

Fanatical Publishing's

# Weekly Review

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## 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, and cover art if you have any.

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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# ORIGINAL LITERATURE

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<http://fanaticalpublishing.weebly.com/>

# RYU, THE DEMON SLAYER

Zaac Rayaken Shero

Genre: Sci-Fi, Fantasy, Action, Adventure, Romance, etc...

This "religious" story revolves around on particular girl that grew up only knowing the peace within her home, but is soon found by dark forces that wish to take her captive in hopes to rule her world. They believe she is only gifted with their own powers, but quickly realize she is actually not one of them. Finding out the truth of her past and who she is, the girl makes a stand against those that are looking for her, becoming a one woman army to bring down the person that started all of her misery... her own father!

## Chapter 1

In the universe resides a system called Garein, with only a single planet holding life called Aberon. This world was a glorious green and blue planet, much like the norm of other well known worlds. Aberon's star, the Cen, is bright white and gives blissful light on the day to all of the planet's lifeforms.

The Yavatos that roamed on Aberon, their home world, were of all types of anthropomorphic animals in the Mortal Realm. Humans, Rodents, Dogs, Cats, Birds and Reptiles. Even Hybrids of Deer and Dog, or Cats and Reptiles! Some were those nonexistent to other worlds, like Dragons and Sergals. They were all one and the same in each other's eyes as Yavatos, able to walk upright and speak the same language.

All were peaceful with themselves, until...

A cult of Satanists arose and began taking hold of the world through the might of their leader, who may only be mentioned solely for narrative purposes as... The Dark One. Sacrifice upon sacrifice, the cult gained Demonic power. The horrid power that they held made them nearly unstoppable amongst the Mortal Realm.

The cult leader brought forth the will of The Dark One, killing innocent people for his reign of power among the living to stay supreme. Along with that, to keep his life and the life of his daughter eternal and to rule over a Hellish army to ravish all of existence, the leader was to sacrifice both a holy woman and a man to The Dark One. For the leader's own life, the blood of his beloved wife. For his daughter's, the blood of the twin brother. Yet at the day of the new year, the daughter was not blessed by The Dark One but by its ever forgiving and almighty counterpart, who should only be known

narratively as The Holy One.

Branded by The Holy One's mark as an act to stop the will of The Dark One, the daughter of the unholy Mortal father was taken by a guardian Angel. In the day the daughter was saved, the Satanists were killed by The Holy One's descendants called Christians. The girl was moved to a foster home, forever gone from her cult leading father. Unfortunately, the father was too powerful to apprehend, thus able to break away and flee into hiding.

The daughter taken, the cult diluted yet still roaming and Aberon broken of The Dark One's grasp, a time came to pass. The daughter, free from The Dark One as well, was brought to where no Demon worshiper could tread. The last holy grounds... of Ambercinna.

It took the father nearly a decade to reform his cult, rebuilding his followers into power so they may once again takeover Aberon. They hunted down any who they saw fit to their plans, slaughtering all as sacrifices to The Dark One in exchange for more power, while in search for the missing daughter. They had their way for 40 days, then The Holy One's followers stepped forward to halt the Demonic acts that were taking place.

Like the Demons given darkened techniques, so too with lightened skills were the Angelic spirits of the Christians. They needed no sacrifice, for their eternal love of their almighty leader was all that was asked. Cross to bear the mark of The Holy One's followers, these worshipers were given tremendous power to fight back against the Satanists. Each Cross held its own great power, able to do what no Demon could ever hope for. However, the Crosses would never kill nor even harm any that were not one brandished by The Dark One's mark. The unforgiving sign that mocks the very fabric of The Holy One itself... The I.C. or Inverted Cross!

For years and years at a time, the Christians tried to both hide the daughter and stopped any Satanists who came to look for the child, giving no hint or trace of where the child may be. Most Christians defeated the Satanists, but unfortunately others failed to stop them. By The Holy One's will, none who were against could touch nor find the pure child—regardless of how hard they tried. Countless battles began between the Cross and I.C., numerous lives were lost, and unexplainable acts of chaos corrupted Aberon, making it nothing more than a cursed planet.

Everyone hated it! The boundless war, the uncountable deaths, the endless torment and sorrow—pain and agony! Everyone cried out for help, yet help never came! Sin ruled everything that was before a peaceful union of a once great world! All were frightened, day and night, to whether their lives were next to be taken! All feared if and when The Dark One may try to take all that they once knew! No one

felt truly safe anymore!

Those who have not chosen a side thought nothing could end what they called The Cross War. They believed everyone and everything would perish, that all will be wiped out of their world and all others. All felt lost, scared, saddened, torn from happiness and forgotten. Yet unbeknownst to them was a little girl, living in a small house, being raised by a heartwarming and caring nun.

The adorable little Red Panda girl was happy, cheerful and very bright. For years did the little girl not know of the world's problems around her, only the true bliss that once was of it within her life, living alongside her adopted holy mother. She was everything to the little girl, as was the little girl to the holy mother. Sadly, the day of the little girl's 10th birthday, she was indeed discovered.

Tricked by a Satanist, a clueless and unmarked male cobra found the location of the little girl. He was given a deal by a Demon, the life of the girl for all he ever wanted. The man, unknown to what he was searching for other than a girl, came upon the woman who was caretaker of the child in her own home. He demanded she tell him where the girl was, yet got no answer. The nun only tried to tell the man to rethink his decision and repent for his selfish actions to The Holy One, but the man ignored the nun.

Hiding in what appeared to be a trashcan, trying before to play a game with her holy mother, the little girl peeked out after hearing the yelling of the clueless man. Frightened by what she saw, the little girl continued to hide as she witnessed what happened.

Demanding one last time to reveal the little girl, the man brandished a small knife from behind him and raised it to the nun. The woman, realizing she could never reason with the man as he was forever lost in his ways, gave the man what he wanted. She removed herself of her purified weapon and dropped it near her feet, which was only a straight sword's black hilt with a thin and four inch long chain holding a white metal Cross at the base.

Giving the poor man what he wanted, the nun said, "I am the one you seek, sir. I cannot and will not fight you, for you are not truly a puppet within the holds of Satan. May God cleanse your soul, if you are so ever to see his grace in Heaven."

Deaf to the woman's voice, the man slew her with his blade—stabbing into her stomach. Her blood, the blood of an innocent, was drenched and fell to curse the holy ground that was Ambercinna. It was the last place The Dark One's followers could not tread, for no innocent blood was spilled before. However, with this final accursed act upon the land, Demons were able walk amongst it.

The clueless man, having stained his body and soul with that of the woman's blood, left the household to find the one he made his

deal with. Silent until the man was gone, the little girl cried as she huddled herself in the trashcan. Frightened beyond imagination, the child shed her tears until nothing could come of her eyes—only pain. Eventually, she crawled out of the metal cylinder onto the hardwood floor, tipping the can over when she tried to motion her foot over its edge. She moved to hug the one she only knew as her mother, knowing nothing of her past. Yet in a short miracle, the nun had one last thing to say.

“I’m sorry, my child.” the nun said, smiling as she looked into the little girl’s eyes. “I cannot help you any further. You must... You must go now, Ryuka, for no one else can. Stop the one who is... your father. Stop his vile reign of terror.” She reached for the metal hilt, giving it to the little girl as her final words were, “Believe... and you shall... bring peace.”

Ryuka cried as she watched her caregiver close her eyes for her eternal rest, believing she had done all that she could. The little girl, alone and scared, held the hilt tight in both hands, wanting never to let go and never to leave her holy mother’s presence. After a few minutes, she stood on her own feet, then was spooked by hearing the voice of the man before.

“There she is!” the murderer said, speaking about the nun his slew. He then glanced at the Demon beside him and said, “As we agreed, I killed her. Now I want what I asked for.” With that, Ryuka turned to face both the man and the Demon, greatly in fear for her own life.

The two intruders laughed, then the Demon, pretending to look as though a businessman, examined the little girl with its dark blue eyes. Finding she was its true target, the Demon said, “Oh! So you’re still alive!”

The Mortal man glanced between Ryuka and the Demon, then said, “What are you talking about?! The nun said she was what you wanted!”

The Demon smiled as it looked over at the man and said, “Deals off, Mortal! You didn’t kill the girl!”

“What?!” the man barked, “No! You can’t do that!” However, the Demon raised its own right arm and quickly formed it into a straight double edged blade with a small I.C. mark at the tip of it, stabbing it through the Mortal’s lower torso.

