

Mass Effect: Eurydice

Von Bint-Lilith

Kapitel 3: The Infidel

"Man, that's a huge storm", Lieutenant Vega muttered nervously, his voice fuzzy due to his helmet. "Looks a lot bigger from up close."

"Pretty average for Mars actually", Kaidan replied rather unimpressed. He still could not quite believe that he was on a mission with Commander Shepard. A few weeks ago he was stationed in Vancouver, where Shepard was under arrest for working with Cerberus. Right before the Reapers started attacking earth they had bumped into each other. More than half a year had passed since he had last seen her. He had never visited her when incarcerated. He had never dared. Upon seeing her again he had not felt as awkward as he might have thought. He had felt delighted. She was looking good. Her scars were gone. And she was actually talking to him. Nevertheless both him and her had seemed uneasy when chatting up briefly. Then the Reapers attacked and husks were all over the place. It was never peaceful for long when around Shepard. And a few hours later he found himself in the Normandy SR-2's Cargo Bay preparing for their mission on Mars.

Vega snorted. "At least one of us is optimistic".

"You're chickening out, Vega?", Kaidan replied as the two men followed Shepard. It was average for spring on Mars. There were plenty of duststorms during the perihelion. The one they were facing now was rather unimpressive. "With the reapers invading earth and the station here offline, a little duststorm should be the least of our worries."

Kaidan heard Vega mumbling something into the comm. The Lieutenant had been Shepard's guard for the last six months. Kaidan was not sure how he should feel towards the Lieutenant. Shepard seemed to trust him. When they had left earth for Mars he had even contradicted her. He was young, too young for Shepard. Still Kaidan could not get rid of the slight jealousy he felt because of Lieutenant Vega.

Since entering the Normandy Kaidan and Shepard had not communicated much except of a few mission related sentences. But being here on Mars again with her reminded him of the past. Of their missions together back on the SR-1. Albeit him being still suspicious of Shepard he felt good. Almost at home.

Shepard was running ahead of them not paying attention to Vega's and Kaidan's conversation. Was she avoiding him? He was looking at her figure as they were rushing through the stony red landscape. The woman in front of him, a woman he once had loved, a woman he had doubted, had actually managed to blow up the Collector basis, afterwards turning herself to the Alliance. *'Perhaps doubting her had been a mistake'*, he thought to himself. Suddenly there were gunshots. As they passed some crates they could make out a dozen Cerberus soldiers shooting kneeling

Alliance soldiers. Anger started spreading inside Kaidan.

"Holy shit", Vega spoke out aghast. "They're executing them". Shepard immediately dashed forward shooting at the Cerberus troops using her M-3 Predator pistol with Vega and Kaidan backing her up.

"Those guys were Cerberus, weren't they?", Vega asked after they had eliminated the last of the hostile troopers.

"Seems so", Shepard responded. Making Kaidan even angrier.

"What is Cerberus doing here on Mars?", he asked the question directed to Shepard.

"I don't know," she said without turning around, instead she continued heading towards the station. Kaidan ran after her.

"You don't know?", there was a reproach in his undertone.

"I'm not with Cerberus anymore, Kaidan, if it's that what you mean," she sounded annoyed.

"It seems suspicious at least."

She did not bother responding further to that. Kaidan knew he should probably stop questioning her. It would not benefit the mission and the team's morale. Nevertheless he was angry and wanted to talk to her. She must have known at least something. After all she had been for months with Cerberus.

As they continued into the station, shooting several more of the Cerberus troopers, he walked up to her while she was operating the elevator. "Shepard, I need a straight answer."

"Kaidan...", she turned away obviously annoyed, pressing one hand into her hip the other on her face.

"Don't "Kaidan" me. I'm serious", she turned around again. "Do you have any information on why Cerberus is here? You must at least know something."

"And why exactly do you think I would know that?", she sounded both angry and hurt. Upon hearing the slight pain in her voice he turned away before continuing. "Damn it, Shepard! You worked for them. You were flying around the galaxy on their ship, with a Cerberus crew, fulfilling Cerberus missions. It's reasonable to think you'd know something."

"Reasonable, huh? Well fuck that. I never worked *for* them!", Kaidan winced at her furious tone. "They rebuilt me, they gave me a ship, they gave me resources, I brought down the Collectors, afterwards turning myself in to the Alliance. What more do you want to hear?" she came to lean next to him on the elevator railing. He could not face her. "Listen. I've had no contact with Cerberus since destroying the Collector base. I have no fucking idea why they're here or what they want. Understood?"

Kaidan bit the inside of his cheek. She was probably telling the truth. Still it confused him. There had to be more to it.

"Commander Shepard has been under constant surveillance since coming back to earth. No way they've communicated since," Lieutenant Vega threw in supporting Shepard. It annoyed Kaidan that Vega interfered. He had a point there though.

"Sorry, Shepard. It's just that...", he did not know how to finish the sentence.

They took off their helmets when the elevator arrived. She looked at him with creased brows and a disappointed expression. "You of all people should know me better, Kaidan."

Okay. *Now* he felt bad. Until now Shepard had never counterpunched. She had only tried to explain herself. But now she had criticised him. Plus the sorrow in her voice made him regret his interrogation.

James was observing the argument clearly confused. Perhaps something began

dawning on him.

"Please trust me", she added when they walked inside the station.

"I do. I'm sorry...", but they were interrupted by noises and shooting coming from the ventilation shaft. Instantly the three of them drew their guns taking cover when a figure kicked through the shaft's grating and jumped down. It was Liara T'Soni. Kaidan had not seen her for years. She was looking good. Although three years were nothing for an Asari she seemed to have grown fairly more mature. He saw Shepard smiling sincerely when she got out of cover. She reassured James that Liara was no foe and walked up to the asari to reunite.