

When I finally stepped back into Steve's room it looked quite a bit different. Ema was standing in the corner, visibly relaxing when she saw it was me. The room itself had been cleared of most medical equipment, leaving it a simple, undecorated space. If the door wasn't an extra inch and half thick and visibly armored from the outside I would have assumed it was just a boring white room. Before I could say anything Ema took my arm and led me back outside into the hall. Once the door closed she turned and let go of my arm.

"He started transitioning to a normal sleep cycle an hour or so after you left." She explained. "They cleared the room so it didn't look so off putting."

"Oh, why didn't you call me?"

"I did, but it didn't connect." She explained, rolling her emerald eyes. "You carded the secure cell phone Fury gave you and I wasn't going to use your normal phone."

"Crap. Okay, I need to make a secure phone. I'll ask... Speak of the devil."

I looked over Ema's shoulder and watched as Agent Coulson and Nick Fury made their way down the hall, stopping at the dorm, right next to us.

"Hey Fury, Coulson." I said with a nod, pausing for a moment before smirking. "Fury, how would you like a revolver that continuously regenerates ammo and is twice as powerful as a normal revolver?"

Fury looked taken back for a moment before quickly recovering.

"...Yes, I would like that." He said, looking at Coulson, who shrugged. "What's the catch?"

"No catch." I said, smirking before continuing. "Just the usual stipulations, three fourths of the usual payment and a bunch of cell phones and communication equipment that is designed to be safe and secure from outside listening in and tracking."

"Half of the usual payment." Fury countered. "The Security council is starting to complain about the cost."

"Really? They are complaining about the cost of impossible, reality breaking equipment?" I asked, my eyes wide in shock before I shook my head. "Fine. But you let them know if they drop too low that I know a few billionaires who would not bat an eye at triple my price for half of what I'm making."

The one eyed soldier narrowed his eyes before nodding. He looked to Coulson, about to open his mouth before Coulson shook his head, looking over at the door that led to Steve's room. Fury let out a very uncharacteristic sigh and pulled out his phone. After a quick text he nodded,

gesturing to a room on the other side of the hallway. Both of us stepped into it, while Ema and Coulson stayed outside.

Forty five minutes, a bunch of questions and a quick binding later Nick Fury was the proud owner of the pistol I had used to test out my regenerating ammo and ammo capacity ideas, and I was two hundred thousand dollars richer and had a box of communications equipment that should combine together well to make untraceable phones.

I had just carded the box, and Fury was examining the revolver, when Ema pushed open the door.

“He is waking up.” She said simply.

After a minute or so of quiet chaos, Director Fury wrangled everything into order. Instead of ambushing Captain Rogers the moment he stepped out of the room, Ema and Coulson joined us in the meeting room. The floor was mostly cleared, the excessive security banished to be at least out of sight for now. Director Fury had spent the last fifteen minutes as we waited asking for more guns like the one bound to him for his agents.

“What would it cost to get a pistol like this into the hands of more Shield agents?” Fury asked, his revolver already strapped to his hip, his old pistol moved to the other side.

“Really? Not going to spend time with it first?” I asked, smirking a bit. “Test it out, put it through its paces?”

“Is there something wrong with it?” He asked.

“No, it does what I said it does. As long as you don't spam it, ammo regenerates as fast as you shoot.” I assured him, before moving on to his request. “I'm sorry Fury, this was an exception. I'm not deviating from what we have going on already. I'll accept the slightly decreased pay if you guys keep paying and supplying me, but that's about all the flexibility you're going to get out of me, save for special circumstances.”

“And if all of the people I send you ask for a weapon like this?” He asked, leaning back in his chair.

“Then I stop being flexible.” I said with a shrug. “I appreciate the leeway and allowances Shield has made for me, but being squeezed for weapons and ordered around is exactly why I refused to join up in the first place. I will vanish if you try to turn me into your personal toy maker.”

My tone was final and unmoving, despite the fact that I was very anxious. I would absolutely follow through on my threat if need be, but having access to Shield resources solved a lot of problems that I would have to dedicate time to solve myself. Eventually I wouldn't need them but for now, they were very helpful.

I was saved from more explanation by a knock at the door. We all looked over to see Peggy at the door, looking happy and smiling. Beside her stood Steve Rodgers. He looked bewildered, but calm, much calmer than one would expect given his circumstances. Peggy pushed the door open and I stood, as did Coulson and Fury.

“Steve, this is Director Fury, Agent Coulson, Maker and Ema.”

“Hello.” He said, reaching out to shake Fury’s hand, then Coulson’s, Ema’s and finally mine. “I would introduce myself, but from what Peggy has said that would be mostly pointless.”

