Shepard makes her way down towards the CIC sharing a couple words with some of the soldiers at the consoles. As she comes towards Navigator Pressly, he smiles and she stops figuring he wanted a word with her as well.

“Good speech Commander, glad it’s you taking over for Captain Anderson. Though, I have to wonder if it’s a good idea to have non-humans on the ship.”

Chessa looks at him, but had a feeling the older man had more than just bad blood to blame for this. “We’re all allies here Pressly, but I think this is more than military protocol. You know you can always speak freely with me.”

“Well it’s just that this is our problem. We solve our own problems and don’t need their help.”

“You know full well allies make you stronger and asking for help is never a weakness.”

Pressly shifts abit nodding some. “I know Commander, I guess I’m just stuck in the old ways of thinking. It won’t be a problem.”

“You aughta try having a little chat with ‘em, might find you have some things in common.” She offers a smile to him. “Though, if I can pry some, how’d you end up on the Normandy?”

“I started as a navigator right out of school. Guess I was just following in my grandfather’s footsteps. The SSV Agincourt was my first post. We were at Elysium during the Skyllian Blitz. A massive fleet of raiders tried wiping out the colony, but they had no chance against an Alliance frigate. They lost so many ships we lost count.” Pressly smiles some clearly proud of such a victory.

“I heard of the blitz, but wow never thought I’d have the navigator from that ship on mine.” Shepard states with a clear smile.

“Well I was hardly the one giving the commands. I just know the battlefield, and when it comes to space you can’t run people aground.”

Chessa smirks at him nodding abit. “Well you must’ve impressed someone higher up.”

Pressly nods smiling. “Yeah, got my officer’s commission after. Anderson picked me when making his crew.”

“And the rest is history huh?”

Pressly chuckles some, “Hehheh, not much history between then and now commander.”

“Then we’ll have to see about making some.” She glances to where Jenkins and Chakwas stood maybe around a day ago. “Well guess I’ll resume my rounds. I have Joker coasting us towards the relay till I give the okay to head to Artemis Tau and find the matriarch’s daughter. She’s a prothean researcher. You know of any place in that cluster that would have them?”

Pressly brings a hand to his chin thinking. “None off the top of my head commander. I think I remember something about some ruins on Armeni I believe but they weren’t prothean. Oh wait…Therum is in that cluster, and there are many ruins there. Most have been stripped by our miners but that’s got to be it.”

“Sounds like a good start. If anything they can likely point us in the right direction. You handle the route. I’ll holler when ready.”

“Sure thing commander, I’ll get the course plotted in.”

Heading downstairs to the mess hall and crew quarters, Chessa decides to check out her new office room, before chatting to Kaiden who was near the door. She looks around the captain’s quarters finding them rather simple, but this was a military vessel and it was better than the sleep pods the rest of the crew had. Stepping in her eyes look to the desk on the right by the door with a datapad upon it and screen above it, a rounded table in the center of the room, then a console sitting on a another half desk for calls, and finally a simple full sized bed. Her door never closed so she was caught off guard as Kaiden’s voice came from behind her.

“Looking at the new room, Chessa?” The feline jumps abit and quickly looks at him smiling and reaching down to smooth out her slightly fluffed tail making him chuckle. “Heh didn’t mean to surprise you commander.”

“Ya you got me just don’t go around bragging. I spook easily.”

“I’ll try not to spread it around. So…like the accommodations?”

She looks around being near the bed as she sits down on it finding it kind of firm. “It’s better than what I had. Not what I prefer, but then comfort isn’t a military standard.”

“Heh, boy do I know that. Atleast you have a bed.” After a moment or so of silence he kind of looks away then back to her. “So…where are we heading?”

“Artemis Tau.” She states rather plainly. “Figure that getting to Benezia’s daughter hopefully first and even more hopefully before she’s on their side would be for the best.”

“Makes sense…though are you sure you’re up for this commander?”

A small sigh was her response for a moment before she speaks. “I already spoke with Joker some. It’s not right, but I have to do this. I have to stop Saren for the good of everyone.”

“That sounds like a rather rehearsed response.”

The calico looks up at him frowning some and slinging her arms out. “What am I supposed to say? ‘I’m glad Anderson got shafted to give me my chance. I’m glad to have stole his ship and crew from him. If it wasn’t for Saren attacking I wouldn’t be a spectre right now.’ I just don’t know what to do…” She drops her head into her hand the weight of everything seeming to hit her hard.

