

Prime Effect

Von Leonis-Prime

Kapitel 7:

Gunfire and monstrous screams could be heard echoing down the corridors of the Conestoga as three people ran from a large horde of creatures intent on ripping them apart. They had just been separated from their friends, one had been torn away from them and into the darkness, the other went charging after her. None of them knew what had become of the two, but as of this moment they had more pressing matters like trying to stay alive.

"We got to keep moving, stay ahead of them." Garrus shouted back to the others as they kept firing back at the creatures running after them.

"I'm running low on ammo over here." Tali said while Wheeljack threw her an ammo pack.

The group ran round a corner to find that they had come up to a door that would not open when Tali hit the activation panel.

"Oh now that's great." the Turian said as Wheeljack fired off another few bursts from his weapon into the crowd that was closing behind them, causing the creatures to topple over their dead buying the group several more seconds.

"Can you get that door open Tali?" Garrus asked while firing around the corner with the Autobot. The Quarian activated her holo-tool and tried to interface with door's controls. She shook her head in frustration and cursed.

"Its no good, I can't open it."

Garrus looked over at Wheeljack.

"Do you think you can?"

The Autobot shrugged and patted Tali on the shoulder.

"Let me try?" he said to her calmly as she got up and joined Garrus in keeping the horde back.

"Wait a minute, I have an idea." the Quarian said as she then worked on her holo-tool.

Garrus shot down two more creatures, but the rest were closing in.

"Either of you can come up with something any time now."

Suddenly a yellow holographic ball appeared in front of Tali.

"Watch this" she said happily as the ball flew round the corner and headed towards the horde who went straight for it, clawing away at it. Tali looked to Garrus.

"You may want to get back here" she suggested as the Turian looked back to the ball and the growing horde surrounding it.

"Right" he said as he took cover moments before the ball exploded, taking out the creatures.

"That was a drone right?" Garrus asked as Tali deactivated her holo-tool smiling back.

"Yes, I just programmed it to explode when it was too damaged to operate."

Wheeljack meanwhile hacked through the doors controls.

"I got it." he exclaimed as the others turned to see the doors open, all their attention on what was inside.

Jack opened his eyes to find himself lying on his front on a cold metallic floor. He slowly got up, every part of him aching. He looked around and found himself in a hallway that looked somewhat different to the ones that he and his team had explored earlier. Just how far had he fallen after he had jumped into the vent after Arcee he thought.

'Arcee' his mind became full with images of her as guilt suddenly came over him. He should have been watching more closely, then she wouldn't have been snatched like that.

'She could be...' he started to think before shaking his head.

'Cant think like that, she is alive. My girl is a survivor.' he thought as he looked up to see the vent opening above him.

'So where did it take you.' He thought while looking down at the ground and noticing marks that could only have been made from something or someone being dragged. He then heard a familiar inhuman scream echoing from wherever the dragging marks were leading. Now with a direction to head in, he picked up his weapon and headed down the corridor in the hope of finding his partner.

Garrus, Wheeljack and Tali all looked dumbstruck at what they saw behind the door they had just opened.

"Well you just gonna stand there, or are you gonna get in here before more of those

things show up."

The three of them nodded and ran through the door to then be approached by Colonel Kage, looking worse for wear, but still alive.

"Private get that door closed quickly now" he said to the young man to his side who ran over to the door and started working on it, as another marine stood watch with his weapon ready in case any more creatures showed up.

"So is this all there is, where's Darby?" Kage asked. The three of them looked down at the ground as if ashamed.

"When we were attacked, one of the creatures grabbed Arcee and hauled her into a ventilation shaft. The Commander went in after her without a second thought." Garrus reported. The Colonel just looked at him in amazement.

"You telling me he deserted his team for just one of you. Why the hell did he do that." he screamed at them, making Wheeljack's eyes narrow as the Autobot found his voice and glared at the man.

"He did it because he cares about her" he answered, the anger in his voice growing. The Colonel acted oblivious to the wrecker's attitude and continued his tirade.

"I don't care if she is the love of his life, a commanding officer is not supposed to leave his team just to save one life. No matter how close they are."

