashed toward them and shoved one on the wall, the second - he punched right in the face and aimed at the third with his pistol. "Stay where you are, scum." The last turian standing didn't look like he wanted to stay in his place, approaching Vakarian with a primal growl. "You asked for it." He shot the turian's foot, between the joints of his armor, rendering him disabled. "Anyone else?" The rest took his threats seriously. Slowly they stepped back, grabbed their fellow injured friend and ran away. "Good."

Vakarian went to Jane. She looked at him through half-closed eyes. Blood spilled from her mouth and nose, half of her face was swollen and starting to turn black. She had multiple cuts and bruises. That doesn't look good... "Shepard, I need to take you to the hospital."

"No! Not to the hospital... please, take me home. Please..." She begged him and fainted. Garrus pulled her unconscious body up to his arms. Watching her olive skin become pale. Her breath was ragged and shallow.

"Fuck." Vakarian mumbled to himself and went to the apartment. He had to turn Jane's head toward his chest so as to not look too suspicious. When he reached their home he felt relieved. For a moment he considered where he should lie her, deciding that the bed in the bedroom would be the most suitable. Carefully he laid her on the bed, she grunted from the pain as he did so. Vakarian took her boots off and sat on the edge, thinking of his next move. He decided he couldn't do shit without help, so called Councillor Sparatus.

"Yes, Vakarian?" Sparatus' face appeared on the holo-screen.

"Sir, I have an urgent matter to discuss. And it's confidential." Councillor Sparatus regarded him with a frown of his brow plates. "I have... errr, a situation here."

"You can talk freely, Vakarian, it's a secured comm-channel and I'm alone at the moment." Vakarian related the story of what had happened, minus that he waited for turians to beat the shit out of Jane. When he was finished, Sparatus' frown deepened even further and he was growling angrily. "Why haven't you watched her, Vakarian?! Don't you understand what's at stake here?! Are you dumb or what? Ehhh... Wait a moment." The call turned to on hold, 5 minutes later the turian appeared again on the screen. "Specter Kryik and a doctor will be there in 10 minutes. Make sure she doesn't die Vakarian."

"Yes, sir."

"And, Spirits... try to do your job better. You had one task, get to know the human and protect her. You are married for a reason, you know? I thought you were smart, Vakarian, and would figure it
out." The turian Councilor crossed his arms, looking at Vakarian like he was retarded.

Garrus realised that he had to spy on the human, that the Hierarchy wanted him to spy and he should have figured it out a long time ago. No one needed to ask, he should have just known what was demanded from him. If he hadn't been so preoccupied with anger over the whole situation, maybe he could have seen reason. Vakarian turned to look at the human, half of her face had changed colour. Blood stopped flowing from her nose and was drying into a crust. He felt shitty. Not just by the way Jane looked. First of all, he had endangered the woman he married, that was a failure… secondly, he felt like his brain had been shut down for a while and at last he could think coherently.

I'm a failure of a turian. Garrus self-loathed while taking off Jane's pants, leaving her in underwear. I thought about myself and was angry all this time… what will mother and father say if they learn of this? He took her black jacket off. I can imagine the shitstorm, mother will start if she learns about everything. If Sparatus tells them… I'm doomed.

The woman was lying in her tank top, her bare thighs and legs caught his attention for a moment, changing his way of thinking. Nihlus' words echoed in his disturbed mind. 'And those lean legs. How I'd love to touch her skin…' His hand slowly reached out to her thigh, touching it briefly, as he though her skin could zap him with electricity. Nothing happened though, so he brushed her skin again. Soft… But she has hard muscles underneath. His rumination over Jane's skin was interrupted by the noise of a pinging omni-tool, opened doors and one angry turian rushing over to the bedroom.

Specter Nihlus Kryik froze in place when he saw Jane lying lifeless on the bed. Blood had spilled from her mouth, onto her neck and green tank top, her black swollen eye and cheek, livid skin. An unknown salarian passed him and went straight to unconscious woman. "Please leave. I need to examine her."

Garrus went outside, Kryik after him. When the doors closed to the bedroom, Nihlus shoved his friend on the nearest wall, his predatory growl could scare even the bravest person. "You! You are her husband! What did you do to her?! Fuck! That's the lowest you could reach, Vakarian!" Garrus' eyes widened, his mandibles twitched in anger.

"You think it was me? Did Councillor Sparatus even talk to you?"

"No, he just sent me here with my ol' doc. You will tell me what happened and the whole truth now. I can check if you lied to me even slightly." Nihlus' hands pulled off of Garrus and he allowed the latter turian to sit on the couch. Garrus again had to tell the story, the whole story. "Spirits, Garrus… you… you waited and watched while those scum almost beat your wife to death? Is that some new Hierarchy directives on how to treat turian wives or just you being the biggest trash in the whole galaxy? Because, I'm afraid, either is bad and I can't really chose at this point."

Vakarian stayed silent, head dipped down, feelings of shame took him over. He felt low. Even he noticed he treated women with… disrespect, frankly speaking. But what he did today was lower than his usual standard. He was just like those three turian scumbags that attacked her. Even rescuing her at the end didn't justify his actions. Period.

"For the love of Menae… She's a living being… It wasn't her idea to marry you. She felt as miserable as you did! Why, Garrus? Why are you taking it out on her, when she is in the same position? She was hip deep in the same shit… You think it's her fault you two ended up in this marriage?" Nihlus sighed, when Garrus shook his head in negation. The turian stopped for a moment to catch a breath and calm down a bit. "I'll talk with Sparatus… and maybe Fedorian. She's not safe with you. You are my friend, Garrus, but now… sorry, I need to act against you." Garrus froze. Did my mission… turn out to be a failure? I've never failed… It can't be right!
"No! Nihlus! Wait, please… I can change it. She doesn't know… I'll try to be good for her now… just… don't talk to Sparatus or the Primarch. My tier..." Garrus pulled his head up and was met with the most disgusted gaze he had ever received. It was the first time Nihlus had ever regarded him in that way, like he was worse than a piece of shit, stuck on to one's boot. Nihlus always approved of his actions, even when the Hierarchy was displeased. He always said Garrus would be an excellent Specter. Now, seeing him disapproving made him realize that some things should never happen.

"You are not a child anymore, Garrus. Some things can't change because you say you'll do better next time. This is the real world. Adult world. Your decisions affect people around you here. It's not a military camp, where they will just reprimand you and send you on another mission." Nihlus stood up and went to the window, leaning on it, watching the skycars in the distance. "And of all people, I thought you didn't care about tiers. That you wanted to get out of that idiocy."

"I did, but mother and father..."

"I told you a second ago, this is real, adult life. I don't see your parents anywhere near by, so just use your brain." After that, the two turians stayed silent.

Garrus was mulling Nihlus' words and knew that his friend was right. That his anger wasn't justified. Kryik took his time to get to know Shepard, even though he had his job, his life. He greeted her on the Citadel, showed her places she could go. Introduced her to Lilihierax, who was also good to Jane, offered her sweets from his shop. Images of a happy Jane, entering the apartment with Nihlus or her smile and merry tone when she went to the pastry shop, flashed in his mind. And what did Garrus do? On the first day he yelled at her, making her cry in the process. For almost 4 months, they exchanged less than 100 words. If that wasn't a fucking record of douchebaggery, he didn't know what else could be.

"Let's make an agreement here, my friend." Nihlus said after a longer moment. "I won't tell her or won't contact Sparatus and Fedorian on one condition."

"What condition?" Garrus asked, sighing. Just a few hours ago he thought he would be free from any agreements. Now he had to make another one, maybe ever worse that the first.

"That you'll get your shit together and start to behave like a normal, adult turian should. Protecting his mate and taking care of her needs." Garrus huffed.

"She's not my mate!"

Nihlus turned around, facing Garrus again. He emitted low growls from his subharmonic. Vakarian could tell that his friend was on the verge of losing it right here. "She's your wife, ergo she's your mate. Don't even start, Garrus. Don't even fucking start." Vakarian hummed an apology in return.

"Good. Do you agree or no?"

"Yes."

"I'm glad I was the one to make you see sense, Garrus."

Again it became quiet for some time. The pair were deep in their own thoughts, when the salarian doctor emerged from the bedroom. "She will live."

"What's wrong with her, doc?"

"I'm a Professor, Nihlus. Doesn't matter. She was severely beaten. No internal bleeding, lot's of internal bruises. Broken nose, skin cut on the lips, bruised right eye and cheek. No bone fractures. Good. Need to rest. Apply medi-gel on her face. Light diet should be given." The Professor reported
so quickly that Garrus had difficulty catching up. "She needs bed rest for 5 days."

"Good, provide this guy with meds for her and you can go Mordin."

The salarian opened his doctor's case and took out a box and 3 vials, containing pills. Placing them on the kitchen counter - mumbling to himself silently the whole time. He picked up a box in his hands. "This. Strong painkiller. Already gave her one. Give her a shot every six hours. 4 in total." Then he took up one of the vials, with a blue lid and light blue pills. "This. Mild painkiller. She needs to be awake in order to swallow." The second vial contained white pills. "This will heal her bruises. When awake, 2 pills per day, every 12 hours." The salarian put down the two vials. "Pink pills, strong painkiller. Use only if needed. Still, she needs to be awake to swallow. Proceed with caution." Professor Solus packed up his belongings and bid them farewell, then left the apartment.

Both turians entered the bedroom. Jane was lying there, sleeping there, oblivious of everything. Nihlus knelt in front of the bed. "What have they done to you, Jane…" His gaze locked on Shepard's face, pained by what he was looking at. It was clearly visible that he cared for the human. "Such beauty, almost destroyed… at least the wounds will heal. I'll pay every credit I've got to bring your smile back."

Garrus watched them and a strange pang, of something he couldn't describe, struck him. He didn't know why but got angry over the scene he was watching. Vakarian couldn't contain his growl. Why did he growl? Why did his subharmonics act as though it had free will? He didn't know why his body did it, yet realised what triggered it - Nihlus and Shepard's closeness. The way Kryik looked at his wife.

"Hmmm? What is it?" The specter turned toward Vakarian.

"Why do you like her so much?" Garrus spat nervously. He didn't know what was happening to him.

"When I saw her for the first time, during your wedding ceremony… I thought she was the most beautiful creature I saw… Then I got hold of her files and read a bit about her. She's an orphan, you know? Her step-father - Captain Zaeed Massani - found her in some forsaken facility, run by a terrorist organisation. They experimented on biotics, she wasn't one of them though… just a child of the researchers working there. Alliance soldiers attacked the facility but the terrorists had prepared themselves. They destroyed the facility before the Alliance could do anything. Wiping everything out in the process. When the human soldiers were searching the remains of the place, Zaeed found a crying child. Her parents were lying dead just next to her, Jane was only two years old. Massani took her with him and adopted her. Raised her on a military base. When she turned 18, it wasn't any surprise she enrolled into the military. Her career was remarkable. In my opinion, better than yours. There is an Interplanetary Combatives Training program in the Alliance, only the best of the best join their ranks. Few pass the N7 rank. Shepard's one of them. And, she's the youngest officer to achieve N7. Really impressive. Jane had been sent to guard a human outpost, where they had wanted to build a colony. They didn't know that there was a nest of thresher maws. 4 in total. Two were killed with her full squad. Shepard - on foot - solo killed the last two. Even Wrex was impressed." Garrus listen in absolute silence, impressed by what that single, squishy human had done.

"If Wrex was impressed… that had to be something." Nihlus nodded, remembering that krogan, one of his crew members, couldn't believe his story until he showed him pictures from the Alliance database.

"It was. The rest of her military service you already know. She kicked your ass big time." Nihlus started to laugh at the nonplussed Vakarian.
"I kicked her ass too, you know." Garrus grumbled. He sat on the edge of the bed, near Shepard's feet. "I… wasn't bothered in getting to know her. I was stupid."

"Yeah, totally stupid. Royally stupid. Hail to Garrus Vakarian, king of stupidity!" Kryik bowed his head, getting a smack on the fringe in return. "Ouch, and you're an asshole too. As for Shepard, she's great. Take that step and try to know her. You won't regret it. Okay, I'm going. I won't be on the Citadel for a month. Specter business. When Jane wakes up tell her that I'll cook something for her when I return." Kryik squeezed Shepard's hand and could hear another faint growl from Vakarian. That made him smile internally. 

"One more thing." Nihlus stopped in the doorframe and turned his head, watching Vakarian with one eye. "Do you know why the Council paired us together? Made us marry each other?"

"As a matter of fact, I do. But I'll tell you when I get back. Hopefully, by that time, I won't have to explain much. Gotta go. Bye, Garrus!"

"Try not to get yourself killed!" Garrus yelled after him but didn't move. He knew damn well that Kryik moved freely everywhere, and could unlock doors. He turned toward his wife. Feelings of shame struck at his mind again. He had to be tossed at a wall and yelled at, by Kryik to see the truth. It was like a cold shower, for a turian - a disaster. Speaking of showers, he got up and went to the bathroom to wash himself. Then he ate his meal and went to sleep just to be woken up by Jane's screams. Painkiller worned out! He jumped on his feet and grabbed the box with syringes and dashed to the bedroom. Jane was thrashing on the bed, still sleeping though. Vakarian had to immobilize her with one hand and quickly give her a shot of painkillers. She still thrashed on the bed, so he had to lay next to her and grab her with his leg and arm to stop her from moving. That's awkward… It took some time for her to calm down and sleep peacefully again. When Jane's breaths became even, Garrus laid on the other edge of the bed and went to sleep, having on his mind, Jane's previous state when the painkillers had worn off.

The next day, Jane woke up feeling huge pains all over her upper body. Her face was swollen and she could feel blood crusts in her nose. "Ugh… What the…" She scanned the room, recognizing Garrus' bedroom. Then to her utter shock she saw sleeping, or rather waking up, with a turian next to her.

"You're awake. Good." Vakarian stood up and went outside the room to come back within seconds. Syringe in his hand. He saw her wide eyes locked on the syringe, so he calmed her down. "Don't worry, Shepard. It's a painkiller. You will feel better. Trust me." The woman nodded and let him apply the medicine. She rubbed at her arm, on the spot that she had been injected with painkillers. Jane regarded the turian when he sat on the edge of the bed carefully.

"Thank you." They turned their heads, awkward silence filled the room. "Why did you call me Shepard? I'm not Shepard anymore."

"I got used to it when I was talking about you earlier… when the war was still ongoing. Sorry. And it would be strange to call you Vakarian, really." Jane turned her head toward Garrus, a small smile appeared on her lips. He could see it out of the corner of his eye. Jane tried to get up but Garrus quickly stopped her, hovering over her. "Don't move, doctor's orders. You should lay still and rest.'

"But I have blood in my mouth… and in my nose… I need to wash it. And… I need to go to the bathroom." Vakarian sighed and took her into his arms. She groaned faintly and winced, but let him take her.

"I'll take you there, okay? And then you will lie in bed." Jane nodded, looking from up close, at his
She tried hard not to blush. One way or another she succeeded. When he reached the bathroom he
put her on the toilet and left. After a moment she was done, so he helped her to the tap and held
her while she washed her face. He could feel her tense muscles under his touch. *She has to be in
great pain.* Jane washed herself and Garrus took her to the bed, laying her softly on the mattress.
"You want something to eat?"

"Oh god no. Just something to drink. Water… give me water, please." Garrus nodded and soon she
was provided with a bottle of water. "Thank you Garrus. For everything… especially for rescuing
me. I was such an idiot…"

"Don't say that… I… I'm sorry, Shepard… Jane."

"You saved me! Don't apologise." She shook her head fast but stopped, grimacing. "Ouch…"

*You don't know the half of it, Shepard. Spirits… I feel even shittier now.* He thought to himself. "I
will go and take a shower. Better sleep some more, you need to get better." Jane nodded. She shut
her eyes and smiled.

"Li and Nihlus were wrong. You're not that bad at all." Garrus froze. He felt his chest was in pain
from remorse at that moment. She said that, not knowing the full truth. Thanking him, when he was
one of the main reasons for her current state. For her pain.

*I've hurt my wife.* He brooded while taking the shower. *And she is so nice to me and all… Spirits,
please, strike me with a lighting bolt. I'm a monster. Would I act like that if she was a turian female?
Probably not… but her being human has nothing to do with it. She feels, she can be hurt. I wouldn't
do that to anyone, yet I did it to her. Mother would kill me…* When Vakarian finished his shower, he
checked on Shepard. She was asleep so he went to the kitchen and grabbed something to eat. After a
few hours he could hear her waking up. Again giving her a shot of painkiller and sent her to sleep.
After the fourth shot and a good rest, she was looking better. Her skin, although dark still on her
cheek and eyes, became less pale. "Want something to eat now?"

"Yeah. I'm so hungry. Can you… um… if that's not much to ask… bring me a sandwich?"

"What is a sandwich?" Garrus asked. He cocked his head to the right and watched Shepard, waiting
for an explanation.

"You know what? Forget it. Better if you could go to that restaurant… Bantia's, the name was. It's
five minutes from here. They have there this dish… Lhorish meat with khru-something… yellow and
blue vegetables, and the gravy, ohhhhh… Nihlus picked that once for me. It was really good." When
she mentioned Nihlus, Garrus growled deeply. *Maybe he's still angry that I met with Kryik…? They
are friends after all…*

"Wait here. Don't move. I'll be back in a few." Garrus went out of the room and took up his things,
he approached the front doors. Before he left, he checked again that Jane was lying still. "Don't
move!" He yelled and left, returning 20 minutes later. Jane was surprised at the time in which he got
the dish.

"Did you threatened someone there or what? When I was there I had to wait for something like 30
minutes." Vakarian gave her the food which he had put on a plate. He didn't reply, that assured her
one thing. "You did threatened someone. What? You took your gun and aimed at the poor bastard?"

"How did you know?" He asked, an amused tone in his voice.

"Fucking A, Vakarian. Ha-ha!" She started to laugh but as soon as she did, she caught her cheek,
grimacing from pain. "Ouch, don't make me laugh. My face is barely holding together as it is."

"Sorry. Truth is I ordered it before I left. And added that I needed it ASAP. You can do miracles with a good tip, trust me." Jane agreed and proceeded to eat. Eating took her a lot of time, even with painkillers, chewing was painful.

"That was good. I was almost digesting my own spine from hunger." Vakarian looked grossed out, so she had to quickly clarify that humans can't eat or digest themselves.

"Do you need something else?" Jane asked for the bathroom and she wanted to wash her face again. Vakarian grabbed her and helped her like he did the previous day. When Jane was clean and in bed, he could really say she look a lot better.

"Thank you, Garrus. You are a really nice guy. Thank you for your help. And that you followed me the other day." Vakarian snapped his eyes at her, wide in disbelief.

"How do you-?"

"I'm a sniper, remember? I can spot a bug in the grass. And, seriously, I have seen your face for 4 months now every day. It's a piece of cake to spot you in the crowd. Easy-peasy." She explained with a small smirk of victory. His shock of her abilities made her ego swell. Which was a nice change. "If you hadn't of lost me when those idiots took me to the warehouse, maybe we could have kicked their asses together... you looked soooo badass by the way."

Garrus froze in his spot. She... knew? And she thinks that I lost her for a while... phew, that's some good news for a change. The thought made him feel better. At least his lie was covered. If all else, how could he explain why he was in the warehouse in the first place. "I wanted to know where were you going the whole time. Sorry, maybe I should have asked."

"It's nothing. I'm glad... I thought I would be safe on the catwalks. I was wrong."

"Yeah. Catwalks aren't that safe. You know... I'm sorry. I should have known better... acted better. I wasn't good to you from the start. I should have shown you the Citadel. I know this place very well. Maybe... when you're feeling better, we can go somewhere. I can show you everything." He asked a bit embarrassed. It was so new to him, to talk to the woman. Asking her out.

"I'd love that."

"Good. So, get better and then we will decide where to go. Deal?" Garrus stretched his hand out to her. She took it eagerly and smiled.

"Deal. Oh... your hands... are really warm." He squeezed her hand and also noticed her's was cool to him. In a pleasant way. He felt like he was touching a soft cooling pad, that left a nice sensation over his skin.

"It's a turian thing. We are warmer than humans by 4 to 5 degrees." He took his hand, missing her coolness a bit. "Umm, I have some stuff to do. Need something else?"

Jane shook her head and pointed at her omni-tool bracelet. "Nah, I'll play with this for now. Nihlus showed me some games and I'll play those for a while."

Again, Vakarian couldn't stop his subharmonic, which made him growl when Jane mentioned the other turian. "Fine. Ping me when you need something."

xXx
That's it for now, folks! Stay tuned for chapter 4!

Sorry that Garrus asshole-ness reached another peak!
Chapter 4

Chapter 4, guys! :D Just like ch. 3 it may be bad… I know… I had huge exam and wrote those two in my spare time to relax.

Small change in Garrus, yay. But it's not that he will change to our beloved Archangel from the game, no no.

As always big thanks to Razzberry for editing and small reminder about her fics (on Ao3): Mass Effectiveness and Dawn of a New Era.

Ok, I'm shutting up (?) and please enjoy!

xXx

For five days after Jane was attacked, she mostly stayed in bed. The woman wanted to recover as quickly as possible. Garrus' promise to go sightseeing was a good motivator. She wanted to know the Citadel and him better. Even though they weren't and most likely wouldn't ever be, romantically involved, they still could be friends. Shepard knew that he needed time to cope with the situation. From the beginning, Vakarian was more moved by the whole marriage deal. Now, she was glad and happy he had changed his attitude toward her.

Jane felt the turians were a magnificent species, strong and so beautiful in their predatory glory. Garrus made an impression on her from the very first battle they had. Though he was wearing a helmet and his armor, she felt he was wonderful - as a soldier that is. She never meant to harm him, always attacking with no will to kill. Their sophisticated dance on the battlefield was something she cherished. Everyone of the crew noticed that. Especially Jack with her mocking and Alenko with his jealousy. Now, when he actually talked to her, she wanted to take advantage of it by getting to know him better.

To her surprise, Garrus was really overprotective, not allowing her to get up from the bed except to go to the bathroom and back. For the first two days he even insisted on taking her there until she had begged him just to help her instead, rather than moving the woman in his arms. Which, surprisingly, were comfortable and strong, made her feel good. Shepard wanted it to stop nonetheless, feeling awkward topped feeling good.

Her restlessness made her jump out of bed when she was cleared from the bedrest and Garrus was nowhere around, doing shopping. She moved to the couch, sandwich in hand and thousands of vids to watch. Jane was scrolling through the list, not really knowing what she was looking at, when Garrus came back from shopping. "Hi there, Big Guy."

"Hello, Jane. I see you're up. Are you sure you're okay? Feeling good? No dizziness?" Vakarian put the shopping bags on the kitchen counter that divided the kitchen from the living room. She nodded, smiling at him.

"Yeah. Don't worry. Jeez, you are really overprotective. I'm shocked."

"It's normal for turians. We protect those who depend on us, those that we are connected with. We are concerned about their health, happiness, safety. That's why we have clans, social tiers." Garrus explained while taking out things from the bags. Not that I want to. I need to act decent or Nihlus will be on my ass. He thought to himself. "You are my wife so it's normal that I want you to feel good."
"Uh-huh. Where were you for those four months?" She mocked. Jane could see him freeze when she said that. "Oh… I'm sorry… I shouldn't have."

"No… you're right, I was an asshole. It wasn't your fault or mine that we're married. But I blamed you anyway. That was inexcusable of me. The one that should apologize is me. You tried to be nice, you tried to talk to me and I was just this huge idiot. Calling you human, treating you like shit. Really, Jane, I'm deeply sorry for that." Garrus left the bags and went to Jane, sitting next to the woman. "Let's start from the beginning. I'm Commander Garrus Vakarian." He offered her his hand.

"Commander Jane Vakarian, previously Shepard, nice to meet you."

"Nice to meet you too, Jane. I heard a lot about you." Jane started to laugh at this. Garrus had to admit that her laughter was really good to hear. When she did, it somehow made the room brighten up.

"If they are naughty, they're true." She winked and saw clearly nonplussed turian, who tried to judge if she was joking or not. "Never mind, Big Guy."

"Big Guy, huh?"

"Duh! You are bigger than me. I think turians are impressive. The war was silly, you know? Instead of fighting, I would have given all my cash to travel to your homeworld and learn more about your species." Jane leaned on the backrest, regarding the ceiling, her face daydreaming. "That was my dream, to travel across the galaxy. Meet aliens. Learn. Have adventures."

Garrus regarded her in surprised silence. Surprised at her little speech. Her dreams had come true in a slightly different way, unpleasant way. Yet she could still maintain a smile and bright mood. "You know, my parents will arrive on Palaven next month… if… if you want, we can go there."

Jane's head snapped at him. He was fairly certain her eyes had never been wider. She just looked at him, not believing in his invitation. "Really?"

"Don't look at me like that. All in all, my mother invited us. If that makes your dreams come true, then yeah, definitely." He smirked in his head. And when I take you there and show that we're in a good relationship, I won't have to worry about the attack."

Jane blushed and hid her head in the hands. "Oh god, don't say such things when I'm not mentally prepared. Not from you anyway." Her sigh was muffled by her hands. "Nihlus saying that would be normal…"

His subharmonic made angry sounds which made her look at him between her fingers. What's wrong with me lately?! Get yourself together, Vakarian! Garrus scolded himself in his thoughts.

"What?"

"Nothing." He replied quickly and stood up, going back to the kitchen.

"You did it again. When I mentioned Nihlus you growled!" Jane exclaimed with satisfaction. She felt like kid a who had found presents for Christmas in their parent's secret stash. Shepard kneeled on the couch, propping her elbows on the backrest. She regarded Garrus with curiosity. "You two had a fight?"

"Sort of. His attitude pisses me off sometimes." And there is something wrong with me. Oh, well…
When I get to Palaven, I need to find a good lay. Seriously. The turian started to put items from the shopping bag in their respective places except things he had bought for Jane. Those - he put on her side of the kitchen. "He's one of the best Specters and he was a really good soldier. He is good friend too. Problem is that he doesn't care about the Hierarchy and social tiers. I do. My parents do. I don't want to let them down."

"What are social tiers? I don't understand." Jane came to the kitchen and sat on the counter next to Vakarian. He explained to her how social tiers in the turian hierarchy worked while he prepared a meal for himself.

"I know it sounds a bit strange, but it works. For me anyway. Nihlus has a different opinion about the subject though. That's why we don't see eye to eye sometimes. Still, one of my best friends." Jane nodded in silence, watching him making the dish. He finished and regarded his work when suddenly... a hand with a fork and knife appeared in his range of vision. He froze when Jane took the fork and knife and took a bite from his food. What is she doing?! He wanted to grab her and take the food out of her mouth but the woman stopped him with a stretched hand that touched his chest. "Twih ih soh ghood!"

"Don't swallow! Allergy!" My tier! With loud smack sound he pushed her hand from his way. Garrus grabbed Jane by her arms, ready to shake the food out of her but force. But she just swallowed with a mischievous smirk and spark in her eyes. Just like on the battlefield, those eyes...

"You are waaaay too overprotective, Mr. Vakarian." She teased. "I don't have any allergy to dextro amino acids. Sorry to disappoint you. I'm a bit suicidal... but not that much."

Garrus was observing her with wide eyes. Even though she had told him, she didn't have any allergic reactions, he still waited for her to collapse on the ground in anaphylactic shock. Yet nothing happened. The woman went to the couch and watched him with a playful smirk. "See? Don't worry, Big Guy!" Shepard pointed at the furniture beside her with one hand and with the other, waved at him to come over. "Let's eat together. You know any good vids?"

Garrus grabbed his food and went to her. She's not allergic. I'm not allergic... What a strange coincidence... He sat next to her and took her sandwich in hand. Looking at it from different angles. "Time for payback." He bit off and tasted it for a moment. A white thing on the either side of the sandwich that looked like sponge, wasn't really appealing to Garrus, but the sweet centre made him purr. Which met with small giggles from Shepard's side. It was sweet, a bit too heavily but still delicious.

"So you don't have an allergy to? Ohh, I bet you will be a Nutella fan just like me." Jane took her nutella sandwich from Vakarian's hand and also took a full mouth bite. "I brought a whole crate of Nutella. My life wouldn't be whole without it."

Vakarian nodded understandingly. If he couldn't buy sayon meat or spices for himself here on the Citadel, he would have a refrigerator full of it, shipped straight from Palaven. And with this Nutella thing he agreed that the more the better, for it was the most delicious sweet thing he had eaten so far. When the last shadows of its taste vanished from his mouth he could talk again. "Spirits, that was... I'm speechless. I was tested for an allergy for levo long ago, standard procedure in the turian military. In case someone wants to bang an asari. So, what do you want to watch?" Jane shrugged, her mouth still full of the sandwich. "Wanna see Blasto 4?"

Jane had to wait to reply. When she swallowed the last bit of her food. "I didn't see Blasto 1... To be honest, I haven't watched any alien movies at all. The girls have watched 'Fleet and Flotilla' but I
wasn't really paying attention."

"Oh, that's good. What do you say to a movie night with Blasto? You won't regret it, trust me. And Fleet and Flotilla is a shitty movie. Ugh. Don't even mention that sort of crap." Vakarian even shivered from disgust to accent his disapproval of such movies. He opened his omni-tool, pushing the hologram buttons until the vid started on the big hologram screen in front of them.

Jane couldn't believe the movie. Huge jellyfish holding multiple guns in its tentacles, doing the unbelievable. She laughed hard with Vakarian. The woman had to pause the vid to ask various questions about the other species, to which Garrus replied patiently. He tried to explain everything as well as he could, Jane listened to him with interest. Her curiosity made him smile. Just like a child who wants to learn so much. Hmmm, humans are like the galactic kids, needing to learn so much.

"That was awesome, Garrus!" She almost jumped on the couch. "Let's watch another one." They watched Blasto 2 and 3, but on the fourth part, Garrus found Jane deeply asleep.

"You still need to recover, silly." Vakarian scooped her into his arms and took her to the bed. Better if I sleep on the couch. He thought as he took off her shoes and yoga pants. Garrus looked at her face, dark spots still very visible proof of how much she had been beaten. He looked up to her face and froze. Vakarian sat next to Jane, mesmerized by her red hair that spread in the fiery halo around her. His fingers caught one strand and stroked it, feeling its silken texture. It looks like fire, but is so soft. No other species had hair, so the idea of it was something new. When he got used to it, Shepard's hair became somewhat his secret obsession. No wonder Sol was so mesmerized by it. At least she hadn't been disgusted by humans like me. It took him a while to sate his admiration, it ended quite abruptly with the nervous realisation of what he was doing. What's wrong with me?! I'm touching her hair now? Spirits, what would father say? He went to the living room where he lay on the couch and went to sleep.

xXx

For the next month Garrus was taking Jane to various places, from the Presidium to the most interesting spots on various Wards. She was watching everything in awe, her eyes bright and curious. Jane bombarded him with questions, and he obliged with answers, not tired at all by explaining everything. He was very surprised that he had so much patience, even more! Garrus had real fun, even though he wouldn't ever admit it openly. What he really liked to do with the woman, was going to a shooting range and to the Armax Arsenal Arena. He admired Jane's skills, she matched him in every step, scoring the same amount of points. They made it a weekly routine to go for some shooting practice at least once a week, and for arena simulator at least 3 times a week.

There was also something that stirred his strange feelings, those he didn't want to acknowledge. For something like ten days after Shepard had left the bed, she had started doing things with her body that made him freeze on the spot. She lay on some mat, in a short tank top, that exposed her well toned stomach, and black knee length pants - accenting her round ass. Jane was stretching her legs and arms, doing impossible body configurations for a turian female. Her flexibility made such an impression on him, he just stood there and watched. Since then she was doing her exercises every day for almost an hour. Garrus didn't even want to think why he tried to peek every time she did it. He didn't want to admit that he had lewd thoughts about her. Her ass and legs, that could nicely circle around his waist. Stop! Don't think about that! Blaming Nihlus for the situation. Stupid, perverted xenophiliac. And his talk about legs and asses. He watched her secretly regardless.

"What do you want to do today?" The turian asked when the woman came out of the bathroom after one of her exercises. He could see her damp hair falling on her bare arms, knowing the woman's shampoo that had a nice, sweet scent. Another thing he wouldn't admit, he liked the scent. It was
"Oh, you will like it, Big Guy! I found a place where you haven't taken me." She smiled and came closer to him, opening her omni-tool on the way. "Here. That will be fun!" She flashed a hologram of the Galactic History Museum.

Fuck… seriously? Like hell I'll go. Vakarian grunted.

"What? You don't want to go?" He could sense the disappointed tone in her voice.

"Eh, uhm… it's not like that. I always thought museums are boring. And you won't be interested in them. But if you really want to go…" Garrus looked at her, hoping she will change her mind but then… the bright smile that appeared on her face did things to him. His chest was flushed in a warm feeling. He couldn't say exactly when, but for some time now he was gradually losing the ability to resist her or deny her pleads. \textit{She caught me. She won.} "Then let's go."

"Yay! Good! Let's eat something and grab some sweets from Li's shop and we can go there."

Vakarian nodded, not voicing his disagreement at the latter suggestion. He wasn't really eager to meet Lilihierax. Li was like a polite Nihlus, a friend but sometimes annoying. After breakfast both of them went to the marketplace, just to pass it and enter the pastry owned by the turian ex-mechanic.

"Ah! My favourite customer!" The turian behind the counter exclaimed when Jane entered the shop. Garrus behind her. "And her ass of a husband!" Jane giggled at Garrus' annoyed growl.

"Yeah, yeah, Li. Good to see you too." Vakarian replied, rolling his eyes.

"Jane, sunshine, where have you been? I thought you found a new place and wouldn't come back to me again." Shepard shrugged and leaned on the counter, closing the distance to the shop owner. She smiled at the turian in the way that, annoying Garrus even more.

"I was busy, Garrus had taken the liberty of showing me the Citadel. We're going to the museum today."

"Nice." Lilihierax's hand went up and touched Jane's chin. "I misse-" Sudden movements and loud smack noise made him snap at the back. Jane straightened and turned to looked at Garrus with wide eyes and a gape. First time seeing him angry like this.

"Don't touch." Vakarian growled at the other turian, making him step back even further. His subharmonic sang with possessiveness and a threat. Then he realised what he had done.

What?!

"I'm sorry… I…"

"It's fine, Garrus." Li stopped Garrus in his apology, regarding him with curiosity. \textit{So Nihlus was right, after all… His defense toward females is crumbling. And it's Jane who is the reason of that.} Li packed them some levo and dextro sweets, his good mood made Garrus furious. There was this quiet trill of Lilihierax's subharmonic that said 'I know a nice secret.'

Garrus and Jane left Li's pastry with bags full of sweets. Vakarian snorted every time she plunged her hand inside to grab some treat. They went to catch a skycab and an hour later, they were stood in front of the biggest building Shepard had seen so far. "This is huuuge!"

"Of course it is. This is the Galactic History Museum. Relics and artifacts of every species are here. I don't know if we will be able to see even half today…" They entered the huge entrance hall with sculptures made of white stone, 3 main species: asari, salarian, turian - the biggest ones, and a few smaller ones. Jane grabbed Garrus' hand and pulled him toward the sculptures.
"What are those species?" She pointed at the smaller sculptures gathered near the legs of the bigger ones.

"This is hanar - you know, Blasto; krogan, quarian, volus, drell, elcor, batarian, and vorcha."
Vakarian pointed at each respective figure while naming it.

"I see." Jane said while regarding the sculptures one after another. After a longer moment she turned toward Garrus. "Let's get a map and start sightseeing."

"Huh?" Vakarian didn't know what she had meant by that, but before he could ask, the footsteps of an asari interrupted him.

"Hello, my name is Liara T'Soni, the Museum is close-" She said as she was approaching but she stopped in her place when she saw Garrus and Jane from up close. "By the Goddess! You are the human and turian that married for peace!" The asari regarded one and then the other with interest but then turned fully toward Jane. "And it's my first time seeing a human in the flesh. I'm sooo excited!"

"Uh, thank you… I guess?" Jane watched the asari in confusion. To be honest, she was waited for the asari to start jumping out of joy. "Umm, if it's closed… we can go home and come another time."
Shepard turned toward Vakarian, who was nodding eagerly.

"No! Nooo, no no! No need! I'll guide you! At least you will have a bit of peace and quiet. Normally it's really crowded here. Come." The asari named Liara waved at them. "There is 5 main parts of the Museum. Asari, salarians and turians - each of those species has it's own part, the fourth part is for the rest of the species and there is also a part with species that are long extinct or haven't made it to the Citadel yet. Which part you want to see first?"

"Turians!" Jane yelled happily. Liara nodded understandingly. Garrus on the other hand felt strange. Why does she want to know about turians so much? He wondered.

The asari led them toward the turian exposition. Jane's head was moving fast from one side to another, watching exhibits placed on or by the wall of the corridor. They entered the hall that had even bigger sculptures than in the entrance hall. This one depicted, as Jane could guess, a male, female and three kinds of children. Two of the children were same height but differ in colours and one had a longer fringe. Jane approached it with her mouth open, staring at the 5 turians in awe. The third was, as far as Shepard could tell, newborn in its mother's arms. The little one resembled something like a kitten, it hadn't have a fringe, and Jane could easily notice that its talons were really short.

Garrus came to her and watched her amazed face. She took her time, looking at each statue, before stating a question. He didn't rush anything, waiting for a question that Jane would certainly ask.

"Why three children?" Shepard asked at last. Human sculptures of families always depicted mom, dad and either one child, boy or a girl or rarely both. It was common to have only one child due to overpopulation. It was still a big problem, even with the thousands that had left Earth to search for a better life in outer space.

"Newborn and two 10 years-olds, I think." He explained. "Around your 10th year, the males fringe starts to grow while females change plating colours."

Jane nodded. "Something like adolescence?" She turned around and started to walk to the beginning of the exhibition where T'Soni waited for them. Garrus behind her, trying to estimate how old Jane is. He had never asked.
"Yup. It takes 5 years to grow up. When a turian is 15, he or she enrolls in a boot-camp for standard military training. It takes one year. Then we are assigned for a field missions. Some finish boot camp and go do something different."

Shepard stopped and watched him, her eyes wide. "15? Oh, that's rough. I enrolled at 18. Befor that I trained a bit, because of Pa… he would approve, always saying that military service should start earlier than 18." The woman's face saddened at the remark. Garrus could only guess she missed her step-parents and other humans. The sight made his heart ache a bit.

"Hey, don't be sad." His hand reached for a length of her hair, pulling it behind her ear. "We can go to Earth after Palaven." Jane smiled sadly in return, their eyes locked and neither of them wanted to break the moment. But of course something had to break it. The asari coughed and that was it. Jane turned her head and Garrus took his hand away in great speed. "Let's go."

Vakarian watched her go and thought. **What are you doing Garrus… you need a willing turian female because you're going mad here.** He shook his head and went toward the two women.

It took 2 hours to see the full turian exposition. Liara was guiding them through the halls that had exhibits from the very beginning of the turian species. Jane was thrilled when she saw a turian ancestor, an animal that surely could be called a dragon by humans. It was like a turian on all-fours, with a long spiked tail. Liara explained that it was an apex predator on Palaven that, after thousand of years, evolved into modern turians - losing its tail and standing on two feet. The asari explained a lot of things to them, that even Garrus was oblivious to. Not that he was paying any attention to turian history lessons during school. After the turian hall, T'Soni took them to the asari one and later the salarian's. That's when Jane decided to take a break.

"Oh, that was fun!" She said when she sat on the bench in the entrance hall. The woman took out sweets from Li's and gave Garrus his dextro ones. They ate in silence, each thinking about something else. Vakarian was still trying to understand why he acted strange, trying to find any logical explanation. 15 minutes later Liara came to them again.

"Are you ready? Which do you want to see? The hall from another known race or that of the extinct and not yet developed species? In the latter we have some human exhibits." The asari regarded them with interest, waiting for their answer.

"So I am not developed yet?" Jane asked with a smirk. "I feel awkward now." T'Soni started to wave her hand in negation, explaining she didn't mean to offend her. Jane only laughed at the sight of the agitated asari. "Don't worry, I'm joking. Mr. Vakarian wouldn't marry some kind of retard, am I right?" The turian rolled his eyes and turned away. "Anyway, tell me. You're a tour guide here?"

"Oh, no. We got VI for that. I'm an archeologist. I finished working on the dig-site a month ago and brought everything I found to the museum. I'm working on restoring the items." T'Soni explained. She sat next to Jane. "I'm a Prothean Expert. That race is long extinct. They left marvelous ruins and artifacts behind."

"When did they lived? Why are they extinct?"

"They lived over 50,000 years ago. Some disease spread among them and they vanished from the galaxy. We found that they had terrorist organisations. One of them was working on some sort of bacteria or infection. It went bad. It spread all over the galaxy very quickly and the Protheans soon vanished. Really sad." T'Soni was looking really devastated. Garrus looked at Jane and he could say something was off with her. "I would give every credit to meet one of them." The asari sighed at the end, looking at them. She was so occupied by her monologue, that she was surprised at seeing Garrus leaning toward Jane and touching her arm. Liara instantly recognized a trill of concern that
the turian's subharmonic emitted.

"Sorry, Miss T'Soni, but Jane is tired. We will come back tomorrow. Is that alright?" Liara nodded slowly. She regarded Jane with concern and a bit of shock. "See you then." Garrus pulled Jane up and excused them, not being bothered by the confused asari.

"I'll see you tomorrow!" She yelled after them.

Garrus took Jane outside to the skycar. He seated her on the passenger seat then proceeded to the one for the driver. She was looking somewhere far away, her eyes not moving. Vakarian eyed her, while inputting their destination. The skycar took off while on auto-pilot, Garrus turned toward the women, his hand touched her arm. "Jane, what's wrong?" She wasn't responding at all.

He tried to remember what they were talking about. *Protheans... and then how they went extinct... something about a terrorist organisation... is that it? Terrorists? Her parents were researchers in a human terrorist organisation. Maybe that's it?* Vakarian gently turned her head to face him. "Jane... is it about your biological parents and terrorists?"

Her eyes snapped, wide, looking at him with a terrified gaze. "H-how do you know...?"

"Nihlus told me. He has read your files. He's a Specter, so naturally he has access to various sorts of files." He coughed, a bit nervous. Talking about her life and her overall, was new to him, dangerous territory to step on. "Ehm, anyway... tell me what's bugging you... I know I'm little help, but talking over things makes it easier."

Jane was looking at him in silence. Considering his words. It took her a while to start talking. Hesitant and afraid. "I... when I think about my real parents... I'm scared. They were researchers in a facility that experimented on biotic children. When I grew up, I looked up the files concerning this terrorist group and the facility itself. Also checked who my parents were." Jane stopped. She turned her head, not daring to look at Garrus. For her, he was pure, with a normal family, normal childhood.

"Calm down, Jane. We'll be landing in a minute. Let's go home and you can tell me everything, deal?" She nodded slightly. The couple reached their apartment, Garrus helped Jane to the couch then sat next to her. She took her jacket off then leaned on the backrest.

"There is this thing, this poison my mind. Where they forced to be there? Maybe they threatened them? Maybe they said that they would kill me if my parents didn't co-operate. Or maybe they weren't forced at all, doing it willingly? What if my real parents were evil and did all those things...?" Jane broke down, tears spilled onto her cheeks. It dawned on her hard, Garrus realised. "I... saw... what terrorists had done to those children, Garrus. It was inhuman. And I lived there! I was a normal child that maybe had fucked up parents! Parents that made so awfu-"

Garrus grabbed Shepard firmly into a hug, preventing her from talking more. He did it before his brain registered what he was doing. The woman started to cry, her sobs filled the room, his second vocals sang soothing songs in response. Garrus lowered his head down to her ears. He could smell her shampoo and her own unique scent. He spoke. His low, flanging voice broke the hum. "Shh, that is in the past. What your biological parents did then is irrelevant. You were raised with love, Captain Massani took you and raised you as his own. He loves you very much, that I can tell for certain. And your stepmother cares for you too." He could tell Jane was calming down, her muscles not as tense as they had been a minute ago. "Besides... those two are your real parents. They raised you since you were... uh, two?"

Shepard nodded. At least he thought he felt the movement against his chest. It was the first time he held her in his arms and it was... good.
"It's hard to estimate what your biological parents did there. What do you know about them?"

Jane pulled herself from Garrus' embrace. They regarded each other awkwardly, realising it was the first time they had been this close. The turian could see the woman's cheeks turning bright red.

"What I know about my biological parents, huh?" Her gaze turned down, Garrus could see her hands, with too many fingers, squeezing each other. "My mother - Hannah Shepard was a geneticist and my father - John Shepard - was a chemist. They were working at the same University when one day, they vanished. Their belongings also vanished from their home. The police couldn't do anything. Theories about their sudden disappearance multiplied. The case hadn't been solved until the Alliance soldiers raided the terrorists. My parents were found, or at least their bodies. There were no data available, so it's still a mystery if they were working there willingly or were forced."

Garrus considered her words. He was good at math, he was good at putting puzzles together. His father was one of the best C-Sec officers. A splendid investigator with many achievements. Garrus had his mind. And his character, that's why unsolved cases were really interesting. "How long was it since they disappeared that you were born?"

"5 years."

"So the terrorists couldn't really threaten the Shepard's with you. You weren't there at the time. Maybe they didn't earn a lot of money?" Jane shook her head. "Hmmm… maybe they threatened them in a different way. Torture, taking their lives. I don't know. You can't assume they were evil."

"But… that is the most probable explanation."

"And if that were true? If they were really evil scientists…?" Garrus turned to her, his gaze sharp. Jane looked at him, not comprehending what he was implying. "Does that change something about you? Does it makes you a lesser person? Your work so far - irrelevant?" Jane gaped at him. "It doesn't change anything, Jane. Those are just fears of a little girl. You are a woman that was forged, not by those two people that gave you life but by this one soldier that took you out of the rubble and raised you. By this doctor that treated you as her own child. By your friends, people you met. Even me." Jane giggled, visibly losing her nervousness.

"Even you. Since the war began, we somehow kept on bumping into one another here and there."

"Yeah. I need to say that it was pleasure to fight with you. But still, I'm glad that the war has ended and we could change our battleground to the one in the Arena."

Jane pulled closer to him, taking his three-fingered hand into hers. Squeezing it lightly. "Thank you, Garrus. I've never talked about my biological parents with anyone… and about those fears. I don't know why but I feel I can trust you. And… I… I really like you." Her warm smile pierced his heart with guilt.

Spirits… just one month ago I wished she was dead… Jane don't say such things… I feel like a total asshole now. Vakarian shifted nervously on the couch. Trying to come up with some good answer. "Uh… Thanks, Jane. I like you too." Yeah, right. But let's say crap like that. How he lied to himself. He wouldn't even admit to himself that he liked a lot about this human female. He wouldn't admit that he simply loved her red, fiery hair, its scent. That, still claiming it was Nihlus' brainwashing, he liked her body. It was exotic, a lot different from the asari, not even remotely comparable to a turian female one.

Jane nodded, still smiling at him. After a moment of watching one another, she broke the silence. "So, when are we going to the shooting range or Armax?"
"Hmmm… we should go today, but I don't know how you feel… If you're tired we can skip it for today."

Jane patted his knee and stood up. She stretched her hands up, revealing her well-toned stomach. He couldn't turn his eyes away, that's how mesmerized Vakarian was. "Don't waste our time, let's go. But first let's eat something. Li told me there is a nice, new restaurant near Armax. We can try it."

"Yeah. Let's do that." After a moment they were again in front of the building. Training bags with Armax gear hanging on their arms. Garrus had his old one, since they had Armax Arenas on Palaven. Jane on the other hand was purely lucky, the company gave her a new one exclusively for her. She could even colour and tint it however she wanted. Her armor was black, with blue stripes similar to his clan markings. He sometimes wondered if she knew that she was showing that she belonged to him. "We can go there by the back alley. That will be the fastest route."

Jane agreed. She was still smiling at him. "Which set should we choose today?"

"Let's go for the hard one this time. I'm kind of bored of those merc maps... And we are pros already. I've heard that the Tuchanka on level hard is reeeeally impressive."

Jane grabbed his arm, bouncing in excitement. "Tuchanka? What is that?"

"Tuchanka is the krogan homeworld. It is radioactive planet with the biggest population of thresher maws." Garrus grinned to her, showing his spiky teeth. She giggled when he fanned out his mandibles. "Don't laugh at me. I can't stop my mandibles when I'm, er, smiling."

The woman squeezed his arm. She tried to stop giggling but it was stronger than her. "I'm sorry, he-he. But it's funny! Anyway, if Nihlus told you about me, you already should know that I'm not particularly fond of thresher maws. I hope they won't spawn one as a final boss or something."

"I hope they will. It will be fun. And you will have me there. One who get's more points takes cleaning duty for one week, deal?"

"Deal. With this new fitted Armax Armour they got me, you won't stand a chance Mr. Vakarian. And that visor you got me is really neat. You put yourself at a disadvantage." Jane elbowed him in the arm. They walked by the alley that was turning darker and darker, while they approached the entertainment part of the ward. It was nearly empty except them and, as Jane spotted someone, one man. She blocked the way for Vakarian with her hand. Meanwhile the man came out of his hiding spot to stand in the middle of the alley.

"Hawkeye sight... of course." The human man said, smirking.

The woman grunted at the sudden meeting. "Kaidan."

xXx

**Sorry for the cliffhanger ;

I hope you like small change in Garrus. He is huge asshole regardless. IMO he shouldn't think too much xD**
Chapter 5

Hello!

I'd like to sincerly apology for the cliffhanger… I can't promise I won't use it in the future… but at least things are exciting.

I'd like to apologize to all Canadian readers… I like Canada and didn't want to insult anyone. I wanted to say sorry at the begining to you wouldn't abandon this chapter in the middle of it.

Again small reminder of Razzberry’s fics (on Ao3): Mass Effectiveness and Dawn of a New Era.

They are great and trust me, worthy of your time!

That's all, I won't waste your time any further. Please enjoy!

xXx

"Kaidan" Jane growled through her teeth. Garrus could swear he heard her teeth grit in anger. And he was right. Jane turned to him and, handing Garrus her bag, whispered. "Hold it and wait a moment. I'll handle this." Vakarian nodded and looked at her while she approached the one named Kaidan.

"Shepard, good to see you." Alenko said when Shepard stopped close to him.

"Why are you here, Kaidan?" Jane folded her arms, shifting her body weight onto her right leg. She regarded Kaidan with annoyance… that was slowly turning into anger. Previous events concerning the man had helped a great deal.

"That's all you've have to say? You left us, your crew… me…"

"Oh boy…" Shepard said to herself, massaging her temple. Here we go again… even here he can't stop himself.

"You have acted like nothing happened but I knew you were in pain. I knew that the whole marriage was agony for you. I saw through your 'commander' mask. I saw a woman that didn't want anything like that… a miserable woman. And now you still act like nothing happened." Kaidan was speaking with emotion in his voice, trying to appeal to Jane but with every word she was close to breaking point. "I thought we had something, Shepard, something real. I love you."

That was it.

Jane shoved him on the nearest wall and punched. Hard. First one to the face. That was satisfying. Next punch to the abdomen. Shepard could see Alenko's biotics flare up but didn't care at all. When Kaidan bent over at the waist, clenching his stomach, she joined her hands and hit hard on his back. That rendered him on the floor, lying there without the power to get up.

"That was impressive." Garrus said after the initial shock had worn off. Clapping his gloved hands to emphasise how impressed he was.

"Thank you, hun." Jane replied. Garrus wondered what word 'hun' meant but decided to ask later.
Meanwhile Jane squatted down next to Kaidan. "Listen, Alenko, because this is the last time I will say this. I'm tired of repeating myself over and over. So now you'd better listen and don't you fucking dare interrupt, pumpkin, is that clear?" She waited for any reply but there was nothing. "No argument so I'll take it as a yes. Here's the thing, Kaidan, I DON'T. LOVE. YOU. Never did. Never will. I wouldn't even touch you with a barge pole. Period. You were just one of my crew. Were, Kaidan. Because I'm no longer your Commander. Another thing: I'm completely fine where I am, trust me. So get the fuck out of here. You should be in Canada, drinking maple syrup or whatever you Canadian's do. And in case you thought otherwise: I will call Anderson concerning today. Now scoot, I don't want to see your ugly mug ever again."

Kaidan lifted himself up and looked at Jane with utter defeat. "What this beast got that I don't?"

Garrus growled and started to walk toward Kaidan but stopped at the sight of Jane. She twisted the man on his back, pulling his hand up. That had to be painful.

"Everything." She replied and leaned into the man's ear. "Beauty and the Beast..." She whispered so quietly that Garrus almost missed that one. The woman stood up, releasing the poor bastard. He was coughing hard. Jane approached Garrus and took her bag from him. "Let's go. I've had enough of this shit."

Vakarian was walking behind Shepard. She was walking fast, stomping heavily on the ground. He could sense her anger even after they were inside the Armax Arsenal Arena. Without a word, they parted to the changing rooms. When the turian came out, the woman was already waiting for him in front of one of the available arenas. Jane was in her armour, visor covering her left eye, hair pulled into a ponytail. Garrus approached her, feeling a bit uneasy. A lot happened to them today. "Uhm, you sure you want to do this today?"

"Yeah, I need to blow off some steam. I worked up a lot of it today. Just configure the damn thing and let's go." Jane looked as though she would toss anyone on the nearest wall and rip their heart out. Garrus didn't want to argue with this kind of Shepard.

"As you say. Sniper rifle, assault rifle and pistol as always?" He asked but saw Shepard thinking over the weapon choice. "Tuchanka or we going with the usual?"

"Assault and shotgun, please. I've read about the enemies on that map. Tough sons of bitches. You were slow, by the way. What took you so long?" Jane asked when Garrus was busily inputting settings and weapon choices on the console.

"I need to look stylish." The turian answered and heard a giggle behind him. He turned to check but wasn't mistaken. No, she really was smirking, shaking her head while looking around. "Don't laugh. That's the most important thing on the battlefield. You need to have a style. I'll teach you, don't worry."

"Uh-huh." The woman shifted her weight to one leg. Her hand rested on her waist.

Garrus looked at her waist and the urge to touch it, grab her, pull her to him, invaded his mind. Her fitted armour made it even stronger. It showed her well shaped body. He almost growled lustfully. Spirits... He turned back to the console and tried to calm down. "All set. Come on."

They entered a big room. It was different from the normal set, with walls and crates as tactical cover. This time it was made with some sort of ruins, rubble and debris everywhere. Landscape of a post-apocalyptic deserted city displayed on the screens covering the walls. In the center of the room was a large area without any cover at all. Hot air blew at them, imitating the surface of Tuchanka. "They really made it."
"Huh?"

"It is really like Tuchanka." Garrus looked around. "Together or you take cover on the opposite side?"

"Hmm… opposite. I'll go there." Jane pointed at the opposite side. "Good luck, Mr. Vakarian."

"Same to you, Mrs. Vakarian." They exchanged amused smirks then took their respective covers.

After a minute, battle started. Big aliens spawned in various places. Jane could see holograms of real krogans and had to admit they were an impressive sight. Big, strong and hard to kill. She killed a few with well placed headshots. Vakarian did the same. "Scoped and dropped!" He yelled on the other side.

"Cocky bastard, aren't you?" She laughed while aiming at another target. "That's the style you were talking about? Because I see only big ego talking."

"You are just jealous, my dear." He replied then ran to other cover. "I'm just simply fabulous."

"That's sweet, still… I'm winning dear husband, get your shit together."

Garrus stiffened at the 'dear husband' remark. He also remembered saying 'my dear' to Shepard, then also to ask about the word 'hun'. "I wanted to ask you… what does 'hun' mean?"

"Hun is endearment for humans. It's a short version of honey. Something sweet." Jane replied, blushing a bit. Oh God, my cheeks are burning. Get yourself together, girl. Good he can't see that. What she didn't know was, he could. He sensed her speeding heart rate too.

Spirits… are we… flirting? Garrus thought to himself. He missed a shot and an enemy approached him on his left. Jane saw that and shot the krogan's hologram.

"Wakey, wakey, sleepyhead!" Shepard yelled, that snapped him out of thinking too deeply about the strange progress in their relationship. "You will clean for a whole wee- What is this?!" The ground started to shake beneath them. Moments later, a thresher maw came out of the ground in the center of the arena. It looked as Jane remembered. Big glowing blue tongue hanging between a set of mandibles, two big claws on each side of the head, and smaller legs that twitched in disgusting ways. "Nooo… you had to say it and they really spawned one. Ahh…"

"I would be disappointed if they didn't."

"Take out the rest of the krogans. I will take care of that little bastard." Jane said and took out her shotgun. "Yippee-ki-yay, motherfucker!" With that shout, she jumped out of cover, shooting the thresher maw at least five times before the monster turned to her, spilling acid on the place she stood seconds before.

"He has a lot of HP." Garrus looked at the boss' health bar and grunted. "Spirits, I didn't know it would be that big."

"Heh, you've gotta be joking. Those four I killed were bigger. Now stop talking and move that stylish, boney ass. I need your help with this fucker." They stopped the banter. While Jane was dodging the maw's attacks and shooting it, Garrus took care of the last krogans. "What took you so long? God you're stylishly slow!"

"Don't piss me off, Jane. Krogans are tough and this is hard mode." Vakarian replied angrily. "Now look at the true master!"
"Yadda, yadda." Jane rolled to the side, dodging another attack from the maw's claws. Garrus came to her at last, changing his sniper rifle to the assault. They shot and jumped out of the thresher maw's attacks until something happened. Jane jumped to the right, avoiding acid, just to land on Vakarian, he lost his balance, falling down and grabbing her with him. She hit his chest with her forehead.

Moments passed before they realised what happened. Shepard was straddling him, her gaze locked with his. In shocked silence they regarded themselves. Garrus realised that his hand was on her waist. Jane, out of the corner of her eye, saw the maw preparing to attack again. She grabbed Garrus' collar and rolled them far from the thresher maw's acid splash. Rendering herself under the turian's body. She blushed again, becoming even more red than before. Garrus' blue, piercing eyes on her, caused Jane to get hot in places she wouldn't presume would get hot. In that kind of situation. "That's kind of… sexy… but we need to get up."

Garrus looked at the woman with shock. He could sense something new. This sweet, breathtaking scent that emitted from her body, a scent that made his groin plates twitch. "Yeah, that is sexy…" He agreed with his low flanging voice. Her eyes widened because of the voice and what it said. _Wait! What?! I said that?_ Garrus jumped up and took a few steps back. Meanwhile, Jane pulled herself up too and turned to the monster.

"Okay, we need to finish this." Jane pointed at the cover. "Go there, take cover and switch to your sniper rifle and incendiary ammo. Watch his mouth, before his spills acid, it always gathers it for a moment. When he's gathering it, shoot." The turian nodded without questioning her order. It took a while but he saw it. While Jane was shooting at him with her shotgun, the monster froze and started gathering acid. "Now!"

Vakarian shot precisely in the center of his mouth, just slightly above the blue tongue. The thresher maw started to shiver and convulse. "Critical shot! Did you seen the damage?! Ohhh, that's my personal record."

"And who will you thank later…?"

"Myself, of course." He replied showing her his smug grin. "For being extremely fabulous."

Jane took the last shot, killing the Maw at last. "God, your ego is beyond any measures. I give up. But I still won." Shepard sat heavily on the rubble, rubbing her eyes. She was visibly tired, which made Garrus' overprotective instincts kick right in. He approached the woman, squatting right in front of her.

"You okay, Jane?" Hesitantly at first, his hand reached her cheek and rubbed it with his thumb. "Let's go home and order something to eat. And I'll take cleaning duty for this week."

The woman touched his hand on her cheek and closed her eyes, pushing her cheek into his touch. She swam in the warm feeling his hand emitted. "Yeah. Let's go home."

Garrus watched Jane's smiling face, closed eyes, she looked caring. For him? He couldn't understand why but he wanted this. A moment passed and she opened her eyes and took his hand away, then stood up, not saying anything about this tender moment they just shared. Both went to change and then they went home. Vakarian was thinking deeply on what was happening to him, between them, if that was right to have those feelings, if he should back away while there was still time.

When their meal was delivered, they sat at the table. Jane was silently eating one of her favourite asari dishes, salad with grilled khanka meat. The meat tasted something like pork, with this additional taste she couldn't describe properly. That's why she liked it, always trying to name the strange taste.
Both sent quick looks when the other wasn't watching. Until Garrus decided to talk. "Uhm… can I ask you something?"

"Of course."

"I don't want to... invade your personal space but... that Kaidan guy... you dated?" Just seconds after he asked that, he regretted it. I shouldn't care... why do I care?

Before she replied, she swallowed her food. Then she let a long, tired sigh. Not looking at him, she clarified things. "No. He's a delusional prick that thought we could have something. I just talked casually to him a few times... he somehow assumed that I was interested in him. How? God only knows." She moved her eyes to look at him. "To be honest... I never dated anyone."

"Really?!" That came louder than Garrus wanted. He also felt... relieved? He was ass deep in this already and still couldn't admit it to himself. He felt something for this woman, for his wife.

"Yeah. Pa was a bit too overprotective. Besides, I focused on my career as a soldier, not being bothered by anyone's advances. And there weren't a lot of them, trust me. Men usually were... intimidated by me. By my N7 rank, by me being a Commander, by Pa." Shepard shifted on the chair, visibly uncomfortable about the subject. "I have a lot of friends among women. Jack's my best friend ever. We grew up together on the military base and shared the same... uhm... charm."

"I see. So to sum up he's just a huge mental asshole."

Jane started to laugh at the turian's remark. "Yeah, pretty much." She stood up, took her plate to the kitchen sink and turned toward Vakarian. "I need to make a few calls, I'll go to the office."

"Fine. I need to call my parents and arrange our trip to Palaven. I'll stay here."

Jane went inside the office and jumped on the huge and very comfortable chair. She opened her computer and called Captain David Anderson first. It wasn't long before the Captain picked up the call. "Shepard. Good to see you."

"I'm on shore leave just now. Kahlee wanted to rest a bit so we're staying mostly at home." The man scratched the back of his head, clearly nonplussed. Jane giggled but wouldn't dare comment. "Anyway... better tell me, how are you? How is the Citadel? And you husband? Is he treating you well?"

"I'm fine. The Citadel is awesome, you need to come here and see for yourself... and you were right... I haven't seen even 20% of it. Garrus is great, I'm still learning about him but he's really great. And he treats me just fine, for example I think he let me win in the Armex Arsenal Arena. We had to kill a thresher maw, you believe that?" Jane was saying all this with excitement on her face. She wanted to prepare the ground before saying anything about Alenko.

"Good. Now tell me the real reason you're calling." The man folded his arms and looked at Jane with amusement. He knew exactly why she was calling and that it was probably something urgent.

"Always one step behind you, huh?" Jane shook her head, looking playfully at Captain Anderson. "Where is Alenko?"

"Hmmm... I think he mentioned visiting his parents in Vancouver, so he's there." David Anderson noticed the deep frown on Jane's face. Oh, something's not right. And I don't like it. "Speak, Shepard."
"Alenko is currently on the Citadel. He might be a little worse for wear…” Shepard said, while not looking directly at the hologram.

"Turian?"

"Me. One punch to the face, one to the guts… one on the back. And maybe a dislocated wrist." She hung her head, tired of everything that had happened today. "Listen, he is just an idiot. I told him from the start that no, I don't want to be his girlfriend. He was the one to impose himself on me. Not to mention that he tried to make me feel guilty of leaving my crew." Jane pulled her head up again. She saw that David wasn't mad. That was a good thing. She leaned on the backrest of the chair, propping one leg on the deck. At last she was comfortable. At last she could relax. "Just send someone to take him out of here… I think he already understands how I don't give a flying fuck about him."

"And what about the turian?"

"Don't, David, just don't." Jane knew that David Anderson was one of only two people in the entire universe, that was capable of reading her like an open book. Now wasn't the time for his little game.

"Zaeed thinks that you're keeping something from him."

Jane shivered. She saw it coming. Her stepfather wasn't an idiot. Far from that, he was a genius with an attitude problem. Shepard would just wait for when he or someone he sent, to ask about the attack, or rather what happened at that time, that changed a lot in her life. Especially her calling routine. "And?"

"Don't you think it's rather strange that for 4 months you were calling 3 to 4 times a week and for the last month, it reduced to once a week. What happened?" Jane could feel the man's scrutinizing look. She felt scanned from head to toe and she also knew that there was no sense in lying.

"Okay. I'll tell you the truth but, fuck David, better not tell the old man. You don't want another war to break. Trust me." Anderson nodded, waving at her with his hand to go on. "At first we barely talked, me and Garrus. Then I was attacked. Three turians. I was careless, my fault. They just punched me few times on the face and stomach, nothing serious. Vakarian saved me and the turian councillor helped to solve the matter. That changed everything…"

"I won't say anything." The man sighed heavily. "Sometimes I feel you are a magnet that attracts problems. And I will solve two for you. I'm gonna say to Zaeed that Alenko attacked you today. He will be too preoccupied with that poor bastard to remember about your lack of communication over the last month." At the end he smiled warmly at the woman.

"Thanks, David. You are a lifesaver."

"Don't mention it. Need to go. Call me sometime. Anderson out." David's hologram vanished leaving an empty space on the desk. Jane thought for a moment then called her stepfather.

"Goddamn time you call your old man, kiddo." He grumbled from the very first second of the conversation. "I thought I taught ya some manners and stuff, Janey. What happened? Why don't you call me and Karin so often?"

"I was in the museum, Pa. I told you I'm sightseeing. You know I'm a sucker for new places. How are you?" They started to talk about current things when Garrus knocked lightly on the office doors. "Hold on, Pa. I'll be back in a moment." Jane pushed the hold button on the console and went out to Vakarian. "What is it?"
"I've talked with my parents and Councilor Sparatus. We are clear to go to Palaven. Next week there will be a shuttle waiting for us on Dock A29 - a council dock." Jane understood very well - the Council wanted them to be safe at all costs. "Mum and Solona are excited and send their regards. Tomorrow we need to go shopping. You need an environmental suite or some cover. Palaven's solar radiation may be fatal for your skin."

"Okay. Oh, god, I'm excited as well! Palaven!" She jumped, while holding his arm. "Ahoy, adventure!"

"Spirits… go and talk with your stepfather, I won't bother you any longer." He could feel a slight squeeze on his arm, then Jane turned and left him. She closed the doors and resumed the conversation with Zaeed.

"Pa, I have exciting news for you!" She related what Garrus had just told her. Zaeed wasn't pleased. At all. Jane could see with just a blink of her eye. That was Captain Massani for her, harsh behaviour, swearing and a bad attitude covered by a warm interior. He always cared about Shepard, not giving a fuck about her parents, background or abilities. Of course he knew damn well she was strong and brilliant and was damn pleased about it, yet he liked to treat her like a child. In his eyes, she will always be that little girl that clung to him, when he brought her to the Alliance base for the first time.

"I don't like it, sweety. You can't go there alone. That is really dangerous."

"I'm going." She replied shortly. That was one of Jane's weapons against Zaeed's overprotectiveness - stubbornness. Father and daughter argued for a while but she knew she had won already. If she wanted something so much, she knew she had to be stubborn, Massani always weakened after a while… losing all of his arguments against her.