“Whoa now, Shepard.” Kaiden steps in letting the door slide closed behind as he moves and resting a hand on her shoulder. It was about now he noticed how young and fragile she seemed right now. Kneeling down some her meets her gaze through a couple fingers almost swearing she was about to cry. “Is this really the never give up Shepard I’ve heard about? I admit this is a lot to take in and rather sudden, but things aren’t going to get easier. Still we have to be strong. This is your chance to really show everyone what you can do. “

Chessa’s paw lowers to look at him for a moment before speaking in a soft tone. “I know, but I never had to step on anyone to get where I was before. I was the good guy, and everything I got was because I was doing the right thing.”

Kaiden shakes his head some at her. “You aren’t stepping on anyone, and you are doing a very great thing right now. As you said we are being the sword of justice to hunt down a traitor.”

A smile slowly crawls upon her face as he repeats a small bit of her speech, before pushing forward and rub her face against his softly and muttering soft thanks.

He blinks at the sudden movement but lightly puts an arm around her giving a slight chuckle. “Heh, well this is sudden.”

Chessa pushes off kneeling now as well and looking at him. “Sorry if I broke any boundaries there. I can be rather affectionate at times.”

“No harm done comma-err Shepard, you going to be okay?”He asks as he stands up and helps her up too with his hand in hers.

A nod came as she steps back and retrieves her hand smiling. “Yeah, thanks Kaiden. Sorry if I’m coming off as a kid or anything.”

“Not at all Shepard. Even the most battle hardened warrior would be abit shaken in your place. Look, I have some things to do so I’ll see you around. Okay?”

“Sure thing, Kaiden, cya.” Chessa gives a small wave watching as the lieutenant heads out the room. She slips into her private bathroom though it was rather small, but again comfort wasn’t taken into account. Still, it was nice to have her own. After a couple moments she steps out in a rather simple bodysuit. It was military standard blue camo with black trim and made to not really show off her curves. She didn’t really care for it or the color, but for now it was better than the padded suit she wore under her armor.

Shepard waited as the elevator descended into the cargo bay, and as she steps out she finds Garrus standing at a console set upon a box by the MAKO, Ashley at the weapons bench, and Wrex leaning against a pole beside the weapon lockers with his arms crossed. Seeing as she couldn’t tell what Garrus was doing, she made her way over.

Garrus notices her and turns seeming to smile as she neared. “Hey Shepard Thanks for bringing me on board. Working with a Spectre will be so much better than C-sec.”

Shepard raises a brow and crosses her arms some. “You say that like you’ve worked with one before.”

“No, I haven’t. I know how they work though.”

“Oh? Shed some light then on the new recruit then.”

Garrus nods smiling now. “Well unlike C-sec you are free to do things your way, make your own rules, long as its mission complete it doesn’t matter how. No damn bureaucrats on your ass or red tape stopping you from doing your job.”

“We’ve kinda covered this Garrus, but those rules are there to protect you and everyone around you.”

“Yes, but those rules make sure it’s done their way. Protocol and procedure come first not the mission.”

The feline narrows her eyes slightly, “Let me repeat this. The mission is only important if it’s done right. If we have to break the rules then we’re doing it wrong. Is this why you wanted to just leave Garrus?” Chessa shifts her stance abit looking abit sternly at him. “You thinking we’d just go off and do as we please, huh? No rules, no worries?”

Garrus shifts abit looking abit uncomfortable. “Not at all, it’s just at C-sec there’s so much red tape and it only gets worse the higher up you are. What happened with Saren wasn’t anything new. Only so much time to find evidence, no shots in the dark, any chasing leads off the beaten path, or using underground contacts. Just look for solid evidence and if there’s none then sweep it under the rug…. I just couldn’t take it anymore. I hate leaving, but damn Shepard, don’t you see where I’m coming from here?”

The feline nods a couple times offering a small smile. “Yeah I do, but you also know that’s not always the case. Still I’m glad I talked you into just taking a leave of absence. I didn’t want you to regret your decision later.”

He kind of looks to the side and averts his eyes away. “Yeah…I’m still not sure if I’m going back, but guess I shouldn’t burn any bridges. Yet, that’s also why I went with you. To let me see how things are done where you can choose how things happen. Have your own rules and restrictions. Noone looking over your shoulder and stopping you from getting your job done.”