At this point the three of them all started getting angry at the Colonel. True this guy was an asshole that was for sure, but now he was just going over the top with his attitude towards their Commander.

"Well sir, it just so happens that she is the love of his life, it's just neither of them has actually realised it fully. And also the Commander happens to be a good friend of mine so I would suggest you keep your mouth shut the next time you want to insult him or I will show you what we Wreckers do best." the Autobot said, not even trying to hide the anger that was growing inside of him as he stood right in the Colonel's face. But before anything could happen the two marines who had just closed the door, appeared with their guns aimed at the three. The Colonel looked right in the face of Wheeljack, not the least bit impressed with the wrecker.

"I would suggest you back down, since with both Darby and Arcee MIA, that makes me the next one in charge. And unless you want to be thrown in the brig when we get back, you better back down."

Wheeljack took his hands off the hilts of his swords on his back and stood back, but never taking his eyes off the Colonel as Kage smiled back at him, revelling in his victory.

The Autobot stood back with Garrus and Tali as the two marines joined the Colonel who placed his hands behind his back.

"Now since I am now in charge, I believe that the mission should be scrubbed and we should head back to the ship before we lose anyone else."

"We cant, the Commander and Arcee are still out there and they need our help" Garrus interrupted, earning a glare from Kage.

"Yes, also the Commander's orders were clear, we have to get to the artefact and disable it so that our com links and map will function properly." Tali added. Wheeljack cocked his head and gave the Colonel an I told you so look.

"I guess you didn't think of that did you?"

Kage could feel his anger at these three coming to an head, but he held it back and sighed.

"You make a good point, so we will head for the artefact and we will search for the two of them along that path, as long as you know where to look for this thing?" he asked looking at Tali.

"I have an idea about that, you see the signal looks like it is coming from the whole ship but there is a build up of energy coming from a few decks below us, here." she pointed on her holo-tool map which was still a little faulty.

"Okay, you may want to pick up some ammo packs that we have found. You will need them. Move out" the Colonel ordered as the group headed out of the room through another door and back into the ship's dark corridors.

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Jack slowly followed the tracks that the creature had left, hoping not to gain any attention from the creatures that might have been in the shadows with him. He then turned a corner to find a shocking sight. The corridor had opened up into a large room filled with metal spikes that had the same creatures that had been attacking his team impaled on them. He activated his holo-tool and took some quick scans as he moved between the spikes, trying not get too close. Once he got half way through the room, he saw one creature kneeling over a body that when Jack got close enough could see was Arcee unconscious. Jack knew he had to take the creature out quietly or he would find himself overwhelmed within seconds. So he took a deep breath and placed his weapon on his back to free his hands and took one step after another as he moved up behind the creature until he was right behind it. He then grabbed the creature's head and with enough force he snapped it's neck and placed the now limp body on the floor before going to his partner's side.

"Arcee...,Arcee, come on partner wake up..." he said as he tried to wake her.

"...You really don't want to be sleeping in here".

Arcee then started to stir as she opened her eyes to see Jack looking down at her, a warm smile growing on his face.

"Jack...Jack you came for me?" she asked as he helped her to a sitting position.

"Of course I did, I wasn't going to leave my girl down here."

The femme looked at Jack in a curious way after hearing his comment.

'Damn it Jack, great time to say what you were thinking out loud.' he mentally kicked himself, before noticing a smile appear on her face.

"I'm your girl I am?" she asked, trying to gain a reaction from the Prime who's cheeks had gone a brighter shade of red.

"Of course you're my girl, we're partners remember. Now I think we should get out of here, can you move?" he asked as Arcee got up and looked for her weapons.

"I think you dropped these" Jack handed her SMG's to her.

"We should be careful since neither of us has much ammo left, so I think that stealth would be the best option."

She nodded and looked around to see the spikes and their captives.

"What the scrap, was I going to end up on one those things?" she asked, fear slightly in her voice .

