

Fanatical Publishing's

Weekly Review

Issue #60

29 April, 2013

AND NOW, a word from the publisher:

Hello folks, Jochannon here; first let me say thank you for reading, and I hope you enjoy, and please feel free to share it with your friends, re-post it to your profile, spread it around; the more people who get to read it, the better!

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If you want to contribute, I'd love to see your work, send it to me at the aforementioned e-mail address with: 'category(prose, fanfic, poetry), story title, author's name' in the subject line: please include the text of your story in the body of the email, and please include a cover letter about you, your work, or whatever; include any links you want.

Do you have any questions or comments? If you do, I'd to hear them; write to me at the aforementioned e-mail address.

I'm bad at stopping these things, so I'll just say again: thank you for reading, and I hope you enjoy!

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NEW AGE OF HEROES THE UNDERWORLD

SaviortoFew
of <http://saviortofew.deviantart.com>

He left the Realm of his Soul, and came back to his cave. He walked to Athena's Library and collected some maps, then to Apollo's Armory and took his Solar Bow, with its 19 strings like a harp, shots a certain amount of flaming arrows depending on the number of the strings plucked, and the Inferno Sword that sets enemies on fire.

He went to the Underworld, where Nickolaes, son of Persephone and Hades, lives. He got to the River Styx and Charon let him cross to Hades's Temple, where Nickolaes was crying over his parents' bodies.

Isalus said, "What happened?"

"Chaos wiped them out and said, 'You and Isalus will die.'"

"Wow. Let me help you." He took Hades and Persephone's Souls and shared them with Nickolaes.

"Thank you."

"I need your help."

"I know. Let me see your map, specifically here."

"Sure."

Nickolaes unrolled the map and marked 4 places: Elysium, Isles of the Blessed, Tartarus and Persephone's Garden.

Nickolaes said, "My father kept watch over the entire Underworld, and he told me that the King of the Winds, Aeolus, was wiped out at Elysium; Dionysus and Hephaestus were killed at the entrance to Tartarus; Demeter and Pan were at my mother's garden, and Hermes was at the Isles of the Blessed."

"That could do wonders. Thanks for helping."

"We will succeed no matter what Chaos says. Just let me get my father's scythes."

A few minutes later, he got 2 scythes: a crimson-and-black colored one with a black chain wrapped around it, and another red-and-black scythe with blades coming out of the end and a broken chain on the end of the shaft.

Nickolaes said, "Let's head off to the Garden."

They walked to the back of the palace and saw the somewhat-dead plants that Persephone once grew. In the middle was Demeter's tomb where she took her Soul and he was in his Soul Realm, and she said, "Son of Apollo and Athena, it is crucial that you defeat Chaos, and please tell Persephone that I am sorry for complaining about her marriage."

He came back to the garden, told Nickolaes what Demeter said, and grew a pomegranate plant. Then Nickolaes grew ivy around it that said In memory of Hades and Persephone, Rulers of the Underworld.

Isalus said, "Off to Tartarus."

"Hold on, let' get a couple of hellhounds." They went inside the palace to the Hellhound Chamber and got 2 hellhounds named Psyche and Eros.

They rode to the entrance of Tartarus and collected the Souls of Dionysus and Hephaestus.

Inside his Soul Realm, Dionysus told him that he could intoxicate his enemies, while Hephaestus gave him the ability to craft anything.

After that, he became woozy and heard a voice that said, "The Titans shall help. Come to me inside Tartarus."

"Nickolaes, things will be different now."

"Why?"

"The Titans."

They walked into the prison of the Titans and took in the Souls of Hyperion, Helios, Gaea and Atlas.

"I feel stronger."

"It is amazing. Now let's ride to Elysium."

Before they left, inside the Soul Realm, Hephaestus said, "Please get the Scythe on my body. It will be useful."

Back in Tartarus, he rose back to the entrance and found the same red-and-black scythe with a broken chain. Isalus crafted an anvil and connected the broken chains.

"Now it is complete. Do you want them?"

"No, I shall hang onto the Punishment of the Cursed God."

"Thanks. I shall name them the Helios Reapers. Now we can go to Elysium."

They rode to the River Styx and had Charon row to the Sanctuary of the Good Souls, and found the body of Aeolus. He took in the Soul and felt the Winds move through his body.

Then he said, "Something evil is at the Isles of the Blessed."

"Chaos?"

"No. It's big, scaly and terrifying."

"I think I know what it is. My father kept track of what came into Tartarus. It is the Lydian drakon."

"Then let's defeat it."

They rode further into the Isles of the Blessed. They found the body of Hermes, God of Travel, Merchants and Thieves, but in front of it was the Lydian drakon, a giant serpent with gigantic claws and scales more powerful than the Nemean Lion's armor.

Using the power of the winds, Isalus glided to its face and shot arrows into the snout, but they bounced off. So he threw the Winds at

Nickolaes, gained them and flew to the drakon.

Nickolaes used the special ability of the Punishment of the Cursed God to manipulate souls of the dead to hold the drakon and have Isalus shoot into its eyes. He then threw the scythe into its mouth and it turned into dust, leaving its armor.

Isalus said, "Finally, let's get this Soul."

He took Hermes' Soul and gained the speed of Olympus.

,it would be a good idea to use the drakon's armor for ourselves."

Using its claw, he made the drakon's armor into 2 sets of armor.

Nickolaes said, "Do you mind if you share some Souls with me?"

"Of course, sorry for being selfish. Which ones would you like?"

"Hermes, Gaea, Atlas, and Aeolus."

He put his hand on Nickloaes, and Nickolaes gained the powers of sped, earth, greater strength and the winds.

Isalus said, "I thought you said Pan was at Persephone's Garden."

"Oh, he was in a tree."

"Ah. Then let's get him."

They rode the hell-hounds back to the garden, and Isalus made the plants, except Hades and Persephone's memorial, wither and found the body of a satyr.

He took Pan's Soul and gained control of the Wild.

"Let's look for the other gods."

They got out of the Underworld, and saw the disastrous over world,with the Typhon Mountains, Mount Olympus, the War Stadium Triton Sea, and Hunter Forest.

Isalus told Nickolaes that they must get to Ares, so they quickly ran to the War Stadium.

FATE

Solilska
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As my eighth written piece i attempted to talk about fate:

I find most people's views on fate to be somewhat childish, letting things proceed and waiting will leave you behind and get you no where. Nothing is meant to be or not meant to be, you make things work and if they don't work its usually due to someone giving up or not having a mutual passion for the subject as yourself.

Let all of your failures teach you a lesson, I have often seen the apparent "Under dog" eventually become the one who is the most intelligent and perfect when compared to their peers. It's because they have overcome much more, they have learnt quickly and adapted, Instilling a hard work ethic into them that will serve them well for the rest of their life.

Life is for most people, a circle of their own behavior. If you break a circle then it becomes a spiral. A spiral is a falling circle, endlessly winding, imagine how much more interesting your life would be if you broke out of a simple boring circle and was to ride a spiral.

Don't let fate play out, play it out yourself! Making choices and future plans, laying foundations and trying your best in everything you do and doing what you deem fit for yourself and the ones close to you.

NARRATOR VS NARRATION

FeatherSpiral
of <http://featherspiral.deviantart.com>

The sun's just risen, its light wakes the teenager boy from his shallow slumber. He opens his eye to a crack, yawns loudly, then says "Huh? Daddy, what are you saying?"

He opens his eyes wider and sees no one - come to think of it, his father should be at work at this hour. He looks around, but he appears to be alone.

"Eh, who said that?" he asks lazily, then snaps: "I just woke up, dammit, don't call me lazy!"

The adolescent carefully descends from the bed, looking left and right and even up.

"Stop saying what I do!" he exclaims, trotting to the door to look around but not seeing anyone there either. He seems alone, but he could swear a young, grown man is speaking right next to him.

"What the hell..." he whips his head around. "Who keeps talking, and how are you watching me anyway?"

He goes back to the bed and jumps on top of it, turning to look for hidden cameras and speakers.

He catches sight of his toys (mostly bulding bricks and cars) in a corner of his room. Jumping down, he quickly shuffles through the pile, but doesn't find anything unusual there either.

"Hey!" he shouts. "Stop saying everyth-" Rolling his eyes, he shakes his head. "Bah, whatever. Just suit yourself."

Concealing his unease, he heads out to the kitchen. "I'm not uneasy, just annoyed."

He finds the kitchen table ready with everything, even a small plate and fork and knife. All he has to do, is put some chocolate powder in a cup of milk and microwave it. No one else is home, as his mom took his sister to a medical appointment.

The young boy groans. "Come on, this isn't funny!"

But I'm not trying to be funny. This is my job. I'm a storyteller.

"You're a lying jerk!" he grunts. "If you were a storyteller, you would create things like angels and fairies and monsters. Or at least bring stuff to life, as in tales and cartoons. Like those cars in my room, why didn't you make them drive around on the floor?"