“Too bad!” the Demon said, “But thanks for allowing me passage here!” It jerked the blade out of the man, who fell lifeless onto the floor, then turned to the little girl with a Demonic smile. The Demon raised its left hand to the girl, another I.C. mark brandished into its palm, waving to call her over and said, “Come here, child!” Ryuka was frozen where she stood, holding the sword hilt in her hands as hard as she could. The Demon noticed the item in her grip,



then said, "You won't be needing that, child! Come now... I won't hurt you!"

Amazingly, Ryuka gained her confidence to stand against the Demon as she lowered her arms, holding the hilt in her left hand with the Cross dangling from the back as she said, "No... you won't..." She then stopped crying and grew angry towards the Demon as she continued, "But I'll hurt you!"

The Demon quickly became furious with the little girl, giving out a Demonic roar as it raised and aimed its own blade to her. It moved into position to strike, yet was unable to touch her. A barrier quickly arose to stop the Demon just a foot away, shining The Holy One's Cross against the vile creature. Finding it was unable to harm the child, the Demon jumped back as it swung its blade down from its right side. It watched as the barrier disappeared, then figured it could strike her once more. However, as the Demon readied to attack again, Ryuka called forth the hidden purified blade within the hilt she held.

Believing she could slay the Demon, a single edged white blade that curved back slightly sprung out forward from the hilt. Ryuka raised the weapon with both hands just as it formed, going at the same time the Demon lunged for her with its weapon. The little girl swung from her left at the Demon's blade, shattering it to hundreds of pieces with ease. The pieces broken off became black acid blood of the Demon's, which melted into the floor and eventually through the ground.

In pain from its dismembered limb, the Demon stepped back from the child as it held the end of its right arm with its left hand and yelled, "You little bitch!! Lord Agasten may be your father, but he shall see you die a most painful death by Satan's own mind!!"

Ryuka stood unmoved from the Demon's threat, having no more emotion of her own, yet responded, "Not until he's back in Hell where he belongs!"

In fear of the child, the Demon tried to retreat from the household but was unable to escape. The little girl jolted for the unholy entity and slew it with her blade, giving a clean upward and out to the side cut with only her left arm. She sliced through the center of the beast's torso, forcing the Demon to stop in its tracks. Ryuka lowered her weapon, the blade returning to hide within its hilt, then the Demon's blood spewed across the room as its body went to quickly deteriorate into nothing. The blood, though landing on Ryuka, did nothing to affect her but still burned into the ground. She stood calm, but also uncaring... unchanged. Almost as if she was heartless, even soulless.

Having slain the Demon, Ryuka put away the weapon, yet had the chain with the Cross hanging out while she moved to give her holy mother a proper burial. She then went through and found all the

information about herself that her holy mother had kept secret about her past, all the documents assembled in one hidden drawer under the nun's bed.

Ryuka... Christina Ryuka, named after her blood mother, while also after the weapon she now possessed. Born from a Satanist father, who killed both her biological mother and twin sibling, Ryuka was taken by a follower of The Holy One from the hands of the wicked. Unfortunately, there was nothing more about her past, only that it spoke to her to move forward. After finding out about herself, Ryuka went forth to do what she believed was the only right thing to do... Kill Agasten!

Uncaring to her own life, uncaring to the will of The Holy One and uncaring to those around her, Ryuka set out only to do one thing. She wanted revenge for her holy mother, her real mother and her brother—who she never knew. Ryuka went on to seek not in ending The Cross War, but to end the life of the one who started it. She cared not if the war continued after her actions were dealt with, only that she sees her father fall before her.

Many a years passed as Ryuka slaughtered those who stood as either a Demon or a bearer of the I.C. mark, followed by a title that came to mind of those that witnessed the aftermath of her brutality. No one saw who did it, no one knew what it might bring. They figured it was just more Cross bearers fighting for power and left everything be. However, a small few were able to catch a glimpse of the truth... The warrior who had slain the wicked ones. Unable to get the face of the wielder, they were forced to notice the purified sword. The people who saw that blade knew what it was and went to spread word of a new hope for their world to all.

The blade they saw was none other than Ryu... The Demon Slayer!

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# OUR TRUTH

Solilska  
of <http://solilska.deviantart.com>

As my fourteenth piece I attempted to talk about Truth:

There is no universal truth ideologically speaking, of course some truths are blatant, we live on Earth, we breath oxygen, the Earth is spherical.

But speaking about truth to people, what they believe and what they follow, we all have our own truths and some of them may be seen as correct or incorrect but none of them are pure factual truth, much like opinion and tastes, they are subjective, and the meaning of life being a perfect example, we make it ourselves and we live our truths and follow them rule by rule to suit us.

Any person who can sway you to their truth and to follow It without being a scientist,

They are merely articulate and able to express themselves In a logical and understanding manner, they are men and women of their own truths, not of universal truths.

Just because a person Is able to convince you of something and make you believe it so deeply does not mean it is factual or even real.

You have to find your own truths and forge your own convictions, that will essentially be you, a living breathing extension to your truths.

# WEEKLY RANT

by ASngel-Rants  
of <http://angel-rants.deviantart.com>

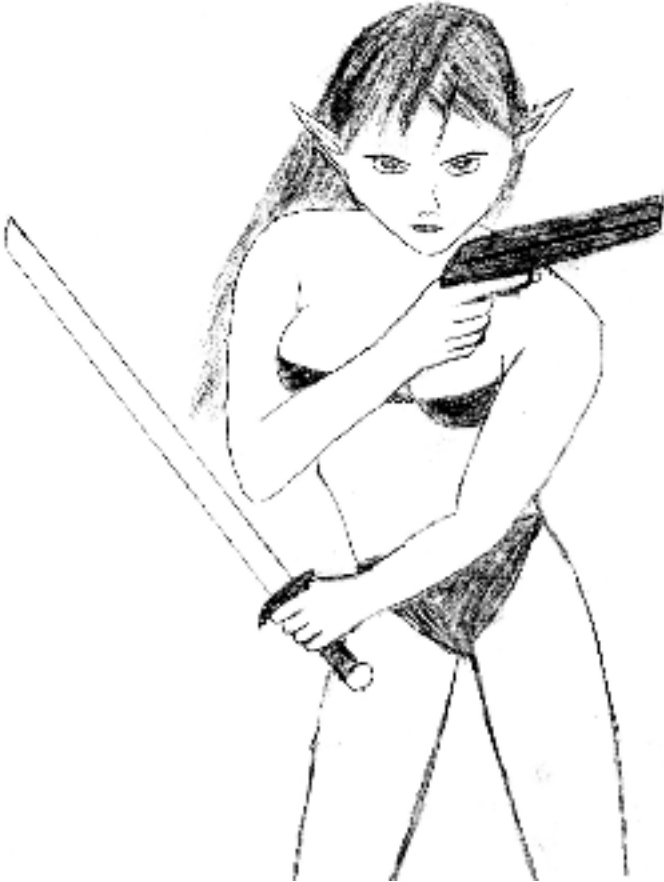
RANT #1: YOLO and Swag

Okay, first rant! 8D

## **Swag** and *YOLO*

You've heard of those phrases, right? Well, that's unfortunate. I cannot stress how idiotic people are who use these two phrases. 'LOL, SWAG!!!!!!' No. 'YOLO, am I right?' You aren't. So, swag has become a slur for....style? Or...stupidity? Because I'm leaning towards the second one. And YOLO. I'm a fan of Pewdiepie and I know he uses YOLO when he jumps off stuff. I don't mind that. What I hate is that kids use it for everything like, 'I'm going into the ocean. YOLO!!!!' or 'I'm going to kiss my friend's boyfriend/girlfriend! YOLO!!!' How about no. Bitch, you kiss your friends date, you're going to lose a friend and then say, 'BAWWW, I LOST MY BEST FRIEND!!!!!!'

# FAN FICTION



or: Leanna's Return

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# ME2 HELLDIVER SAGA

## CHAPTER 39: A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

Veyron722skyhook  
of veyronmaster722@gmail.com

The Normandy was en-route to Arkadia for repairs after the Relay. The crew would also need time to recover. Although many of the team had plans to leave eventually, they'd agreed to stay for the celebration.

Austin was currently down in the cargo hold with Alpha Squad. Dell had just told them that he and Sill had at last finished fixing X-5. The robot's new body was quite astonishing. He was now almost 3 meters tall and his redesign looked even more machine than ever. In fact, if Alpha didn't know better, they'd mistake him for an Exo Suit, he was that big.

Sill was currently standing on some scaffolding making some final adjustments to the robot's head before she turned him back on.

"Well, here goes." she said.

The young Arkane activated her omni tool and the robot hummed into life. To everyone's surprise X-5 seemed to look at the m like a security mech and started talking like one, only with a much deeper voice.

"Crush! Kill! Destroy! Crush! Kill! Destroy! Destroy! Destroy!"