"I don't know but I did take some scans that we can go over once we are out of here. Lets go." he said as both of them started towards the end of the room and back into the familiar looking corridors. As Jack took the lead with Arcee watching their rear, it suddenly became clear to Jack that they were lost and that they were surrounded by possibly a hundred or so of those creatures. Jack's mood didn't go unnoticed by Arcee either who placed a reassuring hand on his shoulder.

"You okay there?" she asked in a soft tone. Jack turned to look at her when he then noticed another creature right behind her ready to pounce.

"Look out!" he screamed as he instinctively pushed her out of harms way and jammed his weapon into the creature's mouth and pulled the trigger, decorating the wall with its brain. He then turned back to the femme who again looked at him in appreciation.

"Thanks for the save." she said taking a breath before both of them suddenly heard the inhuman screams echoing around them and getting closer.

"Don't thank me yet" Jack replied as they both saw another horde of creatures appear just from where they came from and started running after them.

"RUN?" Jack shouted as he opened fire on the group and Arcee ran ahead of him before he too turned and ran. Both gave it everything they had to stay ahead of the stampede that was following them , but the creatures were gaining. Arcee then noticed an open door not far in front.

"This way" she called back to Jack as she ran through the door and activated its controls as Jack stepped through and turned around firing a final burst of bullets at the creatures as they neared. Arcee then pressed one button and the doors slide shut with a clang of metal. Jack then noticed the hard lock lever and pulled it down making a heavy metal sound.

"That should keep them out" Jack said as Arcee looked around, noticing that the room only had one exit.

"Yeah but we are trapped." She said in an almost fearful tone as she looked over to Jack and noticed something on his face. She got closer and saw a trickle of blood on his forehead.

"Your hurt" she pointed out to him. Which made him put his hand to his forehead and then view it, seeing the blood on his fingers.

"Yeah, I must cut my head in the vent when I jumped in after you." he theorized as she directed him to sit down against the wall so she could treat his wound. He didn't want to, but she forced the issue by placing her hands on his arms and physically directing him to sit. He sighed in defeat as he sat down, she bent down in front of him and picked out some medi-gel from her pouch and sprayed it on the cut, causing Jack to hiss in pain.

"Don't be a baby" she chuckled as he looked into her electric blue eyes.

"Thanks." he said as she cleaned his wound.

"Don't mention it.." she replied with a smile.

"...thanks for rescuing me back there".

Then for a moment there was a comfortable silence between the two of them as they just looked at each other. Then a loud bang against the doors shattered the moment, causing them both to look in its direction. Then another bang, and another.

"Sounds like they are trying to get in..." Arcee said as she picked up her guns and checked their ammo, which made her curse under her breath.

"...I only have a few bullets left"

Jack lifted his avenger rifle up and pointed at the zero counter on it.

"You still have more than I do".

The banging at the door continued at a steady pace, as what must have been scores of the creatures were at the other side trying to get in.

"How long do you think those doors will last?" Arcee asked, trying not to sound too worried.

"The doors looked quite strong, but depending how many of those things are on the other side, I would say not long." he replied. Arcee then turned to see a look on Jack's face that was too familiar. It was the same look that he had that night years ago.

"Jack what's wrong?" she asked. Jack looked at her then back to the door.

'I cant believe that this is going to be it, that we are trapped with our backs to the wall while god knows how many of those things are just waiting to break in here and slaughter us.' he thought to himself as a soft finger then touched his chin and brought his eyes to the femme looking back at him, her electric blue eyes questioning. Arcee could see that something was burdening her partner like a heavy weight on his shoulders.

"Jack tell me what's wrong, talk to me". She asked in a calm but almost pleading tone never taking her eyes off the Prime. Jack looked at her before sighing and looking down at the floor in defeat.

"Arcee I am sorry." he replied, his voice soft and nervous.

"Sorry for what?"

Jack looked like he was about to open up when he suddenly looked away.

"Nothing forget it." he closed off. Arcee suddenly felt anger build up in her spark.

"No, you cant do that. Your not pushing me away again." she said as she got up into a kneeling position in front of Jack and stared at him, her eyes now looked determined. The Commander looked back at her, looking like he just wanted to be swallowed up by the ground so long as he didn't have to continue this conversation.

"Why what good will it do now?"

