

= Tali 'Zorah =

Tali 'Zorah is a fictional character of the quarian alien race in BioWare 's Mass Effect franchise , who serves as a party member (or " squadmate ") in all three games in the Mass Effect trilogy . Within the series , she is a skilled technician and the daughter of Rael 'Zorah , a member of the quarian judicial review Admiralty Board . Ash " Liz " Sroka voices Tali in each of her appearances . Outside of the trilogy , Tali appears in Mass Effect : Homeworlds , a comic series with individual issues on each of several Mass Effect 3 squadmates .

Tali was initially the only quarian in the series . In the sequels , more extreme variations of her design were discarded in favor of revisions on her previous look . The Mass Effect 3 development team considered her removal from the squad , but ultimately chose to include her due to staff interest . The team also debated whether to reveal her masked face .

Tali has been received positively , with placements on several " top character " lists , and is one of the more popular characters in the series . Her unveiled face was a popular online discussion topic , and was criticized after its reveal for its stock photo origins . Various merchandise for the character , as with other of the series ' squadmates , has been released .

= = Character overview = =

Tali is a quarian , one of a nomadic alien race driven from their homeworld by a race of software @-@ based intelligences which they created , the geth . As a quarian , Tali must wear a full @-@ body environmental suit due to her race 's weaker immune systems , which also has the effect of hiding her physical appearance and facial features . Tali is first introduced on her Pilgrimage , a quarian rite where young adults leave to obtain a gift for a captain so as to be allowed to join their crew . Having completed this after the first game , her design in Mass Effect 2 and 3 reflects her new maturity . In both Mass Effect 2 and Mass Effect 3 , Tali 's default appearance can be changed to various alternate outfits ; Mass Effect 2 unlocks one outfit by completing her loyalty mission while another requires buying the " Alternate Appearance Pack 2 " , and Mass Effect 3 offers one alternate from the start and unlocks another by buying the From Ashes DLC .

She is a skilled technician and engineer , and renowned in the quarian Migrant Fleet , the spaceship collective home to the race . She has additional pressure to excel as the daughter of Admiral Rael 'Zorah , though the Admiralty position is not technically hereditary . Her father was also strict and had high expectations , and tried to set an example for the rest of the fleet ; this made him distant and saddened Tali . Thanks to her father , she also received some of the best military training available on the fleet . Tali is very loyal to the fleet , and her voice actress Liz Sroka describes her as willing to sacrifice her life for it . Sroka uses an accent described as " unidentifiable pseudo @-@ Eastern European , quarian Gypsy " to voice the character .

Sroka described her as being " grounded in her beliefs " but also having a certain " humility " to her . Sroka also underlined her vulnerability , which she felt was one of the character 's strengths . She described the possible romance with player @-@ character Commander Shepard as her " sexual awakening " , which she also felt helped demonstrate the character 's vulnerability .

Tali 's name changes over the course of the series . Her birth ship was the Rayya , as evidenced by her full name in the first game (" Tali 'Zorah nar Rayya ") . At the start of Mass Effect 2 , she is called Tali 'Zorah vas Neema , showing that , having completed her Pilgrimage , she has become part of the crew of the Neema . During her loyalty mission in 2 , her name changes to " vas Normandy " , as she officially joins Commander Shepard 's crew .

= = Creation and development = =

Tali initially served as the only example of a quarian . Initial concept drawings for Tali and the quarians were finished before the geth 's , but the final geth design then influenced the quarian look . More extreme designs for her Mass Effect 2 appearance were discarded for a " more polished " version of her original " iconic " look instead . Her final new appearance was chosen as it

distinguished the character from other quarians introduced in the second game . Tali 's Mass Effect 3 redesign proved difficult due to the team 's passionate views about her character , though ME3 's art director , Derek Watts , felt that most fans had been supportive of the changes to characters ' designs .

During BioWare 's naming meetings , prior to the release of the first game , Tali 's name had been " Talsi Orah " , with Orah as the familiar name . However , this was changed for both its connotations of softness , which did not fit with the direction they wanted to take the character , and its awkward pronunciation .

New York City actress Ash (" Liz ") Sroka voices Tali throughout the Mass Effect trilogy , her first role in a video game . Sroka auditioned for three different roles : the female Commander Shepard , Tali 'Zorah , and one other female character . After initially receiving the role of Tali , she was still unsure of how much material there was . Ginny McSwain gave voice direction , and would generally take two takes ? the first to use , the second as back @-@ up , and occasionally a third or more if the recording did not fit with what she wanted . Recording sessions would generally last about four hours . Sroka herself is not a gamer , though she says she enjoys the character of Tali and is happy to have landed the role .