"That's not supposed to happen!" said Dell urgently as X-5 aimed his guns at them

It was only then that Sill realised she had a small part still in her hand.

"Whoops!" she quickly leapt onto the robot and forced the part in just as X-5 was about to fire. "There we go!"

X-5 looked around for a long moment. He then tried to take a step forward but struggled to keep his balance. Obviously he wasn't used to his new form and so wasn't steady on his new feet.

"QUERY: Where am I?! What happened?! Last thing I remember was getting shot by Collectors. I thought I was a goner!" he asked. "QUERY: Why am I speaking like this? Did someone fiddle with my voice box?!"

Austin looked at Dell confusedly. Why was X-5 speaking like that?

"I was afraid this would happen." the Arkane sighed.

"QUERY: WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ME?!" X-5 shouted.

"X-5, calm down and listen! You were critically damaged. Dell managed to fix you, but your body parts were beyond repair. They had

to give you a new body." Austin explained sternly.

X-5 seemed to calm down at this and relaxed a bit.

"STATEMENT: No wonder I'm not steady on my feet. But that still does not explain why I am speaking like an out of date computer." he said.

"Must be a small glitch. I'll look into it. For now though, I'd recommend you spend some time in the simulator getting used to your new body." said Dell.

"I thought the simulator was broken." said Austin.

"Sill fixed it easily. Do try to remember who built it for you." Dell smiled. "That reminds me. Shepard, I have some news I need to tell you, but it can wait until after the celebrations. I just need to remember."

"If you say so." said Austin.

"QUERY: Did we at least win?" X-5 asked.

"Oh, we won alright." Austin smiled.

"STATEMENT: Oh good. It is a good thing that I still remember everything prior to my... hibernation. I would hate to not catalogue and remember a kill." said X-5 modestly.

"Huh?"

"I was afraid of this too. Some of his personality might have changed. I just hope it's not for the worse." said Dell.

"OBJECTION: I assure you, Dell. I have no desires to rebel against the Helldivers. If I did, you'd know by now. I'd be slaughtering the inhabitants of this ship if I did." x-5 OBJECTED.

"Okay... this new attitude's starting to creep me out a bit." said Sill.

The main Arkadia hall was packed with Arkanes, Helldivers and plenty of other familiar faces. Zartrack stood in the crowd. Also standing next to him was none other than Austin and Sarah's parents, Matt and Hannah Shepard. Hannah almost looked in tears of joy to see her son again after two years. Mat looked pleased too of course.

All of the team and Alpha Squad were stood above for the entire crowd to see. The Arkane Council also stood before them. Spartan stepped forward and addressed everyone.

"Today we gather to honour the heroism of the team that stands before us. They have defeated the Collectors, destroyed their base, and dealt a fatal blow to the Reapers. Under Shepard's leadership they have practically done the impossible." he said proudly.

Some Helldiver soldier then came forth with several large boxes. Spartan opened them to reveal several shiny medals in them. "For this, we are proud to present all the non-Helldiver members with the cross of glory, the highest commendation we can bestow."

The Arkane presented each cross to the Non Helldiver team members, including Sarah. Even Jack behaved herself and bowed her

head at receiving the award.

The crowd clapped and cheered for a few seconds before going silent. Spartan had much more to say.

"We also recognize the heroism of Alpha Squad's newest members. Liara T'soni, Garrus Vakarian and Alex Wilson, step forward." he said.

Liara, Garrus and Griffin did so and stepped forward from the rest of Alpha.

"Your skills, inspiration of valour and loyalty to the Helldiver cause and your teammates is in keeping with the highest tradition. Therefore, as head of the Arkane Council, it is my honour to award you also with the cross of glory."

Spartan did the same thing again and presented the three Helldivers with a cross of glory each.

Once again the crowd clapped and cheered as the three of them joined Alpha again. They were all smiling proudly. Griffin even seemed lost for words.

"Never thought this day would come." he said.

"No shortcuts, Alex. You earned it." Austin smiled.

"We must also not forget of the heroism and bravery of Alpha Squad. Many times before they have shown themselves to be one of the best Helldiver teams we have ever trained. They serve as a symbol for everything the Helldivers stand for." Spartan continued. He turned to Alpha as he said the next bit. "Since we have long ago awarded you all with the cross of glory however, it has been difficult for us to think of how we can once again commend you for all that you have done. Eventually, we have come to the decision that your names will forever be remembered in our history."

A large cover was then pulled off of a large structure standing over them to reveal a large statue of all of Alpha Squad.

The crowd once again cheered as the Helldiver squad looked at it, all of them surprised beyond belief, but pleasantly.

"This statue shall forever be a part of our great hall of warriors. We once again have another tale to weave into our great history archives." said Spartan, smiling as he spoke. "There is also one more commendation to be given, and that is to be given to a singular individual. Major Austin Shepard, step forward."

Austin stepped forward. He was unsure where this was going, or how the Arkanes could possibly reward him with anything better than promotion. It did seem very early though. To his shock however, Spartan said something completely different and most unexpected.

"Your leadership, bravery, and loyalty to uphold the code of the Helldivers has always been admired by us and it serves an inspiration to many. You are also the one who discovered the truth about the Reapers. When war does eventually come, we are sure you will do the



same again to help us stop them once and for all."

"Nothing more than my duty, Councillors." said Austin.

"Nevertheless, we cannot let this victory go unrewarded.

Though it seems a solution has been made for us. The Queen of Earth has heard of your efforts to stop the Collectors. Now aware of your victory against them, she has decreed that you... are to be knighted." said Spartan.

The crowd once again broke into claps and cheers and whistles. Alpha Squad and all of the Normandy team looked at Austin with surprise. They all knew that among humans, to be given Knighthood was a hard earned but great honour indeed.

Almost struggled to find something to say for a moment. Of all the possible reward she'd thought of, he had not expected this.

"I'm almost lost for words, Councillor. I don't know what to say. Thank you." he said gratefully, bowing his head.

Spartan simply smiled and nodded. Austin then turned to address the crowd directly.

"While this is a victory, we must not forget about those who lost their lives to the Collectors. Many colonists fell at their hands. I'll ask for now is a moment of silence to honor their memory." he said.

The crowd obliged and remained absolutely silent for several seconds.

"Thank you. HAIL THE VICTORIOUS DEAD!" Austin yelled. The crowd replied back.

"HAIL!"

With that over, the whole place had turned into a celebration. Everyone has happily cheering, drinking with friends, many other stuff associated with having a fun time.

The first people of course that Austin made sure he talked to was his family. He and Sarah quickly found Matt and Hannah in the crowd. Hannah almost immediately flung her arms around her son.

"We've missed you so much, sweetheart." she nearly sobbed.

"We've missed you both too." said Sarah as she hugged her mother as well.

When Hannah finally let Austin go, she looked at him proudly.

"My son, a knight. I don't know what to say." she smiled.

"I'll admit I'm very surprised myself. I never expected an honor like that." said Austin.

"You earned it, Son." said Matt proudly.

"Thanks, Dad. That means a lot." Austin smiled.

Father and Son simply smiled at one another for a long moment before eventually giving in and hugging one another. Even a Helldiver General as hard-core as Matt had a soft spot for family.

"You and Sarah have always made us proud, Austin." said Matt.

"We owe it to you and mum, Dad. Everything that was great

about us began with you." Sarah smiled.

Matt finally let go of his son and changed the subject.

"Now, I understand also that you have now proposed to Liara." he inquired.

"Yes. He has." Said Sarah.

"I assume you got the form signed?" Matt asked.

"Yep. Made sure I had everything sorted out before I asked the question." said Austin.

"We're very happy for you, Austin. Liara never stopped loving you and we could see how much you loved her. All I will say is that your father and I will be proud to call her our daughter in law." said Hannah happily.

"Thank you."

"Now, I think we've detained you two long enough. Go off and enjoy your celebrations. You've earned it." said Matt.

Austin nodded and went to talk with everyone else and see if he could find Liara in the crowd. See if he could steal her away later so to speak.

As Sarah went to leave as well, matt quickly spoke.

"And Sarah, the Arkane Council told me that they've put in a word with the Alliance. You're welcome to serve on the Normandy permanently if you choose." he said.

"Well... I'm glad to hear that. I'll have to think about that though. I don't know yet whether I want to be on the Normandy permanently, I mainly joined for the mission." said the N7 marine.

"It's your choice, Sarah. I'm just letting you know you can stay if you wish." Matt smiled.

The drinks were definitely on the house. Austin was quick to notice a lot of the male crew members gather around a table. From the looks of things, Kraan was just about to start a drinking game with Grunt.

"No pauses, no spills." said Ventra.