"Jack you have been holding back from me ever since we have been back together, you don't want to admit it, but I have seen it whenever we get too close, you suddenly look guilty, even if it is just for a moment..." she replied her voice almost breaking with emotion.

"...If this is going to be our final moments, I don't want there to be anything between us, I care about you too much."

As Jack looked back into her eyes, feeling like his soul would get lost in them if he stared into them for too long, he was suddenly bombarded with memories of that night years ago.

'The war had ended only a few weeks ago, Megatron was dead and the Decepticons had surrendered. But due to the their energon supply having run out because of the conflict, the cybertronians had decided that the only way to survive as a species was to transfer their sparks to the con's pretender protoforms. In essence they would become human if only in appearance.

Team Prime had been the first to volunteer for the procedure, making sure that it was safe enough for the rest of the transformers. Jack was standing in the science lab at the Silo. He stood by and watched nervously as his partner Arcee was lying on a berth, next to her was a small almost featureless body of a Pretender lying on a similar berth with a sheet covering it from its chest to its feet and connected to the femme via a large transparent cable that had been plugged directly into her spark chamber.

Jack had never felt so nervous in his life, sure the process had worked for Bumblebee, Ratchet and Optimus who were watching with him. But this was his partner who was going through the procedure now and he was silently praying for it to work, hoping that nothing would go wrong. Knockout and Wheeljack worked the controls of the machine that was hooked up to the femme and her new body in waiting as Jack walked up to Arcee and placed his hand in hers, which made her look down at him with a smile.

"Don't worry Jack, I'll be back before you know it." she said to him in a confident tone. Jack's face lightened up a little.

"It better, because I have my new motorcycle and I would hate to have to ride it alone." he replied with a chuckle, hoping to hide the nervous feeling he had in his stomach. "She cocked her head at the comment and smirked.

"Well we cant have that now can we. Besides, it will be interesting to ride a motorcycle and not be the motorcycle." she commented as Wheeljack walked up beside her and motioned Jack away.

"Okay kids, we are ready for the transfer."

Jack walked back to the others, while not taking his eyes off the femme, who winked at him.

"See you in a minute Jack" she said as Wheeljack then placed her body into stasis, making her optics close and her face go peaceful. The Autobot then walked over to Knockout and patted his shoulder, who then turned and knocked his hand away.

"Careful, I just had this polished." the former Con responded, gaining a glare from the Wrecker.

"Hey you can preen yourself all you want once you are in your own pretender body, but as of this...."

"Enough..." Optimus raised his voice making both transformers turn and look down at the man standing in front of them. Even though he was now only a human in appearance, the

Prime still had the presence of the Autobot leader that had towered over them before.

"...now start the procedure"

Feeling a little embarrassed, both turned back to the controls and activated the machine which started to hum loudly as the cable on Arcee's unconscious body started to come to life. Suddenly her body jolted which made Jack wince a little as a bright white ball of energy appeared in the cable and slowly moved along to the other end which was connected to an adapter that was in place right over the pretender's empty spark chamber. After what felt like hours to Jack but really was only a few seconds, the spark of his partner entered the body and almost immediately the body started to change. It's skin went from silver grey to pale pink as it took on a more athletic figure and it shrunk slightly to about five foot in height. The head started to sprout blue hair that also had pink highlights in it. Jack watched in amazement as its' face slowly moulded itself into what he could only describe as a sleeping beauty as it lied there motionless. Once the transfer had finished, The new human looking Arcee opened her eyes and revealed them to be a beautiful electric blue as they looked around the around the room before they stopped at the young man in front of her, holding her hand.

"Hi" she said softly as Jack held her hand, it felt so soft in his own.

"Hi..." he replied smiling.

"...So I guess that ride is still on" he continued as she returned the smile.

A few hours later and both Jack and Arcee were at their favourite spot atop a cliff side overlooking the Nevada landscape as the Sun began its decent below the horizon, the sky now taking on a vanilla like look. They had an incident free ride on his motorcycle moments earlier as both seemed to enjoy the silence between them as the newly human autobot sat behind Jack, resting her chin on his back and tightly holding his waist. Jack had never felt so good as his partner leaned on him.