"Fuck, kiddo… I'm done. You want to go, then goddamn go." He huffed in anger, Jane almost saw a little pout on his lips. "One thing, tell your hubby that if I see one little scratch on you… I will nuke goddamn Palaven and the Citadel along with it."

"Yessir!" Jane mocked him with a fake salute. "Need to go, Pa. I want to call Jack."

"Fine. Just make it short. No talking for over 6 damn hours." Jane waved with her hand and closed the connection. The last person she wanted to call was her best friend. The biotic connected the call in a matter of seconds.

"Jane... Vakarian! What's up?" Shepard's mood brightened up. Jack could always make her smile even when she felt down or her problems piled up. She decided to tell about her chat about the terrorist, then Kaidan, what happened at the arena and her trip to Palaven. "Nice, Jane, strike him with everything you got. That way, you will get laid sooner than you think."

"Jack!"

"What? I don't think you own a mirror there. You should see your eyes when you're talking about that turian. Damn, I'm jelly Shepard! You never had those eyes when we were together." Jack fanned her eyelids and then brows, Jane couldn't contain her laugh. She missed this silly banter. "But hey, you think that humans and turians are… you know… compatible?"

"Oh God, shut up." Jane looked at the clock. It was late, really late and the two women had talked for nearly 3 hours. "We're doing it again… why does time flow so fucking fast when we're talking? That's a mystery to me. Ok, need to go. See ya next time!" Jack sent a kiss and the connection closed.
Jane went out of the office and almost stumbled in the dark living room. When her eyes adjusted to the dark, she approached the couch where Garrus was already asleep. He shifted on the cushions and grunted. "You are too big to sleep here, big guy." She whispered so quietly, not wanting to wake him up. She carefully sat on the backrest, watching the turian sleeping on his side, his cowl faced her. Shepard's hand reached to his fringe, she wanted to touch it, feel its texture. It was a surprise to her that it was smooth, she thought his fringe and plates would be rough... but no, they were hard but not rough, they were smooth. Her hand travelled from his fringe to the soft skin on his neck. It was like suede, nice and warm to touch and here and there, small plates. When she touched him there, he moaned. Oh, sensitive spot. Jane blushed a bit at her findings. Her fingertips brushed his mandibles and they twitched. She did it again and his mandibles responded in the same way. The woman had to cover her mouth with her hands to stifle her laugh. She stood up and ran to the bedroom, trying hard not to burst into laughter.

When the shut doors behind her, Garrus opened his eyes, wide. It took all of his self-control, to act like he was still asleep but now he could relax. Spirits... I couldn't control myself. First my fringe... then... there... If she touched me there even for a second longer, I don't know what would've happened... The turian didn't dare to move, not wanting her to know he was awake. It took him an hour to re-evaluate everything before he fell asleep again.

xXx

The next morning Shepard woke up before Garrus, she scooted on the floor and sat on the kitchen table, waiting for the turian to wake up. She wanted to prove her theory and she didn't have to wait long. Vakarian woke up and pulled his upper body to sit, almost howling from pain. He massaged his lower back. "Spirits... my back..."

"I knew it!" Shepard said with victory in her voice. Garrus turned to her in great speed and this time he really howled, massaging both his back and neck this time.

"Don't scare me, Jane! Spirits, what are you doing there anyway?" Jane scampered to Vakarian, barefoot, on her toes and sat behind him. She touched his lower back, feeling it was covered with hide like on his neck instead of plates. She could feel a muscle knot, formed under the skin. The woman, gently at first, started to working on the knot. "You don't ha-... oh, that feels good."

"Of course I have to. And of course it does. I don't even know how you got yourself into such a state, Garrus. You can't sleep on the couch. It's too small for you. You can sit here, yes, rest for a bit but you can't sleep here the whole night. You have to go to bed, I can sleep in the office again." She decided to slip her hands under his sleeping shirt, it was black with short sleeves. His hands were partially covered in silver plates and brown hide. Jane could tell he was all plates and muscle. Garrus shivered at her touch. "What? Something wrong? Are my hands too cold?"

"No, it's fine. It's nice." He replied quickly. Calm down, Vakarian, breath. In and out, in and out. He tried to calm himself while her hands worked harder on his back. "I can't let you sleep in the office. I was an idiot to let you sleep there in the first place."

"Ok... Anyway... I was thinking... That, you know... We, ugh, could share the bed." Jane felt him tense again. "I mean, in a normal, healthy way... We can build a pillow wall or something so it will be comfortable for both of us." She quickly clarified, feeling hotness flush her cheeks. Calm down, Shepard! Christ, what am I even asking... Panic built in her and she tried to think of a way out of the things she said.

"Hmmm... If you put it that way... then sure. We can work it out. We are adults. I don't think we even need the pillow wall. I'll just sleep on one side while you on the other. Simple." He said that but shivered internally. What am I babbling about? Did I really said yes to that? For Spirits sake,
"Good." Jane nodded. She massaged his back until she felt it was all good. Then her hand grabbed the sides of his head, taking into consideration his mandibles. Shepard slowly started to turn his head left and right, then up and down and at the end she made circles with it. After that her hands moved to massage his neck. He was feeling so good, he unconsciously started to purr. Giggles snapped him out of his bliss.

"What?"

"You're purring!"

Jane took her hands off him and the second she wasn't touching him he missed the feeling already. He wasn't pleased to feel that way. You have to stop Vakarian! It's just that she's the only female around you now. I'll feel better on Palaven.

He kept lying to himself. Since those strange… symptoms? Yeah, it was an illness. Since they began, he hadn't paid attention to a turian female, even once. Garrus sat straight, not daring to move. Who am I kidding? It has gone too far, hasn't it? And that story… 'Beast and Beauty'… does she really think we will end like that? Last night he looked up those words and found a story. He read it and couldn't believe it. The mess in his head became even bigger. He felt a familiar feeling on his arm, Jane stroked him lightly… Please, don't stop. "Huh?"

Garrus turned to her. Jane took her hand back. No…

"You were somewhere else for a moment."

"Oh, I was thinking about Palaven. We need to prepare everything. Let's go shopping today."

"But I want to finish our museum tour. I think Liara said we can finish it today." Her eyes almost begged him to agree. How could he say no to those green eyes?

"Okay but then we will look for protective gear for you, is that clear? I don't want you to get hurt on Palaven." Jane nodded and brushed his arm again. "Let's get ready and go."

It took them a few hours in the museum. Liara was really happy to guide them around. Jane thought the entire time, was asking questions and showed enormous interest in everything. Just like the previous day.

Garrus wondered if her thirst for knowledge came from her researcher parents. All in all, they had to have been really intelligent people. The truth was, that this tiny woman fascinated him beyond measure. She was like an exotic flower that they had given him for free and now he could indulge himself in her.

When they had finished sightseeing, Liara took them to what she was working on. "Those are Prothean relics. Very interesting." Small metal tablets lying on the table were inscribed with unfamiliar letters. "And here are orbs they used to communicate with or at least we think that was their purpose." The silver orbs were glowing slightly.

"Are they still working?" Jane asked Liara. T'Soni thought for a moment then shook her head. "Oh… I see."

"They are just glowing like that. No one knows how to use them but from all the analysis we did on them, they just do that. No signal is being sent or anything." Liara guided them through the room to a small statue, depicting an alien with a big head and four eyes. "And this is a Prothean. Beautiful isn't he?"

Garrus had a different opinion but kept it to himself. The asari was clearly too fascinated with
Protheans to see reason.

When they had finished with the relics, Liara took them to entrance hall. "Um, if it's not too much to ask, can I ask you for your omni-ID's? I'd really like to meet both of you again and talk a bit. I... I don't really have very many friends here and I've come to like both of you."

Jane smiled and came closer to the asari. "No problem. Here." They joined their bracelets and a pinging sound confirmed their connection. "Okay. You just need to know that next week, we're going to Palaven. I'll send you a message when we return."

"That's fine by me. So... see you soon!"

Garrus and Jane waved her goodbye and left the museum. The turian took her hand into his, feeling the coolness of her skin through the fabric of the gloves he always wore when out of the apartment. "Come on, I need to buy you everything you need."

Jane squeezed his hand. Her beautiful smile made him happy. Very happy. Garrus wouldn't ever have thought that, just a smile of his human wife, would make him feel that way. Why was he still lying to himself?

xXx

*How was it? Worth your waiting after that goddamn cliffhanger?*
UPDATE (30.03.2017): Thanks to Erin Primette from I got to know that Garrus' father's name is Castis and I decided to change Akteon to his canon name. Although I write AU fic I try to stick to as much canon stuff as I can. So that's it. Thanks again, Erin for your message :) 

Hello! How are you, my friends? Hope you're prepared for the ride ;) 

Okay, I'll say it once… I've gone too far with that one xD This is the longest chapter so far. But I really wanted to put all those things… so, yeah, hurr! Not to mention that next cliffhanger would cause major uprising…

Hurr, durr, weather is shitty, I stay home with my kids and get really creative. That's why…

I don't think I need to say that Razzberry have really great stories again… but I will anyway! Here are links:

Mass Effectiveness /works/5330642 

Dawn of a New Era /works/4978891

Okay, now I'm shutting my mouth (my keyboard?) and let you read. Enjoy! Ahoy!

xXx

"I think you've gone too far, Garrus." Jane looked at the turian who was overloaded with shopping bags. They were shopping for hours with only one break to eat something. Vakarian insisted on checking at least a dozen shops offering environmental suits, protection gear and clothing for Palaven's environment. Jane had to settle with those for asari because of the lack of human ones. "And we could tell them to ship all of these to our apartment, you know?" 

"Yeah, right. They could get it wrong or damage something. What would we do then? You need protection." Jane sent him a long glance before unlocking the doors to their apartment. They went in and Garrus put all of their shopping on the couch. "Besides, I'm strong."

"You are strong, yes, and overprotective. I think you bought too much."

"Better too much than too little." He replied shortly as he was unpacking Shepard's things. Two sets of environmental suits, black with blue stripes - Jane's idea - matching Garrus' clan markings. Helmets made for asari but that was better as Jane's long hair could be tied up into bun in it. Gloves and shoes, and lastly three asari dresses with big hoods that would cover Jane's face from the Palaven sun's radiation. They also bought meds, ointments for burns and lotions to protect Shepard's skin. Garrus laid out everything on the couch, mumbling something to himself and nodding. "I think that will do."

"I would be really surprised if it wouldn't." Jane turned around and went to the armchair in the corner of the living room, where Garrus kept his pillows and blanket. She picked it all up and went to the bedroom.

"What are you doing, Jane?"

"I think we agreed that you can't sleep here." The woman replied resolutely and proceeded to the
bedroom. Jane put his pillows and blanket down and then took the smaller pillows from the closet, starting to build a wall in the middle of the bed.

Garrus watched her for a moment and realised that it was so childish. "You know… we don't need the wall… we are adults after all…"

Jane turned to him, her eyes wide. She froze with a pillow in her hands, trying to estimate if what Vakarian had just said was real. Her cheeks turned red. "Um… for real? You sure?"

"Yeah, definitely. Don't worry, I'm not a xenophiliac pervert." Garrus waited for Jane to think over everything. She nodded and returned the smaller pillows back to the closet.

They went to the kitchen and prepared a small supper. While eating, Garrus watched the galactic news halfheartedly, eyeing up Jane from time to time. The woman was watching the news with interest. After a month and a half of Garrus' explanations, she really had learned a lot about the galactic community. Not needing much explanation anymore. When they finished their food, they took all of the shopping from the couch and decided to play video games. Garrus was surprised at how quickly Jane learned to play, and they made a really good team - scoring the most points and winning. He also liked to play against his wife, she was a worthy opponent. They chose Fleet Rush for the evening. The game demanded tactic skills from the players and always ended with a draw, so far.

"Oi, Mr. Vakarian, you need to focus. I just decimated your fleet there." Jane elbowed him lightly, when her frigates destroyed half of his fleet.

"How? You're cheating there." Garrus grabbed her hand with the omni-tool and copied her settings to his. Jane only grinned while he was checking for any cheats.

"I'm just this fucking great, husband. Just admit it."

"Never." Vakarian closed the game before they finished, feigning hurt over his almost loss.

"Oh, what is it? Big, bad turian is angry that the squishy human is winning?" Jane asked with a sweet voice.

Garrus turned to her and moved to tower over the woman. He lowered his voice, asking seductively. "And what if I am?" He didn't even stop himself. It was futile anyway. Garrus couldn't just simply resist flirting with her anymore.

Jane moved up, placing her head next to his. Her cheek almost touched his mandible, if he were to slightly open it, he would feel her cool skin. She leaned to his ear canal and whispered, her breath on his skin. "Then I would have to be scared."

"Then be scared." He dared brush his mandible over her skin, feeling her shiver. It wasn't from being scared, not at all. The turian could feel it, smell it, sense it. How I am supposed to sleep beside her?

"I can't. I trust you."

Garrus drew back from her, feeling shock and shame at the same time. How could she trust him? She didn't know what he did. He lied to her! "You… trust me?"

"Yeah. There are two people, except my step-parents, I consider real, best friends and trust them completely. That's Jack and you. My crew are friends, I trust them to some extent, but I'm always vigilant with them. Having to double check. With Jack, I don't have to. And when you're beside me, I know I don't have to worry about my six. You've got my six."
"I've got your six." Flashes of images invaded his mind. Her back, times where she was walking side to side with him, his eyes scanning her surroundings for potential threat. Even in the shop he checked the entrance and the inside of the place, to be sure. Has she noticed that? Since they got closer he always protected her.

Is that what mother told me before the boot camp? Kalea had sat on his bed while he worked on his sniper rifle, angry over a breakup with a girlfriend. She said to him one of the most important things he ever heard: 'When you find this one special person you will do everything to protect him or her. He or she will be that one piece of your soul that you never knew you missed. Your soulmate, bonded stronger than anything.' It couldn't be more accurate...

"Let's go to bed. We have to buy stuff for my parents. Mom sent me the list. If we're lucky we will have everything in 3 days."

"Ehh?!" Jane made a grimace that could only be translated as 'I don't want to go shopping again.' Even if she was a woman, she didn't really like shopping. "Okay… Hmm, I should buy some presents for your family anyway. Good, I'm going to the bathroom."

Garrus begged internally that Jane wouldn't wash her hair tonight. If he had to sleep next to her for the first time, better not to be surrounded by that scent he simply adored. Luckily she emerged from the bathroom with dry hair, in her black tank top with N7 logo and grey pajama leggings. He liked how her outfit always fitted and accented her shape. The turian went into the bathroom after her, smelling her toothpaste and soap. Scents that were definitely hers, he couldn't define them in any other way. Vakarian quickly washed himself and went straight to bed. Jane already in, hugging a pillow and lying on her side in the way that she had her back to him when he tucked himself under the blanket. Garrus turned off the lights and turned his head toward the woman's back. "Good night, Jane."

"Good night, Big Guy." He could sense her heart was elevated. It took her some time to calm down and then she went to sleep. Her breath calm and even.

Spirits, we are really sleeping in the same bed. Why do I feel so calm? The truth hit him hard, because he didn't have to be on guard anymore. Having her near meant no need to fear if she's safe and well. By realising that, he could go to sleep at last.

xXx

The next day Jane woke up next to a sleeping turian. She felt surprisingly good about it. Just when she sat up, he opened his blue eyes. Garrus looked around to see his wife with disheveled hair and a sleepy gaze, covering a yawn with her hand. "Mornin'." She said with a groggy voice.

"Good morning, Jane." Both got out of the bed to their respective destinations - Jane to the bathroom and Garrus to the kitchen.

Jane returned with brushed hair that was pulled into a ponytail. She decided to go to Li's pastry shop to buy something sweet for breakfast.

"But be careful. Okay?" He grabbed her hands and looked seriously at her. Those impossibly blue eyes pierced through her.

Shepard had to promise she will be careful. "Okay, okay. Jeez, stop with that. Like I wasn't the Commander that beat your ass… just a few months ago…” Garrus chuckled in reply. Jane quickly went outside and jogged to the market place. While she was passing through the crowd someone touched her arm. She turned around, ready to fight but she faced a human woman instead.
"Commander Shepard… I... I'm sorry to bother you first thing in the morning… But… Can I get your autograph? And maybe a photo together?" She spoke with a Scottish accent, as far as Jane could evaluate.

Jane regarded the woman in shock. It was the first time she had seen another human on this Ward. After a second she nodded slowly. "Yes. What's your name?" She asked when she got a datapad to sign.

"Josephine Clark, Commander. I moved to the Citadel a few days ago and now I'm trying to look around a bit." Josephine smiled broadly when Jane handed back her datapad. After the initial shock passed, Jane could examine the woman more carefully. Josephine had black hair with a vibrant green streak, average height and build. The woman was lively and visibly excited about being on the Citadel and meeting with Shepard. "Can we have a photo?"

"Of course. But it's a bit crowded here. Come with me, I know a nice pastry shop down here." When Jane and Ms. Clark entered Li's shop, there was a small queue in front of the counter and 2 tables occupied by a salarian and asari, and two turians. Lilihierax spotted Jane and waved to her.

"Jane, sunshine! I don't miss Palaven sunsets when you are around!" Customers started to giggle but that didn't discourage the owner to praise Jane's beauty or whatever the turian was praising.

"Li, you're the most handsome turian I ever saw. And the loudest." Again customers laughed at the silly banter between human and turian. Some of them Jane recognized as regular customers of the bakery. That's why they already knew Jane and how she and Lilihierax behaved. "Come, Ms. Clark, let's wait for our turn."

It took a few minutes for them to reach the shop's counter where Lilihierax was waiting for them with a big turian grin on his face. Josephine looked a bit scared but Jane reassured her with a pat on the back that everything was alright. "Li, please give us mava juice and donuts. And can you take photo of us? Ms. Clark wanted to have photo with me."

"Did I miss something? Are you famous?"

"Yeah… Somehow I happened to marry a turian… you know the guy?" Before Lilihierax could reply with some sort of insult, Jane presented Josephine to the turian. She could feel that Ms. Clark was a bit scared of turians but she reassured her that Li was a friend. Then the two women sat on the table and Li took photos of the two of them enjoying a meal on the Citadel. Ms. Clark was excited, she scrolled through the images with a big smile.

"Thank you, Commander Shepard. That's far more than I wished for."

"Um, I'm not Commander Shepard, now I'm Commander Jane Vakarian. But please, just call me Jane."

"Josey." The black haired woman offered her hand and Jane shook it firmly. "You don't know how much I've wanted to meet you and thank you. Because of you, the war ended. My family is safe. And… I could come to the Citadel. That was my biggest dream."

Jane felt a connection with Josephine. They talked for an hour. She got to know that the Council offered part of the Ward to humans and a lot had already settled in. It was far, on the other arm of the Citadel. Fuck… I was too busy to check about humans on the Citadel… The two woman would have talked even longer but were interrupted by the appearance of a very angry turian.

"Jane!" Shepard jumped on her seat. She turned toward the entrance of the shop to see Garrus
panting and leaning on the doorframe. "Where were you? Why is your omni-tool on silent mode?"

Lilihierax started to laugh at the back of the shop. "Hello, Garrus, good to see you so early in the morning. Especially in such a bright mood!"

"Hi and shut up, Li." Garrus only grunted and approached Jane and a scared, unfamiliar human female. He looked at the stranger then at her hair. He was confused by the different colours of it but didn't have time to think more about it. "Jane, we have to go. There is so much to do."

"Okay, okay. But first let me introduce Ms. Josephine Clark. She came to the Citadel a few days ago and we met in the market. I'm sorry that we talked too long. And about my omni-tool… I set it on silent mode before going to sleep… Those damn notifications…” Jane dropped her head, feeling bad. She had completely forgot about the overprotective turian waiting for her at home. Then she felt his hand on her cheek, pulling her head up.

"It's fine, Jane. I'm glad I found you. And please, never do it again." Good I still have that tracking program installed on your omni-tool. He looked into Shepard's eyes and the need to join his forehead with her took him over but, luckily or not, Lilihierax's amused trill snapped Garrus out of it. He took a few steps back and coughed nervously. "Anyway. Nice to meet you, Ms. Clark. Commander Garrus Vakarian."

"Ni-to-mee-yo," Josey mumbled quickly, blush all over her face. "I mean… Nice to meet you, Commander."

Jane turned to Josephine, smiling a bit sadly. "It was really nice to meet you. Do you have an omni-tool?" The woman nodded. Jane exchanged with her Omni-ID's and nodded in satisfaction. "Good. If that's not too much to ask, can we chat sometime soon? When I come back from Palaven, let's meet up."

"That would be awesome. I'll look forward to it."

The women parted, waving to each other. Jane was happy to meet another human at last. Especially funny and talkative ones like Josephine.

xXx

The whole week was hectic. Garrus' mother had, three times sent him new lists of things she wanted from the Citadel. Jane wondered at first why they had to buy all the stuff when Vakarian could just order them to be sent to Palaven.

Garrus looked at her above the crate he was packing with the stuff, wondering why she even asked - then realised that she just didn't know. "Shipping fees are still really high. Everything is, because of the war. Pirates and slavers attacked a lot of merchants and cargo ships while the turians were fighting humans. Fees will eventually drop to their previous level but for now… it's better to buy things yourself."

"Oh, I see. So the pirates and slavers still attack ships?"

"Yeah, they are like weeds, hard to get rid of them." The turian sealed the crate and looked at Shepard's one. "I think yours is the last one. We have four hours before leaving. Let's pack our stuff." He helped her with filling the last crate and both went to the bedroom to sort out their clothes, Jane's protective stuff and toiletries. When it was all laid on the bed, Garrus brought out their luggage and soon everything was neatly packed. "That's everything."

"Garrus?"
"Hmm?"

"Don't I need to take food with me… you know, levo stuff." Jane stood there, watching him with a bit of nervousness. She wondered if Garrus had forgotten about her being levo and her need to have a different type of food. He somehow saw through her instantly.

"Silly, don't worry. I know you are levo. I have at least 4 asari aunts and 7 cousins living on Palaven. My mum can cook levo food. And from what my cousins say, she's really good at it." Vakarian came to Jane, his hand moved over the woman's head, stroking her hair in a calming gesture. "I didn't forget. I will take care of you." Jane graced him with a smile that could win over anyone. "By the way, take your guns. Even if we are taking a council shuttle and we go by the safe route, I want to be prepared."

"You expect something bigger than just… I don't know… a turian patrol?"

"I like to expect the worst." He grinned smugly. "There's a small chance I'll be pleasantly surprised." xXx

"This is our shuttle." Garrus pointed at the docked shuttle in the Council bay. It wasn't small, like normal shuttles but quite big and looked luxurious. "Looks good."

With the help of two workers, working in the Council bay they managed to put all the crates and luggage inside the ship. Then they proceeded to the Security Checkpoint to have all the paperwork done.

"ID's and baggage is good. Have a safe trip, Mr. and Mrs. Vakarian." An asari gave them their ID's back and smiled at them. They could board the shuttle at last. Inside Garrus went into the cockpit and sat on the pilot seat and Shepard next to him, taking the co-pilot one.

The woman looked quite excited. "You know how to pilot this thing?"

"Of course, we learn how to pilot smaller ships during our Standard Military Training. You don't know how to pilot ships?"

Jane shook her head, looking confused at the hologram console in front of Garrus. All those graphs, buttons and other strange things that made no sense to her. "I know how to drive, I can drive a skycar. But this? Oh, no. Huge nope."

Garrus chuckled. He leaned out of his seat and put his hand on hers. "Watch and learn." Then he sat again in his seat and pushed a few buttons. "CS-004 requesting permission to depart."

A grumpy voice on the other end of the comm-link gave them permission. Garrus again touched buttons, shuttle engine started and they flew from the docking bay. Jane was impressed at how easy he could navigate the ship. "Be ready, I'm engaging FTL speed." In a few short seconds, the ship started to shake a bit but it took only a while. "Okay, we will jump through the Relay in an hour. Then we will have to fly for 6 hours from the Relay in the Trebia system to Palaven. I'm switching to the autopilot." The turian stood up and took Jane's hand. "See, nothing hard. Now come. I want to see what it looks like besides the cockpit."

The shuttle or rather ship, had two decks. One with two cabins, a small storage room and cockpit. The second deck consisted of two other cabins, a small mess hall and observatory lounge with big window. Jane sat on the couch there and watched the view. Everything was moving with incredible speed. "It's beautiful."
Meanwhile Garrus checked the bar. "Oh, this is nice. Want something to drink?"

"You want to get me drunk, husband? So I can embarrass you?" Jane grinned to him and in the end nodded. "But something light, please. Maybe wine…"

An hour later, they jumped through the Relay and Jane again went to the lounge. They shared one more drink then Jane explicitly forbade any more drinking. "I don't want us to be drunk, Garrus. It would be inappropriate."

Vakarian agreed with her. The rest of the trip they spent on talking and joking till the autopilot indicated they were only 30 minutes to Palaven. "Gear up, sunshine, or Palaven's sun will burn your skin."

Jane smirked at the endearment. Garrus had lately, started to really warm up their relationship. Not that she was passive, she also flirted and used endearments. It was new to her though, she had never received such things from a man. The new territory she stepped on, fascinated her as much as scared her. Was she crazy for even thinking about romancing a turian? And was it really a problem here? Shepard learned that cross-species romances were a normal thing. She saw turians and salarians coupled with asari. No one batted an eye at that. Would it work out with a turian and a human?

When Jane was in her environmental suit, all ready, she went to the cockpit. Garrus was already there, inputting commands on the console. "You're here. Oh, Jane, you look good in that." Vakarian smirked to himself, seeing her blush. "Sit and lock your belts. I need to disengage FTL." The ship jerked a bit, they could feel it moving slower.

Jane looked outside the window on her side and froze. In front of her she saw two big moons and an even bigger planet. "This is…?"

"Palaven, yes. And those two moons are Nanus and Menae."

Jane's hand covered her mouth, tears gathered in her eyes. She was deeply moved by the sight. Her dreams of visiting unknown planets, meeting aliens, was coming true. Just like Garrus promised her. "Oh God, it's so beautiful."

Vakarian turned to her, sensing the salty scent emitting from the woman. "Hey, don't cry, Jane. Besides… wait till we dock." He pushed the button for the comm-link and connected with the docking bay on Cipritine.

"Cipritine Docking Bay, this is CS-004. Requesting permission to dock."

"This is Cipritine Docking Bay. Permission granted. Dock A-02. Welcome to Palaven." The flanging voice that replied was definitely a turian one, female but turian nevertheless. Jane felt that she really was going to enter a different world. Docking took Garrus less than five minutes. After they docked, Vakarian turned off the engines and started to depressurise the ship.

"Okay, we can leave. Keep your helmet in your hands. We will be in the building so you don't have to put it on yet."

Jane pointed at the storage room with their stuff. "What about our luggage and crates?"

"Don't worry, bay workers will take them for us." He replied and without a word he took her hand and lead her outside the ship. While walking he opened his omni-tool and with a voice command, he called his father. "Dad, we're in the Cipritine Docking Bay, Dock A-02."

"We'll be there in 5. Wait for us."
"Okay. We can do the paperwork before they get here." Garrus took Jane to the security checkpoint, where a turian took Garrus' ID. Then he looked at Jane and growled.

"And what is that? A pet?"

Vakarian's blood boiled, he grabbed the office worker by his collar. His guttural growl was an indication that Garrus was really pissed. "Listen, pal, this is my wife, not a pet. Now take her ID, check it in and don't annoy me any further. Or maybe I should call Primarch Fedorian?"

"No! No need! Sorry, madam, please give me your ID." Jane handed the turian her chit with the ID. He handed it back with a dipped head. "I'm really sorry, welcome to Palaven and enjoy your stay, Mr and Mrs Vakarian." Meanwhile some workers were unloading their belongings in front of the dock. Garrus' parents arrived shortly after.

"Jane! Garrus! It's so nice that you came!" Garrus' mother, Kalea, dashed toward them with a happy trill. She grabbed Garrus' arms and waited for him to dip his head. When he did, she joined their foreheads, her trill became even louder. "So good to have you back, son." Then she turned toward Jane and also grabbed her arms and this time she leaned to touch foreheads with the human. "Jane, how are you? Is my son taking good care of you?"

"The best. Sometimes I think he's too overprotective. And I'm fine, thank you." Jane felt a bit awkward. She realised that she knew so little about turian customs. She learned their history in the museum but she hadn't even once asked about customs and culture. God, why I was so stupid?

"Don't worry, dear. It's a turian thing. We are really an overprotective species."

Next one in line to welcome them was Castis Vakarian. He came to his son and they shook hands. Garrus' father seemed to not be bothered by the human female, not saying a word to her. Which was met with a growl from his wife. "Castis, if you're going to pull that xenophobic crap again, you will sleep in the garden from now on!"

"Castis!" Kalea couldn't stop herself anymore and smacked her husband on the fringe. "Really, it's almost half a year since the war ended. You will stop this nonsense! Spirits, have mercy on me..." The turian mother turned toward Shepard and hummed apologetically. "I'm so sorry about that old piece of rock. Sometimes I wonder what I ever saw in him, honestly. But, that's not important... Sol... Solana, come here."

"Hi, Jane!" The young female waved to Shepard enthusiastically. "Wow! Your hair! Is it... longer?"

The turians regarded Jane's hair with stunned silence.

"Uhm, yes. It is. Actually, human hair grows. It can get really long. Usually we cut it from time to time." The turians keened in unison as they imagined it would hurt. She waved her hand to dismiss the idea and quickly explained herself. "Oh! It doesn't hurt! Trust me! Hair is like nails, it doesn't hurt to cut. It hurts if you pull it... or rather the skin that it's attached to hurts. But hair can be cut and it doesn't bleed or hurt. Trust me."

"Oh, that's strange." Kalea said, breaking the awkward silence. "Castis, tell those men to take Jane's and Garrus baggage into our skycar. Let's go, I have prepared a welcome party for you two."

Jane and Garrus walked behind his mother and sister. Garrus after a moment of consideration leaned to Jane and asked in whisper. "I didn't know human hair grows and it can be cut. Why haven't you
"Have you seen any salons on the Citadel?" Jane asked, smirking to herself. "I don't think so. And I can't do it myself. Or I can but it would look hideous. So it just grows."

"I like it longer." His hand brushed through the red strands, feeling its silky texture. "You can keep it that way."

Jane smiled at him in reply. It didn't take them long to approach the exit of the building. Jane quickly tied her hair into a bun and put the helmet on then went outside just to freeze. In front of her she saw the big city of white metal and glass. The city was surrounded by mountains covered with silver. The woods were actually silver. Her eyes watered again, she was overwhelmed by the landscape. "Oh my God..." She could only say until sobs took her ability to speak, away. She could tell that the Cipritine Docking Bay was on one of the mountains a few miles away from the capital of Palaven.

The city itself was like a fortress, made up from rings that enveloped large structures in the middle of it. There was a big tower with at least 6 smaller towers circling it. Shepard couldn't tell how many rings the city was made of but each ring was higher than the previous one. The city itself was the biggest metropolis she had ever seen. City was splayed over whole valley between mountains and further behind them. Just like neverending sea of buildings and structures. Jane didn't know how long she indulged herself in the sight of Cipritine but she could tell it would be hard to sate her.

Mountains surrounding the city were like a natural protective wall against enemies. At least enemies of the old. Covered with forests of silver - few villas here and there, but mostly woods. As far as she could tell, the tree bark was brown with a silver tint but the leaves were actually silver, metallic and shone in the sun. Jane looked up, the Palavenian sky was green, not blue and the sun was so bright. She thanked the inventor of the helmet, as she could look directly at the sun without hurting her eyes.

Again she looked at the city. She saw skyscrapers of metal and glass. She saw buildings white as snow, dotted with windows and balconies. At last, and that was surprising, Jane saw gardens of silver, parks - a lot of them. So turians like gardens... huh...

She snapped out from her admiration over the view when she felt Garrus' hand over her arm. "Jane? You're crying again."

"Oh... I'm sorry... I..."

Kalea came to Garrus and Jane, her subharmonic sang in a concerned tone. "Something happened? Is Jane alright?"

"Yes, mother. She-

Shepard interrupted him. She turned toward his mother and said with a mesmerized voice. "That's the most wonderful place I have ever seen in my entire life... I... Do you remember the turian colony where we met the last time before the truce?" Garrus nodded. "I thought it had to have been really amazing in it's time of glory... but seeing the real thing... not just a colony, but Cipritine itself... Your species is amazing. I... I don't know what to say more... I can't the find words to describe..."

Kalea stepped to her and hugged her firmly. "Spirits... if anyone says a bad word against you, I'll rip them to shreds. I say it officially: You are one of us, Jane. You are my daughter and if someone says otherwise... hell will break loose."

"Thank you, Mrs. Vakarian." Jane hugged Garrus' mother back, feeling the warmthness in her heart.
Even though Kalea was a turian, Jane felt she was real family to her.

"Don't call me Mrs. Vakarian, mother is fine. We are family after all." They could hear an exasperated huff from Castis in the back but Kalea disregarded it. She was already tired of her husband's shit.

"Thank you… mother."

Kalea moved back and sent the most bright, toothy smile Jane had ever seen on a turian's face. "Good. Now let's go home. Everyone is waiting."

They reached the Vakarian's mansion, placed on one of the hills outside the city, in no time. Jane was stunned. The house was really big and spacious and had a big garden, divided into three terraces. She thought they really should have a pool there but there was none. When they entered, a group of turians and at least 3 asari greeted them. Jane took off her helmet and each guest regarded her with interest. Kalea stepped forward and presented her daughter-in-law. "Everyone! This is Jane, Garrus' wife."

A turian with a dark robe embroidered in gold approached them and smiled. "I think you remember Primarch Fedorian. Anthius is friend of Castis, they served together in the military."

"Primarch." Jane dipped her head in acknowledgment.

"Commander Jane Vakarian. Good to have you here on Palaven. How do you find our planet and Cipritine?"

"It's breathtaking, Sir. I've never seen anything so stunning before."

The Primarch straightened with pride. "Of course, Palaven is beautiful, especially at this time of the year. Have a good time, then, I only came to greet you, Mrs. Vakarian. Now I need to go back to Hierarchy HQ. Work, work, work. It will never end." Fedorian patted her arm and left. Now everyone came closer to meet with the human guest.

A turian similar to Kalea approached them with three asari - adult and two teenagers. "Jane, this is my brother - Leantus and his wife Primana, and their daughters Leena and Kais. Over there is my sister, Haya, still looking for a husband." The turian female that looked exactly like Garrus' mother, except the clan markings, waved at them.

"Maybe I don't need one. When I look at Castis, I think I'll pass…” Haya joked and came closer to Jane and Kalea. She shook hands with Shepard and grinned. "I just hope Garrus didn't take much after his father."

"No, he's good… err… I mean both are fine, I suppose." Shepard's words met with a laugh from everyone. "I... I'm sorry…"

"Don't be, sweety." Kalea patted Jane's arm to calm her down. "Everyone know that my husband is hard to deal with. But that doesn't matter now. Please meet Janxi Letsos - Castis's oldest sister and her husband Mavi Letsos…" A green plated male turian dipped his head and a silver plated turian female waved with her hand. "They have three children but sadly, they couldn't be here with us. Don't worry though, in 5 days you will meet everyone. Castis's second sister will come with her husband and their children. My mother and father will come too. Oh, and Castis's mother as well."

"Oh… okay. Why is that? What will happen in 5 days?" Jane inquired. She felt something big was coming.
"Garrus didn't tell you?"

"Tell her what?" Vakarian materialised next to Jane, he was breathing quickly. He turned to Jane and squeezed her hand. "I had to move all our stuff, sorry I wasn't here." She shook her head to let Vakarian know it was all right.

"Tell her about the Unity Festival. Or have you forgot about it?"

"Is it that time of the year already?!” Garrus asked, perplexed.

I haven't checked the Palaven calendar while being on the Citadel... How could I forget about that? "You know that on the Citadel I don't use the Palaven calendar... Spirits, mum..."

"Didn't you see Nanus and Menae while passing them?" Solana said while giggling. "Oh, big brother, you're still the same."

"That doesn't matter anymore. We would still invite the two of you anyway. Now, Garrus, take Jane to your room and let her change into something more comfortable. We will eat in 10."

Garrus guided Jane upstairs - to his, or rather their room now. The room consisted of a large bed, a wardrobe, desk with computer, shelves with models of ships and stuff Jane didn't recognise, there was also a work bench with tools to clean and repair weapons. Jane hadn't expected any less from Vakarian. "So this is your room..."

"Something wrong?"

"Nah. I just imagined it this way. Exactly this way." Jane walked to the shelf and took one of the models off. She inspected it carefully, when she felt Garrus' hands on the clasp of her suit.

The turian leaned to her, his low voice rang in her ears, sending shivers down her spine. "Better change, we don't want to make them wait." Vakarian couldn't resist. The urge to touch her was stronger than ever. He felt wrong without her by his side. With her near, he just wanted to indulge himself in that tiny body.

She caught a ragged breath, not daring to move, while Garrus worked on her clasps, the suit fell from her arms, exposing her upper back, the back of her neck, and her neck itself. She was only in her bra.

The turian could again smell the sweet scent of her arousal. Oh! How he wanted to make even more from her. "Should I go outside?"

Jane shook her head and turned to him. Her chest waved in uneven breaths. "Ca- can you give me... my luggage?"

"Hmm..." Garrus feigned ponder over her words. His gloved talon scraped down her arm.

She waited for his reply but time wasn't in their favour. "Pretty please?"

Garrus nodded and turned around. He passed her her luggage. Jane fumbled inside, searching for her skinny jeans, black top and N7 hoodie. When she found all of the things, she took off her suit and quickly changed to normal clothing. Feeling the turian's eyes on her. It was hard to not to blush and she failed to stop it. "Okay. Let's go. I'm a bit hungry."

When they both went downstairs again, to the dining room, everyone were already there, the table set with food of various types. Jane saw dishes on blue and red plates. They sat on the last two available seats, Jane next to Solana and Garrus next to his aunt, Haya. kalea showed Jane the red plates and explained that those were levo dishes. They ate and talked for hours till it was time to part. Shepard couldn't believe it was already night. She was so tired that just went with Garrus to their
room and after a quick shower, she passed out on the bed. A lot had happened to her in a few hours.

xXx

For the next three days Jane, Garrus and Solana were sightseeing. Cipritine was an enormous city and Jane barely saw a small piece of it. It was marvelous nevertheless. Garrus took her to famous places, for example - Hierarchy HQ called Agoreum - a tall building in the center, the one she had seen from the Docking Bay. Vakarian explained that the center tower was Palaven, the smaller towers represented the biggest colonies. In the smaller towers, representatives of those colonies had their offices, their main job was to maintain a good relationship with the Hierarchy. There were also colonies out of Hierarchy space and jurisdiction, they had representatives too but their embassies were placed outside of the central ring. Jane thought that they made them look unworthy but didn't comment. Not my problem, not my concern.

Shepard also wanted to see the gardens and parks that she had seen before. She couldn't believe that they had vast areas of vegetation inside the city. Gardens were often covered with rooftops, protecting plants from the radiation. The parks here didn't need that as tall trees, that looked like giant mushrooms, made the perfect shade and protected the flowers on the ground. Jane thought that the flowers would be silver too. Far from that. The moment she entered one of the parks, a multitude of colours of flowers hit her eyes. She couldn't believe it. Solana was guiding her through the flowers, naming each kind and giving various facts about them. There were flowers with blue chalices and green stems, that smelled almost like roses. Pink and yellow ones similar to Earth's sunflowers. Jane walked with Solana and both females were really excited about all of them.

Garrus was slightly in the back, watching Jane. At first he was a bit scared that some turians may be unsympathetic or even aggressive toward her but then he realised she looked like an asari. No one could guess that there was a human inside the environmental suit. With that thought he relaxed and just casually followed the women while they had their fun.

xXx

The day before the Unity Festival, Garrus' mother forbade them to go anywhere. She asked Jane to help her with cooking and domestic work. She, Jane and Solana were busy the whole day in the kitchen while Garrus and his father ran errands in the city, buying food and beverages, taking things for the festival from his aunts and uncles.

It was night when he at last returned home and could relax. They ate a quick supper. Garrus watched Jane talking with his mother and sister, laughing and visibly enjoying their company. He was glad that she wasn't detested, that she had become part of the family. After supper, Vakarian had to go to his father's office. Senior Vakarian wanted to have a little chat with his son. At last they had a little bit of time to talk. Hear news from the Citadel, exchange them with those from Palaven.

It was late when his father called it a day and went to bed. Garrus checked his room but Jane wasn't there. He went downstairs to see his mother and Sol watching a vid. Vakarian started to panic.

"Where is Jane?"

"Jane is in the garden. She said she hadn't had any time to watch the sky at night."

"And you let her go alone?!" Garrus yelled but didn't wait for the reply. He rushed through the first terrace - she wasn't there - the second one - still nothing. He found Jane sitting on the last terrace, watching the sky. The turian sat heavily next to the woman and sighed.

"Tired? I am. We cooked for a whole legion, I think."
"I'm not tired! I was worried!" His voice pitched high. Garrus grabbed her by the arms and forced her to look at him. "You shouldn't be alone!"

At first Jane looked at him confused but a moment later her features warmed and she smiled. She reached her hand to his mandible, stroking it with care. "Thank you. I want to ask you something, Big Guy?"

"What?"

"Can you explain me what the Unity Festival is? I didn't have time to ask… and it's tomorrow."

Garrus chuckled at her enormous interest and thirst for knowledge. Relaxing, he sprawled on the bench and started his explanation. "First I need to tell you the legend about Menae and Nanus - Palaven's moons. A long time ago, when the turian's hadn't reached space yet. There was a huntress - Menae, and a chieftain's son called Nanus. Nanus' father wanted to marry his son to the finest huntress so he organized a competition. A lot of females joined the competition. What Nanus' father didn't know was that his son already had a lover - Menae. She was from a different clan. They often met in secret. Nanus asked Menae to join the competition under a different name. She won the competition by killing the biggest pray and offering it to the Chief. Yet something bad happened… One of other huntresses revealed the true identity of Menae and the Chief ordered her executed. They had to wait though… Menae was pregnant with Nanus' child and it's sacred law to not harm a pregnant female. So they waited till Menae gave birth to a son - Palaven. Still the Chief ordered the execution. Nanus argued with his father but he was oblivious to his pleas. That's why Nanus acted against his father's will and freed Menae from her prison. They fled into the woods, chased by the Chieftain's guards. They fought them with extraordinary bravery but were overpowered. They died. The chief of the clan understood his mistake too late. Nanus was dead along with his love - Menae. The chief went to the other clan and offered to unite both clans under Palaven's reign. That's why it's called Unity Festival. When the two moons of Palaven meet in the sky. When Palaven's father and mother can be together again."

When Garrus finished his story he saw Jane's cheeks covered in tears. She looked up at the almost joined moons and cried. He saw the woman's hair shine in the moon's light and he couldn't contain himself any longer. Carefully he turned her face to look at him and lowered his head. They foreheads joined as well as gazes, locked on each other. Garrus had never felt this way toward any female. Spirits, I love her. That's it. No more lies.

Then, Jane did something he never experienced. She cocked her head slightly and placed her lips on his mouth plates. Her hands ghosted on his neck. What came next, shocked him even more. He could feel her lips part and her tongue brush his plates. Garrus didn't know why but he opened his mouth too. His tongue met with Jane's, tasting it, brushing over it. Vakarian didn't understand why he knew what to do but somehow it was so simple. Her taste was exotic and wonderful. Her small tongue so soft. The turian just wished it would never end.

Jane felt Garrus tongue on hers, circling around, it was so long. It's rough texture did wonders to her. The woman felt millions of butterflies in her stomach, warming her from the inside. The feeling was descending down and she felt she was wet from just kissing the turian. Her tongue went to his teeth, feeling how spiky they were, testing if she could get really hurt but he felt that and stopped her with his dexterous tongue, preventing her from doing any harm to herself.

They finished the kiss abruptly, gasping for air. She looked down, feeling ashamed of the urge to kiss Garrus that overwhelmed her. For giving in. "I'm sorry… I…"

Garrus leaned to her forehead again, stopping her from talking. "No."
"Huh?"

"Don't be sorry. That was perfect. You are perfect." And that was the utter truth. *No more lies, Garrus.*

xXx

That was a lot of words to read. I hope some made sense :D

Hyu, hyu, hyu xD

Please leave comment!
'Don't be sorry. This was perfect. You are perfect.' Those words echoed in Jane's mind. She was looking into Garrus' brilliant blue eyes while they still had their foreheads joined. Her hands rested on his neck, stroking with her thumbs. The turian was purring quietly. "What are you doing to me, Garrus?"

"The same you're doing to me, Jane." Vakarian pulled the woman onto his lap, at last she was in his arms. "How I wanted this…" He growled, nuzzling the side of her head and hair.

Jane embraced Garrus, one hand on his cowl while stroking his fringe with the other. They stayed silent, drowning in one another. At last they had the courage to do what they had wanted to, for some time. Her fingers traced the lines of his fringe, then mapped his forehead plates, their eyes locked. Shepard realised that she hadn't even asked about one important thing. "Garrus?"

"Hmm?"

"What does joining foreheads mean for turians? We touched foreheads on our wedding day, although it was quick, not to mention you were so angry… mother touched with you and me when we arrived on Palaven… and…" She blushed at the memory of the recent scene. "And just now…"

"It's a gesture reserved only for ones we… uhm, love… spouse or children - closest family." Garrus turned from her, nonplussed. "Sorry about that one during the wedding. I was an idiot." She dismissed it with a shake of her head and pulled his head down. They did it again, looking into each other's eyes. "It doesn't have any other meaning than: I care for you."

"Oh… so it's like a human kiss?"

"Human what?" Jane giggled and put her lips on his mouth plates once again.

"That is a human kiss… you can add tongue to make it extra spicy." The woman winked at the turian. "It can also mean: I care for you… but mostly, if it's between lovers, it just says: I want you." She quickly realised what she had just said and tried to clarify. "Oh, I… I didn't mean I want you - want you… Oh, God… I um, want you… but… what I meant was…"
"Hey, calm down. I understand." Garrus embraced her firmly. He let his subharmonic sing a soothing tone. It worked perfectly by relaxing her. "I don't know how it will go… the situation is strange and new… I never been in a serious relationship with a turian female, let alone a human one. I will make mistakes, for which I can only apologise now but we can make it work, ok? I, uh… I've seen so many things go wrong, Jane… I've hurt my girlfriends, I was a huge asshole… I want this to go right. Just once… So far we haven't killed each other and that's a good start."

Jane giggled quietly. She thought of all those battles they had fought. "From enemies to a married couple, huh? With feelings and such..." She touched Garrus' scarred mandible. She regarded the scar, remembering how it had happened. "I'm sorry for that one… I never meant to hurt you out there. That one time things got out of hand. To be honest, for five months I was really bored and missed you."

"I know. I shouldn't have run to that side… I was careless. Then... I was so restless during recovery but I came back and again we had fun. It's a pity they spoiled the last one before the war ended." The turian cocked his head, thinking about something funny. "We were a hell of a couple on the battlefield… still are but at last we are on the good side."

"Yeah." Jane nodded to that. They really were an unstoppable force. Now it was even better… their matches in the Armax Arena always gathered large audiences. "You're right, we will make mistakes. Both of us. I've never been in a relationship, at all… but I really want this to work out. I can't really put into words why, but I... I care for you, feel connected to you, Garrus. No Shepard without Vakarian."

"Technically you're a Vakarian as well, Shepard." Both of them started to laugh and couldn't stop. When they finally did, Jane had to wipe the tears from her eyes. "We should go, sweetheart, tomorrow all hell will break loose. All of the family are coming. My grandparents, aunts and uncles with my cousins. Every year it gets more crowded and noisy and mother will make us celebrities this time."

Jane frowned and again she stressed out. "But don't leave me alone, okay? I hope they'll like me… at least a bit more than your father."

"Don't mind him. It's just that he wanted something more for me. Still wants more but I'm a bad turian… I'm not good at following orders. My father's dream is for me to achieve a high tier, marry a good woman… have kids. Problem is I always wanted something else. Now I know what. Nihlus was right in the end… He told me once… that I am an adult and need to think for myself and make my own decisions." Garrus fell silent. He needed those words to sink in, for himself. Saying it aloud made it real. "I want this to go right."

Jane stood up and offered her hand to him. "I'm by your side. Always, remember that. Now come on. There is a nice bed that awaits us and nice pillows that sings to me 'sleeep Jaane, go tooooo sleeep'." The last part she sang in a ghostly voice.

Garrus chuckled and both of them went to their room. Keeping their hands locked together.

xXx

Garrus was right. Ever since Jane, along with him, had appeared in the kitchen that morning, Kalea made them do all sorts of things. From preparing or finishing the dishes to setting the tables that had magically multiplied in the dining room. Jane didn't really count but still wagered that there would be more than 20 people for dinner. How they were all going to fit in the dining room, was a mystery to her.
When they had finished all of the table's preparations, they sat down in the living room. The only thing left to do was to wait for Castis Vakarian to bring his mother and parents-in-law to the house. Solana, with Shepard, was sitting on the couch. The young turian had started practicing what Jane had taught her recently - plaiting braids. Garrus was watching the two on the couch, enjoying a relaxing moment with two of three most important women in his life - his mother was still busing herself in the kitchen.

"How you managed to learn it so fast is a mystery to me, Sol." Jane mused while trying to look at the three-fingered hand busy with her human hair. "After all these years I still can't do it properly myself… and I have five fingers for God's sake!"

"I don't understand it myself, Jane. But your hair is amazing… what will I do when the two of you return to the Citadel?" Solana keened sadly. Having her brother at home was good but having Jane - an enormously interesting human - was even better. When the turian teenager was done with one thin braid, she strapped a hair tie around it and proceeded to plait another one.

"You will miss us as much as we will miss you, I suppose but I have an idea! Garrus said once, that we could go to Earth… there I can buy you hairdressing head dummies and wigs." Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Sol cock her head, apparently not understanding the word. "Wig is… hmm.. artificial hair that can be put on the head. We have hair implants so nowadays wigs are only to dress up. Anyway… I can ship them here or maybe we will come again. Dunno…" Jane looked at Garrus and smiled. "What do you think, Garrus?"

"That would be fun. We can go to Earth."

"Yay!" Solana jumped on her seat, Jane's hair slipped away from her grasp. "Aww, Spirits! I have to start all over again…"

"We have time, Sol! Besides, I have to say that I'm enjoying this…" Shepard giggled and sat still again to let the turian female have her fun. Poor Solana had to stop yet again when Jane's omni-tool pinged with a call. "Oh…? Sorry Sol, I need to pick it up." The woman opened the holo menu and saw Jack's call popping up in the center of it. She quickly started the conversation, a hologram of a familiar face appeared in front of her. "Hi, Jack! How are you?"

"Same shit, different day. I have news for you, ugly! I'll be on the Citadel in 5 days!" The biotic's eyes gleamed with happiness. Both Jane and her missed each other terribly. Vid-calls weren't enough for them anymore.

"Jeez, Jack. I'm on Palaven for the next 9 days. How long are you going to be staying on the Citadel?"

"One week. Bitch, why do you always have to spoil the fun. Okay, we will have three days to waste ourselves. Kahoku won't let me go outside the Alliance HQ on the Citadel. He still shits bricks about everything alien related. So, only the two of us and my apartment. Prepare for that, Shep!"

Jane imagined crates of booze and Jack in the middle of it. Perfect. "Best plan you've come up with in ages! I'm proud of you! Okay, need to finish this up. Sol is waiting to plait my hair and you interrupted her."

"Huh?" Jack's eyebrow raised to an unnatural level.

Jane moved her hand with the omni-tool on it to look at the turian girl. Solana was visibly embarrassed. "This is my sister-in-law, Solana Vakarian. Sol, this is Jacqueline Nought, Jack for short."
"Don't say that name aloud! You know I hate it. Hi, Solana, I'm Jack! Forget about that Jacqueline part." Solana giggled and waved at Jack.

Jane turned her arm to show herself again. "Tell your hubby that you won't be available or rather alive for three days. Okay, see you on the Citadel!"

"Bye!" Jack's holo vanished and Shepard deactivated her omni-tool. She turned to Garrus with a big grin on her face. "You heard the woman."

"And what if I say no?" Garrus asked with amusement. To be honest he wanted to return to the Citadel and spend some… quality time… with Jane in their apartment. Find out how is it to be with a female outside of his species. To test that nice waist and round ass at last. Especially after watching her exercise so many times. Last night she had been so close. Garrus had pulled Shepard's body against his as they slept, embracing. Her coolness was a huge perk. His thoughts were interrupted by Jane's laugh.

"Then you will end up with a biotic fist up your ass. Sorry, husband but if someone opposes Jack, things go bad. You don't want to be on the receiving end of her anger. Besides, it will only be three days." Solana in the meantime had finished another braid, finally allowing Jane to turn her head slightly toward Garrus, noticing his frown. "Oh, don't be a baby, Big Guy. I think a little break from me will do you good."

Garrus exhaled slowly. "I don't think so but have it your way." He took a datapad into his hands, trying to read something but was failing miserably. His thoughts circled around his wife and how he was displeased about the turn of events. Vakarian knew damn well that it was too dangerous to engage in any bedroom activities during their stay in his parents house. Especially with his father around. That's why the turian had decided to postpone those for their apartment. Now he had to wait three days more and it seemed like it would be an eternity. On the other hand, isn't it too fast for that? What if Jane will freak out? But I want her so much… Garrus' forced celibacy didn't help with keeping control over his lust either. It was a double loss.

Garrus stayed silent, listening to Jane and Solana chatter, till his father came back with his grandparents. When he overheard their arrival, the turian jumped up from the couch and went outside. Jane shut up and watched him leave. "What was that about?"

"Our grandparents have arrived… and big brother still plays father's game…" Solana said while wrapping a hair tie around third plait. "He really doesn't want to disappoint dad in any way… Thank you Spirits they don't expect much from me… yet..."

"What do you mean?" Jane turned toward the teenager and asked inquiringly. She had heard it from Garrus before but now Solana could explain it to her.

"Do you know about the social tiers in our society?" Shepard nodded in confirmation. Garrus already explained that part to her. "It's a pile of bullshit if you ask me. And as far as I know, my brother, he thinks the same deep down but his sense of duty and respect toward father, makes him fall in line. This will cause real problems for Garrus in my opinion. He should either open his eyes and tell father the truth or quit with… this, and act like he wants to." Then Solana leaned to Jane and whispered quietly. "I saw you… yesterday… in the garden. If you think he will show you any sign of affection within father's presence then you're wrong. Sorry Jane, but he is an idiot. You two should thank the Spirits that father's sense of smell is weak because of that accident during his C-Sec days… or he wou-"

Jane didn't get to know what Castis Vakarian would do or what Solana meant by his sense of smell. Or how it was related to anything at all. Her thoughts were interrupted by three elderly looking
turians coming inside with Garrus and his father. That wasn't everyone though. Soon after, a turian female with a little asari in her hands came in with an adult asari. That surprised Jane… a female turian with an asari?

Garrus waved at Jane to come closer. She shyly approached the new turians and asari. "Grandmothers, grandpa, this is, ekhm, my wife, Jane." Jane dipped her head in the turian fashion and greeted the elder turians. She instantly saw a huge difference between the elders, middle aged and young adult turians, like Garrus. Their plates weren't shining as Garrus' was, they had visible cracks, the skin on their neck was wrinkled and pale. So turians get old just like humans and here I thought they stay the same due to their plating… She realised also that Castis's plates weren't as shiny and vivid as Garrus' but the skin on his neck still was looking good.

"So this is a human?" The turian grandmother that resembled Kalea, who had to be her mother, approached Jane. Moments later another female turian came by. She had to be Castis's mother but didn't look like him at all with her red plates. The only similarity was the Vakarian clan markings and their eyes.

So Garrus' features were passed from grandfather Vakarian… except those eyes… They take after her.

"It's my first time seeing one… alive…” Kalea's mother stated. Everyone started to laugh except Jane, the woman froze in her place for a long moment. She slowly turned to look at Garrus but he put his thumb up, he had learnt the gesture from Jane. "Sorry dear, for my terrible joke… I've never seen any humans, dead or alive. I must say that you look... exotic."

"And it's nice to have someone not so blue in the family. Our asari daugther-in-laws are a bit boring compared to you." Castis's mother circled around Jane to stand behind her and stared at the human's hair. "What is wrong with your fringe?"

In that moment, Solana materialised next to her grandmother. "Granny! This is human hair! Look! It can be shaped to look different. And you can uh, plait it…?" Solana turned to Jane for confirmation. And quickly got it. "Braids. I made four, here."

While Solana was busy explaining human hair to her grandmother, Kalea emerged from the kitchen and after greeting the guests, she properly introduced Jane to everyone. "Jane, this is my mother - Zanya Oraka and this is my father, General Septimus Oraka, a retired general."

"Can you stop with the retired bit?!" An old turian yelled, annoyed. Jane shook hands with Septimus. His plates had to have been black, now they were dark grey. White clan markings adorned his face, like his wife. She could only imagine Kalea had had the same before she married Castis and had to change to Vakarian blue. "Such disrespect for the man who saved all your asses. Hello, Commander, good to meet you. I've heard a lot about your bravery and strength. I know our races fought together but I only hope you haven't experienced any hostile behaviour so far. All in all we are soldiers, following orders."

Jane agreed with those wise words but didn't have time to add anything more as Kalea pushed her father aside. "Okay dad, that's beautiful and all... remember just one thing: You're retired." Next to the Oraka's was grandmother Vakarian. "And this is my husband's mother, Hamras. Castis's father passed away a few years ago."

Jane nodded then smiled at the older turians. "It's really nice to meet you, Mrs. Oraka, General, Mrs. Vakarian."

"Don't call us that, dear. Please, call us Grandmother. Right, Hamras?" Castis's mother nodded. Both
patted Jane on the arm and smiled, showing all their turian teeth. Her son growled in the back. "What is it, son?"

"Mum, I have enough of him already. He can't live with the fact that his son was forced to marry a human female. He can't understand that it was for everyone's good. And when I see Jane and Garrus, they are completely alright with everything. Castis's brain just doesn't get it that war has ended. People are happy, there are no more casualties! And lastly, the turians can at last do something they are good at, keep the galaxy safe! It would be really nice if prices would go down a little too… can't buy decent treax sauce anymore…" When Kalea ended her rant everyone was silent for a moment.

Hamras looked at her son and just made a disappointed sound with her subharmonic. The older turian turned to Shepard. "Good... Anyway! I've heard you met my older daughter, please meet my younger one - Savia and her wife Xaretta. And this little sweetie is my youngest grandchild, Hamras. They gave her my name. I'm so proud." She took her grandchild and hugged her. The little girl giggled and caught her grandmother's mandible. Older Hamras put the little one into Jane's arms.

The asari toddler looked sweet. Big eyes, small nose and her fringe, or hair tentacles, looked really very cute. Jane embraced her and nuzzled the child's neck which was met with giggles from little Hamras. "You are cute, blue pumpkin! Next time I'll bring you some human toys and we'll play together!"

"Everyone! Please sit at the table, there are name cards as always. We need to wait for the rest. Leantus and Mavi already called. Everyone will be here soon." Kalea raised her voice so everyone could hear her. Jane wondered how it would be once everyone was gathered together.

Jane sat on her seat, between Garrus and his grandfather, General Oraka. Said turian leaned to Jane. "You can call me General if you wa-…"

"You're a retired general! She won't call you that at home!" His wife yelled from the other side of the table. She and Hamras were sitting on either side of Solana. Then next to Hamras was Xaretta with her little one and Savia.

Jane was laughing at the conversation. She felt comfortable as it was exactly what humans did, gather the family and spend time together. She felt at home, even surrounded by aliens, which wasn't problem for her. They had shown her that she was one of them. Most of the family anyway. When the rest of the family arrived, she met the 3 children of Janxi and Mavi, the oldest male, Pinohierix and the twins, an unusual occurrence for turians, Javi and Juna.

"Pinohierix is a Lieutenant of the 17th platoon, 3rd Fleet." His father said, he looked really proud of his son. "And the twins just enrolled into boot camp." Jane spoke at length with Mavi and his twins. She was really interested in training in a boot camp. The twins described that they would be having to learn how to use all sorts of weapons, from which they would chose the most suitable for themselves during their exam at the end of training. They would also be learning hand to hand combat and how to use tech skills like the basics of hacking and sabotage.

Then she turned to Pin. "So have you fought many humans? How do you find our skills?"

Pinohierix coughed and looked visibly embarrassed. "Ou… huh… humans are really strong and resilient and really stubborn… I was stationed as back up when Garrus got hit… in the middle of fighting you." He looked at his cousin's mandible and shivered. "I'm really happy I wasn't caught in the middle of that chaos…"

"What chaos? That was a stylish win until I got a rocket to the face!" Garrus chuckled. "I would so have win, but I fucke-"
"Garrus! Behave!" Kalea growled.

"But I made a mistake in my calculations." He ended, without swearing this time.

"Ha!" Jane said smugly. "All in all, now we're friends not enemies. Let's toast to that!"

They were eating and talking till it was nightfall. Everyone went outside to the garden, now decorated with lights that were floating around the seats and sofas on the first terrace. Jane, Solana and her mother brought drinks and snacks. Everyone sat comfortably and watched as the moons were going to unite.

Shepard experimentally tried to snuggle near Garrus to check if Sol was right. She was, Vakarian shifted and moved away from Jane. The woman smirked to herself. Sol was right. He's really afraid of what his father thinks. I won't compromise it. Better move away. And she did, going straight to Solana to let her plait braids again. Her grandmothers were mesmerized by how the young turian worked with Jane's hair.

Garrus looked at Jane as she walked away, trying with all his might to not look as displeased as he felt. He didn't want to act so stupid by avoiding her but now she was probably offended by his behaviour. It wasn't his fault that his father was looking at them. Vakarian was afraid that his dad already saw through him. On the other hand he didn't like lying to either of them either. Nihlus was right... I really should act like an adult... I can't keep this up much more. I'll hurt her, damnit! Or father… mostly father when he learns...

Everyone was having a good time, talking and enjoying the special night. When the time came and the moons, smaller Menae in front of bigger Nanus, where eclipsing each other, they could see myriads of fireworks light the sky. "I didn't know there would be fireworks!" Jane yelled to Solana, trying to outshout the noise made by exploding fireworks.

"It's a tradition. We celebrate Menae and Nanus back together." Jane already learned of the story. She watched as the two moons came together in unison and imagined two turians joining their forehead's and humming love with their subharmonics. It was a beautiful thing to witness.

It wasn't long before the turian elders decided to call it a day. Castis guided them to their guest rooms. Soon the other guests decided to leave, especially Savia with little Hamras sleeping in her arms. Jane and Solana helped with the cleaning up.

When Jane had finished it was really late, she climbed upstairs and entered the room. Garrus was already there, reading something on the datapad. Without a word she grabbed her pajamas and went to the bathroom to have a quick shower. Refreshed a bit, the woman returned to the room just to jump into bed and roll herself into the blanket. "Good night!"

"Wait for me, I'll change and be back in a minute." The turian returned to an already sleeping woman. Damn it! And here I wanted to apologise for earlier... and maybe practice her human kiss a bit... Garrus laid next to her and brought her sleeping body closer. She sighed adorably in her sleep, moving her head to lay on his arm. Well, that will have to be enough for now.

xXx

Jane was enveloped in warmth. She opened her eyes to see Garrus' arms around her, the turian's hot body so close to her and his neck just next to her… The woman nuzzled it, smelling, inhaling his scent of metal and soap. Turians didn't use much perfumes, instead washing their bodies with special soaps. Shepard started to kiss him, wishing he wouldn't wake up right now. She already missed having his forehead on hers… On the other hand she didn't want to push him, especially in front of
his father. Jane didn't really understand why he acted like that but if that's what he needed, she would agree and not bother him. Now she had great opportunity to indulge herself in his turian body. Trailing a path of soft kissed up his neck, over to the right, his scarred mandible then to his mouth plates. She regarded the still sleeping turian for a moment, admiring his strong features. Then she decided to return to his neck, kissing it at first then she licked it experimentally. Garrus moaned in his sleep. Jane bit his skin lightly, receiving lustful groans in response. He was waking up.

"Jaaane…" Garrus' said hoarsely and pulled her close, flushing her body against his. "You can wake me up like that every damn time…" He opened his eyes to meet hers, mandibles flaring with his good mood. It was his turn to nuzzle her hair and ear, licking her earlobe. He was pleased at hearing her muffled moan. Vakarian placed his forehead on hers. "Hi, you."

"Good morning." Shepard regarded his mesmerizing blue eyes and was utterly happy. For the first time in her life she was in the arms of someone that was so dear to her, so important. She kissed the turian, at first wanting it to be a brief but he stopped her head from retreating. Garrus licked her lips and she responded in kind. Feeling the rough texture of his tongue on hers. When the kiss ended, they just looked at each other, stroking their respective arms. Oh God, I love how he kisses… I won't be able to enjoy a human man ever again… not that I want to… never again.

I should apologize to her… for yesterday. Or maybe no? She doesn't look offended… Garrus was debating internally and almost said sorry but the woman was first to talk.

"I wanted to ask… don't be offended, please… but I wonder… is little Hamras really Xavia's child? Or was she just adopted her as her own? Being that she and Xaretta are two females…"

"No, no no no. You're looking at it the wrong way. Don't look at asari as females. They look like females, yes, behave like them but they are mono-gender. Asari can reproduce with any species and any gender with their melding… or joining… I don't know much about it except that the child is always an asari and that in their genes you can find the melded gene's of the… ehm, father. Xavia is the father here." He stopped for a moment, realising something. "Asair don't like to meld with each other. Calling the children of two asari "pureblood". They prefer to meld with other species, with different DNA…The rarer the pairing, the better."

Jane regarded the ceiling with a blank expression, thinking over Garrus' words. "So that was the reason…"

"Yeah… at least one of them. I don't think they married us just because the asari councilor wanted a human's DNA. Another reason is that the Council wanted to show humanity that it's okay to be, um… romantically involved with aliens…" The turian stopped talking, obviously embarrassed by his words.

Jane smiled to herself, she turned to Garrus, hooking her leg nonchalantly on his waist. "Aren't we romantically involved?" She said seductively, hearing his lustful growls.

"If we're not… we certainly can try to…" The turian's words were interrupted by his mother's voice over the intercomm.

"Wake up, kids! Your grandmothers want to go to the Farinha Park."

"Yay!" Jane smiled at Garrus and quickly kissed him on the nose, just to jump out of the bed. She took out one of her dresses with the protective hood and, skipping, went to the bathroom.

Garrus grunted. Reluctantly, he extracted himself from the bed. I missed the opportunity… I need to apologize to her. While waiting for Shepard to return, he picked his clothes. When Jane entered the
room in her asari dress, his jaw almost hit the floor. "Hi, sexy." Vakarian said after a while, all things literally vanishing from his head.