"And no regurgitations!" Kraan laughed.

"Are there any rules?" Grunt asked.

"Simple, last one standing wins! Ha-ha!" Kraan laughed.

The two Krogan started drinking while the crowd watched keenly.

Austin decided to simply leave them too it. He spotted Zartrack near the bar and decided to join him.

"General."

"You're off duty, Shepard. You can drop the formalities." said Zartrack.

"Sorry. Old habits." said Austin.

"Despite how much a soldier you've become you always remind me of that young promising student I trained so long ago." Zartrack

smiled.

"I owe all of it to you. Things might have been very different without your training." said Austin.

"You give me too much credit, Shepard. I always knew you were special. You didn't learn that from me." said Zartrack.

"I just do the best I can." said Austin as he ordered a drink.

"And you've made me proud by doing that." said Zartrack.

"Shepard, I've said it many times before that you've always been my favourite student. But up till now I've never said that you are also the best student I've ever trained."

"You mean that?" Austin asked surprised.

"Have I ever lied to you?" Zartrack's chuckled.

"No, I just... I always thought... he, was the best." said Austin.

Zartrack's smiled faded slightly at the mention of him. The person that Austin referred to was another Helldiver student that Zartrack had trained many years ago, before Austin had even joined the Alliance first. He'd been a brilliant Helldiver, but he started operating beyond his boundaries and got involved in all sorts of forbidden operations. In-particular, he had tried to form an Alliance with Cerberus, something the Arkanes would never consider or allow for any reason. Zartrack had also found out about his students betrayal and had attempted to bring him in. He had supposedly been killed, but he returned many years later going under the alias of "The Commander"

He and Alpha Squad fought and clashed many times before both Zartrack and Austin defeated him once and for all.

"No. He may have been my favourite long ago, but he was never truly the best. That's always been you." said Zartrack

"Well, in fairness, I had a great teacher as well." said Austin.

"You know, I wouldn't be surprised if you made a good mentor yourself someday." said Zartrack proudly.

"Maybe. If I'm up to it." said Austin.

Austin's drink finally arrived and he proposed a toast.

"So what will we drink to? To victory?" he asked.

"To the best student I've ever had the privilege of training."

Zartrack smiled.

They clinked glasses and drank.

"Thanks... Zartrack."

Back with the drinking game, Kraan now looked just about ready to fall of his chair. Grunt on the other hands still looked like her could many more.

"GIVE ME ANOTHER ONE! HAHAAHAH!" Kraan shouted drunkenly as threw his latest glass not he floor and it smashed.

"This is embarrassing." Griffin sighed.

"Lighten up, Griff. There's nothing wrong with him having

some fun." said Dash as he nudged the demolition expert.

"Oh no, I've got nothing against this. I'm just worried about what this much alcohol will do. Especially if someone cheats and puts something in the other ones drink." said Griffin.

"Yeah. It would be boring if that didn't happen." Dash joked.

"I feel something." said Grunt.

Everyone's eyebrows pricked up in interest.

"A slight tingle in my fingers. I think it's affecting me." said Grunt.

"What did I say?! He can't hold his liquor!" said Kraan. The second the last work left his mouth however, the Krogan fell of his chair.

Dash went up to the Krogan and checked him.

"Yep. He's out." he said. "Someone get a crane."

"Ha! Game over." Grunt laughed, crossing his arms.

As Austin explored the party a bit more, he saw Mordin over with Dell and Sill and a few other Arkane engineers. To his surprise, Mordin was singing. Actually singing!

If Austin recognised it right is was a slightly changed version "Modern Major General" from The Pirates Penzance of by Gilbert and Sullivan. Not a bad tune to sing if he was honest.

"I am the very model of a scientist Salarian; I've studied species Turian, asari, and Batarian.

I'm quite good at genetics (as a subset of biology) because I am an expert (which I know is a tautology).

My xenoscience studies range from urban to agrarian; I am the very model of a scientist Salarian."

"Mordin singing? Whatever next." Austin sighed.

The party was really starting to heat up now and Austin feared that they'd run out of drinks soon. The Arkanes allowed this sort of thing as long as it wasn't out of hand. At least everyone was having a good time. They deserved it after their victory.

Austin then spotted a large crowd gathered around table and he could her music playing. To his embarrassment, Sandra and Alaara were both standing on the table, they had removed their armour so that they were now in just their suit mesh (which was unzipped slightly to show their cleavage and they were dancing erotically.

This was by far the most embarrassing thing they had down yet.

"Me and my big mouth." Austin groaned. "Where's Jack?"

Austin looked around for the Biotic Convict with concern. Last thing he wanted Jack starting a fight. Obviously Kelly was with her, but still...

Activating his scanner, he set it to show Jack's location. The trail led him to the ladies. Through the open door he could see Kelly bent over one of the sinks with Jack thrusting into her. Both their

clothes lay on the floor.

"Hmm, well as long as Kelly keeps her under control, that's fine." Austin thought to himself.

Leaving the two women to it, Austin continued trying to find Liara. He'd been looking for a while now and still hadn't found her. Where was she?

Suddenly, he saw a very familiar face.

"Arnold! How are you?!"

Arnold walked up to his old friend and hugged him friendly.

"Hey, Shepard! Nice job with the Collectors!" he said.

"Katherine."

"Shepard."

All three of the Helldivers sat down. Arnold put his arm around Kat.

"How's the rest of you team doing?" Austin asked.

"Getting back out into the Terminus has been really good for them. They've never had a better time." Arnold smiled.

"That's good to hear." said Austin. "And how's it going between you two?"

Arnold and Kat looked at each other for a moment, but they then smiled at one another.

"Well... as well as it could I guess." said Kat.

"We just saw Liara a little while ago. She told us that you and her are getting married. Congratulations." said Arnold.

"Thanks. Best decision I ever made." said Austin.

"When can we expect a wedding?" Kat asked happily.

"Yes, but I don't know when yet. We haven't decided. We're still working it all out." said Austin.

"Be sure you invite us though, Shep. Wouldn't want to miss out on our friend's wedding." said Kat.

"No. I wouldn't want you to miss out on it either." Austin smiled.

Both Arnold and Kat's omni tools suddenly bleeped.

"Oh. Just as we're having fun." Arnold sighed. "We gotta go, Shepard. Our shore leave just ended now. We're being given an assignment in the Terminus systems."

"Be careful out there. In my experience, it's a rough place." said Austin.

"We will. See you round, old friend." said Arnold.

As Austin explored the party a bit more he begun to see more of the crew that he hadn't seen earlier.

Grunt, having won the drinking game against Kraan (who was still passed out on the floor since no one was able to move the heavy Helldiver Krogan) was now arm wrestling with Griffin. Surprisingly, the Helldiver was doing quite well. Both arms were still firmly in the middle and Griffin wasn't even breaking a sweat. Obviously all that

work with the gym equipment wasn't going to waste.

Austin then spotted Jacob lying in a secluded corner. On closer inspection it looked as though he was miming kissing someone. God knows what Kasumi would say. Just as Austin was about to leave however, he heard a small pleased moan which sounded exactly like Kasumi. He looked again and then he saw the small ripples.

Jacob wasn't drunk, he was actually kissing Kasumi for real, and her cloak had just somehow been activated.

Not wanting Jacob to appear drunk and acting weird in front of everyone else, Austin activated his omni tool. The cloaked figure fizzed slightly and then disappeared to reveal Kasumi properly.

"That's better" Austin thought to himself as he nodded approvingly.

Continuing on through the party, he noticed Garrus and Ventra comparing head shots, Leena and Tali contributing tech ideas, X-5 and Legion doing the robot on the dance floor, much to Austin's embarrassment, Miranda looked like she was talking with Oriana on the mini holo in her omni tool, and Sarah, Sill, and Gabby were all having a girl talk.

Austin finally found Liara sat at the bar. Samara was also sat in front of her and the two were talking. Both of them seemed to smiling, so they were obviously enjoying the talk.

Austin decided to join them and he pulled up a stool next to Liara.

"Shepard."

"Samara."

"Samara was just telling me some very interesting things." said

Liara.

"Mind if I just quickly get a drink?" Austin asked.

Austin slowly opened his eyes. His head hurt like hell and he felt very groggy.

"Ohhhhhhhhh! My head!" he groaned.

He looked to his left and noticed Liara was cuddled next to him. Seeing as they were both naked, they'd obviously made love last night. Austin didn't know for certain though since he couldn't remember. Any memory he had of last night just seemed fuzzy.

"Morning, Liara." he said, making sure to be quiet to avoid giving Liara a headache.

"Morning, Austin." the Asari groaned.

"How much did we have to drink?" Austin asked, rubbing his soar head.