But as he sat there now on the cliff with her beside him and watched the sunset before them, he found he could not keep his eyes off her. She was the most beautiful looking woman he had ever seen. She was wearing black jeans and a blue tank top that showed off her athletic figure perfectly, her blue hair gently moving in the evening breeze.

While it was true that over the years he had known her, he had come to find her cybertronian body attractive, it had been her personality that had attracted him the most. But he knew any kind of relationship with her would not be possible with things the way they were.

Now though, she was just like him, and he found that he wanted to find out.

"It's beautiful isn't it" she said, breaking the comfortable silence and bringing Jack's attention to her fully.

"Yes it is beautiful" he said looking directly at her. Having noticed this, the femme looked over at him with smirk as her cheeks went slightly red.

"I mean the sunset smooth operator" she replied, her blue eyes looking at him.

At that moment the two of them just looked into each others eyes and Jack without even realising it, had found himself leaning closer to Arcee, their faces almost touching when his lips suddenly pressed against her own. Arcee looked shocked, but that quickly faded as she leaned forward into the kiss. For one long moment, time seemed to stand still between the two of them as they held the kiss. Then suddenly Jack pulled away instinctively as a million thoughts ran through his mind as to why they shouldn't have done it. Arcee looked at him confused.

"Jack what is it?" she pleaded as he got up and looked down at her like he had just seen a ghost.

"Sorry, I shouldn't have done that" he said, his voice breaking as he mounted the motorcycle, but the femme got up and walked up to him looking more confused.

"Jack, did I do something wrong?" she quizzed him as he revved the engine, before looking at her one last time.

"I'm sorry, I cant..." he trailed off as he rode the bike off into the distance leaving Arcee standing there completely lost.

Jack rode for what felt like hours as he replayed the events that had transpired between himself and Arcee in his mind before entering the Silo and parking up. He was physically shaking from what had happened. But he had to speak to Arcee so he walked up to her room. When he got there he saw the door was slightly ajar and looked in to find Arcee sitting against her bed with her knees up to her chest and arms wrapped around them, her face was a mixture of emotions as she looked so lost and hurt. His heart felt like it had stopped at that very moment.

'God what have I done'? he thought to himself as guilt and shame took hold of him. He then turned away and walked slowly back to the main control room.

He had hurt her, the one thing that he promised himself he would never do to her. She had lost both her partners before Jack had turned up but he was the first partner to actually hurt her. He couldn't be around her anymore, he felt that if he was to see her every day that he would only remind them both of what had happened between them on that cliff before he ran off on his bike, and he could not bare hurting her anymore.

He found himself outside Optimus's room. He knocked the door twice.

"Come in" came the voice of the Prime. When Jack entered the room he found the Autobot Leader sitting at his now human sized desk, looking at the boy with a questioning look. "Can I help you Jackson?"

Jack tried to hide the shame he felt before he spoke, knowing fully well that Optimus would see right through it. He only hoped that the Autobot would not press the issue.

"Optimus, I was wondering if your suggestion was still on offer?"

As the memory faded, Jack found himself in the dark room with Arcee kneeling in front of him, looking at him intently. He then took a deep breath and looked directly into her eyes.

"Arcee, I am sorry for hurting you all those years ago, when I left you on the Cliff-side after kissing you."

Arcee felt her expression soften.

"Why did you do that Jack, did I do something wrong?"

Jack felt his hands start to shake.

"No Arcee, it was my fault. When I kissed you it felt indescribably perfect. But suddenly I felt guilty?"

"Guilty?" she repeated.

"Yes" he said looking down, not wanting to see her face as he spoke.

"I felt that I was forcing you to choose?"

Arcee kept her eyes on Jack, taking in every word that he said.

"What do you mean, choose?" she asked.

"I know you loved Cliffjumper. Over the years I have noticed the amount of times you visited his grave atop of the silo. And I thought that by kissing you, that you would feel that we were somehow disrespecting his memory and I choked. Almost immediately after I left I felt guilty about leaving you there so I went back only to find you gone."

"Ratchet bridged me back" Arcee answered gently.

