

Meeting during Wartime 1943

Von Rescue

Kapitel 2: Stalking each other

Meeting during Wartime (1943)

The mostly positive reaction to my little project made me come to a decision. My main story "What could have happened!" will be on hold for an indefinite time-span. "Meeting during Wartime" will have now top priority for the next months.

Besides Shinji / Asuka will be no other members of the EVA universe in this story, or so it is planed until now.

Chapter 1 - Stalking each other

Location: The offices of NAA

Asuka and Jeffrey were working on the last bits of their report about the latest test flight when they noticed some commotion in the hangar. Looking trough a window down to the hangar they could see the cause. It was their COE Mr. Kindelberger who was moving along the assembly line with a guest, obviously showing him around and explaining certain things. While Asuka dismissed it as another politician sight seeing tour, Jeffrey looked a bit harder and noticed that the guest was wearing an Air Force uniform.

"Hey Asuka!" He called her attention. "Isn't that the Lightning Pilot who came in with you, that Lieutenant Ikari?"

Turning back to the window Asuka took a closer look and saw that it was indeed said Lieutenant. 'What's he doing here? Why is the COE giving him the VIP tour?'

"Looks like they are coming up to us Asuka." Jeffrey continued. "Is your report ready for a little inspection by our COE?"

Snapping out of her thoughts Asuka shook her head negative and raced back to her desk to finish her report. Six minutes later came a knock from their office door and after a 'Come in' from Jeffrey Mr. Kindelberger and Lieutenant Ikari came in.

"Miss Langley, Mr. Thomson may I introduce you to Lieutenant Shinji Ikari? He's here

from the Air Force to lend us a hand with our prototypes for the new D-Model."

"We already met Sir." Shinji said before either Asuka or Jeffrey could say something.

"Oh, that's good. Than we can move right to the subject of your presence here with us. Miss Langley, I assume you have received my Memo?"

"Yes Mr. Kindelberger, the technicians are currently checking the prototype for damages from his today's test flight. The machine should be ready tomorrow around 2 PM for a presentation."

'So she is indeed one of the test pilots for NAA.' Shinji thought, to Mr. Kindelberger he said, "A presentation wouldn't be necessary Sir. I already saw the prototype in the air and the abilities of the A- and B-Model are well known to me. I think it would be more effective if we went right to the plans."

That interested Asuka. 'He has experience with the P-51A and B and is an active P-38 pilot? That's interesting.' "And what was your impression of the abilities of the P-51?"

"The A was a good low level fighter, but that was it form my point of view. The model lacked the necessary power to combat the Messerschmidt 109 in higher flight levels."

"A fault which we erased with the Packard-Merlin in the B-Model." Jeffrey throw in the discussion.

"That's correct Sir, it was a good decision to combine those two factors. What me irked was the very small cockpit and the small range of the Mustang combined with a short combat time. The A- and B-Models were unfit for long-range escort missions deep into enemy territory."

"Any ideas to remedy those disadvantages Mr. Ikari?" Asuka asked, her voice carrying a sharp undertone. She didn't like someone badmouthing the Mustang.

"Well ... nothing definitely useably, just a few ideas that we discussed during out stay in England."

"Who do you mean with we?" Asuka interrupted him, Jeffrey who stood beside her cast a worried look in her direction. He knew quite well about Asukas little temper problem, unconsciously he took a small step away from her.

A dark shadow flashed through Shinjis eyes before he addressed Asuka "With we I mean all of us pilots who are fighting and dying in Europe while you little girl play's with your toys!"

"Why you ..."

"Lieutenant Ikari! Miss Langley! That's enough! We are here to get our work done, not to insult each other!" Mr. Kindelberger interrupted the two before the situation could escalate further.

"But Mr. Kindel ..."

"I said it's enough Miss Langley! Lieutenant Ikari your insight as a combat pilot is important for us to make the Mustang better fitted for combat so that more of our pilots get the chance to return home alive and not in a damn coffin!"

"Sir, I beg your pardon for my insubordination. I was out of my line. What can I do to help you with your work?"

"Well, the question from Miss Langley hold some value. What are the possible solutions to the known problems of the Mustang?"

"All right, what I could see up to now is that you redesigned the cockpit section, which fixed the, from my point of view, main problem with the plane. The range of view from inside the cockpit."

"As if the Lightning is so much better." Asuka muttered under her breath. Typical for her it was still loud enough to be heard quite well by the others.

"Let me ask you a question Miss Langley. What was the longest time you spent flying in the cockpit of a Mustang?"

"Something around one hour, why?"

"You will see, you will see Miss Langley. Mr. Kindelberger is it all right with you if I borrow the services of Miss Langley, a group of mechanics and one of the P-51's from the flight line?"

"I don't see a problem with that, but why if I may ask?"

"I want to show Miss Langley what it really means to fly a long range escort mission in a Mustang, if she thinks she's good enough for it."

"You bet I'm good enough for everything you could do."

