

## Chapter 13

Beep... beep... beep... beep..I feel insanely groggy. I slowly become more aware of myself, and how heavy I feel. I try to li up an arm, but it won't listen to me. The beeping noise continues steadily.

Beep... beep... beep..I wish Wanda would turn o the stove. I was sleeping so deeply...

Beep... beep... beep... beep..hear a pair of voices around me. They are deep, much deeper than Wanda's or mine. Before I manage to fully wake up again, I sink back down into my peaceful, deep sleep.

Beep... beep... beep..I feel uncomfortable. I finally manage to open my eyes, but I can't see anything; it's too bright. The beeping increases steadily in frequency. I suddenly start choking on something lodged deep in my throat. I can't breathe. I start panicking and the beeping goes wild. All of a sudden there are people around me, none of whom I recognize and they keep a hold of me, pressing me down onto whatever I am lying on, and my vision goes dark as I'm plunged into the abyss of darkness once again.

The next time I regain consciousness, the beeping noise is no longer accompanying me. I feel a dull ache in my body, but no pain. It's a strange sensation. My eyelids flutter open lazily, and I am once again met by the blinding white light. It slowly recedes and I try understanding where I am. I'm lying on a plain white bed surrounded by green curtains on all sides. I'm hooked up into a machine. Without thinking, I rip out the needles sticking into my le arm, which is now encased in a thick cast with some steel pins sticking out. I notice I am dressed in what looks like a thin hospital gown. I swing my legs o the side of the bed, placing my feet down on the cold floor. I struggle for a while to find the strength to stand up without leaning against the bed -my legs feel like they no longer include bones to support me, but eventually, I do find my balance.

I silently slip through the curtains surrounding my bed. I am in a big, open room with the same green curtains pulled around beds, I assume. It's silent, only the noise of the machines inside the wall of green can be heard. I slowly tiptoe out of the room and enter a stark, cold hallway. I am definitely in a hospital, there is an unmanned reception desk and along the hallway are signs in Romanian and Hungarian indicating the way to di erent areas of the hospital. There is no one around, so I start walking down the hallway away from the reception. I pass light, wooden doors with plaques with di erent names on them, but I don't stop. I don't know what I am looking for exactly, but it seems like my legs have a plan as they take me down the hall.

I finally round a corner and instinctively jump back behind it. There are two men, dressed in combat gear with machine guns standing guard in the hallway. Luckily, they did not seem to notice me as they are seemingly deep in conversation, their voices echoing o the walls.

"-whether or not it was on purpose." One of them says and the other agrees enthusiastically.

I dare to sneak a peek around the corner. The two men are dressed in what I can now tell is S.W.O.R.D. kit and they're standing guard outside a specific door. They do not seem to be specifically interested in keeping watch, as they're both stood facing the door, looking through a small window on the door into the room on the other side.

"I don't get why we need to be standing here." One of the men whines. "My feet are aching man. I mean Jesus Christ nothing has happened for the past ten hours."

"She just lies there." The other agrees, switching his weight from one foot onto the other.

"Fuck, I'm seriously falling asleep here." The man starts turning around and I quickly hide behind the corner again. I have a pretty good idea of what they're guarding.

"Dude, me too. Shit, I mean it's four in the morning, we've got what, two more hours to go?"

"Yeah."

"I'm gonna die if I can't get a co ee or something."

"Shit, a co ee would go down so well. Huh, wouldn't you like a co ee too, missy crazy?" I hear a loud bang and I look round the corner just in time to see the men laughingly turn away from the door.

"Shit, she's out, out." One of them snickers. "Seriously though, man, I thought Johnson was tripping when he said she was hot, but yo I'd tap that if it wasn't insane."

"Ha, me too."

I feel nauseous hearing them say that. Men with guns, especially stupid men with guns seem to always lose any semblance of conscience or morals. I know that from experience. I thought it would get easier once I graduated the academy training and became a fully-fledged agent, but wherever they sent me I couldn't escape the boys' club. I tune in again when I hear the guards have veered back to talking about co ee.

"Shit, shall I just go get us co ees?"

"Whatever man there's no one here and that bitch ain't going nowhere, I'll just come with you, I need to stretch my legs anyway."

I panic as I hear their footsteps getting louder. I look around and hope for the best as I pull down the silver handle on the nearest door to me. It opens so ly and I sneak in without bothering to look around me. I pull the door almost shut behind me, looking through the small crack between the door and the frame. The two men pass me, now deeply engrossed in a conversation about what sounds like times they almost died, but didn't, because of how cool they both are. I wait for a second, then open the door again and soundlessly close it behind me as the agents walk towards the reception, completely unaware of their surroundings. I roll my eyes at how anyone seems to be handed a gun at S.W.O.R.D.

I tiptoe back around the corner into the now empty hallway and walk up to the door the agents were guarding. I look around me once more, focusing on any sounds around me, but I'm totally alone. I look through the opening in the door. I see a brightly lit room with a bed in the middle of it, and on the bed Maximo . She's propped up high on pillows behind her back. In addition to the shackles I placed on her, she is now also sporting regular handcus holding her arms and legs in place, and the shock collar around her neck. She's hooked up to an IV, her chest slowly and steadily rising and falling. She's wearing a similar hospital gown to mine, they haven't been bothered to cover her over with sheets. Her head is turned to the side, leaning against the pillows, her hair falling down in front of her face. Her ankles and wrists look bruised. I so ly tap on the glass, trying to get her attention. She doesn't move. I tap again, slightly harder. Nothing.

"Maximo ." I loudly whisper, my voice coming out rough. I tap the glass again, but she doesn't move.

I realize I can hear voices growing louder and I turn on my heels just as the two agents round the corner. They stop talking and stare at me, confused. I have nowhere to escape so I plaster on a friendly smile.

"Hey!" One of them shouts. "What are you doing?"

"Get away from the door!" The other one pipes up.

I throw my hands in the air and try to look as convincingly not menacing as I can. Shouldn't be too hard, one hand in a cast dressed in this stupid flimsy gown.

"I'm so sorry," I begin. "I'm with the FBI. I just woke up and couldn't find anyone, and I must have gotten lost. Do you two know where I could find a nurse?"

They exchange a look, and I can tell they've bought it. They come to a halt in front of me, one of them peering into Maximo 's room.

Pleased with what he sees, he looks back at me.

"Reception, probably."

"Oh, of course." I exclaim in a girly voice. "What way is that?"

"Just round the corner there." The agent points with his thumb.

"Okay. Thank you so much. Have a good evening." I smile sweetly at them and walk past them.

As I round the corner I can hear them whisper:

"Was she the one who-"

"Yeah, I think so."

I walk back through the hallway the way I came, feeling a lot more tired all of a sudden. My feet have grown uncomfortably cold against the floor. When I reach reception, a nurse is sitting behind the desk, looking up, surprised from the paper, a nurse is sitting behind the desk, looking up, surprised from his paperwork.

"What are-" He begins. "You should not be out of your bed!"

"Sorry, I..." I say, feeling lightheaded all of a sudden.

"Let me help you back." The nurse says and comes to grab a hold of my elbow, and begins steering me back into the open room.

He finds me my bed and I climb back onto it. I let him inject the needles again without saying a word, but feeling his disapproving glances on me. Once he is done he leaves me and pulls the curtains back around my bed, leaving me all alone again. I unconsciously start dozing o , feeling very confused as to how I've ended up here when the last thing I remember is Maximo holding my hand.

A/N: Change of pace! Hope you've enjoyed it so far! x

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