"I don't know. I don't even remember what we did last night." said Liara concernedly as she noticed their nakedness. As Austin settled back down, he felt his right hand brush against Liara's leg. Strange though, considering she was on his other side.

"Liara, why is your leg over there?" he asked.

"Both my legs are here." Liara replied, confused by her future husband's question.

"Then who's..."

Austin's eyes widened in shock. Very slowly, he turned his head. To his horror, there lying next to him, also without clothes, was Samara.

"Oh goddess!" Liara gasped.

Samara stirred and slowly opened her eyes.

"Shepard, Liara." she said. The Justicar then suddenly realised that she was in their bed without her outfit. "Why am I in your bed, and why are we all naked?"

All the memories of last night suddenly came back to them all.

"Oh no! Not again! Austin groaned as he flopped back into the bed with his head buried in his hands as he remembered last night.

Flashback

The talk with Samara had gone on for a very long time, so much so that the three of them had ordered quite a few drinks now and it was starting to have an effect on them.

"Oh, Shepard. You and Liara will be very happy. Any Asari would be lucky to find someone to love them as you love her. Even I, would one day hope to find a love like yours if The Goddess deems it so." Samara smiled.

Austin was probably a bit drinker than the two Asari were since they had a slightly higher tolerance to alcohol than he did, and so he was finding it hard to walk.

"Think we should help him back to the ship." said Liara, giggling slightly due to her own drunkenness. Surprisingly, it had even affected Samara since Austin had bought some drinks for her too. She hadn't objected since her code permitted relaxation.

The two Asari kept Austin steady and slung an arm each over their shoulders and slowly helped him back to the Normandy and into his quarters.

What they said after that, none of them could remember. But whatever they had said, it had eventually ended up with them tearing all their clothes off.

Both Austin and Liara gasped as Samara finished removing her Justicar outfit. Her body was to die for. Her breasts were twice as large as Liara's and her hourglass figure alone was enough to bring Austin's member to full hardness.

Surprisingly, Samara was a lot more forward with this than expected. She was quick to pin Liara to the bed and latched her mouth onto the younger Asari. Austin simply watched for now and started touching himself as he watched the truly amazing sight before him. Watching a hot, sexy and beautiful Justicar lesbian kissing with

his fiancé's was truly an erotic sight.

Liara's tongue snaked into Samara's mouth as the Justicar fondled her tits. Samara quickly caught on and did the same.

"Let's not forget about, Shepard." said Samara.

Liara smiled and she and Samara separated. Austin could see where this was going and he lay back on the bed.

Liara lay next to him as did Samara. Liara immediately started kissing him while Samara simply watched his tool throb for a while. However, Austin didn't like his member being unattended. He took it in his hand and stroked it several times, which seemed to arouse Samara a lot.

"Goddess! Never before have I seen a human that big." She said.

"Kiss it." Said Austin. Get it nice and wet."

He let go of his member as Samara took hold of it. Her soft hands sliding easily over the rock hard shaft. Liara watched Samara playing with her bond mate's cock keenly. She was somewhat eager to see if the Justicar was better than her in bed.

Samara leaned forward, her lips connecting with the tip and immediately electing a moan from Austin.

"Uhhnn."

Samara gently kissed the head of his member, getting herself ready to enjoy that strong taste. She breathed in before encasing his cock with her mouth quickly settling for a rhythm. Austin grunted and moaned as Samara's lips and tongue skilfully worked his shaft. Liara's eyes were locked onto Samara's lustful face gobbling on his cock.

"Does it feel good?" she asked.

"Uhhnn.. Yeah... mmm."

Liara leaned into Austin, locking lips, their tongues intertwining while she also slid a hand over Samara's smooth ass. Her other hand groped his body wherever they could. Samara kept sucking hard on his shaft introducing her hands to the treatment. One jerking whatever she couldn't take in her mouth, the other massaging his balls.

Samara's pace increased as her head bobbed up and down on Austin's cock. Austin gave a loud moan as Samara switched to sucking and wet sounds started emitting from Samara's mouth as she sucked greedily on the head of his cock while Liara slid her hand proudly over the Justicar's plump ass.

Samara went even faster now, so much in fact that Austin even helped by putting his hand on her head and controlling her bobbing.

After a long time, Austin decided that he'd waited long enough he wanted Samara's Azure.

"You're turn, Liara." He said. "Samara, get on top of my face. I want to taste you."

Samara got on top of his face so that he could tend to her Azure,



which was now practically begging for some attention and Liara's hand gently slid down his body until it reached his throbbing cock. Taking it in her hands, she started to lick at the tip.

"Oh Goddess! No one's touched me like that for so long!" Samara moaned as Austin's tongue probed deep into her dark pussy. She also fondled her massive tits as she watched Liara suck Austin's cock.

Liara then started sliding her hand up and down her bond mate's cock as she took the head into her mouth and continued licking and also sucking, which elected a moan from Austin, which in turn added even more pleasure to Samara which also spurred Liara on. They were now locked in an unending cycle of sex and pleasure.

Liara let Austin's wet cock pop out of her mouth and gently slung her legs over him until she was straddling his waist, his still rock hard cock nudging into the space between her ass cheeks.

The Asari moaned as Austin's cock slid slowly into her Azure. She then reached forward and started once again kissing Samara as she gently moved up and down on her bond mate's shaft.

One of Austin's hands shifted. While one still remained on Samara to pull her Azure to his face, the other reached around and firmly grasped Liara's behind as it slowly rode him.

Liara shifted lower and started suckling on Samara's tits, enjoying their size, weight and feel. After several minutes of doing this for a long time, the two Asari shifted.

Samara got off of Austin, seeing as she needed to calm down so as not to cum too early. Going for so long without sex had made her unable to last as long as Austin or Liara.

Liara meanwhile moved up ever so slightly so that her bond mate's cock was now lined up with her other hole. Austin got the message almost immediately.

"Goddess, Austin." Liara moaned as she slowly inched Austin's cock into her asshole.

Her walls tightening and clamping down on his cock, tense against the foreign object being inserted.

"Ohh- oo..oohh- ahhhaaa" the Asari moaned as she felt the shaft quivering inside her ass, her rectum clamped even tighter on the Helldiver's member.

Liara looked down into her bond mate's eyes, a smile on her face as he slide is shaft further into her ass until his full length was in her, and she could feel his balls pressed against her ass.

Liara's pace started to increase and she brought her ass up and then down. The air was filled with a slapping sound as Austin's balls slapped against Liara's ass.

All the while, Samara was still touching herself at the erotic sight in front of her. She panted hard as she continued fingering her Azure

as she watched the Helldiver's massive throbbing cock disappear in and out of Liara. This only made her all the more eager for her turn.

Liara picked up the pace riding Austin faster, feeling her ass clamping down tightly on his cock. The Asari began to go faster up and down, up and down, wet noises emanating from Austin's shaft going in and out of her rectum. Liara's beautiful tits bounced furiously with each thrust as she slammed down, impaling herself with his entire cock.

Both Liara and Samara could tell that Austin was getting close because Liara feel his cock throbbing inside her ass causing her rectum to tighten around him and Samara could also see him throbbing like mad with each thrust.

"Go-God- Goddess!" Liara cried as she came first then Austin just a second later.

Austin felt his shaft jerk as he sprayed his load into his future wife's ass.

Liara kissed Austin on the lips passionately as his semen drained out of her ass, and his cock released from her rectum with a wet pop.

As the both of them panted to catch their breath, they noticed that Samara was still fondling her massive breasts. Liara licked her lips seductively. Samara seemed to understand though.

"Suck on my tits." She smiled.

Samara lay down and moaned in bliss as both Austin and Liara started suckling on her tits like new born babies. Austin took on breast while Liara took the other. One alone was more than enough so the engaged couple had more than enough of a good taste of the breasts they were sucking.

Samara's moan increased and she put her hands on the back of their heads, her right ruffling through Austin's short brown hair and the left massaging the back of Liara's crest which was actually a spot that could bring more pleasure when an Asari was aroused.

Both tongues flicked Samara's nipples as they continued sucking. Austin even gently applied his teeth to the one he was on which made Samara moan even louder.

"Oh goddess!"

This continued for a long time before Austin felt ready to go again with another load.

Both Asari seemed to get the message and Liara got into position on her hands and knees, one of her hands spread her Azure lips apart. Austin got up and gently slid in. Samara knelt behind him and pushed gently on his hips in time with his thrusts into Liara. She and the Helldiver locked lips as their tongues battled for dominance. Liara could also see this as she looked behind and she reached down to touch herself while she enjoyed Austin's cock inside her. The dream threesome she and Austin had had with Miranda seemed like a

quick fuck in comparison to this. This one was pure pleasure. Most likely that was because this one was real compared to the dream one, but still...