"Flatterer. Come on, I want to go to the park."

xXx

Garrus, Jane and Solana had a great time with their grandparents. While Solana and her grandmothers were walking around and admiring the park, Jane, Garrus and General Oraka where sitting on a bench. The older turian was entertaining the human woman with old war stories. While being in the park she lifted her hood up, her face was visible to others. Turians were stopping in the path to watch the human, some of them even growled in anger. Garrus could hear all of those, deciding to stay near Jane. After all she wasn't in an environmental suit and helmet anymore.

After the park, Garrus' parents came for everyone and all of them went to a levo/dextro restaurant. "Nihlus called, son. We will meet him for dinner."

Jane leaned to Kalea, happy to hear the news. "Nihlus is here? On Palaven?"

"Yes, he finished his assignment and was in the vicinity. So you know him, Jane?" The woman nodded and explained how they had met and that he was a friend. "Nihlus is really friendly. He even befriended his mentor Saren Arterius. I don't know how he managed that… I've known Saren for years and still get uncomfortable around him…"

"He's not that bad…" Castis replied. Jane was surprised that Garrus' father had joined the conversation at last. He never spoke when she was around.

"Because he's the same old rock as you, my dear husband. Xenophobic piece of shit, if you asked me." Garrus' father didn't even bother to grunt at his wife's words. It seemed he didn't want to make her angry when she was relaxed and in a good mood. "Anyway, how was the park?"

"Good, the General told us a lot of war stories!"

"Don't call my dad General, sweetie. He's…"

General Oraka huffed in exasperation from the seat behind Jane. "RETIRED! Everyone knows that, my dear daughter! Still, my rank was general and it will stay that way till I die! Show some respect!" Everyone started to laugh, even Castis and Septimus.

"Fine, fine. Have it your way, father."

Soon Castis landed with the skycar. Everyone went inside the restaurant. An asari waitress greeted them and showed them to their table. Each table was in a divided section, behind a soundproof field. The woman saw movement inside their section, Nihlus and another turian was already waiting for them. Jane smiled at Kryik and waved her hand. She could hear Garrus growl quietly. Still angry, that turian.

"Jane! My beautiful Jane! You hair shines like aurora on Palaven's pole! Your eyes are... my heart wants to stop by just looking at you!" The turian dashed to Jane and embraced her warmly. "I missed you terribly!"

"Nihlus, stop it…" Jane shook her head and wanted to say something more but an older turian stood up.

"Yes, Nihlus, quit that crap… Don't embarrass the turians with befriending the human scum." His
silver plates were dotted with cracks and scars. Jane looked at him and that was the first time she had seen a fringe that extended at eye-level. He looked a bit younger than Castis and Kalea but older than Garrus or Nihlus. "Castis, my friend, such a pity you had to sacrifice your own son… This is end for the turian race, it really is. Our best soldier had to marry one of those… things…"

Garrus lurched at Saren, pinning him to the ground. He would have punched him in the face if his father and Nihlus didn't pull him up. "Calm down, son. Don't make a scene. This trash isn't worth it."

Jane's eyes widened. Castis was defending Garrus and in the process, her. "Saren… it's better if we leave." Nihlus picked his mentor up from the floor. Saren ripped his arm from Kryik's grasp and left without a word. "Spirits… I love the man but he's such an asshole sometimes… Someone should pull that stick out of his ass someday! Sorry, I'll go and talk with him. Garrus, Jane, please come to my place when you're back on the Citadel. I'll send you my address, Jane. And… uhm, Kalea, Castis, I'm deeply sorry for the incident."

"It's not your fault, Nihlus." Garrus' mother came and hugged the turian Specter. "You should come to Cipritine more often, you know? We miss you."

While Kalea and Nihlus were talking, Jane asked about the relationship that his parents and Nihlus had. "Oh, that. Nihlus was from another colony. Our mothers are friends so he stayed at our place while attending the last years of school and then when he enrolled at Boot Camp… he stayed even longer. Until Saren took him to the Citadel so Kryik could attend Specter training."

"Oh, I see."

After Nihlus had left, Jane got his address for his place on the Citadel. Garrus had again shown a bit of jealousy, Jane at last identified the source of his anger toward Nihlus. Even though the dinner was delicious, Jane looked around and was clearly uncomfortable. The restaurant was filled with turians and a few asari. They looked at her from time to time. She saw anger, hatred and disgust in their eyes. Garrus was quick to see through her. "Jane? What is it?" He asked and the whole family turned toward the human female.

"It… It's nothing. I just… everyone is looking at me." She eyed the turians on the other side of the room, visibly looking in her direction. "On the Citadel, everyone knows me already… and when I went to that restaurant with Nihlus, I was too preoccupied with him and new things to even notice… Not that I'm afraid. It's just… a strange feeling in the back of my mind."

Kalea patted her hand. "Sweetie, don't worry. You are here with us. We accept you as you are. It doesn't matter that you're human. Your heart is turian and I can see that." She then gestured at Castis. "Look, even that old piece of rock defended you."

"Don't jump into conclusions, my dear wife. I was defending my son. Public fighting would affect his tie..." Growls from both his mother and wife stopped Castis from talking.

"Castis!"

"You see for yourself, mother! I'm done! I can't stand this any longer!"

"Dad… please, don't argue. I'm only here for a few days, can't it be peaceful? For once?" Garrus turned to his father. The turian knew that he had special influence over his father and used it shamelessly.

The rest of the meal passed quietly. They resumed their conversations, Jane relaxed, not bothered by the other turians anymore. *Mother is right. I'm here with the Vakarians, I'm safe. Without my Black*
Widow I can rely only on Garrus and my fists…

xXx

Thanks, leave comment and have a Merry Christmas! Wish you lots of good moments and nice presents under the Christmas Tree 3
UPDATE (30.03.2017): Thanks to Erin Primette from I got to know that Garrus' father's name is Castis and I decided to change Akteon to his canon name. Although I write AU fic I try to stick to as much canon stuff as I can. So that's it. Thanks again, Erin for your message :)

Hello everyone! How are you after Christmas break? Bellies full? Got nice presents? Socks filled with sweets? I hope yes :D

And as a New Year's present I'll give you this nice chapter.

Remember to tune for Razzberry's chapters too, here be links:

Mass Effectiveness /works/5330642
Dawn of a New Era /works/4978891

Happy New Year! (In a few days...) We'll meet again in 2016 :D

xXx

The day after the incident in the restaurant, Kalea's parents and Castis's mother had to go back home. As it turned out they were neighbours in a small, peaceful town on the other side of Palaven, where the retired turians lived away from noise of big cities. Jane spent only three days with the turian elders but grew to like them tremendously. The next days passed peacefully. The Vakarian's decided to stay at home and show Jane how turians spent their time, except they met with Primarch Fedorian for an official dinner. In her spare time Shepard, decided to talk with her father-in-law, when Garrus, his sister and mother went shopping. Despite the coldness in his voice, the two of them had a decent conversation. She learned that he was a C-Sec officer when he was younger but had taken the position of Clan Leader after his father became ill. As a Leader, he had to keep an eye on those clan members that needed help, those who wanted to elevate their tier. Castis was answering directly to the Hierarchy and Primarch, as a representative of the Vakarians. He had roughly 1,500 clans members under his power, both turian and asari. Plus one human now. Jane could understand why he was so obnoxious toward her, why he wanted his own son to achieve something more. As it stood, Castis's tier was 24, where the Primarch's was 27 - the highest.

Jane felt bad about the tier thingy. She didn't want to stand in Garrus' way of achieving something better. After her talk with her father-in-law, she felt bad. She knew she had to hide it from everyone, but still felt it inside. It was the first time she had felt like a hindrance.

The woman didn't know that Garrus had seen the change in her behaviour. Not knowing the reason for it, he decided to do something to cheer her up. Two days before their departure, he had organised a small surprise for Shepard.

"Jane, wake up." The turian nuzzled the side her head, licking her ear - he found it was a really sensitive place. Jane only turned around and grunted - still asleep. "Jane." Garrus growled into her other ear.

Shepard raised her head for a second, opening one eye, just to drop it again. "Wha-? It's still dark…” Her muffled voice came from the pillow.

"Get up, I have a surprise for you." His talon ran down her neck, making her shiver. That woke her
"What surprise? And why it can't wait for morning?" She sat up, rubbing her sore eyes. When she fully opened them, she saw a smirking turian. He regarded her for a moment then, ever so slowly, lifted the fallen strap of the N7 tank top she slept in. Jane shivered at his touch again, feeling his talon brushing her skin so lightly. She tried to stay focused but she could only think of how she wanted him to continue.

"If I tell you now, there won't be any surprise." Vakarian lifted his wife up from the bed. Jane froze when the turian started to lift her tank top, exposing the woman's stomach almost to her chest. She quickly stepped back, red on her cheeks and turned around. "Put on your environmental suit."

Jane quickly changed to her protection gear. Eyeing from time to time, the turian that had changed into his blue armor. Huh? Why he... oh motherfucking... he's so sexy in that... looks just like from before... when the war was still on. Jack was right... I had something for him even then.

Garrus noticed her stare. "Yes, I know I look dashing. Especially in my armor."

"It's painted with your overgrown ego."

"Say what you want. I know that you really like what you see." He replied smugly, finishing with the clasps of his armor.

The woman turned her head away from him. The pout on her lips was an obvious indication she didn't like being so easy to read. Why is he turning me on so much? And in such a simple way? Get a grip of yourself, girl. Jane felt his hand on hers, she turned to see Garrus in full armor.

"Come on." He whispered and took her to the skycar in front of the house.

The two of them entered the skycar and Garrus took off the second the doors closed. It was greyish orange outside, an indication of the coming sunrise. Jane wondered if the turian wanted to show her the sunrise in some, ah, so romantic place. That thought made her snort.

"What's so funny?" Garrus asked. He pulled the skycar up to fly in the highest part of the atmosphere.

"Just a silly thought." She replied.

The turian aligned the vehicle then sped up to supersonic speed. He could feel Jane's excitement when he did it, eyeing her, Garrus saw her smiling. Her heart rate and breathing was so fast. "I knew you like speed. Good. Hmmm. But what were you thinking about?"

"Stuff." Again a cryptic answer. Garrus thought better of it and kept on inquiring. "God, you're persistent. I was wondering if you were taking me to some romantic place or... other crap like that..."

Vakarian started to laugh, shaking his head. "No, Spirits, not at all. I don't know anything about romantic stuff. Don't worry, nothing of that sort. You will like it, trust me."

"I trust you."

They flew with great speed. Jane looked down to see that Cipritine was still under them. It took them quite a while to pass the city and fly over the desert. "God that city is enormous."

"It is. It's the turian capital." Garrus slowed their speed. Soon he flew lower, reading the ground.
"We're here."

Jane looked down to see a small port on the white desert. The port consisted of one hangar and a lone vehicle standing in front of it. An infantry fighting vehicle. A turian one to be precise. The woman couldn't believe her eyes, rubbing them a few times to double check if she was seeing right. She turned to Garrus and grabbed his arm. "Oh! Oh, oh! You're shitting me… you gotta be shitting me…"

"Nope. It's there. Turian's pride: the Sandstorm itself. We have it for the whole day." He landed in the small hangar then left the skycar to offer his hand to Jane. "My lady…"

Shepard took his hand and looked into his eyes. She felt he was spoiling her like hell in that moment. The woman jumped to hug the turian, diving her face in collar. "Thank you, Garrus."

He embraced the hanging woman in return, nuzzling her neck and gave her a tentative lick. "I would give you so much more." He felt her slide down from his arms, seeing her really red cheeks.

"How did you manage to get one for a whole day?"

"Oh, I ruffled some feathers here and there. Wasn't really that hard, being the awesome Commander that I am. And I think the guys wanted to show my squishy human wife how it's really done." Garrus replied smugly and pulled her by her hand, toward the heavy vehicle. The sight was impressive. Its white metal surface shone in the desert sun. Six big wheels stood on the hot sand and Jane knew well that the Sandstorm could withstand much hotter environments. As well as much colder. "The Sandstorm and your Mako are alike. I bet the human inventors got some inspiration here."

"Yeah, still... I saw what you did with the Sandstorm. I must say it was pretty impressive."

Garrus adjusted the collar of his armor with a big grin. "Everything I do is pretty impressive."

"Again with the ego, huh?" Jane punched him lightly on the armored arm. "Won't you invite a lady inside?"

"Hop in, it gonna be a long ride." The turian helped her to her seat, fastened her seat belts. Then sat on the driver seat and did the same.

The moment the Sandstorm engine started, Garrus took off speedily. He drove by sand and rocky mountains, canyons and desert dunes. Shepard was holding the armrests the whole time, digging her nails into the metallic surface. She was thrilled beyond all understanding, squealing in happiness when the vehicle jumped on dunes or rocks, when it spinned around, when they were driving down the mountains with great speed, bouncing on every bulge in their way.

Garrus decided to stop around noon, he parked the vehicle by the cliff of the vast canyon. They sat on the back of the Sandstorm and ate the lunch that Kalea had prepared for them. "You thought about everything, food, desert, Sandstorm. That's my kind of date."

Garrus' mandibles flared in content, he was sure Jane would be pleased with this type of time spent together. The turian knew that she missed military life and since he had learned that she was raised on a military base, she got to be a military nerd. Just like him. "I said I don't know anything about being romantic… but I know we like the same things. This is my kind of date too."

"God, if you'd take me to shoot some assholes, I'd marry you… uhm, but we're already married so… yeah." Garrus grinned at her and grabbed something beneath his seat. Jane recognized the shape immediately. "You brought my Mantis?!"
"And my Krysae. Had to get Sparatus' approval." Vakarian unpacked the two sniper rifles from their respective cases and handed Jane hers. "The war may have finished but there is one thing we're going to settle once and for all..." With a loud click, he unlocked his sniper rifle. "Not saying you don't know how to handle a gun. Just saying some of us know how to make it dance." He grabbed a bag and a grenade launcher. Jane put her helmet on, while Garrus opened the doors and exited the Sandstorm with a smug grin. "So, let's find out who's really the best shot."

Jane jumped out of the heavy vehicle, one hand on her hip, her rifle in the other. "There are a few people in the galaxy who've seen me in action, Garrus. They seemed impressed."

"I don't know them so... no comment."

"You are one of them, bastard!" The turian didn't reply and turned around. Humming some song quietly, he started walking to the cliff edge. "All right, Mr. Vakarian! Now you pissed me off. You're going down!"

Meanwhile the turian loaded the grenade launcher and was typing on his omni-tool. "If you say so, Mrs. Vakarian. And don't worry, I loaded them with practice slugs for when you miss."

Jane adjusted her position and took aim with her sniper rifle. When she was ready, she nodded to Garrus and he fired the grenade launcher with his omni-tool. The practice grenade was fired a great distance, Jane waited till it started to fall then shot it precisely in the center, the vial with the slug, exploded in a pink cloud.

"That was an easy one. Let you build up your confidence." He replied but somehow the smug grin vanished from his face. "Long range, I wrote the book. Nobody alive can do this, not even the fabulous human - Commander Jane Shepard. Ekhm, now Vakarian. Give me a tough one."

Jane copied the program for the grenade launcher and adjusted the settings to make it a bit harder. She pushed the button to fire when Garrus gave her a sign. He also shot it right in the centre.

"I said a tough one!"

"Your ego will make you fail, husband. Make it even harder and step aside." She again adjusted her stance and gave the turian a single nod. "Do it."

They fired 48 grenades that way, each of them scoring 24 points. Every round harder than the previous one. Garrus started to show signs of annoyance. Shepard didn't want him to have an easy win. Not after he was such a confident jerk at the beginning of their little match. In the end, the woman didn't want him to lose either, so she missed her last one on purpose.

The turian held up his arms in victory. "I'm Garrus Vakarian, and this is now my favourite spot on Palaven."

Jane smiled to herself. Seeing him so happy made her feel good. Still she feigned defeat. "It's windy up here."

Garrus approached the pouting woman and embraced her from the side. "There, there. It's okay." Then he turned Jane to him and leaned down to her forehead. "I know there are other things you're good at. Besides, you missed only one out of 25, you are right behind me just this once."

"Because you've got my six."

"Yeah, I've got your six." Garrus couldn't stand the closeness anymore when the desire to kiss the woman was so great. His hands pulled her head up and he moved his mouth plates closer to her. His
tongue licked her lips. "Let's practice that human kiss of yours."

Jane chuckled for a moment then dived into the feeling of his coarse tongue. His skilled muscle already knew what to do and how. To make her moan. To make her feel those millions of butterflies in her belly. Garrus was quick to learn and his long, dextrous tongue did miracles for her. Kissing a human man was nothing compared to kissing a turian. Garrus to be precise, because she was fairly sure no other turian would be as good as him.

When they finally broke apart, Garrus nuzzled her neck, inhaling her, intoxicating to him, scent. "Spirits, Jane, your scent will be a death of me."

The woman wanted to ask why he found her scent, probably sweaty and stinky, so amazing but the turian grabbed her and pulled her toward the Sandstorm. "Come on. I'll teach you to drive this thing. I bet you would like to learn the turian way of driving."

Jane momentarily forgot everything in her mind. Too excited to think of anything else but driving the vehicle, so similar to Mako she loved. She knew that rest of her crew didn't share her feelings for the Mako. Too often she rendered them too sick to appreciate the beauty of it. Once Alenko had puked on himself and Jack. She had never seen him move so fast, as he escaped the biotic woman. Kaidan wasn't as powerful as Jack after all.

Garrus sat her on the driver seat then returned to pick up the grenade launcher and their rifles. When he packed the rifles into their cases, he sat next to her and started his teaching. Jane quickly learned the differences between the Mako and Sandstorm. Soon their crazy ride began anew.

They had fun driving around until the sun began to set, away on the horizon. Garrus told Jane to stop the Sandstorm. The two of them left the vehicle. Garrus sat on the top of the dune, he pulled Jane down to sit between his legs. Her back propped against his chest. They sat in silence, regarding the sun that slowly hide behind the mountains, barely visible in sun's dimming light.

After a longer moment, Jane giggled to herself. The turian lowered his head to her ear. His breath tickled her ear and neck. "Credit for your thoughts, as humans say."

"We say penny… but either works I suppose. Hmmm, what made me laugh is… You said earlier that you don't do romantic stuff… and here we are. Sunset, two of us… close… Where'd that come from?" She turned her head toward his, a small smile on her lips.

"Mood swings." He replied shortly, that made both of them laugh. "I'd be lying if I said I didn't hope it would inspire a certain… mood."

Jane took his arms and embraced herself with them. Garrus squeezed her lightly, nuzzling the back of her head and neck. "Something on your mind?"

She heard his muffled voice at the back of her head. That tickled her enormously. "It seems like we need time, to… figure us out. Still, are you ready to be a one-turian kind of woman?" He said the last sentence very seriously and waited anxiously for her answer.

Shepard mulled his words. *Am I ready? Isn't that too fast? But I want him so much… If we weren't in Garrus' parents house, I would find out if we're a match not only in the battle arena… It took her a while to find a good answer. *Leaving Earth was unbearable. Knowing I had to marry you, leave my whole life behind was unbearable. And you haven't really helped to make it better… your old self, asshole and a complete douche."

"Hey, I felt the same way!" Garrus raised his voice. Hearing her say she wasn't happy with their
marriage was hard. He always thought she was accepting of her fate. Vakarian remembered well her attempts to talk to him while he was... an asshole. She took it better than him. Or that was what he thought. "Again, I'm sorry for that. I had it really tough, coping with that hell. Sorry... I didn't mean it to sound that bad..."

"Heh... Well, here we are..." She sighed heavily. The conversation was going in the wrong direction. Somewhere horrible and both of them realised that.

Yet Garrus didn't want to fuck it up. His strong arms again squeezed the tiny woman with care. "I am exactly where I want to be, Jane. I didn't know that I would find a woman that I need, that I want to be mine. But here we are and I want this, us, to work out."

Jane moved her face to his mandible, kissing it lightly a few times. She didn't want to be stuck in the past, in the war, in her anger for the whole marriage deal. She wanted to go past all those things. "I want it too, Garrus. I want to be a one-turian kind of woman. The real Jane Vakarian, wife of Garrus Vakarian. Not just some human that was forced to marry a turian."

"Glad to hear it." The turian licked her from her collarbone up to her earlobe. He made her shiver, made her moan, made her bite her lips to stifle more sounds that he had come to adore. Garrus wanted more and soon he would get that. Just a bit of waiting and some research on human sexuality. Unfortunately now it was time to return to Cipritine. "My beautiful, sadly, we have to go back. I hope you liked our R&R time."

"Loved it. We have to do this again sometime."

xXx

"Please, come again soon, children. I'll miss you terribly." Kalea touched foreheads with Jane and Garrus when they were parting on the Cipritine Docking Bay. She was keening sadly because of their departure. Solana was also sounding sad. Jane's heart broke apart at seeing the two turian females so devastated because of them. Even Castis said his goodbyes to her, only speaking without any gestures. Maybe he had grown to like Shepard a bit or maybe he didn't want to make Kalea angry. Either way, the human woman was glad that in the end they could part on good terms.

When Garrus' parents were busy with Jane and his baggage, Solana approached her brother and sister-in-law. "Goodbye, Jane, big brother. I'll beg our parents to let me come to the Citadel before I have to enroll in Boot Camp. Can I come to your place?" The young turian stood in front of them, looking at Jane a with mixture of hope and anxiety.

Shepard nodded. Garrus leaned to his little sister and joined their foreheads. "Of course, Sol. I'll talk with mum and dad, don't you worry."

Solana trilled happily. She moved to Jane so she could touch foreheads with her for a goodbye.

When they check in with the security office and went inside the ship, Jane slumped on the seat feeling really sad and lonely. Leaving her new family was hard. She really liked Garrus' family. They had shown her kindness and goodwill, accepted her into the family without reservations, without resentment. She regarded Palaven vanishing from her sight in silence, deep in her thoughts.

Garrus spotted her depressed mood instantly. He quickly engaged FTL speed and programmed the autopilot soon after they passed Nanus and Menae. The turian stood up and scooped Jane into his arms.

"Wha-?!" She squeaked and grabbed his cowl to support her. Then she started to laugh suddenly.
"You got me there, I'm really surprised."

"You were so sad just now. Don't be. It's not like we aren't going to see them again, silly. We are family now." Garrus went out of the cockpit and turned to the stairs. In a short moment, they were in the Observation Lounge, he sat down on the couch - Jane, still in his arm, sitting on his lap. "It will be a bit lonely without them… but hey, we can come back again soon. Whenever you like."

The woman's body was laid on the couch. Garrus hovered above her with a predatory gaze, that had her on fire. They were stroking each other experimentally in various places, trying to find the most sensitive areas. From time to time kissing or joining foreheads then Garrus came up with an idea. "You know… there are rooms here…" The turian's suggestion was so seductive, his voice full of lust for his human wife. "We could check them out. If you want…"

Jane grabbed his head and looked into his eyes. She smiled at him but shook her head in negation. "No can do. I bet there are a gazillion cameras and bugs in the ship. I don't want to see porn with me as a main star in tomorrow's news. Thank you." Shepard then pulled him closer to make a long, tentative lick up his scared mandible. "Besides… it doesn't bother you that maybe the turian Councillor will watch the feed?"

"My dear wife! I don't give single fuck about what Sparatus watches and thinks in the end. Let him watch… I heard he has a *cough* mistress *couch*, an asari one. So he can learn a thing or two."

"I think we should learn a bit first, Garrus. We are so different. I'd like to know more about your body…" Her hands traveled up his chest to his neck, mapping each plate. "They taught us about turian bodies… but I only paid attention on how to kill, not to please… to make one special turian go crazy…" Jane whispered into his ear canal. Garrus' low growl reverberated through his chest to hers then straight down, making her sex ache for him. How he managed that with only sheer sound was a mystery to her.

"I can assure you, you already managed to make me go crazy."

xXx

"Home at last!" Jane put her bags down heavily on the floor and jumped on the couch. "I'll rest for a moment then go to Jack's." Shepard lay still for a few minutes then stood up and went to the bedroom. She packed her clothes into a bag, then took out her toiletries from the luggage. "Okay, I'll be he-"

Garrus approached her. Arms folded and a hard look on his face. "I can't let you go there, Jane!"

Shepard regarded the turian in front of her. *I've had enough of his overprotectiveness… Seriously…. In a matter of seconds, she spun him around, locking his arm behind his back and shoved him against the wall. The turian had enough sense to turn his head to the side, not hitting the wall fully with his face. Jane grabbed his fringe, pulling it back. She rendered him immobile. "Listen, honey... I'm going to my best friend's. We're going to drink lots of booze and waste ourselves. In three days I'll be back with a huge hangover so you will have to take care of me, is that clear?"

The way Jane handled him in that moment made his groin plates shift open, he was rock hard from the way she had pinned him to the wall and was pulling his fringe. *Spirits…* Garrus growled lustfully. "Better stick to your word, sunshine, I won't let forget about it."

"Hmm?" Jane lessened her grip on his arm and let him turn around to face her. Vakarian took her into his arms. She could feel a bulge in his pants that she had never felt before. *Is that… oh, God… "Garrus… is that what I think it is?"*
He lowered his head to her ear, whispering hoarsely. "Yes it is. I will wait for you… now go or you will make me do something stupid."

The woman kissed him on the mandible and freed herself from his arms. She took up her bag and sent him a kiss. "See ya in 3 days, hun!" Then she left the apartment. While riding down in the elevator, she exhaled heavily. Jane felt hot in just the right places. *Those 3 days will be tough. How I can forget about that now?*

Jane went to Li's bakery to grab some treats then to the skycab's parking lot. Half an hour later she was in Jack's apartment, in the Alliance HQ. After hugging with Jack for over 5 minutes, the two women sat on the couch. Jack wanted Jane to tell her everything she had done on Palaven. When Shepard told her about the development in her relationship with Garrus, Jack made high pitched noise that could only be translated as shock and disbelief. "The fuck, Shepard? You really kissed? Is frenching a turian even possible?"

"Yeah. And it… I can't describe how good it is… and that tongue…" Jane had to explain everything to Jack because the woman had nagged her so much she had given up any resistance. After relating to her how they first kissed on Palaven, then how nice it was to cuddle him, stroke him and do other things - Jack was sated with her curiosity. "That's all Jack, better bring my booze. I really need a drink now."

While the biotic was preparing their drinks, Shepard's omni-tool pinged with a call. It was Josey calling. "Hi Josephine! How are you?"

"Hello, Jane. I'd like to thank you for all those photo's of Palaven. They were amazing. I take it you're back on the Citadel?" The black haired woman smiled at Jane. This time, Ms Clark had a yellow streak in place of her green one, that she had the time they had first met. "Is there any possibility we could meet?"

"Hmm, as a matter of fact, we can. But I need to warn you, a lot of alcohol will be included." Jane smiled back at Josephine and winked. "I'm with my best friend Jack in the Alliance HQ. Apartment number 15."

"Really? I'll be there in 20."

Jane closed her omni-tool and yelled to Jack. "Oi, Jack! We will have a guest. Hope you don't mind I already invited her!"

"Fuck you!" After a moment Jack emerged from the kitchen with three bottles and three glasses. "I heard ya, idiot. I don't mind. The more the merrier, as they say… right?" The woman put two bottles of alcohol and Coca-Cola on the coffee table, then slumped on the couch beside Jane. She grabbed up one bottle, opened it and poured them an Earth vodka with cola. "Brought the best stuff with me." Jack started to laugh and soon Jane joined in. When Josephine came to the apartment, the two of them had already emptied their glasses.


The three women had fun the whole night. The next day, after a drunk sleep, they started to party again. The women watched alien movies and Jane explained a lot of things to them. She ordered asari food for them and everything was great until the end of the day. Rear-admiral Kahoku came to Jack's apartment.

"Jack, we have to go… God! What a mess… Commander Shepard, you are here as well?! Christ…"
The three women turned to look at the angry man and started to laugh. "Don't you dare to laugh at me! Lieutenant Naught! We have to leave immediately for one of our colonies. We leave in 50 minutes."

Jack's laugh was caught in her throat. Her smile vanished. She quickly stood up and started to pack. Meanwhile Kahoku came to Shepard. "Commander, how are you? Is everything fine with the turian?"

Jane stood up, looking at the man with a grimace. The man always pissed her off. "Yes. And he has a name - Garrus Vakarian."

"Yes, yes…" The Admiral waved in dismissal. "If you have any problems, please contact Alliance HQ. I need to go now, it was… em… good to see you again, Commander." He saluted to Jane - she did the same - and left.

"Fucker." Jane grunted when Kahoku left the apartment. She rolled her eyes and turned to Josephine. "God, I hate him. He hates me too... Come Josey, let's help Jack with her packing."

Shepard and Ms. Clark quickly helped Jack with her belongings. There wasn't much, as all soldiers only carried the most important things with them. Jack and Jane hugged each other firmly. Both of them felt that their time together was too short. They wanted to see each other for longer. When Jack left with Kahoku and the rest of the crew. Jane decided to return to the apartment. "Let's meet again soon, Josey. I'll call you and we'll meet at Li's bakery."

"Okay. I'll wait for your call. Goodbye, Jane!"

xXx

Jane entered her apartment with a sigh. On the one hand she really wanted to return, and on the other she was disappointed she had to return so early. She took her bag to the bedroom then searched for Garrus but he wasn't home. Oh! I'll hide in the kitchen and scare the shit out of him! Grinning to herself, she did as she thought and hid. Shepard sat on the kitchen floor behind the counter so she wasn't visible to anyone who would enter the apartment. It took a while for Vakarian to return so she played on her omni-tool. When the woman heard him unlocking the door, she quickly turned off the holo menu. Jane could hear him talking with someone.

"Garrus, I called you because I'm worried about you… I think you and that human female are too close. Do you have any feelings for her?" Jane instantly recognised Castis's voice.

"Spirits, no! Where did that come from?" Garrus asked with clear disgust in his voice.

"I heard your mother and sister talking about the two of you. How good you look together. How close you are?" Castis growled in anger. "Think about your position, your tier. You can't be with her forever. I'll try to persuade Anthius to talk with Sparatus. To cancel this idiocy."

"Dad… I don't think that will work…"

"Bullshit, Garrus. When the Primarch talks with Sparatus, the Councillor will do everything to make the Council see our reasons!"

Jane decided to stay on the floor and listened to their conversation. She secretly wished that Garrus would not enter the kitchen.

"Listen, dad, I'll tell you one thing… but it's classified." Shepard could hear the turian sigh, and noises of the couch. He was sitting down. Good, sit there and don't come to the kitchen Garrus! It
seemed Garrus wouldn't move anywhere soon. "Jane was attacked almost two months ago. By turians."

"And?"

"And there is a problem. I was following her. I installed a tracking bug on her omni-tool… Anyway, I saw how she was beaten… Hell! I even wished she would die… So I would be free from this mess. They almost succeeded, dad. But then I realized, that if something happened to this marriage, to her, the war would start again. That would be really bad for turians. And me… what would happen to my tier if I were to fail such an important mission?" After that Garrus became quiet. Silence weighed heavily in the room.

Jane wanted to scream, cry, punch something. She covered her mouth so as not to scream in anger and hurt. Her heart broke, shattering into small pieces. The conversation wasn't over yet. After a while Castis started to talk again.

"Maybe you're right… Still! That doesn't mean you have to be close with her. I don't like it son."

"I don't like it either but Nihlus threatened me… and Sparatus too… I don't like her, father. I'm doing it for the turians and Hierarchy." Tears started to fall from Jane's glassy eyes. She couldn't stop them anymore. What she could manage to do, was muffle her sobs, make them silent. "I'm not into humans, dad. Believe me… Ehh, now please excuse me, I want to eat, I bought a take-out. Talk to you later?"

"Yes. Call me when you will be free. Good bye," Garrus sighed. Jane waited for a moment, wanting to confirm that he had finished his conversation. When she was certain he had, she stood up.

Garrus saw her emerging from the kitchen out of the corner of his eye and turned to her, his eyes wide in shock. His mandibles clicked nervously. The turian slowly stood up, still regarding Jane, dumbfounded. "Jane.. I… since whe-?"

She didn't want to listen to him anymore. She didn't want to answer any of his stupid questions. The woman didn't want to speak to him or stay in his presence any moment longer. Just one thing before she could run from the apartment. One thing. Jane dashed to Vakarian and punched him in the face with all her strength. He fell on the couch, blue blood gushing from his nose. Shepard didn't care if he was unconscious or not. She ran from the apartment, not looking back.

xXx

I know! I am deeply sorry for what I did. Please don't strangle me too much. I promise I have already chapters 9 and 10 prepared so you won't have to wait long.

TT_TT
UPDATE (30.03.2017): Thanks to Erin Primette from I got to know that Garrus' father's name is Castis and I decided to change Akteon to his canon name. Although I write AU fic I try to stick to as much canon stuff as I can. So that's it. Thanks again, Erin for your message :)

Okay… I really thought I won't post anything until 2016... but! Because of supersweet comment by Becky, who have birthday today, I decided to post it.

Dear Becky, best wishes from me and Razzberry :) your comment made our day and I hope this chapter will make you really happy on your special day! Happy B-day to you! :*

Thank all of you for your reviews and comments, I want to cry from happiness every time I see all of your brilliant feedback! :*

Usual links to brilliant Razzberry's fics:

Mass Effectiveness /works/5330642
Dawn of a New Era /works/4978891

~Ch 10 of Mass Effectiveness was awesome :D

This time it's really last chapter in 2015. See ya all in 2016! Please enjoy and best wishes for all of you! (Party hard, ppl!)

xXx

When Jane left, Garrus was extremely restless and had a particular itch behind his groinal plates. She left him with an uncomfortable bulge in his pants that needed to be handled by himself. The turian couldn't focus on anything, he wished that time passed faster. He saw that Shepard didn't take shit lightly, and that was incredibly sexy… Garrus remembered how she fought those three fuckers that had attacked her. For the love of Palaven, if I saw her fighting like that now… I don't know what I would do… kill those bastard first I suppose… and then I'd do her. He decided to read about human anatomy, their erogenous zones and searched for other sex related things on the extranet.

On the second day he stayed at home, played some games and watched vids. Again reading about humans and intercourse with one. In the evening Garrus decided however, that he should go outside and stretch his plates a bit. He went to Li's pastry shop to talk and drink kava. Then he decided to eat something traditionally turian. When he was full, he returned home. In the elevator his omni-tool pinged with a vid-call. Hmm… maybe it's Jane… maybe she's dying from drinking too much…? Vakarian thought to himself while putting the bag with sweets on the floor. He opened the call - it was his father. What, in spirit's name does he want... "Dad? What's up?"

"Nothing, son. Is everything alright?"

"Dad, I called yesterday from the Citadel. We are fine."

"Is… em, Jane with you?"

Garrus took the bag from the floor and exited the elevator. "No, she's with her friend for 3 days. I'm alone just now." How he managed to talk, open doors and still hold onto the bag, was a mystery to
him. Maybe that was stress talking. Vakarian went inside, feeling cornered by his father, he just knew something was up.

"Garrus, I called you because I'm worried about you… I think you and that human female are too close. Do you have any feelings for her?" And Garrus was right.

"Spirits, no! Where that come from?" Garrus asked with feigned disgust in his voice. *Spirits help me! I'm not prepared for this conversation...*

"I heard your mother and sister talking about you two. How good you look together. How close you are!" Castis growled in anger.

_Thanks, girls... just, thanks..._

"Think about your position, your tier. You can't be with her forever. I'll try to persuade Anthius to talk with Sparatus. To cancel this idiocy."

*Wait... what? He can't be serious... not now when everything with Jane is so good...* Garrus realised that his father had everything already planned and he had just called to ask get his son's agreement. Or he wasn't needing any agreement and was just stating the obvious. *Shit... shit, shit, shit! I need to talk him out of this... or he will do something stupid!*

"Dad... I don't think that will work..."

"Bullshit, Garrus." Castis interrupted his son abruptly. It was obvious he was getting more angry with each minute. "When the Primarch talks with Sparatus, the Councilor will do everything to make the Council see our reasons!"

Things were getting out of hand and Garrus knew it. He had to be quick and come up with a plan before his father would go on with his own. And he found a way. "Listen, dad, I'll tell you one thing... but it's classified." The turian sighed and sat heavily on the couch. _I just hope he will believe all of this bullshit. Jane was attacked almost two months ago. By turians."

"And?"

"And there is a problem. I was following her the whole time. I installed a tracking bug on her omni-tool... Anyway, I saw how she was beaten... Hell! I even wished she would die... So I would be free from this mess. They almost succeeded, dad. But then I realized, that if something happened to this marriage, to her, the war would start again. That would be really bad for turians. And me... what would happen to my tier if I was to fail such an important mission?" After that Garrus became quiet, really pleased with what he had just come up with. _At least dad can't hear my heart or smell me... hell, he still can tell a lie from a mile away._

Both turians remained silent. Thinking over Garrus' words. Castis seemed like he agreed with his son. "Maybe you're right... Still! That doesn't mean you have to be close with her. I don't like it son."

"I don't like it either, but Nihlus threatened me... and Sparatus too... I don't like her, father. I'm doing it for the turians and Hierarchy. "I am a fucking genius. When I'm certain about Jane and me, I will tell him the truth. Spirits forgive me, I know I'm such an asshole..." Garrus shifted on the couch and decided to end the conversation."I'm not into humans, dad. Believe me... Ehh, now please excuse me, I want to eat, I bought a take-out. Talk to you later?"

"Yes. Call me when you will be free. Bye." Garrus sighed yet again. He was sitting and thinking. When suddenly he saw movement out of the corner of his eye. Ready to attack he turned toward
intruder and froze, his eyes wide in shock. His mandibles clicked nervously. The turian slowly stood up, still regarding not an intruder but Jane - her eyes red, cheeks wet from tears. But what hit him the most about her face was a grimace of utter fury. *Fuck... did she.. hear all of it?*

"Jane.. I... since whe-?"

Shepard didn't answer him or say any word at all. She did one thing - dashed toward him and punched in the face with all her strength. Garrus fell on the couch. His blue blood gushed from his nose. He couldn't move, think, do anything. The image of hatred in her eyes blocked everything in his brain, that's why he didn't notice the woman run from the apartment.

xXx

Jane jumped out of the building then ran toward the darker part of the ward. She found a small empty back alley where she stopped for a moment. *Where should I go...* Shepard opened her omni-tool and saw Nihlus' address. *Nihlus! He's on the Citadel... only he was straight with me. He never lied. I need to go to him.* Jane took off her omni-tool bracelet and put it on some old abandoned crate. With the tip of her finger she wrote 'fuck you' in the dust.

Her next steps were directed toward a skycab. Shepard input Kryik's address for the autopilot and sank in the driver's seat. Jane felt even worse than on the first day of their marriage. Hell! She wasn't some delusional idiot in love back then. *How could I trust him? How could I fall in love with that jerk. Bastard. Fucker. Poor excuse of a man. I should have ripped his mandibles off and shoved them up his ass.* A single tear slipped down her cheek. How could she even think about it? She would never hurt him.

*Fuck.*

20 minutes later she was standing in front of a tall building where Nihlus had his apartment. She entered it and saw a turian security officer. He looked at her suspiciously. "Good day, how can I help you?" He asked with a cold tone. Jane wasn't intimidated at all.

"I'm here to see Specter Nihlus Kryik." The woman said, looking hard at the turian. She knew she looked like shit but had to maintain a strong position. "Can you tell him Jane came to see him?"

Turian seemed to see a lot of weird aliens coming here so wasn't impressed at all. He nodded and called the Specter. 3 minutes later Nihlus came down and froze at sight of Jane's face. "Spirits, Jane! What happened? Come on. We talk in my flat." He guided her to the elevator and when they reached his floor - to his apartment. Nihlus sat her on the couch and sat on the armchair, facing the woman. "Want some wine?"

"God, yes! Please!" Kryik went to the kitchen and brought her a glass of wine and the bottle. He handed her the filled glass and she drank it in one gulp. "Thank you." Jane stretched her hand toward Nihlus. "More."

Nihlus obliged by filling her glass one more time. "Tell me what happened."

Jane looked at the turian in front of her and began to talk, sipping the wine from time to time. She related the whole conversation between Garrus and his father. In the end she couldn't stand it any longer and burst into tears, crying out all her anger and misery. Nihlus moved next to her, embracing her with one hand, humming quietly to calm her down. It was futile. Jane was crying till she was too exhausted and fell asleep. She was tired after two days of drinking and the huge shitstorm she found herself in afterward.
Kryik took her to his guest bedroom and laid the woman there. He took off her jacket, shoes and pants and left. He went to the kitchen and poured himself the strongest turian brandy he owned. *Spirits, Vakarian… you incompetent idiot… you fucking asshole...* 

xXx

Garrus Vakarian - a renowned commander of the turian military, the best sniper and brilliant tactician. All those titles were nothing to him now, he felt like shit, less than nothing. When he took control of his body and brain again, he looked around but Jane was long gone. *No! Shit! Where is she?* Garrus checked his omni-tool and found her location on the map. *She's in some back alley…* 

*Fuck… what if she was attacked again?!* The turian quickly ran from the apartment, then out of the building toward the point that his omni-tool was showing. To his great surprise when he found Jane's omni-tool there was something written on the crate. He scanned the writing and the translation showed him two words 'Fuck you.' *Crap. Where is she?*

Garrus begun to search nearby alleys, then ran to Lilhierax's pastry shop. He charged there in full speed, almost crashing into the counter. The shocked owner jumped back in surprise, his mandibles spread wide. "*Spirits, Garrus. What the actual fuck? I know I sell good stuff but still, no need to rush like that!"*

"*Shut up, Li, and tell me one thing: was Jane here?"*

Li regarded his friend, not understanding what he was asking. *What has he done this time?*

"*Was she here?!!*" Vakarian roared. He was breathing heavily, a low predatory growl sounded from his subharmonic. Garrus looked like the incarnation of a demon.

"*No. She was here 2 days ago. She bought a lot of sweet things and went to the Alliance HQ to have a party with her friend. That's all I know.*"

Garrus nodded and left. He turned to the skycab's lot and in a matter of 20 minutes was in front of the Alliance HQ. The turian went inside toward the security guard, who froze at the sight of him. Vakarian could see the human reach for his weapon. "*No need for that. I'm not here to attack anyone. I'm Garrus Vakarian and I'm looking for my wife. Commander Jane Vakarian, formerly Shepard.*"

The human took his hand from the gun and stood up. Garrus could sense the man's heart rate, that the male was a bit scared. "*Commander's not here anymore. She was here today but left the same time Rear-Admiral Kahoku gathered his crew.*"

The turian regarded the human for a moment then left the building. He didn't know where he should go, where he could find Jane. He decided to return to the apartment and wait there. Think. Try to figure out where Shepard could run to. When Garrus returned to the apartment, he sat on the couch and started to think. Yet he didn't get any good ideas. After a few hours of intense brainstorming, he dozed off.

Vakarian woke up in the morning, all stiff from sleeping in a seated position. *Where are you, Jane… It's been 13 hours since you left… Spirits, I'll go crazy here.* Garrus looked around to find Jane's omni-tool bracelet on the couch. It had to have dropped from his pocket while he was sleeping. *That's brilliant. I'll check her omni-tool. And he did just that, connecting her omni-tool to his. The turian scrolled through the messages and found something. Nihlus' address. "Gotcha. I'll go to Kryik. If she isn't there, maybe he will help me to find her.*" 

xXx
Jane looked around. She was... in a small prison cell, behind locked bars. It was dark, only two torches lit the corridor in front of the cell. The woman was handcuffed, sitting on a cold, stone floor.

The silence of the place was broken by quiet clicks, footsteps. Soon she found the source of them. "Garrus?"

"Jane, I'm here." The turian approached the cell. She could see him better now. He wore old-fashioned turian clothing from very long ago. "We have to run, sunshine. No time to waste, I drugged the guards but they could wake up anytime." Garrus opened the doors to Jane prison cell. He uncuffed her and pulled her up.

Then they silently ran down the corridor and out. Garrus led her by a village, running in the shadows of buildings. Soon they exited the town by a large gate. Not long after they had left, horns sounded from within the walls. "Crap, they found out we ran away. Hurry!"

Jane ran, pulled by Garrus' strong grip. They entered the forest, running between trees and bushes. The woman looked behind her to see the light of torches. She could hear horns and shouts from the guards. "They are chasing us! They are close!"

"Run, don't look back! Just run, Jane!" The two of them were running like their lives depended on it. Hell, their lives really depended on how quickly they could run away from the guards.

It wasn't enough. Guards had them circled, blocking them from every way out. Moments later two of them stepped to the side to make way for someone. Castis stepped forward into the circle. "Son, your mission ended. You can stop pretending."

Garrus' grip on Jane's hand lessened then he released her and approached his father. "You are right, father. I don't need her anymore... We can kill her at last." The turian took a sword from one of the guards then turned toward the frightened women. He approached her with his predatory eyes locked on her. They glowed in the moon's light.

Jane wanted to step back. To run away. But she couldn't. Her feet seemed to stick to the ground, unable to move. "No Garrus... you said you want me to be yours... why?"

Garrus approached her and leaned to her ear. "Silly human. You are nothing to me... just, die." The sword slit through her stomach. The woman fell into darkness.

xXx

Shepard opened her eyes abruptly. Feeling tears falling on her cheeks. "God. It was just a dream..."

Jane realised she had woken up in an unfamiliar bed, in an unfamiliar room. She sat on the bed and looked around. The room was spacious and well furnished. Everything in brown and silver tones.

She stood up from the bed finding her clothes on an armchair. She quickly put them on and turned to the doors. When she left, she found herself in a big living room. Someone moved to her right. "Good morning, Jane."

"Nihlus! Whe-? Ah, yes... I came to your apartment. Good morning." She replied chaotically. She was feeling dizzy so she laid on the couch, coiled in her own arms. "I feel like shit. Or worse..."

Kryik scooted on the floor. The clicks of his talons were, except Shepard's pained grunts, the only sound in the large living room. He sat next to Jane's feet. The turian put his warm hand on one foot and stroked it gently. "Hey, Sunshine, don't be sad. I can't stand you being sad. And forget about Garrus. I warned you... Li warned you... just erase him from your mind. If you want you can stay here as long as you want. Then you can decide what to do next... deal?"
The woman nodded but soon found herself sobbing again. She couldn't just forget about all those good moments with Garrus… even worse she couldn't forget about his words from yesterday. Nihlus scooped her into his arms, she felt his warmness on her body. So similar to Garrus' but so different at the same time.

The turian felt bad. He really felt something toward Jane, an unexplainable bond that he wanted to broaden. No matter what he could never forget that she was his best friend's wife. That was really a bad place to start anything. To hell with that! He lost his chance this time!

With that Nihlus pulled Jane's face up. With the pad of his thumbs, he wiped her tears. Even with a swollen face, red eyes from crying and pale skin, she still looked amazing to him. Kryik leaned to her and joined foreheads with her. He wanted to look into her eyes but she had closed them. Nevertheless, they stayed like that till something unexpected happened.

The woman stood up and blocked an incoming punch from Garrus. It was his turn to punch the other turian and he did it. They started to fight, not hearing the woman's screams and orders to stop. Even though he was smaller, he was more agile, faster and soon Garrus was splayed on the floor. "I told you once, Garrus… and I thought I was crystal clear: protect and take care of Jane."

"Yeah? So tell me what you smell right now?"

Nihlus was too busy with fighting to think about anything. He inhaled Garrus' scent and froze. *He… what the fuck?!* "Get up and explain yourself."

Garrus stood up from the floor and turned to Jane, not bothered by Nihlus' orders. "Jane, please… it was a huge misunderstanding… I never meant any of those words. You have to believe me!"

The woman looked at her husband with narrowed eyes. She was close to abruptly and violently combusting. "Misunderstanding, Garrus? Really? What the fuck are you talking about? I think I understood everything perfectly! You didn't have to bother yourself and come after me… After all, you hate me! You detest me! You know what? Fuck you! Fuck you and that game of yours! You didn't have to bother yourself with… we could just be friends or flat mates and I would be perfectly content with that."

"No! You have it all wrong, Jane… can't you smell it?" Garrus looked at the woman helplessly. Then kneeled in front of her and caught her hand in his. "Spirits, you have to smell it… everyone did… Even Nihlus just now."

Jane regarded Garrus in incomprehension at his words. She couldn't make anything of it. That's why she turned for help, looking toward Kryik. "What is this asshole trying to say? I don't understand."

"Garrus… you idiot." Nihlus started to laugh. "Don't you know that, compared to us, humans are smell blind? She doesn't know what you're talking about. I thought that you had classes about human biology during the war…"
Garrus was visibly nonplussed. Yes, he did, but didn't really pay attention until they told them where to shoot to kill their target. That was all he knew about human biology. When he said that, Nihlus started to laugh even more. "Spirits! That should have been recorded! Listen, my friend, she doesn't know that you love her."

"Wait… what?" Jane regarded Nihlus with disbelief. He… what? What are they talking about…

She became suspicious. "You're working together, right? You want to make fun of me!" Shepard pulled her hand out of Garrus' grasp with great force and took a few steps back. Ready to run, if necessary.

"No, my beautiful. I'm not making fun of you, never would. I laugh at your poor excuse of a husband's stupidity, is all. Listen, Jane, turians can smell emotions, turians can sense if someone loves, likes, dislikes, lies, tells truth. Krogans are even better. Of course we can block those scents, we can learn self control. But if their are emitted, they never lie. Garrus here reeks of love from a mile away." Nihlus sat on the couch, still in a merry mood. He patted the couch to indicate to them that they should sit and have a calm conversation. Neither of them sat down. "I can tell you one thing, Jane, and I'm fairly certain about it. Garrus wasn't lying to you, my dear. He was lying to his father. Perk of having a vid-call conversation over actual face to face conversations."

Garrus stood up from his kneeling. He folded his arms and nodded at Nihlus' words. "You were right… I shouldn't lie to father, I should've acted like an adult. Mother wanted that too, but didn't interfere. The biggest screw up of my life."

"Cheers to that! Garrus Vakarian got his shit together at last!" Nihlus stretched his arms up with a winning gesture. His mandibles were flaring and clicking with amusement. It was so long since he had had this much fun. "I told you, Garrus, that you will have problems if you don't act as you want. You can't be babysat by your father your whole life. Or by me. Castis can find another Vakarian for his seat. You're not the only one out there."

Garrus sighed. It was true. He was so caught up with being the successor of his father, that he almost lost the most precious being in his life. "I'm sorry Jane… I love you, I can't live without you. I was so scared when you left… I couldn't find you and was going crazy about it…"

"Uh-huh. And because I didn't my omni-tool with me, it wasn't so simple this time, was it?" Shepard spat out with dismay. Even though they had clarified a few thing, she still was pissed beyond any understanding. Maybe Garrus didn't lie to her, maybe he even loved her… but still her trust in him cracked and it would be hard to fix it anytime soon. Then she remembered those words… about smelling things… Solana's explanations… She wanted to ask before about it but always failed. Wasn't it her fault too? She still didn't know much about turians. "So basically, you're saying that Garrus emits a scent of love, huh? That sounds strange…"

"Yes." Nihlus replied and shifted on the couch. He wasn't looking as amused anymore, turning more serious. "And I don't have any agenda to lie to you. I'd love to lie and say he hates you, to be honest… Say that all he said was true. Because I like you very much, Jane. Still, I can't lie. You two mean a lot to me. I can't hurt both of you. Instead, I'd like to help. It was a big-ass misunderstanding and Garrus, again, has shown us he's an idiot and big kid. Not his fault, being an adult isn't simple."

"Laugh it up, Nihlus…" Vakarian sighed… Slowly he approached Jane and put his hand on her cheek. "Forgive me, Jane. I beg you, forgive me for my words. I'll tell father the truth. I promise."

"And what about the attack? You were there, Garrus! You wanted me dead!"

"That's true. I was an idiot back then. The biggest asshole in the universe. At first, I didn't want to have anything in common with you, a human that I had to marry. I was angry… and after the attack Nihlus threatened me… He said he will take you from me. I was afraid that it would affect my tier
and everything I had achieved in my life. But then I began to know more about you. You have shown me a lot of things I never knew or realised. I fell in love with you, and species be damned. You think I'd ask you to be a one-turian kind of woman for what? Fun? Tier? We could be just friends but it turned that I'm really crazy for you…"

Jane hesitated. She didn't know what to do anymore. Feeling hungover wasn't helping her clear her mind. Luckily for her, Nihlus' omni-tool interrupted them. The turian checked his message and stood up. "My lovebirds, time to return home and have a good talk. Scoot! I need to leave anyways. Council needs me."

Garrus and Jane nodded and went to leave. Vakarian turned to Nihlus again. "Thank you, Nihlus. And never touch her again or I will kill you. Bye."

Kryik regarded both of them as they left. What an interesting day. Who would have thought that Garrus Vakarian himself fell in love with a human woman? I really thought he would be alone for the rest of his life.

xXx

Garrus and Jane took a skycab and returned to their apartment in complete silence. The woman was thinking about everything that had happened. What a fucked up couple of days. I don't know what to believe anymore… Fuck, why does everything have to be so messed up? Why, when I think it's going good, somehow everything turns out to be completely fucked up beyond all repair in a matter of seconds? Jack was right, I'm a magnet for problems. Different shit every day and nothing goes as planned.

When they finally entered the apartment, she went to the bathroom. She didn't want to talk now, as she felt gross and desperately needed a shower. When she was done, she put on clean clothes and felt a bit better. At last she changed in something more comfortable, choosing shorts and a tank top that exposed much of her body. She knew that her bare legs and arms would tease Garrus greatly. Still without saying a word, she went to the kitchen to grab a sandwich with Nutella - that always made her feel better. Jane could feel Garrus’ eyes on her, he was watching her like some prey, ever since she had exited the bedroom. Yet he also stayed silent. Waiting for her to talk first. Wait you lying bastard. I have time. She turned on the screen and watched the Galactic News, not really paying attention to it but still trying to look busy.

The woman took her sweet time, tormenting the keening turian. She felt good about it. For all he had done to her in the last 24 hours, it was totally worth it. After two hours of staying silent, she decided that it was finally time to have a serious talk with Mr. Vakarian. "Okay, Vakarian. Now we can talk. First of all, I want to know why I should trust your words?"

"Because I love you, Jane. What I did was inexcusable but trust me when I say I was lying to my father. I just didn't want him disappointed with me. He means a lot to me, but you mean a lot more. If you want I can call him and tell him the truth." Garrus replied with confidence in his voice.

Jane looked at him and, despite herself, trusted his words. "No need to for that now. But stick to that thought. I don't like that you lied to your father, Garrus. We humans have an old saying: Karma's a bitch. It means that when you do something bad, it comes back to bite you. You lied to your father and it turned bad, because it made me believe you actually lied to me. Karma works just like that! You do good things and good things come back to you. You do bad things and something bad happens to you." The woman laid her head on the backrest, thinking for a while. "Of course it's not a rule but you can see my point. You should clear things up with your father. I know he detests me, I can understand that he wants something more for you. Pa's the same. That's why I couldn't find a boyfriend that would please him. Maybe it was also that no one was good enough for me… And he
was an overprotective son of a bitch…” She chuckled to herself. Jane could just imagine Zaeed now, aiming his pistol at Garrus for hurting her. *Now's not the time for that, girl!*

"Spirits, Jane… I thought you could smell… me. That was my mistake. But you felt how rock hard I was before you left to see your friend. That sort of thing is impossible to fake. We only get that hard when we're really aroused." Garrus turned his head away, not daring to look at the woman. His subharmonic sang with embarrassment.

"Why didn't you tell me about the attack? Why keep it a secret?"

"Eh… To be honest, I wanted it to stay a secret forever. My ugliest secret. I've woken up everyday knowing the truth and being so disgusted with myself… I didn't want to tell you the truth because I thought I would lose you. The thought of losing you won over my self disgust." The turian laid on the backrest, his head turned away from her. He didn't want Jane to look at him, he was scared to see any hatred and disgust toward him.

Jane looked at Garrus in a different way. The large turian was scared to even look into her eyes. It was all new to him, just like for her. If she was in his place, would she have done the same? She knew damn well that people do stupid things when they are in love. They make mistakes. *He already said he would make mistakes. Who am I to judge him? *"I think… I think I can understand your motives. Sometimes we don't see other ways, other possibilities."

The turian turned his head and slowly pulled himself up to sit straight. His eyes wide and hope in voice. "So… you're not mad at me?"

"Of course I am mad, Garrus. You hurt me really bad, there." Jane's face was serious at first but then she smiled a bit. "But you said yourself, we will make mistakes. Both of us. I want to trust you, so don't screw this up. Okay?"

"Definitely." Garrus moved closer, taking her hands into his, stroking them with his thumbs. "I'm sorry. Really. I love you." He leaned to her forehead and they stayed like that for long moment. "And don't let anyone touch you but me. I thought I was going to kill Nihlus when I saw you two."

Jane chuckled and nodded, still with her forehead touching Garrus'. "Deal. And I'm sorry about that… Now when I think about what touching foreheads means… It's like I cheated on you. That was unfair."

"Don't think about it. You still learning those things. I am too. We need to talk about things so we can understand each other better. Spirits, I really thought humans had a better sense of smell. How stupid I was… I thought you knew about my feelings…” Garrus moved his hand on her bare arm, up to the woman's neck to put it on her cheek. "No Shepard without Vakarian."

"I'm not Shepard anymore, ya know? It's more of a nickname now. But it sounds good, no Shepard without Vakarian." Jane's hand moved to explore his cowl plates and neck. Garrus growled quietly, clearly enjoying her touch.

The turian moved both his hands to her waist, massaging it lightly. Jane caught his hands, stopping him from doing anything. "Oh no, Mr. Vakarian. I bet you think we will have make-up sex now. Forget it. I worked up a bit of steam and want to vent it at Armax Arena. Come on, I feel I'm going to crush you today."

Garrus was visibly displeased by the course of action, or rather lack of it. He wanted her, his desire for the woman was overwhelming. Yet she said no. That was almost painful. "Jane… I waited for so long…"
"No means no. I still need to learn about turian bodies. I don't want to venture into the unknown without being prepared." Jane stood up and went to the bedroom to change into her casuals. She returned to the living room and could swear, if Garrus had lips he would pout like a child that didn't get his candy. "And you know what? You better do the same. Come on." The woman tossed the turian his bag for the Arena and they left to have some fun and relax after the recent storm.

xXx

Have I redeemed myself? I hope so! :D

Again, thank you all and HAPPY NEW YEAR!
The next morning, Jane woke up rather early. She left Garrus still sleeping and decided to go buy sweets from Li's shop. With her omni-tool bracelet again on her wrist, she was certain Vakarian would know where she had gone. Before she left, she took up a data-pad. *I will go drink coffee and read about turian physiology in peace. Don't need a sexually frustrated turian huffing above my head.* 15 minutes later she was sitting at a table with a mug of hot coffee, donut and interesting article on the pad.

The woman was looking at bare turian images and reading explanations of erogenous zones on the alien body. *Most erogenous zones, huh?* Jane looked at the screen, another image shown a turian head with marked mandibles, neck and back of the head up to the fringe. *So if the fringe is pulled… oh God, that's why he was so hard back then… no wonder…* Next images depicted the waist. *Soft skin on waist and neck… similar. Ok, I can go with that. No wonder he was so eager to touch there. Next… Hmm? Groin plates?! He's package is… hidden!*

She found the article so interesting that didn't see Lilhierax materialise behind her, bending over her shoulder to see what she was reading. "Doing some research, Sunshine?"

Jane jumped on her seat, almost spilling coffee in the process. She turned toward the shop owner hot and, as she could guess, red on her face. "I… I just wanted to read…"

"No need to explain. By the way, what did Garrus do to you yesterday? First fight of lovers?" Li smirked at Jane as he sat next to her with turian kava in his mug. "Just two weeks away and his scent became so vivid. What happened on Palaven?"

"This and that. So you knew?" Lilhierax nodded eagerly. "God… oh, well… And yes, we had a fight… with a little help from Nihlus, we were able to sort things out." Jane looked above the pad at the turian. "I bet he was here yesterday, looking for me?"

"Yup. He charged in full speed, almost crushing my counter! You know how long I have looked for the perfect countertop for my shop? It's ideal! Perfect height! Comfortable to lean on it for the whole day and do shit." Both started to laugh. Jane could imagine Garrus crashing on the top of it. "But
anyway… you want to give him a special gift I see."

"Li, I beg you…"

"It's fine. We turians talk about sex casually. Nothing to be ashamed about." Li propped himself on his elbow while moving closer to Jane. "You know… turians… when we want to vent, we do it usually with violence or sex. And it's really, really bad when we build too much stress inside. I heard about human rules against fraternization in the military… Spirits, how can you stand that?"

"It depends… besides it's an old rule that no one had time to change or simply erase. If you think we are frigid, you're wrong. We're not good with this rule, trust me." Jane processed Lilihierax's words for a moment. "And what happens if some turian can't vent… or he just goes to… for example… Armax Arsenal Arena and that's all he does?"

"Ouch, poor Vakarian. I bet he's insufferable!" The turian started to chuckle. Then, after a moment of silence, he got serious. "Not that I want you to do anything, Jane. I understand that it's new for you… But either you help him or send him to vent it… somewhere." And Li said the last word significantly. Jane understood instantly what he meant. "Or you have to do it yourself. It's our biology, can't do anything about it. Building such pressure inside is bad for us."

"I see…" Jane looked into her empty mug of coffee and started to think deeply. Meanwhile Li had to leave her because of new customers. So basically Garrus is doing something against his body. Because of me. How long since he had sex last? Has he gone to brothels? Maybe he has some sort of friend with benefits on the Citadel? A pang of jealousy hit her in the chest. Jane didn't like the thought that each time Garrus went outside he could meet up with some tart. She was thinking deeply about the matter until strong hands and a tongue on her, invaded her personal space.

"Daydreaming again, love. You have to focus more, who knows who's lurking in the shadows?" A dual-toned, flanged voice she adored, said to her from behind.

"Good morning, Garrus." She had to stifle the moan. Shepard turned her head toward Garrus and kissed his mandible. "I know who's lurking there just fine - my overprotective and paranoid husband."

"Overprotective? Yes. Paranoid? You hurt my feelings." Garrus replied with feigned pain in his voice, gesturing dramatically with his hands.

"Ego." She sing-sang.

"Why do you torment me so much, Jane?" The turian took her hand and placed it on his mandible.

"Oi Garrus! Stop the flirting now and come for kava and amshyi. I got it just two hours ago. Fresh from Palaven!" Vakarian stood up and went to Lilihierax, who gave him his food and drink. He ate and talked with Jane and Li for the next hour.

When Jane and Garrus left the pastry shop and did a small shop in the market, they then returned to the apartment. Jane wanted to ask Garrus about his… activity so far, in the confinement of their home. After they put all the shopping away in their respective places, she grabbed Garrus and sat him on the couch. "What is it, Jane?" He asked, obviously puzzled.

"I was talking with Li today… and I want to ask you a question…" Shepard exhaled slowly, thinking how to approach the subject. "The thing is… I just want to know when was the last time you had sex?" She asked quickly before losing the courage to do it.

Garrus looked at her utterly shocked. At least two minutes had passed before he could answer. Jane
watched him with an intense gaze. "More than 6 months I think, why?"

"And you haven't gone… to a friend or someone… for a help with the matter?"

"Hmmm, I… first of all we were married… and since the wedding there were reporters everywhere. Second I don't need help from prostitutes. And third: there is only one woman I want." With that answer he pulled Jane on his lap and kissed her. "I want only you and I will wait. Silly, I know how to manage my body and it's needs, turians learn self-control when we're young. We know how to block scents from our pheromones, we know how to block our body's needs, like sex or food. Food only for a few days of course."

"You said you can block scents but how long do they stay on your body? How is it that your father hasn't found out?" Garrus sighed and explained to her that his father had an accident during his C-Sec days. He was raiding a gang selling red sand and one of the containers exploded right in his face. Castis lost his sense of smell.

"Anyway, scent lasts a few hours, or sooner if we wash ourselves."

Jane nodded understandingly. "I see. Speaking of which, I need a shower." She went to the bathroom and had a long shower while she was mulling everything over in her head. *He said that he can control everything… but I don't want him to stop himself, control himself. I want Garrus to be… well, Garrus.* It took her a while to come up with a conclusion.

*Screw that!* She jumped out of the shower and quickly wiped her body dry. With the towel around her, she peeked her head out of the bathroom. Jane saw Garrus playing some game, when she passed she could see the turian turn his head slightly to smell her. With a small smirk she entered the bedroom and dived in the wardrobe to find Jack's wedding gift, that she had only opened once to toss it deep inside some box. Jane thought she wouldn't need it… that it was a bad joke. Yet here she was, unpacking her sexy black lingerie. "Oh my my my! If I could… I'd get boner. Good job, Jack!" Her fingers brushed the soft, silk material of the bra. Red laces were plaited into the two straps and on the center of each cup, ending with little ribbons at the end. Jane stood up, put the towel away and put on the lingerie. Then she looked at herself in the large mirror on the wardrobe doors. "Hell yeah, you look smokin' hot babe! Time to show yourself to your man."

The woman slowly left the room and tiptoed to the still playing turian. He seemed to be really engrossed with the game, so didn't pay attention to Jane at all. *Yes, that's good, Mr. Vakarian. Stay there and play while I seduce you.* Shepard had to stifle her chuckle as she approached Garrus from the back.

When she was behind him, she slowly put her hands on his cowl, stroking it then moving up to his neck. She leaned forward, embracing him, her face nuzzled his neck. "Hi there." Jane said in a low voice. Her tongue licked his neck then moved to his mandible, nibbling it and kissing. Garrus growled, shifting his head to give the woman more access to his neck.

"Jane… can it wait? I'm in middle of some game here… ranked first." Garrus ordered his fleet to attack the enemy. Trying to concentrate at what was on the screen.

"No, it can't wait. If I wait, I'll get cold." Jane moved away. She folded her arms, shifting her body weight on her right leg, tapping her left foot. *Nerds and their games…*

"What?!" Garrus turned around to see what Jane was talking about and froze. For a few seconds he wasn't sure if was seeing right. The woman sensed his shock, so she unfolded her arms, putting her right hand on her waist seductively. She knew he would like it.
The turian growled lustfully at the sight. Seeing his wife almost nude, bar a few scraps of material covering her chest and place between her legs. Just like asari lingerie he had seen in the commercials. Now Jane was wearing it and clearly seducing him. He slowly turned off his game and omni-tool.

"Like what you see?" Shepard asked with a smirk.

Garrus didn't reply. Just stood up, slowly, his eyes locked on her. He couldn't turn his gaze away from her. The turian approached the woman and with one swift move, he pulled her up, locking her legs around his waist. That made him growl deeply.

Jane squealed when he pulled her up. She put her arms around his neck, her hands ghosted on his skin. That made Garrus growl even deeper. That sound was like an electricity jolt that ran through her chest and down her spine, just to nestle in her aching sex. "So you like it, I take it?"

"Jane, you damn tease… and without saying anything… I almost got a heart attack there." The turian said at last, licking her neck up to her earlobe, playing with it with his long tongue. "And I lost… should I find some inventive way to punish you?" With a few long steps, he was in the bedroom but wasn't eager to lay the woman on the bed. No, instead he closed the door and locked her against them, between his large body.

