

Mass Effect: Eurydice

Von Bint-Lilith

Kapitel 2: The sorrow of losing the one you want

His work on Horizon was done and he had headed back to the Citadel right after his encounter with Shepard. Angry and confused. While still on his way back he had decided to write her an email. Apologizing. Maybe to redeem himself from the accusations he had made. Maybe to rekindle what they once had. Maybe because he still loved her. He did not know exactly. Whatever it was he felt guilty. Still he could not get over the fact that she was with Cerberus which made him mad and feeling betrayed.

He had told her about Elizabeth, the doctor he was seeing. This might have been a mistake but keeping it a secret was not fair to either of them. He was not entirely honest though. He had written that he and Elizabeth just went out for a few drinks. He did not mention how far they were involved. He thought it would do no good telling Shepard that he was sleeping with someone else.

Why not actually? These past two years he thought she was dead. In fact he had seen her dying. His world had crumbled down when it had happened. He had mourned and hated every day he was allowed to live and she did not. He had decided to carry on with his life. To distract himself. It was not wrong to be with another woman. Why did he feel so guilty then?

He was not even sure who exactly he had encountered today. Was it really his Shepard? The person that was staying in front of him several hours earlier sure did look like her. It was the perfect duplicate. Almost. Old scars were gone, replaced with new scars that seemed her face was stitched together. She seemed stitched together. He could not quite understand what Cerberus had done. He asked himself whether she had really been dead at all or had only been hiding all this time. Or perhaps she was some kind of clone fabricated from her actual DNA. The thought of the desecration of her corpse made him almost vomit. It could not possibly be Shepard. The righteous Commander he knew would never team up with Cerberus. Never. He wondered how come he felt so familiar at her sight. When he had embraced her she felt warm. Her smell was the one he was acquainted with. The expression of her face was the one he had known. The sound of her voice was the one he was missing for so long.

It was already evening when Kaidan arrived. He lived in a small apartment near the Presidium Commons. As Staff Commander he would earn enough to afford a bigger one but he was rather satisfied with the one-room flat he lived in. It had a bathroom, a kitchen and a living place where he was also sleeping. It was enough. He would gladly replace his apartment for a simple bed in the crew quarters of the Normandy SR-1. But that would never happen. And he could not picture himself as some kind of

Cerberus guerilla fighter on the new Normandy SR-2.

Kaidan checked his messages. She had not replied. His head was aching. That goddamn migraine again. He rubbed his eyes and tried to ignore the vertigo. He leaned on the silver kitchen counter and breathed heavily when his door bell rang. He guessed it was Elizabeth. He had notified her that he would return today, however he was in no mood to see her. He considered ignoring her but when the bell rang again he went to the door and let her in.

"Kaidan", she raised on her tiptoes kissing him on the mouth. He barely returned it. "You're alright. I was worried. I'm happy to see you.", she smiled cheekily at him. She was still wearing her work clothes. She had probably went straight from the hospital to see him.

"Yeah, I'm alright. Hell of a headache though", Kaidan rubbed his neck and squinted his eyes. He damned himself for letting her in. He felt annoyed and irritated by her presence.

"Figured. Brought some pills with me", she reached into her bag while Kaidan was eyeing her. She had auburn hair and cornflower blue eyes, slender and much smaller than him. She was a zealous and determined woman, always dedicated to her work.

"Here. This should work."

"Thanks, Elizabeth."

"So? How'd you been?", she was from London thus having a British accent. "I've missed you." She caressed his cheek and kissed him.

Kaidan tried to think how good of a woman she was. Nice, pretty, affectionate. Nevertheless he felt uncomfortable. Why so, he could not explain. When she reached under his shirt trying to take it off he pushed her away.

"What's it? You don't feel well, alright. Want me to make you some tea? Have you eaten yet?"

"No. Just stop it", he turned away and headed to the fridge to fetch a soft drink.

She frowned. "Kaidan? Is something wrong?"

He had not realized how big of an impact seeing Shepard again had on him. He felt repelled by Elizabeth' physical attempts. Almost disgusted. He sighed. "Perhaps you should leave. I'd rather like to be alone."

Elizabeth joined him in the kitchen. "You're acting quite weird. Did something happen on Horizon?"

"Well, yeah. I just witnessed almost a whole colony being kidnapped by the Collectors", Kaidan replied annoyed. "Or whatever the hell they did to them. I didn't manage to save anyone except of my own sorry ass. "

She smiled sympathetically, running her fingers through his hair. He felt her too soft, too petite hand on him. "You worry too much, you know? It is not your fault. You're doing your best. You really are an admirable man, Kaidan Alenko." When she reached to kiss him he rolled his eyes and stopped her again. Elizabeth stared at him puzzled.

"I'm sorry, Elizabeth. I can't do this right now."

She creased her brows and pouted her lips making her look like a little girl. "Did I do something wrong?"

"No", he barked at her a little too loud. "You're perfectly fine. But this just doesn't feel right. Not anymore."

She made an irritated sound. "Excuse me?"

"You should go," his voice was strict and commanding.

"I don't understand. Are you breaking up with me?", he noticed she tried to express it nonchalantly.

"I met Shepard."