"Very well Miss Langley. Wake up time is 5AM tomorrow morning. You have $\frac{3}{4}$ hour to wash up and eat your breakfast, after that we will talk $\frac{1}{2}$ hour about our flight plan for the day. Take off time is not later than 7AM."

"What?! That's ..."

"This is the normal schedule for a long range escort to a target in Germany for every normal escort squadron stationed in Europe and flying escort for the bombers of the 8th Air Force. It's normal for us pilots since we deployed for the war in Europe. You have to become accustomed real fast to it. If not you will soon be too exhausted to fight and that will sooner or later lead to your death in combat."

"But ... why?"

"You can only improve something when you know from experience. That's all this is about, you have shown me earlier that you know how to handle your Mustang (at that little praise Asuka smirked a bit), but doing aerobatics and fighting to survive are two different pairs of shoes."

"OK, I'll do it."

"Just one more thing Miss Langley. During our flight you will have to dogfight with me, after the mission we will check the gun cameras to see good you are."

"You are so going to get it tomorrow." Asuka murmured.

"Don't be so confident Miss Langley, Lieutenant Ikari here has 15 kills on his account." Mr. Kindelberger said.

"What type of planes shoot you down Sir?" Jeffrey asked, curiosity evident in his voice. As a technician he was interested in the abilities of the P-38 against the Luftwaffe.

"I have 9even kills for the Me109 (Me ° Messerschmidt), five Ju88 (Ju ° Junkers, Medium sized Bombers) and even one Fw190 (Fw ° Focke - Wulf)."

"You creamed a 190 in that piece of junk of you?" Asuka asked, sarcasm dripping in her voice.

Not eve looking at Asuka, Shinji said "That piece of junk, as you so nicely put it, has saved my life more than once. The same goes for many other pilots. There are more P-38 returning with heavy combat damages than your oh so precious P-51. Even the P-47 can take more hits and sustain more heavy damage than the Mustang." Turning to face Mr. Kindelberger Shinji continued. "If you excuse me Sir, I would like to make some preparations for tomorrow."

Location: Home of Asuka Langley

Time: 5AM next day

A persistent banging noise at her main door rose Asuka from her slumber. Cursing the early hour Asuka climbed out of her bed and grabbing a robe she stumbled to the door to check who dared to visit her at such an early time. Looking through the peep hole of her door she saw the back of a US Air Force flight combo, finally Asuka remembered her little + date + with Lieutenant Ikari and she opened the door.

"Good morning Miss Langley. I hope you had enough sleep, 'cause you will need every bit of your strength for what I have planed today?"

"Yeah, yeah Lieutenant good morning to you too and no I've had not enough sleep tonight. So it would be nice if you could make it quick." Asuka snapped at Shinji.

"Don't bite my head of Miss Langley. I just wanted to give you a quick wake up call and escort you back to NAA so we have enough time left."

Taking some deep breaths to calm her anger Asuka did her best not to lash out, vocal or physical. "OK Mister Ikari, I think I can live with that. Now would you please step aside so I can fresh up a bit so we can be on our way in no time."

"As you wish Miss Soryu Asuka Langley."

Asuka was on the move toward the bathroom, but that sentence made her stop in mid-step. "What did you say?"

"That's your full name, isn't it?"

"Yes, but how did you ..."

"Mr. Kindelberger was very supportive in my try to find out more about the people I have to work with the next weeks and months. If that's a sensitive topic for you Miss Langley I won't mention it again."

"I would appreciate that Mr. Ikari." Asuka said, her voice containing enough cold to freeze the Caribbean.

Picking up her anger laced voice and posture Shinji decided to try to smooth the waves a bit. "Miss Langley it seems we had a real bad start. If you agree I would like to make a new start. I'm Shinji Ikari Lieutenant in the United States Air Force and currently assigned as a liaison between the Air Force and NAA, and you are?"

Not surprisingly Asuka felt a bit overrun by the sudden development. 'Am I still sleeping? That Lieutenant makes more hard turns than a ... well ... pilot in combat. Oh boy Asuka! The work with that one will be really ... interesting.'

"All right Mister, I would although like to start anew and for the record. Don't call me Miss Langley, it makes me feel like an old maid."

"Only if you do me the honour and call me Shinji. After all we will have to work together and I would like to work in a friendly atmosphere. Don't you agree with me?"

"Agreed ... Shinji. So what have you planed for us today?"

"No telling Asuka. You will only have the basics told like flight path, flight time and so on. As I said yesterday I wanted you to experience what it means for a combat pilot to fly a long range escort mission. Like every other pilot Europe you have to deal with nasty surprises."

"You enjoy leading me on, don't you?" Asuka said, but now the accusing tone from earlier was gone. Instead of it her voice held now a bit of humour in it.

"Now, how could you come to that conclusion?" Shinji said.

To be continued.

To improve me writing please be so kind and leave me short review or send me a e-mail. daniel79_de@yahoo.com & D-J79@gmx.de