"You certainly can try…"

Garrus licked her all over the neck, her so sensitive earlobes, stopping to kiss her from time to time. She responded in kind, focusing on his mandibles, the skin on his neck. Her hands massaged his fringe or pulled it lightly, making him moan and growl in response. The turian's hand remained at Shepard ass, holding her in place. He stroked her bottom with the pads of his thumbs, scratching her lightly with his talons. Spirits, good I've blunt them… her skin is so soft…

Jane's pull on his fringe intensified. "Clever girl, you've done your homework."

"We'll see about you…" She moaned while he resumed his licking on her neck. He bit her experimentally on the soft neck, but very lightly and very carefully. Jane moaned louder than ever. "Oh, God… don't stop."

The woman's clit ached for Garrus, she started to move her hips a bit, to relieve her tension. Feeling so wet and horny, she couldn't stand it. What she noticed though, was that Garrus was getting a hard bulge while she was pleasing herself on him. "Jane… the things you do… and that scent of yours… you know I won't be able to hold back anymore?"

"I won't let you hold back… you silly turian." She gasped, breathing quickly.

Garrus decided it was time to lay his woman on the bed. He moved with her and laid her carefully down, hovering above her and sateing his desires. She looked amazing, her soft skin shone with beads of sweat, so alien and exotic. "Can I look at your breasts?"

"So you've read something…" She smiled and slowly pulled herself up to sit. Her hands moved to her back to unclasp her bra but Garrus stopped her.

"Wait, I want to do it… I saw this one vid…"

"You know it's the nemesis of every human male?"

Garrus shrugged and moved behind her. He put his hands on her back, stroking them down to the clasps. He checked them then unclasped it in one move. "Simple. I don't know what is so difficult about it."
"Smartass. You've done it from the back. Try from the front next time." Jane giggled but soon her giggles were replaced by moans when Garrus' tongue circled patterns on her bare back. "Your tongue should be banned, it's the most terrifying weapon of all time."

"That good?" He asked between licks, receiving more moans from woman.

"God, yes."

The turian decided to touch her breasts. He still hasn't seen them yet but making Jane sound like that was something he couldn't miss. His warm hands travelled round her sides to the two mounds at the front. He felt their softness, the two small bulges in the center that instantly hardened when he touched them. Jane squealed when he was massaging those two small buttons. "Interesting…"

"Wha-aaah… what are you doing? Researching?"

"You can call it that, yes," He replied, knowing he would irk her. While his hands were exploring blindly at her breasts, Garrus nuzzled her neck again scraping his spiky teeth on the skin and licking along it.

Jane was becoming irritated because she couldn't do anything to Garrus. She stopped his hands and turned to face him. Garrus tried to look at her breast but she covered it with her hands. "Na-ah! No looking! Strip and then I'll let you see…"

"You little…" Garrus growled but then realised that he really was overdressed. Not to mention he felt uncomfortably tight in his pants. The turian stood up from the bed and took off his shirt, similar to humans t-shirts except the part for the cowl. Jane liked it much better than standard turian civvies that he wore outside the apartment. She could see his muscled and plated arms. Then he pulled his casual slacks off, that he also only wore around their home. The woman liked them too, she could admire his legs and alien feet, that clicked funny on the floor.

Jane looked at the almost naked turian in his boxers.

She pointed at the last piece of clothing with one finger, hands still covering her breasts. "This too." Shepard couldn't not notice the bulge in front of the boxers.

The turian regarded the human woman with mix of anxiety and hesitation. "You sure…? It may not look like a human one…"

Jane's brow raised, she regarded Garrus, not believing how self-consciousness he was right now. "You know, I already have noticed that you are turian… and I saw how it looks from the images I looked at. I want to see it!" With that she leaped to his front and pulled his boxers down. His hard shaft sprang free from its fabric prison. The woman froze at sight of it. The first thing she noticed - it was blue. Second - his penis had ridges and bumps.

"Jane?" Garrus asked, embarrassment in his voice palpable.

The woman shook her head and approached him and with a reassuring smile. Her hands rested on Garrus' chest plates. Her fingers traced them, feeling that the plates on chest were a bit more rough than others on his body. She had wanted to touch him here for so long but only places she had had access to was his cowl, neck, arms...

"I know that we're so alien to each other. And that half a year of living together won't stop us from feeling awkward. But remember one thing… I know you are different… I've been… observing you all this time and not even once thought that your body is disgusting. Not even once I compared you to human man. Because you're not one." Shepard's right hand stroked his mandible while her left
embraced him, flushing her body against his warm one. "So stop worrying. I'm eager to learn everything about you."

Garrus leaned to her and placed his forehead plates on her soft forehead skin. Yes, she had soft skin instead of plates and thick, suede like skin but did that matter to him? No. The turian wasn't sure when he stopped to care about her being human. He hadn't moved, deep in thought, while Jane was scrutinizing his hard shaft. He wouldn't until she touched it lightly - that made him shiver and return to current activities.

"It's blue… like your tongue. And eyes…" Shepard gripped his cock, circling it with her fingers but was careful. Not too much pressure, just touching. His cock was so hot, and big, and long. God, please, let me handle that… She also found no balls visible. Maybe they are hidden?

While the woman was busy with inspecting Garrus' lower parts, he regarded her infamous human breasts. Shepard's were olive colour just like the rest of her skin, with dark brown nipples in their center. Garrus wanted to lean to them but the woman stopped him and pushed him on the bed. He managed to sit instead of being splayed on it.

"Relax and don't worry…" She said and to his surprise, Shepard kneeled in front of him and dipped her head. Before he could ask, protest or do anything at all, she licked his cock.

"Spirits…" The turian moaned, trying to process what was happening. It felt so good.

Jane smiled to herself. "I want to see, touch and taste all those places you have covered up from me for so long…" Then she made a few more slow, tentative licks from the base of his shaft up to the head of it. Garrus started to purr with his subharmonic.

*Give man head and he will end in heaven. Species be damned, everyone's the same.* Then she decided to suck him, his cock so hot in her mouth. His strange alien flavour wasn't bad at all. Different, strange to describe, but she liked it.

"Spirits… have mercy on me…"

Jane pulled her head up to look at Garrus. His dreamy gaze told her everything but she decided to tease him a little nevertheless. "That bad?" The woman asked with feigning sadness.

"Are you kidding me? Spirits, love, don't stop… don't stop, I beg of you."

Shepard took his hand and kissed it in the center of his palm. "I won't. So just sit and enjoy the ride." After that she didn't say anything more, returning to licking and sucking him. While keeping his shaft still with her left hand, she massaged the soft skin on his waist. He purred, growled, moaned, made all the other sounds that were a clear indication of enormous pleasure. His hands gripped the bed covers firmly. Jane sped up her pace until she could feel his cock throb and convulse in her mouth, just to spill inside. When she pulled up and wiped her mouth, she saw a blissed turian in front of her. His mandibles spread slightly, closed eyes. "To the heaven and back, I presume?"

It took Garrus a moment to descend from his high and state something more coherent than growls. "Spirits… you said my tongue is a weapon… better see what you did here… THIS should be banned…" The turian pulled the woman to himself, licking Jane's breasts, each one at a time.

"At last I can see them…" Vakarian said with a raspy voice between licks. "They are… unbelievably soft and sexy."

She couldn't focus while Vakarian's skilled muscle circled around her nipple and another was massaged or rolled between his fingers. "Fuck… I can't… Garrus… how long until… mmmm… you
can go again? And when did you… mhm... learn that?"

"Extranet. You don't even know how much an eager turian can learn there." Garrus changed sides, and resume his ministrations on Jane's boobs for a moment. "What do you mean by how long before we can go again?… don't understand."

"When you will be hard again…" She gasped.

"Look down." Jane did as he said, seeing his hard, ready cock. "That was quick." She grinned at him and nodded in approval.

"Still don't understand… it was like the whole time."

"God… now you being a turian is even better. Human males usually have to wait some time after orgasm… so they can get hard again."

Garrus flared his mandibles, clearly amused and proud by her words. Nothing boosts a man's ego as much as saying he's better than someone, especially in the sex department. "Let's take care of that silly thing, shall we? It's in my way and I don't like when something's in my way for a prize." The turian hooked his talons on the hem of Jane's panties and pulled them down. His head moved to nuzzle her belly and inhale her intoxicating smell. "I want to be inside of you… I can't wait any longer."

Jane pulled the turian's head up to look into his eyes. She kissed his mandibles. "Me too… Show me how you want it..."

He laid her on her back and wrapped her legs around his waist. Garrus looked at Jane, his eyes asked 'You ready?', she nodded to him. Both of them didn't need words anymore. With her approval, the turian positioned himself at her welcoming entrance and ever so slowly pushed himself inside.

Shepard covered her mouth to muffle her painful squeal. Her eyes wide and teary. When Garrus saw that, he froze at first then wanted to pull out but the woman locked her legs to prevent him from retreating. "Jane, maybe this wasn't a good idea afterall…"

"Don't be stupid. You won't break me with your dick. I haven't used that part of me for a long time. Just kiss me and everything will be fine." The woman's hands grabbed the turian's cowl and pulled him down for a passionate kiss. Meanwhile she wiggled her hips to urge him further. "Ah, just move. I'll accommodate you… human females are stretchy."

"You sure?" The turian's forehead rested on the human's one. "Spirits, Jane… I really want us to feel good… I don't want to hurt you…"

"Silly, silly, silly turian." Jane giggled. To think that about six months ago they were enemies, soldiers that wanted to kill one another and now Garrus was afraid to hurt her while having sex. *World is strange. Galaxy is even stranger.* "Just distract me with that tongue of yours and we're good."

The distraction worked just fine. At first Jane made painful sounds while their tongues battled for dominance but then her moans became that of lustful ones, which Vakarian adored. The turian noticed how wet and hot she became down there when his cock hit the end. He experimentally moved his shaft to the back, growling from pleasure that the little movement gave him. "Spirits… that's just…"
"See? I told you human females are stretchy." Jane smiled at the wary turian. Her fingers trailed the shapes of his plates and the suede skin between them, calming him down. Shepard's hips wiggled to urge Garrus to move.

They swayed back and forth slowly, becoming accustomed to the new feeling. Garrus' tongue worked on the woman's cheeks, neck and ears, while she explored every inch of his fringe and the back of head with her fingers. They took their sweet time after having waiting for so long. Not rushing a thing, not urging to move faster or deeper. Not yet. Both knew they would have time for that later but now they enjoyed the sweet lazy minutes of learning new breathtaking feelings of being joined in the most intimate way.

Still, long minutes of cuddling, caressing and Garrus' slow motion made Jane yearn for more. *Does he hold himself back for me?* "Garrus… I want more…"

"But I am stronger, Jane. Bigger. I don't want to hurt you." His talon travelled on her cheeks down her lips, leaving a light red trail that faded away after a while. "You are so delicate… compared to me…" Jane started to laugh, which made her squeeze around his shaft. "Jane… stop… or I won't be able to control myself anymore."

"You really are one silly turian, Garrus. It's funny because we wanted to kill each other not that long ago. Remember our fights? And now you're still afraid that you're gonna break me with your dick. Seriously, that's hilarious! And sweet. And you called me delicate, no human would call me that. For my race, I'm a hard woman, a soldier." Jane moved her hips so Garrus' shaft was sheathed inside her fully. With a mischievous grin he knew so damn well from the battleground. "Move that boney ass, husband, and fuck me like a turian."

The challenge in her eyes was enough encouragement for Garrus. "Whatever you wish, my beautiful wife." He straightened up and grabbed her waist. His mandibles twitched in anticipation. Vakarian never felt like this, turian females weren't that tight, that soft, that unbelievably fantastic. Pumping himself inside Jane was like entering heaven. Not to mention that sounds she made caused him to go crazy. He also wanted more.

Vakarian pulled the woman up, she was sitting on him, her ass in his taloned hands. The turian was moving her body on his length while Jane kissed him, bit his neck with her blunt teeth. He liked how her body was cool and inside so hot. How her chest, with her enticing human breasts, was flushed against his plates. He loved how light she was and how simply he could move her on himself, speeding up the pace every minute, until he felt her squeezing him. The turian stopped for a moment, trying to process what was happening.

"Don't stop! I'm so close!" She moaned to his neck.

"Oh." Garrus started to move Jane again and felt her muscles convulse on him again. That was so new to him and so pleasurable. He growled and fucked her even more vigorously, gaining more squeezes in the process until the woman screamed and climaxed. Her climax triggered his. With a roar he laid her on the bed again. Thrusting his cock inside until he reached his release.

Both laid in the same position, not daring to move or say anything for long moments. Trying to catch their breaths, to calm down after their orgasms.

"Spirits…” The turian gasped near Jane's ear when he could talk at last. "Manual didn't cover that part…"

"Which one?"
"That thing you made… with your thing."

Jane snorted. She rolled them to the side, straddling the turian. "Can you clarify?"

"Don't made me… ugh, fine… the thing you did before you reached orgasm… you… squeezed me. My mind was blown away." Garrus' hands reached Jane's breast and he massaged them gently.

"Want more?" Jane's lips broadened in a smile.

"Of course… for me it was just a warm up." The turian grinned back to the human female. "I want a lot more of you love."

xXx

The next day they slept until late noon. Garrus was first to wake up and the first thing he smelled was human blood. That alerted him. He grabbed the woman lying on his chest by her arms. "Jane!"

"Hmmm…?"

"You're bleeding?! I can smell your blood!" Vakarian rolled her on her back and inspected her bare body, seeing bruises on her thighs, marks from his talons on her arms and sides… and a bit of blood between her legs. "Spirits… what have I done…"

Jane opened her eyes and regarded the turian for a while just to kick him in the side. His large body fell from the bed to lie on floor. The woman jumped on him, with a few precise moves, she blocked his movement. "Garrus, my dearest… as you see, I am alive. Still can kick your ass. And as I said: your dick hasn't broken me. It's normal for human females. It's just skin, it easily bruises, it bleeds. But we are strong and durable." Her hand pointed between her legs. "And that part wasn't used for a long time. When human female don't use it often, it's normal for it to be tight. Human skin is stretchy and it turns back to its original state if not stretched. Soon this part will be used to your nice size.” Shepard leaned to Garrus and kissed his nose plates. "Care to join me in the shower?"

After they washed themselves, Jane decided she wanted to have a late breakfast or rather late lunch. Garrus took her to the Presidium. Jane held Garrus' hand the whole time - surprised that his large three-fingered hand fitted hers so well. The turian didn't hesitate to show her signs of affection too, leaning to her forehead from time to time or licking her earlobe, at which she always giggled.

In the evening, the couple went to the Armax Arsenal Arena. Again Garrus had chosen a map with the Thresher Maw - Tuchanka, Jane didn't want to argue with the overly happy turian. Maybe even she would start to enjoy fighting the hologram bug - it wasn't like on Akuze and she had Vakarian with her.

Garrus was observing Jane the whole time. He couldn't believe humans were that resistant and durable. Not only did the woman show no signs of pain or discomfort, but had shown him strength. The turian knew well that even asari had problems during their first times with turians. He was afraid about his human wife. He was taught that humans were weak and stupid during the war. Yet here he was proven otherwise. And he was really proud of Jane.

Garrus won the battle this time and decided they should celebrate his victory in Purgatory. They drank a bit and danced. Had real fun. Late into the night, the Vakarians returned to the apartment. The turian turned on the Galactic News and sat heavily on the couch. He didn't have time to focus on the screen.

"Hey." Jane sat next to him and started to kiss his neck.
"Hey you." Garrus hands slipped under the woman's tank top, massaging her back and sides.

The couple was focused on each other till their names were said on the News.

"Council decision to marry Commander Jane Shepard and Commander Garrus Vakarian has hit on the spot. Couple seems to have feelings for each other. As a reminder: both of them were forced to marry as one of the terms of the Peace Agreement between Humans and Turians. Relay 314 Incident or First Contact War lasted 6.5 Galactic Years and caused big political and economic stir…"

While the asari reporter was talking, a vid of Jane and Garrus on the Presidium or in Purgatory, was aired through the Galaxy. Jane's face become pale. "Garrus… if your father sees it…" She turned toward her husband to see utter shock on his face. His eye wide and mandibles spread apart.

The turian visibly shrunk. He rested his head on Shepard's arm and sighed. "You were right about karma… it gives you back what you deserve." His arms embraced the tiny woman, as he thought karma would take her from him too. "Don't leave me…"

"I won't, Garrus." Jane hugged Garrus back, trying to cheer him up. "Don't worry, I think your karma is satisfied and won't do anything more. I'll always be here for you." She forced Garrus to look at her. "I love you." Shepard licked his mouth plates, he automatically opened them and mingled his tongue with hers.

They would have kissed longer but suddenly Garrus' omni-tool pinged with an incoming vid-call. For a moment he hesitated, he was afraid his father was calling... but then he opened his omni-tool to see a vid-call from Kalea. He quickly answered the call. "Mother…"

"Garrus…" Kalea looked at her son with a smile. "You looked so nice together. Jane, my dear, thank you for changing my son at last."

"Umm… thank you, Mother…" Jane sat next to Garrus to be visible in his camera. She waved to Solana, who was lurking behind her mother. "Hi, Sol!"

"Hi, Jane!"

"Okay… stop for a moment… Mum, where's dad? Has he seen the News?" Garrus asked, wary of his words. He was really afraid that his father would appear suddenly, releasing a major shitstorm on Garrus' head.

"Oh, yes… Garrus, I don't have good news. Your father saw everything and before I could stop him, he left and will probably fly to the Citadel." Kalea growled, angry at her husband. She was serious and looked at both Garrus and Jane in that way. Only Garrus could understand her apologetic hum.

"Shit."

xXx

Steamy?

:3
Chapter 11

UPDATE (30.03.2017): Thanks to Erin Primette from I got to know that Garrus' father's name is Castis and I decided to change Akteon to his canon name. Although I write AU fic I try to stick to as much canon stuff as I can. So that's it. Thanks again, Erin for your message :) 

Sorry for late update, but I had a bit of work so it took me longer to write this one. I hope I'll redeem myself with Vakarian drama at its best.

Let's all thanks Razzberry for editing late in night. She ought to sleep but decided to edit instead! :D :* Appreciate her work by reading her incredible fics:

Mass Effectiveness /works/5330642

Dawn of a New Era /works/4978891

Thanks for comments and reviews, my heart is melting at how sweet and supportive you all are!

Enjoy! :*

xXx

"Fuck." Garrus said and lowered his head in defeat. His father would be coming like a storm. A shitstorm. And he didn't want to confront him.

"Garrus, mind your language." His mother growled. "Don't worry you two. We're coming to the rescue. Your grandfather got us a small ship. We're leaving in an hour."

"Grandfather is coming?" The turian raised his head, feeling that there was some hope after all. If someone could talk to his father and change his mind, it was certainly grandfather Septimus. Oraka's clan tier was higher than Vakarians, Castis would surely listen to his father-in-law. "Okay, that's some plan."

"Of course it is. I have had enough of your father's bullshit, Garrus." Kalea sighed. She was truly tired of the situation. "Ever since your father became Clan Leader, he is unnerving. That changed him so much… It was so nice, living on the Citadel… he was working at C-Sec… everything was good…” For a moment she fell silent, reminiscing about the past. "Anyway, please act as though you don't know anything about his arrival or ours. I want to make this a surprise he will remember for the rest of his life."

Jane shivered at those words. She considered her mother-in-law to be a motherly figure but now she looked so different. Angry and serious, that wasn't Kalea Vakarian at all.

"Bye, kids, we will be on the Citadel tomorrow."

Jane could see Solana's waving hand seconds before the image vanished. She snuggled into Garrus' side and sighed heavily. "Why does everything have to get completely fucked up when I think everything is going in the right direction?"

"Hell if I have any idea… same here. When everything's going just fine… something fucks up… although sometimes it turns out, that after some time, it wasn't that bad." The turian nuzzled her neck,
trailing its shape with the tip of his tongue. He felt her shiver, her heart rate elevate. How her body temperature raised in matter of seconds. Her, now faint, scent of arousal. "For example our marriage…"

"True." The woman stood up. "I'm going to wash myself and get some shut-eye." After a second of consideration, she pulled at his hand. "And you're coming with me."

xXx

It was really early in the morning when the couple was woken up by the doorbell. Jane jumped out of the bed and went to the livingroom to unlock the doors. Seconds after the swooshing sound rang in the silence, the woman was pushed on the wall. "You…" Castis grabbed Shepard by her neck, strangling her. "It's all your fault… my son wou-

Garrus pushed his father away from the coughing woman. He hadn't expected such an outcome. He would never have thought that his own father would attack someone… especially his son's wife. He sat her on the couch. "Jane, sit and calm down. I'll get you some water." Then he turned to his father with a threatening growl. "You. Sit there and don't you dare to move."

Jane drank the water, eyeing Garrus' father from time to time. The older turian sat in place, exactly where Garrus had told him to, making angry sounds now and then. Jane wondered why he obeyed his son's order.

"How could you attack my wife in my own home, father?"

"Wife? You're joking, right?" Older Vakarian snorted, clearly dismayed by his son's words. "This marriage is a joke, Garrus. And I will find a way to end it."

"No!" The younger turian yelled. He was surprised at himself for having such courage toward his father. "I don't want to finish anything. I… I was so focused on pleasing you… so focused that I forgot about myself. I've even hurt my wife… my mate. Because of you. We were the same, but I've changed… You're hurting mum and don't give a fuck about it… you would have killed for her, once… what happened, dad?"

"I…"

"Just… leave my apartment, father… Just leave." Garrus pointed firmly at the open doors. His father regarded him with shock, not believing his son's words. The younger turian became irritated. "LEAVE!"

Castis left, mumbling something. When the doors closed, Vakarian sighed loudly. He watched the doors for a while, thinking about what he had just done. Then he turned to Shepard. The woman was still coughing from time to time, black bruises had appeared on her neck under bloody scratches from the turian's talons. Garrus sat next to her, embracing the woman with one hand and humming his apology. The turian felt bad, he had failed yet again to protect her. Not that she needed it, but this time it shouldn't have happened. After a long moment he only said one thing. "I'm sorry, Jane."

"Don't." She replied with a hoarse voice, then she started to cough. It took her a few minutes to calm her coughing. "I'm so used to unexpected violence. After all, I survived 4 thresher maws, 3 angry turians and now your dad. Oh, and sex with my turian husband. Usual."

"It's not funny, Jane. I failed you." He turned Shepard's head to face him and he wanted to put his forehead on her when suddenly doorbell rang again. "If it's him I don't know what I'll do…" Garrus stood up and checked who was at their door before allowing entry. "No… it's mum and
grandparents… and Solana."

Five turians entered the small apartment of Garrus and Jane. The elders looked around with interest, while Kalea checked to see if her husband was there. Her gaze landed on Jane and her bruised neck. She could smell blood in the air. "Jane!" Garrus' mother ran to the human female and inspected her neck, sensing Castis's scent on it. "That bastard!"

"It's nothing." Jane replied with a raspy voice, although it was better than several minutes ago. "Sometimes all of us get too emotional. That's all."

"Don't say that! How could he…" Hamras also sat next to Jane. "I thought I taught my son some decency. I thought I knew him… What happened here? Where is Castis now, Garrus?"

"I don't know, grandmother. He just left when I told him to leave."

xXx

Nihlus Kryik was enjoying a lazy morning in his apartment when Councilor Sparatus called him and demanded his presence. Of course… he has some radar and knows when I want to laze about and do shit for a change. With a grumpy mood, the turian changed from his casuals to standard turian civvies and went to the Presidium. The secretary waved at him to enter the office of the turian Councilor immediately. He was surprised to see Saren Arterius inside. "Councilor Sparatus, Saren, so good to see you again." Nihlus greeted the two turians with his usual cocky smirk.

"Nihlus. What took you so long?" Sparatus spat at him.

Fucker. If you're such a smartass, invent a teleportation device. I could be here in a matter of seconds. He thought to himself but said nothing. Kryik knew that Sparatus didn't like his attitude at all. But Nihlus was too damn good as a Spectre, and the Councilor couldn't do anything about him. "I'm sorry. You know traffic is high around this time. Anyway, to what do I owe the pleasure of meeting you two first thing in the morning?"

"It's time for the Vakarian's to do something. I want you to tell them that, starting next month, they will start their Spectre training. Tell them to wrap everything they were doing up and prepare accordingly."

Nihlus nodded. He had learned some time ago about the Council plans concerning Jane and Garrus. To be honest he couldn't wait to bring them the news. After their training they would be assigned to him. Can't wait to show those two my new ship. Oh, we will have so much fun. The turian smiled to himself internally. "As you wish, handsome."

"Stop speaking to me with such disrespect, Kryik! I am your boss, not the other way around!"

"Sparatus, I still think that letting that human scum be a Spectre is too much." Saren said angrily. He had tried to persuade Councilor Sparatus for some time but had achieved nothing in the matter. "Humans are a stupid and arrogant race that should be placed lower than vorcha!"

"Eh, Saren… my dearest friend. You talk so much bullshit that my ear canals will start to bleed."

Nihlus replied to Saren's words with a merry mood. He had talked to the older Spectre so many times about changing his attitude toward humans, that he already lost count. "Humans are smart, strong and can achieve a lot. And your brother was just unlucky. You can't hate a whole race because your younger brother died in a fight with them. Stop this nonsense. We are at peace now and everyone is glad about it."

"Shut up, Nihlus. I know too fucking well that you like that human bitch. It disgusts me. I thought
you were worthy of something, Kryik. You were my protegee, my friend. Now… I don't want to have anything in common with you." Saren's words were like acid. He spilled all his resentment and anger on Nihlus and his affection toward Jane and humans.

Nihlus didn't show how the older turian's words hurt him. Saren was his mentor, someone he looked up to. He had wanted to be like him once. That had changed after the war. After Desolas' death, Saren had changed for the worse. "Heh. So good to hear all those kind words in the morning, my beloved mentor." Kryik replied sarcastically. "You know what? Fuck you."

"Stop you two. Saren, it was already decided a long time ago. So shut up and don't make me angry. Or maybe you really want to be sent on a mission to Tuchanka? Hmm?" Sparatus glared at Saren for a moment, waiting for some reply but Arterius stayed silent. "Good. Now, Nihl-"

"Councilor, Mr. Castis Vakarian wishes to speak with you." The voice of Sparatus' secretary rang through the intercom.

"Castis? What the fuck does he want? And what's he doing on the Citadel?" The councilor by this point was really pissed off. His day was going from bad to worse. "Let him in. You two, stay silent and don't say anything about what we talked about earlier."

xXx

Castis was furious. His own son told him to leave. He took a skycab and went to the one place he actually could do something - the Presidium. When he reached it, Castis Vakarian headed straight for the Council Tower. The turian approached the Turian Councilor's office, in front of Sparatus' office, a turian secretary was typing on his computer. "Good day, I'm here to speak with Councilor Sparatus. It's urgent."

"Please wait a moment, Sir." The secretary turned to his computer and activated the intercom link. "Councilor, Mr. Castis Vakarian wishes to speak with you." When he got approval he turned to Castis again. "Please go in, Sir."

Older Vakarian stepped into Sparatus' office, seeing the Councilor with Saren and Nihlus. "Good morning. Oh, Nihlus and Saren, good to see you both."

"Castis, hello… sorry for asking, but… what are you doing on the Citadel?" Kryik was a bit flummoxed. He was aware that it would be bad if Garrus' father knew about his son's and Jane's feelings. Then realisation hit him. Fuck! He had to have watched the Galactic News yesterday. Shit…

"You know exactly why I came, Nihlus. Don't play dumb." Castis turned toward Sparatus with a serious look on his face. "Councilor, I want my son to be divorced. He can't stay in that stupid marriage. I don't know what that human did to him, but I can't lose my son. Garrus can achieve so much!"

Before Sparatus or Nihlus could reply, Saren started to laugh. "Ha! You see! Humans are like a disease. I bet she did something to that poor boy. Humans should be wiped from the galaxy, once and for all!"

"Saren!" The councilor roared at the older Spectre. "Leave now! And prepare for Tuchanka!" He could hear Nihlus' quiet snort but didn't say anything, too tired with this day already. And it was only the beginning.

Arterius regarded his boss with an icy glare that could kill. He growled and mumbled to himself.
"Asshole." Then left without saying goodbye.

For a long moment, the remaining three turians stayed in silence. The councilor regarded the serious turian and tried to think about his words. From what he had seen on the vid-feed from the council's shuttle and from the Galactic News - Vakarian's son was in really good relationship with his human wife. And that didn't look like false feelings, but actual love. After a moment he came up with an answer. "He won't divorce. If Garrus himself won't come and ask for this, backed up with a damn good explanation, I won't do anything."

"But..."

"No buts! Nihlus, you know Garrus and Jane better than most. What can you tell me about their relationship?"

Nihlus was really happy to stay there in the back and observe the whole situation until the Councilor turned to him with his question. For a moment he regarded his boss with wide eyes. It took him a second to collect himself. "Well... they are in love. I myself have smelled it from Vakarian. They had a small fight recently and Jane found about the details concerning the attack on her from two months ago. But they clarified things and are good now. From my, ekhm, reliable source, I knew they had searched for ways to be... intimate." The turian didn't look at Garrus' father, but could bet all his credits that the older male was utterly shocked.

"No... it can't be... my son isn't like that."

"He is." Nihlus replied. He knew that older Vakarian was traditional to the core. That he respected traditions, tiers and all that shit that Palaven stank with. Nihlus had also hoped that maybe Castis could change. Kryik sighed heavily then turned at last toward Garrus' father. "Castis, listen to me. You will lose Garrus... Kalea and Sol too. Your family. Stop being so stubborn!"

"NO! You two don't understand! My family tier is at stake here. Garrus' tier. He could be something. He is a capable young turian and should be with one of our own... not some... human." Castis tried to persuade Sparatus again but the turian Councilor wasn't moved by his pleas. When his efforts were futile he turned around. "I see I won't achieve anything here. Good, I'll leave. But remember my words, I won't stop!" Then he left the office more angry than when he entered.

xXx

After Jane had rested for a while and felt better, she and Garrus prepared breakfast for their guests. All of them waited anxiously for Castis to show up again. Kalea, her father and mother-in-law along with Garrus, had tried to come up with some plan. All of them knew too well that it would be hard to persuade the traditionalist turian to change his mind.

Four hours passed had past before the doors pinged with an incoming guest. Garrus looked through the console to see his father. He opened the doors and Castis stormed inside just to stop abruptly and regard the additional turians in the apartment. "Wha... Why are all of you here? What is going on?"

"Yes, that's a brilliant question, Castis! What is going on here?" Septimus stood up from the couch. The elder turian regarded his son-in-law with anger, folding his arms and waiting for his reply. "Because, frankly, I don't understand. And I'd like to hear your explanation."

Before Castis could say anything, his mother's voice sounded from the kitchen. "Son, I am so disappointed in you. What would your father say? His spirit is angry, I'm certain. This is no Vakarian way of dealing with things." She stepped to her son with a low growl. "You attacked Jane! What did you hope to achieve?!"
Castis looked at his mother, then his father-in-law, slipping his gaze to Kalea who was sitting next to Jane. Something in her eyes made him shiver. "Kalea… I…"

"I don't want to listen to your explanation, Castis. I just don't." The turian woman growled deeply. Turning her head away from her husband. "You have changed so much that I don't see the man I fell in love with anymore. I don't see the man I have children with… I see a poor excuse of a turian that is concerned only with his tier."

"Which will get lower as I revoke your rights for Kalea's tier as Vakarian! I feel shame for giving my daughter to you. Once you were capable of something, Castis. Now you act like a piece of trash, just like that Saren!" The retired General was more than angry, he looked furious. He approached Castis. The latter turian shrank in himself under the General's hard gaze. "Your father never cared about his tier that much. Vakarian's are high-tiered anyway! Such a wealthy and strong clan! You want to destroy them or what?!"

"Don't you all understand?! Garrus could be someone! I don't want him to end up with just this shit!" Castis Vakarian straightened his back with the small bit of courage he could muster. "Father left me the clan to make it better!"

Septimus snorted at his son-in-law's poor excuses. "And how you expect to do that? By what?! Forcing your son to divorce and then forcing him to marry a girl of your choosing?! I thought forced marriage was banned something like, 5 centuries ago… This is stupid…"

"He was FORCED to marry THAT thing in the first place!" Vakarian senior pointed at Jane, sitting between Solana and Zanya. He didn't bat an eye at her black neck or scratches.

"And you didn't say a single thing back then, Castis. What changed your mind?" Kalea spat viciously. "You said he would be a hero. You were proud that the Council had chosen our son specifically. But something happened that you didn't expect, am I right? Your son started to like his human wife. Not like! He grew to love her. That's really xenophobic of you. And to think your own sister has an asari wife and child."

"That's different! Asari who live on Palaven have tier ranks just like turians. She's human. Garrus should have know his place!"

All turians turned and regarded Castis with shocked expressions. His rage over Garrus' tier and his marriage made no sense to them. Turians were hierarchized by their tiers, that was common knowledge but it wasn't a competition, to raise it at all costs. For them it was unthinkable that someone would make such a scene, to force someone to do something against his will.

"Have you ever asked the boy what he wants?" Hamras was slowly losing it. Like everyone else, she couldn't believe her son. The turian female turned to Garrus. "Garrus, my boy, what do you want? Share with us and your father."

"You know well, Grandmother, I want to be with my wife. Find a good job and live a normal life. I love her." Garrus stepped to his father, an aura of confidence surrounding him. At last he could say what he wanted to do, to be and with whom he wanted to be with. "I am sorry I lied to you during our last conversation, father, but I… I was simply a coward. I should have told you the truth long ago. I cared about my tier only because of you, dad. But I don't want to live without Jane anymore. She has shown me who I really am."

"I don't agree with that!" Castis roared. "Why are you all against me?!!"

"Because you are wrong…" Kalea said sadly. "I always supported you… For me, you were always
right. But you've changed so much… I can't be around you right now."

Jane regarded the whole scene feeling awkward and out of place. She also felt she was the main reason for the whole situation. Her throat didn't want to cooperate with her, as she wanted to say something, anything. But what she could do? She wasn't in any place to say anything. This fight wasn't hers, it was Garrus' and his family's. Still, it hurt. It hurt so much.

"You can't do this…"

"Yes I can. I want you to leave, Castis. I want you to vanish from my sight." Kalea turned her face from her husband. Her chest ached and her secondary vocals let everyone know how much pain she was in.

"Leave, Castis." General Oraka said firmly.

Older Vakarian watched his wife. He could hear her painful keen. It wasn't something that would change his mind but it made him stop his rant over Garrus' situation. The thought of losing his beloved wife and whole family in the process was like a cold shower of realisation, maybe he was wrong afterall? Maybe Garrus and Nihlus were right that he WILL lose his family because of his stubbornness? If everyone was against him, if everyone was thinking that he was wrong… then maybe he really was wrong. Castis quickly decided one thing - it's better to leave now than pull this shit any longer. "Fine. I'm going back to Palaven. Please excuse me." He turned around just to bump into Kryik. "Nihlus, goodbye. I hope we will meet on Palaven sometime in the not too distant future."

"Castis. Um, yes, that would be nice." The Spectre dipped his head then looked around to see Garrus' family gathered in the apartment. "Oh, I see everyone is here."

"Goodbye." Father Vakarian said then left, making everyone else fall silent. Kalea sat next to her mother, starting to keen even louder. General Oraka took the place next to her and stroked her fringe lightly.

"Well, that was unexpected." Nihlus said when the silence prolonged. "Just like my whole day." He approached Jane, sat on the table beside her and instantly saw her black, bruised neck. "Jane! What happened, for Spirit's sake!" He leaned to her and almost took her neck into his hands. Almost, because Garrus stopped his outstretched hands.

"Can you refrain from touching my wife, Nihlus?" Vakarian watched him for a moment with suspicion but when he saw that Kryik pulled back from Shepard, he relaxed. "And what are you doing here anyway?"

"Council orders, as always. Because you are a poor friend that won't invite me in. I brought you two this…" He handed Garrus a datapad. Vakarian took it and read it in silence. His mandibles and eyes widened with every sentence. "I know you can't believe it, my friend, but it's the truth. Everyone, please listen, because it's important. Once Garrus asked me why the Council married him to Jane. Well there are a lot of reasons: to make a bond between our two races, to bring fresh blood and DNA to the Galaxy, to show humans that aliens aren't that bad and aggressive… and to make these two - the best soldiers that each race could provide - a pair of Spectres."

"What?!" Jane asked, not believing Nihlus' words. If she hadn't have known him for some time, she would have taken it as a joke. Shepard knew this strange turian, that when he was joking - he was joking, and that when he was serious - he never would never dare to joke. "They… want us… as Spectres?"
"Yes." Kryik nodded. "Next month you two will start your Spectre training. It usually takes one year. While it goes on, you won't be able to leave the Citadel, so you'd better finish every unfinished business outside of the place. When you pass, and I'm certain both of you will pass with flying colours, you will be my proteges. Isn't that fun?!" Nihlus bounced on the table, that thrilled was he.

"Yaay!" Jane pulled herself up then jumped over the couch to hang on Garrus. "We will do some badass shit, hun!"

"Spirits, Jane…" The turian embraced the woman with one hand, still holding the datapad in the other. "I… can't believe it…" He couldn't believe how lucky he was. First of all he had the woman he loved and now he could become a Spectre - a dream job that he had always wished for. Garrus threw the datapad on the couch and embraced his wife dearly, joining his forehead with her. "We are the luckiest couple in the entire universe!"

Everyone cheered for Garrus and Jane. Nihlus explained some details and after a long chat over the Spectre matter, Kryik could at last ask about the strange behaviour of older Vakarian. Not that he was surprised, he was a bit shocked to see him on the Citadel but wasn't surprised about his demands and behaviour overall. It wasn't any news to him that Castis wanted Garrus achieve a higher tier. The poor turian thought that it was Garrus' dream to achieve Spirits-know-what, when in truth, it was so much different. Even if Garrus said himself that tier mattered for him, Nihlus knew better. It mattered for Castis and because his son wanted to appeal to his father - Garrus tried his hardest so that the tier would be important for him too. Kryik knew also that it would backfire on Garrus sooner or later. It did - twice. The first when Jane was attacked, the second with lying to his father and all the needless drama that took place a few days ago and now.

"Okay, okay! Now that we have the official part behind us… I need to say that this day has brought a lot of interesting things… for example: Castis met with Sparatus this morning… demanding a divorce for Garrus. Of course Sparatus declined. I understood he saw yesterday's news."

Garrus with his grandfather and mother explained everything to Nihlus. "Oh, I see… I told you Garrus, that if you stop being an asshole and idiot, your life will be brighter and less problematic. All of this shit could have been avoided."

"Nihlus, mind your language." Kalea said automatically. "Let's not talk about it anymore. Since we are all already on the Citadel… let's have a short vacation. What do you think?" She asked the elders. They nodded and agreed to that plan. Solana was the happiest turian Jane had ever witnessed in her life.

Jane was happy that she could spend time with Hamras and the Oraka's, as well as her mother-in-law and Solana. Yet she realised one thing - their apartment could not accommodate 5 turians. It was enough for her and Garrus but having more guests than one was a problem. "But… our apartment is small. Garrus you need to book rooms for everyone…"

"No need, sunshine." Nihlus approached Jane and, to irk Garrus, he took her hand into his. Snorting at the growling turian next to him. "Kalea, my apartment is big enough, 5 of you will fit just fine. Let's all go there and spend some time together. What do you think?"

"We don't want to cause problems, Nihlus. You have your work and…"

"Don't you worry about it. Sparatus gave me the whole week free." He looked at Kalea with a plea in his eyes. "What do you think?"

"If there is no problem then yes, Nihlus. At last we can spent some time with you. Because of your work we see each other far too little. Even your mother is complaining about your rare visits." Kalea
stood up and opened her omni-tool to call the dock service. She ordered the delivery of all their luggage to Kyrik's apartment. "So… I think we should start by visiting the Presidium."

xXx

"Ah, it was good to see everyone again. And we didn't have to wait too long for the meeting." Shepard said after entering the apartment, the whole day spent with Garrus' family. "Although it's a pity that it was because of such bad circumstances… I'm a bit concerned about mother… will she be alright?"

Garrus guided Jane toward the couch in the living room and sat her gently on his lap. "She will. I hope… I hope that father will sort things out on Palaven. It's just that he hasn't heard the news about us becoming Spectres… that will be another heavy blow."

"Why?"

"Because he hates Spectres. Remember that father was a C-Sec officer. He respects law over all things. And Spectres are above law, they can do whatever they want if it means finishing a mission with success." Vakarian moved Jane to lay on the couch, hovering above her with a lustful gaze. "And soon, my beautiful wife, we will be Spectres… I have dreamed about becoming one… Nihlus always said that I should join him, to rock the galaxy, the two of us. Now with you… Spirits, we will be unstoppable!"

"Oh, Ego, I missed you for a while." The woman giggled, her hands were stroking the turian's fringe. "You think I'll pass this training?"

"Of course, you are smart, strong and you have me as your husband." Garrus' head moved to the crook of Jane's neck, scraping his teeth on her skin lightly. "I can't wait to do something. After those years of war, six months of lazing in the apartment is totally boring."

"Hey, don't tell me we don't have fun now." Jane slid her hands on his arms, then to the sides to place them on Garrus' waist. He growled at the feeling. "I'm going to take a shower."

"And I'm going to join you." He quickly pulled himself up and tossed Jane's body over his arm. She squealed adorably and let him take her to the bathroom, dangling her head down behind his back. "You do know that you're a very naughty and shameless turian?"

"Oh, I know that, love. I certainly know about that." Vakarian pulled her down, sliding her body against his. "Now let's take all those silly human clothes off, shall we?"

"You say silly but I know you liked my sexy outfit from two days ago… you want to have another round?" She asked while Garrus took off her hoodie and top, leaving her only in her bra. "Let's see how you perform this time."

"Challenge accepted." Garrus embraced Jane, his fingers fumbled on the bra clasps for less than a minute. He unclasped it then quickly pulled the piece of clothing from the woman's chest to discard it on the floor. "See? I'm the best."

"Pfff, better use those hands for something better."

Garrus only grinned and pulled her pants, along with underwear, down then quickly removed his own clothes. They stepped into the shower stall and closed the glass doors to have some nice hot time together, not stopping there but on the bed, until both of them were too exhausted to move.
Next morning they quickly washed and put clothes on. Without breakfast or any other delays, they went to Nihlus' apartment. Everyone was already awake and waiting for them to go sightseeing again. In the evening Kryik suggested something great. "Let's go to the Armax Arena!"

Solana jumped happily next to Nihlus. "Yaaay! I'm in your team, Ni!"

"Of course, my precious. No one can be with me but you." The turian hugged Solana.

Garrus looked at them then turned to Jane. "That will be bad…"

"Why?"

"Because Nihlus trained her… they know everything about each other. Secret signs, strategy, everything. Okay, but we have worked together too…"

Everyone went to the Armax Arsenal Arena, only Garrus and Jane had to return to the apartment for their gear. When both pairs were suited and had chosen their weapons, they entered the arena. Garrus’ mother and grandparents sat in the lounge and observed their game.

"Okay, hun, better focus and we're good. We were at war for a long time, we know what to do. Not to mention we are regulars here. Shoot those bloody mercs and be faster than Nihlus and Solana."

Jane said and checked her pistol and shotgun. "I'll take the close ones while you do the ranged."

"I've already told you, I wrote the book."

"Yadda, yadda. I can see that this is some serious shit. Family competition that is." The woman patted Garrus on the armored arm and checked the time to start. "We have one minute. Better take your position." Jane also took up position, just almost in the center of the arena. The battle would start within seconds, the woman could feel adrenaline rush, like every time before the fight, whether it was for real or not. When the holograms of mercenaries started to show up she killed each with deadly efficiency. Her precise shots, backed up with Garrus' headshots bought them lots of points.

But Nihlus and Solana weren't passive at all and Jane could see they had almost the same score, they missed only 3 to them. Soon round 1 ended with a victory for team Garrus and Jane. The second round ended the same but round 3 and 4 were won by Solana and Nihlus. The last round would decide the winner. This time they were to defeat each other. Team versus team without any holo mercs spawning on the map. The arena changed, blocks that made cover, rose up.

"What's the plan?" Jane asked while there was a small break between rounds. She was breathing heavily, sweat on her face and her damp hair. Yet she still had strength to fight and a smirk on her face.

"I'm thinking about a trap…" Garrus replied enigmatically while studying the area. "Listen: I want you to lure them here. His finger pointed at a spot on the map with his omni-tool, a small shiny dot appeared on the place. "Use your cloaking to distract them."

Shepard nodded and smiled. She knew his tactics well. She had gotten used it on one of their numerous encounters. Two minutes later, Jane was leading Solana and Nihlus into a trap. Each of them were approaching her from different directions. She ran from one place to another, hiding and appearing in turns. The woman was focused on her mission, she knew that one wrong step would be fatal - just like in real battle. Jane led both turians into a corner, they stopped looking puzzled at each other when Jane became invisible.

"Scoped and dropped!" Garrus yelled from his cover when his headshot took all of Nihlus' HP, meanwhile Jane appeared behind Solana and shot her a few times.
"Sorry, Sol! But remember I love you and you're my number one." With that, the match was over. Team Garrus and Jane won the match, 3 to 2.

The four of them left the arena and went to their respective changing rooms, joking and having fun along the way. Solana was really excited and happy despite her loss. "Spirits, Jane, I can't believe how awesome you were. And why is your hair so wet?"

"Oh, it's sweat. I'll go and wash it. Wait for me, 'kay?" The young turian female nodded eagerly. Shepard went to have a quick shower then went out and put her clothes on. Solana was ready but waited for Jane to finish. By the time the two of them left the changing room, Garrus and Nihlus were already in the lounge where Kalea and the turian elders were watching the game.

Jane wasn't surprised to see the lounge filled with various aliens. Her games with Garrus always attracted a huge audience. She also saw one human - Josephine Clark. "Josey!" She yelled, waving at her friend.

Josey turned around and smiled at Jane. "Jane! That was so awesome! You rocked the arena."

"I didn't know you were coming here. We have to come together next time." Jane hugged Josey and quickly led her to her turian family. "Josey, please meet my family: Garrus' mother - Kalea. His grandmothers - Zanya and Hamras and this handsome gentleman is General Septimus Oraka - my husband's grandfather. This sweet thing is Garrus' sister - Solana."

"It's a pleasure, I'm Josephine Clark." The woman was a bit nervous of being around six large turians, Jane patted her on the back and whispered that it was fine. "It's good to see you again, Commander Vakarian."

"Likewise, Ms. Clark." Garrus regarded Josephine, again her hair had changed - still mostly black but now part of it was red, like Jane's, with white streaks. For him, as a turian, human hair was strange… he got used to the fiery hair Jane had but Josephine was something else. He noted internally to ask Jane why her friend's hair was changing colour on a regular basis. Vakarian would have mused about the matter longer but suddenly he was pushed aside.

"Sunshine! You forgot about the absolutely perfect, dashing and devilishly handsome badass Spectre. That's me in case someone didn't know." Nihlus barged through Garrus to present himself to the still nervous human woman. "Spirits… behold! Has anyone seen a more beautiful creature that the fair lady in front of me? What's your name, oh marvelous angel?"

Josey looked at Jane with a helpless gaze. It was the first time for her, to see such behaviour from a turian. Shepard could relate to that, at first she was shocked too but then Nihlus just made his place in her heart. "Don't worry Josey, he's always like that. Please meet Council Spectre - Nihlus Kryik. Nihlus this is Josephine Clark. She came to live here on the Citadel from Earth. We met in the market near Li's shop."

"Such a shame we didn't meet earlier. Bad luck. I hope we will get closer in the future." Nihlus was just Nihlus, as he flirted shamelessly in front of everyone. Ending his pick-up line by kissing Josey on the hand in the human fashion.

Meanwhile Solana approached Jane and whispered to her ear. "Jane, why does Josephine have different coloured hair? I mean… I've seen humans have hair in one colour, like you. She has three colours…"

Jane giggled to herself and leaned to whisper back to the young female. "God, Sol, you are so cute. Humans can dye their hair. Colour it, like Josey here."
"Everyone! Let's go eat something and celebrate Garrus and Jane's victory. My sweet Solana, you were splendid as well. Ms. Josephine, please come with us. Any friend of Jane's is a friend of ours." Septimus took Jane and Solana by the arm and led them out of the Armax Arsenal Arena. Nihlus, with Josephine, behind them.

The time they spent together was fun. Jane was eyeing Josey and Nihlus from time to time. The woman was looking more relaxed with each passing minute. Kryik was leaning to her ear now and then, making Ms. Clark blush. He even dared to touch the red and white part of her hair, then pointing at his plates and clan markings. *I just hope he knows what he's doing… or else I'll kick his boney turian ass.*

xXx

**Razzberry suggested pairing Josey with Nihlus and I think it's super sweet ^^**
Chapter 12

Missed me? *in voice of Andrew Scott from BBC's Sherlock*

Sorry for such a late update~! I feel shame about that, really! But I have my reasons: my kids were sick then I was sick… and Blade and Soul was launched on NA and EU servers xD

But here it is! New and shiny chapter :D

Remember about Razzberry's fics: Mass Effectiveness and Dawn of a New Era.

Enjoy! :*

xXx

Garrus' family spent 5 days on the Citadel, then they returned to Palaven. Their Grandparents were glad that they had visited Jane and Garrus, and about the fact they could see the place again after all those years. Jane felt sad when they left. She had grown to love those turians just like her real family. That also made her miss Zaeed and Karin even more. She decided to plan a trip to Earth. The first thing she did was call her step-father. Sitting comfortably in the office, the woman opened up a vid-call on the computer. Jane started the call but Zaeed wasn't picking up. Hmmm… come to think about it I haven't called for some time again… with all the dra-Fuck! What if he saw the news?! But he doesn't watch anything… but Ma could've watched it… omg, omg! The woman was calling and calling her step-father until he picked up.

His angry face appeared as a hologram. "Oi, kiddo! You want to make your old pa really, really angry? Goddamn, Janey, you haven't called in days. What happened for fuck's sake?"

"Hi, Pa, I missed you too." Jane giggled nervously at Zaeed's grimace. "I had… a lot of things to do. How are you?"

"Good. I'm a bit tired after Benning. Not to mention how fucked up Arcturus Station is. Goddamn morons with their goddamn attitude problems!" The old man huffed in exasperation.

Like you don't have an attitude problem, Pa. She regarded the man, he didn't seem to know anything about the news. I'm fucking sure he hasn't watched it… although Karin will have seen it. God I love you, Ma. Jane sighed with relief internally. It was her lucky day. "So… same old I see… I wanted to, um… But first things first. When you will be on Earth again?"

"We already are on goddamn Earth, pumpkin! Since yesterday! It's goddamn Christmas next week!" Zaeed couldn't contain his anger anymore. He yelled then regarded Jane with a glare. "You would know if you have called more often and longer."

"Christmas? Oh my god, Pa! Why didn't you tell me earlier! We will come to Earth in two days! I'll call when and where, bye!" With that she closed the connection and ran to Garrus, who was lying casually on the couch and watching some vid. She jumped on the turian like a cat, with a big grin on her face. "Big guy… we're going to Earth. It's Christmas next week!"

"Huh? Christmas?" Garrus remembered that word from somewhere. "You said that word before! When we met on the Citadel for the first time!"

Jane watched him with a gape. That sudden excitement was a surprise. "God… and you actually
remember that? You barely wanted to look at me… there was that aura of disgust, you know…” She giggled at the nonplussed turian. "Sorry. You changed and I love you." She kissed him on his mandible.

"Make fun of me for being an idiot. Go on. I'm used to that anyway. Nihlus is a pro." His hands went under her hoodie, learning that she had nothing on underneath. The woman bit his neck when he said that. "Oh… that is nice. So, what's Christmas? And should I be scared?"

"Silly, it's a holiday, like the Unity Festival. We gather, we eat and we give presents to each other. It was about one guy that claimed to be a god's son. Jesus Christ, his name, and humans celebrate his birth. I don't believe in god, I'm not a religious person. But it's good to meet with everyone." Jane smiled sadly and laid on Garrus' broad chest. "I miss them, Garrus. I'd like to see my parents."

"So let's go. I said that we can go after Palaven. Why not? I see that you need it. A lot. And we have only one month before Spectre training begins." He hugged her under her hoodie. Tight. "I want to make you happy, Jane."

"You're making me happy, Garrus." After a moment of cuddling, when Garrus started to make bold moves on her, Jane pulled up and looked at him, thinking about something. "You think they will lend us a council shuttle again?"

"I think so, yes."

"Yaaay. Okay, maybe this time we will use that nice bedroom." Shepard bent to kiss the turian. They stroked each other, making each other moan or growl. Garrus' hand started to pull up the woman's top when she again pulled up. He growled lustfully and tried to pull her body down again but she stopped him. "One more thing, Big Guy. I think… I think we need to buy a bigger apartment. Our own."

"I like this one."

"Yeah, me too. But we can't have guests here, Garrus. We can't rely on Nihlus to accommodate our guests for us." She stood up and opened her omni-tool. "I've checked our accounts and we have enough to afford a bigger apartment. With all the money the Council gave us and the money from the wedding. Also Pa sent me something, because apparently he doesn't know what to do with all the money he's got." Jane shook her head. Zaeed was rich as hell but he wasn't one to flash his wealth at everyone. He had lived with Jane and Karin on an Alliance base, leading a normal life without luxury. Jane liked that about her step-father. "What do you think?"

"Maybe you're right. We can find one after we come back from Earth." Garrus opened his omni-tool and called Sparatus. The councilor agreed to lend them a council shuttle again. "Okay so the day after tomorrow we will leave."

Jane nodded and then frowned. "God, we have to do some shopping. Tomorrow we need to find some good presents. And we have to buy you dextro food for 10 days."

Garrus agreed with her, all serious. With such face he asked. "Everything's fine by me… but can we have sex now?" He took her hand and placed it on the hard bulge that was a clear indication of what he wanted. "This wants your attention."

Jane smiled and squeezed his hard member lightly through the fabric of his pants. Then her hand started to work on it, up and down. "You really are one naughty turian." With her hand still on him, she leaned to kiss him softly and passionately. "And I love it." Shepard said when she broke the kiss, gasping for air.
Garrus took the hem of her hoodie and lifted it up, taking it off the woman. He liked the fact that she had nothing on underneath. The turian's hands roamed on Jane's naked upper body to end on her breasts. The sounds she made, how her body reacted to his touch, how she could arch her back while pushing herself toward his body - those things were making his groin plates shift open faster than he could think about. He would've devoured her right then if the doorbell hadn't interrupted them.

"Spirits! What the fuck is going on today?!" Garrus grit his teeth in anger. He was at his limit.

Seconds after his outburst, a happy Nihlus entered the apartment, spotting Garrus above Jane, whose strategic parts were luckily covered by the turian body. Kryik stopped, regarding Garrus and clearly waiting for something, anything. He didn't have to wait even a moment for Vakarian's angry response.

"Go away!"

"But it's impo-"

"You can come back in 40 minutes! Now get out!" Garrus roared and pointed at the doors. When Nihlus left, the green circle turned to red allowing the turian to focus again on his wife. Jane was giggling maniacally at the scene that had just taken place in the apartment. "Okay, I have had enough of it." He said and kissed her, stopping her laughter and making her moan again. Then he pulled himself up and with one swift movement, took off her shorts and panties. It wasn't long before he was naked himself.

Jane squealed when her husband, with just a few moves of his very strong and very determined hands, she was turned on the stomach, her lower body kneeling on the floor. Garrus spread her legs slightly apart and she could feel the nice skin of his fingers and blunted talons, on her entrance and clit. "Oh, yesss…"

During this short time, Vakarian had learned a lot about her body - he was quick to learn things. When he noticed Jane's moans become deeper and more frequent, he couldn't restrain himself any longer. Garrus took his hand off her and placed his hard member in front of her entrance just to shove himself in.

Jane screamed at the sudden sensation. She wasn't prepared for this to progress so fast but she liked it. Oh fuck... who would know that angry Garrus would turn so... The rest of her thought vanished from her mind while her husband was rocking into her, hard. She dove her face into the cushions of the couch, trying to muffle her screams of pleasure. Strong hands that, just seconds ago, were gripping her hip firmly, now turned her face to the side. Garrus leaned to Jane, his hot quick breath made her shiver.

"No… I want to hear you, Jane."

The turian's low predatory growl turned her on even more than was humanly possible. Her hands clenched on the material of the couch like her life depended on it. "God, Garrus…" Jane gasped, while the turian licked the back of her neck and lower down. "I love you so much."

Garrus bit Shepard on the crook of her neck, first lightly but then his teeth sank deeper. Making the woman scream from both pleasure and pain. She didn't mind the pain, she was all for spicy sex. The woman felt her climax approaching and started to feel the anticipation when suddenly Vakarian pulled his shaft out. "Wha-?"

He took her up and sat himself, then her on him. Jane's back leaned on his plated chest. In one swift move he impaled her on him again, moving her up and down like a doll. She was so light for him,
not to mention her flexibility. Garrus felt she was near and now again her muscles started to clench on his member. To add more for her, he bit the other side of the neck. Flicking his tongue on the bite. "Jane… Spirits… you're unbelievable." Her climax was overwhelming, the first time he had felt it so intensely, so strong. It caused his own, also intense and violent.

Garrus leaned on the backrest, slowly descending from his high. Jane laid on his chest and, with effort, enveloped herself with his arms. Both contented with their afterglow. The turian felt it was the best moment of his life. When he could process more and move again, Vakarian laid his wife down and looked into her eyes. "I want to be with you forever."

Jane smiled at his words and brought his head closer so their foreheads could meet. She saw his appreciation when she showed her feelings in the turian way. "Me too."

The pair cuddled for a moment until Jane remembered about Nihlus. "Garrus! Nihlus! Call Nihlus! I'll go wash myself."

Ten minutes later, Kryik was in the apartment again. Garrus offered him a turian beer while Jane was finishing her shower. Vakarian sat next to his friend with a beer in his hand. "So what was so important that you had to charge into my apartment without asking?"

"Like you asked for permission when you charged into my apartment... when..." Both turians regarded themselves. Nihlus swallowed hard then turned his head. "And I will shut up."

"Exactly, Nihlus, shut your damn mouth." Garrus realised what he said and chuckled to himself. "At least about that matter. So what happened?"

"I need the two of you... it's a delicate thing. Where is Jane? Sleeping? Too tired after your exhausting activity?" With a big grin he inhaled loudly. "Spirits, it smells like sex in here." Nihlus waited for any sign of annoyance from Garrus, but his friend only regarded him, nodded to his words and sipping the beer.

"Yup, it is." Vakarian inhaled to and sprawled himself on the couch with a big, satisfied grin that could be done any male after sex with his female. "Jane has just finished her shower and should be here in a minute." As he said it, the woman left the bathroom. "Or even faster as you see."

"Hi again, Nihlus." Shepard came to them, a smile on her face. When she saw the turians with their beers, she turned to the kitchen to grab some for herself. "What's up?" The woman asked once she had sat next to Garrus and snuggled to his side, the turian's hand looping around her waist.

"I need you two to come tomorrow evening for dinner. I invited Josephine but she was reluctant so I said you would be there." Nihlus grabbed Jane's hand in his two, his begging tone shocked the Vakarians. "Please, come tomorrow, to my place."

"Um..." Shepard turned to Garrus for some help but he just shrugged - indicating that the decision was hers. "We need to go shopping because we're going to Earth the day after tomorrow. But I think we will manage to finish before the evening. So yes, we will come." The three of them sipped beer in silence. Shepard was thinking about Nihlus and what he really wanted to do. Is it right? Just a few days ago he was saying that he had feelings for me and now he wants to date Josey... I can't let Nihlus hurt her... Jane decided she should talk to Kryik before anything serious happened. Right here, right now. "Nihlus, I want to ask you..."

"Yes, Jane?"

So no 'sunshine' anymore? Huh, maybe I made a mistake... "I want to know if you're serious about
Josephine. The woman scrutinized the turian, not that she was an expert in turian body language, but after spending so much time with Garrus she knew this and that. Sadly, her sense of smell wasn't that of a turian, so she couldn't tell their emotions. Jane could only hope that Nihlus would be sincere and/or Garrus would tell her the truth.

"I am serious, Jane. And no, I am not some loverboy who chases every woman he sees. Your husband on other the hand…"

Garrus shifted uncomfortably, he coughed a few times to clear his throat. "That was in the past, Nihlus. And we are talking about YOU not me. So stick to the subject." The turian saw the judging glare from Jane and shivered. His mandibles twitched nervously. "What?"

"Who would guess my husband was such a player…" She giggled at her joke and turned to Kryik.

"Oh, I am Garrus Vakarian. She has two arms and two legs? She breaths? That's my kind of woman!" The red plated turian acting as Garrus made Jane laugh so hard she actually started to cry. Garrus tried to look offended but from his subharmonic everyone could hear only amusement.

When Shepard had calmed down she decided to continue on the previous topic. "Anyway, please Nihlus, just don't try to hurt her… It will be a real shame if I have to kill you." Jane felt the rumble of Garrus' chuckle next to her and smacked his arm. "Don't laugh, Big Guy! I am serious here."

"That's what I am laughing about. Nihlus, just don't be like me. Don't be an idiot."

"Jane, I know that… you can think I want just to play with Josephine… partially because of how I acted earlier, toward you." Nihlus looked at the woman to see her nodding in confirmation. "But this is something completely different. I can't describe why… and believe me, I am not some xenophilic perv that looks for human females. It was just… like a lightning bolt struck me." Nihlus, for the first time, fumbled on his words. It was strange for him to describe this feeling. It vexed his senses, overwhelmed him, made him deaf and blind to anything else. His subharmonic sang with confusion and feelings he didn't know until now, for which Garrus' replied with understanding.

"Stop that and talk." Jane warned them with a serious voice, but her eyes were merry. She learned a bit about their sounds so she knew that sub vocal 'talk' was important for turians. All those sounds, growls, keens, low rumbles that meant so much and could explain more than words, were part of their charm.

"Sorry, love, but I know exactly how Nihlus feels. He is as confused as I was, when I realised that I loved you." Vakarian explained and cuddled into Jane. "The hardest part is to learn what the feeling is and then accept it."

The woman nodded understandingly. She didn't have that much difficulty understanding and accepting her feelings for Garrus, but she saw how much he struggled. Admitting to everyone that he loves his human wife was hard, but she could bet everything that admitting the truth to himself, was the hardest trial for Vakarian. "Okay. Don't worry, we will come tomorrow. Ugh, we just need to do the shopping. Good that I know what I want to buy for my parents and friends as Christmas presents."

"Christmas presents?" Nihlus asked with interest.

Jane explained once again what Christmas is and, after a moment of consideration she asked bluntly. "Want to come with us? You have some free time now, right?"

"Hmm… I have free time… and it would be nice to see the human homeworld with my own eyes."
Nihlus thought about Jane's proposal. *I need to tell Sparatus that I am going. I will just tell him it's for security reasons.* Kryik after an internal debate, agreed to go with the Vakarians. He couldn't pass up such a great opportunity.

xXx

"I should have declined…" Shepard said while exhaling. The woman looked tired after a whole day of shopping. "I hate shopping…”

"But you were the one that wanted to go for this Christmas thing, presents." Garrus patted Jane on the knee with one hand, the second still on the steering console of the skycab. "Not to mention you were the one that agreed to this dinner."

"Yeah, put all the blame on me. Because you weren't there and you didn't drop the decision on me." Jane pouted and turned her head toward the window. The view of the Citadel was still breathtaking for her. The five arms of the giant station shone with small lights from the buildings and traffic. She always felt mesmerized at how every race could live in order and peace here. The Citadel was like a giant ant nest for her, where chaos at first sight turned into perfect harmony when one looked at the full picture. The woman smiled to herself. She had lived here for almost six months and wouldn't dare to regret even a second of it. There had been ups and downs along the way, but everything turned to be perfect - a loving husband, good place to live and great future job.

"What are you thinking about?" Garrus' flanged voice snapped her out of her thoughts.

"Just how I love my life here."

"Because you have the perfect turian husband by your side. I hope you're fully aware of that." Garrus' hand went from Jane's knee, to stroke the inside of her thigh, only to be smacked.

"Focus on the road, Big Guy. Or turn on auto-pilot."

Garrus took his hand to place it on the steering console. "Spoilsport. Besides, there is no fun in driving with auto-pilot. I like to feel I am in charge."

"Oh? I know, hun, yesterday you were completely in charge and I really liked it." Jane purred to him. She saw his mandibles flare, telling her how contented he was with her words. "Still, focus on the driving and don't think about anything stupid."

It took them only few minutes to reach Nihlus' building. They were greeted by the same turian guard that was on duty when Jane last came to the apartment. This time he was really polite, bowing to them. *I bet he wouldn't be that nice if Garrus wasn't here. Fucker.* The couple passed the guard to enter the elevator. A few moments later they entered Nihlus' apartment - noticing Josephine wasn't there yet.

"Hi, you two. I'm glad you're here. Josephine just sent me message, she left her apartment and is on the way." The host handed Jane and Garrus their drinks. "So, what time tomorrow?"

"We wanted to go in the morning. But because you invited us here, we didn't have time to pack. So, tomorrow around 16:00, okay?"

"Yes. I'll meet you two at the Council Docking Bay."

Twenty minutes later, the door guard informed Nihlus that Ms. Clark was downstairs. The turian rushed to greet his honorable guest and soon he was with the woman upstairs. Jane and Garrus greeted her. Like always, Josephine's hair colour had changed. This time, the strands that she always
coloured, were a radiant yellow. She regarded the apartment shyly and when she spotted the Vakarians, a broad smile appeared on her face. "Good evening."

"Hello, Josey! How are you?" Shepard came closer to other human woman and hugged her.

"Fine. Just hungry as hell because Nihlus said something about how amazing a cook he is." Josey chuckled quietly, looking at the red-plated turian with a warm smile. "Not to mention he strictly forbade me to eat anything before the dinner."

"I just wanted you to taste everything, is all." Kryik replied, amused as well. "Now, my wonderful guests, please come to the dining room. Your humble host prepared you a real treat."

When they entered the dining room, they saw the table already prepared for four. Nihlus led Josephine to her seat next to him, helping her to sit like a real gentleman. Both Josey and Jane were stunned at his manners. Then he showed the Vakarians to their places. Both women were seated opposite each other, just like the two turians. Once the guests were seated, Nihlus went to the kitchen to fetch the starter dishes.

"My ladies, especially for you I made something from your home planet - Wonton soup." Kryik put plates in front of both women. He looked at them to see two stunned humans, with their eyes almost popping out.

"Wow." Josephine said after a while of admiration. "Just like in the Chinese restaurant on Earth."

"Exactly." Jane nodded, still watching the dish with pure amazement. "Oh god, Nihlus. You nailed it."

The Spectre smiled to himself and returned to the kitchen for Garrus and his dish - a light salad with Vakarian's favourite sayon meat. "Here you go my friend - your number one." Garrus nodded, thanking Kryik for the food. At last the host sat down and grinned to his guests. "Let's eat. I hope you will like it."