Chessa raises her brow again having a feeling there was more to this than just him lashing out against doing things by the book. “I get cha Garrus, but remember. We do things right not fast. Understood?”

“I didn’t mean it like that, but I understand, Commander.”

“Good now if you just hold on a second, forgot something.” She activates her omni-tool showing she had her military one on even when not in her armor. “Hey Joker…”

Joker’s voice came out of the device. “Y’know Shepard the ship has an intercom system.”

“Yeah I know, but I’m down in the hold and didn’t wanna yell. Get us underway to the Artemis Tau cluster. Pressly has the cords.”

“Roger that.”

She cuts the channel and looks back at Garrus smiling. “Sorry. Slightly forgot even with the relays, travel can take some time. Specially when we aren’t heading to a relay system. Anyways, just what were you up to before I bugged ya?”

The turian turns back to the console tapping a few keys pulling up some diagrams. “I’m going over the schematics for the MAKO. I figure I could handle maintenance on it since Williams is handling the weaponry.”

Chessa steps up beside him understanding some things, but being far from an expert. What interests her more is the turian beside her. “So, top hand to hand fighter in class, spectre candidate, c-sec investigations officer, high ranking father in c-sec, and now a weapons and vehicle maintenance tech? Is there anything you can’t do Vakarian?”

A chuckle came from him. “Jack of all trades Shepard. Kind of required in c-sec to help cover slack in some departments. I’m not the best at much, but I add that special flair to it.”

She giggles some bumping her rear against him some. “I’m pretty much like that too. Don’t have your kind of flair though. Am easier on the eyes atleast.”

“No arguments there Shepard. I know we turians are far from asari in terms of looks. Guess it’s why we don’t have strippers.”

Chessa steps to the side and looks over her smirking. “Yeah. The scales and it all being inside doesn’t leave much to look at. Good for you I don’t go for just the body. If I did then I think Wrex would be more my type.”

“Like those battle scars huh Shepard?”

“Oh ya. Nothing like a face that looks like a road map, and big ol mouth to slobber on ya.” Her tone was clearly of a teasing tone, but in the fairly empty hold her slightly higher voice echoed and was heard by Wrex.

The Krogan shifts ever so slightly to look over at them. “I heard that.”

Chessa just laughs calling back over her shoulder. “Love ya too Wrex!”

“Yeah, yeah,” was his response as he lowers his head back down and lets his eyes close.

Garrus just chuckles shaking his head.

“Oh you find that funny scale-head?” Shepard states making a playful huff like she was annoyed.

Garrus just smirks looking at her. “Actually more amused at your lack of shame. It’s like you really don’t care who hears you, or what they think about you.”

“Well I don’t. I can be the greatest saint in the world and people will still hate me. So I just be myself, and if they don’t like it then they can take it up with me and discuss it like a Salarian.”

“Surprised you didn’t say like a man.”

“Well salarians prefer to talk normally, and a lot of males prefer to let their fists do the talking.”

“True there.” Garrus responds plainly.

Chessa smiles looking around feeling no more could really be said. “Well guess I’ll let ya get back to ya studies. By the way be ready as you’re coming with me on the mission.”

“I’ll be ready Shepard.”

The feline nods and turns heading away while letting her tail graze his leg as she makes her way towards engineering. She figured Tali was in there and hoping she wasn’t bugging Adams too much.

As Shepard enters the engine room she takes in the view of the huge drive core. The engineering area was really just a shelf connected to the entryway and floating in the start of the large cylindrical room. Barely past the guardrail and consoles was the start of the rotating ring of the engine with random electrical pulses going inwards to the base of a pillar. Atop that was a three pronged claw looking to hold what looked to simply be a ball of electrical energy. She thought that maybe that was the element zero core, but maybe it was just electrical energy going between the terminals. In fact the entire thing was spinning at slightly different speeds. Deciding if she wanted to know more she’d ask Adams about it to which he was at his post where he should be.

Stepping closer she raises a brow as Tali stood beside Engineer Adams with both looking over the main console. Another engineer was at Tali’s other side with all three seeming to be chatting amongst each other. Stepping closer one of the other soldiers speak up and salute yelling out “Commander on deck!” making Chessa wince some wanting to have got abit closer before being noticed. The three stop what they were doing and immediately turn around with the soldier and Adams saluting.