“It would be Mr Rogers.” Director Fury said. “I’m glad you could join us.”

“I’m just glad to have the chance.” He said with a nod. “This is... Well it’s a lot to handle all at once. But...”

He looked over at me, giving me a nod and a smile.

“Peggy said that you’re the one who let me keep a promise. Even if I was seventy years late.”

“Just doing what I can Mr Rogers.” I said.

“Still, thank you. For helping Peggy and stopping whoever it was that tried to take me. And call me Steve, please.”

“No problem, just return the favor next time a nebulous outside force attempts to kidnap me for probably nefarious purposes.”

Steve chuckled but stopped when I wasn’t. I shrugged and finally smiled before sitting down. Steve turned to pull out a seat for Peggy who quietly thanked him and sat down. When everyone was seated Fury opened his mouth to say something but Steve cut him off.

“I need to go after Bucky.” He said emphatically. “I know I’m missing a lot of time but whoever has him is obviously brainwashing him and who knows what else.”

“While I understand the need for expediency, there needs to be a process here.” Fury tried to say. “We should-”

“Cap, I have finding him taken care of.” I responded confidently. “There isn’t a place on the planet where they could hide him that I won’t be able to find him.”

Fury looked at me, narrowing his eye, while Coulson remained stoic. He clearly didn't like me butting in. I could almost see his internal debate on if it was worth it to kick me out at this point.

"Then what are we waiting for?" He asked. "We need to find him, before they have a chance to do anything worse to him."

"Steve, Bucky would understand the need to regroup." Peggy explained, her hand reaching over to touch his arm. She hesitated for a moment before following through. "You need to learn some things, take a few days at least."

"... two days. Fine." He said after a long pause. "But not any longer. Bucky wouldn't leave me to suffer, and I won't leave him to either."

"Alternatively, Ema and I could do it by ourselves." I offered, sitting back when everyone looked at me. "It was just a suggestion."

"No, I need to be there." Steve said, shaking his head. "If something goes wrong and I can't then yes, but... Give me two days. Peggy is right, I'm not at full strength yet."

"No problem Steve." I said with a nod, standing up, Ema joining me. "I'll be back in two days, probably a few hours before now. Until then, I have some things to take care of, some things to get ready."

Steve stood as I walked to the door, reaching out to shake my hand again. It was a tight grip that was joined by a respectful nod.

"Thank you for helping Peggy." He said. "I don't know how you make the things you make, but thank you."

I could only nod in return before making my way from the office. I was joined by a guard, guiding me out of the building.

----- *The Next Morning* -----

With my new deadline in place Ema and I started planning. The dot that marked Bucky's location had stopped somewhere in Washington DC, a concerning location considering who had probably sent him in the first place. Ema quickly came to the conclusion that being able to travel there with my vambrace would be incredibly valuable, so she convinced me that while I was making some last minute things for myself and for anyone coming with Me and Steve, she would spend the morning driving to DC to put a landing pad somewhere. I reluctantly agreed.

After getting her set and sending her off, I quickly used the box of secure communication equipment to make a few of the most secure cell phones I could. I worked the entire box into

them, with the result being ten B ranked cell phones that had such a large concept of security, protection and communication I was pretty confident that just thinking about calling me would connect my phone with whoever was trying to call me. I was so confident that after spending some time messing with it I called Fury from the one I bound to myself sitting on my couch.

“Who is this?” His voice all but barked.

“It's Maker.” I said simply, not wishing to piss off the Director of Shield too much. “I finally got around to making a secure phone, so no more worrying about burner phones, secure lines or anything like that.”

“You're saying the phone you're calling from is secure. How secure?” He asked, tone a little less annoyed.

“Feel free to run it through the gamut, you'll recognize the address if it fails at least.” I said. “I'll even leave the phone on to give you some extra time. That's not what I was calling about though. I need to talk to Peggy, if she can step away from Steve for a moment.”

“I'll have her call you back on... Why doesn't this phone have a number?” He asked. “How does your phone not have a number?”

“Don't think about it too hard Fury, you'll just give yourself a headache.” I explained with a smirk. “Tell her to just dial my name.”

“Fine, but it's your problem if you're messing with her.” He said with a scoff. “I don't think that would go over well.”

I left the phone on for a few minutes, before Fury came back and confirmed that the Agent attempting to track my phone was baffled. They were getting almost nothing, and what they were getting was nonsense. He said Peggy would be calling me soon and hung up. Satisfied that my phone was now secure I added a cell phone to Steve and Peggy's boxes. I frowned and started to consider what kind of helmets I would make for the two before Peggy called.