Everyone grabbed their utensils and started to eat. The women were sighing or moaning while eating - for Jane it had been so long since she had eaten human food, not to mention such good food. She didn't speak until she had finished every last bit of the soup and dumplings. "Holy fuck, Nihlus, it was… God, where did you learn to cook like that?"

"It's my hobby, Jane. It relaxes me. Kalea taught me a lot. And my mother. Then I started to cook asari and salarian cuisine."

"But what about an allergy to levo?" Jane inquired. She knew that there were cases of allergic reactions during the war. For both sides. Luckily for her, neither she nor Garrus had one.

"Don't have any." Nihlus turned to Josey and watched her finish the last bite of her food. "Did you like it, Josephine?"

"It was delicious, thank you so much." The woman smiled at the turian with affection. At first she was afraid of the red plated turian, but now she had to admit, she had grown to like him. A lot. His messages with a small tint of flirting. His calls just to ask how was she. And now this dinner. They had only known each other for a few days, but something drew her to the turian.

After the starters they had a while to talk and have a drink. "First time I was away from Earth was when I was 15. I went to Luna - Earth's moon. Pa was supposed to go to the Armstrong Outpost for half a year with his platoon. He took me there so I could get used to outer space and different gravities." Jane started to talk when Nihlus had asked about their first experiences in space. "Next
time was when I was 17 - I went to Lowell City on Mars, I also happened to be in the Mars Archives."

"Really? Isn't that a top-secret facility?" Josephine asked, quite shocked - Jane had been in places forbidden for normal people. To talk with such a person was something special.

"Oh, I wasn't inside the archives. Just in the common area where the researchers and scientists gather in their free time. They taught me math, biology and physics. Best vacation of my life - while studying." Jane chuckled and Josephine giggled after her. "Anyway, when I was 18 I joined the military and had real fun there. After one year of training I was promoted and could go on a mission."

"I've read that human military training lasts 3 years." Nihlus looked at Jane with a big dose of surprise.

Jane blushed a bit, feeling like she was being scrutinized. "Yeah, well… since I already knew everything, they promoted me earlier. And when I say everything, I mean everything. Pa had his own way of training. But it's not like I cheated or anything. No one would rely on some idiot without skill. I proved that on Akuze. But before that there was ICT… those were 3 hard years of extensive training and doing unimaginable things." Jane looked down at Garrus' hand, that she had hold of for a moment now. She realised her grasp had become stronger when she mentioned "N" training and Akuze.

"Was it that hard?"

"Training was… like I said, the 3 hardest years of my live. But then it was worse… Akuze, 4 thresher maws to kill. Then my whole squad dead and still 2 more to kill. I don't know how I pulled through it… somehow I did it and achieved N7 rank as the youngest in history. I was 24 then." Shepard sighed heavily, dropping her head with sadness and defeat. "To be honest, I'd have preferred to die instead of them. They were a great bunch of men, they didn't deserve to die. Not like that…"

"Jane, don't say that." Garrus' three-fingered hand brushed the woman's hair in affection. He made a calming sound with his subharmonic. To be honest, he had never thought about how Jane felt about Akuze. The realisation of why she was so reluctant to go for the Tuchanka arena was so obvious now. She had walked through hell and back, with all her squad dead. That tiny woman - that loves to ask questions, loves to learn about aliens, wants adventures - achieved so much. But at what cost? Not to mention she had married her enemy and now she loved him with all her heart. Spirits, and I was such an asshole in the beginning of this marriage. I've never thought that she had gone through a lot and still could be that strong. A light squeeze on his hand made him look at Jane, she smiled to him. "I love you, don't you ever say you would be better dead."

"Silly." Jane replied shortly and blushed at Josephine 'Awwww!' was heard from the opposite side of the table. "Ekhm, yes. So when I was 25, just a few days after my birthday, all humanity was struck by the news that an alien race had attacked our ships when we wanted to open the new relay."

Shepard grinned like stupid to the turians. "And hell broke loose."

"Those were some intense years." Garrus nodded. "I almost lost mandible because of you." Nihlus snorted at the remak.

"You burned my hair a few times, you silly turian!" Jane poked him in the arm and now everyone was giggling. "You don't even know how long Jack could mock me about my bald head. Thanks to all gods for skin transplants and hair implants! Or you would have an ugly wife."
"I got the latest one. I can change my hair color whenever I like." Josey pointed at her hair. "It was a real pain in the ass to dye my hair every now and then."

"I can relate. I used to paint my hair too, until I got enrolled."

Suddenly a pinging sound could be heard from the kitchen. "Oh! Main dish is ready, please wait!" Nihlus rushed to the kitchen only to come back a few minutes later with two plates. He put them in front of the two women and went for his and Garrus' plates. Missing quite the scene in the dining room.

When Kryik put the plate in front of Jane, she couldn't believe her eyes. She looked at the dish and thought she was in heaven. She literally started to cry. "I... I can't believe it! A steak, a real steak! I'm in heaven!" No one expected such a reaction from Shepard. The woman, after a moment, realised how embarrassing she was acting. "Um... sorry... it was so long ago since I ate real steak."

Josephine started to laugh and soon after her, Garrus and Jane. Poor Nihlus entered the dining room with the turian dishes when everyone but him was laughing hard. "Um... something's wrong? That bad?"

"No, not at all, sweetie!" Jane said after a moment, when she had calmed a bit from laughter. "It's my fault. You are an angel. A steak, Nihlus. A steak!" The woman stood up and hugged Kryik and thanked him once again. Garrus growled at that behind them.

"Okay, Janey, stop or your husband will kill me. That would be bad." He led her to her seat then sat himself. "I hope you will like what I prepared."

Shepard and Josephine were eating their food and literally melting. To eat something human after months of living on the Citadel was almost like coming home after being away for a long time. Jane didn't mind learning about new tastes, asari cuisine was really good in her opinion. But in that moment she was closer to home than ever. And soon she would be on Earth again. After 6 months away. "God, it was sooo freakin' good, Nihlus. I'm so happy we're going to Earth tomorrow. I'll eat more human dishes. Oh! That made me remember. Please buy something to eat for ten days."

"I already prepared my food, Jane. How about you Garrus?"

"Me too. I hope someday there will be dextro food on Earth." Garrus sighed. Now that he knew he wanted to be with Jane forever - or at least till the day he died - he wanted the two races to be closer. After all the war had ended just 6 months ago. Turians and humans were still hostile toward each other on the Citadel - with a few exceptions - not to mention regular attacks on colonies or in space.

Josephine listened to their talk and suddenly she realised what they were talking about. "You are going to Earth?! FOR CHRISTMAS?!"

"Uhm, yes. Yes we are." Jane replied and instantly knew where it was going. "The Council lent us their shuttle... ship, rather, and we have free seats."

"Loving Jesus in heaven! Can I come with you?!"

"Yeah, sure, Josey." Jane nodded and smiled to Nihlus who grinned madly at her and winked, then at Garrus - who was really grumpy. The woman could only guess that he was pissed about missing time with her in that nice bedroom on the Council ship. Well, next time maybe?

"Thank you! I already bought presents but when I tried to book a place on a shuttle... it was too late. Everything was sold out. I thought I'd spend Christmas in my shop."
"You have a shop?" Jane asked and realised one thing - she never asked what Josephine did for a living here on the Citadel.

"Yeah. I own 3 shops on Earth and when the war ended, I wanted to come to the Citadel and start a business here." Ms Clark leaned on the chair and regarded the ceiling with sparkling eyes. "I inherited my shops from my parents. The income is good that's how I could afford to move here. It was my dream to leave Earth and travel through the stars. I wanted to go to one of the colonies but the war started and civilians without military training were prohibited to go. And since the Citadel was opened for everyone, I made up my mind and came here. Although it's a bit dangerous sometimes. Hatred between our species won't vanish anytime soon."

Nihlus took the woman's hand into his and moved closer. "Don't worry, my beautiful star, I will protect you."

Josephine blushed and didn't say anything for a while. On one hand she was flattered by Nihlus advances on her, but on the other she was afraid that the turian wanted to make fun of her. She decided to change the topic. "Anyway, selling human wares on the human part of the ward has hit in the spot. I can't complain about my daily income, really."

"That's great, Josey. I am really glad you made it."

Later Nihlus served an apple pie that he had bought from Lilhierax and turian sweets for him and Garrus. They made an appointment with Josephine as to when and where they should meet and soon Ms Clark rushed to her apartment to pack herself.

Garrus and Jane returned to their home with merry moods. The dinner was nice and they could spent time with friends. Garrus also remembered that he wanted to ask one important question. "Jane?"

"Hmmm?" She hummed while cuddling up to her turian husband.

"How old are you?"

The woman raised her head and regarded Garrus with wide eyes. She realised that she also didn't know how old Vakarian was. "I am 32 earthen years. And you?"

"Same in palavenian years. Wait a moment…” Garrus quickly opened his omni-tool, then checked length of an Earth year and calculated Jane's age. "On Palaven you would be… only 26! Spirits, I have such a young wife."

"And how about you in Earth years?"

"38. Oh, okay." Garrus frowned. He would be almost 40 years old. Normally, turians start a family around that age. "It's strange that we have the same age on our respective planets but then when we calculate it, the age is so different. And you are baby."

"Haha, very funny." Jane replied at the smirk. Then moved up to straddle the turian's lap. "Maybe I am just a kid… but a very naughty one." She said and licked his neck and mandible.

The turian growled and moved his head up, showing the full length of his neck. "And I like that aspect about you, love."

xXx

Jane and Garrus were in the Council Docking Bay, where they checked in and proceeded to load all the luggage on the ship. Soon after them Nihlus showed up with his baggage and mandatory grin on
his face. "Hello, you two. Jane, your radiant beauty makes this place so bright." He said not bothered by the jealous sound the turian made. Then he looked around to check if Josephine was already there too. "And where is my most gorgeous angel - Josephine?"

"She messaged me that she will be a bit late. But should be here soon." Jane replied while grumpy Garrus took Nihlus' baggage and put it inside the ship.

Vakarian looked at the size of his and Nihlus' things and he had more than Kryik."Is this all of it Nihlus? You brought your food?"

Kryik went inside. "Yeah, I got Spectre rations from requisitions. They are extra small before heating them up. And don't taste like cardboard." He pulled out a small packet with Taetrus Meat Stew. "And I got some for you to check out too. Soon we will eat only those, on missions that is."

"I see." The turian was reading the list of ingredients when he got smacked on the back.

"What are you doing, you nerds?" Jane giggled behind him. "You left me alone outside, come on. Let's wait for Josey in the bay."

It wasn't long before Ms Clark appeared. She had two bags, that Nihlus quickly fetched from her when he saw her. "Hello, and thank you Nihlus." Said turian took her to the check in counter where Josephine proceeded with all the formalities. Moments later she entered the ship, accompanied by Kryik. The turian took her downstairs while Garrus and Jane prepared the ship to take off. In a few hours, the two women and two turians would be on Earth.

xXx

Next chapter: EARTH! = Zaeed! Hell yeah!

I heard that turian liver in BBQ sauce is really good xD
Chapter 13

Hello! You didn't expect me that fast, did you? :D To make up for long waiting between Ch. 11 and Ch. 12, I decided to post Chapter 13 extra fast - Lucky you! :D Razzberry managed to edit it really fast too! :D Yay, big thanks to her!

That's why don't forget about her fics: Mass Effectiveness and Dawn of a New Era!

Enjoy :D

xXx

The first part of their flight, from the Citadel toward the Widow Relay, Jane and Garrus spent in the cockpit. Mostly because the turian was flying the ship, they cuddled for a while and also because they wanted to leave Nihlus and Josephine alone. After jumping through the relay, Garrus put the ship on the autopilot. The Vakarians decided to have a drink on the lower deck.

"I hope you brought all the things I wrote in the message" Garrus asked the other turian when he sat comfortably on the couch with a turian beer in hand. "Earth has a colder climate than Palaven."

"Yeah. Don't want to freeze." Nihlus shivered from imagining the cold, not happy about the prospect. Palaven with its hot climate was, ideal. Just like the other turian colonies. Not that missions from the Council didn't demand that he go to cold planets. Like Noveria, where Administrator Anoleias literally gnashed his teeth every time Kryik docked. Well, people usually loved him or wanted him dead. "Why did you humans set a major holiday in winter, is a mystery to me."

Jane shrugged, not bothered by the mocking. "It's not like the whole planet is freezing cold, Nihlus. Besides, we're going to the Alliance base in Rio. I can assure you, there it won't be colder than 25°C Celcius." She looked through the huge window in the Observation Lounge to see that they were passing Jupiter - 'a coffee planet' as Jane used to call it, with it's beige and brown colours.

Just 3 hour later, Garrus was docking on a landing port in Edinburgh, to drop off Josephine. After wishing Josey a Merry Christmas and saying their goodbyes, Garrus and Jane went down to the hold to let Nihlus have a moment with the woman, alone. He took her aside and kissed her on the hand.

"It's such a pity you can't come with us. I'd like to spend this human holiday with you, Josephine."

The woman blushed and lowered her gaze, too ashamed to look into the turian's eyes. "I'd like that too. More's the pity you can't come with me."

"Sorry about that, the Council sent me here for a job. I need to keep an eye on those two lovebirds. But I heard you will come see us soon. I will wait for you." Without thinking too much, he took Josephine's head into his hands and moved it gently up to join his forehead with hers. He saw her wonderful green eyes startled at the sudden act but they warmed up and she closed them.

The woman felt good at the intimate act of the turian, his warmness on her skin. His touch was alien, but felt good. The turian's alien green eyes pierced through her, reaching her soul. Josey didn't know when her hands went up, stroking the soft hide on Nihlus' neck and the sudden need to feel the rest of his body overwhelmed her. But it wasn't the time nor the place. Not to mention that they knew too little of each other. The woman took her hands off the turian and moved back a few steps. She had to clear her throat before she could say anything properly. "Uhm, it's time to go. I need to find a skycab. Um, good bye, Nihlus. Merry Christmas. We will see each other again soon." With that she turned around, her luggage in hand, and left the ship.
Kryik watched her leave, then the hatches of the ship closed. His body felt stiff. In the lounge he slumped on the couch, powerless. "Spirits..." He put his face in his hands, still not believing what just happened.

"What's up, buddy?" Garrus sat next to his friend and could smell Josephine's scent on him. "Oh... I see."

"Yeah." Nihlus' muffled sigh could be heard behind his hands. "I couldn't stop myself..."

Jane frowned at the remark and approached the turian to grab his hands and pull them aside. "What have you done?" An angry tone could be heard in her words.

"Just... I wanted to touch her so badly... just wanted to put my forehead on hers and look into her brilliant eyes." He said frankly then keened with a sad undertone of his subharmonic. "And now she's gone."

Jane slumped next to Garrus and smacked her forehead. "God, and here I thought you did something stupid..." She then shook her head, amused by the turn of events. "Don't worry, Nihlus, she will come to the base next week."

"I know. I know, damn it! But it's so hard..."

Garrus patted the other turian on the arm and stood up. "Okay, time to go. Come on Jane, you need to give me the coordinates."

xXx

It wasn't long before they docked on the Alliance base in Rio. Zaeed's home was there because he had chosen a warmer climate than Vancouver or London. Jane had to admit now it was a good thing. Making the two turians stay in Vancouver now, would give them hypothermia. The woman had already contacted her stepfather, that they were coming, so it wasn't a surprise to see him on the landing pad. Along with Admiral Hackett, Karin and Jack. Shepard grinned madly to herself - she didn't know how much she had missed them until she saw them standing there. Once Garrus had landed and turned off the engine, she jumped out of the ship faster than anyone could imagine. "Pa!" She dashed to Massani, only to jump on him and hug him dearly.

"Janey." The old man could only whisper her name and return the embrace. After a moment he said with a hoarse voice. "You got soft around the edges?"

"Very funny, Pa." Her voice also hoarse from emotions, eyes filled with tears. "I missed you."

"Me too, pumpkin, me too." Zaeed let her go, so she could hug Karin. While Jane was greeting the others, he entered the ship to greet his turian son-in-law and help him with their bags. He spotted the turian fumbling with the bags. "Commander Vakarian, good to see you."

Garrus straightened up, feeling nervous. To be honest, he had been nervous for a while because of how his own father reacted to the news. What if Jane's father will make this hell on Earth? He mused every few minutes while flying to Jane's home planet and now he was facing said human, waiting for the bucket of crap he would get on his head. "Captain Massani, likewise." But Jane's father only smirked.

Zaeed looked behind the turian to see a lot of luggage and crates. "That's a lot of goddamn stuff. What was that idiot girl thinking?"

"Oh... that's my food mostly. And Nihlus'." Vakarian clarified and took two crates at once to take
"Nihlus?" Zaeed asked, puzzled.

"Jane didn't tell you, Captain?" Garrus asked, surprised as well. When he saw shake of denial from Massani, Garrus just sighed. "Spirits, that woman... the Council ordered one it's Spectre's - Nihlus Kryik - to accompany us. To secure our stay here. He's a friend of mine... and Jane too."

"I see. I've heard about Council Spectres. Tough sons of bitches."

"We certainly are, Sir." Nihlus came up from the lower deck, smiling with a toothy grin. He thought that humans would get scared by his smile, but Zaeed didn't flinch a bit. "Special Tactics and Reconnaissance, Nihlus Kryik, at your service." The turian offered his hand and - again - was surprised by the human's behaviour. Massani took his hand and shook it with a confident, strong grip.

"Captain Zaeed Massani, Alliance Navy. Father of Jane Shep- I mean Vakarian now. Sorry for all those stupid things, that I don't know and don't want to know, that she did so far." He said and smirked at the two turians. Both of the aliens started to laugh.

"You don't have to apologise to me... Garrus on the other hand, is living with her. I bet he has a list."

"I think I have a full list of her bullshit on my omni-tool." Garrus replied with an amused smirk. I think I'm starting to like the man. "Oi, Nihlus, it's good you quit your slacking on the lower deck. You can do something for a change." With that he shoved baggage into Nihlus' hands.

"Oi! I thought I came here for a vacation."

"No, you came here to secure our stay. So do your damn job." Garrus retorted thoughtfully, having real fun at mocking Nihlus for a change. "I, on the other hand, came here for a vacation." Kryik grunted at that and left the ship.

"Huh. Anyway, Commander."

"Garrus is fine, Sir." The turian interrupted. He felt that all those military ranks shouldn't be used by him and Zaeed.

"And Zaeed is just as fine, Garrus." The human replied and both men shook their hands in agreement. "Anyway, Garrus, you didn't have to bring that much food. Karin already ordered a huge shipment of dextro stuff. That woman is a goddamn genius, shit you not. If only Jane called more often she would have known that we already got food for you."

"I will make her call you more often from now on, promise." The turian smiled at man. He also thought to himself that he also, should call home more often.

"Better do that, son. Now let's take those goddamn things and move."

Soon all the things were placed in the skycars. Garrus greeted everyone, then Jane presented Nihlus Kryik. She could spot the dismayed gazes of soldiers in the docking area, but no one dared to say anything in Hackett's presence. The Admiral seemed to notice them too, so he regarded everyone with a sharp gaze - that made the humans fall in line and mind their own business.

The Admiral turned out to be a good host - he was really interested in the Spectre's work so he went to the skycar with Nihlus and asked various questions concerning his work. Kryik obliged, telling
him everything but classified things. Garrus was talking with Zaeed and Karin so Jane could sit in the backseat and have a quiet talk with Jack.

The biotic had been scrutinizing her friend since she left the ship and at last could ask some important things. "So… how is it screwing a turian?"

Shepard started to cough violently, hearing Jack asking such question. "Jack…" She hissed in whispers. "Can you, for once, think about what you're saying? Pretty please?"

"Fuck no, screw you, I can ask my best friend whatever I want. And now I want to know how it was." Jack said with such mischievous smirk, that Jane could honestly say it was the first time seeing it on her friend's face.

"You know what? Fuck you too." Again she hissed but after a while she started to talk. Jane moved closer to Jack and whispered to her ear. "Okay, listen… It's like he's fucking my brain out. You understand? He… god, fuck, Jack, he's bigger than any human… and all those ridges… and his claws on my skin. I know I sound like a xenophiliac pervert… Probably am. But it's unbelievable, okay? And his tongue… god, his tongue can do things, Jack. Things and stuff!"

The biotic listened to Jane with wide eyes. It was first time she had seen Shepard so agitated about sex. Earlier, when her friend had had sex, she wasn't that marveled by it. Hell, Jack thought she was asexual at one point. Now - seeing her all amourous about her husband - she thought it was a mistake. Jane just had to find her match - and she did in a turian male. "You forgot to mention his teeth."

"What? How do you-?"

Jack pointed at the crook of Jane's neck, where small punctures, whose shape indicated what they were and who they belonged to. Shepard touched her skin feeling those punctures and blushed. "Those, Jane. Those."

"Fuck."

"Yeah. I think everyone saw them already, idiot."

"Double fuck." Jane hung her head, feeling ashamed and scared. *Crap, I bet dad already saw them. Strange he didn't say anything… or kill Garrus, so to speak. Something's strange here… Better to talk with Ma.*

**xXx**

Jane entered the house and felt a familiar warmthness in her - a warm feeling whenever she came home from a mission. She was home, even though she lived on the Citadel now, the house on the Alliance Base will always be her home. Karin guessed her feeling right away so she hugged her daughter and whispered. "Welcome home, sweetheart. We missed you."

"Ma…” The woman couldn't contain her tears. She quickly wiped them and went to the living room where she sat with Karin and Jack. "Ma. I need to ask you before the men bring in all the stuff. Have you seen the Galactic News?"

"You mean the feature about you and Garrus. Of course we did…” Chakwas nodded. "To be honest I thought your father would take the first ship to the Citadel and do something stupid. But then I looked at his face and… I swear to God, Jane! He was smiling. I didn't know what he smiled about till I watched it again…"
Jane cocked her head to the side, not understanding what her mother was talking about. "What do you mean? What was so special there?"

"Hmm… I watched it a few times and then I realised. It was your face, child. It was you - beaming with happiness. It was the first time, for me, to see you so happy, in love. And I understood right away. That, for Zaeed, was the most important thing. That you were happy at last. Truly happy and in love. I think Jack will agree with me too." Karin turned to Jack to see the biotic nodding.

"Bitch I…"

"Jacqueline! Mind your language! I think I need to talk with David… really…"

Jack frowned and apologised. She didn't want Anderson to have the talk with her again. The woman was adopted, just like Jane, by Captain David Anderson. Both Jane and her were found in the same facility, with just one difference. Jack was a test subject. She had been experimented on since she was an infant, until she was two when the soldiers found her in a collapsed testing room. The terrorists wanted her dead, but her biotics saved her. This was one of the many reasons she and Jane were connected. "Anyway, I thought the same thing. When I saw it. And, call me nuts, but I think there was something between you two from the start. I never saw you so passionate on the battlefield unless Vakarian was there too."

Jane nodded absentmindedly, thinking about what she had just heard. Was it really that obvious? That everyone, by just glancing at her face, could read her feelings toward Garrus? When she saw the footage, she was too absorbed about Garrus' problems with his father to notice anything more. Shepard was afraid of what reactions she would see on Earth but she didn't expect such an outcome. Especially from her father. Zaeed was hot-headed and hectic when something concerned Jane. No wonder, he raised her - his only child, an adopted one. He couldn't have his own children, just like Karin - so he focused his every effort to raise Jane as best he could. That applied to Karin as well since she joined the family. She smiled to herself at the realisation of how her parents were awesome and how they loved her. How they accepted her relationship with Garrus. Just like Kalea and Solana - well almost the whole of Garrus' family did. At last she could speak. "Thank you, Ma."

"It's nothing, child. I love you. I understand everything. I am happy."

Meanwhile, the men brought all the baggage inside the house. Jane took the crates with food for the turians, to the kitchen to put it in the storage room. Then she and Garrus took their bags to put things in Jane's room. Nihlus did the same in his guest room.

"So this is your room." Garrus looked around to see shelf with books, a desk with a computer and a huge collection of model ships.

"I said the same thing about yours." Jane smiled to herself at the memory of Garrus' room. "There is one small change though, I've got a large bed now." She pointed at the bed, that could fit two. "I had a smaller one."

"Oh. Your parent's are smart." Garrus approached Jane and hugged her from behind, nuzzling her neck and licking it tentatively. He could feel her body shiver under his touch. "I'd love to test it."

"Not now, silly. Stop it. We will have dinner soon."

The rest of the day, they spent talking. Jane showed the photos from Palaven, which really interested everyone. The humans watched the vids and photos from the turian homeworld, with wide opened eyes, asking Garrus questions about the climate, Cipritine and other things. The turian was again surprised about humans and their interest in everything. It wasn't just Jane then - all humans were a
smart species, with a thirst for knowledge.

Later Hackett had to leave but invited everyone to his villa for a Christmas party. Jack left late in the night after having a few drinks with everyone. Jane and Garrus went to her room late at night, too tired to do anything more than cuddle in the giant bed and sleep.

xXx

Until the day before Christmas, Jane took Garrus and Nihlus to show them the Alliance Base near Rio de Janeiro and the city itself. The turians couldn't believe the obvious gap between rich and poor humans. Jane had learned about the turian balance program, that helped poor units to maintain at least a sufficient level to afford food, a small apartment and other important things like clothes. The woman explained that the gap had lessened over the last few years, due to colonial expansion and the Alliance enlisting program. The Alliance recruited a lot of new soldiers during the war, pity a lot served mostly as cannon fodder. Now the program still worked due to the broadening colonisation range after joining the Council species.

Jane could sense the two turians were on guard, while sightseeing the city. Humans openly watched them and pointed their fingers. No one dared to approach them as Jane wore her N7 outfit - a clear indication that she wasn't one to be messed with. Jack also wore military clothing, so the two turians with soldiers weren't a good target at all for civilians. Of course they could hear shouts like 'Alien scums/trash/bastards.', 'Birdmen', 'Abominations' and such. Jane also could hear insults directed at her 'Alien lover' or 'Turian whore'. So the footage from the Galactic News was broadcast here to.

Jack suggested they should also take them to New York after Christmas and Jane agreed with that. New York and London were the biggest cities and the pride of humanity after all.

Along with Jack, Vega and Ashley - who at the beginning were reluctant to spend time with aliens - they went to the beach to just sunbathe or swim. The turians were a bit baffled about humans and their ability to swim. At first Garrus was nervous when Jane vanished under the surface but when she appeared again, he relaxed a bit. Turians could only sit in the water - where it was shallow and the waves gently washed their plates. When Jane had had enough fun in deeper water, she sat between the turian legs, leaning back on his chest. She and the two turians had an enjoyable talk, while just sitting in the nice water and relaxing.

The day before Christmas, Jane locked herself with Garrus in her room and splayed presents on the floor. She brought with herself rolls of different wrapping paper, ribbons and other decorations. The woman sat casually on the floor, legs crossed and with a focused and really determined look on her face. The turian could only assume that the thing she was doing now was really important. He watched her as she wrapped each present in the paper then decorated it with ribbon and a name tag. The turian was laying on the bed, turned on his side to have the best vantage point of his wife. "You stick your tongue out when you're concentrating."

"Because I'm really struggling here, Big Guy."

"Want me to help?" Garrus asked, watching her five-fingered hands holding the paper and taping it down with the same hand. The woman nodded, so he stood up and sat on the other side, helping her, holding the paper in place when she pointed. "You humans are really strange. You could buy special gift boxes on the Citadel or just pack those in present bags."

"There is no fun in this unless you wrap the presents yourself. Its for people I love, my family and friends and I don't want to do anything half-heartedly." She replied while checking her work from each side. "Perfect."
"Didn't you already run around half of the Citadel to get those?" Garrus asked in a mocking tone. "It can hardly be called 'half-hearted'."

"Still, I like to wrap presents myself. To finish the job - you get it now?"

"I prefer to help you finish… if you know what I mean." He said and coughed, waiting for her reply.

Jane regarded her husband for a moment then started to laugh. "You wicked turian you." She propped herself up on her hand and leaned forward to kiss Garrus on the nose.

The next day, Jane jumped out of the bed first thing in the morning. She could already hear noises downstairs - Karin was preparing a festive breakfast. "Wake up, hun, Santa came with presents!"

The woman giggled and put on her yoga pants and top.

"Santa?"

"Yeah, fat ol' guy who brings presents overnight on Christmas. Silly tradition that parents feed their kids until they learn the truth the hard way…" The woman coughed and said with a gravelly tone. "There is no Santa!"

"You serious?" The turian asked with his brow plate raised. He stood up from the bed to put some clothes on to.

"Dead serious." Jane replied and grabbed her datapad to search for Santa images over the extranet. "Here you go, this is Santa Claus."

"Spirits! Humans can get that fat?" Vakarian took the datapad, regarding the image closely. "And what's that on his face?"

"It's a beard, Garrus. It's hair that humans grow on their faces." Vakarian rose his head up and regarded Jane with wide eyes. "Only males." Shepard took the datapad from his hands and searched for images of various beards and mustaches. "It can be in different shapes and length. Usually males shave it almost everyday. Some want to have it short - women like those. But longer - ugh, I don't like, it's gross."

Garrus nodded and looked at the gallery of human males with different shapes of their facial hair. "That's really strange."

"Okay, but that's not important right now. Let's go eat and find out who was naughty and who was good this year!" Jane grabbed his hand and pulled him toward the doors leading to the corridor and stairs.

"What do you mean, who was naughty?"

"That's another part of the Santa tradition. He brings presents to those kids who were good during the year. If a child was naughty, they get coal instead of a present." The woman explained while they were walking downstairs. She jumped two or three steps at a time so she had to wait for her husband at the foot of the stairs.

Garrus had to be careful with his large feet that had a hard time with stairs. "Spirits, damn you humans and your stairs. Why are they so narrow?" The stairs on the Citadel were wide to be comfortable for every species.

"I think the architect didn't have turians in mind at the time he designed those." She mocked and again pulled him toward the large Christmas tree.
They had decorated it two days prior, and Garrus had to say it was a really nice thing. He saw Jane scan all the presents and she was almost picking one up, when Zaeed appeared in the living room. "Get away from those, cupcake! Now's the time for breakfast. Nihlus' already in the kitchen, come on!"

With a grunt and slumped arms, she nodded and took Garrus' hand while passing him. While eating, Vakarian could see his wife eating fast for the first time.

"You will choke on the food, Jane!" Karins scolded her. "Still like a kid, really…"

"She choked once. When she was 8 or 9. Remember that, Karin?" Zaeed turned toward his woman. "Jane wanted that goddamn marine doll and couldn't wait to find it under the goddamn tree. I thought we would have to take her to the goddamn hospital…"

"Really? I thought you said you're not suicidal when it comes to food." Garrus asked, amused, while Nihlus snorted at the remark.

"Yeah, it was just this once…" Jane smiled at the memory. "And I got my marine doll. I could play war."

After breakfast everyone gathered in the living room. Zaeed stood up and handed over a red Santa's hat. Jane narrowed her eyes, looking at her father under her brows. "What? It's your goddamn turn this year, Janey."

"Seriously? I thought I did it last year."

"Nope." Massani pushed the hat into Jane's hands then sat comfortably on the sofa with a mischievous smirk.

Garrus and Nihlus regarded the scene oblivious of the meaning. Karin explained quickly the meaning of Zaeed and Jane's behaviour. "It's a family tradition. Each year someone different hands presents to their respective owners. This time it's Jane's turn."

Shepard put the hat on and blushed. *Fuck… Why do I have to humiliate myself…* With a huge sigh she approached the tree and picked the first present. "This one is… for…" She fumbled with a name tag for a moment. "Mr. Zaeed Massani! Lucky you!"

While Zaeed was busy opening his present, Jane took another one, then another till she was left with just one - a small box that she handed to Garrus with a big grin. The turian had already received a present from Massani and Karin, and from Nihlus, the last he got was from Jane. He opened the box to see a long chain and military dog tags. "Oh, what's that?"

"Those, hun, are military dog tags - like mine." She took her necklace and showed it to the turian. "It's a military tradition here on Earth. Although now we have implants with all our personal data, we still wear these. And I thought… well, that you might like those as well." She blushed and dipped her head.

Garrus quickly rose her head up with his hand under her chin and placed his forehead on Jane's. "Thank you, Jane."

She smiled broadly and placed a kiss on his mouth plates.

"Ohh, quit the sweetness, lovebirds, and check what I got!" Nihlus stood up and presented himself in long green scarf. "How do I look?"
"Spirits, Nihlus! You should parade around in that on the Citadel! All the chicks will be yours!"
Garrus said to his silly looking friend. He had gotten one too, a blue one - matching his clan markings.
"How do I wear it?"

Jane wrapped the scarf around the turian's neck and nodded in approval. "Yup, both of you look smokin' hot. Thank's Ma for the scarfs."

"Ah, it's nothing, I knit those all the time. That's why Nihlus could get his one too. Next year: matching sweaters. I just need to take your measurements boys."

"Karin, dear, you know it's hot in here. They won't need those…” Zaeed mused, wearing his black and yellow scarf though. "Maybe next year we could go north?"

"Hell no, those two will freeze." Jane shook her head in disagreement. Last thing she wanted was Garrus and Nihlus to get hypothermia. "And now, Santa's elf will check what she got." She sat next to Garrus, three presents already awaited her. One from Nihlus - a bottle of luxury asari perfume. From her parents, a red scarf she put around her neck and some books. And lastly from Garrus - a custom made visor, just for her. "Oh my god, Garrus, this is amazing." She said when she put the thing on and turned it on. "And you're a nerd."

"He is. An utter nerd." Nihlus agreed. "But I can see it's custom made. That had to be hard to get… not to mention expensive as hell."

In the evening Jane with Garrus, Nihlus and her parents went to the Hackett villa. Everyone was dressed up and in good spirits. The woman was pleased at how Vakarian looked, he wore his black outfit with white stripes on the chest - one he wore only on special occasions. She thought he looked too sexy in that. *God, those buckles on his pants... How I'd like to unbuckle them right now.* She thought to herself while sitting next to Garrus in the skycar. As for her, she wore elegant black pants with a matching, elegant blouse. Jane wasn't one to wear a dress after all. With her high heels and that outfit, she felt good - the same couldn't be said for Dr. Chakwas, who had begged Shepard to wear a dress once in awhile.

The party was really nice. Jane, Garrus and Nihlus mingled with the guests - higher ups of the Alliance and random other guests. Some people kept their distance from the turians, some talked with them. Jane felt that they could do without any incidents, like those while sightseeing.

Later, after nightfall, guests were getting used to the two turians being around. Nihlus was approached by Hackett and they continued to talk about Spectre work. That's when Jane spotted a hanged mistletoe. With a wicked smile, she pulled Garrus straight under it. "You know…" She started with a meaningful smile. "There is one tradition I forgot to mention…"

"And that is?"

She pointed up, at the mistletoe. "That is mistletoe. Tradition says that any couple that stands right beneath it, have to kiss. Like they mean it."

Vakarian smirked to Jane and pulled her closer. "Oh, my dear wife, trust me. I always mean it." With that he lowered to her and they kissed, not bothered by a few humans staring at them. "We made a scene." The turian said when the kiss ended and he regarded their surroundings.

"Do I look like I care?"

"No. And that is one of the million things I love about you." Garrus replied with a low voice, while nuzzling her ear and neck. "I'd so like to sneak out somewhere and have you only for myself."
"Stop that, you naughty boy, or Santa will give you coal next year." Jane replied while her hands ghosted on the turian's neck. They would have cuddled more but an interruption came - as always in those moments.

"Oh my, my. I can't believe what I'm seeing." Jack mocked in a sweet voice. "At last I could sneak away from the biotic worshippers."

"They still do that?" Jane asked. Jack always had to be the center of attention from people who were interested in biotics - mainly because she was the most powerful human biotic. Kaidan Alenko was second after her, but it wasn't a secret that Jack could smash him without even warming up.

"Bitch, I can't stand all those questions." She motioned with her head at the terrace. "Come on, I need a smoke. And have a news for you." When Naught lit her cigarette she smiled at the couple. "Listen to the big news! We have reserved 'Paradise Lost' for a whole night!"

Jane widened her eyes. 'Paradise Lost' was a bar just outside the base, where soldiers went to blow off some steam. "You're shitting me!" She turned to Garrus. "Hun, we will party like hell. Paradise is a bar. When and who will come?" And again she turned toward Jack. The biotic explained that Massani, Hackett and Anderson booked the place for the turian guests, Jane and her crew. "Oh, I can't wait for that. We will get so shitfaced."

"I'm glad that alcohol doesn't have dextro/levo limits. I think I need that too."

"So we're set up, Jack. Oh, I love you girl."

xXx

Josephine came to the Alliance Base just one day before the party. Nihlus was in heaven when she again was near his side, and grinned like a madman. Just like Jack suggested, the 5 of them went to New York for sightseeing and some shopping - mostly done by Jack and Josey. Sadly, again they met with xenophobic behaviour targeted at the turians and Jane. But they didn't care. Garrus and Nihlus were too busy with the colder climate and whining about how humans could live in such cold when they could move south. Even with special outfits, they didn't stopped their complaints.

"Okay, okay we get it." Jane had had enough of it. "We're heading back to Rio before you two get hypothermia or I'll just shoot your asses."

The next day, in the evening, the women got dressed and the two couples went to Paradise Lost. The whole of Jane's ex-crew was already there. The woman greeted everyone - Jack, Joker, Kasumi, Sam Traynor, engineer Gabby with her boyfriend - also an engineer - Ken, James Vega, Ashley Williams, Jenkins, and lots more. She even spotted Kaidan Alenko and wasn't really happy about that. Shepard overheard Garrus growl in anger at the sight of the human male, but she calmed him down.

To begin with she mingled through the crowd with Garrus - Jane presented him to each crew member and they talked with everyone, they danced, they drank. Later she left him chatting with Gunnery Chief Ashley Williams, as those two were exchanging views on sniper rifles and weapon modifications. Shepard went to the table near the bar where Jack, James and Joker were holding a drinking contest while playing poker - something for her to join in.

They were at round number four when Kaidan interrupted them. "Shepard, can we talk for a moment?"

Jane grunted in annoyance. "Yeah… wait for me." She followed Alenko to an empty corner of the
bar. "So, what do you want, Alenko? Apologise for that stupid stunt on the Citadel maybe?"

"No. I wanted to know why you're lying to the whole world that you're in love with that bastard." The man's tantrum only shocked Jane. "How can you let him touch you? When you're mine, Jane. I love you and you love me. I can't allow that!"

_Fuck this shit, I can't stand this bastard anymore._ Jane poked Kaidan hard in the chest, growling in burning anger. "Listen, Alenko, you went full nuts here. I don't love you. I despise you. The only man I love is my husband - a turian named Garrus Vakarian. Get. OVER. IT!" With each word she poked him harder on the chest. "Am I clear here? Or should I send for someone to take you to the mental institute?"

"You are lying to yourself…"

"No, I'm not, Alenko. I love how Garrus touches me, I could fuck him all day long. And that is it." Shepard pushed him away. "And one last thing: STAY AWAY!" With that she turned on her heel and went back to her seat. Annoyed beyond any reason. She exchanged a meaningful glance with Jack. Jane already knew that her friend understood what the quick chat with Alenko was about.

"Screw him." Jack leaned to her and whispered those words.

"That I am going to do, girl." Jane looked at the empty spot, occupied previously by Vega. "Where is James?"

"He went to the toilet."

_xXx_

Garrus was talking with Ashley and was really impressed about her knowledge of guns, not only human, but turian ones. She was explaining to him a assets of special rifle mods she had gotten a few weeks ago, when suddenly Kaidan Alenko come to them and interrupted in the middle of her speech. "Ash, can I have a talk with Mr. Vakarian?"

"Yeah, sure." The woman stood up and left the two males and went to the bar.

"So, we meet again, human." Garrus said with a cold voice. The memory of their last encounter flashed in his mand - it wasn't a good one. "What do you want?"

"I am here to show you that Jane loves me, not you." Alenko said with a mischievous grimace. "Let's go outside. I'll show you."

The two of them went outside to the garden at the back of the bar. "So, what is it that you want to show me, huh?" He asked but the human didn't reply. When they were almost at the end of it, Vakarian spotted a few other men from Jane's crew. _Oh, I see... so it's an ambush._ "That is low, Alenko. Really low."

Kaidan seemed as though he didn't hear the question. As though he didn't notice anyone but the turian a few feet from him. "You have some guts, turian. You really thought that you would steal her from me?"

"I didn't have to steal anyone. She wasn't yours to begin with." Garrus retorted with a shrug. _So that's what this is all about... Figures..._

"She is MINE!" Alenko roared, his face was looking mad. With his biotics, he sent Garrus flying into the bushes.
That he didn't expect. Vakarian quickly stood up, readying himself for another attack. He saw the other men hesitate, taking a few steps back. So they didn't know what that fucktard would do… The turian thought to himself just before another biotic wave sent him flying against the wall of the bar. Garrus saw glints of stars before his eyes. He could sense that something had cracked on the back of his cowl, and the pain. While he was struggling to stand up he could hear men talking.

"Oi, pendejo! What the fuck are you doing?" It was James talking - as far as Garrus could recognize. As he tried to pull himself straight, he could hear other men voicing their concerns as well. The crew argued with Alenko for a moment, until James decided it had gone too far and Commander Shepard should know about everything. "Fuck this shit, I'm going inside."

James pushed Alenko into the bushes and ran inside before the biotic could trap him in his biotic field. Other men ran as well, leaving Garrus with Kaidan alone. The turian stood up, ready to fight with the biotic. He knew enough that he wouldn't stand a chance against him, but wanted to fight nevertheless. Vakarian charged at the man, jumping to the side to avoid his biotic attacks. He almost reached him, ready to punch Kaidan in the guts, when massive wall of biotic energy was produced from the human. Garrus again flew against the wall, this time he hit it with an even powerful force. Again he could hear the cracking sound somewhere behind him, and the pain grew stronger.

"Spirits…” Vakarian whispered with a strangled whimper. The situation was bad, he could feel blood gush from his nose. He wanted to stand up but dizziness and pain prevented him from doing so. It was too late, the biotic was approaching him with hands glowing bright blue. Alenko pulled him into a biotic field, where he started to suffocate.

xXx

Jane drank with Joker and Jack, they cracked a few jokes till she looked up to check on Garrus. She left him with Ash but now the woman was standing at the bar, talking to Jenkins. Shepuld stood up, alerted. With quick steps she went to Nihlus. "Nihlus! Where the fuck is Garrus?!

xXx

Omg, wild end of the chapter appears!

It uses CLIFFHANGER.

It's super effective!

I fainted. xP
Hello everyone! I'll start from apology. Sorry for posting it after such a long time. That one month was really strange. I had emotional rollercoaster. Kids being sick just made it even better 3 *kill me please*

But! Apparently, even divorced woman with 2 kids can be attractive for someone. And that's how I got bf. Who would guess, huh? :v

Thanks to Razzberry, for editing. Check her fics *mandatory advertisement* Mass Effectiveness and Dawn of a New Era!

Anyway, thanks for sticking with me, and waiting. And those comments asking: "Where the hell are you? We want next chapter!" I love it! Love you guys :D

Okay, I won't bore you with my bullshit anymore. Please enjoy! :*

xXx

Kaidan approached James, after his talk with Shepard and gestured toward the garden at the back of Paradise Lost. He nodded and excused himself with an excuse that he had to go to the toilet. When he stepped outside, Kaidan with a few men from the crew, were discussing something. "Oh, James, good you're here. I want to prank the Commander's husband just like in our rooky days."

"Oi, I'm in, hombre." Vega smiled to himself. He had pranked a lot of rookies during boot camp. "But what about the Commander?"

"I already spoke to her. She agreed." Alenko explained what he wanted to do and everyone took their respective positions.

Everything looked good until something went horribly wrong. James couldn't understand why. "Oi, pendejo! What the fuck are you doing?" He wanted to do something but he wouldn't stand a chance against a biotic. That's when he decided to stop the madness at all costs - he ran to the bar.

Right at the doors, Vega crashed into the other turian - Nihlus - he remembered the name. The Commander just right behind him. "Shepard!" James yelled with relief and nervousness at the same time. "Alenko… he went completely loco! He…"

"Where is Garrus, Vega?" Shepard asked with her commanding voice. James straightened up and pointed at the back of the garden. The woman, by just the look on the man's face, could guess that something bad had happened. "Shit!"

xXx

Jane went outside to see Garrus in the mass field, holding his throat and desperately gasping for air. The sound he made wasn't healthy at all. Wheezing breaths, like his lungs had holes in them. "Garrus!" Then her eyes turned toward Kaidan - his face and eyes crazy, like a madman he was laughing to himself, looking at the suffocating turian. Jane's rage rose to an inhuman level. She charged at the man, knocking him down to the ground. She jumped on him, locking his arms with her knees and started to punch him straight in the face with precise hits. Blind rage overtook her, she didn't know how many times she hit that disgusting face. 10… 20… she didn't count and that was really unimportant at the moment. Just smash that face into bloody pump. Shepard would have
punched him more but two pairs of strong hands prevented her from doing anything. Still feeling rage, she looked at the owners of the hands and prepared to attack if necessary, but she saw Jack and Nihlus - her friends.

Kryik pulled Jane away from the beaten human and pushed her toward Garrus - now lying motionless on the ground. "Let's check him, Jane." The turian knew exactly what to do to distract the rampaging woman.

While Jane and Nihlus were taking care of Garrus, Jack checked the pulse on Alenko's neck. "He's alive. Okay... Jane, you went bat shit crazy here." She said while looking at the bloody mess that used to be Kaidan's face - a man considered quite handsome by many people. Then she activated her omni-tool and called Admiral Hackett. "Sir, sorry for calling so late, but we have a situation here."

"What is it this time, Lieutenant?" An older face looked at Jack's with suspicion. It wasn't the first time the biotic had done something crazy.

"Oh no, no no no. This time it wasn't me. Please look at this." She scanned the area with her omni-tool and sent the image to Hackett. "Lieutenant Alenko attacked Commander Garrus Vakarian. I don't know what his status is, Jane and Nihlus are taking care of him. As for Alenko, he was beaten and is unconscious, but alive."

"God... I knew there was something wrong with him. Stay there, Jack, don't let anyone near the place." With that he closed the connection. Jack decided to call her step-father and Zaeed. In a matter of 15 minutes, three men were at the place. Jack ordered Vega to guard the entrance to the garden while she imprisoned Alenko in a mass field, just in case the bastard woke up.

"I told you, Steven, that all goddamn L2's should be replaced with fucking L3's!" Captain Massani said after making a quick scan of the garden. "This fucking idiot went nuts long ago. Spread goddamn gossips about him and my Janey. Attacked her and Garrus on the Citadel. And now this fucking goddamn mess."

"You're right, Zaeed. I should have listened to you two long ago..."

"I send you the report myself. 'L2 implants are notorious for causing severe medical complications such as insanity, mental disability, and crippling pain.' that's what was written there." Anderson said while squatting near the still unconscious Kaidan, now trapped with Jack's biotics.

Zaeed turned away from Kaidan to check on Jane and Garrus. The turian was lying on the ground, where Nihlus was checking on his vitals. He came closer and put a hand on Jane's arm, squeezing it gently. "How is he, kiddo?"

"Nihlus said Garrus is good, but has a broken carapace. I mean... plated part on his back." Her eyes were red from tears, which enraged Zaeed. His precious baby girl was crying and he would punish anyone who was responsible.

Massani went to the doors leading to the bar, where James Vega was standing and waiting for any orders. "Lieutenant, I want a full goddamn report on what happened here."

James explained everything, looking at the ground the whole time. "That's what happened, Sir. Alenko lied to us then attacked Garrus. I immediately ran to the bar to alert the Commander and everyone else."

Anderson, who had come in the middle and listened to the report, asked for the rest of the men who had witnessed the incident. He strictly forbade anyone from saying anything about it. "From now on,
it's classified. Peace between humans and turians is at stake here. If anyone says a word, they will be court martialed. Is that clear?"

"Crystal clear, Sir!" The men straightened up and saluted Captain Anderson.

"Good, now you go. Return home and not a word. Except you Vega. Go to HQ and bring me a few boys from the military police. ASAP."

Vega saluted and went to do what he was ordered to. Zaeed went back to Jane and Garrus while David went inside the bar. He ordered everyone to return home. Only Josephine was still sitting there, not really knowing what to do. She could sense something had happened, and was waiting nervously. "And what about you?" Anderson approached Ms Clark and noticed she wasn't from Shepard's crew.

"Um, I'm Josephine Clark. Friend of Jane and Garrus, from the Citadel. I'm staying at the Captain's house at the moment." She clarified with a shaky voice.

"I understand. Please take a skycar, Miss, I'll notify Karin Chakwas that you're heading home. Good night."

Josephine went outside and took a skycar as she was told to. When Anderson was sure no one but a waitress and a bartender were present, he asked them to leave as well. He then deleted all footage from the security cameras, not only in the garden but from the whole club. Making sure no evidence was left, he returned to the garden. He approached the Admiral and whispered to him "I took care of everything."

"Good, Zaeed will take Commander Vakarian home."

Massani and Nihlus pulled Garrus up and carefully took him outside. To anyone who didn't know any better, the turian would look drunk, so there wouldn't be any suspicion.

At home they laid Vakarian on the bed and Kryik injected him with a painkiller. Then he turned him, to lay Garrus flat on his stomach and applied a medi-gel on his back. The crack looked nasty, but it was normal for the Specter, he had gotten those lots of times.

Dr. Chakwas stood beside Nihlus, assisting him. She scanned Vakarian with her own omni-tool. The woman wasn't used to the device quite yet, but still found it really useful. She read the results and smiled at Jane. "Everything looks good for Garrus. Brain waves are normal, no damage. Only that cracked carapace and minor bruises. His throat is bruised due to strangulation but he will heal quickly."

"Thank you, Ma. How is it, Nihlus?" Jane asked finally, when the turian had finished. For all the time he and her stepmother were taking care of Garrus, she was pacing nervously around the room.

"It's good, I applied medi-gel on the crack and wound. Also gave him a painkiller. When we dock on the Citadel, I'll get Mordin to take care of the crack. He will heal in no time, trust me." Once he had finished, he noticed a salty scent in the turian stood up and saw Jane crying. "Hey, don't cry Jane. It's normal for turians, we break bones and crack plates all the time. Those will heal quickly, just leaving a faint scar. He's got three of those already. Worst is the fringe, once it's broken, it will never heal."

"You sure?" Jane asked while scanning Garrus's back with her eyes. She noticed the crack scars.

"Yeah. Now go wash yourself and lay next to him." Kryik smiled at Jane and patted her arm. "Nothing heals as good as a loving woman at a man's side. Speaking of which, I'll go check on Josephine."
Jane nodded, still sobbing quietly and bade Nihlus and Karin good night. She felt exhausted and bad. Taking the turian's advice, she quickly washed herself and changed into her sleeping shorts and top. She laid next to Garrus, ever so carefully so as not to cause him pain or discomfort.

Jane watched Garrus for a moment, he was sleeping calmly on his stomach, his head turned to the side for his comfort. She could see his sleeping face. Jane hugged his turian arm and nuzzled it, feeling as though it was all her fault. That she had failed her husband, screwed up big time. *I'm so sorry, Big Guy. It's all my fault, I should've just throw Kaidan from the party once he approached me. If I had just kicked him out you wouldn't be hurt.*

Her hand reached his, she entwined her fingers with the turian ones. Suddenly, he squeezed her hand like he could sense her distress. Jane didn't dare move, but just kissed him on the arm. "Sleep, love, you will get better soon."

xXx

Garrus slowly opened his eyes. His vision blurry at first, he waited a few moments to see everything better. The turian found himself lying on his stomach. Another thing he noticed was Jane's hair, splayed on the bed and he felt her coolness on his arm. She was clutching on to it, sleeping - he could tell by her even breath. Vakarian tried to move but pain, like a thousand needles stuck in his carapace, stopped him from movement. He groaned silently and laid still. "Spirits..." His voice was different, wheezy and it hurt like hell.

Memories of last night invaded his mind. The face of that crazy bastard, just before Garrus lost consciousness. Feelings of suffocation and the desperate need to catch a breath. The turian growled in anger and again felt pain in his lungs. *And that maniac said Jane is his, what a joke...* He squeezed the woman's hand, feeling her soft, cool skin in his grasp. He wanted to see her face, but it was hidden behind his arm. Garrus could feel her breath on his skin. He moved his arm a bit and it wasn't long before she was waking up.

She looked up and saw the turian's blue eyes watching her. Jane smiled at Garrus.

"Hey, you." He whispered slowly.

"Garrus..." She regarded him then ever so carefully moved up the bed to face him. "Garrus... I am so sorry... I should have kicked that sick fuck out after he came to me..."

"He... what?" The turian whimpered, but still anger was more important than the pain he felt. He could feel Jane's hand stopping him from moving and that prevented him from feeling more pain.

"Stop moving! I'll go fetch Nihlus and some painkillers for you." Jane went outside to Kryik's guestroom. She knocked a few times but no sound could be heard from behind the door. *What if he's with...* Jane turned toward the closed doors leading to Josephine's guestroom. The woman debated internally if she should knock but movement on the other side of the door stopped her thoughts.

"Jane?" Nihlus regarded the human for a moment, halfway through the doors of the bathroom. "Want something?"

"Hi, Nihlus. As a matter of fact, I do. Can you give Garrus his painkillers?"

"Sure." The turian went inside his room to fetch a box with dextro meds. Then inside Jane and Garrus' room. Soon Vakarian could sit up, still with a pained look on his face plates. "Hi, Garrus, how are you?"

"Shitty... Spirits, I almost forgot how bad it hurts..." He tried to straighten but pain prevented him.
Once Garrus' painkillers had kicked in fully, he ate and Jane helped him to wash and change his clothes. Just after noon, Admiral Hackett called her to Alliance HQ for her report. Shepard left the house with grim thoughts. She didn't know what to expect. Kaidan attacking Garrus was one thing, but her beating the crap out of him was something entirely different, and serious. Arriving at HQ didn't take long, and soon she was standing in front of Hackett's office. His secretary announced her and she entered the room, feeling nervous all over. "Sir."

"Shepard, come. I need to talk about yesterday." Admiral Hackett said and gestured toward the chair in front of his glass desk. His face showing the seriousness of the situation. "The matter is delicate. I need everyone involved to tell one story."

"You mean…?"

"The true one is unacceptable, Commander." The man sighed. "I was thinking about it and have concluded that Lt. Alenko has gone crazy because his L2 implant. Without mentioning his attack on Commander Vakarian. Vega and everyone else already agreed. Peace between the humans and turians is fragile enough. If they found out about the attack…"

"The war would break anew." Jane ended his thought. "Do you know about… um…"

"Attack on you? Yes, I was informed by Councillor Sparatus, Shepard." Hackett stopped for a moment, thinking. He tapped on the glass with his thumb. "Better if those two… incidents remain a secret. Those were just two unfortunate happenings. So let's not hold grudges here. Is that clear?"

"Crystal, Sir. I think the same." Jane nodded and relaxed.

"Just try to keep Commander Vakarian and yourself out of trouble." The Admiral smirked. "It would be really good if there was no more peace threatening incidents from now on."

"Of course, Sir." Jane saluted. She sat in silence for a moment. Thinking about Alenko.

"As for the Lieutenant, he will be evaluated by psychiatrists and we plan to replace his L2 implant with the L3." Hackett said, almost reading the woman's thoughts. "We will keep him on Earth from now on, in a psychiatric facility. You don't have to worry about him anymore."

Jane's eyes widened, her shock at the news palpable. She knew that the procedure of changing implants was a heavy risk. She had to voice her concerns, even if Kaidan had acted like a huge douche. "Isn't it a risky operation? I've heard that soldiers have died…"

"There is a risk, yes. But it's even riskier to have an unstable biotic. Kaidan is a powerful biotic, of course he's not Jack. She is an implant-less biotic, a product of experiment, torture and genetic engineering." Hackett typed something on his computer and a hologram chart appeared in front of him. "Look at the numbers, Shepard. L2's have a higher rate of instability. Psychiatric disorders, maniacal behaviour, suicides, homicides. Those people need their implants to be replaced or they are a threat to everyone. We don't have a choice."

"I understand. Basically, the story involves Kaidan going gaga then trying to kill us in the bar?"

"Pretty much. Jack fought with him and that's all."

"Jack warped him and he passed out. That's a good one." Jane leaned on the backrest, mulling the short story over and over again. Her hands crossed over her chest. "Should I know anything else?"

"No." Hackett started to turn his back to her. "That's all for now."
"Sir." Jane straightened up and saluted. Then turned around and approached the doors. A question from the Admiral stopped her.

"One more thing. When are you going to tell Zaeed about your Spectre training?"

Jane had so much self control that she didn't snap at the question. She only smiled to herself. *He's good, damn good.* "Well, tomorrow is a good day. Dealing with his shit for one more day won't be too much, I think."

The Admiral only snorted and waved at her.

xXx

"You what?!" Zaeed's scream rang in the silent dining room. Everyone was staring at him. "And when were you going to tell me that you will be a goddamn Spectre?"

Jane exchanged tired looks with Karin. Just like Garrus exchanged looks with a shocked Nihlus. Shepard sighed, she turned to regard Massani again. "Well, because I knew what your reaction would be, I wanted to postpone that glorious moment."

"Are you goddamn crazy, pumpkin? Both of you?" The Captain pointed at the Vakarians. "You are married now. You two were crucial for brokering peace. I didn't know the Council was so goddamn stupid! What if you die? You will be an easy target!"

Shepard regarded her step-father with one brow raised up. She was lazily munching on her hamburger as he was having his little drama. Soon he had finished, she swallowed slowly and spoke herself. "Okay, dad. You're sweet and all, but seriously - I am an N7, remember? We will be fine, me and Garrus. Besides it's Spectre training. It will take a long time to become one."

"Yes, but you did missions for the goddamn Alliance. On our territories or colonies. And you didn't have to deal with goddamn aliens before war broke, cupcake. You see the difference?"

"Nope." She deadpanned.

Zaeed gnashed his teeth and started his explanation all over again until Karin stepped in. "Honey, it's time to stop. She's a grown woman, a married one. Let her and Garrus decide."

"But…"

"Honey." Chakwas growled and looked at Massani in such a way that anyone would just shut up and lower one's head. Zaeed did just that, Karin smiled in victory at Garrus and Jane. "See? No problem. Just be careful, you two. We could do without anymore incidents in the future."

"I will keep them safe and sound, Karin. Don't you worry. Such a beautiful woman shouldn't worry about such small things." Nihlus said for the Vakarians. "They will be assigned to me after the training. I already talked with the Council, first we will be tasked with training missions then the real fun will begin." Nihlus gestured at Shepard and Garrus, smirking. "And they are both excellent soldiers. No need to worry about them. I've seen vids of them in action, I was really impressed."

"You say that…" Zaeed sighed. "But Jane's all I've got. And I don't want to goddamn lose my lil' girl."

"I'm not a lil' girl, Pa. Let's move on to the next topic, shall we?" Jane knew how Massani would react, how he would voice his concern when Karin wasn't around. "We're going to buy a bigger apartment."
Garrus nodded to that. "The last time my family visited they had to sleep in Nihlus' apartment. We want to find one soon. You are welcome to visit us."

"Thank you, Garrus. That's sweet of you." Chakwas turned to Zaeed and smiled. "Don't pout like a child, sweetheart. Maybe we should visit Jane and Garrus when they settle in. It was six months ago since we were on the Citadel and we really didn't have time to see it. It's a marvelous place."

"If you negotiate my shore leave with Steven…"

"Then it's settled." Karin laughed in a playfully evil way. "He won't dare disobey me." Garrus looked with startled eyes at Jane, but the woman only shrugged.

"Go to your apartment, lovebirds. I'll come in two hours with Mordin and he will take care of your back." Nihlus said after he was done with his paperwork in the Council docking bay. "I need to take Josey to her apartment then I'll contact the ol' man and we will be there soon."

"You don't have to take me home, Nihlus… especially if you're busy." Josephine replied. A small blush appeared on her face. "Garrus needs you more."

"No, he doesn't. I injected him with so much painkiller that he won't feel a damn thing for a day or so." The turian snorted and lightly hit Garrus on the arm. "See?"

"Yeah, but I think I hear colours, all because of you. Jane, take me home." Vakarian said. His pupils dilated. Although he felt a little drugged, his mind was his own. Shepard took him to the sky-cab and soon he was lying on his stomach in bed.

Jane laid next to him, stroking his fringe in a light manner. "You okay, Big Guy?"

"No… Nihlus overdosed the painkiller. I…" He swallowed hard. His eyes darted from one thing to another. "I just hope Solus will do something about it."

"Sorus?"

"Salarian doctor who works with Nihlus. Don't know much besides that he is really old and smart." Garrus tried to stop his eyes from moving but failed. He shut them so as not to get dizzy. "Spirits… anyway, Nihlus keeps only a few people as regular crew. I know about Urdnot Wrex, big ass krogan merc… um… there is his girlfriend - a quarian engineer - Tali'Zorah vas-… Vas-Rannoch? Don't remember… her geth guardian, Legion. And Mordin Solus. Those I know." Blindly he found Jane's waist and pulled her body against him. "Your coolness helps a great deal. You have to stay like that from now on."

"Hehe, you are helpless…"

The pair cuddled until the doorbell rang through the apartment. "That'll be Nihlus. I'll let them in."

"He can let himself in, you know." Garrus grumbled when Jane pushed his hand away and jumped out of bed. With a sigh he adjusted himself, not bothered by the doorbell or anything else.

"Yeah, but it's polite to greet your guests. Really, Garrus." Jane replied, smirking. She went outside of the bedroom and opened the door for Kryik and his doctor. "Hello again, Nihlus. And… doctor Mordin Solus, I presume?"

"Childish behaviour. I suspect deep psychological problems."

"Don't give her my psychological profile, doc." Nihlus said behind Jane, as he was walking toward the bedroom. "She knows it already."

While Jane turned to look at Nihlus to exchange grins, the salarian scanned her with his omni-tool. "Whoa! Whoa! What are you doing?" She moved back a few steps.

"Everything healed. No structural damage visible anymore. Good." He said while checking the data on the holo-screen. "Was concerned. But humans durable. Heal quickly. Still, more damage taken and healing would be… problematic."

Jane turned again to Nihlus who was shaking from laughter. He waved at Jane and with a shaky voice assured her everything was fine. "Spirits…" The turian said when he had calmed a bit. "Let's go check on Garrus."

"That would be great!" Vakarian yelled from the bedroom. "I've been waiting for you all too long."

Professor Solus went in and while he checked on Garrus and treated his broken cowl, Jane and Nihlus had to wait outside. The turian just sprawled on the couch, relaxed but the woman was fidgeting and looking at the door leading to the bedroom every few seconds. "Don't worry, Jane." Kryik said after some time, smirking and clearly enjoying himself. "I told you it's normal for turians to crack their cowl. Especially when we are on active duty."

"He wasn't on active duty, Nihlus!" Jane replied harshly and stood up. She started to pace around the couch. "It was my fault. I should have reported Kaidan and his off behaviour long ago. I ignored his behaviour because he was one of the best biotics. I heard the rumors about L2's but seeing it firsthand… After seeing how, unhinged, they can get while wielding such power."

"L2's?" Kryik asked, puzzled. That was a first for him. Although he had learned a lot about humans, their culture, history and everything else, that thing didn't ring a bell.

"Implant. It enhances biotic strength, but can cause mental disabilities, insanity, delusions." Jane leaned on the broad window, looking at the stunning view of the Citadel. Millions of lives living here, oblivious of her and her dilemmas. "Not to mention the pain. L2's usually suffer painful migraines - headaches. Kaidan often complained about his headaches. But he was good a soldier, smart, brave. Just slightly annoying with his awe and love toward me. And now… well… he will be put under the procedure to change his L2 to L3. He won't be as powerful as he was… but, hell, if that's what it takes to be healthy again, I call it a small price to pay."

"You don't hate him. That's good."

Jane turned to Nihlus, checking if he was mocking her or not. But Kryik looked at her with confidence and pride - just like he was considering her his protegee even before they had started working together. She smiled and looked at the skycars, flying in perfect harmony around them. "Well, of course I don't. He's sick. He needs help. And he will get it." A flash of Alenko's massacred face flashed in her mind. "I think I went too far, Nihlus. Rage overtook me… On the battlefield, I'm ruthless, I've killed countless souls and didn't bat an eye. But never like this… never."

"Oh, it's normal, my dear. If you were a turian, no one would say anything. It's normal that we fight for those we love and care for. We kill for them. I was really surprised that he could still breathe, that poor bastard." Nihlus laughed for a second only to become serious shortly after. "To be honest, Jane… When I saw you for the first time, I thought you were really similar to us, turians."
"Oh?" Shepard grinned to him. "Just missing spurs and a fringe."

"I don't mean looks. But here." He put his hand on his chest. "I don't know why, and maybe that's why I was attracted to you... but I'm fairly certain that Garrus saw it too. That you are a turian at heart. You are courageous, you are a protector, even if that means killing hundreds for those you care for. Not to mention you are strong, resilient and don't give a fuck about what anyone else thinks."

"Stop, Nihlus... I'm blushing here." Jane replied hiding her cheeks. She thought over the turian's words. *It's not only me... I think humans as a whole are really similar to turians. Maybe not by looks... but still.*

Shepard remained silent until the doors leading to the bedroom opened and Professor Solus, along with Garrus exited. Jane turned quickly and bounded to her husband. "How is it?" True concern all over her face.

"All good. Fixing gel on cowl. Please sleep on stomach." Mordin started with his quick speech. He gave Jane 2 vials with pills. "Painkillers and thulium supplements. Painkillers when needed. Supplements 3 times a day. After eating."

"Okay. I will make sure he takes his medication accordingly. Thank you, professor." Jane stretched out her hand. The salarian regarded it for a moment then shook hands with her.

"Human custom to shake hands. Showing that one's not a threat. Also to start physical contact. Touching really important for humans."

Jane's eyes almost popped out of her head. Garrus and Nihlus started to laugh. After a longer moment, the latter had calmed a bit to explain to the nonplussed woman what had happened. "It's okay, Jane. Doc here is xeno scientist, xenobiologist, xeno-everything. I bet he'd love to dissect you here and now. But you will have to wait, love." Nihlus hugged Solus and almost rubbed his mandible on the salarian's cheek. Solus winced and moved his head away. "You will have your fun when the two of them join the crew, deal?"

"Deal. Still, want every sample I can think of."

"If you don't take full organs from her, then sure. Why not." Nihlus nodded while grinning at the professor.

"Hey! Don't I have a say in it? What if I say no?" Jane crossed her arms, shifting her body weight onto one leg. Garrus stood behind her, nodding to her words.

"Mrs. Vakarian will be one of first humans on the ship. Great possibility to study humans. Besides, me and Shakria are doctors on board. She will need some data too. And samples in database. Will produce antivenoms, antidotes, vaccines. Will need personalised medi-gel as well." Solus concluded. "Need to study human-turian mating and in-relationship behaviour."

"Oh for fuck sake, Nihlus. You want us to be some sort of experiment?" Jane frowned but wasn't that angry. She didn't want to be a test subject for anyone. Still, she had to admit she didn't feel anger toward the older salarian. "Anyway. Do I need to know anything else about Garrus' state?"