Adams who looked the part of a middle aged military man was the first to speak up. “Hey commander didn’t notice you enter. Coming to check on the engines?” Adams wore the dress of an officer given he was a lieutenant and chief engineer of the Normandy. His face showed some age too he possibly being around the same age as Anderson maybe even Pressly as well. His black hair was shaved nearly off as standard for military hairstyles, and his rather dark looking eyes matched his calm and collected looking demeanor.

“Actually I’m just making my rounds checking to see if everything’s good to go and all are ready to get underway.”

“We’re good to go down here; in fact the quarian you picked up has been rather interested in the drive core.”

Shepard raises a brow while glancing over at Tali who’s kinda wringing her hands together. “Is that so? Hope she’s not bothering you.” Shepard takes a moment to look over what she guessed was a girl barely past the age of being an adult. Her metallic helmet looked to be mostly a face plate and flashing mouth piece likely for air and to let people know when she was speaking. While odd this was likely done as the glass or whatever material the plate was made of barely could be seen through, allowing one to just make out slight contours of the face. Over the rest of the helmet was a piece of elegantly designed purple cloth. The rest of her suit looked to be a simplistic space suit with random bits of armor, tubes, straps, and padding. Shepard figured this was due to how they had to scavenge for everything so even their enviro-suits as they are called were pieced together as they are needed.

Adams just gives a chuckle shaking his head. “Not at all, commander. You made one hell of a find with her. She already knows more than just about my whole crew does, and give her a month and I’ll be taking pointers from her.”

Tali kinda looks down some speaking softly, “I’m not trying to replace anyone…”

“Didn’t mean it that way Tali.” Adams retorts with a smile. “Why don’t you step over to that console and let me and the commander chat for a moment. In fact the schematics for the IES stealth system are on there. You’ll likely find them very interesting.”

Tali nods and steps away to a far console, she seeming to be immediately engrossed on the display. Chessa looks to Adams tilting her head some, “Something up Adams?”

“Well there have been a couple whispers about the aliens on the ship and how you’re letting them wander wherever.” A slightly annoyed look came to the feline’s face as she looks at the older man. He holds up his hands to stop any retort quickly speaking again. “Don’t worry, commander. I’ve done told them that if they have any problems to get over them. Like our quarian there, I explained that they are here to help and you wouldn’t bring them on unless they were useful.”

Chessa nods a couple times crossing her arms. “They’ve all proved themselves in combat, and it seems that’s just the tip of the iceberg.”

“You have an eye for talent, ma’am, that’s for sure. So did you need anything else?”

“Well if you feel like sharing, Adams. Where else have you served?”

“Just about every class of ship the Alliance has. Dreadnoughts, carries, frigates, you name it. A cruiser called the Tokyo was my last post. Good ship but couldn’t hold a candle to the Normandy.”

“She’s that good huh?”

“The best I’ve ever served on. Likely the fastest ever and the only ship with the Tantalus drive core.”

Shepard looks past him at the massive core again before drawing her attention back to him. “Well I highly doubt it being this big is just for show.”

Adams nods. “You’d be right. It’s twice as big as any other ships, so not only are we faster, but we can store more charge before having to dump it.”

“Wouldn’t that mean we’d have to use a larger planet or core discharge station then?”

“Not actually, commander. If a planet can be used to discharge a core we can use it. What makes the Tantalus better is that we don’t need heat-emitting thrusters to move around. Essentially it generates mass concentrations that we ‘fall into” and that’s what makes us move.”

Chessa blinks abit sort of being lost at the last bit, but it’s why he was the engineer and not her. “Hmm I think I get it, but then I really don’t. In layman’s terms we don’t need fusion torches, or ion drives to get around, and that allows us to stay cool in space. Well cool on the sense of not radiate heat like an uncovered hot tub.”

Adams chuckles some and nods. “Yes. Combined with the IES stealth system, we can remain undetectable for hours at full drive or a few days if we just drift.”

“I’ve done some research on that. Well not the actual system, but a way to hide ship emissions. It was theories a couple years back that one could use heat sinks to hold in heat, but because ship drives give off so much the idea never made it beyond that.”

Adams nods with smile and raises a hand tapping his finger in the air. “And that is why the Normandy is so special. Because we don’t need traditional engines we can use those very sinks to store residual heat and thusly be invisible to sensors. Course when it comes time to vent the sinks we might as well be setting off a bomb, but by then we would be far from any threat.”

