

## I Have A Lead

I met up with Steve a few days later, I needed the drive back. We sat at a small cafe just down the road from the compound, far enough for me to relax knowing we weren't being listened to.

"Does he know? About the drive?" Steve asked me, curiosity getting the better of him.

I shrugged my shoulders, I knew I had to tell Bucky about what was going on but not until I was sure. "He knows enough." It was the best I could give him for now.

Steve looked from me down to the table, a slight shake of his head told me he wasn't happy about it. He picked up his drink as he looked back at me. "Yet you wanted to meet away from the compound." He was assuming it was because I didn't want Bucky to know what I was going to do. That wasn't it at all. "I don't trust Fury, in fact the only ones I do trust are you, Bucky and Loki."

That seemed to pacify him as he nodded his head. "What are you planning to do next?"

I sat back in my seat, crossing my arms with a smile. "What I do best." He raised his eyebrows waiting for me to continue. "Take down the bad guy. The question is can I rely on you to be at my side when I do it?" I raised my glass, he wasted no time in clinking his against mine with a smile. "I wouldn't be anywhere else."

We both took a sip of our drinks, a plan fully forming in my mind. "Good, because I have a lead."

After finishing our drinks we headed back to the compound, where I found a rather pissed off Bucky.

"Where the hell have you been?" His hair was sticking up in places, a sure sign that he'd been running his hands through it. I walked up to him and wrapped my arms round his waist. "I went for a drink with Steve, you can't keep me cooped up in here forever."

He leant his forehead against mine with a sigh. "You can't just disappear on me like that." I felt guilty but I couldn't change who I was. I had a job to do and I'd do it whether I had his permission or not. I stepped back from him, trying not to sound angry at him.

"Buck, you know me. I'm not going to be one of them women that sit around and bake cookies and shit. I also won't ask for permission to go for a drink with a friend." I could tell by the way his face hardened that it had come out harsher than I'd intended.

"That's not what I'm saying doll. I don't expect you to ask for permission to do anything. All I'm asking for is a heads up before you disappear on me." He sighed, running his hands through his hair.

I didn't have time for a petty argument, Steve was waiting for me. "Can we talk about this later? I've got things to do."

"See! This! This is what I mean, you're hiding shit again!"

"No I'm not! I've got a hunch about that drive and me and Steve are going to look into it. We'll be back in a couple of hours." I was getting more and more pissed off with his attitude. I walked into my closet and grabbed a hoodie along with a pair of leggings, getting changed before I walked back out.

I didn't say anything to him, apparently arguing and fucking were the only things we were good at and I didn't have time for either right now.

"Doll wait," he grabbed my wrist as I got to the door. I looked down at his hand before I glared up at him. He instantly let go, if there was one thing he was good at, it was reading my body language. "Just-just don't do anything without me okay?" I gave him a nod before I walked out.

I met up with Steve at the nearest mall, I needed a computer that wasn't connected to the SHIELD servers in any way. Walking into the tech store, he kept an eye out as I took the drive from my pocket.

"You sure about this?" He mumbled, looking over his shoulder.

"We need to know what's on it Steve, give me a minute." I plugged the drive into the computer, scanning through what documents I could make out. Diving deeper into the encoded files, I noticed a recurring theme. "Son of a bitch," I grit out causing Steve to look over my shoulder at the screen. "What is it?"

"I know where we have to go." He could tell by my tone of voice that I wasn't happy about what I'd found. I highlighted all the old transfer files, the same location popping up each time.

"Madripor. Why?" Steve asked. Suddenly it clicked, I had been wrong. "It wasn't a SHIELD agent sending the intel, but they knew about the secure server."

He looked over the files highlighted and suddenly he seemed to catch up. "They were receiving it, but why?"

"Simple, they couldn't access the files themselves anymore. SHIELD updated their security a few months back, took all the old agent logins off the system." I counted down from three in my head and right on cue he looked at me. "They're ex SHIELD." I gave him a small nod, rolling my eyes at him. "Finally the lightbulb goes on."

I grabbed the drive and put it back in my pocket. There was more information on this thing than I originally thought, it would take weeks to sort through it all. The decoding alone was going to take days.

When we got outside Steve looked at me. "What now?"

"I gotta call Buck, I made a promise I kinda stick to those. Most of the time." He nodded understanding why I had to call Bucky in on this.

"I'll go get us a car."

Picking up my phone, it only rang once before he answered. "Doll? Where are you?"

"Do you remember earlier when I said me and Steve were looking into something?" I could hear him sigh on the other end.

"And I told you not to do anything without me."

"Yeah I kinda didn't listen to that bit." I mean technically I hadn't done anything yet, but I knew he wouldn't see it that way.

"I'd like to say I'm surprised, but honestly I'm not."

"Buck, you know me and you know I can't just let this go." This drive had nearly cost me my life, I needed to find out why and I was pretty sure I had a theory.

"What did you find?"

"Who do we know in Madripor that would want SHIELD intel?" He wasted no time in coming to the same conclusion I had.

"The power broker."

"Exactly. Whoever it is knew about that server, they knew what was on it and it was worth protecting. There is something on this drive that either they need, or they don't want me to have." I see Steve pull up beside me in a blue truck, holding up my finger I go back to listening to Bucky.

"They think you know what's on it. That's why they sent someone after you."

My mind was racing, until everything clicked into place. "There's only one thing that would threaten them that much. To risk coming out into the open."

Bucky grunted down the phone at me and I could all but hear his eyes rolling as he realised what I'd gotten myself into. "That drive can tell you who the power broker is."

As true as that might be, it would take weeks to sift through everything on it. Unless, "there is one person who would know where to start."

"Don't do anything. We need a plan first doll. This isn't something you can't just go storming into and hope for the best."

I knew he was right, as much as I wanted to do what I needed to, I needed a plan. Unfortunately that meant working as a team, something I wasn't fond of. Climbing into the truck with Steve, I wrote down the address of the last safehouse I'd used with Hydra.

"Remember that last mission we were on together? The safehouse?"

"Meet you there. Stay safe doll."

I smiled down the phone at him, "always do." Hanging up I leant my head back against the seat. I couldn't help but wonder if I was ever going to catch a break. It was always one more mission, one more bad guy. As much as I loved the fight, it was different now.

I wasn't alone anymore.

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