"One week rest. Bed rest not necessary. Still, advise to be cautious." Mordin explained while he packed his belongings. "Sexual activity, not advised."

"Wha-?"

"Turian clearly aroused." Solus replied and pointed at Garrus. "Stand close to his mate. Mandibles
twitch occasionally. Eyes his female almost in precise timing. Focus at turian erogenous zones. Neck, waist. As said, clearly aroused."

Nihlus started to laugh and pushed the Professor toward the doors. "Okay, doc, I think you should leave. I don't want one crazy and aroused turian to harm you in any way. You are my precious gem."

"Of course, Specter. Turians tend to be aggressive…" Mordin deadpanned. "When aroused."

Both Nihlus and Jane started to laugh. They said goodbye to the salarian and sat on the couch, discussing Spectre training.

xXx

While Garrus stayed at home, Jane met with the asari - Liara T'Soni. She met with her a few times to talk about humans. It was the last opportunity to meet with the archeologist as she was being sent to a dig site. "I had one week of free time before they just popped up with another assignment. It's good we could talk about human customs because the dig site will be on Eden Prime."

"Oh, our colony, nice. I hope you will have a great time there."

"I will be working." The asari grimaced.

"Liara, I may have only known you for just a few months, but I see that you love your job." Jane smirked to herself. T'Soni could talk about her job and the protheans for hours. "Pity that because of my Spectre training, I won't be able to go anywhere. I could visit you…"

"When you pass, I'll do anything to get a few days off and will come to the Citadel. We will celebrate properly." Liara raised her glass with a vibrant pink drink inside. "Let's toast to the bright future!"

"Amen!" Shepard raised her blue drink and the two women drank. "I wanted to ask you… I had a really interesting conversation with my turian friend lately. As a doctor who has studied various species, their history mostly, do you think humans and turians are… similar?"

"Oh…" The asari only said and remained silent. She was thinking of the proper answer to that question. "Not by biology… they are dextro, we are levo. Hmmm… I think... it's hard to say. But you, specifically, are similar to them. I can't say that for your entire species, as you are really diverse. But I can see why turians see you as their own."

"I see…"

"So, you said you wanted to change apartment?" Liara asked, changing the subject.

"Yes. In a few days, when Garrus feels better." Jane explained to T'Soni what she wanted from the apartment. Liara gave her a few contacts for real estate offices and suggested a few good areas to live in. An hour later, Jane went back to the apartment and showed Garrus the contacts and what they offered on their extranet sites.

xXx

Once Garrus' back was completely healed, he and Jane decided to look for a bigger apartment. The contacts that Liara had given to them were really helpful. They chose four apartments to view. By the third one, they had found what they were looking for. Immediately after they had entered it, they fell in love with the place. Spacious, well furnished and with 5 bedrooms for them and guests.
"Hmm… we could adapt one for sparring and training." Jane said while checking one of the rooms on the upper floor.

"You would like to spar… with me?" Garrus approached her and looked inside the empty room.

"Well… it would be good as foreplay, yes?" She smirked. "Besides… we need to keep our skills sharp. And that room isn't furnished. Like it's just waiting to be a training room."

"Agreed." Vakarian stepped into the room and looked around. "We could buy some workout benches. And mats… that would be good."

The week before their Spectre training they occupied themselves with moving into the apartment that they had decided to buy. Soon the training would start and they were really looking forward to it.

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Ehehe :D shitty chapter. Sorry. Mordin!
Chapter 15

Hello! It's me :D I'm still kicking and spawning random chapters!

Lately it takes me longer and longer to write… sorry about that. Spring came and my kids demand to be taken outside. I could write during their play time but my smartphone works slower and slower with each day. That makes me mad…

Big thanks to Razzberry for her support and editing :D you are real MVP!

xXx

"I can't believe this Jane… I can't take this anymore!" Garrus stormed inside their apartment, throwing his bag to the floor with so much force it slid toward the wall and smacked it with loud thudding noise. Jane entered their home, behind her husband and with a sigh she went to fetch the turian's bag from the floor. "If he calls you names or says something disrespectful to you one more time, I'll personally rip his filthy mandibles off his face… and shove them down his throat."

"Yeah yeah, honey…" Shepard sighed again. She passed by a huffing Garrus, then through the kitchen to get to the laundry room with two bags dangling on her arm. The woman took out their training clothes from the bags and returned to the kitchen. "I've told you so many times, Big Guy… I don't give a single flying fuck what he says. Really…"

"Yes, but…"

"No buts, Garrus. Guess what? I saw Vyrnnus talking with Saren the other day." Jane said casually while preparing herself coffee. "Now I know exactly why he's like that. Still, he can't fail me on the exams because the Council is looking at his hands. That's why he's trying to make my life miserable in other ways." She poured herself a full mug of black liquid and sniffed it with satisfaction - earth coffee smells the best. "Besides, he's failing love. I'm perfectly fine and don't care. Only him, out of all of the turian instructors, acts like a total dumbass. Let him be."

Garrus checked if Jane was telling him the truth. She raised her head to look at him, and he saw honesty in her green eyes. The turian shook his head, calming a bit. He approached his woman from behind and nuzzled her neck, sniffing her in the process. She smelled of sweat and that unique scent of hers that he adored. "Okay. It's just that I hate when someone doesn't show you respect. You are one of the best there. Even better than me."

"Liar." Shepard smiled to herself. She raised one hand up above her head, and stroked Garrus' fringe with light touches. "Just let him be. Three more months and we will have our final exams. I don't want that one fucktard to spoil all the fun we're going to have with Nihlus. Oh! By the way… did you know that Josephine decided to move into his place?"

"Really? When did you find that out?"

"I got a message from her while I was changing after counter-biotic training." Jane replied and felt the turian tense behind her. "Don't think about him. I said already, Vyrnnus is a giant dickhead and that's all. Don't bother about him. Everyone else treats me well, all the instructors and everyone else, so just fuck it… and give me a kiss."

"Yes, ma'am." He spun his wife around to face him and kissed her deeply, purring. His hands travelled all over her body, massaging and Gripping whatever they found. They had been married for
a year and a few months now, had been having sex for almost a year of that time, but he still couldn't get enough of her.

"See you in bed in 60?"

"That sounds like a plan, Commander Vakarian." The turian grinned and turned around. He fumbled in the kitchen, searching for ingredients for his supper.

Jane went upstairs and just after she had sorted through all of her data-pads and training weapons, she hit the bed. It wasn't long before she was fast asleep. Garrus meanwhile ate a light supper, read through the materials on his datapads and was soon ready to go upstairs. He silently ran up the stairs, as silently as a turian could, and went inside their bedroom. The turian quietly approached the bed only to find that his wife was sleeping deeply.

He sat next to her, brushing her hair to the side. "You say that I shouldn't mind that bastard… if only he knew how much you work. How hard you try…" Images of Jane, exercising for hours, learning all the galactic laws or the Citadel common language, training with her weapons, flashed in front of his eyes. That woman was working her ass off, he could only imagine what she had been like that during her boot camp days, or during her ICT training. She took her shit seriously. That's why she was one of the best during training and no one could say that it was because she was in someone's favour. No, it wasn't the case. Jane never looked for praise. She did it all for herself… well, and for him too.

For six months now, Shepard was running on high speed. She never tired of it at all, she clearly enjoyed the training, her life on the Citadel and her marriage.

Garrus watched Jane's sleeping face for a long while, musing at how she was awsome till tiredness took over him. He quickly washed himself and tucked himself into bed, embracing dearly, his sleeping wife. She was all soft and delicate to him, despite her strength and wits. Maybe because he was the only person that she let see that side of herself. Shepard mumbled something in her sleep, placing a hand on the turian's chest. He purred to her ear and soon was asleep as well.

xXx

Hand to hand training was something both Jane and Garrus enjoyed during their Spectre training. Jane liked the training very much, especially because of their instructor - an asari named Sara Lavens. She was strict, hard on the surface but was helpful and patient. She always pointed what a trainee did wrong and where he or she should do better. Lavens also trained them in stealth and capturing. Jane was good at that one, always being praised for her technique. Yet she had to admit that during Spectre training, she had learned that even her skill wasn't sufficient. She had to learn new strategies, technologies and the capabilities of alien foes. The knowledge of which different species had a better sense of smell and hearing or a sort of 6th sense, was most valuable.

"Good, Commander Vakarian, you've got a natural talent for this." Sara said once she had turned off the holographic map in the training room, where Jane was being assessed on her ability to sneak up on a target. "Remarkable skill, you won't have any difficulty in the final exam. Please call Captain Jondum Bau next. And please notify Commander Garrus Vakarian that he's after Bau."

"Yes, ma'am." Jane left the room and approached a salarian that was waiting at the front for his turn. "Jon, you're turn. Show' em your best."

"Thank you, Jane." The salarian replied shortly with his usual, enigmatic smile and entered the room. Jane approached Garrus with a small smile. "You're after Jon, hun."
"Ugh, I really hate stealth training. Turians don't hide, they face their opponent face to face. Spirits..." He shook his head in dismay. "That's not honorable."

"My knight in shining armor!" Jane laughed quietly, hugging her husband. "You know that these skills, we will need in our missions. They're essential. You won't go to war, you will have to do recon, you will have to sneak up to an opponent's base, to an opponent's room, sneak behind him and strike where he won't have a chance against you. This isn't the turian military anymore, Big Guy."

"Yes, mum, thanks for clarifying that." He replied with a grumpy voice. "Without you I would be so lost..."

"Shut up." Jane smacked him on the arm. The woman wished she was taller, that way she could smack Garrus' fringe just like her mother-in-law. Speaking of whom. "Maybe you want me to call mother? Hmmmm? She will be delighted, I can assure you."

"Don't treat me like a kid."

"I can't help it, Big Guy, you act like one." The woman cuddled into the turian. "We have a break now. I'll head for lunch. Meet you there?"

"Yeah. Order me something." Garrus quickly placed his forehead on hers and she was gone. He approached the rest of the group that waited for the midterm exam. They talked idly about current matters when out of the corner of his eye he spotted something.

Vyrnnus stalked toward the control room where Lavens was examining the trainees. Garrus found it really suspicious. He quietly left the group and approached the door. He activated an interception program on his omni-tool and begged the spirits for connection. After a while, a connection was established. What shitty security protocols...

"... earlier so go and buy some food." Lavens spoke to the turian trainer. "I'll come home a bit later."

"Want something special?" There was no reply so the asari had to have shook her head. For a moment there was silence "So... how is this human trash doing?"

"Can you stop? I told you I don't care what Saren is saying," The asari spoke with an angry tone. "I don't want to lose my job. After all those centuries of being a merc and doing shitty jobs, I really want to have a bit of peace."

"But it's disrespectful! Outrageous! We should fail her!"

"I don't give a shit about you and Saren's xenophobic propaganda!" She started to yell back at Vyrnnus. "If you want to lose your job and be kicked off of the Citadel, then be my guest. But don't think I'll follow."

"But..."

"Fuck you! I don't want to have any part in this. You want to jeopardize her exams, then do it!" The asari was furious, that Garrus could tell without a doubt. He slowly started to move back, waiting for Vyrnnus to storm out of the room, still being in the range of the connection. "Go screw yourself! You know I was pardoned for my crimes on one condition. That I will sever my connections to Eclipse and teach trainee Specters my skills. I won't return to that shithole we were in!"

We...? So that asshole was Eclipse... Well, well. I need to contact Nihlus. Garrus ended the connection and moved to the back of the group just in time, as the angry older turian rushed from the
control room. Just few minutes later, Jondum left the exam room and waved at Vakarian.

"It's your turn, Garrus, good luck. Where's Jane?" The salarian looked around, trying to spot the red haired human in the crowd.

"She's left to go to the mess hall. Go with her, I'll come to you two when I finish here."

Bau nodded. "Affirmative."

Garrus wasn't as good in stealth and capturing as Jane, but he wasn't bad either. He was a hand to hand specialist though, so he scored good points at Lavens' trainings. The midterm exam took him around 20 minutes and he was free to go and have lunch with Jane and Jon. Vakarian entered the mess hall where the other Specter trainees were having their meal. Laughter and chatter filled the hall along with the aroma of various cuisines. The turian was quick to spot the waving salarian at the side tables. To his surprise, Shepard wasn't around. Quickly, he got to the salarian. He felt a bit anxious because of the talk between Lavens and Vyrnnus that he had intercepted. "Where's Jane, Jon?"

"Oh, she was called to the Human Ambassador's office. She left ten minutes ago. Jane said she would come back in an hour, just before Galactic Law class." Bau explained then pointed at an empty chair on the other side of the table. "Sit, have a meal."

Garrus put his belongings on the chair and excused himself to order some turian food. He had eaten in various restaurants, especially when Jane and him weren't in the mood to cook, but the cafeteria here provided one of the best meals on the Citadel. No wonder even Nihlus came here from time to time. Speaking of whom, Garrus was coming back to his table just to see Kryik approaching him with a bright toothy smile.

"Garrus, baby! My sweetheart! You are so handsome I barely can hold myself, give yourself to me here and now!" The red plated turian tried to hug Vakarian but the latter gracefully evaded his friend's hands.

"Can you shut up for once? Really." With a big sigh, Garrus sat down and disregarded his friend. Meanwhile Nihlus went past the table to order himself food. It wasn't long before he was back with his meal. Garrus wondered how Kryik could get himself food that fast, but on the other hand, maybe it wasn't something that he should know. "What's up?"

"Oh, I passed by Jane on the Presidium just 15 minutes ago. She was in a hurry so I didn't get a chance to hug or kiss her… what a shame." Nihlus replied and giggled at other turian's growls.

"Anyway, I decided to hang out with you instead."

"For a Specter you have a lot of spare time…"

"Yeah and who was on a mission for a whole two months? Me. Oh, sorry Jondum, hello, how are you?" Nihlus seemed to know everyone. That surprised Garrus at first but then he understood - knowing others was important for a Specter. After exchanging some news with the salarian, Nihlus turned his attention back to Garrus. "So… is there any specific reason Jane is visiting the embassy every week? Or does she like to see that sleazy Udina all the time?"

"He has some political agenda and that makes her furious. She can't openly refuse him because he represents humanity." Garrus leaned to Nihlus. "Until she becomes a Specter of course. Then she will work directly under the Council, so he can go and fuck himself."

"That's not entirely true… You know that I still need to do missions for the Primarch?" Nihlus shook his head angrily. "Fucker doesn't even bother to call Sparatus anymore. The same applies to every
other Spectre. My friend Harro is fed up with the Dalatrass calling him every now and then to close some illegal salarian facility. That's classified by the way." Kryik turned to Bau who was listening to the turians in silence. "No offense, Jon, that's just reality."

"None taken, Spectre." The salarian waved his hand in dismissal.

"Anyway, Harro works his ass off. And you two - don't be surprised when you get a call from the Primarch or Dalatrass about dangers that your species is threatening, that will cause imminent doom unless you take care of it." Nihlus smiled at the end. "Well, at least for one year I'll have a break from those. I don't think Fedorian will call me with Jane onboard."

"Well, shit." Garrus commented after a moment of silence. "Oh, we're coming to your place after training. Jane wanted to talk to Josey." Garrus said, looking at Nihlus seriously.

"Okay. No problem." Kryik nodded, he had picked up that something was wrong in a matter of nanoseconds.

xXx

Jane rushed to Udina's office with loud angry steps. Not only was she interrupted during her meal and that she had tried to explain that she had training and wasn't listened too, but she had to fly in a skycar to the Presidium for the 4th time this month. Only to listen to the same shit Ambassador Udina had to say. Again. On the way she had met Nihlus but sadly didn't have time for him. Now she was waiting in front of the office, tapping impatiently with her foot. Everything infuriated her, from Udina's blonde, big boobed secretary, to the plant whose leaves gently swayed from the breeze of the various passers by.

"He called me here and now I have to wait… how long do I have to stand here like an idiot?" Shepard barked to the secretary after another minute of waiting.

"He received an urgent call, please wait just a little…"

"Little?! Fuck! Listen, dollface, I am this close…" Jane raised her hand, thumb and fore finger almost touching. "... to spontaneously and violently combusting. And trust me when I say this: I really don't care if you or any other asshole ends up in the crosshair. Call Udina and tell him he has 5 fucking minutes or I'm off." Jane looked into blondie's terrified eyes and waited but the woman didn't move at all. Shepard's patience was quickly wearing off. "NOW!"

The blonde woman pushed a hologram button on her console and through the intercom she spoke to the Ambassador. "Sir, Commander Jane Vakarian is here and she's in a hurry."

"Call her in." The grumpy voice of the Ambassador replied.

Jane narrowed her eyes and entered the office with a grim face. "What have I done, that I had to come here despite my midterm exams, Udina? Hmmm?"

"Midterm exams? Why didn't you tell me, Commander?" Donnel huffed. "I told you that you becoming a Specter is humanity's top priority!"

"Humanity's or yours, Udina?" Jane narrowed her eyes even further. She was pissed off beyond any understanding now. Again, she was summoned to Udina's office to hear his usual 'humanity is the best' prep talk. Like she needed it today. Or ever.

"I represent HUMANITY! Don't you ever forget that!" The older man yelled at Shepard. "With enough influence I might become a councilor someday. And I hope that someday won't be that far
away." Udina smiled mischievously at Jane. She thought to herself that he really looked like a goblin or something. She used to call him like that while talking with Garrus or her parents. Seeing him like this made her want to laugh her ass of. "... and that's why I need you."

"... what?" She shrugged and looked at the Ambassador seriously. "Sorry but I'm allergic to bullshit and when I hear some my brain instantly shuts off. It was really nice to see you again and all, but I gotta go." The woman waved at Udina. "You know, midterms and stuff. Don't call me again because I have had enough of it."

"Shepard, wait!" Udina barked his order but Jane had left.

When she was on the Presidium again, she sighed and looked around for the nearest skycab lot. Soon she was flying back to finish her exams. While flying she called the one person that could actually do something about Udina. "Commander, how can I help you?"

"Admiral, good to see you again. I need your help, Sir."

xXx

Garrus saw her coming back a few minutes before their break was over. Jane was walking toward him with an angry grimace on her face. She was frowning deeply and her fists were almost white from holding them clenched. *Uh, oh, something happened.* He approached her to distance them from the crowd and leaned into her. "Jane…?"

"This is bullshit, Garrus." Shepard whispered with an angry tone. "That idiot Udina, called me just to listen to his bullshit again. But… I got a job…"

That pricked Garrus' interest a great deal. "Job?"

"Yeah, well… it didn't go as I had planned though. I called Hackett." Jane looked around, chewing on her lip. She was tired and now this. "He ordered me to investigate Udina. The thing is, that this man gained a lot of political influence in too short an amount of time. Steven suspects that there is something behind it. A terrorist organisation most probably."

"Shit."

"What?"

"We had a similar problem. It was around 100 years ago." Garrus scratched his mandible, thinking. He wasn't good with history. "Facinus was the name of the organisation. They wanted to gain control over the Council. But failed. And our Councilor was sentenced to death."

"Huh… here it's an ambassador. But just think about the consequences… We've been on the Citadel for what? Something around 2 years? It's a fucking miracle that we can freely live here and that we've gained the possibility to spread our colonies." Jane sighed. Then she realised one thing. A terrible thing. "With him acting stupid and guys like Saren… Fucking Christ, Garrus, if those two forces collide, a new war could start. It's just a matter of time."

"About Saren… we're going to Nihlus' after we finish here." Vakarian replied, and looked at Jane meaningfully. His eyes spoke 'not here' and she knew better than to ask.

xXx

"Josephine!" Jane jumped and hugged Josey straight after entering Kryik's apartment. "How are you settling in?"
"Fine. Although Nihlus tries to spoil me. I have to be on guard." Miss Clark smiled and guided Garrus and Jane to the couch. "Coffee, Jane?"

"Yup, a big and strong one. I had a bad day…" Jane sat and patted the place next to her but Vakarian wasn't looking at her. He approached Nihlus and both turians entered the office for a moment. Meanwhile Josey brought in two steamy mugs, the smell was delicious and distracted the woman from thinking about what urgent matter Garrus was so cryptic about. "Oh, yes. From Earth?"

"Yup. Nihlus even bought me an expensive coffee machine that I never asked for… but to be honest, I'm really good with that one." Josey sat down and curled her fingers on the red and white strand she used to colour so often. Although now she kept it with Kryik's colours mostly. "And before boys come back… I have a question Jane… how is it to… you know…?"

"Have sex with turian?" Jane grinned madly at her friend. "I've had my share of human lovers but a turian one… Spirits." Jane snorted into her coffee at her own remark of 'Spirits'. She had to wipe her face before continuing. "It's something else. Really, they are different but I think you're not disgusted by his body. You've been living together for a few days so I bet you've seen a turian body. Anyway… they are strong, their tongues are one big fucking miracle. I swear to all the gods, that their tongues are a piece of art and can do all the shit humans cannot." She stopped to catch a breath. "Really I could talk for a whole day about the perks of having sex with a turian. You just need to watch for chafing… and it's not really that bad. Just use lotions here." Shepard pointed at her tights. "And maybe on your ass, depends if you like doggy style. Umm, you were tested for an allergy to dextro-amino acids?"

"Yes, I'm not allergic. I heard that only like 3% of humans are allergic. Is that right?"

"Yes. It's a rare condition, to be honest. Still, a few soldiers died because of anaphylactic shock during the war." Jane remembered one, Akio his name was. He was fighting hard to hand with a turian when the latter one spit blood on him. Akio's face swelled and soon his body thrashing on the ground. She could do nothing, literally nothing to save him. "I saw one man die because of it. That's why the Alliance made it standard procedure but I wanted to ask anyway."

"I see. No I was checked during the war. To be honest I wanted to join the military but my parents strictly forbade me to do so." Josey leaned back on the couch, thinking about those times. "It was just 4 years ago. My brother is an Alliance marine though, maybe that's why they didn't want me to join."

"He is?"

"Yup, Cameron is stationing on Eden Prime now, guarding our colony." The woman started to laugh. "He sends me stupid pics all the time, he is so bored there. Nothing really to do."

"Well, the war ended, turians are behaving, and that part is in Alliance space… now the Council's as well, but it's far away from any real danger. The Attican Traverse is far, not to mention the Terminus Systems. Oh, that part is real fun. As a Specter I might have missions there. Can't wait." Jane smiled to herself but quickly spotted that Josey had saddened. "What?"

"I don't know what I'll do when the three of you are gone on missions… to be honest, now I'm have deeper thoughts about my relationship with Nihlus… he's a Spectre… he told me what his job is about. That there is a risk he won't ever come back." Clark put her face in hands, small sobs filled the room. "I… I don't know what to do."

Jane patted Josephine on the arm, giving her time to calm down. After few moments the latter woman raised her head. Shepard took it into her hands, looked into Clark's eyes and said seriously. "Josey. This is bullshit."
"Wha-?"

"Bull-shiiiiiiit. Your lack of faith in Nihlus makes me sad." With her thumbs Shepard wiped away the woman's tears. "Listen, maybe he's and idiot. A big one. Shameless flirt? I agree. But he's not one to be defeated that easily. How do I know that? Because he's been a fucking Specter for more than ten years now. And he is the best. Or so I've heard. So just believe in him." Jane moved back and smiled warmly at her friend. "So don't let those stupid thoughts invade your head ever again, deal? Besides, me and Garrus will keep an eye on him."

Josephine never talked about it again. Later she thought that Shepard was really impressive, with her simple words she could inspire anyone. She could make anyone better. "Thank you, Jane."

"No problem, anytime. So tell me, when are you gonna do it…?" The two women talked in quiet voices about bed matters until the two turians emerged from Nihlus' office. They looked serious, Jane could tell instantly. She knew turian expressions perfectly by now. "What's going on?"

"Shit is going to hit the fan…" Nihlus sighed and sat next to Josephine, embracing her with one arm. "Garrus brought me something… and it's better if you listen to it." Then he nodded to the other turian. Vakarian pushed a few buttons on his omni-tool and the recording of Vyrnnus and Sara's conversation began to play.

Jane was listening in silence. Only the frown, that deepened with every minute, indicated she was pissed. Pissed at Vyrnnus, that is. Lavens maybe too, because she should have stopped her, as it turned out, boyfriend. It was dangerous for both of them. But she was most pissed at Saren, for his utter idiocy. For his need for revenge. Did'n't he realised that he was endangering billions of lives? War was shit. War wasn't what the Galaxy needed. Not now, not ever.

When the recording was finished, no one said anything for a longer while. Each of them was mulling the new information over in their heads. Those thoughts were not pleasant, not at all.

It took a while, but the silence was broken by Nihlus' voice. "I'll take this recording to the Council. I think the best option is to keep Vyrnnus and Lavens in their job, but… they need to spy on Saren. It pains me that my mentor is an utter asshole, but his thirst for revenge makes him mad. And can lead to really bad things. Things we don't want."

"Will the Council believe this?"

"By Council I meant Sparatus. No need for Valern or Tevos." Nihlus looked at the shocked expression of the rest. "Oh, yeah… lesson number one, rookies, you go to your Councillor and when he or she wishes to tell the others, then it's his call. Politics, don't ask me how it works… it just does and I'm not one to judge… or to care…"

"Okay. I don't give a single fuck either…" Jane stood up and approached the window. She always calmed down from looking at the Citadel. "Nihlus, I need a bug in Udina's office."

"That… can be arranged, yes. When?"

"ASAP."

"Say no more."

Jane was glad to have a Spectre for a best friend. Her task given by Hackett was more bearable with Nihlus around. "And now let's drink. I need alcohol." Jane turned to everyone with a small grin. "With all the shit from today I propose we should get shitfaced, for tomorrow's sake."
Jane woke up with a huge hangover, luckily she had pills for that. Garrus was far worse. Turians usually didn't drink much because of the lethal hangovers the next day. For his sake, Nihlus had stolen a few pills from Mordin. She saw him waking up and was quick to provide her husband with everything, so he wasn't a whiny pain in the ass for the whole day. She had a day off and wanted to spent it right.

"Take this." She barely whispered, giving him a glass of water and the pills. "You will be fine soon."

Garrus grunted something unintelligible and swallowed the pills. Then he laid back and waited for the medicine to kick in. Jane laid next to him, her hand lightly brushed over his chest plates. Maybe this wasn't a perfect morning, because of the storming headache, but still it was good. No need to go anywhere. No need to put clothes on. What he wanted was to lie naked in bed… and to maybe make love to his wife. That was some plan. And he could actually do what he planned.

"What are you thinking about?" Jane whispered.

"How I'd like to plunge myself into you…" He sighed. "Not now, of course… I still feel shitty. But give me an hour, 'kay?"

"Deal." She giggled. "So tell me, how you managed to record that conversation from yesterday?"

"I am a capable turian, aren't I?"

"I love your ego almost as much as I love you." Jane replied, trying to calm her laughter. She knew that the turian beside her was still too sensitive.

"Me and my ego are one person. You can't separate us, love." Garrus shifted to lie on his side. He looked at Jane, her disheveled hair, her tired but happy face. Little dark spots under her eyes. After almost a year spent with her he knew just about everything about her body. And that pleased him.

"You look shitty, Jane."

"I could say the say, Big Guy." Shepard pinched her husband's waist, she knew it was really sensitive. This small punishment made him gasp. "Now tell me, about the recording."

"Ehh, you are such a little minx." Vakarian hugged the woman and told her what had happened yesterday. She listened quietly to his words. "And that's it. I'm glad that Nihlus had time to listen to it yesterday."

"Why?"

"Silly, the quicker he does something about it, the less we will have to worry about it."

Jane leaned her forehead on Garrus' cowl. She sighed and shook her head. "I will still worry. That Saren guy is dangerous. To everyone. I've never lost any member of my family so I'm really no one to talk, but still… Trying to start a new war? Because his brother died in battle?"

"Well, from what I've heard it was his fault. And because of that, he was posthumously discharged."

"Huh?"

"Standard turian procedure. If someone won't follow orders and gets his whole squad KIA, it's normal that the Hierarchy will cut all ties." Garrus explained. "It's also common that one loses his tier and the clan disowns him."
"That's pretty rough."

"Maybe, but he or she is dead anyway. And a clan doesn't need to have a member that lowers it's tier. It's still a shame for the clan, though. Usually a clan leader sends his bests as a decoy, so everyone will forget about the dead discharge." He stopped for a moment, thinking. "Hmmm… the Vakarian clan hasn't had anyone like that for more than 300 years."

"Really, that rough…" Jane exclaimed and moved on top of Garrus. "Let's talk about something more pleasant… or maybe let's not talk at all. There are nice things we can do… in silence."

"My beloved wife… I don't think we will be silent at all." Garrus replied with a smirk and tossed Jane on the bed. She squealed adorably, which made him more horny in the process. "See? You can't be quiet at all."

"You…" She wanted to threaten him but was silenced by his tongue invading her mouth. And with that her mind went blank.

xXx

Look forward for next chapter! :) Unexpected steamy bit confirmed!
Chapter 16

Apologizing for such long break between chapters is futile, imo. But I'd like to say sorry nevertheless. Life is life and it usually change our plans dramatically. Still, I was able to finish Chapter 16 and my lovely Razzberry edited it faster than Flash.

Her fanfics are here:

Mass Effectiveness: archiveofourown.org /works/5330642

Dawn of a New Era: archiveofourown.org /works/4978891

I won't promise I'll be any faster with next chapter, but I won't abandon this fanfic so don't you worry.

Now, please enjoy :) comments would be very appreciated.

xXx

Josephine woke up after a good night's sleep, just next to her boyfriend. Boyfriend…? She hid her face in her hands, trying again to process that one word. Boyfriend? Would anyone call a turian that? A man, maybe? No. Every human word she used to describe her relationship with Spectre Nihlus Kryik was somewhat wrong. She couldn't define it and she decided to give up defining anything. Nothing was normal with him. Not in a bad way, no. She felt adored, she felt beautiful. He listened to her, he wanted to give her everything she wished for or not. Why had no human man been so good to her? How is it possible that men from her own species, were always such douchebags? She didn't know.

The woman turned to the side to watch her sleeping turian. She loved to watch him sleep, even though it had been just a couple of times now. Every time he was the perfect gentleman. Not crossing any line she had set for them. That was very important. But also… his looks. Josey was good with Nihlus being another species. An alien, with an alien body. Of course, she hadn't the courage to do much yet. Small kisses, touching his neck, stroking his mandibles or fringe, holding his three fingered hands while watching movies - she was ok with that, and she had to admit that he wasn't unpleasant to touch.

Watching him sleep, while he was only in sleeping slacks, was something new to her. And almost every morning she woke up before him and watched. His red, or rather reddish brown plated chest that slowly and rhythmically moved as he breathed. Strong hands that stretched for her but never touched her, like he wanted to hug her dearly but waited for her approval. Those strong, muscular arms, looking so safe and welcoming. His back with a broad cowl that at first she found strange but then appreciated it looks, just like Nihlus’ fringe or mandibles. Or the white clan markings that made him look dangerous and sexy at the same time.

Ms Clark moved her hand slowly. Just an impulse, but so strong. It made her touch his hands, slowly tracing a path up from his middle finger, forehand, passing his elbow up to the arm. Kryik shivered but was still asleep. She decided to move even further but to do so, she had to pull herself a bit closer. Which she did, ever so slowly she moved her body closer, feeling warmth emanating from the turian's body. With feather like touches, she mapped Nihlus’ chest plates, wondering how would it be to be flushed, naked against those.
Wha-? What are you thinking you lewd girl... She scolded herself internally. Although she didn't stop her musing at all. Just a reminder that she should take things slow. But... was it really true? She sighed heavily not knowing the answer.

"Something wrong?" A flanged voice rang in the silence of bedroom. Josey snapped her head to that direction just to see those two beautiful orbs of green watching her. "You seems so sad, my angel."

Josephine moved back, blushing. "No, it's nothing. Good morning." She sat on the bed, her back to Nihlus so he couldn't see her face.

"Morning." His voice again was near, she felt him sitting slightly behind her. His talon lightly brushed her arm. The woman shivered unconsciously. "You slept well?"

"Umm, yes. I'll go wash myself." Josephine jumped out of the bed and almost ran to the bathroom. Leaving a speechless and slightly confused Nihlus on the bed.

What am I doing, for God's sake? She thought to herself when she entered the bathroom and closed the door. She leaned against the door and slid down to the floor, sitting there miserably. I love his touch. Why I am so scared? I need to talk to Jane... I need her to explain to me... I need to know.

xXx

Later Nihlus left for the Presidium, and Josie for her shop. She sat in her office with lunch and enjoyed a moment of peace. The woman opened her omni-tool and typed a new message.

[ Hi Jane :) how are you and Garrus? How's your Spectre training? Remember when I told you that I'm thinking about moving in with Nihlus? I actually did it. Just 5 days ago. Sorry I didn't tell you about it...just needed to see if it would work. Since it's fine by now I could share the big news.

I hope we could meet sometime soon. Want to talk with you about something important. ]

She checked the message a few times and with a nod of approval, she pushed the send button. Josephine didn't have to wait long for a reply.

[ Hi ;) I knew it! I just waited for you to move in with Nihlus. You were living in such a small dump. Sorry for honesty. And Nihlus' place is way to big for one sassy turian. Good for you. Both of you.

Oh, we're good. Training's fine.

I don't know when we could meet. I'll ask Garrus later. Now we are halfway through our mid-term exams.

Still, hope to see you soon! ]

Josey smiled to herself. Jane's support meant a lot to her. Because she was human. Like her regular human customers who were already accustomed to Nihlus coming to pick her up or just to see her. The woman knew that some of her kind didn't approve of her... friendship, with the turian.

Still she owned the biggest and best human wares shop on the Citadel. She wasn't scared for her future. Especially since many other species were starting to come and buy human food and other things. From a small shop to a big mall in just a few months. Luckily she could rent the rest of the building.
That evening Nihlus came to pick her up so they could go home. He entered her office all happy, purring like a cat. "Starshine!" The turian approached Ms. Clark and put his forehead on hers, the purring becoming louder. "Jane and Garrus are coming later."


xXx

When Garrus and Nihlus vanished into the latter's office, Josephine knew it was the best opportunity to ask Jane about… well, having sex with a turian.

Jane sniffed the contents of the mug that Josie handed to her. A small smile appeared on her face. "Oh, yes. From Earth?"

"Yup. Nihlus even bought me an expensive coffee machine that I never asked for… but to be honest, I'm really good with it." Josey sat down, a bit nervous. Thinking how to start. While playing with her hair she tried to come up with something. In the end she decided to make it simple. Or try to, at the very least. "Before the boys come back… I have a question Jane… how is it to… you know…?"

"Have sex with a turian?" Her friend finished the question and grinned widely. "I've had my share of human lovers but a turian one… Spirits…" Jane stopped to wipe beads of coffee from her face, giggling. She started to talk about a turian's tongue and body and how good they can be. "Really I could talk for a whole day about the perks of having sex with a turian. You just need to watch for chafing… and it's not really that bad. Just use lotions here." Shepard pointed at her thighs. "And maybe on your ass, depends if you like doggy style. Umm, you were tested for an allergy to dextro-amino acids?"

"Yes, I'm not allergic." Josey replied. They talked a bit about allergies, her brother and Nihlus' job. Jane made Josephine feel better about his risky job. Thanks to that, she could drop that burden off her shoulders. She decided to continue with her sex ed. "So… um, tell me what I should know."

"About sex? First thing: kiss him. Shove that tongue." Jane put her empty mug on the coffee table and stood up. She pointed at the back of the head. "Here, under the fringe, and the fringe itself. They are very sensitive. You can massage or lightly scratch and he's all yours. Also, his mandibles. Biting, scratching, lightly of course, kissing, touching is a good thing."

Then Commander pointed at her whole body. "The skin between their plates is really sensitive too. And now… the most important thing is… here." She pointed between her legs. "His dick is hidden behind groin plates. And it won't emerge if he's not aroused and attracted to you. If it's out then you can be 100% sure he loves you and wants to fuck you the whole night long."

"Really?" Josephine asked, confused about such a strange biological feature. It didn't put her off, it was just different. Yet Nihlus was all different and she was good with that.

"Yup." Jane fanned her eyebrows, smirking. "And when I say the whole night long, I mean it. Turians can have multiple orgasms, not just firing once and waiting to reload like our guys. Garrus' record is 7 times. I couldn't walk for a whole day. Totally worth it though. No regrets." Shepard sat down and became serious again. "Anyway, if you think you are ready then you should go for it. Still, be sure. It will save you regret and pain. Mental pain, that is."

"I understand. I'm ready, that's why I wanted to talk." Josephine said, not looking at her friend. "I… I didn't know where to look… I'm not really good with being in a relationship. Had a bad experience before."
"I know. Hmm maybe it's not exactly the same, I didn't have any experience with relationships whatsoever but the most crucial thing is don't rush anything, learn about him slowly. Everything's gonna be fine, Josey, trust me."

xXx

When Garrus finished showing Nihlus the recording, Kryik wasn't really surprised. He already knew that Saren was spreading his anti-human bullshit propaganda, wherever he could. It reached Councilor Sparatus and it wasn't a big surprise when said Councilor gave his best Spectre, the shitty job of fighting with the propaganda.

"Ehhh, still the same shit Saren." Kryik shook his head, angry. Yet he quickly chased the anger away. "Do not worry, I will take care of it. Hmmm… I have something to ask, buddy."

"What is it?" Garrus looked at Nihlus, surprised. It had been a long time since his friend had had such a confused and worried trill. Kryik turned to the side, not looking at Vakarian.

"Tell me… was Jane scared of you?"

"I don't follow, Nihlus."

"I mean… your body, turian body. And having sex with you. Spirits, Garrus, activate your brain."

Kryik growled, feeling bashful and nervous, like a teen. Hearing an amused trill from Garrus, he turned to him, a bit pissed off. "Listen, Garrus, I need your help here."

The blue marked turian cleared his throat and nodded. He sat on the chair next to Nihlus' big, glass desk, thinking. "Jane wasn't scared of me and my body, wasn't disgusted of its alien features. Just like I wasn't about hers. Of course we both had to learn about each other. Where it feels good and where not… it's just matter of knowledge. You need to know. If Josephine is ready."

"Yeah… About that. She sends mixed messages. She gets closer just to run away. I don't know what to think, Garrus… I'm at my limits and don't know what to do anymore." Nihlus leaned on the window, not looking at the Citadel's traffic outside, it luminescent lights and problems that awaited him every time he left the confinement of his apartment.

"Have you talked to her…?"

"No. I don't want to scare her. I don't want to make her decide or to sound like a horny perv."

"Who you are, actually."

"Oh, shut it."

"Don't be an idiot and talk to her. From all my experience with Jane, which actually you know about and took a big part of, I know that communication is crucial." Garrus sighed at even the smallest mention of his and his wife's past. "But seriously, if you just normally talk to her, everything's gonna be good. I think…"

"That's not really assuring, dude." Nihlus frowned, looking at his friend. He had to admit Vakarian was right. Marriage, and what comes with it, gave him some wisdom. A little, but still. "You're right. I'll talk with her…"

"Do it. Josephine loves you, she agreed to move in with you. Maybe she needs time to find out about how it is being with man from different species." For a moment he paused, giving themselves time to mull things over. "Talk to her, if it does go sideways, just give her some more time."
"Yeah. I'll do that." Nihlus sighed heavily. "Okay, let's go to our girls."

xXx

The next day, after a night of drinking and having fun, Josey woke up quite late. Luckily she already said she wouldn't be at work so she could laze about. Her talk with Shepard also made her want a day off. To move things forward with Nihlus.

Speaking of whom… The woman turned to watch him, only to notice the bed empty on his side. *He woke up already?* Still a bit drowsy, she sat up, feeling sad. She wanted to watch Kryik's sleeping face, see his chest move up and down in peaceful rhythm, touch him. She stared at that one place till Nihlus entered the bedroom.

"Nihlus!" Josephine jumped out of bed and hugged the surprised turian. "Nihlus…" Her cheek flush against the warm plates of his chest.

"Something wrong, Starshine?" Kryik reciprocated the woman's tight hug.

"It's just… you weren't in the bed…"

"Yeah, well. I woke up some time ago, took pill for my hangover, washed myself and checked my mail." He said. His hand was stroking the woman's hair in a calming manner. "What? You missed me?"

"Yes…"

They hugged each other till they both started to talk at the same time. "I need to talk to you, Josephine."

"We need to talk, Nihlus." Josey looked up and laughed at him. "Hehe. At the same time… You go first." She dragged the turian to sit on the bed and faced him, waiting for him to speak.

"Well, hmm.. I was thinking about…" He started, slowly scratching his mandibles. "What I want to ask is… um… are you…"

Josephine watched Nihlus in silence, waiting for him to say what he wanted. It was the first time she had seen this really talkative and cocky turian fumble on his words. She gave him time.

"AREYOU DISGUSTED OF MY BODY?" He burst out louder than he wanted. Quickly he turned away and smacked his forehead.

"Wha— What?!" She was utterly shocked but then she understood what he asked and realised her previous actions led to this huge misunderstanding. "What? Hell no. Where did that came from?"

"Ever since you moved in here with me, you've been uncertain. Every time I approached you and I was only in boxers, you withdrew." He sighed, still not daring to look at Josephine. "You were running away from me so I realised you were either disgusted or scared of me. After all I'm alien to you."

Josephine regarded Nihlus for a second then began laughing. After a moment she collected herself to explain. "Silly, silly turian. How could you even think I was disgusted? Scared? Yes. But not of your body… of things I wanted to do to that marvelous body. But didn't know how to approach… I didn't know anything about turians."

Josey reached for his head, turning it to face her. "I didn't know what I could do to you to make you
feel good." She leaned to his mandible and licked it. The turian growled unconsciously and very lustfully. "But now I know." Again, she licked his mandible. Then she moved her lips closer to his mouth plates and whispered, knowing he would hear every little sound she made. "Open your mouth." When he parted his mouth plates in the exact way she wanted, she stopped him. "And now show me your tongue."

The turian didn't know where this will lead but did what she told him. Soon he understood what she wanted to do, she touched his tongue with hers. Then she circled around it, she stroked and massaged his muscle with hers. He couldn't stop the groans of approval. He was basking in this marvelous feeling until he was ready to reciprocate it.

This time she moaned into his mouth. His slightly hoarse, cat-like tongue did things to her. She enveloped their dancing tongues with her mouth, placing lips on his plates. They kissed till Josephine sucked lightly on Nihlus' tongue. That was the last straw for him, his self-control crumbled and in a matter of seconds, the woman was lying flat on the mattress. She couldn't stop the squeak of surprise when she saw her big, reddish turian hovering above her. Looking at her in a way that would make even a chaste girl, wet.

And he was kissing her again, more fiercely and needy. After a moment both of them decided to venture even further. She caressed him, while he was stroking her neck and arms. Josey's hands massaged the turian's neck then moved up and up, under his fringe. She found his sweet spot, thanks to Jane's teaching.

Nihlus groaned and stopped kissing her, just to nuzzle the side of her neck, breathing on her skin with his hot breath. "Josephine… I've wanted you for so long."

"Me too." She gasped shortly in reply. Her hands moved on their own to the hem of his shirt, lifting it up, indicating that this unnecessary piece of clothing is in her way. "Take it off, take it off!" The woman pleaded in urgency. Nihlus quickly took his shirt off, so Josephine could put her hands on his chest plates, feel its texture - same as those on his arms and hands. "How could you ever think I would be disgusted by you, Nihlus…?"

Real love and amazement was in her eyes. Her little fingers touching him with care. All of that told him she was true in her feelings. She wanted him as much as he wanted her. "I just wrongly judged your behaviour. Sorry, starshine. I'm so crazy in love with you. You turned this silly turian into a silly love-crazed madman."

"Oh, Nihlus…" She giggled.

He only smirked and began to take off her nightdress. A sweet little thing she bought via the Extranet only a few weeks ago. The nightdress was exposing her legs and arms, which came in handy in Kryik's apartment - the temperature set higher than that of a human's. She gasped and quickly wanted to stop but he stopped her. "No, starshine, I waited too long for this to let you hide yourself from me." Carefully he slid the straps from her arms. Lightly tracing the path down with his hands. The gown was barely holding on over Josey's breasts.

Josephine always marveled at how the skin on his palm was soft where rest wasn't so. His touch was always delicate, careful not to harm. She thought at first that turians were a violent and strong species but she was wrong. Or maybe it wasn't the case with Nihlus.

Speaking of whom, the turian leaned to her neck and lapped at it lightly. Josephine wasn't prepared for that. She gasped and grabbed his fringe while he was licking his way down. From her neck, past the collar bone to stop just between her breasts. "Mmm, you are delicious, my sweet. I want more." Kryik pulled her to sit and pulled her nightgown even lower, exposing her naked breasts.
She knew better than that to just let it go. The woman didn't have to be ashamed of herself. It was the first time she felt loved and adored that much and maybe because of that she felt bashful. Yet she didn't want to anymore. Josephine was in bed with someone she cherished. No need to feel embarrassed anymore.

So she rid herself of this feeling and looked at Kryik, who was dipping his head to her right breast and licked her nipple then skin around it. Her other breast was taken care of by the turian's hand. First he massaged her with his hand and tongue, making her moan lewdly. But then he traced the shape of her nipple with his blunted talon, rendering her out of breath.

"You like it?"

"Y-yes… how did you-?"

"How did I know where a human woman is sensitive…?" He finished her question. Nihlus' head was still next to woman's breast. He saw how her skin reacted to his hot breath. Tiny little bumps appeared on her. "Well, I'm a Spectre. I have access to secret knowledge." He replied and returned to working on her breasts.

"You- you are t-terrible liar… Nihlus." Josephine replied while holding onto his fringe for dear life. She didn't realise yet that from pulling and touching there she triggered his lust over her.

Nihlus was at the verge of losing control. He delicately but firmly took her hands away from his head. "Easy there, sunshine. If you pull me there like that I won't be able to control myself. And I want to explore and sate myself with you first."

He resumed his licking while pulling her nightdress down, off her legs and tossed it somewhere in the back of the room. Only pink panties were in his way to fully appreciate Josephine's naked body. Which he thought every inch was perfect. The turian sniffed her marvelous scent, and couldn't imagine a more sweet thing in entire universe. Now he knew the source of it, so he wanted to taste it as well, dipping between the woman's legs.

Before Josephine could voice any words of concern, her voice was taken from her. With the first tentative lick, she wasn't able to say nor think about anything else other than the sensation of that slightly rough, cat-like tongue, on her sex. She had to grab something again, and because she could only see Nihlus' fringe, she grabbed it and pulled with such a force that the turian growled lustfully.

"Josephine… please…"

"I can't, I can't!" She nearly cried. "Please, Nihlus, don't stop."

"Mmm." Kryik hummed and again started to work on Josephine's woman parts. By experimenting he found out, that her clit was most sensitive. He felt the woman's leg twitch involuntarily with each lick. Then his tongue found the entrance into her core. The sweet scent that came from her had its source right there. That sweet scent changed into a half sweet half salty taste which he fell in love with. "You are delicious."

"Ni-hlus… please…" She gasped. Her breath was fast and irregular and soon she screamed in her orgasm. Pulling Nihlus' fringe so hard he couldn't stop himself anymore.

"I can't wait anymore." The turian said and in seconds he stood up and was naked. He stopped for a moment, evaluating Josephine's face. But he saw there, only love and appreciation for his form, so he didn't want to hesitate anymore.

As for Josephine, she didn't want to look scared. But seeing how big he was, his long and throbbing
cock, she had a moment of hesitation. Yet she smiled and looked at him with a flirty smirk. "Can't wait anymore too, so come here and make love to me."

"As you wish, my lady." Nihlus replied and slowly crawled on the bed and kneeled between the woman's legs. The turian positioned himself and, as he was aware of the size differences, he took it slowly to push himself in.

"Ouch!" She cried painfully. "Faster, Nihlus, put it all in."

"Wha-?!" He freezed.

"Just put it all in and give me a moment." The woman repeated her order. She squealed in pain when Nihlus did as he was told. "Uhhh, you are bigger than I thought." She wiped the tears running down her eyes and smiled.

"Josey, I'm so sorry." He wiped one last tear from her eyes, leaning to touch his forehead with hers.

"I didn't realise…"

"Silly. It's okay. I had one lover that, well, was big. Not like you, but still." Her hands reached for his mandibles, slowly stroking them. They stayed silent for a moment while the woman was calming down. Once she had accommodated him just right, the pain subsided. She wiggled her ass, testing the waters. She thanked the gods for being wet down there. Big thanks to Nihlus too, he made her wet just by kissing her. Not that the feeling of him licking her body wasn't really pleasurable, but kissing her turian was exceptional. "Can you kiss me?"

"You don't have to ask, starshine." The feeling of her tongue, so small and nimble, made his mind go crazy. But after a while another feeling made him reach the breaking point. Josey was moving her pelvis, causing a little friction on his cock inside her. She was so tight, so hot, so incredibly wet. Nihlus stopped to kiss her and moved up, to look at her and start moving on his own. Almost out and then in, slowly. He heard her moan every time he did that, he also couldn't contain himself from groaning in pleasure. "Spirits, you are wonderful."

"Nihlus…” She gasped his name so adorably.

They moved in unison. She responded to his pushes inside of her, and felt her climax slowly creep upon her. So close that a few more moves and she would come but Nihlus had other ideas. He picked her up, holding the woman's ass. Josephine quickly grabbed the turian by his neck and cowl, surprised by his action.

"Sorry, starshine, I just want to fulfill one of my dreams right now." Without any more explanations he took her from the bed, still inside her, slowly moving her body up and down. A few steps from the bed was a wall, he pushed her against it. With one hand supporting her body, he took her hands up with the other. Locking them above her head.

"God, Nihlus…”

Kryik bent his head and licked her neck up to the ears. Then played with her earlobe. He did the same on the other side as well. "Mmmm, you taste so sweet."

"Ahh… so… so you wanted to fuck me against the wall."

"Yesss…”

His low voice rang in her ears, making her eyesight blur. She was bombarded with sensations. Not only touch, but also the sound of his voice, the vibrations of his subharmonics, heat of his skin and
his cock so deep inside of her. Was there an end to all those pleasures? She hoped not. *Why did I wait so long, dear god. Being afraid was unnecessary.*

Nihlus' pace grew faster and faster. He couldn't stop himself from pounding inside her as she was contracting on his member with every movement. Both of them were reaching the point where they couldn't think anymore, just feel. Feel each other, feel the love, feel the need to be together. Nothing was important right now, just being together in the most intimate way possible. And screw what anyone would think or say about their relationship whatsoever.

Josephine felt her climax coming upon her again, and this time it wasn't stopped. It flooded her brain with bright light and enormous pleasure. Every nerve in her body exploded with heat and electricity, starting from her core. It was pulsing on Nihlus, triggering his own release. With a wild roar he pushed himself a few more times to spill inside of her.

Sighs of happiness and relief. Looking into each other eyes. The pair was certain, that it was the best thing that had happened in their lives. And now nothing could separate them. Their eyes were sending one message: "I want to be with you forever. Never let me go. I love you." They didn't need to voice those words, as they knew by just sheer look what one another wanted to say.

Nihlus released Josey's hands, so she could grab his cowl, and he took her to the bed again. He laid her carefully, like the most precious gem, devouring the sight of her. The woman's body glistened with fresh sweat. Her eyes were glossy, sparkling with joy. Her hand reaching for him, wanting him close, seeking his heat.

"Wait a moment, love." He turned toward the drawer of the nightstand and pulled a small box from it. Then he laid down next to her, fulfilling her silent plea. "I've read a lot about human customs and I think it should be done that way… so… Josephine Clark, will you do me the honour of becoming my wife?"

Josey watched as her turian opened the small black box and revealed to her a golden ring with a diamond on the top. She was fairly certain her jaw would drop on the floor if she wasn't lying on the bed. She sat up, watching the box in the three fingered hand and couldn't believe this was really happening.

"Nihlus… I… I…"

Nihlus waited as the woman was regarded the ring with a shocked expression. He gave her time and didn't want to jump to any conclusions like he did earlier. Of course he was scared. He feared rejection or that Josephine wasn't ready yet.

As for Josephine she didn't even bother feeling not ready at all. Not after what they just did. She was just admiring her soon-to-be ring. It was perfect and in those perfect hands. She reached to them, closing them with her hands. The woman looked up and smiled brightly. "You did it perfectly, Nihlus. Yes, I'll gladly become Mrs. Kryik. I don't want to be anyone else's wife. Just your's."

Nihlus exhaled with relief. He didn't even realise he was holding his breath.

Josephine laughed at him. "Calm down, Nihlus… hmm now you have to put the ring on my finger." She raised her hand up, wiggling the ring finger. "This one."

"Thanks, starshine. You have so many of them. And to be honest, I'm too much of a mess to guess which one is the right one." Josey' laugh filled the room like the most beautiful music. Nihlus regarded her finger, now adorned with his ring. The feeling that it wasn't real was slowly washing away. It was real. She said yes. His head raised up and he saw it. Pure happiness in those green orbs.
Nihlus took her into his strong arms and embraced her. "I'm the luckiest turian in the entire universe."

"And I am luckiest human."

xXx

Jane Shepard was woken up by an urgent message, her omni-tool was beeping furiously. Still drowsy after a really exhausting bed-session, the woman was slowly turned to lie on her back. She reached to her wrist to open the control panel of her tool. To her surprise, the message wasn't from Udina or anyone else, but from Josephine. Shepard opened it quickly.

[ Jane. That was... amazing. Thank you. Please meet tonight. We have something to tell you and Garrus. 17:00 Citadel Time at our place, is that ok? ]

While Jane was reading her own message, Vakarian was also woken by his omni-tool beeping with a message. The turian sat up and opened it.

[ You were right, buddy. We just had to talk. Thanks. And 17.00 at my place. Bring Jane and don't be late. See ya. ]

Jane looked at her husband's message and read it. She had learned the Palavenian Common language quite fast and now could read Garrus' messages. She snorted and smacked the turians arm playfully. "So you two weren't planning tactics against Saren yesterday. You were planning on how Nihlus could get laid. You dogs."

"What's a dog?"

"Nevermind." Jane moved closer to her husband and kissed his mandible. "Good you two talked. I am proud of you, Garrus."

"Well, thanks. But it wasn't a big deal really. Still, I'm glad I could help him. And Josephine." Vakarian crawled toward Jane with a lustful growl but she stopped him with her hand. "What?"

"Hold your horses, loverboy." Shepard winked to him playfully, yet she stood up from the bed. "I need a nice long bath... and then something to eat. Don't forget we have to go to Josephine and Nihlus' at 17:00."

"Okay, okay... I wonder what they want to tell us..." He paused for a moment, then snorted. "I hope Nihlus doesn't want us to know anything they did or did not... I don't care"

"Don't be silly, I don't think so... We'll find out when we get there..."

xXx

Yay. Engagement after sex is the best. Why, you ask? Because of endorphins running in the body. You are so happy you won't realise how fucked you are. Hahahaha xD

Sorry, I'm an idiot.

Hurr.
Chapter 17

UPDATE (30.03.2017): Thanks to Erin Primette from I got to know that Garrus' father's name is Castis and I decided to change Akteon to his canon name. Although I write AU fic I try to stick to as much canon stuff as I can. So that's it. Thanks again, Erin for your message :)

Hi everyone! I'm back! :D and not empty handed. I present you brand new shiny chapter of _Marry me…_ I know it was half year, and I'm really sorry. I had a lot things to do but at last I'm more free now.

I want to thank Razzberry for still sticking with me, and helping me with editing and checking fic.

I have also announcement for y'all. I got tumblr blog. If you want to ask me anything, maybe have some idea for this fic, or maybe one-shot just write there :)

Now I won't take your precious time any more, please enjoy! :D

xXx

"First Saren... now this." Councilor Sparatus growled under his breath after listening to the recording that Spectre Kryik had brought to him. "Who recorded it? Vakarian?"

"Yup." Nihlus nodded to his boss. He arrived at the Presidium in the afternoon, still sensing Josephine's scent all over himself. He was fairly certain Sparatus was able to smell it too. He didn't give a single fuck about it though. "What do you think?"

"That Saren is seriously crossing the line lately." The Councillor replied, the anger in his dual toned voice was palpable.

Nihlus knew that Sparatus was busy with lots of things lately and adding one more thing, a shitty one, was like poking a predator in its sleep - it ends badly. _Glad that I'm not on receiving end... this time._

"I will talk with Vyrnnus. I hope he values his freedom here on the Citadel more than Saren's sick agenda. If that doesn't work then maybe Lavens will help. And if all that fails, then... well, we have a few free cells in prison." The Councilor said after a longer moment of thinking. He then looked at Nihlus. "You. You will stay out of this for now. You don't know about the recording nor do you know who recorded it. Is that clear?"

"Like the finest asari crystal - clear, sir." Nihlus replied with a smirk. "What about the Vakarians?"

"Tell them to lay low. They don't know about the recording either." Sparatus said and turned around toward one of his computers. Indicating that their conversation was over.

"Okay." Nihlus stood up from the chair and left the Councillor's office. _I wonder if that idiot Vyrnnus will get his shit straight or not. He wasn't dumb, not at all._ Nihlus remembered how he had met Vyrnnus when he was studying at the Academy. Back then he was working for a mere year as an instructor.

Kyrik learned from Saren, that it was him who brought Vyrnnus to the Citadel. Arterius met him on one of his missions as a Spectre. The turian and his asari girlfriend were working for the Eclipse -
which is a strange thing for a turian. Eclipse's organisation was mostly asari with a few salarians. But aside from that, working with Eclipse wouldn't be that bad, if they stick to their normal line of work - mercs providing effective security. When those two stepped into more shady jobs within Eclipse, and got caught in the process, that's when normal people would run. Vyrnus and Lavens made a few stupid-ass decisions but still, proved that both of them gained some skills. Catching up to them took Saren 3 years, and if that doesn't say how good they are, Kryik didn't know what else could. That's the reason they got to repent their sins as instructors. Of course, they were suspended for years, blocked from any contact with the outside and under heavy surveillance. Throughout all those years they were behaving, building their reputation and not causing a single problem. **Until now, huh.**

Nihlus jumped into his sky-car, still musing over Vyrnus. He was impressed on how easily Saren could influence the other turian. Maybe he had something on the ex-merc, who knows? **That's not important anyway. Sparatus knows everything about everyone on this piece of junk. And farther. Kryik didn't want to think about it though. He always stopped himself from thinking how powerful Sparatus was. With one snap of his fingers he could even end Nihlus' life. Of course, theoretically, the Councillor could be replaced. Yet life proved that it was very hard to accomplish. Sparatus had been Councillor for over 15 years now. Quite a long time for a turian councillor.**

Sparatus had gained huge political power within just a few years, after he had returned as a hero from a mission during his military years. Backed by the main branch of his clan - Fedorian - he became the youngest Turian Councillor in the Council's history, at only 42 years old.

Nihlus was one of his most trusted Spectres, aside from Saren of course. He knew exactly what Sparatus had to deal with: political bullshit, terrorists, things that never should reach the galaxy-wide media. Nihlus could count those for hours. He really knew all of them too well, he was the tool that Sparatus used to take care of all those things. And he knew damn well when to shut his mouth up about them.

xXx

"Josey, darling…" Nihlus said when he saw his fiance standing in the kitchen regarding her new possession. He chuckled. The turian approached the woman from behind and then nuzzled his face in the crook of her neck. "Jane and Garrus will be here soon. Not to mention Li and Creya are coming upstairs."

Josey looked startled at Nihlus. "Oh, my god! It's so late. Why didn't you tell me? I need to prepare so many things!"

"Calm down, starshine, I already did. Table, food, everything is ready. Everything's fine. Just come." He pulled the woman to the living room. A few seconds later, the doors to the apartment swooshed open and two turians - male and female - came in. "Creya. And Liliihierax, good to see you outside your shop buddy."

"Hi, Nihlus." Creya - Liliihierax' wife and Nihlus' cousin - entered first. She was a green plated female turian - as Josie learned, a rare thing for turians - with yellow eyes. Predatory in look but really, really gentle. Creya stepped in and trilled with awe at the place. "Every time I come here I'm so jealous."

"Niece, Nihlus, it will be niece." Liliihierax passed Nihlus and patted his arm. "Sorry to disappoint."

"Glad you told me, I can still change my order."
"Creya, good to see you again." Josephine shook hands with turian female and both sat on the sofa. Chatting about Creya's pregnancy while Li and Nihlus were mostly listening. Everyone was waiting for the last couple. It took some time for the Vakarians to arrive and Josephine started to worry. "Where are they? They are never late."

"Wait here. I'll call Garrus." But he hadn't even reached his office when they heard the doors open with a swoosh.

"Hello, everyone!" Jane marched inside with a grin on her face. "Sorry for being late but we had this discussion about Interstellar Commerce Law. We couldn't agree on Article 20114 Parag-"

"Okay, Jane, we don't need to hear your sex talk." Nihlus interrupted her in his usual way. "Your's and Garrus' intimate things should stay intimate."

"Ha-ha. Aren't you extra funny today, Nihlus." Jane started to laugh. "Isn't it ironic, my love?"

Garrus smirked and looked at Kryik with victory in his eyes. "Well, you may be right. Considering recent events." Being a nuisance to Nihlus was always a good thing, especially because it was really rare. "But still, that's not why we came here, is it? What's the big news, Nihlus?"

"Sit on the sofa and wait." Nihlus said and entered the kitchen.

Jane looked at Josephine and smiled, noticing the ring on her hand. She abruptly caught air in her lungs. That was the moment she realised what the whole fuss was about. Oh, my, ooooh my! I can't believe!

While Shepard had her moment of fangirling, Josephine tried to take everyone's attention away from her friend. Also to occupy Jane with something else to think about.

"Just one month, Creya. I can't wait to see your baby." That did the trick. Josie knew that Shepard was crazy about Creya's pregnancy. She had seen turian infants and babies on Palaven and was literally in love with them. Jane turned to Creya and showered her with questions.

Meanwhile Kryik returned. He reached out to Josephine and pulled her up from the sofa and stood her near his side. "My friends, I have an announcement to make." Everyone looked at the couple in front of them. Nihlus cleared his throat and smiled with his toothy grin. "When I met my first human, I didn't know that this species would have among them that one person I would fall in love with. Even though our history didn't start well, I'm happy that turians and humans get along now. Especially since I want to spent my life with one. My friends, Josephine made me happiest turian alive and agreed to marry me."

"I knew it!" Shepard bounced up with hands in the air. "I. KNEW. IT. With one glimpse at that crazy-ass ring."

"Ring?" Creya asked.

"It's a human tradition that when a man proposes to woman, he puts a ring on her finger as a sign that she has agreed." Garrus explained. "I wasn't particularly appealed by it, but now… I think it's fine."

He brought up his three-fingered hand, with middle finger exposed - a silver shining band. "Who would have guessed that such a respectable turian like me would wear jewellery?"

"Shut up, you like it." Jane pushed him lightly on the knee then show her own hand. "We got matching wedding rings."

"I see. I like that," Creya said. "Turians don't do anything like this. Or rather we have matching clan markings. Hmm… maybe because we don't wear rings in the first place. You humans have more
fingers." She stood up and approached Josephine and Nihlus. "Anyway, I want to wish both of you all the luck. Nihlus..." The female turian put her hand on his mandible, then on Josephine's cheek. "Josie, you are perfect together, even though I thought it was crazy at the beginning. When I see you now, I know you two will live a happy life."

After Creya, everyone else wished luck for Nihlus and Josephine. Later they had a meal together to celebrate the engagement. When Li and Creya left, Nihlus could talk with Garrus and Jane about his meeting with Councillor Sparatus, reporting what was said. "So that's all. Sparatus will take care of everything. There is just one tiny problem - Saren. We don't know where he is. He's been off the radar for a week now. I contacted the Shadow Broker already and I'm waiting for the information. I know he left the Citadel some time ago. I last saw him when he reported back from his mission on Tuchanka. But that was like two months ago."

"I see. So what was he doing up to one week ago? Any intel?"

"Yeah. After Tuchanka he spent 2 weeks on the Citadel. Then he was on Palaven for a short time then on Taetrus, Digeris, Triginta Petra, Altakiril and other turian colonies." He opened his omni-tool and opened a map of the galaxy. "Look, this is his route."

"Last one was in the Omega Nebula... you think he...?" Garrus looked at Nihlus inquiringly, not ending his question.

"What else? I'm extremely lucky I could track him out of Council Space. I'm glad that I have men everywhere." Nihlus sighed and leaned on his desk. "Listen, lay low, don't say anything about Saren or Vyrnnus. You don't know anything. But I think you know the drill."

"Of course." Jane nodded. "But tell me, what's the deal with Saren going to the Omega Nebula?"

For a split second Garrus and Nihlus looked at the woman, shocked, then both realised she couldn't possibly know about Omega. Or Aria. It wasn't a common subject to talk about. "Well, love, there is station there. Called Omega. Nest of all the scum in this galaxy. Drug dealers, assassins, shady merchants with even shadier merchandise. It's the heart of the black market. They say that if something exists, you definitely can find it on Omega - especially if it's illegal. Every scum that lives, or lived, passed through Omega at some point."

"So if he is on Omega... can some Spectre reach him?"

"It depends." Both Nihlus and Garrus said at once, with a grim tone.

"On what?" Jane, with each passing minute, was more intrigued and interested in the subject. The desire to go to Omega increased as well.

"On HER whim." Nihlus sighed.

"Her? Oh, fuck, Nihlus, do I have to rip every answer out of you?!" The woman was becoming frustrated as well. Usually she got her answers quite fast, so waiting for Nihlus to spit out the information was unnerving.

"Aria T'Loak - a self proclaimed Pirate Queen of Omega. Well, she always says she IS Omega. So... yeah." Nihlus sat on the sofa in his study. "She runs that junk and because Omega is the nominated capital of the Terminus Systems, she runs Terminus as well. Nothing can happen there without going unnoticed by Aria. No one enters the Terminus without her knowing it first."

"So Omega is like a dark, twisted Citadel with Aria being the one and only councillor?" Jane asked herself more than the two turians beside her. "And it depends on her whim if she will help or work
"Yes. Although I don't think she will. She's a great strategist and wouldn't dabble in Saren's little revenge plot… Sit." Both Jane and Garrus sat around a small coffee table. "Aria won't risk going to war with a race that managed to fight back the turian fleet for so many years. No. She will see value in humans. I can bet my salary that she already tried to get some humans on Omega, if they aren't already there. Willingly or not."

"So she won't help Saren?"

"No, I don't think so. She's not into war."

"And how do you know all this?"

"Heh." Nihlus smirked, his mandibles twitched a few times. "Because I know her. And I am one of her biggest nuisances."

"I bet you are. Just like ours." Garrus shook his head. "Although I know for sure you don't annoy her in the same way you annoy me."

"Oh no, of course not. I'm not suicidal." Kryik started to laugh, Jane joined him seconds after. "Compared to Aria you are full of fluff and sweets." Between their laughs Nihlus overheard a knocking. He opened the doors for Josephine. "Come in, starshine, we're finished here."

"That's good, your super-extra-secret meeting took you longer this time." Josephine entered Nihlus' office carrying a tray of four steaming mugs. "Let's talk about something less classified."