A paw is brought to her chin looking around some. “I’m guessing if we don’t vent eventually it becomes a sauna in here huh?”

“Even more than that ma’am. It’s rare that you’d have to run that risk as we’d make sure to go to FTL before it reached even the minimal required venting point.”

“Wouldn’t jumping give us away, or can the sinks catch that too?”

“Our emissions become blue-shifted at that point, and they are at too high of a frequency to be captured. We essentially set off a flare to sensors every time we enter and exit FTL, but short range scans have a very low chance of finding us. Long as the IES is running to see us they have to look out a window, and we are the only one with this system.” Adams almost seems to smile smugly at this looking proud to be a part of such a revolutionary craft.

“Well it’s good that we won’t be getting surprised by our own trick and I’ll make sure to not wave out the cockpit at passing ships. Hate to be the one to get us noticed.” Adams just smiles shaking his head some at her. “I’ll let you get back to work Adams, thanks for the chat.”

“Anytime commander,” Adams responds with before turning around returning to what he was doing.

Making the few short steps over to Tali Chessa couldn’t even open her mouth before the quarian turns and almost seemed to be beaming with excitement. “Shepard, you’re ship is unbelievable. Just the core alone would take a lot to fit in atleast a cruiser and you managed to fit it into a frigate, and still have plenty of room. I can see why humans have advanced so quickly and are so successful in what they do.”

The feline smiles at the compliment, but shakes her head some. “Well this isn’t truly an alliance vessel Tali, and even then it’s a prototype of both turian and human design with the council’s backing. So ya, the most advanced tech available went into every bolt of this ship.”

“Even then, like a month ago I was making makeshift repairs on a converted tug ship. To go from that to this is very overwhelming to say the least, I’d say a dream come true to be allowed upon it.”

“Well I’m glad to have helped you achieve that. I hope you don’t wet your suit from excitement.”

Tali could almost be seen blushing through her visor at this. “Shepard….not like that. It’s just being a quarian we are reliant on the Migrant Fleet to survive. Any knowledge on new systems or ways to update ships to better withstand today’s problems is considered very valuable.”

“Yeah I heard many see your race as scavengers and vultures of ships. Swooping in to pick clean corpses for anything useful then leaving nothing but skeletons.” She lowers her head shaking it some and seeing Tali start to follow suit. “But that’s a horrible and hateful analogy. If anything it’s showed the skill and knowledge of your people to have survived so long on used parts and obsolete technologies.”

“Yes. Some of our ships are ones used back when we first fought the Geth.”

Shepard’s eyes open some as she looks rather surprised at this. “Unbelievable. And here I thought using a seven year old console was working with out of date things.”

“Yes…we make do with what we have. They aren’t the prettiest ships, but they work, mostly. We try and be independent, but some things we just can’t make with our limited resources. Patching a ship’s hull with actual armor just can’t be done, atleast not armor that would matter in battle. It’s why the pilgrimages are so important.”

“Tell me about these pilgrimages. You said you were on one before ending up here.”

Tali nods wringing her hands for a short couple seconds deciding to just tell her about them in general than hers. “Well, to keep genetic diversity among my people, at maturity a child leaves its birth ship and seeks to join another crew. Yet no one wants someone that will just be a burden on them. That’s where the pilgrimages come in. We leave the flotilla and our families only to return when we found something of value to present to the captain of the ship we wish to join. If it’s acceptable then we’re welcomed in.”

The feline crosses her arms rubbing at her chin abit. “Sounds dangerous, but I doubt they just toss you out. Also, what about if they decline the gift?”

“Correct. They teach us how to survive, and give us things to help us on our journey. Even implants for sickness and diseases due to our weakened immune systems.”

“Yeah. It’s why the alliance cycles us between ships and planet-side stations. That way we don’t get too used to a clean or simulated environment.”

Tali nods softly. “Exactly. We didn’t have that privilege and it has cost us more. We can’t even survive outside our suits. We’ll we can, but even in a clean room between each other we get colds or fevers.”

Shepard frowns some at this. “Wow. Even when mating? I’m guessing casual sex is outta the question, huh?”

“Physical contact has pretty much become just for reproduction purposes. While the sicknesses caused by it are minimal it costs more resources. That and we can only have one child per family. Sometimes two are allowed, but it’s only at times of a population decline. If it gets bad enough rewards are even offered to encourage it.”