But that'd be implausible. I'm a narrator, not a magician. I just narrate. I don't do things that wouldn't happen in reality.

"Implowhat now?" he asks in confusion, but waves a dismissive

hand. "I don't care. Keep playing with me if you want, but you'll be caught one day. Then it'll be less fun."

The teenager quietly rages, stirring his milk to dissolve the chocolate. He decides to ignore the voice and heats up his drink. Meanwhile he spreads some butter on top of a slice of bread, gritting his teeth.

As he's taking the cup out of the microwave, he looks up, then nods. "Ooh, I get it. You're trying to get into my head?" He frowns and puts the cup down on the table. "Nuh-uh, you're not gonna do that. You can't. Weird stuff like that doesn't even exist. My mommy told me that."

He decides to add some jam on top of his buttered bread and realizes the jar isn't on the table. Grumbling, he walks over to the cupboard, tossing over his shoulder: "Bet you haven't thought of putting something weird in there, like a... um... a savage scorpion with huge lips trying to kiss me!"

He opens the cupboard... and finds himself staring at a scorpion with thick lips.

The boy leaps two meters away, fluttering his arms and hollering, as the bug jumps out smacking its lips together.

He hurries out, panting, then remembers the bug spray his parents keep in the bathroom. He runs to the medicine cabinet where he finds the canister, but when he comes back to the kitchen, there's no sign of the scorpion.

He yells at the voice: "You're a horrible person! I don't know who you are, but I'm gonna call the police if you go on!"

He runs to the phone, but remembers he doesn't even know the number to the police. All he remembers is 911 that he heard from an American TV program, but he lives in France.

As he turns to go back to the kitchen, the phone rings. Stopping, he stares at it for a moment, wondering if this is another trick from the voice.

Suspicious and worried, he puts the spray down and picks up the phone. "I'm not worried!" he hisses, forgetting to cover the receiver.

"Uh... hi?" a girl's voice replies shyly. "Morning, Nicky."

Nicky draws in a breath, relieved. "Oh, hey there, Cher. How's it going?"

"Fine. But um, you sound confused. Did I wake you up?"

He does a double take, then remembers they exceptionally don't have school. Their teacher finished the program early, so she lets them recover and study for the upcoming finals. Cher probably thought he was enjoying it when she called.

"Nah, I woke up around the usual time. I'm just, uh... just having a weird experience."

"Oh," Cher says worriedly. "Your ringing-noise thing again? The 'tintus' stuff?"

"Not really..." He hesitates, but since he's already mentioned it, he might as well tell her what it is. "It's just... some weird guy's voice describing everything I do." He looks around and sighs. "He's talking right now, can you hear it?"

A couple of seconds tick by, during which Nicky looks around and plays with the phone's cord to keep the voice speaking.

"Uhh... no." Now the girl sounds puzzled too, and maybe suspicious. "Did you tell your mom?"

"No, she took my sister to the doctor before I woke up."

"Ah."

"It's really weird, I'm telling ya. The voice says he just 'narrates' and doesn't do anything weird, but he does!" He scratches his forehead and frowns. "I swear, I was talking about a scorpion trying t-"

He yells again and drops the receiver - the scorpion has just crawled on top of the stand.

"STOP IT, GODDAMMIT, THIS ISN'T FUNNY!"

Swiftly, he reaches out for the canister and presses the top. Surely enough, a toxic cloud reaches the bug, which panics. Trying to run away, it falls off the stand and hits the carpeted floor with a muffled thud. Scurrying to its feet and scuttling away, it can't go far before collapsing.

Nicky is shaking, his hand still on the spray, glad to see the scorpion at least die like a normal bug.

Reaching down to get the phone receiver, he presses it against his ear, but Cher hung up.

Doesn't matter, he has to swallow twice before being able to say a word anyway.

LAND OF INSANITY P₃

riolightwarrior
of <http://riolightwarrior.deviantart.com>

One month later. Location: Yale. "Lane, our ride is here. Are you ready, or are you going to be teacher's pet again?"

"I'm coming, Dale. I'm coming. Sheesh. I just need to get my books." My name is Lane. I'm a student of Yale, 25 years old, and I work for a high-tech company, though it's under the radar. You see, we are known as Hydra. We're a group who tests the security of well-protected information, and if people are willing to pay for that info, we are more than willing to sell it to them. Before you even get ahead of me, yes, we are hackers, but smart ones, and have never been caught. While doing some diving, I found information about something called 'bio technology' dealing with the modification of animal and human anatomy, turning the subject into a living, breathing weapon. We destroyed the computer, and with it, the info I found, and moved to a new location. My friends and I have been scattered since then, and trying not to get caught.

"Lane, you okay, Dude? You seem out of it." I looked to Dale, and smiled slightly, shaking my head.

"Just thinking, Dale. Just thinking." I rubbed my head before sitting down at my desk, undoing my tie a little bit. While searching for a pen, I found a note I didn't remember ever being there. It read, "Meet me at the top of the school after midnight." No one signed it. I didn't know anyone who would go to the school after hours, let alone not sign the note. I didn't pay it any mind, and went on to do my job. A few hours passed, and it was getting late. I had done four security checks, five info thefts, and six info burns for people. Hey, the pay was good. Why wouldn't I do this?

I stood up and walked around a bit, then heard a knock at my door. Wondering who could be visiting this late in the evening, I opened it to find what looked like two Men in Black agents. All they were missing was the alien blasters. "Please come with us, Sir," one demanded.

"Why?" I looked at the two men carefully. They were armed, and looked like they could break me like a twig.

"Don't ask questions. Please, just come with us." I didn't ask any more questions. I got into their car, and they blind-folded me.

"Where are you taking me," I asked.

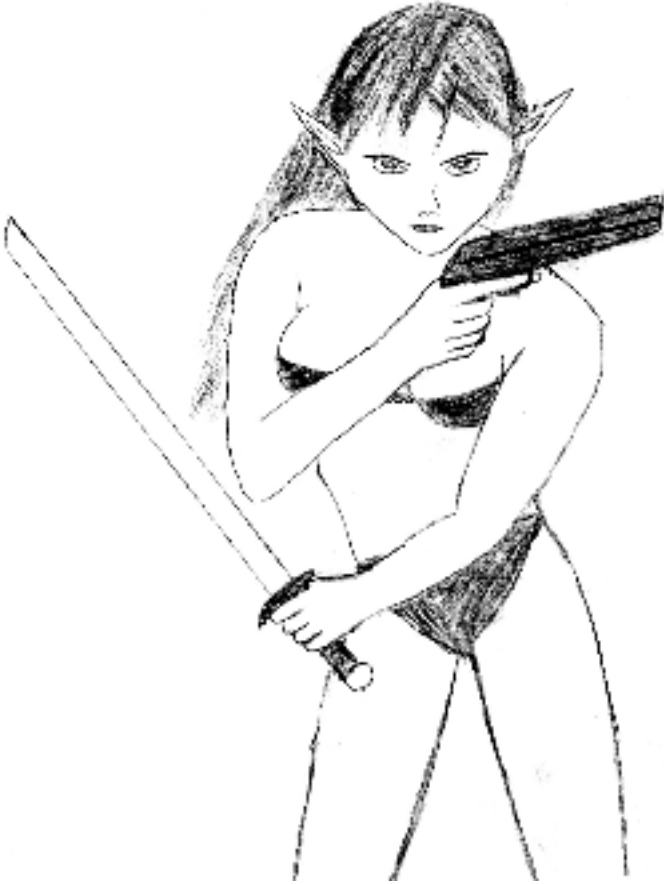
"To Jonithan." *Jonithan?* I heard that name before, but where? Before I even had a chance to really think on the name, I was yanked out of the car, and brought into a building that was very cold -- almost

like a freezer.

Shortly after, I heard a deep, almost raspy voice. "Ah. Mister Lane. So nice of you to come here. Please, remove your blind fold." Just realizing my hands had been untied the entire time, I took my blind fold off, as instructed, and saw a tall, caucasian man with a cane in his right hand. He was wearing a dark blue suit that was a little tight around his torso, as if a size too small. His hair was black, and his dark eyes seemed like stone. I realized at that moment it was Jonithan Gorat, the multimillionaire who owns the world's most high-tech company, which yours truly hacked and stole info from.

"Why didn't you have the decency to sign the note," I asked.

FAN FICTION



or: Leanna's Return

Brought to you courtesy of Gunslinger, the wandering Vigilante.

Check it out: <http://www.lulu.com/shop/jb-hickock/gunslinger/ebook/product-18930890.html>

Editor's Warning: adult content

ME2 HELLDIVER SAGA CHAPTER 27: The Ardat-Yakshi

Veyron722skyhook
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Austin simply lay in his bed thinking about the ring he'd just bought. In his pocket was a small box that contained the engagement ring that he had brought for Liara. He still had no idea when he was going to ask Liara to marry him, but at least now he had the ring if he needed it.