"Well I went back to the Silo and came to your room and that's when I saw you, sitting against your bed looking lost. I could see the hurt in your eyes and I decided that I wouldn't hurt you anymore, so that is why I chose to leave. I felt that if I was to stay, it would only bring you more pain and I care about you too much for that to happen. I am so sorry."

When no response came from the femme, Jack looked up to see Arcee looking back at him. Then the most unexpected thing happened. Arcee leaned in closer to Jack, he could feel her sweet breath on his face and she kissed him. It only lasted a moment, but it seemed to calm him down as she slowly broke the kiss and looked at him lovingly.

"Didn't you ever think that maybe I wanted you to kiss me." she replied with a gentle

smile. Jack didn't know where to look at this moment but could not take his eyes of the woman in front of him.

"Jack..." her voice going serious.

"...I did love Cliffjumper, but he wasn't my spark mate, neither was Tailgate. But I know that neither of them would have wanted me to spend the rest of my life alone. I want to spend my life with you.....partner..." she answered as a big smile graced her lips.

"...Now how about you kiss me again?" she said as she leaned closer to Jack.

Jack felt a smile appear on his face as he too leaned towards her face till their lips met, sending waves of euphoria over them both. The kiss was amazing, if felt like they were swapping life energy through it as he placed his hand in her hair and she placed her hands round his back and squeezed themselves closer together intensifying the kiss. Time seemed to slow to a standstill again as they embraced each other. Finally parting when their need for oxygen came about. Both panted heavily, as they looked into each others eye lovingly.

"Well I guess this changes things" she commented as Jack smiled at her.

"Yeah, it does."

Arcee cocked her head. "So where do we go from here?" she asked curiously.

"Well I think we should get out of this room first." Jack answered.

"Could be kind of rough." she said playfully. Jack gently stroked her cheek.

"yeah, for them!" he replied as he felt his confidence come back with a vengeance. With the woman he loved at his side, he knew that those who stood in their way would not stand a chance.

And at that moment there were a hell of a lot of those creatures on the other side of the door that was now starting to buckle.

They seperated as Arcee equipped her SMG and extended an arm blade on her free arm. She then handed Jack her other SMG.

"It has about the same amount of bullets as this one. Doesn't your amour have another weapon?"

Jack took the SMG. "Thanks, and I am not sure. Let me try something."

Jack then concentrated, his thoughts focusing on another weapon. Then suddenly his holo-tool activated and then changed colour from its usual yellow to white as it reformed into a saber like blade. Arcee looked on in amazement.

"That looks a lot like the star-saber."

Jack looked up from his new weapon to meet Arcee's gaze.

"Well Optimus did say that this armour would have a few surprises."

Arcee smirked at Jack.

"Yeah , I wonder what the rest.." she was about to finish when the doors broke open to reveal the horde of creatures in the corridor. Jack and Arcee took up defensive stances next to each other. The creatures then lunged at the two who both fired their SMG's into the crowd as the creatures charged at them. Bullets ripping through a number of the monsters before the partners went charging into the horde, blades swinging. Jack swung his blade through one creature, slicing it in half perfectly as Arcee sliced past two others before landing a kick to the face of another. The two managed to fight their way out of the room to find themselves in the corridor. They stood back to back as the horde surrounded them. Jack sliced the head off one then impaled another then hitting one more fully in the face with a reverse roundhouse kick.

"Nice." the femme observed with a smile as she ripped one apart with her arm blades.

"Thanks, anyway I was wondering what you wanted to do for our official first date?" he asked as he sliced at another one. Arcee looked over her shoulder in astonishment at the Prime's question.

"Your asking me this now?" she replied before she grabbed one and threw it into the others.

"Why not, gives us something to look forward to beyond this moment, wouldn't you agree." he said as the creatures regrouped giving the partners some temporary breathing room.

"Well when you put it that way, sure" she replied as Jack noticed some lit flashlights behind the horde approaching them.

