

Colloquy

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Kapitel 1: Kira & Shinn - Athrun

„He socked me in the face, you know."

„Huh?" Kira looked up from the waves and to his side, where Shinn was standing next to him, his red eyes set on the ocean in front of them.

„Athrun did."

Kira only blinked in response. What on earth was he talking about? Why would Athrun-

„After our fight. When everything looked like the *Archangel* had sunk, and that I had killed you."

Kira's mouth shaped a little 'o', and for a moment neither of them spoke a word. Only the sound of the waves crashing onto the shore in front of them resonated through the air. Shinn rested his arms on the railing in front of them, shifting his weight on his other leg, his eyes never leaving the horizon. Kira wasn't quite sure what to say. The picture of Athrun hitting someone seemed so foreign, but so had the thought of either of them killing other people, a long time ago. His amethyst eyes wandered around until they finally settled on the beach spreading in front of them.

„I see."

Shinn shot him a glance, as if he was deciding on what to say next.

„He asked me why I did it. Said that you never wanted to kill me, or anyone, for that matter. Neither did the *Archangel*, and that you weren't our enemies."

Kira gave a little nod. He couldn't exactly deny that what Athrun had apparently said was wrong, but he also couldn't deny that he couldn't understand Shinn's position at the time, to some extent. The boy next to him hadn't known what had really been going on at that time, he had done what he had thought was right. And if his superiors, the people he was trusting to do the right thing because most of them didn't know what was happening around them, had told him that Kira and the *Archangel* were enemies, then it was only logical that the black-haired boy next to him would follow the orders given to him. He didn't hold it against Shinn, he only thought it was sad that it had come to that.

„I asked him if he would've rather seen me dead. That was when he hit me."

Was he imagining things, or did Shinn sound like he was about to laugh? Kira looked at his younger friend wondrously.

„Two people had to restrain him, or else he would have done it again. Well, they had to restrain me, too, because I was about to hit back."

Indeed, Shinn gave a small chuckle that didn't quite hide the irony of it all. A tiny, crooked smile graced his lips when he raised his hand to cup his cheek where Athrun's fist had connected so many weeks ago. His eyes flickered to Kira who looked back with an unreadable expression.

„Rey... went between us and talked to Athrun, tried to make him see reason, but Athrun...wouldn't listen. Rey dragged me away and Athrun just stormed off. I've never seen him so angry."

He paused, and Kira carefully observed the other. A certain bitterness had appeared, but he wasn't sure where – or whom – it was directed to. Red met purple, and after some long seconds, Shinn averted his gaze back to the ocean, resting his head on his palm at the same time.

„I didn't get it at all, at the time. If the captain and everyone else said you were an enemy, then he, too, should have been happy that a strong enemy was dead now, right? At least that's what I thought."

Shinn remembered it as if it had been yesterday, the pain and anger (and despair?) in Athrun's eyes when they had been standing face to face. But only now he finally understood where those feelings had come from, after the war was over. After everything had come to light, and especially after he had seen the two of them interacting. Now he understood what he had almost done to someone he now considered a 'friend'. Shinn didn't even want to know what would have happened to all of them if he had actually succeeded in killing Kira.

„I see."

Kira's eyes never left the young soldier beside him. He couldn't help but smile a little at what he had just heard, even if that smile was tainted with bitterness. He hated the fact that he had worried Athrun like that, but he also hated the fact that Athrun hadn't been able to see more clearly earlier than he finally did. He wasn't angry with his best friend, not at all, he just... wished that they could have fought next to each other sooner. If he and those he cherished had to fight, then he wanted to fight next to those he loved. Not against them.

„Hey... can I ask you something?"

Kira watched as Shinn stood straight and turned to him, one hand resting on the railing. The wind was blowing through his black hair, messing it up. Kira cocked his head.

„What is it?"

The sound of children's laughter suddenly filled their ears, and their gazes swept across the beach in search for the source of it. Not too far away they saw Lacus and Athrun with the children from the orphanage returning after taking one last walk before it was time for dinner and lastly, bed. They had been thrilled to see their 'Athrun-onī-chan' again and had instantly draped themselves all over him, dragging

him outside to play. Poor Athrun didn't stand a chance. Kira smiled at the memory.

