

AN: I would suggest listening to The End of the World by Ingrid Michaelson while reading, since that's the song that inspired this.

E-Day they called it.

The 'E' stood for Extinction.

The day the Catalyst failed to activate. The day the Reapers killed ninety seven percent of the Earth's population before moving on. Content that their husks could wipe out the remaining pockets of resistance.

Commander Shepard had done what she could, destroying both the Citadel and the Catalyst before returning to Earth, but it hadn't been enough. The Reapers were more than capable of destroying life without their master giving them orders.

So, the fleets had withdrawn. Quickly realising that it was a hopeless cause.

Earth was lost.

Only one ship had stayed, had returned to Earth to try to help any survivors to hold off the hordes of husks. The sole ray of hope being that the Reapers had taken most of the more powerful husks with them, giving any survivors a chance to hide. Although the odds of continued survival were still slim.

But that didn't stop the Normandy from returning.

Because there had been no way in hell Garrus Vakarian would ever leave his mate behind, he recalled as he walked up behind her.

She was keeping look out as they scavenged the remains of the mall, in the hopes of finding anything of worth. Non-perishable food was always good, they were running low on dextro stockpiles. Thermal clips had once been a coveted find but the survivors had since taken to retrofitting their weapons to operate without them, much like they had when he was younger.

"Hey," He said softly before noting her stiff posture, the way her fingers hugged the edges of her shotgun telling him all he needed to know. Almost thirty years of fighting together had taught him her every quirk. "What is it?"

"Where's David?" She asked, inquiring after their son, as her eyes refused to leave the horizon.

After Shepard had returned to Earth, Garrus had told her that he had no intention of ever leaving her, no matter how hopeless the cause. Even if it was to simply ensure the survival of the few small bands of people left behind after the Reapers had made their escape.

The Normandy had acted as their safe haven, helping them to co-ordinate between the survivors across the globe. They had tried to ask for help beyond the Sol system but they had received no reply. They had no idea how the rest of the galaxy was faring but the Normandy had been badly damaged. There was no way that it could make a relay jump.

Regardless, it had been their home for a long while. However, the ship's condition had quickly deteriorated. It hadn't been long before they lost her in an effort to reduce the husk numbers, losing both Joker and EDI along with it. Since then, the crew of the Normandy had been Nomads, helping to set up trade between the groups of Settled survivors.

But now only Shepard, Garrus and their son were left.

Not long after they had lost the Normandy, they had found a small child on their travels, no older than three years at most, lost without his parents. Shepard hadn't needed to insist that they take him in, the soft look in her eyes when she regarded the child had been enough for him.

She had called him David for the man who had been the closest thing she had ever had to a father.

That was many years ago now. David had since grown into a man, as competent a soldier as both of his parents and as good a tech as his mother. Retrofitting the weapons had been his idea.

"He's with the others, gathering supplies," Garrus replied. "Why?"

"I'm picking up movement. I think we've got husks incoming."

Garrus simply sighed at that. "I know."

She whirled around to face him, frowning. "You *know*? Garrus, I said that this was too risky and I was right. There's no way we'll make it out of here without--"

"A distraction. I know that, too." He sighed again, his eyes drifting to his shaking hands.

Shepard noticed where his gaze had fallen, clasping his hands in hers, as she had recently taken to doing. They both knew the cause, but neither of them said anything as they shared a significant look. There was nothing to say.

No cure had ever been found for Corpalis.

“Don’t you dare,” She whispered, although the order was clear.

“Shepard, I have to. I... A sniper who can’t shoot straight is no use to anyone. I refuse to become a liability. A burden. Dextro supplies are short enough as it is without having to provide for someone who can’t work. You know that.”

She shook her head, trying to shake away the understanding of what he was saying. “No, *dammit*, Garrus. Not like this.”

“You said it yourself; it’s the only way you can get everyone else out.”

“So, what? You trapped us in here so that you can martyr yourself?” She couldn’t stop her voice from cracking with hurt.

He gently placed his hand on her cheek, the pain in her eyes reflected in his. “Isis, you know that’s not true. We *need* these supplies. Or others die. What was it you always used to tell me?”

She refused to answer.

“Sometimes, sacrifices *have* to be made. One dying turian seems a small price to pay.”

“Not to me.” Her voice was small and so unlike her, tears lacing her eyes.

He lowered his forehead to hers, sighing softly. “I love you.”

They both knew that he was saying goodbye. She grabbed him by the cowl, drawing him closer so that she could press her lips to his mouth plates as tears rolled down her cheeks.

Eventually he pulled away, his subharmonics keening in a way that broke her heart. “You’d better the other and get going. You won’t have long.”

She found herself unable to move as he walked away, frozen in a state of shock until her son jogged up to her, prompting her to quickly wipe the tears from her eyes.

“Mom? You okay?”

She gave him a weak smile in response. “Of course. You’d better grab the others. You need to get going.”

“Trouble?”

She gave him the most reassuring smile she could. "Nothing your father and I can't handle. We'll catch up with you in a little while, okay?"

David regarded her carefully for a few moments before nodding. "Sure, Mom. Just... Be careful?"

"Always, sweetheart," She told him before lowering her gaze to her weapon as he began to head back out. "And, David?"

"Yeah?"

He was caught by surprise as his mother pulled him into a tight hug.

"We are so proud of you, son. And we love you, with all our hearts. Never forget that."

He frowned at her as she pulled away. "Are you sure you guys can handle this?"

She nodded, her fake smile still firmly in place. "Of course, sweetie. We've survived much worse than a few husks."

"Really? Because Dad gave me a very similar speech before. It sounds like you're saying goodbye. Seriously, Mom, how many husks are we talking about here?"

She just shook her head. "We'll be fine. Now, you'd better hurry. There isn't much time."

Her son was, God bless him, a good soldier. He knew when his duty had to come before his personal feelings.

But that didn't mean that he wasn't fighting back his own tears.

"I'm gonna hold you to that," He told her as he began to leave, before turning back, momentarily. "And Mom? I... I love you guys, too."

She simply nodded, not trusting her voice. As soon as he was gone, she headed to her mate's position, giving him a watery smile as his mandibles fluttered a little with surprise.

"Isis, why aren't you with David?"

She took a moment to scan the horizon, noting the proximity of the husks as well as their quite staggering numbers, before replying. "He can handle things on his own. Anyway, I told you a long time ago; there's no Shepard without Vakarian. So I hope you've learnt how to duck."

He gave a short bark of laughter that was quickly silenced by an awful screech.

“That’s a Banshee, isn’t it?” If Garrus didn’t know better, he would have sworn that there was a note of fear in her voice.

“Yep,” He answered simply, knowing that they had mere moments left.

“Garrus?”

“Yeah?”

“I love you.”

“I love you too, Isis.”

They readied their weapons as hordes of husks began advancing on their position.

“One last thing, Garrus.”

“Yeah?”

“First round’s on me.”