"Get down!" came a familiar voice, as Jack grabbed Arcee and pulled her to the ground on top of him. Then weapons fire blitzed the corridor as the creatures were ripped apart by a hailstorm of bullets before falling to ground around the partners who were just lying on the ground staring into each others eyes. Arcee was about kiss Jack again when that familiar voice spoke again.

"Okay you can get up now."

The Commander and his XO stood up to see Wheeljack, Garrus and Tali standing in front of them smiling back.

"Glad to see you are both alright." Garrus said to them.

"Thanks, its good to see you too." Jack replied as Tali handed them both more ammo.

"Well we didn't get here alone" Wheeljack answered as he pointed over to Colonel Kage.

"Colonel, its good to your still alive" Jack said as he walked over to the soldier. As Tali and Garrus whispered something to each other while looking at Arcee who had noticed them and glared back. The Colonel looked at Jack impressed.

"I am happy to see that you managed to save your XO, Commander."

Jack looked at the area around Kage.

"Where's the rest of your team Colonel?"

The older man shook his head.

"I lost two of them during the creatures initial attack, and then the others...." he trailed off as Garrus stood next to the Prime.

"We lost Jenkins and Murdock just before we got to you guys, in the large room behind us. They were suddenly impaled by these spikes that appeared from the ground." Arcee and Jack listened as the Kage continued.

"I saw my men as they lashed about on those spikes, being changed. They were becoming like those creatures. So I put them out of their misery before the change was complete." he said with remorse in his voice. Jack placed a hand on the Colonel's shoulder in support.

"You did the right thing by lessening their suffering." The soldier nodded as Jack turned to the others.

"So anyway, report your status" the Prime said.

"We are were heading towards what is hopefully the Reaper Artifact, and then we came across you and Arcee."

Jack then reloaded his weapon. "Okay then, lets move..."

The group had been walking along the corridor towards what was hopefully the source of the signal. They had not come across any of the creatures for a while now, not that they were complaining about that particular fact. Wheeljack walked alongside Arcee as Jack and Garrus lead the group.

"Arcee" he said as he looked over to her.

"Wheeljack" she answered in a slightly puzzled tone.

"So.....you and Jack." he carried on.

"What about it?" she said acting coy.

"Just.. That its about time." He replied with a smile.

"Thanks" she responded in kind.

Jack then pointed ahead to a ray of light coming out of a doorway ahead.

"I think we found the lab."

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They entered a large room filled with computer screens as their attention was drawn to a large black object with blue light shining out of the patterns on its surface.

"Well I guess that's the relic then, I'll take some scans" Wheeljack said as he activated his holo-tool. Jack walked over the terminal nearest to the black object and started looking through the research.

"Well the database isn't fragmented here. It seems that the object wasn't the only thing they picked up. They also brought up a number of devices that they called dragons teeth. They had found them on the planet's surface with the remains of beings who had been impaled on them." he read as Arcee and Kage stood beside him.

"We should take this with us, Tali can you download the database off this terminal." Jack asked. The Quarian walked up and used her holo-tool on the terminal.

"Sure thing Jack"

As they waited for the Wrecker and the Quarian to finish up, Jack looked around.

"Where's Garrus?", they all looked around the room, but could not see the Turian anywhere.

"Out here" a voice came from outside the lab. Jack, Arcee and Kage went outside to see Garrus standing next to a door.

"I have found our way out of here." he said as pressed the control panel next to it, opening the doors. "The others looked inside.

"You have found a working elevator?" Jack replied.

"Please don't thank me all at once." the Turian said happily. Arcee and Jack both slapped him on the both shoulders.

"Well done, so we have a way back to the shuttles, without having to face off against

anymore of the former crew of this ship. So how do we destroy that object?"

Kage walked forward to Jack and opened up the backpack he was wearing.

"With this, enough explosive to take out a quarter of this ship."

Jack looked down at the bomb and smiled.

"Impressive, so how do we....."

Suddenly a creature jumped on Kage's back and bit straight down hard into his neck, causing blood to spill out.

"KAGE!" Jack shouted as he, Arcee and Garrus stood in shock at Kage who tried to shake off the creature as it clamped down on his neck. Regaining his composure, Jack activated his energy blade and thrust it directly into the monsters' head, causing it scream out loud as it released Kage who fell to the floor with it. Jack finished off the creature as Arcee and Garrus tried to tend to the Colonel's wound which was bleeding out.