Goddess knows what sort of life Samara had led as a maiden if she was this good with a human and another of her own kind.

The exoticness of fucking Liara while Samara controlled his thrusts turned Austin on so much that he could already feel his load approaching. Liara, sensed this sheathed Austin all the way in.

"Cum inside me, my fiancé!" she smiled.

Samara also reached around Austin and felt Liara's ass as he reached forward and took both her tits in his hands just as he felt his orgasm start. Both he and Liara moaned as they felt the cum shoot out of him and deep into the Asari Maiden's Azure.

Samara simply shivered with pleasure as she listened to the moans. This had made her even wetter now and she felt so horny now. She wanted some too now.

Liara seemed to notice this as she looked back.

"Samara hasn't had a turn yet." she said.

"Yes. Please, I want it." Samara moaned.

Austin was more than happy to comply. Liara got up as Samara took her place on the bed, this time laying on her back and with her legs spread wide to reveal her own dripping Azure.

Austin was still hard from the last round and more than ready to go again.

Samara almost practically screamed as she felt a pleasure that she'd denied herself for so long.

"Oh Goddess! I'd forgotten how good it was." she sighed as the initial pain was replaced by pure pleasure. She'd managed to adjust to Austin's 10 inch length.

"Who would've thought a Justicar would be such a screamer in bed." Austin smiled as his thrusts sped up

As Austin started thrusting into Samara, Liara hugged tightly to Austin from behind, her tits pressing against his back, her wet Azure touching his own behind and her nails digging into his chest which only added to the pleasure.

All three of them moaned as they moved in synch with each other.

After a while, Liara had an idea that was extremely naughty. She reached with one of her hands and adjusted Austin's face to look directly at her.

"Embrace Eternity!" she said, whispering so that Samara wouldn't hear.

The Maiden's eyes went black as her nervous system once again connected with Austin's. Both their pleasure intensified as they felt the pleasure of each other. Liara had been careful not to do it with

Samara. She after all had taken quite a few bond mates in her time and because she was a Justicar she probably would not approve of that now.

That didn't mean of course that Liara and Austin couldn't have some fun with her, especially seeing as how they were all a bit drunk to the point of them engaging in this threesome.

"I know what you're thinking, Liara." said Austin telepathically.

"Come on, Austin. You know you want me to, especially while it's inside her." Liara replied deviously.

Samara meanwhile had both her hands on the Helldiver's chest as he continued thrusting into her. She was so lost in the pleasure that she didn't notice the engaged couple smiling evilly above her.

Another thrust from Austin suddenly brought her even more pleasure than before. Then the next one brought more again. How was Austin suddenly getting even better?

The next thrust had a small bit of pain in it. Something was going on. Samara opened her eyes and looked up. It was only now that she saw Liara's black eyes and that both her hands were glowing with biotic energy as they wrapped around the base of Austin's cock.

Now that she was still, she could actually feel the shaft slowly growing and expanding inside her. It was more pleasurable than painful though.

"Yes! I was hoping you'd use that!" the Justicar moaned.

Austin once again resumed his thrusts. His pace was slow to begin with since Samara had to once again adjust to his new big meat. Samara was also now screaming with each thrust.

"Goddess! It hurts!" she yelled.

Liara moved from kneeling behind Austin lay on top of Samara. She took the Justicar's large bust in her hands and started sucking on it again.

Samara's screams once again returned to moans as not only did Liara's suckling add to her pleasure, but she felt her vaginal walls once again adjust to Austin's now 16 inch long and 3.5 inch wide cock.

"Gonna cum soon!" Austin groaned, trying to postpone his orgasm as best he could, despite how much his enlarged, sensitive shaft begged to shoot.

"Don't pull out!" Samara moaned.

Austin complied and thrust himself in as hard as he could go, just as he felt his cock erupt.

"OH FUCK!"

"GODDESS YES!" Samara cried as she felt her insides become filled with almost a gallon of warm cum.

Liara started once again kissing Samara as the Justicar panted heavily, recovering from the euphoria and Austin gently slid out. Austin then noticed how both Asari's azures were rubbing together.

This gave him an idea.

Both Asari moaned together as Austin very cleverly slid his cock between their two touching Azures, which both brought them pleasure. Austin admitted it would've been much easier, and more fun, if he had two cocks, but he knew that was impossible. This was still just as good nonetheless and the constant moans from both Asari only encouraged him.

He lowered his upper body down until he was lying on Samara's back. All three of them started kissing each at the same time while Austin was able to fondle both their tits pressed against one another.

The sensation of both dripping Azure's massaging his gigantic cock as he thrust between them was driving Austin over the edge. He had a feeling this would probably be the last round and he could tell that the two Asari he was pleasuring felt the same.

"Final cumshot incoming!" Austin moaned.

The two Asari immediately got the message and lay down as Austin knelt in front of them and stroked his cock furiously.

"OH GOD! HERE IT COMES!"

His cock erupted like a geyser, sending hot sticky semen out into the air landing everywhere both on Liara and Samara. Mostly their faces and their tits got the most of it. Seeing them covered in the white stuff was indeed a sight to behold. Even more so once they started licking it off each other's faces.

The two Asari collapsed on top of Austin, their cum covered tits pressed against his sweaty chest. Sleep claimed them quickly as Liara even held Austin's slowly softening shaft in her hand gathering up and last bits of cum with her fingers.

All three of them looked at each other with shock. Samara especially looked shocked. Her code didn't say anything against this, but still, the fact that she had engaged in a threesome with two close friends without her knowing about it did make her feel a bit uncomfortable.

"Errrrrr... oh dear." Austin sighed.

"Justicar, I... I'm not sure what to say." said Liara slightly nervous of what Samara might do.

"You do not need to be nervous. None of us were in our right minds when this happened, so it wasn't your fault. Also, my code does not forbid intimate contact." said Samara as she looked around for her outfit.

"That's it? You're not gonna say that you've violated your code?" Austin asked in surprise.

"Well, meaningless sex is not permitted, but secretly, I did enjoy it. It reminded me so much of my days as a maiden." said Samara, her lips smiling ever so slightly

Both Austin and Liara looked at each other with surprise. They had not expected Samara to say something like that, let alone that she'd enjoyed the threesome. In fairness though, so had they.

"I am willing to overlook that I broke two rules of my code by engaging in a one night stand with you both and I ended up drinking too much at that party, but only if you promise we will not speak of this again."

"Definitely done and done, Samara. We didn't intend for this either.

Today was a big day. After spending the whole of yesterday allowing the crew and himself to recover from their hangovers, Austin had plotted a course for Earth were they would head to London for Austin's knighting ceremony. Austin had instructed everyone to look their best and had been particularly insistent that all the Helldivers polish and clean their armour.

Austin was currently examining himself in the mirror just to be sure that his armour was as clean and polished as it could be. The dented paint and battle scars were fine. Those didn't need to be amended.

To also look his best, he'd had a clean shave; he'd washed his hair and everything. He didn't need to worry about wearing his uniform since he'd been told it'd be better if he was knighted in his armour. Even he himself felt that would be better.

Liara simply sighed as her bond mate kept checking himself thoroughly.

"You don't need to make such a fuss, Austin. You look great." she said.

"I know. I guess I'm just bit excited, but anxious at the same time." Austin sighed.

"I may still have much to learn about human ways, but I do know that becoming a knight is a great honour. In fact, Samara herself said that Justicars are like a Knight errant, so I'd be surprised if Samara doesn't at least say that she sees you like another Justicar."

Austin's smile brightened.

"You always know how to make me peaceful, love." he said.

"Trust me, love, you look great and I can honestly say you've never looked more handsome." said Liara. "Do you think I look okay though? I am your future wife after all, it's important to make the right impression."

Austin simply shook his head and chuckled. Despite how much she'd matured since they'd first met on Therum, she still often said things that reminded him of the innocent and shy Asari scientist that she'd once been. It was nice to see that some things never changed.

The team had agreed to stay so that they could see their leader getting knighted. After that though, those who planned to leave had said they would be doing so.

Since this was a more private ceremony, there weren't so many people in the hall of Buckingham Palace. All of Alpha Squad, the Normandy crew, Sarah, Matt and Hannah were seated as they watched Austin slowly walk up to the Queen herself and slowly get down on his knees.

Everyone watched proudly as the Queen took her own ceremonial sword and tapped both of Austin's shoulders with it.

"Rise, Sir Major Austin Shepard, Knight of the Helldivers." she said.

Austin slowly got up and bowed his head. Despite that he knew no one could see his face under his helmet, he did his best to remain casual, despite how thrilled he was.