For now, things were pretty calm so Austin decided to have a chat with Samara. He hadn't in a long while and he admitted that he did feel a sort of friendship connection to the Justicar. He found the Asari in her usual spot, still meditating.

"I am glad I joined your team. It has been too long since I travelled with companions. When the time comes, I will do whatever is necessary." She said.

"You're an important part of this crew, Samara." Austin smiled.

"It is my honor. Also, there is a matter I need to discuss." Said Samara as she stood up and walked towards the large window that simply gazed out into space.

"I'm happy to listen." Said Austin.

"When we met on Illium, I told you about a very dangerous person I was pursuing. Using the information you obtained, I have located her. She's been going by the name "Morinth" I would like to apprehend her before she disappears again." Samara explained.

"I don't mean to sound rude, but didn't you say you'd pick up her trail after our mission?" Austin inquired.

"I know where she is – right now. In a month, she may be gone. This is the best opportunity I've ever had." Said Samara calmly.

"Where is she then?" Austin asked.

"Omega. I believe you're familiar with the club called Afterlife – it seems the perfect place for her to hunt." Samara replied.

"What can you tell me about this Morinth?" Austin asked.

"She is an Ardat-Yakshi." Samara replied.

"Ah. Now I see. It makes sense now." Said Austin, understanding immediately.

"You know of Ardat-Yakshi?" Samara asked, a bit surprised that she didn't have to explain to the Helldiver what an Ardat-Yakshi was.

It was true that Austin knew very well what an Ardat-Yakshi was. Ardat-Yakshi (meaning 'Demon of the Night Winds' in an old

asari dialect) was a rare genetic condition in asari, specifically affecting their nervous systems. Although the condition did not harm the Asari, during mating the Ardat-Yakshi's nervous system completely overpowered and dominated that of their mates, causing haemorrhaging in the victim's brain and ultimately death in extreme cases. As a result, the Ardat-Yakshi became smarter, stronger and deadlier after each encounter. Ardat-Yakshi also had the innate ability to dominate the minds of others.

“Yeah. The Helldivers teach us about even them. They kill you by overloading your nervous systems during a Union if I’m correct.” Said Austin.

“Yes. This one in particular has been pursued by me for over 400 years. She’s even the reason why I became a Justicar.” Said Samara.

“All this and that many years just for one person? Sounds a lot more personal than that.” Said Austin. It certainly did sound as though this whole thing was a lot more personal for Samara than she made out.

Samara hesitated for a little while before she finally answered.

“You are correct, Shepard. That is because this creature, this... monster. She is my daughter.”

Austin fell silent. He had expected Samara to say something more like the Ardat-Yakshi had murdered her daughter, not that it actually was her daughter.

“I... I’m so sorry. I didn’t realise...” said Austin as he tried to be sympathetic with Samara.

“Do not pity me, Shepard. Simply understand my situation.” Said Samara.

“Okay. How do you want to handle this?” Austin asked.

“All I want at the moment is your help, Shepard. Help me find my lost daughter. And kill her.” Samara replied.

“We’ll go find her. You have my word on that.” Said Austin.

“I appreciate it, Major. It pleases me to know that you are always so willing to help your crew.” Samara smiled as she sat back down and returned to her meditations.

Austin remembered of course that he’d promised the engineers that if they ever came by Omega again, he would keep an eye out for some new FBA couplings. Since finding Samara’s daughter took priority however, Austin instead instructed the engineers that they would need to do it since he was very busy. Tali of course hadn’t argued and had agreed to do the shopping herself. She reckoned she’d be alright since Quarians were more welcomed on Omega than they were on the Citadel.

“Well, well. Look who’s back. What do you need, Shepard? I doubt that you’re not here on business.” Said Aria modestly.

“An Asari fugitive is hiding out here. She’s an Ardat-Yakshi. We need to find her.” Said Austin.

“I knew it. Nothing leaves a body quite so... empty... as an Ardat-Yakshi does.” Said Aria.

“You haven’t taken steps to kill her?” said Samara, a bit appalled that the Queen of Omega herself hadn’t tried to rid herself of a problem.

“Why would I? She hasn’t tried to seduce me. Her last victim was a young girl. Pretty thing. Lived in the tenements near here. That’s where I’d start looking.” Said Aria.

“Thanks for the help, Aria.” Said Austin as he stood up from his seat.

“Good luck finding her. Better luck catching her.” Said Aria. “And keep your Varren under control. I’m letting him on-board the station but that’s it.”

Urz gave a small growl but Samara patted him gently to calm him down.

Austin, Samara, Alaara and Urz all made their way to where Aria had told them. They to go rather low into Omega’s lawless regions, but they met no resistance.

The girl’s mother, Diana, let them into her home. She seemed to trust them enough since two of them were Helldivers and the other a Justicar.

“Are you here about my daughter? My Nef died a week ago, and no one seems to care. The medics said it was a brain haemorrhage, but that’s not true. It was murder. Someone killed my Nef, my baby.” She asked.

“I think she was murdered too, and we’re looking for her killer.” Said Austin gently. He could see how sad Diana was due to the death of her daughter.

“Oh, thank you! It’s so hard when no one believes you. I’m all alone now. Are you... one of Aria’s people?” Diana asked.

“I’m here to help. Does it matter who sent me?” Austin responded.

“No one else on this hell-hole station gives a damn that my Nef is dead. If you can do something about it, I’ll help you however I can.” Said Diana.

“Do you mind if I examine Nef’s room? We might find something that can help us.” Austin asked.

“I didn’t want to disturb anything. Her clothes, her art, her sculptures. Everything is the way she left it. The way it will always be.” Said Diana. Her eyes were starting to water and she was sounded like she’d cry any moment.

“My baby is gone. She’s gone.” She sobbed.

“Hey. It’s alright.” Austin said as he stepped up to Diana and put his arms around her. She seemed to regain her composure slightly and her voice cleared a bit.

“Thank you. I’m sorry. I just miss her so much.” She said, doing her best not to let her voice crack again.

“It’s okay. We’ve all suffered loss. We know how you feel.” Said Austin calmly.

“I know what it means to lose a daughter. I will avenge her.” Said Samara.

“Thank you. Please, if it helps you find her killer, look through her things.” Said Diana.

“We will be respectful.” Said Samara.

Nef’s room was the usual sort that was expected from a teenager. There were a few untidy things here and there. There were even a few sculptures as well. Nef was an artist. Samara had said after all that Morinth had always had a bit of a thing for art and sculptures. There was even a datapad picture of a piece of art by the Elcor artist Forta.

Austin found a holo-journal and accessed it.

“Read oldest entry.”

An image of Nef herself appeared on the holo-journal’s screen as she narrated the entry.

“Hey, diary. Cycle 34, orbit 671. There’s a lot to talk about! I dropped Jaruut’s name, and they let me into the VIP room at Afterlife. I was sure everyone was staring at me. Then the most beautiful Asari starts dancing near me. She moves like water; form and volume but shifting, changing. I’m in a trance. Then I’m dancing with her. Later, we went for skewers, and I’m supposed to see her again tomorrow.”

“That sounds familiar.” Said Samara.

“Read middle entry.”

“Cycle 36, orbit 671. Am I a freak Morinth is a girl like me, and she’s definitely not human. Just... when we dance, and the Hallex is flowing through me... The way she looks at me – with a hunger, a longing... No one’s ever looked at me like that. We kissed tonight.”

“Read newest entry.”

“Cycle 42, orbit 67. She’s going to take me to her apartment tonight. Whatever happens, I want to be with her forever. She can sell my pieces. We can live somewhere glamorous, like the women in Vaenia, that vid Morinth likes.”

“Huh, what a coincidence. Sandra and I like that vid too.” Said Alaara.

“How did this happen to me? I’m just dumb trash from Omega.” Nef finished.

“Close holo-journal.”

“This is Morinth’s work. She is attracted to artists and creators.”

Someone with a spark, slightly isolated from their peers. She impresses with sophistication and sex appeal. Then she strikes. The hunt interests her as much as the conquest.” Said Samara..

“Anyone who’s successfully hunted sapient beings for 400 years warrants caution.” Said Austin as he petted Urz.

“Morinth speaks to you on many levels. Her body tells yours that she’ll bring unimaginable ecstasy. Her scent evokes emotions long hidden. Her eyes promise you things you were always scared to ask of another. Her voice whispers to you after she is done speaking.” Samara continued.

“She sounds more like a highly evolve killer than a genetic defective.” Said Alaara.

“The condition has been present since our people huddled around fire at night. Perhaps it is symbolic, rather than a defect.” Said Samara.

“Storming her den would be a mistake – she will have a hundred escape routes planned.” Said Alaara.

“T’onrak is right. Morinth will go to ground and disappear for fifty years or more. This is the closest I’ve ever been.” Samara agreed.

“So we have to lure her out.” Said Austin.

“Exactly! Shepard, you read my mind. Afterlife’s VIP section seems to be her preferred hunting ground. You must go there alone and unarmed.” Said Samara.