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Two hours later Jane and Garrus were back at their apartment. Jane went to change her clothes to something more comfortable and then curled up on the sofa in the living area. After Garrus had changed himself and checked his online game, he sat next to her. The woman stayed quiet, buried deep in her thoughts. He called to her but when she didn't respond, he got closer to his wife and whispered straight into her ear. "What is it Jane?"

"Oh. Garrus. Uhm..." Shepard cuddled up to turian and sighed sadly. "I was thinking... and I feel like a bad person."

"Huh?"

"I don't know..." The woman snuggled even closer to the warm plated body. "I'm so happy for Josephine and Nihlus... yet... I feel terrible for saying this... I feel envious."

"Why is that?" Garrus took Jane's hand into his, caressing her smooth skin with his thumb, then circled the wedding ring around her finger. She was struggling with something, he could sense it, and see it as well as she opened and closed her mouth a few times. Even though they had lived together less than a year, he could spot all of Shepard's emotions. All the grimaces of her face and the movement of her body. He catalogued them in his mind and could almost say that he had become an expert in human emotions. That apply to Jane as well. She knew exactly what he felt with just one look at him or by the sound of his voice. "Hey." He lifted her chin with his hand, making Jane look into his eyes. "Tell me what's wrong."

"But..."

"I won't judge you, Jane. I love you. You can say anything to me."
"Ok. It's just that… Like I said, I'm so happy for them but… I envy them… that they have a normal engagement. That they will have a normal wedding. And their vows will be honest." She closed her eyes and didn't say anything for a moment again. Then, still with a heavy voice she continued. "When I remember our wedding. How we were forced. I... I know that it turned out well. Even though I know there were bad things on the way. Still... I wish we could have... I mean... if it wasn't like that."

Vakarian hugged his wife tightly. Now when she said that... he also felt a bit envious. Images of a turian ceremony flashed in his mind. Where they were on Palaven. Where Jane would wear a traditional turian wedding dress, remodelled for a human of course. Where she would get his clan markings. He saw her and himself in the Spirit Garden, where they both would give offering to the Spirits. He also saw himself in a human ceremony - that he had seen from a movie they had watched together. His wife in that long white dress... with that white material on her head, covering her face. And he would lift it... And they would be happy and smiling.

He remembered how their wedding looked, he was barely looked at her. More occupied with his friends and family. Barking at her a few words at a time. He remember her fury when they were left alone in their old apartment. How they barely spoke for over three months. Then Jane covered in blood when those bloody idiots beat her almost to death. *Which I helped greatly in the matter, fuck, how stupid I was.*

Remorse struck him. They didn't have a good start. Not like Nihlus and Josephine. Sheer luck set them on a good path. When they both realised they were meant to be together. Now when he thought about it, it was really painful. Yet he wouldn't trade the time he spent with Jane for anything else. He cherished every moment with her. He wanted to have only good moments from now on. That got him thinking. "What about... we could have a second ceremony."

"What?"

"Or even better, we could have both human and turian ceremonies. On Earth and on Palaven."

"We're already married, silly." Although Jane's eyes still emanated with sadness, a small smile crept over her face. "Besides, we won't have time for that when we start our Spectre duties."

"Oh, yeah, you may be right." The turian replied, a bit flummoxed. For a moment he was musing what he could do to make it up to Jane. He was aimlessly caressing her arm when suddenly he got it. It was so simple. He took Jane's hand and took off her wedding ring. He took off his own and placed it on a pillow. Then Garrus knelt down on one knee and took her hand. The woman was shocked at first, regarding her husband like he'd gone mad.

"Wha-"

"Hush. Just listen." Vakarian cleared his throat and spoke to Jane in an official manner. "I, Garrus Vakarian, vow to you, Jane Vakarian, that I will love you not 10 years, not 20 year, not even 30 years, but my whole life. I want to spent every moment with you. Share joys and sorrows." He took up a silver band into his hand and slowly pushed it up Jane's ring finger. "So will you make me the happiest husband in the entire galaxy, and be my wife till our last breath?"

"Oh god, Garrus." All control that Jane had over her tears broke, just like the dam during a flood. "I don't even..."

"What do you say?" He asked quietly with his low voice.

"Of course, you crazy turian. Of course I will." Shepard embraced him dearly. It took a while for her
to calm down. When she did she took Garrus' wedding ring and grabbed his hand. "I Jane Vakarian, vow to you, Garrus Vakarian, that I will love you my whole life. Won't stop even when the Council says it's okay for us to. Because fate brought us together and I don't want to separate ever again." Just like Garrus, Shepard pushed his ring onto his finger. "Will you be my husband till the day I die?"

"Yes." He said quickly and as Jane pushed his ring to the end, he pulled the woman up and took her to the bedroom.

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The three months after the unexpected engagement party passed quickly and the Vakarian's could finally take a short break between their exams. They would finish training in the Spectre Academy soon. After exams, they would be dispatched on their first mission - which was a final test before becoming fully fledged Spectres.

The alarm clock woke Jane up. She was surrounded by hot, hard-plated arms - Garrus' big warm arms kept her close to his chest. He was waking up as well, she could tell. The woman turned around to see blue eyes watching her lovingly. "Good morning, Big Guy."

"Mornin' Jane." Garrus' hand moved up, passing under the hem of Jane's shirt to reach her breast. He was all eager to ravish his wife first thing in the morning but she stopped him. "Don't be like that, love, we still have time. It's our first day off for two weeks."

"No." Jane replied and with difficulty, tried extracting herself from possessive arms. "Your parents are coming today and I don't want the whole apartment to reek of sex."

"It won't. Every room has air filters. For spirits sake, Jane."

"Listen, he-... mmm." A long blue tongue invaded Shepard's mouth, she struggled but in the end she gave in. Maybe it was even better, to forget how tired they were. How nervous they were too.

Garrus invited his parents. Truth to be told, Kalea forced the invitation when they had almost stopped calling - mostly because both Jane and Garrus simply didn't have time during their training. It would be their first meeting after the fight with Castis. A lot had happened since Castis had left the previous apartment. At first he had moved out of his house on Palaven, just to beg Kalea for forgiveness some time after. Time he had to think over what he had done. A more surprising thing happened later - he apologized to Jane and Garrus for what he did. When he did the latter, Kalea at last let him move back to their home.

Shepard found common ground with Castis and at last she could feel the family was whole again. Still talking over the vid-comm and talking in person was two different things. She was nervous. Garrus too. Unspoken questions lingered between them. Will it be okay? Should they expect anything? Will they be able to act normal after all that had happened?

A few hours later, Garrus went to the port to fetch his parents. Shepard decided to greet them at the apartment and check everything. Wiping non-existent dust or adjusting decorations. Food was almost ready, guest room prepared. Yes, everything was perfect. I hope they will like the room. And the apartment.

It didn't take long before the doors swooshed open and Kalea, with Castis, entered the apartment. All three in a good mood. Jane looked from the kitchen at her turian family and smiled. With quick steps she reached Kalea so the two of them could join their foreheads. "Mother."
"Jane, my sweet girl. I missed you." Kalea put Shepard at an arm's length away and scrutinized the human woman. "How are you? You look pale. Do you eat well? How about sleep? I bet that Spectre training is really tiring you two. Garrus I'm so ashamed. You don't take care of your wife at all."

"Mom..." Garrus felt instant regret for inviting his parents the second they stepped into the apartment.

"Shut up, son. Jane, I will take care of you, don't you worry."

"But, mother..." Jane tried to defend Garrus and explain but Kalea wouldn't let her.

"But, mother..." Jane tried to defend Garrus and explain but Kalea wouldn't let her.

"Hush, my child. I understand every-..." Castis coughed and Kalea turned over to her husband. "Oh, sorry, you can greet Jane now."

Castis just sighed and stepped to his daughter-in-law. She looked at him and he could tell she was worried, but he had changed. He spoke to her with a soft voice. "Jane, it's good to see you again."

"Father." The woman replied in Turian Common, dipping her head in greeting, the turian way. She could feel a light pat on her head. She looked at Castis again, a bit shocked, then smiled. "Welcome, Father."

"I see you got a better apartment." The older turian said while looking around. "Can you show us around?"

The smile on Shepard's face broadened even further. After she and Garrus had shown the apartment to his parents, they sat and had dinner. Later they went to the living room to talk and have dessert. An interesting thing came up during their chat. "I didn't want to talk about it through the comm, kids, but it's better if you know." Castis said, a bit worried. "Saren tried to meet with me when he was on Palaven, three months ago. I refused to talk to him."

"Saren... Yes, Nihlus said he was on Palaven." Garrus said, confirming the news. "You talked?"

"Only by vid-comm. It wasn't long chat, believe me." Castis growled. "He dared to say that my boy will go to waste and that he has a plan."

"A plan...?" Jane repeated after her in-law, sending a long glance at Garrus. Saren tried to recruit Vyrnnus and Castis too. They got lucky that, firstly, they caught their instructor almost red-handed and that Garrus' father had changed his mind. But who was actually recruited by Saren? With whom was he working?

"Yes. I don't know the details though. As I said he can shove his plan up his ass." Castis waved his hand in dismissal. "I didn't want to have anything in common with that piece of garbage anymore."

"Thank you dad." Garrus said. "Although we are in need of some intel. Still, good to have you on our side."

"Garrus, dear. Father's days in C-Sec are over. He won't play double agent for you." Kalea said, while sipping her beverage.

"I know, mom."

"If you need intel, something's up." Castis said, sending a scrutinizing gaze at both Jane and Garrus. "Care to explain?"

"Better not father. Most of things we know are classified. Just let me tell you that Sparatus isn't
pleased, he has quite a big problem with Saren." Garrus said, trying to evade his father's questions. He knew that his apartment was bug-free, except those he planted himself just in case when they were out. Still, Saren and what was he doing could cause a lot of problems. Including war but that outcome was still really far away and should be avoided at any cost. "But, if you happen to hear anything, gossip, whispers, literally anything about Saren or his plan, don't hesitate to inform me through the secure channels."

"Understood." The old turian agreed, understanding his son words. The matter was serious. Kalea coughed and changed the subject to something light.

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For the next two weeks, Jane and Garrus were taking their last exams. Vakarian seniors were staying with them, cheering them on and helping them to relax between each exam. Jane at first was afraid she wouldn't have time to revise and practice to her tests. It turned out Kalea and Castis could really support her and Garrus during tense time. Kalea was cooking and tending to the apartment, while Castis helped with revising galaxy laws and history - which he could almost remember by heart. Jane was really happy she could spend time with her in-laws and that they did everything they could to help them. Even Garrus, though he got scolded a few times by his parents, was happy in the end.

The day the results were officially published was nerve wracking. All four of them went to the Specter Academy. Garrus' parents had to stay in the large atrium because the Academy building was restricted to normal folks. Only special guests, trainees and instructors were allowed to enter most of the areas. Of course, they met Nihlus with Josephine there. "Kalea. Castis!" Kryik almost yelled.

"Nihlus. Josephine." Kalea almost purred at the sight of those two. She hadn't had time to meet with her friend's son and his fiance since she arrived on the Citadel. Nihlus was smart enough not to pester the Vakarians during the exams. "Congratulations. Jane told me everything about your engagement. And your mother is really pleased. She said she visited you not too long ago."

"Yup, she came to meet Josephine and nag me about how I don't have time for her." Nihlus said, giggling. "Castis, good to see you again. Please meet my fiancee, Josephine Clark."

They talked for a while when Jane spotted Jondum Bau in the crowd. "Garrus, Jon is here, come on." She grabbed her husband and dragged him to the salarian. "Jon, hi, how's things?"

"Good. Let's go inside, I heard that Director Oxshi and Vrynnus are giving out the results." The salarian said quickly and turned to the elevator. After a moment they were standing in front of the Director's office. Doors open, they could see the Director and their not so favourite instructor inside. An older looking asari - the academy's director - waved at Jane and Garrus from the inside.


Jane smiled at Oxshi. "Thank you, Director."

"Now, Vakarian number two. Garrus Vakarian, hmmm, 92%. Not as good as your wife but still a notable score. You two will be a hell of a duo. Uhm, trio if you add Kryik to your hellish tandem." The asari turned to her turian companion. "Do you have anything to add Vrynnus?"

"No." He almost growled. Jane could swear that she heard his teeth gnashing. "Congratulations."
Oxshi sent a long glance at the turian but said nothing. She turned to the Vakarians again then looked at the datapad she was holding. "Now. You have a meeting with the Council in two hours. You will be assigned for your first mission and a final test. As you know that mission will evaluate if the knowledge and skills you acquired during the Training and your natural talents will lead to becoming Spectres."

"Of course they will." Nihlus entered the office with a happy purr. "Oxshi, how are you?"

"Same as always, Nihlus - better without you around." The asari graced her face with a fake smile but then her features softened. "Congratulations on your new pupils. I hope you three won't disappoint me."

"Never." Nihlus bowed slightly to Director Oxshi. "Now, please excuse us. We have an appointment with the Council. Director. Vyrnus. Have a nice day." He turned toward Jane and Garrus, gesturing at the door. "Come on you two. We don't have all day."

They hadn't gone too far, not a few steps out of the office, when Jon and Instructor Lavens approached the Vakarians about the results. "We passed." Jane said with a big goofy grin on her face. "I can't believe it."

"You were one of my best, Commander." Sara said, the pride on her face was palpable. "I heard that you got the same score as Saren. And he was the best too. That is really great."

"Yes, thank you. Director said that as well." Jane agreed but felt a bit strange. Being compared to Saren who was now on the run. "Jon, good luck. Send me a message, 'kay?"

"Of course, Jane. Congratulations, you two." The salarian patted Jane on the arm then went into the Director's office.

Jane, Garrus and Nihlus went downstairs to the Academy's atrium, where Garrus' parents were waiting. A big surprise awaited Jane. She left the elevator after her husband and Nihlus, only to freeze. She couldn't believe what she saw.

"Oi, marshmallow, what's got into you? You won't hug your old pa?"

"Dad… Mom… How…?" Jane walked toward Zaeed and Karin, not believing they were actually here. "You said… you said you were leaving for Eden Prime, for a mission."

"Well, we couldn't miss your big day, silly pancake." Massani hugged his step-daughter and patted her head lightly. "And I'm really proud of you."

"How do you know?" Shepard looked at her father shocked. Not only that him and her stepmom were here, on the Citadel, in the Specter Academy but that he already knew that she had passed.

"Well, I'm a fucking awesome dad who knows this and that." Zaeed bared his teeth in a proud smile. "Still it was goddamn hard to get those imbeciles to give us a week long vacation. Like I ever ask for 'em! They always forcefully make me have a break! And now I almost had to ask! Politely!"

"Damn." Jane replied to the revelations. "You're great." She turned to Karin and hugged her dearly. "Mom, we did it."

"I knew you two would darling. I just knew." Chakwas said, looking at Jane with pride and a bit of fear. "I hope you will get a good medic onboard, I'm so scared for you."

"Mom…" Jane laughed it off. She knew that her parents were sometimes worried shitless. She
understood that, yet she was a soldier, she risked her life on daily basis. Of course being a Commander in the Alliance Military during peace times was rather boring. During the First Contact War there were a few occasions that she had almost lost her life. Still she managed to live and prove her skills. Being a secret agent for the Council, dabbling in really dangerous things, hunting people down that are a threat to everything that lives - that was a whole new level of danger. "Um, so where are your things? We have a while to take your bags to the apartment."

"We're good, marshmallow." Zaeed said and patted Castis on the arm. The turian looked surprised at Massani but didn't say anything. "Mr. and Mrs. Vakarian helped us. Nihlus contacted us when we got permission to come to the Citadel."

"Oh, I see." Garrus hugged Chakwas and shook hands with Zaeed. "So it was planned behind our backs. You see that Jane?"

"Yeah. Still, hell of a surprise. I love it."

xXx

Later everyone went to the Presidium. Nihlus found a nice restaurant for the Vakarians, Josie and Garrus' parents then he, Jane and Garrus could go meet the Councillors. When they had reached the Citadel Tower, Nihlus guided them to Sparatus' office. The three Councillors were waiting. "Hello, everyone!" The cheerful turian marched in with a happy purr. "I brought you my pupils."

"Nihlus, can you behave for once?" Sparatus growled and disregarded his Spectre. He turned to Jane and Garrus. "Mr. and Mrs. Vakarian, long time no see."

"Councillors." Both Vakarians dipped their heads in the turian fashion.

The three councillors sat behind a big glass table in the corner of Sparatus' office. Sparatus on the left, Valern on the right, with Tevos in the middle. The asari smiled and spoke first. "We are really pleased with your scores, both of you did a great job. Now with the Academy's recommendation you will have to pass the last test. Our examination in the field. There is no place for re-takes. You won't get a second chance. If you fail, you won't become Spectres."

"They won't fail." Nihlus replied with a smug grin.

Councillor Valern snorted at the remark. Tevos only smirked, knowing Nihlus' ways but Sparatus got angry again. "Don't be so confident, Kryik. It may lead you to failure some day."

"Dear Sparatus, sweetheart as always." Kryik replied and sat opposite the turian councillor. "If I hadn't seen them in action already, trust me, I wouldn't be so damn sure."

"Still, keep your remarks to yourself, Nihlus." The asari Councillor said with a bit of a glare at Nihlus. "You three will go to Virmire. Our intel found that there is secret breeding facility, a krogan breeding facility tha-..."

"What?!" Kryik stood up from his chair, his voice loud and angry. "Since when did you know?"

"Since an hour ago, Kryik, calm the fuck down." Sparatus grit his teeth in anger. "We wanted you three to go on a different mission but this popped up and it must be you who goes to Virmire. Because of Wrex and Mordin."

"Nihlus, as a Council, we will hold up our end of the bargain. Even if the salarian Dalatrass is against it." Valern said firmly, cutting through the drama. "Your task is to get to Virmire and find out what's going on there. We don't have much intel for you three beside the location of the facility and
our recon team. They sent a distress signal yesterday and we got it an hour ago. Any questions?"

For a moment there was silent as the Council waited for any questions. Jane tilted her head from side to side then asked. "To sum up, basically we're heading into the unknown. There is a breeding facility, the recon team sent a distress signal so we can expect heavy resistance for sure. If it's a krogan facility then we can expect krogans."

"They breed krogans, yes. But it's better to assume that there is far more than just krogans there." Nihlus responded. He stood up and started to pace nervously. "I don't think it's only krogans there… mainly, because I haven't seen many krogan scientists in my life. As Wrex once told me, if you ask a krogan what he'd like better, find a cure for the genophage or fight in a bar, he will fight in a bar."

"My kind of boys…" Jane giggled. "Do you have anything else for us, Councillors?"

"No. You should have a week to prepare yourselves but this is of the utmost urgency. You will leave tomorrow. All the data will be sent to your encrypted profiles once you board the ship." Tevos stood up. "Nihlus, Mr and Mrs Vakarian, good luck. Dismissed."

xXx

Yay, mission :D please comment and give me some feedback. It was really long since I wrote and I don't know if I didn't get too rusty.
Chapter 18

UPDATE (30.03.2017): Thanks to Erin Primette from I got to know that Garrus' father's name is Castis and I decided to change Akteon to his canon name. Although I write AU fic I try to stick to as much canon stuff as I can. So that's it. Thanks again, Erin for your message :)

Behold! I present to y'all brand new, shiny chapter of Marry me...! I hope you liked last chapter.

I had real fun writing this one, really.

If you have any questions or sth, pls check my tumblr. Comments will be appreciated :D

Please enjoy! Ahoy!

xXx

Jane, Garrus and Nihlus quickly left Sparatus' office. On the way out Jane called her salarian friend, Jondum Bau. "Jon, how did you do?"

"I've passed too." The holographic face of the salarian smiled at Jane. "Can we meet later?"

"That's why I'm calling, Jon." Jane started to explain while almost running to the elevator. "We can't. Council gave us an urgent mission. We're supposed to have a few days off before going but the plan changed. We have to leave tomorrow. Sorry."

"Oh. That's fine. But you two must schedule some time when you are next free." He waved his three fingered hand. "See you soon. Bau out."

"Okay, now let's grab our folks and hurry." Jane looked at Garrus and Nihlus and suddenly she felt really excited. "Gosh, guys, we're really doing it. I can't wait to kick some ass with you both."

"It won't be just us three, Jane." Nihlus said, his mandibles twitching in a turian smile. "But I won't say anything, tomorrow you two will get one hell of a surprise. Now, before we join everyone, let's go to the Specter Requisitions, you two need some gear. And then to your apartment. I need to explain a few things."

"Okay." They both agreed. Soon they reached Specter Requisitions in the Specter Office. Everything was located next to various Embassies. Jane didn't really want to be there, not when she could easily be seen by Udina. They entered the office and reached the console. Nihlus searched for Jane's profile.

"Ah, yes, everything is working." He said while scrolling through the available equipment. "Oh, I see that everything is ready. Jane, check this out."

Jane stepped toward the console and looked at the personalised armour that she would use during the missions. Black armor with red and white stripes and an N7 logo. The specs were truly amazing. She received the newest, high end gear. Motorized joints, light but durable materials, high shield capacity. Her helmet had a customised visor that could be connected to her omni-tool. "That's... awesome, Nihlus."

"There's more, Jane. Check this out."
Jane gasped and squealed in shock and happiness. "Nooooooo! You didn't."

"What is it?" Garrus checked the screen and growled. "You know I am her husband and I should
please my woman that way… not you?"

"Don't worry, pal, it's the council's order."

"Ah, yes, the usual excuse. Council's order." Garrus sighed. "Quit the bullshit, Nihlus."

"Can I see it?" Jane turned with a big smile on her face. She got the not yet released, modified Black
Widow sniper rifle. She was excited beyond imagination.

"Of course. But first let's check what Garrus got." Nihlus found Garrus' profile and found his gear.
"Check this out my friend. I didn't want to please only Jane. You are my bestie after all."

Garrus glanced at the screen and instantly his eyes widened and his mandibles spread. He also was
did you get your hands on that piece of perfection?"

"I ruffled my contacts here and there, when I found out they would release it soon, I decided that
Sparatus should make a move. I got myself one too, so don't think you're some kind of special turian
out there." Nihlus moved to the console again and fumbled with buttons. After a quick search he
found what he wanted. "Ah, there you are."

"Is this for real?" Garrus was looking at the holo-screen, speechless. He had to admit that Nihlus
really did it this time. No shitting. "HMWSR Master Line of Sniper Rifles and additional upgrades
for both of you. HMWA Master Line of Assault Rifles and HMWP Master line of Pistols, I managed
to get you access to one of the best. Go to those consoles and log in for the first time. Then just tap
what you want and tomorrow it will be waiting for you on the ship."

When Jane had finished she turned to Nihlus again. "So where is it?" She was so excited. Her old
Black Widow was good, she loved that weapon but she knew that there was at least three newer
versions. To have one that wasn't quite released yet, that was great. "I want to see it."

"You can even try it. There's a shooting range here." Nihlus guided Jane toward the doors on the
left, where the storage room was placed. They saw other doors and the shooting range behind them.
"Just log in on that console and your things will be moved here in a moment."

Jane did as she was told and soon she was holding her beautiful new weapon. She checked the
thermal clips and scope, then brought it up to her eye. Shepard went to the shooting range, the light
turned instantly on and a target appeared. In a matter of seconds she had aimed and shot.

"Impressive." Nihlus walked toward Jane with his omni-tool opened. "Only 1.4 seconds from aim to
shoot. And your aim's 100% accurate. I'll check your aim when we get back. Now, we have to
go. Come on."

They moved from the Citadel Tower to the Presidium quickly. Not wasting time for anything.
Especially reporters that, when they spotted the Vakarians with Nihlus, tried to conduct interviews.
Kryik stopped the reporters by dismissing everyone with a Spectre business excuse. They reached
the restaurant where their parents and Josephine were. "Come on folks, we gotta hurry." Nihlus
pulled a confused Josephine up. He waved at the asari waitress. "Add it to my bill."

"As you say, sir." The asari bowed, not bothering to ask for Nihlus' name.

"Nihlus, what's happened?" Josie asked, Kalea and Castis wanting to know also. Judging by Zaeed
and Karen's faces, they were shocked too.

"Let's go to Jane and Garrus' apartment. We will explain everything. Hurry."

xXx

"So what's this fuss about?" Kalea asked when the apartment doors closed. She grabbed Nihlus and stopped him in his track. "Is it about a mission? You're going on a mission, right?"

"Yes. Me, Garrus and Jane have to go earlier than expected. Something popped up and we have to sort things out." Nihlus sighed. "You know I can't tell you much, but shit got serious and I need to take care of it. As always." He approached a confused Josephine and placed his forehead on hers. "Sorry, love. We have to go. Two, three weeks and we're back."

"It's okay, Nihlus. It's your job."

"Now, everyone, please excuse us, I need a moment with Jane and Garrus." He gestured with his head toward the office and the three of them went inside. Leaving everyone in the livingroom.
Nihlus sat comfortably on big chair and again, sighed. "Shit."

"And?" Garrus asked, looking at his friend and waiting.

"I didn't expect that outcome. We were suppose to find some doctor... but now..." The turian looked back at Garrus. "The truth is... we're working to cure the genophage."

"Oh... WHAT?!!" Garrus stood up. He couldn't believe what Nihlus had just said. Curing the Genophage? Was he serious? "They were a threat, Nihlus. Do your homework."

"Yeah, the hierarchy and Salarian Union spread this lie and it's really convenient for everyone to believe it." Nihlus spat out. He stood up and stepped toward Garrus, growling. "Wrex is my best buddy just like you and he is a krogan. You know Wrex, don't you? Saved your sorry ass once."

"Well, yeah, but..."

"No buts, Garrus. And just to point out that I'm right, the hierarchy called humans stupid and dangerous... just sayin'." Then he pointed at Jane, who had listened to their conversation with a brow raised. "Oh, look, here is your wife Garrus. Guess what! She's a human." He finished sarcastically.

"Wow, girls." Shepard smirked. "I like that hint of sexual tension between you but quit the crap. Both of you, sit." She growled and the two turians sat down, afraid of the look the woman just sent them. "First of all, Garrus, what the fuck?" Her husband wanted to say something but seeing her raised hand and angry eyes, he decided to stay quiet. "They are a dying race, honey. It's murder. And no one can convince me otherwise. The turians and salarians sterilised the entire species. Which, watch out, helped you lot to exterminate another species. That's a great way to say 'thank you', isn't it?" The woman walked toward the window, lights from the sky cars moved in the distance. For a moment she looked at the view, to calm herself. She sometimes mused about humans being wiped out. She feared it. Her husband was in a better position - turians were a council species. They had their own councillor, who worked for the best interests of his people. "So what does a breeding facility have to do with the genophage?"

"Krogan breeding facility, Jane." Nihlus opened his omni-tool and showed them pictures on the holo-screen. "Look. These are from krogan breeding facilities I have found during my missions." Photos of half grown krogan babies, deformed and mutated, flashed in front of them. Jane tried to look but quickly turned her eyes. "They struggle. Try to find a way. This isn't right, Garrus. All those
mothers that miscarry or give birth to dead babies. A while ago, when me and Wrex found the first one… and by first one we say about our own experience… hell only knows how many are still out there… anyway…"

"It's okay, Nihlus." Jane silently moved to her friend and patted his back. "I understand…"

"Yes. Like I said, when we raided our first facility, we were… shocked to say at least." He continued with a grim tone. It was visible he was struggling to contain himself, his clenched hands, shaking - all that was more than enough to know that it was serious, it was bad. "Those scientists, whether paid or not, were conducting horrible experiments. Cloning was the tamest of 'em all."

"Cloning?"

"Yeah. You will see. We will go to my personal hell. Again." Nihlus leaned on the window frame. Staying silent for a while. "Tomorrow, onboard, I'll send you all the pics I have. Not to torment you but so you know what we're dealing with. I puked the first time so I'd like to spare you that, at least."

"Don't need to. I had a mission at a human cloning facility. I know what we may see there… or smell. God, the stench." She wrinkled her nose. "I remember the stench of decomposing bodies. What a great start… first mission and we have something like this. Do you understand now, Garrus?"

The turian was still looking at the pictures, not moving, not saying anything. Just watching as pictures on the holo-screen passed, one after another. Jane spoke to him, but he was in some kind of stupor. He didn't even notice that Nihlus had turned it off. When he felt a cool touch on his opened mandibles, he snapped out of it. "Wha-? Jane…"

"Garrus, it's okay baby." Jane smiled sadly. "Is it… first time for you?"

"First time for what?"

"First time seeing… this…" Jane swallowed heavily. It wasn't the best subject to talk about but she was genuinely concerned for her husband. The impact that those pictures made on him. "You have to overcome it, Garrus. We have a mission."

"Yes. Yes, you're right. Sorry." Vakarian said and nodded then turned to Nihlus. An apologising hum erupted from his sub-vocals. "I'm sorry, my friend. I didn't know, didn't realise…"

"Yeah, I know Garrus. You were misled by the hierarchy for a long time. Even though I told you to not to trust them." Nihlus sat back on the chair next to the table and swung on it from one side to another. "The plan is: we go there, check what are they up to, collect all data, destroy everything and come back. Is that clear?"

"Yup." Jane nodded. "What about survivors?"

"If there are any, we will think about them at the time." Nihlus raised his hand to shut Jane up, as he saw the big frown on her face. "Before you start to protest, just listen to me. Trust my experience here, friend. Usually there are no survivors and even if they are unlucky to still be alive… well, I end their suffering."

"But if…"

"We will check everything and try to do our best, Jane." He said firmly. "Believe me, I would be happy to find out that there is someone whom I could help. Now, I want you to pack only necessities. I have big room as the captain of the ship but… I'll use the XO's room, you two will be
privileged to take the Captains. From tomorrow you two are my XOs. Jane number one, Garrus number two."

"Wh-...?" Jane tried to ask why she would be first XO but Nihlus interrupted her mid sentence, explaining that he had already worked with Garrus. Although it was during the war. "Okay, if that is your decision."

"Second thing, tomorrow I want you at the Spectre's Docking Bay at 15:00. We're leaving the Citadel at 15:30. Then at 16:30 we will have a meeting with the crew. Is that clear?"

Jane and Garrus just nodded. Nihlus fluttered his mandibles and smiled, as best a turian could. "Jane, I almost forgot. Here." The turian threw a data chit toward Shepard, which she caught effortlessly. "Data you asked me about. Now, as your dad is here, you can just give it to him."

"You got something?" She asked, not looking at Nihlus but the chit instead. She flipped it in her hands a few times.

"Well, if you know anything about a terrorist organisation like Cerberus then yes, I did find something." The woman snapped her head up and regarded Kryik with wide eyes. "And before you ask, there's not much but the evidence is solid. Udina was financed by them and they exchanged a few secured messages."

"Shit." Jane exclaimed as she turned to look at the data chit. Suddenly heavy in her grasp. It did contain a bomb. News that were able to destroy a lot, but also prevent a lot. Had Cerberus resurrected? Everyone believed they had been wiped out not long after Zaeed found Jane in the debris of the destroyed research facility. It was more than two decades ago. "Okay. I will talk with pa."

"Now, I think we can join your parents and my fiancee. We don't have much time."

xXx

Nihlus and Josephine spent just an hour longer in the apartment, then he rushed out with Josephine to take care of everything. Jane and Kalea cooked a meal and everyone sat at the table to celebrate Garrus and Jane's success in the Spectre Academy. Later Jane and Zaeed went into the office where, just a few hours before, Nihlus had explained what the mission was about. She sat heavily behind the computer, locking down the data stream and securing everything. "Pa, I have something for Admiral Hackett. I'll show you it now. You will explain everything on my behalf."

"Okay, pup, shoot away."

"The thing is, pa, Hackett ordered me to investigate Udina." Jane explained while opening the certain file. "For me alone it would have been extremely difficult but I got backup. Nihlus hacked Udina's computer. He extracted the data we need. And here lies the problem - Udina was financed by Cerberus."

Zaeed regarded Jane completely dumbfounded. Muttering to himself and shaking his head. He didn't want to believe. He saw what Cerberus was capable of. They wiped them out of existence. Cerberus couldn't exist. "No. This is wrong. It can't be, Jane, we took them out."

"Nihlus managed to trace who the original message was from." Shep opened the image of a human man. "He called himself Illusive Man, but I found his real name - Jack Harper. He was a commando in General Williams unit, stationed on Shanxi."

"Fuck." Massani closed his eyes and rubbed them with his hand. "Double fuck. Shanxi was…"
humanity's biggest success and mistake."

"Yeah, I heard. I wasn't there but…"

"You know who they killed there?" When Jane shook her head, he sighed. "A turian general - Desolas Arterius."

"Shit."

"Yeah, anyway, I shouldn't tell that to you pumpkin but I'll be damned if you don't know the whole goddamn truth." Zaeed sat more comfortably, he looked at his hands while explaining.

The First Contact War started when humans opened Relay 314 - the turians almost decimated them, only one sole ship managed to escape. And they escaped to Shanxi, where they gathered their forces and pushed the turians back. Of course from that point on, the war escalated rapidly. Also Shanxi was the one and only human colony that was occupied by turians during the First Contact War. And that's where Desolas Arterius died. Which lead to Saren hating humans. And Jack Harper was involved.

During the turian siege on Shanxi, General Desolas had to secure a valuable prototype of a weapon. He failed. The turian weapon was seized by Harper's commandos while General Williams surrendered, only to attack the turians again. While the turian general was being interrogated, the humans made a mistake and Arterius broke free. With a last courageous effort, the turian destroyed the prototype and was killed in action. It was Jack Harper and his squad that led to Desolas' escape but he took the blame on himself and… vanished before he could be court martialed.

"But how could he be involved with Udina?" Jane asked when Zaeed finished his story. "He had to be with Cerberus long before the War."

"That may be a goddamn thing, Janey." He paused, thinking. "He somehow laid his hands on all of Cerberus' resources. As far as I know, a lot were involved in financing Cerberus. The siege on Shanxi was, like what? 6 years ago? Jack Harper vanished half a year after the battle but the war was still ongoing. Udina's career starter around 4 years ago. Before that time he was no one."

"That means Harper had 2 years to organize and plan everything."

"Yeah. Fuck it Jane. I had planned to stay on the Citadel for a few days, get to know the goddamn piece of junk. I thought we would spend time together but you have this goddamn mission and I have to go to Steven." Zaeed frowned deeply, he was supposed to be on vacation, he was supposed to spend time with his daughter and her husband. And Karin of course - but that hellish woman was his heart, he couldn't live without her.

"Sorry to disappoint Dad but life's a shit. And we both know first hand about that. At least we are those who make it better for others. Okay, I'm going to pack my stuff." Jane patted Zaeed on the arm and left him to his brooding.

xXx

They laid in the darkness. Well, not entirely as dimmed lights in the corners of their bedroom prevented complete darkness. Shepard liked it that way, it made her feel secure and warm in the night, although Garrus' body temperature was also helping with that… with his arms always wrapped protectively around her. She got used to it. Now they laid next to each other. Sleep didn't want to come.

"You asleep?" She asked quietly.
"Nah." Garrus replied in hushed voice. "I think I'm too excited about tomorrow's mission. At last we're going to actually do something."

"What do you mean?" She nudged his side and Garrus growled playfully. "What, were we doing nothing this past year and a half? Just lazing about and fucking occasionally?"

"No, I don't... ugh..." The turian turned towards his wife. "What I mean... is we're going on a mission, Jane. We'll be working in the field. Together. I can't wait to see you in that sexy armour, killing the bad guys."

"Aww, sweetheart." Jane giggled and pushed Garrus to lie on his back again. She gracefully moved to straddle him. "You know... when I remember how you looked in that blue armor of yours... back during the war. Mmm, I'm all for devouring you here and now."

"You know, as we can't sleep..." His three-fingered hands traveled up Shepard's thighs, scraping them with his filed talons. "We are..." His hands brushed past her panties to dive under her sleeping t-shirt, continuing their journey to their goal, just a few inches above. "... excited and you just said you're all eager and ready."

"But you're not in that armour..." Jane replied, feigning sadness.

He pulled himself up and whispered into her ear, his mandible brushing against her reddened cheek. "We can improvise."

"But you're parents..." The woman gasped when Garrus' hands reached their destination, pinching her nipples. "... my parents."

"We are married..." Garrus growled lustfully, his already hard cock was pressing against her wet panties. "And we're going to be really busy soon." He quickly pulled her t-shirt up and off her to discard it on the floor next to their big bed. "I need you, Jane, I need you so much."

Shepard just smiled and kissed the turian. Her crazy, pervy turian, that couldn't lie next to her without getting a boner. She adored him too, couldn't imagine her life without him by her side. His nuzzling her neck first thing in the morning, overprotectiveness, all the small things he did for her - like remembering how she liked her coffee or taking care of her weapon collection. Well about the latter, she also knew he wanted to get to know human guns, appreciating their construction and specs.

They had fought, of course. Over small and big things. But in the end, they always managed to get things clear between them. It wasn't simple, not at all. They were from different backgrounds, not to mention they were different species, she was levo, he - dextro. And they worked everything out, since the first fight - when Jane learned that Garrus had watched her being beaten. But that was in the past. How she couldn't love Garrus Vakarian? She meant the world to him, and Jane felt the same.

Shepard watched him lovingly, as he lowered his head and nuzzled her breasts then licked each in turn. Her hands traveled up to his fringe and to the back of his head - he purred from the sensation. "You won't do anything stupid, will ya?"

The turian stopped playing with her nipples and looked up. "What? What do you mean?"

"I mean... your overprotectiveness, Garrus." She caught his face in her hands and looked into his eyes. "We watch our backs but we watch our own sorry asses too. Okay?"

"Okay." He agreed. "I know, Jane. I know we have to be professional here."
"Good." She purred. Jane cocked her head to the side and placed her lips on his neck, kissing, licking and biting. Shepard moved back a bit, her hand patted Garrus on his fringe. "Good boy."

"You little…" He feigned annoyance and pushed his wife onto her back, one hand locking her hands above her head. The turian, with his free hand, stripped her out of her pants and clumsily pulled his own underwear halfway down.

Jane loved the feeling of his cock stretching her entirely, brushing against all her sweet spots. Turian hands roamed over her body. She could only grab his thighs and claw at them as waves of pleasure washed through her. "Garrus, please… more…" She gasped.

"No." He simply replied and pulled her on him again. Holding her by her bottom, he moved her up and down on him, now slowly. "Just once let me have some time with you…"

"But, ahh… but we don't have much time…" She gasped, moaning between words. Fingernails dug into the hide on his neck. Jane was so close yet he denied her her climax. "Why you do… mmm… this to me?"

"Because only I know what face you make when I do this. Because I find it incredibly sexy when you're almost there... and it gets you mad and crazy… and needy… and sexy." Garrus licked the woman's neck from her collarbone up to her ear. He was close too. Feeling her squeeze him with her inner muscles, her legs around him. She tried to move her hips, urge him to speed up, but he just gripped her harder, controlling the situation. "Just let me…"

"Mhm…" Jane just couldn't and didn't want to say no to him. Not this time. They're going on a mission. There won't be much time for pleasures. "Just this one time…"

"You always say that…" He whispered in her ear. Feeling her shiver as he did. They swayed back and forth, slowly. Not caring for the world outside, for the upcoming mission, for anything. Just this one turian male and this one human female. Not caring what the whole universe would say about what they were doing now. What their feelings were toward each other, or that it was weird to have an interspecies relationship. Well, after more than one and a half years of marriage, most of the people they knew or they met, had gotten used to their marriage and the bond that Jane and Garrus shared.

Garrus scraped lightly at Jane's back, making it almost agonisingly slow and sensitive, her sensation reaching sky high. He could pinpoint exactly when he should stop, not to overdo his attempt to overload her nervous system - when she bit her lips, when they were almost white, clawing into his plates or hide with inhuman strength - that was when he knew, that playtime was over. Now it was time for serious business.

But he liked one thing about the change of pace - her surprise. Garrus never indicated in any way that he was going to toss her on the bed, grab her legs like two levers and pound into her furiously. The turian simply loved her squeal of shock, and screams of pleasure - now stifled with her hand. He allowed it, this time - after all their parents were in their rooms, just outside their bedroom.

Garrus felt her climax, as always. Turian females didn't have muscles like that down there, they couldn't squeeze like human females. With a hushed roar he finished, spilling hard inside her. He collapsed to the side of Jane, breathing heavily. For a moment he laid there, basking in the afterglow, just nuzzling Shepard's neck. "I love you, Jane."

"Mmm, I know, Big Guy." She giggled and kissed Garrus on the nose. "I love you too."

Garrus just fanned his mandibles in content. That's what he loved, good sex and then just looking at
Jane, saying that he loves her and seeing that she loves him back. To see how she adores him. Watch her reddened neck, her chest rise and fall from the exertion, small beads of sweat, and that sated smile - only for him to see. He would love to stay like that forever but it always had to end. Jane kissed him on his mouth plates as always and went to the bathroom to wash herself. He could only look at her gracious back and ass until she covered it in the bathrobe. One last smile - for him - and she vanished behind the doors to the bathroom.

He laid alone and regarded the ceiling. *Even so, I'll do everything to protect you, Jane.*

xXx

"You can stay here as long as you want, Pa." Jane said when she placed her duffle bag on the couch. She was all ready to leave on the mission.

"We have a shuttle to Earth tomorrow. With the shit you gave me I have to hurry, muffin." Zaeed replied and looked around the apartment. "You sure that it's safe to leave everything here?"

"Yup. Garrus installed the newest security protocols. Courtesy of Nihlus." Jane smiled and gestured to the glass wall next to the entrance of the apartment. "Besides, we've got an explosive glass of wall."

"You shittin' me…" Zaeed approached the glass wall and touched it, not believing his daughter's words. "It's explosive?"

"Yup." Garrus came down too. "One man's decorative glass wall fixture is another man's explosive glass wall fixture. I had to beg Jane to install it for over a month."

"Garrus, I'm truly proud of you." Both men shook hands in unison. "You have to tell me how to get one of these."

"Over my dead body." Karin exited the kitchen and frowned at her partner. "If you're going to blow up our apartment, I'm leaving. I heard Kahoku has a thing for me."

"Don't bring up that piece of crap, love. He's not worthy of you. No one is!" Zaeed was visibly shrunken, though maintained an angry tone. "I... I won't let you leave."

Garrus' mother decided to intervene too. She touched the glass carefully then turned to her son. "I don't think that keeping explosives in your apartment is the wisest choice." She moved back and regarded the glass again. "I thought it was only a decoration... but now..."

"Don't worry, mother."

"With the entire apartment." Garrus' mother replied, shaking her head.

"No. When the protocols activate, a small biotic field will trap the unwanted guest inside and then the glass will blow him up." The turian explained, very proud of himself. "That way the doors and the apartment remain intact. After the explosion, the front doors will lock themselves until I or Jane prompt the opening sequence. Until then, the whole apartment is sealed within a biotic field."

"How much did you spend on all this security?" Castis asked when Garrus had finished his explanations. "This is not some cheap security system. This is a high-end security system."
"Well, I have to say that... we got it for free."

"Lucky bastard." Zaeed started to laugh. "I'm impressed."

"Thank you, Zaeed." Garrus was glad that his father-in-law liked him. They always had good conversations. "Well, we have to hurry. Wish us luck while we're leaving."

xXx

Jane felt a bit down that she couldn't spend more time with her parents and Garrus' parents, still she was also very excited about the impending mission. She wondered how it would be... after all, it had been more than one and a half years since she had been on a battlefield. Shepard saw that Garrus was nervous and excited as well - the twitches of his mandibles and that glow in his eyes said everything.

When they had reached the entrance to the Spectre's Docks, Nihlus was already waiting for them there. He was standing there with a smug toothy grin, looking at them with the same glow in his eyes as Garrus. "Hi, folks! I like that you two came here early."

"The sooner we start, the better." Jane said and patted the red-plated turian on the arm. "Let's get going with this shit."

"Come on. I said I had surprise for you two..." Nihlus' mandibles twitched, he paused to make his speech more dramatic. And for the scanners to scan the three of them. "And I can't wait any longer to show it to you rascals." They entered hangar number S3 - Jane and Garrus froze where they stood. Inside was brand new, shiny ship. "I knew you would be amazed. I was, trust me."

He walked around them and pointed with his hand. "Look at this beauty. This piece of art will be our home while on our missions. CCSV Normandy SR-1 - that's her name. It's a joint project from the turian hierarchy and the human Alliance, with the sponsorship of the Citadel Council, of course. They made it so we three could have the neatest spaceship to rock the galaxy." Kryik was beaming with pride, excitement, happiness and rainbows at the same time. "Whatcha' thinkin'?"

"Wow." Jane said when she sated her eyes with this beautiful sight, yes she couldn't pilot ships but she certainly was a sucker for any military equipment. The Normandy was beautiful... Wait, what? Normandy? "Why Normandy, Nihlus?"

"Oh, well, I was reading about human history around the time they called me to ask about the name..." Nihlus smirked, fanning his brow plates. He hugged Jane from one side, leaving a speechless Garrus behind. "A little token of appreciation for humans, I suppose."

"Uh-huh." Jane looked at the ship again. "It's getting better and better with each minute."

"Ha! Don't worry, my dear, it's just the warm up from my side." Nihlus replied cryptically. And gestured toward the airlock, now opened and welcoming. "Shall we?"

Jane smiled and turned to her husband, who was still regarding the ship with awe in his blue eyes. "Oi, Big Guy, we don't have all whole day, you know?"

"Oh, yes, let's go."

They went inside, when they entered Nihlus gestured to the left. "Here we have a cockpit. I recruited one of the best pilots I could find. Soon you two will meet the crew." They passed down a short corridor leading to, as Nihlus explained, the CIC - the Combat Information Center. When Jane entered the area, she froze on the spot.
"Attention! Commander on board!"

xXx

And... the cliffhanger. Sorry ;d
Hello again ^^ I brought to you long chapter to read. Big thanks to Razzberry who despite lots of work had time to edit it.

Mass Effect Andromeda will be released in 2 weeks. Are you as hyped as I am? :D I wonder who will be nice LI for my Ryder. Maybe Jaal? What about you?

Ah, Virmire mission. I liked that one a lot. Especially with leaving Kaidan to his heroic death… I know, I'm terrible person.

Enjoy!

xXx

"Attention! Commander on board!" It was Ashley Williams, who yelled the command. Eight humans straightened up and saluted to their Commander. There they were, some of her former crew, standing in front of Jane Shepard, saluting.

First from the right was Ashley Williams, then Jeff 'Joker' Moreau, Jack, Kasumi, James Vega and engineers Gabriella 'Gabby' Daniels and Kenneth Donnelly, and Samantha Traynor at the end - her crew, the men she had fought and flew with for so long. "At ease." Jane said with a cracking voice, smiling at them. "All of you… why did nobody say anything?" The woman descended the stairs and approached her people then turned to Jack. "Especially you! We talked two days ago!"

"Ha! Surprise, Shep!" Jack replied and hugged her friend. "It's gonna be awesome!"

"Yeah." She replied and looked at Joker. "So you are the best pilot in the universe, huh?"

"You thought otherwise? I'm deeply hurt, Commander." Joker grabbed his chest over his heart and feigned pain. "There is no one as good as me.

Jane wanted to talk to everyone but Nihlus materialised next to her and urged her to walk. "Okay, okay you will have time to chit chat later. Lieutenant Moreau, we're leaving in 40 minutes."

"Aye aye, Sir." Joker saluted and limped back to the cockpit.

"Ground teams will have a meeting with the Commanders in 90 minutes. Everyone else, dismissed." Nihlus said to Jane's crew then pulled the woman. "Now let's continue our tour." They walked behind the CIC to the doors leading to the elevator.

"See ya guys!" She waved at the humans then fell in with Nihlus who had moved on further. "Why? How?"

"Because you need your people, Jane." Kryik fanned his mandibles and grinned in his turian fashion. The turian turned left, passing the elevator, and lead them to the left doors. "Because you need them, because you trust them. Every Specter needs a good, trustworthy crew. And you need yours. That's why I contacted the Alliance HQ and told them to send 4 soldiers. We got two engineers for the core drive from your former crew… after all it's of human design. Oh and the Comm Specialist, she will also be our yeoman."

"And Joker? He has… a condition..."
"I saw what he is capable of. And he's good with math too. We don't have to worry about anything with such a pilot." Nihlus said then stopped, getting all serious. "In the turian military it would be unacceptable to have disabled staff, but luckily for us, we don't belong to the turian military. We can solely decide about our crew, and Lieutenant Moreau is a great and skilled pilot."

Jane nodded understandingly. Nihlus was right - Joker was a great pilot. He knew by heart all the physics and math behind relay jumps or FTL speed, drive cores, and all the things needed to fly all kinds of ships. She smiled at Garrus. "Do you believe that, Big Guy?"

"It's hard to process right now… to be honest." The turian sighed heavily, opening and closing his mandibles to calm himself. "Let's follow Nihlus and just expect anything."

"Don't talk like I'm not here." He lead them through the corridor, gesturing toward the first doors on the left side. "This is the Research Lab or rather Mordin's lair, so watch out. He got himself new shiny equipment and is all eager to dissect you. Come on let's go from here." A few steps further they came to a room with a big table in the center. "Here you'll find the debriefing and communication room. We have a quantum entanglement based communications array, so we can hang up on the Council in real time."

"You did that? Seriously?" Garrus wasn't amused. Hanging up while talking to superiors wasn't a good way to do your job in his opinion. "Nah, don't bother to answer. I know you did."

"Yeah, and a couple of times. Not my fault their bullshit is killing me slowly." All three laughed for a moment then Nihlus proceeded with the tour. Leading them to the Tech Lab. "Here we have the Tech Lab along with Weaponry. As far as I know you two, you will be stayin' here modding the shit out of your rifles."

"He's good." Garrus just simply said. His eyes shone bright at the thought of new mods and raising the specs of his Krysae.

"Yes he is." Jane brushed the workbench with the tips of her fingers. Marveling at how much her military life would be different from that of a Spectre. She had access to high-end, state-of-art equipment in the Alliance, but here it was even more advanced.

After that Nihlus lead them to the elevator. A short ride one level up and they were standing in front of the Captain's Quarters. "And that will be your second home from now on. It should be mine but I'll pass. You two will accomodate here just fine and I will take the bit smaller, XO's quarter."

"You sure? What if you decide to bring Josie on board?"

"Yup, I'm positive. I want to keep Josephine away from Spectre business. Too dangerous."

Jane and Garrus just tossed their duffle bags on the sofa and left. They would have time for checking the quarter later. Now Nihlus wanted to show them the rest of the ship. Quick ride 2 decks down and they were on the Crew Deck. Nihlus left the elevator and started his tour guide duty again. "Those doors on the far right lead to the Starboard Observation lounge and on the other side, Port Observation lounge - places to chill, drink, read or talk, whatever you like. Those doors lead to crew quarters, we got places for nearly 80 people. Now we only have 29 crew members. 9 humans, 15 turians, and one member from other species - a salarian, a krogan, a quarian and an asari. Oh and a drell of course. Do we have to count one geth?"

"You got geth here too?" Garrus asked, interested in the matter. He knew the quarian that Nihlus got for his crew, Tali'zorah vas Rannoch, but didn't know she had actually brought a geth into Council Space. Creating AI was against the law, luckily for quarians they lived outside Council Space, in the
Terminus Systems. They could do whatever they liked, and it turned out that after they created the geth, their lives became much simpler. Of course 300 years ago they had a minor upset with their creations but things got sorted out quickly.

"Yup, Tali won't go anywhere without Legion." Nihlus nodded and just waved his hand dismissively. "She can do what she wants until she's with me. And I need her skills. Besides Legion is a skilled assassin and tech specialist himself." The turian then opened doors showing narrows corridor. "There are 2-, 3- and 4-bedrooms. Turian designers didn't want to agree with humans that everyone can sleep together in larger rooms, on bunk beds. We respect privacy."

"Yeah, I can relate. I didn't like those but the Alliance didn't give a flying fuck about its soldiers privacy or comfort." Jane walked into the corridor, on each side at least ten doors leading to each room. "Nice. So two separate resting areas and crew quarters. And those doors lead to?"

"Bathrooms." Nihlus explained. "We got separate ones for males and females."

"And here?" Garrus gestured toward doors on the left side of the elevator.

"Oh, that's life support. And our Drell friend lives there." Nihlus said, frowning with his brow plates. "He needs extra humid air and peace for his meditations. So best not to drop in uninvited."

"We're not you, Nihlus." Garrus snarked. "We don't charge into someone's home with a smile on our faces when they are busy." Jane snorted at the remark. She remembered well when Kryik entered their apartment while their were having sex. "Don't judge everyone by your sick standards."

The red-plated turian started to laugh loudly. "Oh, Garrus, you are such a sweet boy." He patted Vakarian on his arms and waved his hand to follow him. Just around the corner was a large area with a kitchen and mess hall. With doors on the either side and a corridor leading to other doors. "So, here is the mess hall. We got a good cook, he can do both levo and dextro food so don't you worry. On the left is my room. On the right is the med bay. Shakria's our doctor - I think Mordin said something about her... Anyway, she studied human biology and medicine for our mission's sake. Also Mordin is a xenobiology god and already treated you, Jane."

"When I was attacked, I know. He mentioned Doctor Shakria too."

"Now, that doors leads to the Main Battery."

Garrus turned his head immediately, words Main Battery piqued his attention. "I was certain you would be interested, Garrus. Later you can check if it's well calibrated. I know you love it."

While they were talking, a silver-plated turian female left the med-bay and approached the three of them. She wore a standard turian military outfit, only in a different colour to the normal blue and grey. She wore white and blue. A visor covered her left eye, glowing in green. "Commander Jane Vakarian and Commander Garrus Vakarian I presume." She dipped her head in greeting. Both Vakarians reciprocated the gesture. "A pleasure to meet you finally, Spectre Kryik talked about you two a lot. Until he met Ms Josephine, that is."

"Did he now?" Garrus sent a long glance at Nihlus. "We hope he didn't embarrass us too much."

"Not in the slightest. I hope for good cooperation from you two. Commander Vakarian. Um..." She turned to the human female, her mandibles twitching lightly. Her orange eyes regarded the floor. It was clear she was a bit nervous."Sorry, there is two of you..."

"Shepard is fine, doctor."

"So, um, Commander Shepard, I'm a qualified medical doctor for humans, you and your people don't
have to worry about anything with me."

"I'm aware of that, doctor. Nihlus chose the best of the best, and wouldn't endanger any of us with non qualified crew members." Jane replied with a reassuring tone, she had learned from Garrus. "I wouldn't expect any less. And I hope we won't meet much in the med-bay, I prefer lounges or the mess hall."

"Ah, yes. Of course." Shakria started to laugh. "For now I have one regular customer, Nihlus I hope you can change that."

"You know I like the way you patch me up." The Spectre shrugged. "Don't tell that to Josephine."

"Anyway, that's all from me... for now. Later I'd like you two to come in for a medical exam. Need your data for the system. But for now... Please continue your trip." The turian female waved her hand and returned to her post in the med-bay.

Next destination was the deck with the Engineering. Jane was happy to see Gabby and Kenneth already fixed on their respective consoles - just like back on the Alliance vessels. There were also one turian and a quarian. "Jane, meet Tali'zorah vas Rannoch, our tech specialist and engineer. And this fine turian lad is Lieutenant Crain Fedorian, from the Fedorian clan."

"Stop saying that, Nihlus. I'm so far related to the Primarch or Head of the clan that they won't even know about my existence." A green-plated turian said, smirking to the Specter. Clearly it wasn't the first time he was introduced in such a manner. "It's a pleasure, Commander." The young turian turned toward Garrus, clearly in awe. "It was my dream to meet you, Sir."

Garrus dipped his head. His mandibles spread slightly in a proud grin. "Well, here I am. It's nice to meet you too, Lt."

"Crain was so excited to meet you Garrus, he's new and didn't have an opportunity to meet you earlier." The masked alien approached them. She wore a black enviromental suit with violet stripes in a pattern. "And this is your wife?"

"Tali, this is Jane." Garrus presented his wife. "Jane, this is Tali. We worked together a couple of times."

"During the war?" Jane asked, interested when hearing they had actually worked together. Garrus mentioned working with his squad a few times, helped by Nihlus on occasion. She didn't know the details nor had she asked about it. Shepard knew some things were classified and shouldn't be shared even with close people in your life.

"Oh, no, no no. Nihlus didn't want to have anything to do with the war with humans." Tali shook her head. "Besides, both me and Wrex wouldn't do it either. That's against what we believe in. Wrex saw too many wars to get involved in another one. Especially to galactic babies. Here he comes."

"Nihlus, you little bug. You took the wrong turn, I was sitting in Port Cargo." A giant krogan in red armour walked by the doors. He sported large scars on his head and had a nasty smile. He looked at Jane with challenge in his eyes. "So that's her, huh? That tiny bit took 4 thresher maws? Two solo? You got-"

He didn't finish as he got head-butted by Jane. Garrus and Nihlus shouted Jane's name but she only waved at them dismissively. Everyone looked in shock as Wrex took a few steps back, touching his head in the place he got tackled - it didn't hurt, no, it was just one hell of a surprise. Jane smirked at the krogan and eye-challenged him back. "You say?"
"Hahaha." Wrex's guttural laugh ringing loudly in the shocked silence. Everyone was eyeing Jane and the krogan, waiting for their next move. But Wrex only stretched his hand to Shepard, she grabbed him by the wrist - a traditional greeting for both krogans and turians. He regarded their joined hands with a smile. "You know krogan ways. I like you, human."

"You can call me Shepard."

"Wrex. Urdnot Wrex."

"I think we're going to get along just fine." Jane smirked as she shook hands with the alien. "I heard this and that about you too, Wrex. I looked forward to meeting you.

"Pity such a woman took a rookie over there as a husband."

Garrus didn't have time to react because a warning cough behind them made Jane and Wrex look behind. The krogan took one glance at the quarian female and knew he was in trouble. "It's not like that, Tali. Don't be jealous."

"I am not, you bosh'tet." The quarian said with anger.

"Oi Garrus! How are you rookie?" Wrex patted Garrus on the arm a few times, with a lot of strength.

"Hi, Wrex." Garrus replied. "Usual, Nihlus dragging me into dangerous missions of his."

"Yeah, same old." Wrex laughed again. "But you're not some boy anymore. You got yourself a woman, you almost became Spectre. Maybe you won't die too fast."

"I'll try to impress you."

"I have to make friends with two turians in the galaxy who think they are funny."

"Aren't we?" Nihlus spawned beside Wrex. "Imagine how Garrus feels. He's supposed to hate krogan, but you came along and warmed his heart with your winning personality."

"And yours?"

"You had my heart since day one, love." Kryik said affectionately to Wrex then turned to Tali. "No offence, Tali. You know it's one sided. That big pile of muscles and maleness is all yours."

"Keelah, I don't know what I'm doing with those two bosh'tets." The quarian shook her head, giving up on them. "Maybe I'll just return to Rannoch with Legion, and will have a peaceful life with my people. Anyway, it's good to have you here. Garrus, Jane, I'm looking forward to working with you. And your human engineers - Gabby and Ken, are really skilled and professional."

"Thank you, Miss Zorah!" Kenneth said from behind, regarding the whole scene with Gabby next to him.

"So you two get along with everyone else?" Jane turned to her human friends. "Good, I'm proud of you two."

"Miss Zorah and Lt. Fedorian have been really friendly. We're all good here in engineering. Also Wrex is really great." Gabby reported to Jane quickly. Shepard nodded to that. She was glad her crew was on good terms with everyone. Or at least Gabby and Kenneth were.

"Okay, we don't have too much time so come on, guys." Nihlus waved at Jane and Garrus. Tali walked back to her console and started to work again. Wrex tagged along with the three of them on
the tour. "So on the either side you have Port Cargo and Starboard Cargo areas."

"Well, it's not Starboard Cargo anymore. Me and Tali repurposed that place and it's our room now." Wrex clarified. "Quarians have weak immune systems, making them get sick easily so…"

"Yeah, we know, Wrex." Garrus interjected. "So you two made a sterile room. Biotic fields?"

"Yup." Krogan nodded. "You got your shit together, I see. Got a bit of a brain, smart-ass?"

Jane snorted seeing the unimpressed Garrus, rolling his eyes. She looked then at the big, red plated krogan and she couldn't believe he was with a small and weak quarian - well she didn't know about Tali's field skills or if she was good in combat, but she had a weak immune system and was smaller than her. How that worked, she couldn't fathom. But she, a human, was with a turian. So anything was possible. Besides, she wasn't one to judge.

Last deck to see was a cargo deck. First thing they say was a turian Sandstorm docked in the hangar. "And that's all, folks. Here we have the Sandstorm and shuttles. Also, your marine, Vega, made a small gym here."

"Ah yes, that's Vega for you." Jane smiled at the memory of James exercising in the docking areas on various ships they were flying with. She had to admit his muscles were impressive. Still, she won every sparring session with him.

"Now, we have 10 minutes before the meeting so it's better if we return to the briefing room." Nihlus moved his hand up to activate the comm link. "Lt. call the ground team to the briefing room."

xXx

Jane regarded her team then looked at the four turians that had joined them - a light grey plated turian with white wide irregular markings who looked at Nihlus and Garrus with enamored awe, drowning in every word Kryik said while briefing the crew. Another grey-plated male with just blue stripes on is mandibles who was plainly listening while leaning on the wall next to a barefaced, dark grey male - who looked uninterested in anything but picking at his spiky teeth, and lastly one turian female with almost white plates and a red clan marking patterned in long stripes coming down from her forehead and widening on her nose plates. She looked rather grumpy, pissed even - and was eyeing Garrus from time to time. Even Jane felt her angry gaze upon her.

Shepard saw Garrus flinch and lean to Nihlus when the female entered the briefing room. She overheard Garrus whispering to Nihlus about her. Asking why Nyreen was here. They have some history together. The tension is almost visible. Jane thought to herself while listening to Kryik.

Beside the humans and turians, into the briefing came Mordin Solus, a salarian professor, Tali along with Wrex, an asari with a green skin, and a drell. It was the first time she had seen a drell - they usually kept to themselves, serving the hanar on their home world, rarely leaving. The drell was standing in the back and looked like he was meditating during Nihlus' talk. Jane was almost certain he hadn't blinked nor moved even an inch. That creeped her out a bit.

"So to sum up my monologue: we only know it's a krogan breeding facility. There is no more intel. Any questions?" Nihlus looked around waiting for any questions. After a few moments he just cleared his throat and turned to Garrus. "So now some introductions are needed. Garrus is now part of my crew, news addition are - Lieutenant Tarquin Victus…"

The turian with white irregular clan markings straightened even further and saluted in the turian fashion. "Lt. Tarquin Victus, 9th platoon, Commander. I'm so honoured to finally meet you. And it's
a great honour to work with renowned Spectr-..." The young turian was stopped by Nihlus.

"It's fine, Lt. We're not a military vessel, loosen up a bit." Kryik smirked and waved at Victus. "At ease. Now...Lantar Sidonis our demolition specialist."

Sidonis grinned, spreading a his mandibles a bit. "I can blow up almost anything. Plus I'm good with shotguns."

"Rolan Quarn." The barefaced turian just raised his hand and wiggled his fingers when Kryik mentioned him. "Infiltration specialist. Can pose as anything, from varan tamer to stand-up comedian. And I have to say his stand-ups gather quite an audience."

"Don't forget about stunt driver, sous-chef, martial arts instructor and ambassador." Rolan added, humor in his dual-toned voice. "I'm also a tech and hand-to-hand combat specialist. I like to get close with opponents." He moved a bit closer to Nyreen and purred in her direction but the turian woman grunted in disgust.

"Yup, great, then last but not least our turian beauty - Nyreen Kendros." At which Nyreen growled quietly. "A biotic." She didn't bother to reply, just narrowing her eyes in a glare. "Um, yes. Now all of you know Tali, Wrex and Mordin. Please meet our former asari commando, a powerful biotic - Shiala, and our assassin - Thane Krios. Specializing in stealth, firearms, hand-to-hand combat and biotic abilities. He can also snipe but prefers closer contact with his prey."

The drell just nodded and it was the first movement Shepard saw from him. That was really strange and creepy. It was hard to guess who or what he was really looking at, even salarians were easier to read.

Nihlus then turned to the remainder of the group. "Now our human crew." The turian lifted up the data pad he had been casually holding up till now and read from it. "Gunnery Chief Williams."

Ash become pale, regarding Nihlus with eyes as wide as plates. The woman turned to look at her human Commander and got a reassuring smile. "Ah, yes-Sir."

"Next, Lt. Kasumi Goto, recon and infiltration, stealth, data hacking. Specialist in tactical cloaking."

Kasumi wiggled her hands at the Vakarians and Nihlus. "You two trained together, right?"

"Yup. Although later my career path deteriorated from Kasumi's. I began training in other fields."

"You had a natural gift, Shep."

"That is true." Nihlus nodded and looked at the datapad again. "Lieutenant James Vega - mid range specialist, hand-to-hand combat specialist, with formidable strength."

James flexed his biceps, an already stretched t-shirt tightened on his muscles. "My pride, Sir."

"And we finish with Lieutenant Jaqu-"

"Don't say it..." Jack growled.

Jane leaned to Nihlus and whispered to Nihlus that the biotic didn't want to be called by her name, she preferred Jack instead. Nihlus nodded. "Ah, sorry. Jack it is. Powerful human biotic. From now on we will work together. Starting from this mission, we will form squads lead by myself, Garrus and Shepard. Oh, before I forget, this is not a military vessel, thus honorifics won't be demanded from anyone. You can use it out of respect but trust me, soon we will be a close team and forget about all those commanders and Lt.'s."
"For me, Shepard is enough." Jane waved with dismissal. She never liked being called Commander anyway.

"But you're not Shepard since the wedding, Lola." James replied, the humans along with Garrus and Nihlus started to laugh. "In case you hadn't noticed"

"Laugh it up, Vega. 100 push ups after the meeting."

"But… Lola…"

"With me on your back." Jane added narrowing her eyes in feigned anger, still sporting a smirk on her face.

"Mierda…"

"Well, anyway… like I said, we will form three squads. I will assign each of you to me, Garrus and Jane till we get to know each other better. For each squad - one Spectre plus one turian plus one human plus one member from another species. I find it fair and we'll learn to trust each other." Nihlus regarded everyone with a serious gaze. "I don't care about any post-war animosities. I just don't. If you think you'll act in a xenophobic way toward any of crew member, then you can turn around and leave. Is that clear?"

Everyone shouted "Yessir" in unison. Kryik nodded with a contented smirk. "Good. Now, dismissed." The Vakarians and Kryik turned to each other to talk over the briefing, waiting till the room was empty. Everyone left till the three of them were left almost alone but Nyreen. The turian female coughed, gaining their attention. "What is it, Kendros?"

"I need to speak with Garrus."

The red-plated turian looked briefly at Nyreen then at Garrus. "Um, okay. I think I need to be somewhere else…" And as fast as he could, he left them in the briefing room, closing the doors behind him.

"I need to speak to Garrus, Commander." Nyreen looked at Jane with anger. "You understand my language?"

Jane narrowed her eyes and replied in Turian Common. "Yes, I do. Garrus, I'll be in-"

"No." Vakarian stopped Shepard with his hand. "If you have anything to say, Nyreen, then say it in my wife's presence. I don't want to keep any secrets from her."