Everyone clapped and cheered as he got back up on his feet.

"Thank you, your Majesty. I'm honoured." he said proudly.

"You've done humanity a great service, Shepard. You deserve it." the Queen smiled.

Sadly, it was now time to say farewell. With the ceremony over, the Normandy had docked at the Citadel for everyone to leave.

Austin stood before the entrance to the airlock in order to bid farewell to those who were leaving. He knew it wasn't a goodbye. Naturally he'd see them all again at the wedding and he was sure that the eventual war with the Reapers would bring them together again or at least allow their paths to cross.

Thane was the first one that Austin said goodbye to.

"It has been my honour to work for you, Shepard. You have been a good friend as well. I definitely hope that one day we meet again." said the Drell.

"I hope so too, Thane." said Austin as he and Thane shook hands. "I hope it eventually turns out good with your son."

"It will be difficult, I admit. But I have faith." Thane smiled.

Mordin was next.

"Farewell, Shepard. Know we will see each other again at wedding, but still, going to miss all this. Knowledge gathered on this mission immense. Don't know if things will ever be the same." said the Salarian quickly.

"What will you do now, Professor?" Austin asked.

"Will head back to Omega first just to check on Clinic. Not sure what to do after that. Have thought long and hard about what you said though, about the Genophage. Perhaps you may be right. Will at least look into Maelon's research. Will see where it goes from there."

Mordin replied.

"I wish you luck, Mordin."

Jack was next followed by Kelly. The Alliance had found out that Jack had helped her and had rather surprisingly offered her a position as biotic teacher at Grissom Academy. Kelly, having fallen in love with Jack hadn't wanted to be parted from her. She had found that the school was actually in need of a physiologist and so she had decided to take the job. The Arkane Council had agreed to it, so she was still technically in the Helldivers. She had assured Austin that this was what she wanted and she had even given a list of her own recommendations for possible candidates to fill her position on the Normandy.

"Well, Shepard. I hate long goodbyes, so it's best we just make it quick." said Jack.

"You've been a valuable member of this team, Jack. I hope you do well at the Academy." said Austin.

"Trust me, I'm gonna turn those kids into the baddest biotics you've ever seen." Jack smiled.

"Take care of Kelly as well, Jack. She's been a valuable part of the crew. I'm sorry to see her go, but at least I know she's in safe hands." said Austin.

To his surprise, Kelly hugged him.

"I'll miss you and everyone else too, Shepard." she said.

Grunt had planned on staying, but Austin had told him that with the Collectors dead, they probably wouldn't be seeing as much action and had recommended that the tank bred Krogan might be better going back to Tuchanka. After all, he had a place as an Urdnot now, so...

"We've fought great battles, Shepard, and you've been a great Battlemaster." said Grunt.

"We couldn't have done as well as we did without you Grunt." said Austin.

"You know, when the Reapers finally arrive, I have a feeling you'll be diving head first into the fray. When that day comes, I hope to come back." said Grunt.

"You'll always be welcome on the Normandy Grunt. You're a part of this clan too." said Austin.

"Shepard."

"Grunt."

Legion was the next one who was leaving. Now that the heretics had been reverted back to the true Geth cause, it would need to tend to them. It had also said that it planned to help build an army that, when the time came, would come to Shepard's aid.

"Shepard-Major." said the Geth.

"I hope we meet again, Legion. You showed me that there's a better side to the Geth, and I owe you for that." said Austin.

"We are also grateful for you not only accepting us on your ship,



but for helping us to save our people. We are in your debt." said Legion.

With his contract done, Zaeed saw no reason to stay any longer.

"Shepard."

"I'm glad the Arkanes hired you, Zaeed. You've been a valuable asset to the team." said Austin.

"When I get paid to do a job, I do it well." said Zaeed proudly.

"Take care of yourself out there." said Austin.

"You too."

Last but not least was Samara. Austin could not deny that he was going to miss Samara most of all. He and the Justicar had become very good friends and he really felt a friendly kind of bond with her.

"I'm gonna miss you most, Samara. You've been a good friend." said Austin.

"You have been a good friend as well, Shepard. I will miss you too. I look forward though to be present for your marriage to Liara. A bond as deep as yours is very special." said Samara.

"Stay safe out there, Samara. I hope we will see each other again." said Austin.

"As do I. My wisdom tells me that you have a great destiny ahead of you as a leader. You will face a great evil, and I know you will defeat It." said Samara. "And in some ways, I see you as like brother in arms. Your Knighthood easily makes you comparable to a Justicar.

"I'm honoured to hear you say that, Samara. Thank you." said Austin gratefully.

Samara then reached out and put her hand on his shoulder.

"If ever you should need me, seek me out. I will come for you, my friend."

Anyone else left would be staying. All of the Helldiver crew naturally would continue serving under Austin and so they wouldn't be going anywhere. Miranda and Jacob were also staying since they were still under Austin's command, Tali planned to return to the Migrant Fleet eventually but she had said she was in no rush and so she would stay a bit longer, Kasumi was also staying since she didn't want to leave Jacob and Sarah was still on-board as well. The N7 Marine was still debating whether she wanted to continue serving on the Normandy or not. Austin naturally understood and simply told his sister to take all the time she needed to decide. She was welcome on the ship for as long as she liked. He hoped though that she would stay. It would be nice to have his sister always with him.

Austin walked into his quarters to find Liara relaxing on the bed, smiling as he entered.

"Sir Major Austin Shepard." she smiled proudly.

"Her majesty did seem very grateful." Austin smiled.

"She's not the only one." Liara smiled as she sat up.

Austin could see where this was going and slowly made his way towards the bed.

"I love you." Liara sighed as Austin planted kisses on her neck.

"I know." Austin smiled smugly.

# SOMETHING MAGIC IS BREWING

## CH 2

cxdlover

of <http://www.cxdlover.deviantart.com>

Jess woke to the sound of her door opening that morning. It opened quite rapidly, and loudly.

"Get up!!! We're gonna be late!" Jess opened her eyes. It was Draco Malfoy.

*Oh no...* Jess thought. *Not Draco, again!* Jess got out of bed, and shooed Draco away.

"I'm coming...!" Jess screamed as Draco yelled at her through the door.

Jess finally came out, not very happy to see Draco waiting for her.

"I can give you a ride, if you want." Draco said.

"No thanks..." Jess replied walking away.

"You don't even know where the train station is! And it will take ages to get there walking." Jess did agree with Draco, but didn't say it, of course.

Sighing, Jess let Draco drag her along.

"Hello, Jessica." It was Draco's dad.

"Um... Hi...?" Jess wasn't in the mood for talking with Draco, nor his dad, like she would ever be in the mood anyway.

Jess was silent the whole ride, only looking out the window of Draco's dad's car. Finally, they arrived at the train station.

Jess got out walking away from the Malfoys before they could notice.

"Hmm.... Platform 9 3/4..." Jess looked around, but there was no platform 9 3/4.

"Jess! Need help?" It was Draco.

"Oh great... Um... Okay..." Jess replied.

"Watch this," Draco ran right through the wall between platforms 9 and 10.

"Um..." Jess did the same, ending up going through a portal to a train that said "The Hogwarts Express". Jess then quickly ran away, so she was away from Draco.

Jess boarded the train, trying to find a compartment with no one in it. She finally found one right before the train was about to leave.

"Hey," A girl with medium length blond hair walked into the compartment. "could I sit next to you?"

"Um... Sure..." Jess said.

"Oh, my name is Sarah, by the way, but most of my friends call me Jo." The girl said.

"Why Jo...?" Jess asked. "It's not at all like your name..."

"I really don't know. Someone just started calling me that in my first year." Jo replied.

"What house are you in?" Jess asked, curiously.

"I'm in Ravenclaw. This is my third year at Hogwarts." Jo replied.

"Oh, cool. This is going to be my first year." Jess said, smiling.

"You'll love it!!" Jo said. "Oh... There's my friend in the other compartment, see ya! Oh, and I didn't catch your name..."

"Oh, I'm Jessica..." Jess replied. "See ya, Sarah...!"

Jo left, and Jess was alone. Well, for about five minutes she was alone. Then someone walked in.

"Hello, Jess." It was no other than Draco Malfoy.

"Oh... Hello, Draco...?" Jess was not happy to see him.

"You know, I was just thinking..." Draco said.

"About what...?"

"Well, you'd make an wonderful Slytherin. They're nice, caring, and smart, just like you." Draco replied.

"Um... Okay..." Jess was barely listening.

"And I'd be there!" Draco said with joy. "Well, I'll have to be going, Bye." He left.

"Thank goodness..." Jess muttered.