Chessa smirks more now looking at her. “Wow. Encouraged to mate and even rewarded for doing so.”

“There are of course still restrictions even then.”

Chessa nods a couples times waving a hand. “Figures, back to the gifts though. Are they ever turned down?”

“Not often. The larger the crew the more standing the captain has in our society. Usually it’s accepted out of a sense of tradition, but giving a sub-optimal gift isn’t a good way to impress the community. Most don’t return till they have something worthwhile.”

“Given what I’ve read and you’ve told me your people are essentially nomads. Moving from place to place and just surviving. “

“Pretty much. Resources are scarce, and everything we do is for the fleet. The last count listed around seventeen million quarians in the flotilla, and everyone relies on each other for survival. We are essentially one very large family.”

“Even then, I bet it’s hard to live in such surroundings. Bet privacy suffers.”

“Not as much as one would think, but when you wear your own room you don’t really need private areas.”

“I can only imagine how that is. I must say though, you all do amazing jobs making your suits look appealing. Love the coloration of yours, specially the hood.”

Tali smiles though it couldn’t be seen. “Thanks Shepard. I plan to improve it when I get back to the fleet.”

Shepard was silent for a moment not sure how to continue their chat till something clicks in her head. “Hey, Tali. I haven’t seen much of the ruling structure on the flotilla. I’m guessing each ship has its own leader, but what about between ships, and the whole race? I wouldn’t think its one ruler or martial law.”

“In theory we’re still under military jurisdiction, but the best place to start is the conclave. You see The Conclave is our civilian branch of government. Each ship elects a representative to serve on the conclave and make decisions that affect the fleet. Each ship has its own captain to handle ship matters, a tradition that dates back to our time under martial law. Though with the success of the conclave most captains have their own council to give them advice and guidance.”

“Sounds to me like ya’ll have diplomacy down.”

“In practice yes, but even then problems can arise that the conclave can’t solve. That’s when the top five military officials in what’s called the Admiralty Board get together to solve it. In cases of emergency only they have the power to overrule any decision by the Conclave. And even then only a unanimous decision can this happen. After that one time they must resign their posts. It’s a safeguard that’s worked well for nearly three centuries. In fact only four overrules have ever taken place.”

“Seems to me they do it better than we do. Though I have to wonder the inevitable Tali.” They both look at each other as if knowing what she was going to ask. “What can you tell me about the Geth?”

“I doubt I can tell you anything you don’t already know. I do know the story of what they were and why they turned on us.” Shepard just gave a simple nod letting her know to start. “The geth were originally nothing more than a manual labor force. A simple VI platform that we slowly modified to allow them to do more things and complete complex tasks.”

“Sounds to me like you got close to skirting that line of AI creation.”

“We never did anything illegal. All tweaks were very subtle and well controlled. The neural network we created for the geth was far more powerful than we expected.” A raised brow from Chessa showed she followed, but didn’t quite get it. “You see the geth were designed to work together. In layman’s terms, the more that are in a group the smarter they are.” A slightly confused look followed this. “Okay. You see each geth has its own awareness and identity, but they can’t share sensory data and information. To share that would overload their programming, but when close the network can allow them to coordinate low-level functions and that frees up more processing for independent thought.”

Rubbing her chin Chessa thought a moment trying to piece it together. “Almost how you can increase one computer’s power by linking it in and using resources from other ones?”

“Not quite, but I think you get the overall idea. The geth are very advanced and complex creations. As you might have guessed though is that we continued to make more and more geth, thusly making them smarter and smarter. When one geth asked an overseer about the nature of its existence we knew we went too far.”

The feline crosses her arms seeing where this was going now. “Let me guess, you all panicked and immediately tried shutting off all geth? To which they retaliated.”

“We had no choice! They were on the verge of rebellion. We figured if we acted first we’d stop the war before it even began. Yet the geth had already progressed further than anyone anticipated.”

“Sounds to me like you all acted before thinking. There was no rebellion. It was just curious of why it was there. What should’ve happened was you could’ve slowly and systematically shut down the geth and mainly the network hubs.”

Tali throws her arms out and down at her defensively. “We didn’t have time, Shepard. It’s not like we could’ve stalled them or tell them they are just our slaves.”