„Why-“

Shinn had only started speaking when they suddenly heard shouting from the beach. One of the kids had apparently jumped on Athrun's back and was clinging to him, causing the man to sway in an attempt to hold his balance. The children however seemed to have other plans and more of them started to literally siege him. Kira couldn't help but laugh when his friend finally lost his balance and fell down into the sand, children climbing all over him. He saw Lacus kneeling down next to the heap of bodies, apparently trying to help her former fiancé to escape from the onslaught, but it was no use. Their conversation temporarily forgotten, both Shinn and Kira continued to observe the spectacle. The pile of people on the sand started to shift and shuffle, and a moment later Athrun emerged, holding the evildoer who had started this 'raid' in his hands and up above him. They could hear him laughing, even as the other children tried to take revenge for their 'fallen' comrade. Kira could see Shinn shaking his head from the corner of his eye.

„Nevermind. Let's continue this some other time.“

Kira wondered what this was about, but decided to humour his young friend when Shinn seemingly nodded to himself, his red eyes never leaving the scene unfolding on the beach. Lacus was now ushering the children away from Athrun, reminding them both very much of a shepherd with his sheep, before she held her hand out to her 'fallen' friend to help him up. Kira turned to Shinn and nodded, placing a hand on the younger boys' shoulder.

„Sure.“

They shared a small smile before stepping away from the railing and back into the building to welcome their returning friends.

Kapitel 2: Athrun & Murrue - Kira

Athrun was sitting in the cafeteria of the *Archangel*, lost to his own thoughts. They were back in space after leaving the burning ORB behind, something that pained him not only for Cagalli's sake. But he and Kira were finally on the same side again, and for now, there was no fighting. He should be glad, right? But somehow, Athrun didn't feel like rejoicing; too many needless fights were still ahead of them, even if silence was surrounding them now.

"Torī?"

He looked up when he heard the familiar sound and saw the green, mechanical bird flying through the door towards him. He held up his hand for it to land on it, and so it did. His emerald eyes locked on the bird and a tiny smile tugged at his lips. It tilted its head towards him, flipping its wings once. His attention was drawn towards the doorway though when he heard someone entering.

"Ah? Oh, it's you. Athrun-kun, was it?"

Murrue Ramius smiled softly at him as she made her way over to where he sat. Athrun nodded once.

"Captain...Ramius?"

"That's right. May I?"

Athrun nodded again, keeping his eyes steady as the older woman sat down in front of him. They simply studied each other for a moment, Murrue with a gentle smile on her lips that looked surprisingly natural on her and Athrun carefully keeping his face void of any emotion. He didn't know what to expect from her; from what little he had heard and seen so far, she seemed to be a genuinely kind person, but one could never be too sure.

"Torī?"

He saw her amber eyes shifting to the robotic bird in his hand, and suddenly a certain amount of... unwistfulness? appeared in her gaze.

"That's Kira-kun's, right?"

"Yes..."

They lapsed into silence again, both just gazing at *Torī*, who in turn looked back to Murrue curiously.

"I wonder where he got it from. I've never seen anything like it..."

She trailed off, her eyes locked onto the young man in front of him. Athrun felt something heavy, yet unfamiliar settle in his chest.

"That's because I made it for him...", he replied softly.

He felt Murrue's gentle eyes on him and held her gaze, not wavering at all. She smiled again.

"Is that so? Yeah, I think Kira-kun has mentioned you before. You've known each other since you were small, right?"

"Yes..."

Athrun briefly wondered if he should say any more. The woman in front of him didn't seem any less kind than before, and she looked genuinely interested in him and his relation to Kira. He had only been on this ship for a short amount of time, but he could already feel himself *wanting* to trust her. He wasn't quite sure where that desire came from, but he couldn't help but think that the smile on her face looked so much like the one his mother had used to give him, back then, when everything had still been good. Straightening up somewhat, Athrun nodded again, resolve flowing through him.

"Yes, we met when we were four or so, on the moon. We went to the same Prep School. We were both kind of loners, but we... somehow, we just clicked, and pretty soon we were the best of friends. Nearly inseparable. Heh, I probably spent more time at his house than my own."

Athrun couldn't keep a smile from forming on his face as the memories flooded his mind. He lowered his hand and *Torī* jumped off his palm, onto the table. Entwining his fingers, he allowed himself to dwell on the happiness of pictures long since past, at least for a moment. Murrue watched him quietly, waiting for him to continue. She could almost feel it herself, even if she could see some remorse in the young boy's face as well.