Elizabeth exhaled and shook her head in disbelief. Her eyes widening in shock. "She's alive then." Kaidan nodded. "And after two years you still want her?", he remained silent and could not even manage to meet her eyes. "She was absent for two years. You thought she was dead for *two* bloody years. And all of a sudden she's walking in and you're running after her again?", she was almost screaming, her voice a jarring sound hurting his ears.

"You don't know what happened. You don't know her, at all", he wondered at himself for defending her almost automatically.

"Were you just playing with me, Kaidan?"

"No!", he objected. "Listen. I don't want this to end dirty." He could see her eyes tearing up. "I never intended to hurt you. But after meeting her on Horizon I understood that I'm not ready for a committed relationship. I'll probably never see her again, but still..."

"I could wait for you to be ready," he looked at the woman and pitied her. She looked forlorn and yet hopeful, tears running down her cheeks, her bottom lip trembling.

"No. I can't be with you. I'm sorry. You're a good girl, but...", he did not manage to finish the sentence when Elizabeth had taken her bag rushing out of his apartment without saying any goodbye.

"Great, Alenko", he said to himself. "Damn, you Shepard. Damn you to hell."

He felt sorry for the other girl. Nevertheless he knew she was better off that way. He remembered how he came to meet Elizabeth in the first place.

After Shepard's death something inside of him had died as well. The only reason for him to get up in the mornings was merely for his duties. Apart from that he had considered his life as pointless. It had taken months for him to even realize that Shepard was indeed gone. Dead. Somewhere in space. Above Alchera. He would never been able to hold her again. His lips would never meet hers ever again. He would never hear her reprimanding, commanding, delicate voice again.

By the time he had come to terms with her being gone, the whole galaxy seemed dull to him. Each person he met, each mission he was on, each food he ate. Everything seemed awfully empty. For the time being he was controlled by anger, unleashing his wrath on his foes, intimidating his colleagues, eventually leading to his promotion. After a while though he had just resigned. Living for the day without any thought of tomorrow. Existing only for his work. It had been around this time when some of his co-workers had pushed him into getting to know Elizabeth.

"You know, Alenko", one of his workmates who viewed him as friend came up to him one day. "I know that smoking hot Doc. You really should go on a date with her."

Kaidan had declined the offer several times until one day he had allowed himself being persuaded into some drinks with her.

They had went to Purgatory that night. He remembered upon first seeing her immediately comparing her to Shepard. Elizabeth was petite, feminine, almost fragile. Laughing sheepishly at any of his sentences. He could have considered her pretty once. Before he had known Shepard. Before everything was infiltrated by that Commander. He was searching for her in Elizabeth. But he could not find her. He damned himself for doing this. He realized that he was only tormenting himself. So he forced himself into further dates. Forcing himself to like the doctor. Trying to eradicate the image of Shepard haunting him.

When they first kissed he had not felt anything. When they first had slept together neither. Aside from lust accompanied by loathing after he was sexually stimulated. He

then began picturing Shepard again when sleeping with Elizabeth. Imagining it was his dead former lover he had sex with and not this plain good – and more particularly alive - doctor girl. Kaidan had never been fair to Elizabeth he realized. The whole thing they had was but a lie. As much as he tried to force feelings for this other girl, they never appeared.

After seeing Shepard that day he had realized he was not over her. He had never been, not even for one single day. He remembered how horrified he was upon hearing the rumours that Cerberus had brought her back to life and that she worked for them now. Instead of feeling happy, he was scared, terrified, torn. He remembered how he was sitting on his couch sobbing manically. The outburst of his own feelings had scared him. What good was it losing his love just for her to resurrect again as some enemy minion? Most likely being obliged to fight her eventually.

But then he had seen her on Horizon and his first reaction was embracing her. Feeling her warmth, her heartbeat, her breath. Yet, terrified as he was by the idea her being a foe, he had unleashed accusations at her before even actually listening to her. Listening to what had happened. Why she was alive. Breathing and not dead. Why she was with Cerberus. Or if it was really Shepard at all. Perhaps he was scared of the answers. Of the truth. And when she had asked him to join him, it was even worse.

The real Shepard, *his* Shepard would have never suggested for him to abandon his career. Giving up everything he had fought to accomplish to join with a terrorist group. This was not Shepard. Or was she?

Soon after they had parted again his chest was filled with an ache. He regretted what he had said leading to Kaidan writing that email.

Seeing her alive. Seeing her standing right in front of him again. The pain showing almost imperceptible in her dark eyes when he was humilitating her. He had felt relieved. Relieved that she was alive, that she was capable of feeling emotional pain. He wondered if they could work it out somehow again. Someday. Maybe what she had said about the Collectors and Cerberus was right. Maybe she was a human. Maybe she was Shepard. Maybe he should have joined them. Fighting the Collectors. No. Not with Cerberus. Every part of him rejected Cerberus. He did not know what to believe anymore. He only understood that he was aching to see her again.

"How could you call her a traitor, you idiot?", him being scared did not gave him any right to hurt her. The pain crept up to his head again, making him feel nauseated. The image of Shepard slowly fainting to give place to the pulsating pain. He tried to concentrate on the face he saw that day. Scarred. Hurt. '*Shepard*', he thought. '*Please be careful. I want to see you again.*'