The feline just lets a slight smirk curl upon her lips and raises a hand and turns it over in a questioning motion. “Why couldn’t you? Slowly delay and isolate them to lower their strength why neutralizing the network through viruses and other means.”

“We tried to avoid war Shepard. We thought just shutting them down would be enough. Millions of quarians died because of them.”

“Because you drew weapons first? You acted with open aggression against them. What did you expect? All it did was ask a question. Yes it was one it was never meant to ask, but that was the worst way to handle it.”

Tali again throws her arms down raising her voice a fair bit. “So you would’ve just had us wait?! They are synthetics. Soon as they found out they have no use for us we would’ve been massacred. Why do you think they never chased us beyond the veil? Why do you think they kill every organic that’s came in contact with them?”

Shepard shrugs showing no sign of emotion unlike Tali who was becoming rather expressive in her movements. “Maybe they just want to be left alone? They chased away the threat and are now just keeping to themselves.”

“Then what about the ones with Saren? They don’t seem to want to be left alone.”

Another shrug came from her. “Just a group of them he convinced to join him to bring back the so called reapers?”

Tali sighs hard, “The geth aren’t innocent victims in this. Even before Saren they wanted to destroy organic life. Now that Saren got them to actively pursue that goal we have to stop them both.”

“Well I agree on that, but I can’t help but feel like there’s more to this. Sorry to upset you though Tali.”

Tali takes a breath to calm herself. “It’s okay Shepard. The geth are still a sore spot for my people.”

“I can tell. I’ll try not to stir you up so much next time we chat. I better slip away, though. It was wonderful talking with you. Try not to distract Adams too much or show up the crew too often.”

“Sure thing Shepard, see you later.”

Shepard turns and steps away as Tali returns her focus to the console she was at. She makes her way out of engineering using the other exit so she was on the other side of the cargo bay near Wrex.

Wrex looked to almost be sleeping, but the feline knew differently. As she approached his eye opens and the red orb looks right at her. He figured it was his turn for let’s try and be buddy time, but had no wish to do that. “Nice ship you’ve got, Shepard. Now what do you want?”

Chessa steps up to him, tilting her head some. “What do you mean Wrex? I’m just coming to chat.”

“You want to chat then go chat with the quarian.”

She frowns abit at him, “Aw come-on Wrex. Tell me about yourself.”

“What you see is what you get.”

“Seriously? Not even a good ol’ war story?”

“There’s nothing good about it…the Krogan are dying and not a damn person is trying to stop it.”

“Why doesn’t someone try and unite the Krogan? Get everyone back to the planet and use your scientists to figure out a way around the genophage.”

“Really, when’s the last time you seen Krogan scientist? We’re warriors Shepard; we rather fight than stand around and talk. It’s why we’re so spread out. Our planet is dead so many leave to fight and get paid to do it. Besides I gave up on them long ago.”

Chessa looks down some surprised at how much of a downer he was being, but given what was happening it wasn’t really surprising. Much as she didn’t want to she had to ask. “I know this is a touchy subject and I know a fair bit on it, but what can you tell me about the genophage? From the eyes of the ones it was wrongly forced on.”

Wrex shifts some letting out an audible growl as she expected. “You want details then ask the salarians. All I know is it makes growing our numbers impossible. So many die in stillbirth and even more don’t get that far. Every Krogan has it, and no one wants to cure it.”

“They’re worried that if the Krogan are allowed to get back their breeding potential they’ll be another Krogan rebellion, but even worse.”

“And they’ll be right.”

“And that’s why your people are dying. They need a leader to unify them and stem their aggressive ways. Your people are like the frogs on earth. Yes there’s differences but the sheer breeding potential is there to maybe overcome the genophage.”

“So you want us to get together and force the female’s to constantly breed and give birth to dead children Shepard? I suggest you stop that thought right now…” Another growl came from the large male and his eyes narrow some.

“I-I didn’t mean it like that Wrex sorry.” Chessa steps back abit holding up her hands. She didn’t want to anger him as she doubted even the whole crew could stop him if he went berserk. “I meant it in that having your people just going around killing others and getting themselves killed is only sending you to your doom.”

“Look Shepard, I see what you’re trying to do, but the Krogan aren’t MY people anymore. They are a lost cause, and as long as the genophage exists nothing will change.”