“With all due respect, Justicar. Shepard doesn’t need to go alone. I can also go in there disguised as a dancer.” Said Alaara.

“That is too risky. Morinth will be too suspicious.” Said Samara.

“Trust me, Samara. Alaara is very good at this kind of thing. She’s an expert in undercover work and her Eclipse training gives her the advantage. Trust me, as long as I don’t try to communicate with her, Morinth won’t suspect her. To her, she’s just another dancer.” Said Austin as he vouched for Alaara’s almost unmatched undercover skills.

“Very well. If you believe that she is up to task, I will trust your judgement.” Said Samara.

“Time’s wasting then. Let’s go.” Said Austin as he and the others left Diana’s house.

“I agree. We can talk more once we’re there.” Said Samara.

The club that Nef had mentioned was the VIP section of Afterlife. The door was being guarded by a Turian, but thanks to Nef’s journal Austin knew a name to drop in order to get into the club.

“What do you want?” the guard asked.

“What’s behind this door?” Austin replied. Obviously he knew, but he felt it best to play this right so that suspicions wouldn’t be raised.

“VIP section of the club. For those with the right name. Do you

want something?” the guard responded.

“Someone told me the rest of Afterlife is nothing compared to this place.” Said Austin.

“Sounds like a smart person. Who was it?” the guard replied.

“Jarut.”

The guard immediately reacted to this and his tone changed.

“Go on in. Word to the wise: start a fight, we’ll hurt you.

Someone attacks you, it’s okay to defend yourself.”

Alaara went in first in her dancer disguise so that it didn’t look as though they were entering together. She made sure that Austin saw her first so that he knew which dancer she was. She’d added white markings around her head and had also added some body tattoos just in case she ended up removing her dancer outfit, and given how much she loved sex, that was very likely.

A short while later, Austin was also ready. He’d dressed himself in his off duty mercenary outfit so that he looked like someone who was meant to be there. His scars would only add to it. Before he entered, Samara waved him over.

“Alaara has already gone in. I have informed her of what she needs to do and what I know of Morinth’s tactics. Like any predator, she is cautious. You must pique her interest enough that she will approach you. When you are face-to-face, subtly encourage her to invite you to her apartment. I’ll follow discreetly and when you are alone, I’ll spring the trap.” She said.

“Understood.” Austin replied.

“Know this, Shepard: until I get these, you are in great peril. She will be planning to inflict horrors on you and may even try to seduce you as well. If you are not careful, you will want her to do these things to you.” Samara warned.

“Okay. Let’s get started.” Said Austin as he took a few deep breaths. He’d be lying if he said he wasn’t nervous about this. The thought of an Asari being able to kill with her mind did scare him a bit, not to mention that there were other things that could easily go wrong.

“It is okay to be nervous. Even I am rather tense about this, as is Alaara.” Said Samara as she put her hand on Austin’s shoulder. That seemed to calm him down a bit. “Just remember, we only get one chance at this. Any mistake, and Morinth will disappear.”

Austin nodded and he made his way into the club. Rather surprisingly though, the second he went in, he was stopped by a merc.

“Hey, do you know where to get tickets for Expel 10? I heard this amazing Asari say they were her favourite band. I want... I just want whatever she wants. I got to find tickets! Expel 10 is playing tomorrow.” He asked, rather ecstatically.

“I’m afraid not. Sorry.” Austin simply responded.

“If you score some, I got creds for you.” Said the merc.

Although that had technically been a waste of time, it had at the same time proved helpful. There was no doubt that the Asari that merc had referred to was Morinth so it was clear she loved Expel 10. That little bit of information would come in handy.

Austin proceeded further into the VIP club. It actually wasn’t all that bad to be honest. Austin then overheard an argument. He looked to see a Turian arguing with an Asari dancer. Upon closer inspection however, Austin saw that it was in fact Alaara that the Turian was arguing with.

“I said get away from me!” Alaara shouted.

“Don’t be like that – I got creds. We’ll go back to my place. I got simple tastes.” Said the Turian.

“I said back off, you asshole! I’m a dancer, not a hooker!” said Alaara as she shoved the Turian away from her.

The Turian however remained unfazed by this and he simply stood up close to Alaara again.

“You got a mouth on you! I’ll enjoy watching you use it.” He said.

“The lady asked you to step away.” Said Austin forcefully as he pushed the Turian away from Alaara.

“What the hell?! I’m just looking for a good time. This isn’t your business!” said the Turian as he walked up to Austin.

This was a very bad move for the Turian as Austin immediately punched him in the face and then the stomach and finally delivered a sharp kick that sent him flying.

“Aaah!”

“Good times are over.” Said Austin as he dusted his hands.

“Thanks for that. Security was asleep. If you want a private dance, I’d be more than happy.” Alaara smiled as she winked at Austin.

“I’ll bear that in mind.” Said Austin casually as Alaara left.

Austin continued a bit further and he soon found himself on the dance floor. He figured that dancing wouldn’t hurt, and it would help to blend in better. As he danced mostly casually for a while he found himself face with an Asari. Austin doubted that this was Morinth. She didn’t look the sort.

“Hey.” He said.

“Hey.” The Asari replied back.

“I’ll dance next to you. If you want to think we’re dancing together, go ahead.” Said Austin.

“I do want to think that.” The Asari replied.

The two danced very well together and the Asari seemed to be smiling at him. When they eventually finished, it seemed he had her approval.

“Thanks for that. You can dance with me anytime.” She said.
Austin next made his way to the bar. The bartender took notice of him.

“What’ll it be?”

“These are good people, but they look bored. Bored people don’t spend much.” Said Austin.

“And you got an idea for how I could fix that?” the bartender asked.

“A round of drinks shows that you appreciate their business. Your rep will improve, and you’ll make more money in the end.” Said Austin.

“Maybe worth a try once. You better be right!” said the bartender. He then addressed everyone in the bar. “Listen up, everyone! We love having you here, so a round of drinks on the house!”

Almost everyone seemed to cheer at this and the bar was soon packed.

“That was a great idea.” The bartender smiled as he tended to several other customers.

“Anytime.” Austin nodded.

Austin hoped that with most people at the bar, Morinth would be slightly easier to find. At first, though, Austin didn’t see anything but then, speak of the devil, was another kind of Asari. There was no doubt that this was Morinth.

She seemed to be dressed in a usual Asari commando outfit and she had rather pale blue skin just like Samara had. A few differences were that Morinth looked younger.

“My name is Morinth. I’ve been watching you. You’re the most interesting person in this place. I’ve got a booth over here in the shadows. Why don’t you come sit with me?” she offered.

Austin nodded and Morinth directed him over to her booth. Within a few moments, Alaara came over to their table.

“Excuse me. You don’t mind do you? I need to keep working.” She asked.

“Morinth?” Austin asked. It was her table after all, so she was the one to ask.

“I see no harm in it. Knock yourself out.” Said Morinth.

“Thanks. I’ll put on a good show, I promise. I like doing shows for couples.” Alaara smiled as she stepped up onto the table and started dancing. Austin had to keep reminding himself to keep his eyes on Morinth and not Alaara.

“Anyway, some nights I come here and there’s no one interesting to talk to. Some night, there’s just one person. Tonight, it’s you. Why is that?” Morinth asked.

“I know what I like.” Austin replied.

“Do you?” Morinth asked.

“What do you think of the music here?” Austin asked.

“Dark rhythms, violent pulses. It stirs something primitive in me. What about you?” Morinth replied.

“Hmm, funny you should say that. I’m rather curious about a band called Expel 10 that plays similar sorts of music. You heard of them?” said Austin.

“Yeah! They get in my head and tear it to pieces. They’re in concert soon, maybe we should go together.” Morinth smiled.

“We’ve only just met though.” Said Austin. He made sure he said it right though. It was meant to be part of the conversation.

“I feel a bit a connection with you. You’ve got something about you that I want to know more about.” Said Morinth.

“Well, when you put it that way...” Austin smiled.

“I had a feeling you felt it too. You can lose yourself in the music here. There are ways to enhance that. You know?” Morinth smiled back.

“You’re talking about drugs, right? I’ve heard of a particular one called Hallex. Never tried it, but I hear it’s excellent.” Said Austin.

“It is. It slithers through my soul. Seems like we share some interests.” Said Morinth.

“Seems like we do. What about art? You know anything about that?” Austin asked.

“It speaks to the darkest places in me. What about you?” Morinth replied.

“Elcor artist Forta is a personal favourite of mine.” Said Austin.

“You’re full of surprises. I didn’t think anyone around here knew him. He’s sublime. Art comes in many varieties. I’ve seen vids that were more powerful than a sculpture sitting in a gallery.” Said Morinth.

“Do you know Vaenia?” Austin asked.

“My favourite. The two actresses on it are so glamorous.” Said Morinth. Rather surprisingly, she then started touching one of her breasts. “And you would not believe how many times I’ve touched myself to the sex scenes. They’re that arousing.”