“Hello? Maker?” She asked. “If this is a prank I won't be-”

“Peggy you dialed five numbers into your phone and it connected, who else would it be?”

“... Fair enough I suppose.” She admitted. “What do you need?”

“Well first, does Steve have his shield?”

“Yes, he had it when they recovered him.”

“Alright, good. I’ll have a uniform for him so tell him not to bother with that.”

“Maker... how much are you making for us?” She asked, sounding a bit worried.

“Oh just a few things.” I assured her. “I’m already done with most of it, don't worry. Do you want a uniform or...”

“By uniform do you mean a costume?” She asked. I could practically hear her roll her eyes.

“I could mean both?”

“Make me something simple.” She said clearly. “And take it easy on Steve as well.”

“Yeah sure, of course. I mean you've seen what I made right?”

“I have, and you look like something from a video game.” She responded.

“Thanks! Oh wait no I see what you're saying. Alright, I'll keep it simple and old school.” I agreed. “Anything else?”

“Will you make me a gun?” She asked.

“I already did. It's a revolver, a smaller caliber than mine but that hardly means anything after I did my thing.” I explained. “Don't worry I'll explain how it all works, bind everything and show you how it all works tomorrow. It's why I recommended we meet up at noon, so we will have enough time to show off the stuff and still do this at night.”

“Alright Maker, and thank you again.”

“No problem Peggy. Happy to help.”

A quick goodbye and I got to work. I went shopping for more than a few hours, unfortunately stuck riding my bike around at first since Ema was driving my civilian truck. Luckily by the time I was almost done she had placed the landing pad in a heavily wooded park. I took a break to eat and pick her up before driving around and making my last purchases. When we got back to the quarry I combined one of the secure cellphones with her exosuit to add in its security.

I started with Steve's uniform next, adding kevlar and other protective materials together with a loose fit leather jacket and a pair of tan army pants. I combined them with a transformation card and a much more basic and subtle full body armor system. I reinforced the body armor with a few plates of super metal before adding thinner clothing to make it smooth and flexible, resulting in a plating system which was visible but wasn't nearly as chunky and

sci-fi as mine. The armor smoothly transformed back and forth between the more normal clothes, the army pants and leather jacket, and the smooth armor plates. I made a quick helmet as well, using the same technique I had used with the plates to get it closer to what he used to wear in the comics, though it was still obviously armored. I wasn't going to rely on plot armor like the comics did.

Banking on the binding taking care of the coloring I repeated the process for Peggy, this time working the transformation into a simple looking utility belt and a torc similar to what contained my helmet. Once again I made sure to smooth and reinforce the armor so it was more subtle. When I was done with her armor, including her own helmet, I combined her gun with a ring, letting her carry it like Natasha did her pistols.

I quickly threw together a pair of super glasses, adding in a zoom, night vision, thermal vision and metal detection, leaving out the others to keep it simple and save on time. My last addition to the two boxes of stuff was a pair of armored gloves and combat boots, the latter with sound suppression.

Finished with Peggy and Steve's equipment I combined a half dozen sheets of cloth with various forms of invisible and disappearing ink, combining them all together and combining it to my cloak. The result was a definite improvement.

"How did you not think of this before?" Ema asked as I activated the invisibility, my form fading. "That's a seven point five at least. There is a shimmer but its like a heat shimmer, not a 'what the fuck is that' shimmer."

"I honestly don't know." I said, looking down at myself and nodding. "I'm just glad I caught it before I needed it."

I spent another hour or so making a bunch of repetitive items, coming up with a knock out ring by combining a half dozen types of sleep aides, an electric shock version of a joy buzzer and a simple ring as well. Once I was done with that, Ema and I spent the rest of the day, and the first half of the next day reinforcing the super truck even more. We pulled off parts from the bottom and reinforced them with super metal. I was tempted to card and combine the whole truck at once, but I was afraid it would affect how it looked.

"At some point we are going to strip it down to the frame so I can reinforce that." I said as we finished shoving the last piece back into place and setting up the repair tablet to fix any damage we had done.

"Just one more thing on the list." Ema teased, passing me a rag to clean the grease off my hands, simply flicking her hands to get it off of hers.

"I'll crack flying once this is all done." I assured her. "What are the odds that Shield has a jetpack program already?"

“Pretty high.”

“What are the chances they would lend me one or twelve?”

“Probably zero.”

“Yeah... I was afraid of that.” I said with a frown before throwing the rag at Ema. “Alright. Home, shower, early lunch and then off to Shield. Steve’s waited long enough.”