Like Garrus Vakarian , Tali was not an option for player romantic pursuit in the first game as the developers were unsure whether the alien characters would be emotionally compelling . Tali 's romance event tree was added in Mass Effect 2 due to fan demand and her ability to express human emotion . This romance , if pursued in the second game , can be continued in Mass Effect 3 . The romance event tree in 2 was written by Patrick Weekes . Mass Effect 2 lead writer Mac Walters commented that " [t] he choice should be in ' who ' you romance , not so much ' how ' " , with each of the characters having different @-@ natured romances depending on their individual personalities .

Each squad member in Mass Effect 2 had music composed for them , intended to convey their character ; BioWare gave the composers detailed character studies for each to help . Tali 's theme was created by Jimmy Hinson , who had generally made game remixes beforehand . Hinson worked from his home in Tennessee and made his pieces using FL Studio 9 . Although they were given full access to the game 's content , Hinson chose to avoid looking beyond what he absolutely needed to look at to write the tracks , due to wanting to experience the game fresh upon its release . In addition to Tali , Hinson also wrote tracks for Samara and Grunt , as well as various other tracks in the game .

The game artists regularly drafted variations on Tali 's face throughout the series ' development . BioWare 's position on whether to reveal her face was a long @-@ standing internal debate , and the developers announced they were still unsure during Mass Effect 3 's development . Concept artist Matt Rhodes felt it would interesting to see how players compared her personality to her appearance , and how they would respond to an appearance that challenged their expectations as " a little too alien , just a little too repellant " . They were aware that either decision would likely annoy some people , and that no reveal could universally fit all views of Tali . BioWare wished to unveil her face in a " tasteful way " outside of the game engine , and decided that a gift from Tali would be the best way . A stock photo was used to ensure the face 's closeness to a real photograph . An in @-@ game photo of Tali 's face is available as a gift to the player @-@ character Commander Shepard upon pursuing her Mass Effect 3 romance event tree .

BioWare considered not making Tali a squadmate in Mass Effect 3 . Some writers , such as Weekes , felt passionately about her inclusion , which led the team to believe that the players could share his passion . Preston Watamaniuk , lead designer for the Mass Effect series , found Tali 's death in 3 was the toughest for him to plan , though felt it needed to be possible due to the option of wiping out the quarians .

= = Appearances = =

= = = Mass Effect = = =

The first game of the trilogy , 2007 's Mass Effect , marks Tali 's first appearance . Whilst on her Pilgrimage , Tali discovers that a rogue Spectre (elite agent of the galaxy 's central government) , Saren , is working with the geth and has attacked Eden Prime , humanity 's first space colony . She arranges for a meeting to trade with the Shadow Broker , but is betrayed by its organizer , the thug Fist , who pretends to organize a meeting but instead has sent her into an ambush . Commander Shepard , the player @-@ character , rescues her . Tali gives the evidence to the Commander , and Saren consequently loses his Spectre status . Shepard is then sent to hunt down Saren , and Tali joins the player @-@ character 's squad . Tali can join the player @-@ character on missions and is available for personal conversation aboard Shepard 's spaceship , the Normandy .

On board the Normandy , Tali is initially excited to be there , intrigued by the advanced technology used to power the Normandy , and stays in the engine room as a result . The next time Shepard speaks to her , though , Tali now seems saddened and withdrawn . She tells Shepard that she 's losing sleep , since the Normandy 's engines run so quietly compared to ships in her home flotilla , where quiet ships indicate a bad engine or a malfunctioning air filter , plus the ship , due to how it 's spread out , seems emptier . This results in Tali feeling slightly homesick and she ponders if the true purpose of the Pilgrimage is to remind her people what they still have . The next time Shepard speaks to her , Tali 's spirits are back up , having adjusted to living on the Normandy , plus how the crew has been treating her like one of their own , especially Shepard . She thanks Shepard for this , saying that Quarians are treated as second @-@ class citizens by other races and Shepard is the first to treat her as an equal . If the player completes a particular side @-@ mission involving the geth and then speak to Tali afterwards , she will ask if she can have a copy of the geth data that Shepard recovered , explaining that it is exactly what she needs to complete her Pilgrimage . If the player allows her to have a copy , Tali is overly happy , promising to pay back Shepard by helping them defeat Saren . If the player declines , Tali will still promise to stay to fight Saren , but will then leave afterwards so she can finish her Pilgrimage .