For about twenty minutes, Jess was alone, admiring the train. It was silent, and it wasn't cold, like the cave she had lived in before. Red curtains covering the windows, so only a small amount of light was shining through. The walls were velvety and soft. The ceiling was a dark green like the tops of the curtains. It went well with the red walls. Jess thought as though she could live in the very train, and she almost drifted off more than once. Suddenly, the door to the compartment opened, and three kids came walking in. One had black hair and glasses, one was a red head, and the girl had light brown wavy hair. The admittedly noticed Jess.

"Hello." Said one of the kids. He was the one with the black hair and round glasses.

"Hi..." Jess replied.

"I'm Harry Potter." Said the black haired one. Jess noticed a lighting bolt on his forehead. She thought it must be some sort of scar.

"I'm Jessica Cranberry..." Jess said quietly.

"Nice to meet you." Harry replied. "Oh, and this is Ron," He pointed at the red haired boy. "and this is Hermione." He pointed at the girl with light brown hair.

"Nice to meet you too..." Jess smiled slightly.

"Could we sit next to you?" Harry asked.

"Sure...!" Jess replied.

There were two seats on one side, two on the other, and in the middle there was a table. Harry sat next to Jess, while Ron and Hermione sat on the other side.

"So, is this your first year?" Hermione asked.

"Yes... I'm sort of worried..." Jess replied.

"Of what?" Ron asked.

"Draco Malfoy... He's been following me around a lot lately, and he said I would make a perfect Slytherin and-"

"You don't want to be a Slytherin?" Hermione asked.

"No, no I don't..." Jess replied.

"I can see why." Said Harry. "Malfoy can be really mean sometimes..."

"Really...? He's been really nice to me... He just makes me feel awkward..." Jess replied.

"NICE!?" Ron yelled.

"Shh!"

"Yeah, sort of..." Jess replied.

"That's strange..." Harry said.

"Very..." Said Hermione.

"You don't sound like you'd be a Slytherin to me." Harry said.

"Draco said they were kind, caring, and smart..." Jess replied.

"He's a liar!" Ron said. "Any Slytherin I've ever met is mean!"

"I can see you as a Hufflepuff... Or maybe even a Gryffindor, our house!" Harry told Jess.

The four of them talked for thirty minutes, then a lady with a cart full of candy and sweets came into their compartment.

"Yum!" Harry said walking over. "I'll get enough for everyone!"

Harry brought back chocolate frogs and Bertie's Every Flavored Beans.

"Go ahead and take whatever you like!" Harry said. "Oh, and Jess, they're not real frogs, and by every flavor, they mean EVERY flavor."

"Oh... Okay...?" Jess took a chocolate frog. "Yum! Hey look... A card...?"

"They have famous wizards on them, and you can collect them!" Ron said.

"Cool," Jess replied. "mine is... Albus Dumbledore.... Our headmaster, I think... Right?"

"Yes. That was the first card I got, too." Harry replied.

"Wait... Is the picture... *Moving*...?" Asked Jess.

"Of course! In the world of magic, it always happens!" Replied Ron.

Jess, Harry, Hermione, and Ron ate their candy and talked until they could see the school.

"Wow, it looks amazing!!!" Jess said.

"It is!" Hermione replied.

"All firs' years over hear!" Yelled a very tall and big man.

"That's Hagrid." Harry said. "He's been our friend for a while."

"Okay... Well, I should be going..." Jess said.

"I hope you're in Gryffindor!" Ron said.

Jess walked off, following Hagrid.

"C'mon, c'mon! We don' have all day!" Hagrid said, rushing the kids. Finally, they walked in a small-ish room. "Stay here."

A few of the kids talked, but Jess stayed silent. Then, a few minutes later, a lady with a bun in her hair and squared glasses came in.

"Hello, I'm Professor McGonagal. If you would please follow me, we can head to the Great Hall for the sorting." She said.

Jess and the others followed her. They walked into a huge room, apparently called the Great Hall.

"Hello!!!" Jess could tell it was Dumbledore, the headmaster talking. "I am Professor Dumbledore, your headmaster! Welcome back to the kids who have been here before, and welcome to our first years! We have a very exciting year ahead of us, but first, we'll need to have the first years sorted into their houses! There are four great houses, founded by four amazing wizards and witches!! There are Gryffindor, Slytherin, Hufflepuff, and Ravenclaw. Now, we will begin the sorting!"

One of the professors brought out a hat, people called the sorting hat.

"Tori Tarralela!"

Jess watched a short girl with dark brown hair walk up and put the hat on.

After a few moments, the hat shouted, "GRYFFINDOR!!!" And the girl walked over to the Gryffindor table, with Gryffindors cheering.

A long time passed, but finally, they called Jess.

"Jessica Cranberry!"

Jess walked up towards the hat, her heart beating so fast, she was sure everyone could hear it. When she got to the hat, she put it on, her hands shaking.

"Hm... Hello..." The hat was talking.

"Um... Hi...? Can you hear me...?" Jess was only thinking, but the hat replied.

"Yes, yes I can. Hm... Very quiet... And you must be brave to be living in a cave..."

"How do you know that...?!" Jess thought.

"I just know. Hm... I think I've made my decision. I'll put you in GRYFFINDOR!!!" The hat shouted.

The Gyrffindors clapped, and Jess sighed a sigh of relief that

she wasn't in Slytherin. She walked to the Gryffindor table, and noticed Harry, Ron, and Hermione weren't there, so Jess just sat down next to Tori Tarralela.

"Let the feast begin!!" Jess heard Dumbledore say.

Food appeared in the plates and Jess ate some of it.

"Hi, I'm Tori." Tori Tarralela said.

"Hi... I'm Jess..." Jess replied.

"Nice to meet you, Jess!" Tori said. "Oh, and if you want, you can call me Stori Tori!" Tori did a kind of action when she said "Stori Tori" with her arms.

"Okay, Stori Tori..." Jess replied.

For a long time, Jess and Tori talked and ate.

"You really live in a cave!?" Tori asked.

"Yes, I did. It was always cold..." Jess replied.

Finally, Tori and Jess and the other Gryffindors left the table to head up to their house.

"Step aside, prefect coming through!" A boy went to the front of the crowd. He stood there for a few seconds, then said "Oh, yes! The new password is Pork Chops!"

A fat lady in a picture nodded, then a door appeared and the Gryffindors walked through it to the Gryffindor common room.

"C'mon!" Tori grabbed Jess's hand and pulled her to some chairs. "Sit down!"

Jess sat down. "Why are you so excited?"

"Well, both of my parents came here and they told me all about it!!" Tori replied.

"That's cool." Jess said.

"Well, we can go to bed now if you're tired. I just wanted to sit in the chairs." Tori stood up.

"Okay," Jess stood up, and the two of them walked off to the girls dormitory.

# POETRY

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John Mahler's Quotes of the Day

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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!



# STEEM

Kela Lewis-Morin

Your loneliness has spread to your eyes,  
It has now become a part of who you are.  
You can no longer keep contract of your own lies.  
Everyone else but you can see that this has gone too  
far.

Your expressions and body language have become bionic.  
It's almost like the lights are on but the room has been  
ransacked.

What is ironic is that you try so hard to subtly avoid the topic.  
I choose and use my words carefully because I know  
how you will react.

There is only so much I can say or do; the rest is solely up to you.  
Only you can dispose of the trespasser that lies  
underneath.

If you only knew the trials you have unintentionally put me through.  
Maybe then you will shed your grief and embark onto a  
new leaf.

I hope you take my sincere concerns on board.  
Because time is one thing none of us can afford  
To squander and wonder our lives away.  
Be true to yourself.  
Change the way you view yourself.  
Over rule yourself.  
Because you are loved each and every day.

# SOME LOVING

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

Need to find some loving,  
Or maybe just some fucking.  
With what I've been through,  
I need somebody new,  
But one thing is a must.  
I need someone I can trust.  
I wish that you were here.  
I need somebody near.  
I really want some fun.  
Some dates out in the sun.  
With my looks, guys are easy,  
With pick up lines so cheesy.  
Quality is what I need.  
Preferably one with weed.  
Keep an optimistic mind.  
Keep looking until you find.

# STRUCK WITH SADNESS

MstrDeth  
of <http://msterdeth.deviantart.com>

My two best friends,  
Started to fight,  
With strong mite,  
So i sat in between.

So it seemed,  
That it had to be me,  
To disagree and in turns it agreed,  
After awhile the fighting stopped,  
But the hate arose...

Till one day..  
They sat with each other,  
Notes were passed,  
Hugs exchanged,  
Laughs given,  
And Friends they became.

And on that day,  
Today is that day,  
My Best friend..  
Stopped knowing me,  
She started to ignore me...