



## Chapter 2

"So, is it still above my pay grade, or do you feel like briefing me on where the hell we're going?" I suddenly ask agent Woo, my voice slightly cracking and breaking from not having used it for almost the entirety of the 9-hour flight. I guiltily remind myself, probably for the hundredth time, to start drinking more water as I take a sip from the can of coke zero that has been sitting in front of me.

Agent Woo jumps slightly, surprised at having been interrupted from staring at his computer. He meets my eyes, and smiles slightly, slowly closing his computer, as if I've been spying on whatever he's been doing. I haven't, by the way.

"Eh..." He begins, looking around at the four other agents on the private plane the FBI has been kind enough to lend for the journey. I notice everyone look up from whatever they've been doing, not even pretending to not listen in. I'm apparently not the only one who hasn't been told where we're headed, or into what we're headed.

"You do realize you'll have to tell us sooner or later." I shrug, crossing my arms across my chest. "I think we'll be of more help the more we know what we're supposed to help with."

"That's true." Agent Woo says uncertainly. "Eh, well."

I cock my head, amused. For an agent, Agent Woo is not the smoothest at lying.

"Well." He begins again, his brain clearly racing through scenarios and the best way to get out of my interrogation. "I worked on a case a while back, and we didn't exactly close it. We've got some new intel and hope to close it this time around."

He's got me more interested now. I'm trying to think back on high profile cases the FBI has handled and not closed, but without knowing when this specific case took place, I'm coming up empty. I know it is important, though, since the FBI would normally not send out agents on a private plane without a thorough briefing first. I've been with the FBI for the past five years, ever since I graduated, and although being quite young for my rank, I've done my fair share of missions and have handled a fair share of different cases, but never one quite this secretive. And never has the FBI sent me out on a private plane. The best I got was business premium after closing a particularly irksome case once.

"And what are we supposed to help you with?" An agent pipes up. He has a slight accent I instantly recognize as Russian. Interesting.

Agent Woo is looking increasingly uncomfortable. He clearly does not like lying. And he's clearly not the one who's decided on this course of action.

"I would much prefer not discussing this with you all here. Don't worry, you will all be debriefed once we reach our destination."

"And what is our destination? I did not pack my swimsuit or any sunblock, I hope that's alright." I sarcastically hum, earning a slight chuckle from the tall and lanky agent on my left.

"You know we're going to Eastern -" Agent Woo begins, but I cut him off again.

"Europe, yes." I finish for him. "But where? It's not a very small place, Eastern Europe."

"No, it's not." Agent Woo agrees. "Well, I guess I can tell you where... We're going to Transia."

"Transia?" The same agent that spoke up before echoes.

"Why are we going there?" I ask softly, my eyes slightly narrowing at Agent Woo. As much as I can joke about things, I know that if the FBI is sending out a team to Transia, it does indeed not mean anything good. And what could connect a cold case Agent Woo worked on with Transia...

"Again, I can't tell you. Not my position." Agent Woo opens up his laptop, signaling the end of the conversation.

I remain fixed in my seat, my hand still around the now slightly warm can of coke. I study Agent Woo for a while, trying to put the pieces together. All I could gather on Agent Woo so far was that he had a Californian accent, he was slightly socially awkward and he seemed trustworthy. In lieu of anything better to do, I pick up my phone - noting the no service signal, and plopping my AirPods in, and letting the music play on shuffle as I stare out of the window. My eyes are met with views of rolling, soft clouds and the occasional view of the mountainous terrain below. The sun has just started to set, casting a warm, golden blanket onto the clouds below. For a moment, I wished I could just jump out and lay down on one of the clouds and close my eyes and drift away.

"Is someone going to fucking update us on what the actual fuck we're doing here?" I loudly blurt out.

Straight after having landed, we were met by a caravan of black SUVs, which then transported us through the old, cobblestoned capital city of East Transia. The citizens the cars passed all made points of not looking directly at the cars and instead hurried about with their business as if a glance at the SUVs would expose them to some fatal disease. I had only been to Transia once before on a brief mission which had turned out to be a complete failure. Nonetheless, I had quite enjoyed my stay; having been quite warmly welcomed by the people of Transia once they learned I was well versed in their culture and languages. The city seemed to have changed in the short few years that had elapsed since my last visit. It seemed colder, greyer, and more hostile through the tinted windows of the back seat.

The cars had raced through the city and had finally come to a stop on the outskirts of the city where a seemingly massive operation had been mounted. There were tents everywhere, makeshift cold lights bathing the entire scene in an eerie glow. People dressed in warm coats and hats hurried back and forth between the tents, creating a muddy slush of the ground.

"Yes, we are, if you can just hold on for just another second. I realize the private plane must have really tired you out, otherwise, that sort of language would have you sent right the fuck out of my tent, agent." A tired-looking man spits out at me, with a scowl I bet rarely leaves his face.

We are all stood inside the largest tent, in the middle of what seems like an unorganized mess of agents and equipment.

"This is Tyler Hayward, Acting Director of S.W.O.R.D." Agent Woo introduces the man facing us. I make a mental note of Agent Woo's seeming disapproval of Hayward. I haven't met the guy before, but the little I've seen so far has not let me very impressed.

I bite my tongue, though, not feeling now is the best time to piss off Hayward. I am surprised to see him here. I know he was briefly under the custody of the FBI for something he had done a while back... I silently swear at not remembering the exact details, but Hayward's arrest had happened at the same time as my little... breakdown. Still, I would have not expected him to be back at his former position this quickly - if at all.

"Thank you, Agent Woo." Hayward smirks, almost condescendingly, at Agent Woo. I wonder what went down between them. Maybe there will be time to grill Agent Woo later on, I am a hundred percent certain I can crack him.

"So, you are all here because the FBI and S.W.O.R.D. are cooperating on a highly sensitive case. I do not have any time nor patience for any dilly-dallying, I want everyone to operate at 110% and I want no mistakes. Am I understood?" Hayward speaks quickly, looking from agent to agent, spending a little extra time staring me down, as if to intimidate me. Sadly for Hayward, my respect is only earned once the person in question proves themselves. So far, all Hayward is proving is being a dick. A scared one, I can tell. He can not afford this to go wrong.

The agents all around me mumble their yesses and Hayward nods curtly.

"Good." He says and straightens up even more. "Who here is familiar with the Westview anomaly?"

A/N: Right, chapter two! Again, I'm trying to keep stuff consistent with what we've seen in the movies and shows, but some creative license will be taken ;)

Hope you've enjoyed it so far!

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