= = = Mass Effect 2 = = =

Tali returns in the 2010 sequel , during the game 's second mission on the human colony world Freedom 's Progress , leading a group of quarians in search of a quarian named Veetor , who is on his own Pilgrimage . The colony has been attacked by the " Collectors , " its human colonists abducted , and Tali agrees to work with Shepard in order to help search for Veetor , over the objections of her team . The quarian team rush to Veetor 's location only to be defeated by mechanical guards that have been reprogrammed to shoot on sight by the fearful Veetor ; Shepard 's squad arrives too late to save all of the quarians , but they manage to eliminate the guards and calm Veetor . After learning what Veetor witnessed during the attack , Shepard can either send Veetor back to the Migrant Fleet with Tali to be treated for his trauma , or to hand the quarian over to Cerberus , Shepard 's employers , for further questioning about the Collectors .

Tali later appears on the planet Haestrom , a former quarian colony , where Shepard is sent to recruit her . She and a team of quarian soldiers were sent to investigate a star aging faster than usual and are under attack by a geth patrol that spotted their activity . After Shepard eliminates the attacking geth and meets her in the bunker in which she had been trapped with her equipment , Tali departs with Shepard on the mission to investigate and stop the Collectors , receiving permission from the Admiralty Board after the fact .

Tali 's " loyalty mission , " an optional mission that reveals more of a squad member 's past that is meant to increase loyalty , puts her on trial before the Admiralty Board , facing possible exile for bringing active geth parts to the Flotilla , a charge she denies . Tali admits to Shepard that she did send her father inert geth components to develop more effective weapons , but asserts that they could not spontaneously activate . When the Normandy crew arrives on the vessel hosting the trial , Tali is referred to as " Tali 'Zorah vas Normandy , " an unexpected revelation that she has been formally re @-@ assigned without any notice ; this development means that Shepard , as Tali 's captain , will represent her in trial . The admirals reveal during the trial that geth have taken over a

ship , the Alerei , and that Tali 's father was on the ship when the geth took over and he is presumed dead . Given the evidence supporting the grave accusations , Tali has the option to board the Alerei to search for evidence of her innocence and to clear the geth infestation ; onboard the Alerei , Tali and Shepard discover her Rael 'Zorah 's remains and logs documenting his experiments on the geth , reactivating and assembling the components Tali sent him , and that he is to blame for the attack . Tali asks Shepard not to reveal the information they discover , as it would disgrace his otherwise good name . At the trial , the player chooses whether Shepard withholds the new evidence (Tali is exiled with Rael 'Zorah 's good name intact) , submits it (Tali is innocent at the cost of her father 's reputation) , or incites the crowd to show popular support for Tali and her previous service record (Tali is found innocent without disgracing her father) .

Tali can die during the final mission of the game ? the " Suicide Mission " ? depending on the player 's choices . Her chances of dying increase if the player submits the evidence against her will , or does not complete her loyalty mission .

== = Mass Effect 3 == =

Unless the player imports a Mass Effect 2 saved game where Tali cannot appear in Mass Effect 3 , Tali shows when the Commander moves to recruit the quarian fleet in the fight against the Reapers , powerful sapient cyborgs with intentions to destroy all life . Tali joins the squad , and her conversation options tell of the quarians ' new attack on the now Reaper @-@ allied geth , in a bid by the quarians to try and reclaim their homeworld . Depending on the player 's choices in the second game , Tali may either be an Admiral or merely an advisor on how to defeat the geth . Eventually , the player must choose between saving the geth or the quarians , or , if certain conditions are fulfilled , negotiating a stand @-@ down and saving both parties . If the player sides with the geth and lets the quarians die , Tali kills herself ; otherwise , she fully joins the squad and can be found interacting with other Normandy crew members . Admiral Shala 'Raam vas Tonbay fulfills Tali 's role in saved games where Tali cannot appear in @-@ game . Shala 'Raam does not join Shepard 's squad .

The downloadable add @-@ on Citadel adds a number of character moments for Tali , including (depending on dialogue and event choices or whether Shepard is in a romance with her) revealing her love of romantic movies , her talent for singing and doing impressions of the Normandy , and the fact she cannot hold her liquor very well .