"We got separated when we were 13. My... father was worried, and since my mother's research project was finished, he wanted us to move to PLANT. And so we did... I gave *Torī* to him on the day we left." Something clenched in his throat, but he ignored it and continued, "I actually thought, or was telling myself, that Kira and his family would come to PLANT as well. That this would only be a temporary goodbye. But the years passed, and I thought he had forgotten about me... I was really surprised when I saw him again, and when I heard that he still had *Torī*..."

The young male tightly gripped his hands and took a deep breath, as if he was trying to calm himself. A barrage of emotions threatened to overwhelm him, all caused by one single person that almost meant the *world* to him.

New memories, *recent* memories started flashing through his mind now, and everything felt, once again, simply *unreal*. He snapped out of his stupor when Murrue started to speak.

"That sounds like a wonderful friendship. I can only imagine how hard it must have been for you two to fight each other... I'm sorry. It was us who made Kira fight in the first place. Even if we were desperate, there's no excuse for making a civilian do the things we had him do, especially since he is still such a young boy..." She looked away, as if she was ashamed of herself. She probably was.

"I'm sorry."

Moments passed in which Athrun simply observed her, taking in her posture that radiated with guilt. For a split second he wanted to blame her for everything- for making Kira fight, for making Kira kill Nicol, for making himself kill that boy -Tolle, was it?- in return, for... but he found that he couldn't. His new captain gave him a feeling he hadn't felt since the last time he had seen his late mother. Warmth and understanding surrounded her, and Athrun knew that she was sincere in her words. Finally, he shook his head.

"What's done is done, there's no use in mulling over it now. All we can do now is to end this war as soon as possible, so this madness will finally be over, and both Naturals and Coordinators can live in peace."

She looked up at him again and he held her gaze. He could only guess what was going through her mind, but he had no doubt that her determination was any less than her warmth; if it were, the *Archangel* would have been sunk long, long ago. Seconds passed until a smile spread across her face, and Athrun found himself smiling back.

"I guess you're right."

She stood up again and offered her hand. Without hesitation, Athrun raised to his feet as well and accepted it. Shaking hands once, they let go of each other again.

"Let's both do our best, hm?"

He nodded in agreement and as if on cue, *Torī* leaped into the air to settle down on his shoulder. He looked at it fondly, so many memories were connected with this small, robotic bird. His masterpiece.

"Athrun? Are you here?"

Both Murrue and the requested male shifted their gazes to the door, and seconds later Kira emerged from the corridor. He saw the two of them standing there and tilted his head in question.

"Am I interrupting something?"

"No, it's fine", Athrun shook his head and looked at his old friend curiously, "Is there something you need?"

"Actually, there is. I checked out the *Justice* and noticed that there was something different about the thrusters, making it more agile than the *Freedom*. I was wondering

if you knew what it was and if it was possible to do the same adjustments on the *Freedom*?"

Kira looked at his old friend in confusion when Athrun suddenly sighed in... exasperation?

"Kira, don't tell me you still suck at *Micro Units*?"

The brownhaired male blinked in surprise.

"Uhm, what does that have to do with-"

"It's the same principle! Alright, alright, I'll explain it to you..."

Kira seemed to shrink under his friend's scolding tone and couldn't help but grin sheepishly. Athrun scratched the back of his head before sighing once more and making his way over to where his brownhaired friend stood. The older boy grabbed the other's arm and started to drag him away, but not without receiving a light knock on his head first.

"Really, after everything that has happened I thought you had at least *some* understanding of it by now. What you mean follows the same rules that allow *Torī* to fly, and to some extent to simply *move*, even if it's in a much bigger scale."

"Haha, well..."

"Don't 'haha' me!"

Murrue couldn't help but chuckle to herself after the two young boys had left her, their voices slowly disappearing as they went to the hangar. If what Athrun had told her earlier was true (and she believed so), then there had to be very deep bond between those two young men. She hadn't seen Kira like that at all over the past months, and it was such a nice thing to see... Even if it made her feel even more regretful. She was glad however, that they were still able to let loose a bit, even if it was just for a short amount of time. Smiling, she too left the cafeteria to return to the bridge and back to her duties.