"Fine." The turian female hissed. "Have it your way… Why, Garrus?"

Garrus regarded her in silence then sighed. He turned to his wife and keened in embarrassment. "Nyreen is… one of the females I treated like a total asshole…"

"Oh?"

"Asshole?!" Kendros roared, smashing her fist on the table. "You promised me marriage… you promised me life… just to dump me after a few one night stands!"

"Oh…" Jane wasn't really shocked. Nihlus already told her a few of Garrus' experiences with women. And it wasn't something he could be proud of. Plus his reputation as a Casanova was being confirmed first hand. "Well… he was kind of an asshole… literally the biggest douche I ever met."

She said casually, validating Nyreen's words. "If I were you… I would punch him so hard he would
reach FTL speed from the impact."

"Wh-what?" The turian female looked shocked at Garrus' wife. "You… won't defend him?"

"Why?" Shep asked, shrugging. "I love the man, but I also know how he used to be. I almost died because he was the king of douchebaggery."

"Jane…" Garrus said but his wife just raised a hand to shush him.

"Shut it. I won't defend your past self." Shepard said firmly. "You are different person now but I said to you once - Karma's a bitch and now you see it for yourself yet again. Nyreen I can just say I'm so sorry for what happened to you. It was inexcusable and I don't know if you can forgive Garrus and work with him. I can just assure you he won't do that to any other woman again as I have an eye on him."

"I…" Kendros looked confused at Jane then at Garrus, and back to the human female. "I don't understand…"

"I think you should apologize." Shepard turned to her husband, glaring at him.

"Nyreen… I'm sorry for what I've done to you in the past." Garrus said, feeling like a child. "I… I've changed. I'm not that idiot from when I was young. A lot happened in my life and I realised a lot of my actions were wrong and a mistake."

The turian female didn't expect such outcome. At first she was angry but Garrus' wife changed her anger first to confusion then to nothing. She understood that what happened was in the past. Such a long time had passed that she was holding a grudge just for the principles of it, nothing more. She realised that she wasn't really angry anymore, and she was holding on to something that wasn't her present nor future. That turian from the past didn't exist anymore. He changed, he had grown up, and was with a woman that triggered those changes. "I… I'll forgive you, Garrus. I see you're not the same person anymore."

"Oh, that's for sure." Jane nodded then stretched her hand toward Nyreen. "I hope we can work together without any grudges, Miss Kendros."

"Nyreen is fine, Commander." Both women shook their hands and smiled at themselves slightly. "I think we will get along just fine."

xXx

"Wow, Garrus. I didn't think I would meet one of your exes so fast." Jane mused while she was unpacking her belongings from the duffle bag in their quarters. 

"That was awkward." Garrus agreed. "Nihlus never said a word about her, and he knew that we had a fling… bastard."

"Don't blame Nihlus for your own stupidity, Big Guy." She sighed while packing her clothes into the locker. Shepard's face told absolutely nothing, with a blank expression she was putting her thing into drawers and lockers.

"You're angry?"

"Why?" She stopped and looked at her husband. "Why should I be angry? We didn't know each other at that time. I didn't know about the turian species or we were at war, so I really don't care. But still it threw me off balance a little." She entered the small bathroom to put all their stuff in the
cabinet. Her red-haired head stuck out from the bathroom, smirking a little. "It's a good thing though. I got some new experience and next time I will hold my guard up."

"Ha-ha." Garrus replied with unamused laugh. There can be a lot of those next-times, to be honest. "I hope not."

"Judging from what Nihlus and you said… they can be hiding behind every corner."

"Can you just stop?" He asked, so done. It was unnerving first of all, and listening to his wife having fun wasn't pleasing any more. "I learned my lesson, okay? I hope that bitch will find another target… Karma." He clarified when Jane looked at him with a brow raised. "Anyway, let's go to Doctor Shakria for the samples and medical evaluation... and then just take a rest, okay? Tomorrow we reach Virmire."

xXx

Virmire was in sight. A planet of green and blue just like Earth used to be. Long ago, before wars and pollution. Now only with small areas of natural environment. The hard work of humans would get it restored eventually, now moreso with more and more leaving for colonies.

Normandy positioned just barely behind the inland scanner range. Jane, Garrus and Nihlus stood fully geared next to Joker, looking through the data. Suddenly the signal beeped. "Sir, I'm reading a signal. Must be our infiltration team."

Nihlus nodded then looked at the holo-screen. "Defense towers. Drop the Sandstorm, Garrus' team will go in hot and take them out. Notify his team to be ready."

Aye-aye, Sir." Joker turned the intercom on and made an announcement.

Meanwhile Vakarian had turned around and went to the elevator. Quick ride down and he was in the hangar, then in the Sandstorm with James, Nyreen and Wrex. "Let's make them jealous, girls… and you Wrex."

"I was all itchy for some action." The krogan laughed and checked his shotgun. Then he sat behind the cannon.

"Lieutenant Vega, you take machine-gun." Garrus turned to the human and pointed at the seat just a bit below Wrex' one. "Sandstorm is similar in build to your Mako. I think you'll feel familiar vibes."

James nodded. He sat then fastened the belt. Nyreen sat next to Garrus and activated the scanner and maps.

"I'll get you in underneath the radar, Commander." A few seconds later Joker started the countdown. "Drop in 9… 8… 7… 6… 5… 4… 3… 2… 1… Go!" Mass effect fields keeping the vehicle in place were deactivated. Garrus launched it forward, driving through the opened bay door. A short drop down and Garrus landed in the water, cushioning the landing with thrusters.

[ We've got a clean drop, Commander. ] Joker's voice rang in the Sandstorm.

"Still got it." Garrus said to himself smugly.

"At least you didn't do a flip." Wrex said from the back. "Nihlus usually does a double flip to make it more dramatic."

[ And you like it! ] Nihlus' voice was heard through the intercom. [ Okay, I'll leave it to you Garrus.}
We'll stay out of range and continue evasive maneuvers until you bring those AA towers down. Joker, come on.]

[ I know the drill. Meet you at the camp, Commander, once those towers are off-line. Joker out. ]

Garrus sighed to calm himself down. He began their ride between cliffs and the sea, it wasn't long, maybe 30 minutes, before they were attacked by drones and mechs. James along with Wrex got rid of them fast so they didn't waste too much time. Even the turrets weren't too time consuming. What really took the time was opening the gates of concrete between the structures blocking the way. Luckily in one of those they found what they were looking for - AA Gun Power Controls. Garrus and Wrex disabled them while James and Nyreen killed the last of the mechs guarding the outpost.

The comm link activated again with Joker on the line. [ I'm reading that the grid is down, Commander. On approach to the intel base now. Out. ]

"You heard the man, move out. We're close to the base." Garrus gestured toward the Sandstorm. They drove again through the cliffs, the Normandy flying above them to the camp. Just one more gate and few minutes later, the Sandstorm was parking on the beach where their intel - a salarian STG squad, had its base. The ship was hovering above the water and most of the ground team members were already on the beach. Garrus unbuckled and turned to Nyreen and his team. "You check the Sandstorm and make it ready to move out again. I'll find out the situation. Report when you finish. Wrex, come with me."

"Yes, Commander." Only James replied to Garrus' order. Nyreen nodded but said nothing. Wrex just snorted and left the vehicle with the turian.

The two of them approached Jane and Nihlus, who were talking with a salarian. Everyone seemed tense. Jane looked at the salarian and gestured with her arms in annoyance. "So what are we supposed to do now?"

"Stay put until we come up with a plan."

Garrus came to them, Wrex slightly behind. "What's the situation?" Then turning to the salarian. "Are you in charge here?"

"I'm Captain Kirrahe, Third Infiltration Regiment, STG." He presented himself. With his thumb he gestured behind himself to the big wall. "You just landed in the middle of a hot zone. Every AA gun within ten miles has been alerted to your presence."

"Fucking splendid."

"We have to stay put until the Council sends the reinforcements we requested."

Jane's arms hung in defeat. Nihlus sighed heavily, Garrus did the same soon after. Kryik scratched his mandible for a moment then with a gravelly tone he clarified things. "We are the reinforcements."

"What?" The Captain was shocked at the news. That wasn't what he expected. Not at all. It was the biggest cloning facility he had ever encountered. A mere one ship wouldn't help with anything in this situation. "You're all they sent? I told the Council to send a fleet."

"Yeah, well, sorry to disappoint but the Council has a unique sense of humor." Nihlus said. "Okay, we don't have time to waste. Please show us all the data you have. You have any blueprints of the facility?"
"Yes, we scanned it." Captain Kirrahe gestured to move into the tent, where on a table flashed a holographic map of the building behind the big wall. "From our investigation we know that they're attempting to breed an army of krogan."

"How?" Wrex asked from behind.

"We intercepted messages about a cure for the genophage." Kirrahe opened the message originating from someone on Tuchanka. Nihlus narrowed his eyes but said nothing, just opened his omni-tool and copied the message. "But it's highly disputable if they succeeded. Cure or not, we must ensure that this facility and its secrets are destroyed."

"Destroyed? No. I don't think so. If they have the cure… Our people are dying. This cure can save them."

"IF there is cure, it can't leave this planet, the krogan will become unstoppable. We can't make the same mistake again." Kirrahe opposed, a bit nervous. After all, a confrontation with a fully grown krogan against a small salarian, would end in only one way.

"We are not a mistake!" The angry krogan approached the salarian, who shrunk in terror.

"Wrex!" Nihlus said, raising his voice. Wrex stopped and turned back. "You know the deal, Wrex. No sense in getting too emotional." The krogan grunted in response and walked away. "So tell me, what are we up against?"

"We know that they have a big krogan force with them, also a few asari commandos. In the facility there are three salarian scientists working with cloning. We also found dead bodies of Krogan females." The salarian pointed at the back of the facility. "Thus, we can assume that producing the cure is much harder than simply cloning. Still, I don't think they found a way to make a perfect clone."

"Great… not fully developed fetuses or bodies of children." Jane sighed, grimacing to herself. She knew from her own experience that cloning was a highly unstable process. Even Cerberus couldn't produce a perfect clone. They were weak, sick and died young. "Just another tuesday."

"Pretty much." Kirrahe agreed.

Nihlus grunted in dismay. So it was really just another krogan cloning facility. He knew that curing the genophage wasn't a matter and some backwater facility wouldn't get even close to solving that enigma. "Okay, let's think of a plan and do something about all this shit." In the distance they heard shotgun fire. Kryik and the rest turned to see the angry krogan on the beach.

"Is he going to be a problem?"

"Not at all." The turian Spectre replied. "He's a ball full of fluff and sweets, trust me. I'll talk with him. Prepare some plan while I check on my krogan boyfriend." Nihlus gained an awkward gaze from the salarian. Jane smirked at the scene. She knew that her friend was strange sometimes but also very professional. "Jane, come with me. Garrus, check the data and help the Captain with the plan of attack."

"Fine."

"Now, my dear, shall we?" Nihlus took Jane's arm, not bothering with Garrus' angry growls, and walked with her to Wrex. Both of them stopped a few feet from the krogan.

"This isn't right, Nihlus. If there's a cure for the genophage, we can't destroy it."
"Darling." The turian started. "I understand you're upset, but I'm fairly certain you know that we won't find any cure for the genophage here."

"How can you be so certain, Kryik?" Wrex barked the question back, getting more angry at Nihlus' so certain attitude. "Look at the size of it. We haven't raided such a big facility before. Look at all the defenses here."

"Yeah, but I got some intel, my friend." Kryik said. "Besides… if we'll find something. We'll get it straight to Mordin."

"Yeah, but…"

"No!" Nihlus, despite his merry-go-lucky attitude, became irritated. It was the first time Jane had seen him like that.

"I've been loyal to you so far. Hell, you did and are doing more for me than my own family ever did." He said slowly, reaching for his shotgun. Jane stood from behind so she saw the movement. "But, if I'm going to keep following you, I need to know we're still on the same page." On the last word he pointed his gun at Kryik.

At the same moment Jane pushed Nihlus to the side, loading her own pistol. "Wrex, those are clones. Everyone has doubts that the cure is here. But if it's there, trust me, I'll find it even over that idiots…" she pointed with her free hand at Nihlus. "dead body to give it to you. Because krogans didn't deserve their fate. And what's going on with the krogan now, is murder." At the end she lowered her gun and holstered it on her belt. "I give you my word."

Wrex regarded that small squishy alien in front of him. Looking at the iron will in her green eyes. She wasn't like any other alien he'd met. He could say she was krogan at heart. Urdnot lowered his weapon and also holstered it. "All right, Nihlus. You two made your point. I don't like this, but I trust you two. Especially you, Shepard."

"Good." The woman smirked and patted Wrex on the arm. "I knew we'd get along just fine."

"Just one thing…" Wrex said at the end. "If we find the one responsible for all of this… I want his head."

Before Nihlus could say anything, Jane said with a bright smile, while nodding to the krogan. "Deal."

"You two are terrifying." Kryik exhaled deeply. *That turned out better than I expected. I'll need to thank Jane later.* "Okay, let's go find out what Garrus and Kirrahe came up with."

xXx

**Jaal? Or Vetra? Or maybe some krogan? xD**
Chapter 20

UPDATE: I'm sorry I posted this chapter without Razzberry editing it first. I made a huge mistake and gave you shitty thing. I won't do that again.

Hello everyone :D thanks for all great comments and support. Thanks to Erin Primette from for the tip, I changed papa Vakarian name from Akteon to Castis.

I hope you enjoy ME Andromeda, sadly I'm still can't get it, need to buy new PC first… which should happen in 2 weeks.

Ehhh… but I want to play it TT_TT

Anyway, please enjoy!

xXx

"We'll divide into three teams. Assault team will be led by you Nihlus," Garrus pointed at the front of the facility. "You and the Captain's men will provide a distraction for my team - we're going to disable those AA towers, satellite and communication. And Jane's team will infiltrate the labs and office, hacking and coping the data to the Normandy." Three dots were flashing at the places mentioned by Vakarian on their holomaps. "Just assign your squads and we're ready."

"Good." Nihlus nodded, so pleased at both Garrus and Jane for being skilled in various areas. "When the data reaches the Normandy, Mordin will check it. If there is something interesting, we will stay longer and collect all the evidence, samples and data. If he says it's not worth it we won't wait and will just blow this hellhole to pieces." The turian pointed at Jane at first. "Team Jane - infiltration - Tali, Rolan and Jack. Team Garrus - sabotage - Tarquin, Thane and Kasumi. I will go with the rest and launch a full-scale assault on the front gates. We're leaving in 30 minutes after the debrief."

The talk going over the plan with the rest of the crew and Captain Kirrahe's men, took just a few minutes. After that, they prepared their gear, everyone checked their weapons and grappling hooks in their armour. After all they would have to descend over 50 meters down to the facility. When both Jane and Garrus were ready, he pulled his wife behind the Sandstorm. "Stay out of trouble." He said while brushing his now gloved fingers over her cheek.

"You too." Shepard smiled and raised her head, waiting for a kiss. Which she got, a hot, deep kiss with that blue turian tongue involved. After a moment she had to move back. "Stop, we'll have time for more after we finish here."

"Mandatory celebration sex later?"

"Is it some turian tradition?" The woman grinned and checked the latches of Garrus' armour.

"No, but it can be our tradition, my dear wife."

"Uh-huh." Her finger waved at him to move closer. He placed his forehead on hers, purring slightly. "Just be good and don't do anything stupid."

"We already talked about it."
"Yeah, just a small reminder." She gave him a quick peck on his mouth-plates, as Kirrahe called to move out.

xXx

2 hours later both teams were standing at the back of the breeding facility. They had to climb a rocky cliff then pass a vast jungle. Garrus and Jane scoured the vicinity below. "6 targets. The rest has to be at the front gates. It won't be too hard." Vakarian said while preparing his sniper rifle. Jane had already laid on the ground with her Black Widow prepared, Thane next to her adjusting his scope. The rest of their respective teammates were preparing their grapple hooks - sticking their mass field stakes into the ground.

"Okay, team, we clear the perimeter and you're going in. 10 seconds." Jane said while aiming at a target. "9… 8… 7..." Three shots were heard. 4 seconds passed while they reloaded and more shots were fired. "3… 2… 1… go!"

Four soldiers slid down. Garrus and Thane prepared their hooks and Jane was scanning the vicinity with her scope. No movement. "All clear, let's go." She stood up and quickly stuck her hook into the ground then abseiled down with the turian and drell.

On the ground they pulled all the ropes down and rolled them back into their armour. Garrus looked at his team, all ready and waiting for his sign - it was so good to have a squad under his command again. "We're good. Let's keep radio silence unless of emergency. Good luck."

Jane nodded and signed to her team to move. Garrus moved off in the other direction, having unpleasant feelings as his protective instinct kicked in, telling him to follow his mate - still he ignored it. They were both professionals and he had to overcome his fears for Jane. She was better than him, that he had known for some time.

They didn't encounter much resistance on the way to the Comm Tower. Just three krogan and one asari commando, with Thane's biotics, Kasumi cloaking and Tarquin's firepower, they quickly managed to disrupt the communication links. Not too long later, they reached the satellite link tower and got rid of that too. Now all that was left were the AA towers. With all of that compromised their enemies defenses were crippled. Also the Normandy could engage in attacking them from the sky.

From that point the assault team had a much easier job. Garrus looked around. Drones were flying here and there, from some unknown point. "Kasumi, can you follow them?"

"Sure thing, Commander." With a quiet buzzy noise and blink, the japanese woman made herself invisible. She went to the place the drones were flying from, meanwhile Garrus and the team waited, hidden in cover. The radio cracked and Kasumi reported back.

[ There are fuel tanks here, Commander. I can set up the charges, blow'em up, drones won't get refilled anymore. ]

"Do it."

[ Affirmative. ]

Radio crackled again then went silent. Just minutes later, a huge explosion could be heard behind the rocky cliffs. Seconds after the explosion Jane radioed Garrus.

[ The hell? ] He could tell that the explosion had her worried.

"We blow up some fuel tanks." He reported. "You good?"
Ugh, why can't anything be quiet with us? Fine, ping me if you want to blow up anything else. Jane out.

Kasumi was back moments later. "All done, Sir."

"Good. Move out." With his hand he waved at the main building.

The problem was the AA towers were on the rooftop. They had to sneak in. The closer they got to the main building, the more resistance they had to fight through. It wasn't big numbers, still it slowed them down. Garrus' team made their way to the back doors, closed from the inside. Lieutenant Victus approached the console nearby and started hacking.

"Sir, we've got access to the base security. We should be able to cut the alarms from here. Might even trigger the alarm on the far side of the base. It'll clear the guards for us, but they might be too much for the assault team." The Lt turned to Vakarian, waiting for his orders.

Garrus thought about it for a moment. Nihlus had his hands full with killing mercs on the other side. And he didn't want Jane's team to be caught in the middle. It was far better if his team just took care of any enemies in their way. Besides, he had waited too long for this opportunity. "Just disable the alarms. We can handle any guards inside. Besides, we already alerted them with that explosion." He took his assault rifle, checked the heat sink and the magazine. His team did the same and they were ready again. Vakarian signed to open the doors and the way they were going into the main building.

They entered a long warehouse area guarded by some mechs and another squad of krogan mercs. With precise headshots, the mechs weren't a problem. The real challenge were the few krogan they encountered on the way. It was difficult to take them down with one shot. And some of them being biotics didn't make it any easier either. Good thing they had their own biotic - Thane was throwing biotic warps and throws, effectively aiding Garrus and Tarquin as they were shooting. Meanwhile Kasumi was overloading the enemies and throwing flashbang grenades - incapacitating them.

They were fighting their way to the roof, moving from one room to another, then on the catwalks, a quick elevator ride up and just one bridge ahead - a Comm Tower. Of course nothing in life was easy, this time wasn't an exception. Passing 4 krogans blocking the way tends to be difficult. Mechs? Mechs are fast to take out for a skilled squad, but krogan are always a challenge. And 4 at the same time made it hard. Garrus looked round the corner at the krogans casually guarding the Comm Tower, he had to think fast.

"Krios, take out your sniper rifle. Go for the eyes." Vakarian ordered as he was already adjusting himself with his rifle. "Kasumi, try to go from behind." The japanese woman nodded and vanished from their sight. "Tarquin, you will go full scale assault on them while we do the heavy damage."

"Yes, Sir." The young turian took out his assault rifle.

Garrus pointed at a large crate, indicting to Thane where he should hide. The drell nodded. With a quick dash, the assassin was behind cover. The turian also adjusted while the krogans turned toward Lt. Victus, noticing his presence after he had emptied a full magazine at them.

"Scoped and dropped." Garrus yelled when he shot one of them precisely in the eye, he knew that it wasn't enough for them, so he shot again, making sure he was dead. "Thane, that one the left!"

"Roger that." The drell shot at the second one and Tarquin finished the deed.

Meanwhile Kasumi's tactical cloak flickered and she appeared behind the krogans, tossing a grenade
at one, who was standing behind his three companions. He noticed the small human female and
turned his attention to her. The woman looked terrified as the krogan charged, barely jumping to the
right, evading his attack. She drew her SMG and emptied an entire magazine into the merc.

"Krios, Victus, take care of the last one, I'll help Goto." Garrus barked orders while jumping out of
cover. He changed to his assault rifle, showering the farthest krogan with bullets. Vakarian passed
the nearly dead krogan, dashing toward Kasumi but it was too late. The last merc charged at the
woman, smashing into her, knocking her off the bridge. Luckily for her, she fell on the shelf like area
below.

Garrus sent an overload at the krogan, taking out his shields then firing at him. He saw the krogan
prepare to charge at him, so without a second thought he tossed down his assault rifle and tackled the
charging merc in precise movements, pushing him to the side - thus, making him fall off the bridge in
the process. The krogan fell, screaming, then after a loud thud noise was heard, he became silent.
Vakarian turned around to see a grapple hook on the barrier, Thane already beside Kasumi. Tarquin
was fighting off the last Krogan, Garrus took his rifle from the floor, attaching it to his back, and
pulled out his pistol. He launched forward to his turian squadmate and quickly shot the krogan,
finishing the fight.

"Thank you, Sir." Victus dipped his head, then took his weapon from the floor.

"No need to thank me, let's go find out what's with Lieutenant Goto." Both turians jogged toward the
hooked line. "Thane! Status."

"She's unconscious. Scans indicate a fractured skull and 3 broken ribs." The drell replied. "I don't
know how I should move her. Or if I should even try."

"Damn it." Garrus touched his ear socket. "Joker, are you there?"

[ Yes, Commander. ]

"Patch me to Doctor Shakria."

[ Right away. ] The pilot's voice vanished for a moment. [ Patching her through. ]

[ Yes, Commander? ] The dual-toned voice of Dr. Shakria in the comm.

"Doc, we've got an injured human. Lt. Goto was hit by a charging krogan. We'll send you the initial
scan report." Thane forwarded the data from his omni-tool to the Normandy's medic. "You got it?"

[ Yes… hmm, where is she? ]

"She fell on a small shelf near the wall. We don't know if we should move her." Garrus looked at the
human worried, that was an unexpected outcome.

[ Please lay her to the side and don't move her. Activate her cloaking device. As far as I know, it can
work for a few hours. I hope we will be able to extract her from that place. ]

"Roger. Thanks doc. Vakarian out." The comm link cracked and shut down. Vakarian looked at
Thane, who had already pulled Kasumi's body to the side. "Okay, activate her cloak and come here,
Krios."

The drell opened his and Kasumi's omni-tools, activating her invisibility. Garrus' visor was recording
her position. Seconds later Thane was on the bridge again. They rushed to the Comm Tower, soon
they were inside. Vakarian moved to the console and disable all AA towers within a 10 miles radius.
Normandy was clear to perform an air assault. "You are clear to fly, Joker, AA towers are disabled."

[ Aye aye, Commander. ]

Garrus watched as the Normandy took off and flew toward the main gate. It was time to catch up with Nihlus. His team would attack any resistance from behind.

xXx

It was quick. Almost no enemies except four mechs and one krogan - all that stood in the way of the main lab. Shepard and her team dealt with any obstacle quite fast. She knew what horrors awaited her. She promised herself not to look, not to think about the tanks, big or small, filled with fetuses or almost adult clones. Jane wanted to reach the main lab and extract the data, send it to Mordin, and walk away. She had hoped she would walk away from that place and never come back.

Raiding cloning facilities wasn't new to her. After all, humanity's most sacred law was broken a lot of times. Full body clones were forbidden. Only a few medical centres were allowed to clone parts of the body - internal organs or limbs. And were thoroughly examined, no screw ups allowed - or it would end up losing it's credibility.

Still, from time to time she had had to take her team and wipe out some illegal cloning facilities from existence. First one was the worst. She would never forget seeing mangled tissue, limbs, fetuses. Rotting corpses thrown on half burnt piles. And the stench of rotting flesh, of the formalin, of death. She knew the smell of death from the battlefield, of 2-3 days old bodies... but the smell coming from cloning facilities was different. It made even the staunchest of soldiers vomit. Also because of the horrors seen stored in jars, in tanks.

Thankfully the main lab was a sterile place, without the stench of store rooms filled with tanks. They passed those and reached a clean area. The whole squad was moving in complete silence, comm-link turned off. Everyone was listening for even the smallest sound, not paying attention to the sounds of the battle at the main gate, a background noise they almost muted in their heads.

Jane reached a bank of consoles on the far side, connected to a data hub. That was what they needed, that was what they came for. Shepard and Tali nodded in unison and started hacking. Still in silence, the Commander turned to Rolan and Jack and made circles with her index finger, also darting her eyes from left and right, ordering them to check the perimeter. At first Roland looked to the human, not understanding the signs but quickly grasped what she was meaning.

Jack gestured toward doors on the right. They checked them but found only a small storage room, filled with medical supplies. Next was doors on the left side of the main lab, it lead to a small corridor. The doors at the end of the corridor were blocked, a red circle indicated someone had locked it from the other side. Rolan approached them and started hacking, gesturing to the side. The biotic just smiled and took position there. The doors opened with a swoosh.

"You won't take us ali-" A terrified salarian shouted but was quickly silenced by a biotic field. Four salarians were trapped in the stasis by Jack.

The woman approached them and looked around. The room had another doors on the other side. She narrowed her eyes and stepped toward the salarian. He was looking at the biotic human with terror in his black eyes. "You blink once for no, twice for yes. You lie, you die. Understand?" She growled quietly.

The salarian blinked twice.
"Good." She said, observing how Rolan was handcuffing the other salarians behind their back. "Are you the scientist behind this?"

Two blinks again.

"Are there more of you? Scientists?"

One blink.

"Are guards here?"

One blink.

"Okay. If you're lucky, maybe you will live… or not." She said with a mischievous smirk, watching as the scientist's black eyes widened even further. She put handcuffs on him, while Rolan put them on the last. Jack broke the stasis field and all four salarians fell on the floor, powerless. With quick punches they rendered all of them unconscious - the last thing they needed were four screaming scientists.

"Let's check they weren't lying. Last thing we need are guards swooping in on us from those doors." The turian said, pointing at the doors. "By the way, your powers are top notch, only asari commandos could put four enemies into stasis at once."

"Thanks." Jack replied shortly, a bit baffled. Not only had she been at war with turians just one and a half years ago, now she was working with a bunch of them, being complimented even. But Nihlus' crew were okay, she thought to herself. "Pity, I couldn't see you posing as a stand-up comedian, or a chef."

"I was a good ambassador, to be honest." The turian smirked.

Both of them passed the doors leading to another corridor. It had doors on either side and on the far side as well. "Prison cells?" Jack asked looking into the window of one door.

"Rather test-subject cells," Rolan said and entered one, shocked. He didn't want to believe what he saw through the window but there she was… "A female krogan." The turian walked to the female only to learn she had been dead for some time. "Ugh, let's leave. Wrex will be furious."

"Why?"

"This is a female krogan. A dead female krogan. And judging by the state the body is in…" He closed the doors to block the smell coming from the body. "She was experimented on."

"Oh."

"Shit just hit the fan." Rolan moved from one window to another. "5 females, all dead. Rest of the cells are empty, but four bear the signs of occupants. So there might be 9 krogan females in total." He said to himself looking at an empty cell with displeased eyes. "Not good."

"Let's check a bit further." They started to walk forward when they heard someone moving behind them - Jane. "Oi, what's up?"

"Tali's forwarding data to Mordin. Most of the data wasn't encrypted at all. Only the most important messages and test results were encrypted with an old version of Mexir 2.567.5. We got that covered." She reported to her fellow squadmates. "What you got?"
"10 cells, 9 were occupied. 5 krogan female bodies found." Roland said and pointed at one cell with a krogan lying on the cot. "4 must have been removed earlier."

Jane nodded after a brief look through the window. Her face was cold and without any emotion, but inside she grimaced. From what she had learned from both Garrus and Nihlus, the extranet and Spectre training, she knew krogan kept their females more secure than any credits or other valuables. They were their treasures, having 9 dead females meant trouble. She didn't want to think about it now, there would be time for this. Soon. "Let's move."

The three of them moved toward the doors at the end of the corridor. Rolan was quick to hack it and a minute later, they stood in a hall filled with full as well as empty tanks, varying in size. Some of them had only single limbs inside, some of them full specimens of salarians, krogans, turians, quarians, even one asari - although not fully developed. Cloning asari was the most difficult, no one had ever accomplished that. All of them had seen such things already so nothing had made as strong an impression like that of the last tanks, stored at the end of the hall.

"Mutants." Roland spat with disgust at the sight. Krogans and turians with 4 hands, salarians with two heads and a quarian with turian mandibles. "And hybrids."

That was new to both Jane and Jack, they swallowed hard, trying their best not to puke here and now. "Soon this hellhole will be wiped out of existence." Shepard growled through clenched teeth. The radio pinged and the Commander turned her back and opened the comm-link. "Yeah?"

[ Professor Solus received the data Commander and is currently analyzing it. Nihlus commed me that they have breached the gate to the facility and are taking care of the merc leftovers. ] Joker reported. [ Commander Vakarian joined Nihlus. No casualties, some minor wounds except Kasumi. ]

"What happened?"

[ She was hit by a charging krogan, can you believe it? ] Joker asked quite excited. [ Apart from a fractured skull and broken ribs, she's intact. ]

"Good, it's lucky she's still alive. Such a small thing to be hit by a krogan." Jane shook her head, happy that Goto was alright.

[ Joker, do you copy? ] Nihlus' voice could be heard through the comm-link. [ Inform Jane that I want her on the Normandy in 30 minutes. ]

"I hear you, Nihlus." She replied. "I'm coming."

xXx

Jane entered the Normandy now docked on the landing zone in front of the main gate. She quickly passed the cargo deck and rode the elevator up to the CIC deck. She turned left to Mordin's lab. When she came inside, Nihlus and Garrus were already present. "Good job guys." The woman said with a tone that wasn't happy or even pleased.

"What's up, love?" Garrus moved to his wife, seeing her distress as soon as she entered.

"Besides dead female krogans, a whole bunch of tanks with clones, mutants and hybrids... nothing much." She spat out and letting herself grimace.

"Yeah, Rolan already pinged me with the memo." Nihlus nodded, growling faintly. It was clear that he was furious. "Wrex is on the way, I let him have his fun with last of the mercs."
Jane nodded. At least he had some fun before he learned what happened in this shity place. "He won't be pleased…"

"Ehh…" Nihlus just sighed, waiting for the inevitable. His krogan friend was likely to unleash hell. "Maybe let’s meet him outside?"

"Good idea." Mordin said, not looking up at them, still reading the data. "Angry krogan prone to violence. Smashing things - good stress relief for krogans. Vegetation the best target. No one will get hurt."

"What he said." Nihlus just shrugged and left the lab. Jane and Garrus after him. They met with Wrex outside and as Mordin foresaw, Wrex went into a complete and insane rage, unleashing mayhem over trees and bushes and rocks and anything that fell into his hands. It took him some time but he calmed. "We got them, Wrex, you will have your revenge."

"I know." He replied, sitting on the ground, panting. "They will beg for death."

Jane smiled. She wanted the same thing for those who were experimenting with life. She was pleased with the outcome. Maybe she was turning into a monster herself but seeing those abominations, half grown horrors, she was certain that the scientists behind it, deserved a slow and painful death. For toying with life, for posing as gods that they clearly weren’t.

Nihlus checked his pinging omni-tool. "Come on, Mordin has some pulmonary results."

Again Jane passed the cargo deck, then up to Solus' lab. When they were inside Mordin, tore his gaze from the data stream and moved back from the console. "This time it's true, they were working on the cure."

"Results?"

"Not even close. Got something to start with. Or rather... They wanted to invite someone. Don't know yet. Still decrypting. Will take time. Most likely a month or two." Solus as always was reporting quickly. "Hard encrypted data. Must be important."

"What about the facility?"

"Need to take samples. Scan the krogan females. Check their injuries.” The salarian almost jogged next to them from one side to the other. "Mutants also, and hybrids. Check the clones. Maybe find something.” He stopped for a moment, looking at Jane and Garrus. "Need to clear the air. Mission too important to keep secrets. I…"

"Don't worry, Mordin. They already know." Nihlus interrupted. "I told them from the beginning that we are working on curing the genophage."

"But they've earned the full story. Need to know me. What I can do. What I did." Mordin stopped, looking at the ground, ashamed. Wrex growled quietly. "I was working with STG. Initially just did recon. But uncovered data. Troubling. Krogan population was increasing at faster rate than expected. Krogan were adapting to genophage. Overcoming disease."

"Did the krogan evolve or did some of their scientists develop a treatment?" Jane asked earning laughs in return.

"Jane, it's hard to find a krogan scientist." Nihlus said with a humorous tone. "I've told you already."

"Krogan scientist? Hah." Mordin almost started to laugh but one glance from Wrex and he covered it
with a cough. "Never met a krogan scientist worthy of them."

"Oh, yeah… during the meeting. But, why?"

"You ask a krogan: would he rather find a cure for the genophage or fight for credits? He'll choose fighting every time." Wrex replied to her, not amused at all anymore. "It's just who we are, Shepard. I can't change that. Nobody can."


"Okay, but what changed your mind?"


"The krogan have become desperate." Jane nodded to herself. "And you really didn't expect the krogans to actually do something about the genophage?"

"Not like this."

"And now you want to repent for your mistake?"

"Yes. Made a mistake. Need to to this." The older salarian turned to her, a serious look on his wrinkled face. "My project. My work. My cure. My responsibility. Someone else may get it wrong."

Shepard didn't want to dig further. She saw that Solus was in pain. Maybe seeing the horror for himself made him realise that cold calculations in the lab weren't everything. That hiding behind statistics and ignoring new data, so transparent, is purely wrong. Simulations were worth shit in the real world because the real world doesn't give a squat about statistics. He saw what soldiers were dealing with in such facilities. What krogan have faced till now and had to endure. But for how long?

"We are here to help you, Professor." She stepped to the front. "Wrex." Both the salarian and krogan nodded in acknowledgment.

"Yes we are." Garrus agreed with his wife. "You can count on us." Even if initial disbelief and disagreement with Nihlus, and Jane also - the turian had to change his mind. Just like Professor Mordin did.

"Thank you, Commanders." The salarian dipped his head, meaning his words.

"You all are my sweethearts." Nihlus broke the silence with his joke. "But tell me, doc, what are our next steps?"

"Like I said, need samples. Will check dead krogans. Cause of death. Also, clones, experiments. Then we nuke the place." The last part he said as casually as the rest of the sentence, that made Jane and Wrex giggle. "We follow standard procedures."

"That's a good plan. Okay guys. Wrex, go to the facility and search for any survivors or unlucky
"bastards that are left standing." The krogan hit his fists together and left. Kryik turned to the Vakarians. "And you two, my lovebirds, go write up reports for the Council. In 1 hour we will send them to the councillors."

xXx

Jane was free of her armour, sitting on the couch in their room, writing a report on the datapad. Garrus was by the computer, doing the same. Making it quick - both had learned long ago that military reports have to be precise and short. It wasn't for storytelling, just fast descriptions of moving from A to B, plus essential data that might be useful. Garrus was faster to finish it, as he hadn't seen too much, his objectives weren't as important - disrupting their communication and AA towers, then aiding Nihlus.

The woman had more to write, she had passed labs and halls with tanks, she saw dead krogan females, she saw all these terrible things he had yet to see for himself. Garrus knew he had to go there and see it with his own eyes. Which made him uncomfortable. Seeing pictures was one thing but going there and experiencing it - totally different deal. Garrus sighed, he saved his report and forwarded it to Nihlus.

The turian stood up and decided he needed a quick shower, lucky for him there was still time. He glanced at his wife - the tension on her face was visible. Vakarian realised that her cold Commander mask had worn off, she was showing real emotions now - and was deeply moved, pained by what she had seen. He knew that it wasn't the first time for her, she had been there and done that. Still it got her down. As the overprotective husband he was, all he wanted was to scoop her into his arms and take it all off her back. Make her happy.

"I'll take a shower." He said and got only a slight nod in response. I will talk with her later… He mused while washing his plates. I bet she thinks about the facility she was born in… maybe about her parents. And about the horrible things she saw. But first they would have to join Nihlus in the briefing room and talk with the Council.

xXx

"We've got your reports." Councillor Valern started the meeting. "Good job. Please continue with the standard procedure. Gather data and wipe it out."

"Of course, Councillor." Nihlus agreed.

"Thank you for not including any photos, this time." Sparatus added. "Much appreciated."

"I didn't want to upset your weak stomach anymore, Sir." He replied with concern in his voice, feigned or not - hard to judge. Jane had to bite her lips so as not to burst into laughter. "One time is enough, I think." The turian councillor's mandibles shut tight and he didn't say anything more.

Tevos and Valern also seemed to fight to keep their composure. To change the subject, the asari gestured toward Jane and Garrus. "What about our soon-to-be Spectres? Judging from the reports, everything went smoothly."

"Yes. I may sound too confident, but I knew they would make me proud." Kryik said, his mandibles spread a bit in a turian grin. "I hold to my word and recommend them as Council Spectres."

"Very well." She nodded. "Notify us when you finish on Virmire, we will organise a ceremony for you, Commanders. Good luck." The asari pushed a button on the console and the councillors vanished.
Jane and Garrus turned to Nihlus, happy about both his and Tevos' words. The turian offered his hand to Jane, she quickly grabbed it and shook it with a smile plastered on her face. "Thank you, my friend."

"Yes, thanks Nihlus." Garrus was second to shake hands with his Spectre friend. "At last, you proved to be useful." He grinned at the other turian.

"Someday I'll shoot your stupid ass off." Kryik replied with a laugh. "Congratulations you two. Soon the real work starts."

xXx

A bit of action, a bit of drama :D hope you liked it :) share your thoughts in the reviews and comments.
Surprise :D I got ya'll new chapter.

Buying new computer was postponed for who knows when : but I want Mass Effect: Andromeda sooo much :_; this makes me soooo sad.

At least I can play Mass Effect Trilogy ;) and write this fic.

Enjoy!

xXx

Chapter 21

Checking on the ground teams that had come back to the Normandy, took Nihlus some time. It had been almost two hours since he and the Vakarian's had returned to look over the data with Mordin and report back to the Citadel. Soon all surviving mercs had been eliminated and the facility was now empty. Almost, as one of his team had found 6 salarians from STG in the prison cells. Jack and Rolan also captured scientists and put them in the brig. They would be interrogated soon - Wrex couldn't wait for that. He already was eager to snap each bone in their weak fingers. Nihlus had to order him to calm down and take care of Tali. She also helped, almost dragging him to their room.

Captain Kirrahe and his men were located in the empty crew rooms. The Normandy became more crowded and Nihlus had to admit that it was nice to have a bit more crew - he needed to see to that in the future.

When everyone was checked on in the ship, he went from the cargo deck up to the med-bay. Except Kasumi, who was now lying under the medical scanner. Shakria had treated her few minor injuries. Nothing fatal - and that was a success for Nihlus, considering the scale of the mission. "How is she?"

"Lt. Goto will be suspended for at least 3 weeks. Nanobots are already working on the skull and ribs." The turian doctor said as she patted Tarquin on the arm. "You are free to go, Lt. Next time try not to engage in hand-to-hand combat with a krogan, please."

"Yes, ma'am." Victus saluted and left the med-bay.

"Does she need any better medical treatment or can you handle it here?" Nihlus approached the sleeping human woman, now without her usual hood. She had dark rings under her eyes and was a bit pale - well, she was always pale but now even more so.

"No, with all the new stuff here you got me, I can treat her onboard." Shakria glimpsed over at the human then sat in front of the computer. "I'll send you a report soon."

"Thanks." He replied and turned to leave, passing Shepard as he was leaving. "Jane, she's sleeping and stable. Ask our nice doc about the details."

"Thanks, Nihlus." Jane patted him on the shoulder as she was passing him.

The turian left the med-bay and went to his quarters to check on all the reports. Almost all the reports were rather short and mainly about the combat. Those more interesting were from Jane's squad. And Mordin - at least his initial report. For a full one he would have to wait. He was finishing reading Rolan's report when a ping at the door interrupted him. The VI announced Jane and Captain Kirrahe.

"Open." He ordered the VI, the door swooshed and his guests came in.
"Captain wanted to speak to us." Jane came in and sat by the round table in the center of his quarters, sporting a mug with a hot beverage in her hand.

"Spectre." The salarian dipped his head. Nihlus gestured at the table, the Captain nodded and sat down.

The turian stood up from his place and sat by the table. "What about your hubby?"

"He has the deck now." She said while blowing at the steam coming from her mug. "I'll pass along whatever we discuss here."

Kryik nodded in acknowledgment. He turned to Kirrahe, feeling that reading all the reports had made him tired. "What can I help you with, Captain?"

"I need to speak to you, Spectres." The salarian started with a serious tone. Somehow Nihlus knew where that would lead. "Off the record, of course."

"Yes?" He asked eyeing Jane. The woman raised her brows in anticipation, she also knew what the conversation would be about.

"I have this feeling that your mission…" Kirrahe scratched his neck nervously. Darting his eyes from Jane to Nihlus. "Your mission is to cure the genophage."

"Oh…" Jane just said and blowed onto her mug again.

"Captain." Kryik began and he could feel how tired and sleepy he was. Trying hard to not to get annoyed. "What we're doing here is important and will save us doing missions like this in the future. Of course it's highly classified so I will know if you or anyone from STG spilled any info about it. You will be charged with treason." The turian didn't bother to muster any sign of threat in his voice. His voice was as casual as if he were talking about the latest elcor play.

"Yes, I understand." The salarian nodded eagerly. "No one from my team suspects anything anyway."

"Good."

"I just wanted to make sure."

"Sometimes ignorance is a bliss." Jane said behind her mug. "I'd live a happy life without seeing these facilities."

"Not the first time, huh?"

"Yeah, humans had the same shitholes." Jane sighed and looked at the salarian. "What I can't understand is… why the salarians and turians did it to krogans."

"At the time they considered it the best idea." The salarian stood up. "Thank you for clearing the air. I won't say anything, trust me. I have too many problems anyway." He dipped his head, saluting and left.

"You look shitty, Nihlus, go to sleep. You take the deck in 6 hours." Shepard stood up, scratched his nose plates playfully, making them twitch. "I'm going to hit the hay too."

"Okaaay, mom." He said and did as he was told to, falling in his bed powerless. "Goodnight."

Jane smiled at her friend, turning the light off. "Night, night."
Garrus was dead tired. He could barely stand when he entered the elevator. Jane was curled up on
the bed, sleeping. Her face was tense, he could see it even in the dimmed light of their turian quickly
changed into his sleeping shorts and slipped under the covers, taking the tiny woman into his arms.
She visibly relaxed. That woman... The turian inhaled her scent and smiled to himself, soon he was
fast asleep.

But Jane slept only two hours more, waking up nestled in the hot arms of her husband. Garrus only
mumbled something when she extracted herself from his arms. She looked up through the window, it
was still dark. She checked on the data-pad, it was still 3 hours till dawn. And her shift would start in
6 hours.

The woman changed into her favourite Alliance casuals and decided that coffee was a must. A quick
ride two decks down and she was on the crew deck. She headed to the kitchen, passing the mess
hall. With a still groggy voice, she greeted the crew that was currently off duty. Vega was sitting
with Kasumi and the green skinned asari, Shiula. At the second table was the drell Krios, explaining
his religious beliefs to Ashley. To Jane's surprise, because she knew damn well Ash was nervous
around aliens - after all she was really religious and it was hard for her to learn that there were aliens
in the galaxy.

Shepard was waiting for her coffee, leaning on the kitchen counter, when Nihlus came down to the
mess hall and straight to her. "Good morning, Jane."

"Hi."

"Come to my office when you get your coffee."

The woman waited just a few moments more when the coffee maker made her a mug full of the
delicious hot beverage - she was grateful to Nihlus that he installed it on the Normandy. She waved
playfully to Vega and Kas who smiled at her and then entered Nihlus' quarters. "What's up?"

"Tali and Wrex just returned from the facility." Nihlus said looking at his datapad. "She
reprogrammed the security protocols, patrol drones and cameras so we have access and full control
over it."

"That's good." 

"So now we will take Garrus and Mordin and we will find every piece of evidence and data not
stored in the central databank." The turian stood up and paced around the room. Coming up with a
plan for the next couple of days. "I want us to work hard and purge that place as fast as possible."

"Hate to be here, or do you expect a recon team?"

"Both." His mandibles twitched, he sighed heavily. With the amount of data they would have to
decode, they had work to do for the next few months. "This one is big, the biggest we've taken out.
A lot of creds were spend on it. We have to expect someone will show up sooner or later. But, I
already have my security protocols running on the mass relay and nearby satellites and comm-buoys.
No one will pass by without us knowing it first."

"Good. So when do you want to leave?"

"In five hours. Go get some more shut-eye, or rest... because it's going to be a long day."

"Aye aye."
"Spirits..." Garrus left the hall full of tanks containing clones, hybrids and mutants, clearly disgusted. Jane was sure that he would have been pure white if he was human. "That's the most sick and disgusting thing I've seen in my life."

Jane patted him on the arm. "There, there, Big Guy. First time is the worst."

"Thanks…" He replied with clear disgust. "To think there are more of these places across the galaxy."

"And it's nearly impossible to wipe 'em out." Shepard said while looking for the last time inside the storage hall. "Let's go, Mordin and Nihlus are coming." The Vakarian's went to where Mordin and Nihlus were. The salarian peeked through the window to see a dead krogan female.

"Let's start here." All four of them entered the cell, but only Mordin approached the body. He scanned it with his omni-tool. "Dead krogan. Female. Tumors indicate experimentation. No restraint marks. Volunteer."

"She volunteered for that?!" Garrus was shocked to the core. Being abducted and experimented on - that was a common thing, but willingly giving yourself like that, was unheard of.

"Welcome to our sick world." Nihlus just said that, his voice so flat and tired.

Meanwhile Mordin was still talking to mostly himself. "Sterile Wyrlock female…"

"Wyrlock?" Jane whispered to Kryik.

"One of the krogan clans."

"Oh." Jane only nodded, turning to Mordin again.

"... willing to risk procedure. Hoped for cure. Pointless." The salarian hung his head, looking at the krogan with hurt in his eyes. "Pointless waste of life. Never wanted this. Can see it logically… but still unnecessary. Foolish waste of life. Hate to see it."

"Rest, young mother. Find your god. Find someplace better."

"Come on, doc." Nihlus stepped toward the kneeling salarian, putting a hand on his shoulder. "We have to move."

"Yes." Professor Solus stood up and they went to check on all the other krogan females. Each in a similar state. Different experiments were conducted, yet all of them proved to be fatal. "Nine females. None of them survived. Experiments performed here… unethical."

"Let's go, Mordin."

Nihlus turned on his heel and left the room, Jane and Garrus after him. Only the salarian hesitated. He looked one last time at the female's body, now lying lifeless on the cot. He wanted to justify the genophage for so long, but the first time he saw a krogan female tortured and experimented on, something broke in him. He realised his mistakes, and now, after dozens more facilities were stumbled upon at first with STG and now with Kryik - Mordin was certain that the genophage had to be cured. He was glad that the Council saw his reasons, that it agreed for the cure. Despite what the salarian Dalatrass would have to say about the matter.
All four of them began searching for any new evidence. Each of them scanned data pads, consoles and papers scattered around. Checking the integrity with data already copied to the Normandy. It was slow work but had to be done - no evidence could be omitted.

"Where are they?" Wrex entered the lab where Jane and Nihlus were checking on some papers.

"Wrex, you shouldn't…"

"Don't tell me what I should and what I shouldn't do, Nihlus." Wrex snarled at his friend. "I want to see them."

"Past those labs, you will find a corridor at the back of the main lab." Kryik gestured toward the room on the right.

A few minutes passed when they could hear a loud roar from afar. Jane and Nihlus exchanged worried looks. Just seconds later, the angry krogan rushed outside, passing them on the way. "Will he be alright?"

Nihlus shrugged. "Same as always. It gets him every damn time."

"I understand."

"No, you don't. No one does." Kryik said. "Not you, not me, not even Mordin. No one. He's hundreds of years old. Saw shit straight from nightmares. He saw what the genophage did to his people from day one. Hell, he lost 50 children... I really tried to understand him but no other species in the entire galaxy was almost sterilized. At first he gave up on his people. He became a merc… and was a merc for a long, long time. Wrex would still be merc but Tali changed him."

"How?"

"She almost killed the guy. Then we met, he saved my ass and we became friends..."

"Wait, wait! You're kidding me, Nihlus…"

"No, he's not." Garrus entered the branch lab. "Mordin is reading some messages, he wanted you to read it." He said to Kryik. "Go and I'll take your place here."

"Be good, kids." Nihlus warned them, grinning. "Don't do anything I wouldn't do."

"Idiot. Go." Garrus pushed him to the doors. He approached Jane and leaned to touch his head with hers. "How are things?"

"So far nothing new or of importance." Shepard smiled a bit. "So tell me the story."

"It was on Therum. Spirits it was so hot there…"

"That's new… you're complaining about the temperature? Of all… people?"

"If molten lava is involved then yes, I do." The turian hissed at the mere memory of the heat blowing straight in his face. "So, my platoon assisted Nihlus on Therum."

"Wait, wait!" Shepard interrupted again. "Therum… Liara said she was at a dig site on Therum."

"Really?"

"And that it was attacked…"
"Maybe she was one of the archeologists. I don't really know, I never reached the dig site," Garrus thought for a moment, scanning the datapad that Jane put in his hands. "My platoon was sent to assist Nihlus on his mission wh-..."

"But, wait..." Jane stopped him yet again. The turian sighed in annoyance, he didn't like to be interrupted. "How did those two meet? And why did Tali want to kill Wrex?"

"Because he wanted to steal my ship." The quarian entered the lab, looking around. "Wrex lost it again, and I don't want to take care of it right now... or ever."

"Hi, Tali'Zorah." The human greeted the sudden intruder. She felt a bit embarrassed about talking about Tali when she showed up. "Sorry that we're talking about you..."

"It's okay. We haven't had much time to get to know each other." The suited woman came closer to Jane and Garrus, watching as they were scrolling through the messages and comparing them with the data on the Normandy. "Nihlus pinged me to come here and help. Just point me where to begin and I can share my story... because, Commander, I know a lot about you. And I already know Garrus."

"Nihlus?"

"Nihlus." The quarian started to laugh. "At first I thought he had fallen in love with you... but then Josephine came into his life and he talked mostly about her. But let me start the story..."

xXx

It was an important mission for Tali'Zorah vas Rannoch - it wasn't everyday that the Admiralty Board gives you a solo task. None of the dangerous sort, no, but crucial for Quarian-Council relations. Her species wasn't welcome in Council space. Scarce amounts of quarians ever managed to leave the Terminus system to roam the other side of the galaxy.

Tali looked at her guardian, her own geth - Legion. He was her protector from the day she was born, always keeping an eye on her... his one funny glowing eye - well, technically a camera but she always thought of him as more of an organic than machine. She knew that the Council was against the geth, only because of the rogue faction of them. She wanted to clear the air, explain why they had left Rannoch and why they had turned against everyone.

"Creator Tali, we're in comm-range of the Citadel." Legion announced with his mechanical voice. It snapped her from her musings. "Should I request a spot in the docking bay?"

"No, I'll handle it." Tali smiled at her geth. This was her task and she wanted to see it through. "Citadel control, this is Ayanee from Rannoch, are we clear to descend?"

[ This is Citadel Docking Control, Ayanee permission granted. Dock E-11. ] A turian voice sounded from the speaker. [ Please be advised that you will have to pass through dock security to enter the Citadel. Council orders. ]

"Understood. Ayanee out." Tali severed the connection and growled nervously. "Those bosh'tets, treat us like some evil scientists! Because we created you. If they knew how sweet you are, Legion..."

"Creator Tali, we wish not to undermine your mission." Legion said, looking at his creator and waving the plates on his 'head'.

"You won't. After all I want to show them that your kind is not harmful." At least she hoped she would be able to do so. Quarians had tried to persuade the Council that the geth weren't a threat to anyone, that, although they were machines, they were AI that was capable of learning, deciding for
themselves and that they had peacefully coexisted with their creators for almost 3 centuries.

While Legion was supervising docking on the Citadel, the woman went to her quarters to change into her environmental suit. Rannoch was so clean, pathogenic microbes were comparatively rare outside the biosphere, that's why the quarians' immune systems were rather weak. They knew that outside of Rannoch, they had to wear suits. Only their ships had a sterile environment to make leaving the planet possible.

She sealed her helmet and headed to the cockpit again. Seeing the Citadel in front of her for the very first time. The woman felt a bit nervous. "Ugh…"

"Creator Tali, your heartbeat is elevated. You are under heavy stress. We suggest that you calm down." Legion turned his long head toward her, cocking it to the side like he was curious of something.

"Don't worry. I'm just stressed." She tried to assure both the geth and herself. But she couldn't calm herself, she knew that her mission was too important. "The Admiralty Board really wants quarians to be a part of the galactic community, not restricted just to Rannoch."

"Is Rannoch bad?"

"I told you it's not. That's not the point." Tali sighed and shook her head. She knew that Admiralty reasons were hard to comprehend by geth. They didn't care about colonising new planets or going somewhere driven by mere curiosity. They had all they needed on Rannoch and with the quarian colonies. "We want to travel around the whole galaxy, not just Terminus."

"If that's important for Creator Tali, it's important for us." Legion simply nodded. That's what she adored about him, he didn't question her choices. He just calculated them and could sometimes suggest a better approach or a different way to finish with the same result.

They docked at the designated dock and Tali went with Legion to the airlock. After a moment of depressurising the small space, the airlock finally opened and they left the ship just to be stopped by a turian and an asari officer. As Tali could only guess - they were C-Sec officers, judging by their blue armour. "Freeze! You're not authorized to bring AI to the Citadel."

"Legion is my guardian. He is not armed, he just takes care of me." Tali tried to oppose but when she saw the turian pointing a weapon at Legion and the flare of biotics, she knew it was hopeless. "Ehh, fine. Legion please wait for me inside."

"But I was told by Creator Admiral Raan and Creator Admiral Zorah to…"

"I know what you were told but the situation changed." Tali said firmly.

"Acknowledged. This unit will remain on the ship." The geth turned around and entered the ship again.

Tali turned to the officers with mixed feelings. On one hand she felt a bit unsecured. Legion was always her silent, or not, follower. But on the other hand she saw the officers visibly relax. Why they were so scared? "I have an appointed meeting with the Councillors."

"Yes. Cab is waiting, Ms. Zorah." The asari checked her omni-tool and nodded. "Just please pass by the counter and show your ID to travel control. Have a nice day."

The quarian followed them up to the counter. All was finalized quickly and she was escorted to a cab by a turian concierge. 20 minutes later she was sitting in the Council Tower in one of the many
offices. Just a few moments later a turian, an asari, and a salarian came inside. Tali stood up quickly and showed her respect by bowing slightly. "Councillors."

"Zorah vas Rannoch, yes?" The asari smiled at the quarian and gestured toward the doors. "Let's move to the meeting room." All four of them went to the other part of the office, with a large glass table and a breathtaking view at the Citadel. Everything was white and glass.

"Tell us, Ms. Zorah, what is it that the Quarian Conclave and Admiralty Board wants from us?" The turian asked politely but Tali could swear he was tired and wanted to go home. He tried to mask it with manners yet she was good at reading people and situations. That's why she was sent after all.

"As it was already written in the formal application, we want to become part of the galactic and Council community. You're ban had really staggered our economy and development." Tali explained, showing charts on her omni-tool. "We just want permission to travel, trade and settle within Council space."

"What about the geth?" The salarian asked plainly. "I'm fairly certain you know, miss, that Council Law no. 231, paragraph 31, states that no AI is allowed in Council space."

"Yes, I understand but it's…"

"We cannot allow the past to be repeated, Miss Zorah." The salarian stood up. "My species knows first hand what an unshackled AI can do…"

"That was a thousand years ago, Councillor." Tali stated. "The geth are different."

"Are they?" The turian asked. "What about the rogue geth attacking our trading vessels?"

"They were…"

"We don't care why they started it, Miss Zorah." The asari raised her hand in an elegant way, silencing the quarian woman. "The quarian people need to take care of this problem."

"Problem?!" Tali stood up, so mad - she wanted to explode, taking those idiots with her. "You don't know them! You haven't see what they've managed to do along with us on Rannoch! Our plants flourish, it's so clean that it's hard to catch a cold lately. They guard our children, they brainstorm with our scientists. We gave them a chance and didn't regret it even for a second. And that rouge fac-…"

"This meeting is adjourned." The asari said, then looked down at her omni-tool. "Until the quarians meet with our terms, we won't allow anything. We will send an official reply to the Admiralty Board and Conclave. This is all. Good day." The three councillors stood up, not saying anything more.

Tali was escorted to the docking bay, feeling bad, and guilty, and angry. She couldn't even explain anything! "Biased bastards." She muttered now and then. The quarian was so preoccupied that she didn't see the fuss on the docking bay. She passed the travel control once again and entered her ship.

"Creator Tali?"

"Those bosh'tets!" She screamed in the confinement of her ship. "Those braindead bosh'tets!"

"Creator, those words are restricted for use..." Legion was standing up, just moments ago still in offline mode. "Creator I sense so-"

"Don't talk to me right now, Legion. I'm mad." She said and sat in the cockpit. "Citadel Docking
Bay Control, Ayanee requesting permission to take off."

[Citadel Docking Bay Control, permission granted. ] This time it was a salarian voice that sounded through the speakers. [Have a safe flight.]

"Thank you." She said and severed the connection, she felt the clamps of the docking bridge unlock and the second she was free to take off she was flying away. "Never again. Fuck Citadel space and the idiots that live here."

"Creator Tali we nee-..." Legion again wanted to say something. But she hushed him again.

They flew toward the mass relay and the second she passed it she knew something was wrong. The ship's mass changed. "Legion! What's going on?"

"Male krogan boarded the ship while I was offline, Creator Tali." Legion stated. "He's hiding in the holding area downstairs. His breath pattern and brain waves indicate he's... sleeping."

"What the..." Tali stood up and put her mask on again. She knew she would get sick anyway. The woman approached a hidden shelf for her reliable shotgun. "Yes, good to have you in my hands, baby." Almost lovingly she caressed the gun. "What do you suggest?"

"We have concluded the two best ways of dealing with a male krogan, Creator Tali." Legion said while they were going down to the cargo bay. "First: we can trap him in a mass effect field, but it will reduce our fuel supply. Or second: vent out all the air."

"I like the second option better, Legion." She said with a mischievous smile on her lips. No one could see it though. "Start the procedure and I'll wake him up."

"Understood. Venting air started."

Tali saw the bloodied body of a krogan lying on the floor. The mix of blood colours suggested that he had fought hard against turians, asari and salarians. She saw both purple and blue, and salarian yellowish-green too. "You said his vitals were stable?"

"Yes. Krogans regenerate fast. He already healed his major wounds."

While there were talking, the trespasser had started to wake up. It didn't take long before he was on his feet but instantly he realised something was off. The krogan gasped for air but the venting process was already at 65%. "What did you do?" He growled.

"I should be the one to ask that, krogan!" Tali pointed at him accusingly. "You broke into MY ship!"

"I... I didn't know. I just wanted to rest somewhere for awhile, hide." He said and again gasped for air, vented at almost 80%. "Please..." The krogan said with a wheezing hoarse voice. "I'll do anything."

"Reverse vent procedure, Legion." Tali ordered. "But one funny thing, krogan, and I'll start it over again. Faster, this time."

The krogan fell to his knees, weak and beaten. "I promise, you have my word."

"I've heard that the word of a krogan is worth shit." She said as she went to fetch some medi-gel and other medical supplies. "Strip off that armor. We need to patch you up."

With a grunt, the krogan took off his armour and sat on the bench. Multiple scars on his arms and
torso indicated he wasn't new to a good fight. "Thank you, quarian."

"I have a name."

"Me too." Tali narrowed her eyes at the krogan. She waited till he grunted again and rolled his eyes. "My name is Wrex. Urdnot Wrex."

"Tali'Zorah vas Rannoch." She said, taking his arm in a harsh manner. The woman looked at it from one side then from the other and started to apply medi-gel. "You are lucky I have levo medi-gel."

"I would heal anyway." Even so, he quietly left her to tend to his wounds, grunting in pain from time to time. "Thank you, Miss Zorah."

"Before you thank me, better tell me why I shouldn't give you to the first turian patrol I see?" She said, folding her arms and leaning on one leg. Her nice curves all visible.

Wrex had to say she was a pleasant sight. He was bored with asari anyway. "Because I didn't do anything wrong. C-Sec usually take me for a little chit-chat every time I show myself on the Citadel. But today they accused me of killing some idiots. I wasn't on the Citadel at that time. I just got in and they already were jumping on me."

"You know, you don't look innocent at all."

"I get that a lot..."

"Creator Tali, I got the signal."

"Where are they?"

"One ship in Hades Gamma." The geth reported and went upstairs.

"If you want to leave the ship somewhere then say so. I've got a job to do." Tali turned again to Wrex. "Or if you're in for some fight then you're welcome to stay."

"You want to trust me?"

"You gave me your word. And you can end up with no air your lungs." Tali said while walking toward the stairs. "I think I have the upper hand." She sat in the cockpit and scrolled through the data Legion had gotten. "One ship? Where is the rest?"

"We don't know."

"You sure they are geth?"

"Positive."

"If you say so... let's investigate it." Tali moved her hand to the steering console and plotted a course toward the Hades Gamma cluster. She was in the Exodus Cluster so it was only one jump away.

Meanwhile Wrex came up, still out of his armour. His arms and chest patched up. "So what is the job you're talking about? And what will I get from it?"

"We want to find a rouge geth ship." She said casually, raising Wrex's interest. "Whatever you loot is yours."
"And what if there isn't anything worthy?"

"Life is a gamble." The woman replied shortly, not even looking at him.

Wrex had to say that this girl was really interesting. He liked women with a temper. Just like… no it wasn't time to dwell on the past. "I'm in, Miss Zorah."

"Tali is fine." Again she didn't bother to look at him. "Legion, control everything. I'll go take some antibiotics." She stood up and went down stairs again.

The quarian went to the medical supply shelf and took up a pack of antibiotics. She took off her mask and environmental suit. Sighing, she injected the medication. She knew that a mild fever and shitty days awaited her thus it would be better is she finished quick. "Legion, connect me with Admiral Rael'Zorah."

[ Acknowledged. ]

Tali sat behind the desk and waited till her father's face lit up on the console. They talked for a moment. She reported what had happened on the citadel and that she had located one of the rouge geth ships. "I'll be on Rannoch in two weeks I suppose."

[ Good, be careful, child. Let Legion handle the job. ]

"I know dad, Tali out." The woman leaned on the chair, regarding the ceiling. It would take, best case scenario, 6 hours to locate the ship, in the worst, 20. She hoped Legion would do his job fast and she hoped they would locate all the remaining ships. Her thoughts were interrupted by the krogan. She almost jump in fear.

"So you want to hunt those rogue geth you quarians sent to Citadel space?"

"We didn't send them." She said and turned her face to the krogan. "They were... You know what I'm done with explaining this shit!"

Wrex looked at the girl without the mask on her face. She looked like a goddess to him. "Wow, you are beautiful sight."

"What?!"

"You are beautiful."

"That doesn't have anything to do with what we're talking about." The woman said, flustered, feeling blush creeping up on her neck, up toward her cheeks. "All you council species are the same..."

"No, we're not." The krogan said firmly. "I'll help you, Tali, because something so beautiful shouldn't go alone on a risky mission."

"I don't understand you."

"You don't have to.

They didn't talk much for the next 7 hours while the ship jumped through the relay and located the ship. The geth ship didn't emit any signal but Legion could find it anyway. Wrex approached Tali and her geth guardian, looking through the window. "Why aren't they attacking? They should've spotted us through the window long ago."

"Geth ships don't have windows." Tali said as though it was so obvious.
"Why?"

"Structural weakness." Legion explained.

Tali, Wrex and Legion boarded the ship. Legion guided him to the central data bank, which stored part of the rogue geth software. Before the rogue faction could counteract Legion and Tali's hacking, their program was rewritten to its original state. Tali also added tough firewalls to block all attempts for those geth to revert. "Summon standard unit." She ordered.

Moments later, a standard geth unit was standing in front of her.

"Creator Tali'Zorah." He dipped his metal head.

"Take this vessel and return to Rannoch." She ordered. "Do not engage with any other ships. Report to Admiral Raan then return to the consensus."

"Affirmative."

When everything was done, Tali turned to Wrex, who had taken a tour around the ship. "See, nothing risky."

"I didn't know, still, better to be safe than sorry." Wrex said, winking at Tali. She hissed at him in return. "I found some weapons, mods and supplies that we can take with us. And prothean tech too."

"Prothean tech?"

"Yeah." He waved at her to follow him. They went down to the geth ship's cargo hold and inside Wrex guided her to four different containers. "They are from different ships."

"I see..." Tali picked up data pads from the containers. Inside there really was Prothean relics and tech. "Geth don't need supplies... they were after those..."

"This tech is illegal. Only certified teams of archaeologists can dig out Prothean ruins and own artifacts." Wrex said but only got a hiss in reply.

"I know, wise-ass. I may live on Rannoch but I know Council Law." She growled. "We have access to Galactic News."

"You are really sexy when you are angry like that." Wrex said and started to laugh. He turned around and left the cargo bay.

"What...? She regarded the vanishing back of the krogan, trying to understand what had just happened. After a moment she concluded that he was making a joke of her. "Legion, call some prime units here."

xXx

"That's how we met." Tali ended her story as well as the inspection of the lab. "It was... 6 years ago. Time sure flies fast..."

"It does..." Garrus said, turning to Jane. "You need to hear how I met those two."

"That was fun!" Tali snorted. "We saved Nihlus' retarded ass."

"So I've heard." Jane laughed in unison with Zorah.
"I'm not retarded." Nihlus entered the lab but quickly spun back to Mordin behind him. "Don't say a word, doc." Mordin was opening his mouth to say something but gave up. "Okay, folks. That's it for today. We will check the new data and start anew tomorrow."

xXx

How did you like Tali story? :D Hope it wasn't too bad.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!