Shepard scoffs rolling her eyes. “Feh, and here I thought you were fighters. I thought true warriors only fought harder when backed into a corner. Guess I was wrong about you and the Krogan. You aren’t the non-stop powerhouses I heard about. Just a bunch of downers and whiney kids constantly kicking themselves and griping about how the genophage ruins any point of living.”

A clear near roar was heard as a fist slams into the boxes behind him causing the upper one to topple over gaining the attention of both Ashley and Garrus. Williams grabs a rifle only see Shepard point at her silently motioning for her to put it down. Garrus though stood there watching quickly piecing together what was going on. “What the hell am I supposed to do about that Shepard?! I’m no damn leader! Even if I was no one would listen to me. Even on Tuchanka the Krogan live in clans that fight between each other over resources and the few women they have. Many women live in their own clans and only meet with a male to mate then leave. There’s no uniting that…”

She had her arms crossed just rolling her eyes again. “Sure sure. More excuses. Look you want to keep being like that then so be it, but I won’t have a downer on my ship. You may think they are a lost cause but they aren’t. You proclaim they are warriors then appeal to them as such. Show them you are the strongest Krogan and if they don’t want to be wiped out then they will join you.”

“Let it go Shepard…”

She meets his gaze just staring at him a long moment before shaking her head. “Whatever Wrex, I just know what I’d be doing if I was in your boots. Have your gear ready. You’re going with me on this mission.” With that she just walks away from the now likely slightly annoyed Krogan growling and lowering his head again. Moving to Ashley who had her hand still resting upon the rifle just in case, Chessa places a paw upon the gun and raises a brow at her. “Abit jumpy are we?”

“I was making sure he wasn’t going to do anything. I can’t tell the animals from aliens out here so I rather shoot first and ask questions later.”

Shepard narrows her eyes some stepping abit closer and speaking softly yet firmly. “You will not point a gun at another teammate if you want to stay on my ship. I understand you were trying to defend me, but I was in complete control there. Wrex had no weapons, and if had made an aggressive move towards me I would’ve been able to counter it.”

Ashley looks at her unable to really look elsewhere as that testing gaze was now upon her. She knew she couldn’t waver or divert her eyes and even retorts. “I was protecting a superior officer ma’am.”

“I understand military protocol Williams, but I knew what I was doing. I appreciate it, but no pointing guns at teammates unless it’s absolutely required or an order. I can pick up on little things most can’t. Not sure why. Maybe it’s the feline half I’m not sure. Like now, you’re on your back foot. Weight is shifted ready to react while all senses are focused between me and what’s around you. You’re alert and ready.” She smiles and steps back releasing the slight hold she shared with Ashley upon the gun. “You’re protective I get that. The alliance comes first to you, I understand, but I am now a spectre. This ship is now a part of the council fleet. To me humanity matters just as much as all other races. I might have been human before, and I might have been part of the Alliance first, but I am now as alien to you as any other species and you can ask Chakwas about that one to confirm it. Hell I don’t even fit into the same scientific group because of that. But that’s something for the scientists to figure out. What I’m saying is that the needs of the council and the needs of the galactic community come first, and with this ship in my name it’s a council ship and thusly any race is allowed on it and anyone I deem worthy can go wherever they want in it.”

Ashley looks at her a long moment slightly stunned she just cast aside everything she was when joining the spectres. It was like she didn’t care about the alliance or the people that saved her. In fact Shepard really didn’t. She wasn’t some army brat or someone down on their luck using the military as a means to escape. She was a simple girl that took a chance and just lives life to the fullest. Course Ashley didn’t know this and just seen this person, this alien, she had been sort of looking up to in a new light. So with that long explanation and all she merely answers with a near monotone. “Understood, commander.”

“These animals as you call them have names and you need to learn them. You can keep it impersonal and use their last names or species to refer to them, but show respect just like they give you. I’m heading back to my cabin and I expect to find you being more chatty with our new allies at mess call. Now dismissed.”

Another emotionless answer came. “Ma’am.”

Chessa nods and steps away giving a look at Garrus he seeming like he knew what they talked about, but just returns to his work glad to have had his chat before those two. The feline says nothing as she boards the elevator back to the crew deck and goes into her office. She turns on her console and sets about pulling up a video before going over to her bed and laying back on it with her legs hanging over the end and closing her eyes just relaxing till Joker calls her. Already she felt this wasn’t going to be an easy mission, but then that was fairly obvious given what it took just to get this far.