Despite the temptation, Austin remained casual, but showed the interest in the tone of his voice.

“Hmm, I’ll have to watch it. It sounds like my sort of thing.”

“Maybe we could do that together.” Morinth suggested.

“Maybe we should.” Austin answered.

“Tell me some more. You’ve got me really interested.” Said Morinth.

“Well, I’ve travelled all over the galaxy.” Austin continued.

“It changes you, doesn’t it?” said Morinth.

“That it does. Although I’d say that real travel means going to dangerous places.” Austin replied.

“Where you can see and do things most people can’t imagine.” Morinth continued for him.

“Definitely.” Said Austin.

“When I travel, I find myself drawn to dark, dangerous places.” Said Morinth.

“Violent places?” Austin asked.

“Violence is the surest expression of power.” Morinth replied.

“Hmmm, who has the power here then, you or me?” Austin asked suggestively.

Morinth’s brow pricked up in interest and she stood up from her seat.

“Well...”

To Austin’s surprise, she then strode over to his seat, sat down on his lap and then she put her hand right on where his cock was. He jumped slightly at this, but kept his composure.

“Does that answer your question?” Morinth asked very seductively.

“Undoubtedly, but shouldn’t we take this somewhere more private?” Austin responded, also in a rather seductive tone.

“You wanna get out of here then? My apartment is nearby, and I want you alone anyway.” Said Morinth.

“Lead the way. Although I’d recommend you keep your hands to yourself for now. I may not be able to keep my own hands off you.” Austin smiled.

“Now you’re toying with me.” Morinth smiled back. She then turned to Alaara who was still dancing, almost oblivious to what was going on.

“We’re going now. But thanks for the dance.” She said.

“My pleasure. Have fun.” Alaara smiled as she watched Austin and Morinth leave. Once she was sure they were gone, she activated her omni tool. “Samara, Morinth’s taking Shepard to her apartment. So far, I’d say he played his apart very well.”

“Is Shepard still in control?” Samara asked.

“From what I could tell, yes. He should be fine.” Alaara replied.

“Very well. It’s best you stay here until Shepard and I come back for you.” Said Samara.

“I can do that. Good luck. Goddess be with you.”

Morinth’s apartment was quite nice. It had a bed, couches and everything. As expected, there were a few pieces of art here and there, including the statue of a Krogan, and even a few trophies of some kind.

Morinth sat down on the couch and patted the spot next to her. Austin sat down.

“I love clubs – people, movement, heat. I can still hear the bass,

like the drums of a great hunt, out for your blood. But here, it's muted – and you're safe. Is that what you want, Shepard?" she asked as she very gently put her hand on his leg.

"I don't know. People feel safest right before they die. Wouldn't you say?" Austin replied.

It was very hard to remain casual now and to not suddenly give in. He could already feel something nagging in the back of his head. Morinth was obviously trying something in his head.

"It's true, we're never safe. I've never understood the fascination with safety. Some of us choose differently." Said Morinth as her hand very slowly crawled slight further up Austin's leg. "Independence over submission. I think we share that, you and I."

"You compare us, but you're nowhere near my league. You have seduction power though, and I'd say that's good enough." Said Austin confidently.

"Bold. I like bold. And you're so strong and..." Morinth's hand once again touched his erection. Now that she felt how big he was now, this seemed to arouse her and she smiled. "...arousing. I need this."

Morinth then took his head in her hand and made him look directly at her. Her eyes suddenly rolled over black and Austin suddenly found it very hard to think.

"Look into my eyes and tell me you want me. Tell me you'd kill for me. Anything I want." She said.

"I... I..." Austin tried to say, but he just couldn't think straight.

Morinth's hand then sneaked inside his trousers and gripped his cock properly. He stiffened instantly to her touch, despite that she still had a glove on.

"You feel this? You feel how hard I'm making you? How much you're body calls to me?" she said seductively.

"I want you. I'd kill for you. Anything you want." Austin said. All other thoughts had emptied his mind. He didn't even know why he was here anymore. All he seemed to care about was her. This beautiful Asari that was currently stroking his cock and wanted to mate with him.

"Good. Now take your clothes off and show me how much of a man you are." Morinth smiled.

Austin obeyed and stood up. He then started stripping himself of his clothes. Morinth relished the sight of this soldier. He was going to be special. She traced her lips with her tongue, as she watched his trousers drop to the floor. She felt herself getting wet, watching his cock trying to break free from his boxers. Finally, Austin finished and sat back down. Morinth's smile widened even more when she saw his erection fully. The sight of it beating and at full length in front of her made her really wet.

“Impressive. Most impressive. Very few humans are as well-endowed as you are.” She said.

“Anything for you, Morinth.” Said Austin.

Morinth’s hand once again reached for his cock and she took it into her hand. She stroked it once or twice before she leant down and took it into her mouth. Austin moaned in delight as the Ardat-Yakshi sucked on him. Her skilled tongue was working wonders on him. She licked around the bulging head of cock and even at one point licked all the way from the base to the top. The taste and smell of it was proving hard for her to resist. This man was affecting her as much as she was affecting him.

She was the one in control though, not him. She continued sucking as she made his hand go on top of her head and push her down slightly. She allowed a bit of control so that he could make her deep throat him completely. She’d never taken a cock that far into her mouth before, but this time she wanted to. This one was worthy of doing these things to her.

Morinth planted several kisses on Austin’s long meat as she looked up at him. She could see the pleasure in his eyes and it only turned her on even more. She could no longer deny the growing heat and wet arousal growing in Azure. Her free hand reached and fondled her ass through her commando suit. It was starting to get rather hot in here and she was very tempting to take it off now.

“So good. You’re so good!” Austin moaned as Morinth gave his cock several fast long strokes which made it very hard to suppress his imminent orgasm. The cum creeping up was getting closer.

Morinth gave Austin’s cock a tight squeeze and a bit of pre cum oozed out from the tip. The Asari eagerly took it onto her tongue, savouring the taste.

“Hold it in. I’m not done with your cock yet.” She said as she once again licked from the base all the way to the top. The short hair around the base tickled her slightly.

Her other hand abandoned her ass and she used a small bit of her biotics to keep her azure and ass occupied while her hand fondled his balls, increasing Austin’s pleasure tenfold. She moved her mouth up and now simply sucked very hard on the head, her tongue licking back and forth at the same time.

Austin moaned and gritted his teeth hard. His cock felt it would burst any second. He couldn’t hold the cum in much longer.

“Can’t hold.... Gonna... gggrrrr! Morinth, please...” he moaned.

Morinth let his cock pop out of her mouth and looked up at the Helldiver

“It’s okay. You can cum now.” She panted. All this sucking and licking had drained her breath.

Having now been told this, Austin let go and he let the cum

spray out of his meat and into Morinth's waiting mouth. Another round shot right into the back of her throat and she swallowed it.

"Mmmmmm. That was good." Morinth smiled.

"I still want you." Said Austin.

"Of course you do. You want all your senses bursting with ecstasy." Said Morinth as she stood up and undid some of the clips on her outfit.

Austin watched and stroked his cock as he watched Morinth's commando outfit glow with biotics and slowly peel off of her body. What was revealed underneath however was a rather surprising sight.

Unlike the usual Asari body, Morinth had some sort of strange black vein things covering her arms, her very large breasts, her body, a bit of her neck and they went all the way down to her feet. While they looked like veins, they didn't at the same time look as though they were in her skin. They looked like decoration or tattoos. But at the same time, they looked natural. It was rather odd sight. In some ways though, these strange black veins showed her corruption. The only part that didn't have these veins was her face as they seemed to fade away as they climbed up her neck.

Morinth turned so that she had her back to Austin and brought her hands down to her large behind, which also had the black veins growing over it.

"My beautiful ass!" she whispered seductively.

Using both her hands, Morinth spread her cheeks apart to reveal her dripping Azure and puckered hole. Austin couldn't help himself and he reached out and touched the Asari.

Morinth gave a sharp intake of breath as he felt his hands on her bare skin. Her right hand moved over his and guided his fingers to her tight hole. He fondled her ass cheek for a while before he slowly starting to see if he could stick a finger inside.

Seeing where this was going, Morinth spread her cheeks apart as far as she could and braced for a finger being stuck in. She moaned in delight as Austin managed to push one finger in first. The Helldiver slid in and out a few time so that she could get used to it before he then slid out completely and went back in again, this time with two fingers.

"By the Goddess!" Morinth moaned.

Austin pushed all the way in until his fingers disappeared completely.

"Ooooooh yes. That's it!" Morinth encouraged him.

The Helldiver upped the pace and kept thrusting his fingers into her ass. After several thrusts, he finally pulled out.

"I want to feel your cock between my tits. Sit back down." Morinth ordered.

Austin did as he was told and sat back down. The Ardat-Yakshi

knelt down in front of him and wrapped her large bust around his meat and started moving up and down.

“Oh yes! Your tits are beautiful!” Austin moaned.