== = Mass Effect : Homeworlds == =

The second issue of the comic Homeworlds was revealed to focus around Tali 's past . Released on May 30 , 2012 , the issue tells of the beginning of her Pilgrimage , and the events leading up to her appearance in the first game . Originally intending to take the quarian ship Honorata to the planet Illium , along with Keenah 'Breizh , in search of valuable items , they discover geth activity on an unidentified ice planet . Tali extracts the memory core from one of the geth , and discovers a recording of a conversation between Saren and Matriarch Benezia discussing the attack on Eden Prime .

Once they arrive at Illium , the crew is attacked a group of mercenaries including Commander Jacobus , hired by Saren , leaving Tali and Keenah the only survivors . The two stowaway on a ship to the Citadel , though are uncovered and turned over to C @-@ Sec once they arrive . Though they try to tell of the evidence they have found , they are ignored and told to leave the Citadel . Later , they are suddenly attacked by Jacobus , injuring Tali and mortally wounding Keenah . After being chased through the Citadel , Tali eventually traps Jacobus in an incinerator , killing him , though Keenah collapses and dies .

Tali then arrives at Dr. Michel 's clinic , who treats her wounds . She is told to go to the bar Chora 's Den by Barla Von , and put into contact with the Shadow Broker , setting the stage for her entry into the first Mass Effect game .

= = Reception = =

Tali has received a positive critical response . Writing for UGO , Evan Saathoff listed Tali as his fourth best video game companion , comparing her as the " innocent , girl next door experience " to the sexiness of Halo 's Cortana . GamesRadar 's Carolyn Gudmundson listed Tali as one of several video game characters she 'd " go gay for " , noting her " kind personality and air of mystery " , as well as her technical genius and accent . Upon hearing news for a potential Mass Effect film , Dan Ryckert of Game Informer looked at the different characters and felt Famke Janssen would be best suited to play the role of Tali ? due to having a similar body to the character and having played Xenia Onatopp , a Russian @-@ accented soldier , in the 1995 Bond film GoldenEye .

Within the trilogy , Tali is one of the most popular characters , with various sources describing her as a fan favorite . Steven Hopper , writing for IGN , listed her as his second favorite Mass Effect teammate after Garrus Vakarian , praising her " endearing geekiness " and the story that follows her . Similarly , UGO 's Sal Basile listed her as the fourth best squadmate in Mass Effect 3 , giving credit to her in @-@ game abilities . Kirk Hamilton , of Kotaku , also felt her one @-@ on @-@ one dialogue scene in Citadel was the best out of all the squadmates ' .

Nevertheless , PC Gamer 's Andy Kelly listed the character as one BioWare character he hated , expressing confusion at her popularity and calling her " One of the duller characters in BioWare history . "

= = = Tali 's face = = =

Tali 's unmasked face and its potential appearance has been subject to discussion by both critics and fans . Casey Hudson , in an interview , acknowledged depictions of Tali 's face as the most common fan art . Jordan Boughman , writing for GamesRadar , highlighted a piece of fan art that he enjoyed and which a BioWare developer had retweeted . Before the face was revealed , IGN 's Scott Nichols ran an article about the possibility of revealing the face , concluding that fans did not just want to see her face but also " the expressions it can make , adding yet another level of emotional depth and complexity to a fan favorite character " . GamesRadar 's Mikel Reparaz listed it as one of the 12 gaming mysteries he wanted solved in 2011 , and hoped that it would be something unusual @-@ looking ; this sentiment was echoed by fellow GamesRadar writer Tyler Nagata , who felt that the face should be ugly . PC Gamer 's Tom Francis also included the face in their list of 15 things he wanted to see in Mass Effect 3 .

Once the face was revealed , it was met with wide criticism from fans , particularly for being a stock photo (of Miss England model Hammasa Kohistani) . GameZone 's Matt Liebl felt that the issue was not as big as fans had made it out to be . Some fans proceeded to make their own faces , such as a piece by deviantArt artist " K4ll0 " that Kotaku 's Luke Plunkett compared favorably to the actual face .

= = Promotion and merchandise = =

Like other characters in the trilogy , Tali has been subject to various merchandise . DC Direct included Tali their first line of Mass Effect 2 squadmate figures , first revealed in January 2010 and then released in April 2011 . A second figure was announced during Comic @-@ Con 2012 , as part of Square Enix 's second line of Play Arts Kai Mass Effect figures (along with the female Shepard) . BioWare also officially endorsed an originally fan @-@ made plushie of the character , selling it on their online store . Dark Horse 's Mass Effect playing cards feature Tali as the Queen of Hearts , alongside other Mass Effect 2 characters in other roles .