"Commander...(cough)..." Kage called to Jack while coughing up blood.

"...You and you team should (cough) get out of here."

Jack knelt down in front of the wounded soldier.

"We are getting you out too, I'm not leaving anyone else behind." he said with a determined look. Kage attempted to smile.

"I don't (cough) think I will be (cough) coming with you. I've been at this (cough) long enough to know that this is it for me."

Jack looked up at Arcee, who shook her head sadly.

"I cant stop the bleeding and the medi-gel isn't helping" she replied. Jack looked back down to Kage who beckoned him closer.

"Commander, I wanted to (cough) apologize for my behavior towards you earlier." he said trying to speak through the pain as the femme held a bandage to his neck, trying to slow the bleeding.

"Don't speak, save your strength." Jack said back to the Colonel.

"No, I was out of line. (cough) I was wrong about you. When I saw you fighting with Arcee back there, I didn't see a boy who was out of his element. I (cough) saw a Prime." he said as he offered Jack his hand.

"It was an honour to serve with you Jackson Prime" he smiled, blood trickling down his chin.

Jack took the man's hand in his own.

"No, the honour is mine Colonel." he replied.

Kage then motioned Garrus and Jack to move him over to the door and lean him up against its frame and hand him his weapon, just as inhuman screams could be heard in the distance. Wheeljack and Tali came out of the lab after finishing their scans and equipped their weapons.

"Throw the explosives package into the lab, I will detonate it while keeping the monsters off you." Kage said as Jack picked up the package and tossed it through the door.

The screams grew louder as the team entered the elevator and looked back to the Colonel sitting against the door. Jack was about to enter when Kage called to him, getting his attention.

"You promise me that you'll will stop Saren." he said while holding the bandage to his gaping wound. Jack looked at him, his face now completely stoic.

"I promise you Colonel." he replied. Kage smiled.

"Then go, get out of here." he answered back as Jack pressed control panel inside the elevator, causing the door to shut as it took them back up. Kage then saw the hordes rushing at him as he used his strength to lift his weapon and fire bursts of bullets at the creatures taking some down while the others kept moving. The colonel then dropped the bandage as the blood started to flow out and picked up the detonator. He held it up in his hand and lifted the lid over the button and prepared to press it as the hordes were almost on top of him.

"Come and get me you ****ers!" he spat as the creatures pounced on him.

The elevator stopped on the hanger bay deck as Jack and his team ran out and sprinted towards shuttle two, which opened it's hatch for them.

"Do you think he.." Garrus asked as suddenly the ship was rocked by a powerful explosion.

"I think that answers your question, now get on board" Jack shouted as they all boarded the shuttle, the hatch closing behind them.

"Get us out of here now and tell shuttle one to do the same." He said to the pilot who nodded and sent the message while piloting them out of the cargo bay and into open space.

As the both shuttles reunited and sped away from the Conestoga, the large star ship was rocked by explosions across its hull until it finally exploded in magnificent fashion. Sending debris in all directions. The shuttles managed to stay ahead of the

shockwave and left the asteroid field and back to the waiting Normandy.

"This is the Normandy to shuttles one and two, Commander are you there." Hotrod's voice came over the com link. Jack stood beside the pilot and opened the channel.

"Yeah we are here Hotrod, but we lost Colonel Kage and his team."

"Sorry to hear that, I am opening the shuttle bay doors now." Hotrod replied as Jack went back to his team mates. Arcee put her hand on Jack's shoulder, gaining his attention.

"He sacrificed himself so that we could get out of there." she said gently. Jack looked at her with a sad smile.

"I know, but we have to make sure his sacrifice was not for nothing. Wheeljack, Tali, I want you two to start going through everything we brought back from the Conestoga. We may have a destination, the planet Virmire but we need to be ready for whatever will be waiting there."

They both nodded as Jack looked out of the window at the planet and wondered how many more would have be sacrificed before this was over, as the shuttles entered the Normandy's open shuttle bay.