Morinth simply smiled at the pleasure she was giving this Helldiver. His wet warm cock felt so good sliding between her tits. The black veins on her body tickled him slightly and only added to his arousal.

“Your cock’s so thick and hot. Feels so good between my tits.” Morinth moaned soothingly.

“Gonna cum!” Austin moaned as he let loose and a torrent of cum shot all over her tits, her neck and even bathed her face. The Ardat-Yakshi gathered the substance with her fingers and scooped it into her mouth. Very tasty. He ate well.

“On the bed. It’s time.” Morinth ordered.

Because the Ardat-Yakshi had complete control over him, he didn’t even resist in obeying her command and he made his way over to the bed. Morinth lay on it first and then beckoned him over. As Samara had said, her eyes promised him such things that he forgot the world around him.

Almost hypnotised by the Asari’s body, Austin climbed onto the bed and was face to face with Morinth. Pleasure started filling Morinth’s body as he dug in on her bust, biting her nipples.

“AAHnn YES!” Morinth moaned in the pleasure as Austin kissed her skin and licked at her dark corrupted veins, digging in with his teeth, his tool was brushing against her lower body, spreading pre-cum on her body.

“I want to be with you forever.” Austin said. There was a small part of his brain that was attempting to resist this, but Ardat-Yakshi underneath him was just too strong.

The two dove in for a kiss, their tongue’s dancing with one another.

“Then take me. Claim me as yours, and I shall join our minds. You think you’ve known pleasure before, you have no idea.” Said Morinth.

Austin lined himself up with Morinth’s entrance and he thrust forward. Morinth’s control over him didn’t make him gentle and he pushed in hard and rough.

“Oh Goddess yes! You’re so big!” she moaned.

Morinth’s moans only urged Austin on and he kept thrusting hard into her. Morinth’s fingers gripped his back hard. Austin pulled back, quickly thrusting in the rhythm of beats from the club. The sound of sex and the dark beats of the music. Morinth was feeling it, her body deriving more and more please. His cock surpassed the limits her body, her body more sensitive than ever had been with any of her lovers. With every thrust into her deepest every inch of her

body cried in joy. Austin was giving all his strength, trying to please her body to the fullest.

He was already close, her warm flesh rubbing every inch of his cock with every thrust. His mind was blank, his whole body in a bright haze of pure pleasure and lust. Her finger sending sparks throughout his body, moving only on instinct.

Morinth then suddenly flipped them over so that she was no on top and she started grinding her hips as she rode him.

“Oh, you wonderful bitch!” Austin moaned.

“Relax Shepard, and feel the best thing of your life!” Morinth moaned in-between thrusts.

Then something rather unsettling happened. As Morinth’s moans intensified with each thrust from Austin, so too did her aggression. Her black veins started to look as though they were throbbing. Morinth placed both her hands on his chest and the veins on her fingers started to grow. The vein extended even past the length of her finger and seemed to continue growing. It was like something out of a horror film.

“Let me cum!” Austin moaned. He wanted to, but he couldn’t. Something wasn’t letting him.

“Don’t cum yet. Just hold on!” Morinth moaned, getting close to her own orgasm.

“I can’t! Please...” Austin moaned.

“Yes you can, Shepard! I’m in control of your body now. As long as I don’t want you to cum, you can’t!” Morinth smiled rather evilly. Her fingers had now practically transformed into 5 inch black claws. At one point, these claws squeezed around his neck. It was only a playfully sexual choke and she wasn’t trying to kill him.

He gasped for air as Morinth let go of his throat and she upped her own hip thrusts. She could feel Austin’s cock practically swelling inside her, begging to cum. Austin stared onto her body, one of hers hand was playing with her bust, her other had found her clit, pinching her purple nub. She cried out, nearing her second climax. Her whole body was glistening in sweat. Her body was beautiful. His eyes opened wide as time suddenly seemed to stop.

“Cum now!” Morinth moaned.

Both she and Austin threw their heads back as they finally released and Morinth felt his cum shoot all the way inside her.

“AAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHH!!!” The image was ripped away as Morinth screamed her way into an orgasm. Her walls squeezing tightly around his cock as she slammed her body onto him, savouring the feeling.

She opened her eyes looking at Austin. Her body was still shaking lightly. Her eyes still darker than the void.

“That was brilliant.” Morinth panted.

“Still want more.” Said Austin.

“Of course you do.” The Asari smiled wickedly.

She slid off of Austin and then got down on her knees in front of him.

“Cum in my ass and then I will make us become one.” She said as she moved her long clawed hand over her ass. She felt the tip pressing against her rear. Austin braced his hand on her body, making sure he wouldn’t lose his grip.

“NggaAAAHH!!” Austin thrust violently inside her ass, going in hard and deep, her insides forced aside.

Morinth screamed as a wave of pain and pleasure stormed inside her body as Austin fucked her ass at speed, pushing her body to her limits. The Helldiver grunting and moaning got, louder, deeper, erratic.

Morinth straightened herself up so that her back touched Austin’s chest. She kissed him as the Helldiver snaked his hands around her body and cupped both her tits in his hands.

“FILL ME UP!!!”

“AAHHH!!” Austin screamed, he was finally there.

Austin gripped her body hard as he started his final thrust. Morinth’s mind went blank, his blinded by the overwhelming pleasure waiting to be unleashed. Once more, time seemed to slow, every ripple of her body stimulating every inch of his member. As Austin’s eyes registered the side of her face, as her dark eyes glanced him. A part of Austin’s mind found a way back to reality as the door broke down, his orgasm taking hold on his body.

“Not bad, Shepard. Now we become one.” Morinth said as she took Austin’s face into her clawed hands and looked directly into his eyes. “Embrace Eternity.”

Right at the last moment though, Austin found that he was in control again. Using all his strength, he kicked the Asari off of him.

“Go to hell, Ardat-Yakshi!” he said weakly.

All the sex coupled with Morinth’s mind controlled had drained a lot of his strength.

“But you... who are you?” Morinth asked confused as she slowly got to her feet. Then she realised. “Oh no. I see what’s going on here. The bitch herself found a little helper.”

Speak of the devil, Samara then entered the room, her body already shimmering with biotics and her stare focused solely on her daughter.

“Morinth!” she said as she activated her biotics and threw her daughter against the window.

“Mother.” Said Morinth coldly.

The Ardat-Yakshi’s eyes seemed to remain black, but at the same time, the black veins on her neck seemed to start growing. Now

they seemed to travel up her neck and now across her face, just stopping at her crest. So it seemed Morinth could control the ones on her face.

“Do not call me that!” Samara shouted as pushed again.

“I can’t choose to stop being your daughter, mother!” Morinth growled.

“You made your choice long ago.” Said Samara.

Morinth then suddenly unleashed a massive biotic shockwave. As she did, she seemed to emit a rather high pitched terrifying scream. The blast caused Samara to stagger backwards.

“What choice?!” Morinth yelled. The still naked Ardat-Yakshi then hauled Samara up into the air and threw a nearby chair at her.

“My only crime was being born with the gifts you gave me!”

“Enough, Morinth!” Samara yelled as she toppled Morinth over with another biotic attack.

The two Asari quickly got back up and both threw attacks at one another at the same time. Both biotics smashed into each other and they were in a lock with each other. The singularity they were both creating was causing objects nearby to float around them.

“I am the genetic destiny of the Asari. But they are not ready to reveal this, so I must die.” Said Morinth.

“You are a disease to be purged, nothing more.” Samara retorted.

“A disease?! This “disease” as you call it has made me more powerful than any Asari could ever dream of. Shepard knows this, and he wants it.” Said Morinth.

“No. I...” Austin tried to say, but he was then interrupted as Morinth’s influence once again entered his mind. “Arrgh! Get out of my head, Morinth!”

“Block her out, Shepard. She cannot be allowed to live.” Said Samara as she kept trying to overpower her daughter. She was really struggling. Morinth’s biotic powers were more powerful than she had thought they’d be. Morinth’s black veins were even beating in time with her heart beat and were pulsing fast as she kept manifesting the singularity.

“I have the power to give you pleasure for an eternity. Let me join you. You must choose.” Said Morinth, trying to influence Shepard’s decision.

“Don’t listen to her. I am already sworn to help you, Shepard. Let us finish this.” Said Samara.

Morinth’s power was starting to prove too much for the Justicar. The singularity was becoming very unstable now due to Morinth’s dark biotics. Pieces of Samara’s outfit were even being ripped away by the singularities force. Huge portions fell away to expose her azure skin (and even her more private areas)

“I won’t let you kill again!” said Austin as he tried to get up.

“I don’t think so.” Said Morinth.

Austin was interrupted by the influence in his head making him stand down. All he could do now as watch.

“You’ll stay out of the way, Shepard.” Said Morinth.

Morinth then let all her powers fuel her next attack and she once again screamed, unleashing a massive shockwave that sent Samara to the ground.

The Justicar tried desperately to get up, but she’d practically exhausted herself. The Ardat-Yakshi stepped up to Samara and sat on her, pinning her to the ground. Samara tried to shake her off, but she was too strong.

“Don’t you dare, Morinth.” She struggled.

“You are no match for me, mother.” Morinth smiled evilly as she took Samara’s head into her clawed hands and licked her cheek. Samara was disgusted by this.

“Oh how I have often I have fantasized about this. Not only will your life force be able to feed me for centuries, but your power will make me even stronger.” Said Morinth as she prepared to kill her own mother by mating with her.

“No! It cannot end like this.”

“Oh, but it can. Goodbye, Mother.”

Just as Morinth attempted the connection however, a shout interrupted her concentration.

“NO!”

Morinth looked in the direction only to find a shot heading right out at her. The bullet hit her straight in the shoulder and she was sent flying off of Samara.

“How did you do that? No one has ever resisted me.” Morinth winced as she clutched her bleeding shoulder.

Austin very slowly got up with a pistol in his hand. He’d only just managed to regain control again and get to the gun which he’d stored in his outfit.

“Don’t ever try to mess with my head! This is the end of the line for you, Morinth.”

“And they call me a monster. You’re no better!” Morinth shouted as Samara walked up to Morinth and held her down.

“Find peace in the embrace of the goddess.” She said.

Samara gave Morinth’s neck a violent twist and her neck snapped completely. The Ardat-Yakshi went limp and Samara no longer felt any resistance pushing against her.

She then noticed Austin’s weakened state and helped him up as best she could.

“Are you alright, Shepard?” she asked concernedly.

“Yeah. I’m good. Feel like my skull’s on fire, but I’m good.”

Austin said weakly as Samara helped him stand up. The Justicar didn’t

even seem to care right now that he was still completely naked and she was partially nude.

"I'm sorry, Samara. I'm so sorry. I should've been stronger." Austin apologised, regrettably.

"It's not your fault, Shepard. Morinth was even more powerful than I thought she'd be. If I'd known how strong she was..." said Samara. "The fault is mine, Shepard. I risked your life to stop her. I nearly went against my code."

"I guess we're both as much to blame." Said Austin. A horrible thought then occurred to him. "And now Liara's gonna kill me for being unfaithful."

"No, Shepard. It's not your fault. You didn't know what you were doing. Morinth made you do it. Your bond mate could never call you unfaithful. Your mind was not your own." Said Samara sympathetically.

"Thank you, Samara. I owe you my life, maybe even more than that." Austin managed to smile.

"I am ready to leave this place and get on with my life. Are you ready to do, as well?" Samara asked.

"Let me just get dressed. Sorry also by the way about..." said Austin, apologizing for his nakedness.

"Do not apologise. It's not your fault. And it is nothing I am not used to." Said Samara, doing her best to suppress a chuckle.

"Right... You might want to change as well, Samara. Morinth's biotics seems to have taken the toll on your outfit." Said Austin as he too indicated to Samara's torn outfit which now practically had her Azure displayed and even had her large tits on display.

Both of them turned their backs to one another as they got dressed. Austin redressed in his own outfit while Samara was forced to take off her own outfit and instead redress in Morinth's commando outfit. It would do until she could back to the ship to repair her usual one.

Rather naughtily, Austin was unable to resist a quick peak at Samara's nude form. Her tits and ass were so large and beautiful. Liara and Alaara would be rather jealous.

"Do you wanna talk about what happened?" Austin asked as he and Samara finished dressing.

"Shepard. What do you think I will say? What can I say? I just killed the bravest and smartest of my daughters. There are no words. I will try another time. For now, show mercy on a broken old warrior and let us leave." Said Samara.

"Okay. Let's go pick up Alaara and leave." Said Austin.

Getting back into the VIP section of Afterlife was easy. When they entered however, they found that Alaara had obviously got extremely bored during the wait. The entire crowd was gathered around the central

podium which Alaara was dancing on, completely naked with two other Asari and even a human female taking her from behind with a strap on.

Samara looked extremely surprised by this, whereas Austin was rather embarrassed and he face palmed. He should've expected this.

“Does this often happen?” Samara asked.

“You’ve no idea.” Austin sighed.

THE MASK OF HAPPINESS

CHAPTER 2

ReizYouUp
of <http://reizyouup.deviantart.com>

The Happy Mask Salesman awoke in the warmth of red sheets under velvet blankets. The muffled roar of the desert could still be heard in the background. He felt the heat of embers on his back. He sat upright to find himself inside of a tent. Memories began flooding back to him.

Another salesman.

A woman.

A vision.

"You collapsed back there." A voice said.

The Happy Mask Salesman turned to direct his attention to his side. The Carpet Salesman sat in a cushion beside a roaring fireplace.

"You!" shouted The Happy Mask Salesman. "I remember now. You tried to scam me!"

"And I suddenly remember why I was glad to have you pass out." The Carpet Salesman related.

The Happy Mask Salesman's head darted left and right.

"Where are my masks?!" he exclaimed.

"Calm yourself! They're in another room. Don't you think we would have thought of that? Can't have you attacking me again."

The Happy Mask Salesman looked around the tent. It appeared that there were several flaps going in different directions. The tent was a lot bigger than he had originally thought.

"Where is the woman?"

"Making the tea. She'll be a while. In the mean time, I must say, I've never seen a tribesman collapse from simply a vision before."

"Well I am only half tribesman."

"Oh, really?" The Carpet Salesman raised his brow questionably. "That must explain why you collapsed, then. I doubt a half-tribesman would be able to handle a love vision."

"Love vision?" The Happy Mask Salesman repeated. "What exactly is a love vision?"

"For a curious fellow such as yourself, you seem to have little knowledge of your own people." said The Carpet Salesman.

"Normally, we can only see protheses of the non-sighted. If one of the sighted looks into the eyes of another sighted, nothing will happen. This is the only vision that can occur between two tribesman. It happens between him and the one who he is destined to fall in love

with."

The Happy Mask Salesman was taken aback. "But that means-

"Exactly. You, here are destined to be with my dear Tsuki."

A flap opened up and Tsuki entered the room carrying tea.

"Am I interrupting?" she asked.

"No, we were just talking." The Carpet Salesman said.

Tsuki set the tea down and sat down beside her uncle.

"Are you feeling any better?" she asked The Happy Mask Salesman. The concern shown in her voice.

He stared long and hard into her red eyes again without answering. He wanted to be lost in them again, so that he could find the answer to what he was seeking. Anything; any words to find what he had to say.

"Your uncle tells me we are destined to be together." he finally said.

"Yes, I know." said Tsuki.

"I never expected to marry." said The Happy Mask Salesman bashfully. "I am not exactly the type to fall in love."

"Neither am I. I expected to be helping my uncle with his shop until I grew old."

"Your uncle tried to scam me."

"Yes, he tends to do that." she said with a laugh and a smile.

"So you simply let him do this without a care?" The anger shown in his eyes.

"It does not concern me what happens to the money of a few travelers, as long as we get our fair share. Does that surprise you?"

"No." said The Happy Mask Salesman, too used to the workings of villains. "In fact your uncle reminds me of someone I know."

All at once, he rose up to his feet.

"You won't drink your tea?" asked Tsuki.

"I would like my masks back."

"I'll show you to them, then."

Tsuki opened up the flap which lead into the kitchen. The room was decorated with purple and gold. The bag of masks were layed on top of a counter top. The Happy Mask Salesman took them off, then slung them over his shoulders. He held out his hand to Tsuki.

"Come with me."

"Where to?" she asked.

"Back to my mask shop in Hyrule. If we really are destined to be together, I'd like to show it to you."

Just then, The Carpet Salesman entered the room. He eyed Tsuki and The Happy Mask Salesman's clasped hands.

"Ah!" said The Happy Mask Salesman. "There you are. I'd still like to trade with you."

"I am not selling you my niece."

"That is not what I meant! You still have my cucco mask!"

"Oh? You still want that thing?" The Carpet Salesman asked.

"I'll go get it for you, but I doubt you'll want it, now."

"What do you mean?"

The Carpet Salesman left the kitchen for a few moments while Tsuki and the seller of masks waited patiently. He came back with the charred remains of an object.

"What happened to it?!" The Happy Mask Salesman exclaimed.

"Sorry. You see, I tried an experiment. Flying bombchus. Didn't work."

Tsuki laughed.

The Happy Mask Salesman's red eyes opened. He began to rock back and forth furiously, the weight of his enormous mask sack not impeding him even an inch. "Whaaaat?!"

"Easy!" yelled Tsuki. "Take a deep breath."

The Happy Mask Salesman managed to get a hold of himself, but his fists were still clenched, and his nostrills were flaring.

When The Happy Mask Salesman was finally calm, Tsuki spoke up.

"Uncle, he asked if I could go with him back to his shop."

"That will be hard, seeing as our transportation is destroyed." said The Happy Mask Salesman. "I use to use that cucco mask for whenever I was exahsted from teleporting long distances. I cannot teleport for very long in this condition."

"In that case," said The Carpet Salesman. "I will loan you a magic carpet."

The Carpet Salesman went away for a few moments, then came back with a carpet in the colors purple and red lacing.

"This is a spare. Return this to me within a few days."

The Happy Mask Salesman and his new fiance began to exit the tent. The tumultuos cry of the desert rusumed loudly for all to hear. He stepped onto the magic carpet, then proceded to attempt to start it.

"How do you control this?" he asked Tsuki.

"Grab the little threads on the sides like reigns."

The Happy Mask Salesman did just that, and they lifted into the air. Tsuki turned back.

"Good bye, uncle! Be back soon!"

The full moon shone brightly like a beacon of light penetrating the dark storm in the sky. The Happy Mask Salesman pulled the carpet higher so that it was closer to the big light. He felt a rushing in his veins, and some of his strength returning. He looked back to check on Tsuki and saw her kneeling down and cupping her hands together.

"What are you doing?" he questioned.

"I am praying to the moon goddess, Luna."

The Happy Mask Salesman was shocked. "The moon is a goddess?"

"What?" asked Tsuki, befuddled. "You don't know about moon worshipping?"

"Forgive me." said The Happy Mask Salesman with a hint of disdain. "My mother was the only tribeswoman in our family, and she died before telling me much of the tribe's ways. The great calamity that decimated and scattered the tribe's numbers left her traumatized. She always spoke with some sadness when mentioning traditions. She said that the moon was important to our people. Nothing more."

"Oh, the moon is very important to the tribe. Many girls share its namesake, like mine. Not to mention we raise our children on it."

"You were raised on the moon?!"

"Yes, I was." Tsuki said with a smile. "Weren't you?"

"No." said the seller of masks. "I was raised in an inventor's workshop."

"Well that's interesting." said Tsuki. "Oh, speaking of names, I never asked you yours. What is it?"

The Happy Mask Salesman turned to give Tsuki a look as serious as stone.

"Now, there are many secrets my mother told me to keep. I am very secretive, even after all these years. There are not many people I share such matters with. Can I trust you?"

"I won't tell anyone your name or anything else if you don't want me to. Promise."

The Happy Mask Salesman was unsure of the girl. However, if she was to be his bride, he must tell her eventually.

"Sato." said The Happy Mask Salesman. "My name is Sato."

XX

Meanwhile, far off in Hyrule Field, the bright orange ball of the sun was slowly making its way over the horizon on The Happy Mask Salesman's nephew. Sakon the thief and The Curiosity Shop Owner were heading towards Kakariko village.

"Remind me again why we're doing this." said Sakon with a yawn. He was definitely unhappy about waking up this early in the morning.

"I already told you, Sakon." said The Curiosity Shop Owner. "You and I are on a mission to retrieve several shipments of 'special' wine."

"What's so 'special' about this wine?"

"Never you mind that. I just need you to stick close to me. You're muscles may be wiry and thin, but since no one else is available for this job, then you'll have to do for the position of bodyguard."

"You picked me for my muscles, huh? Why, I didn't know you had a crush on me."

A shiver of utter disgust made its way up The Curiosity Shop Owner's spine. "Its not like that, Sakon."

"Can't blame a guy for being bisexuall."

"What?" asked The Curiosity Shop Owner. "You're bi?"

"Yeah, got a problem with that?"

"Oh." said The Curiosity Shop Owner, who did not expect to hear that, but was not surprised all the same. "No."

"Hey, if I'm supposed to be the bodyguard, then how come I don't get a weapon?"

Sakon pointed to a holster on The Curiosity Shop Owner's waist.

"Because, Sakon you'll poke your's or, more importantly, my eye out with it."

"Aw, come on! How am I supposed to protect us without a sword?"

The Curiosity Shop Owner appeared to be in deep thought. "Well... Kaiden's men would likely have weapons themselves, and they're all twice your size... Ok. I'll give you one, but if you mess around with it, I'm taking it back."

He reached into his holster and pulled out another sword. He handed it to Sakon, who immediately started testing it out.

Sakon pulled the sword from its sheath and magic sparkles came forth in a shower of rainbow. The sword appeared to be on fire, and as Sakon flailed it left and right, he nearly charred what little hair The Curiosity Shop Owner had left.

"Give me that!" he shouted. "What are you trying to kill me, you moron?!"

The Curiosity Shop Owner yanked the sword out of Sakon's grasp, then hit him with the butt of it.

"Ow, awww!" yelled Sakon.

"You know," The Curiosity Shop Owner commented. "for a 21 year-old, Sakon, you are real immature."

They came upon the fork in the road between Hyule Castle Town and Kakariko Villiage.

"Come on." said The Curiosity Shop Owner. "We're almost there."

POETRY

is published here thanks to
John Mahler's Quotes of the Day

<http://www.lulu.com/shop/john-mahler/john-mahlers-quotes-of-the-day/ebook/product-20105057.html>

Some people, at least, have enjoyed my Quotes of the Day, so here they are, for your amusement and bemusement: one entire year's worth of quotes. My quotes by the way; nobody else's. These are my thoughts and observations on the world around us: funny, sad, uplifting, evocative, inspiring, silly, and occasionally just plain stupid, they are all here for your perusal: enjoy!

KITES

Nikki Cowx

Blinded by smoke and heavy air,
Ash from burning buildings drift,
Falling, tumbling, twirling there
As winds push and give kites lift.

A world crumbles below here
Leaving ruins built by forgotten sins,
The city's soul flies away in pity.

High above the chaos and clouds
Further than many believe,
The kites fly above those who bow
And the deep abyss that they don't see.

Cold and lost in the atmosphere,
Kites separated by forlorn winds,
One by one falling back to the burning city.



<http://candy42.deviantart.com/art/Kites-361865724#/art/Kites-361865724?edit=1>

This is just a little something I wrote to convey the sense of destruction and chaos that nobody sees because they are no longer around to see it because they've left or because of other reasons.

This is the inner turmoil, so obvious, so invisible. This is the end for a new beginning. This is hope as it flies away. This is life.

LOVE LIKE THORNS

Maria Kubiak

His eyes like a ocean,
His lips soft as rose petals,
His arms strong like a tree,
His body sweet as forbidden fruit,
But His love...
His love like a thorns.

OUR HISTORY

ZombiePwner5
of <http://zombiepwner5.deviantart.com>

These pages you read, whether it be by me or another,
these facts are ones, you cannot deny. We are free,
If not we'll write it out, we are the masters
of our own destinies, so let us tonight, be free.

Create our own history,
remembering the ones before us, that helped
us become who we are, from the actions that helped,
write their own history.

Let us tonight come together, and write our own....
...History...
...Destiny...

Together or apart we are still together.

UNHEALED

nixitrixi
of <http://nixitrixi.deviantart.com>

There is a train that runs from the south
and I wish you would get on it.
Because I've wracked my brain
and I've bled my arteries dry
and you keep falling out.

You once told me that staying on your knees
is the key to fixing anything.
But I have bruises that are black
and bone damage to make you cry
but you still have that vacant expression in your eyes.

MOTIONLESS TRANQUILITY

Loftydreams101
of <http://loftydreams101.deviantart.com>

Time is to be savored
Accented, with sparse pinches of joy
And served,
Upon the gilded platter of your choosing

I became, a stranger among the elements
Serenaded by a host of wailing goslings
With rosebud fragrances, wafting around and above

How I crave to remain motionless
As a prisoner, exiled to natural comforts
To be held, by the ruggedness we have long forgotten
Far gone and taken by the pillars of our time

Every mile I journey lives!
Every cherished inch,
Beats with the same longing to remain

Through the trails I carve
That aimlessly wander and stray
I crumble, assured
Unshackled for the moment
I let this age slip away

LOSING MY BELIEF

HauntedQueen
of <http://hauntedqueen.deviantart.com>

Today I watched a couple of 2 years say goodbye to their relationship.
Today my friend dumped the bitch who's been the bane of his existence for 6 months.

~~Today the boy of my dreams asked me out.~~

Today I watched a girl reject the sweet guy friend with no shame.

Today I saw at least 10 couples showing their love through trinkets, chocolates, and roses.

~~Today I felt real love for the first time.~~

Today I saw tears, smiles, hugs, bitchslaps.

Today my friend cried on my shoulder, asking for my advice.

~~Today I walked hand in hand with the perfect guy.~~

Today I laughed, no strings attached in any place.

Today I smiled, loving my liberty and freedom.

~~Today the guy told me his love for me was hard to convey.~~

Today I hunted for mysteries without a nuisance tagging along.

Today I burped without a disgusted face sitting opposite of me.

~~Today I saw the guy snogging another girl, right in front of me.~~

Today I was able to do my work without having a gnat on my mind.

Today I fanned over famous guys without a jealous face interrupting.

~~Today I caught the guy cheating, we're over now~~

Today I watch a couple of 2 years say goodbye to their relationship.