The Naked Truth

by Scriptserpent

Summary

Five times Gaby walked in on Napoleon naked and one time he wasn't.

A Friendship fic.
Gaby was exhausted. Listening to Janice natter all day (who was the wife of their current mark) was draining in a way that running through the city during a mission never brought. The only good that had come of the whole day- for it had brought no fruitful information- was that the wife had absolutely no idea of the going ons of her husband and Gaby was doubtful she would have to spend another day pretending to befriend the woman. The staircase to the apartment she was sharing with Illya and Napoleon smelled musty. She doubted the carpeted stairs had been cleaned in some time and her new orange manicure gleamed in glossy contrast to the worn and chipped railing.

She made her way up the stairs and pondered over if they had any nail polish remover. She didn’t actually like the color- Janice had been the one to pick it out– and she knew that my the end of the night the paint would be chipped after she had dug into her radio project. The poor thing had laid neglected all day and she was itching to get her fingers busy. It should be a quiet night anyway. Illya was on the outskirts of town, watching the boats come in and watching where the shipments to an Oxalide Toothpaste Company was really going to. She didn’t expect him until late that night. Napoleon should be quiet as well. Should be was the key.

He had received a nasty gun shot wound to his side last night while returning from his own surveillance. Cooped up in a bar with the gang they suspected were moving the new hallucinogenic drugs through the county, he’d been the victim of a surprise police raid. He’d been befriending the leader, charming his way in through his usual eloquence, wit, and gambling skills. The police raid had caught him off guard and he’d gotten in the way of an unfortunate bullet. Fortunately, by the bullet hitting him, he had inadvertently saved the life of the leader and cemented his place and trust within the Redbird gang.

“You always go looking for trouble,” Illya had groused last night as Gaby stitched up the wound.

“Peril, you should know by now,” Napoleon had said through a pain thinned smile. “Trouble comes looking for me.”

Napoleon of course had tried to go that morning, claiming to strike while the iron was hot, but Illya had watched him stand and list to the side and growled in no uncertain terms, that Napoleon was to stay and rest.

So naturally Gaby was curious to see what he had gotten up to today.

She did expect him to lay low, though. He had been pale from the blood loss and and unsteady that the morning. And although he never voiced it, Gaby knew he was hurting. She could see it in the tightness around his eyes and the reticence in his normally fluid movements. When she reached the door and quietly took out the loft key, she was surprised to hear the staccato and heavy footfall of someone running and Napoleon’s loud curse.

She pushed open the door, pulling out her gun.

“What—“

“Ah Ms. Teller,” Napoleon said, staring at her in surprise from his place in front of the stove, “I wasn’t expecting you so early.”

And Gaby’s voice was lost because Napoleon was standing in the middle of the room without so much as a sock on.
“Why are you naked?” she asked as she stepped in and shut the door firmly behind her, locking it quickly.

Napoleon glanced at the smoking pan in his hand and calmly walked to the sink, dousing it in cool water. It hissed, steam instantly billowing up to the ceiling and curling around his head. Eventually it quieted and he dropped the pan into the sink.

He dried off his hands with the dishtowel and returned it back to its place on the oven door. “Damn. That was a good steak too,” he muttered, but it was more to himself. He wasn’t attempting to cover himself up at all, and Gaby realized her cheeks were a little hot.

“You don’t seem to be very embarrassed,” she said and raised a brow coolly.

“Should I be?”

“Most people would, yes.”

“Well, I don’t think I look like most people either,” Napoleon said and winked.

Gaby turned, realizing her face was fairly warm by now and looked for an apron to toss to him. “Confident,” she retorted.

“Only when I know it’s true.” She heard him walking away towards the bedroom and listened as the door shut. She turned, looking discreetly over her shoulder, and turned around fully when she confirmed the room was once again empty. The kitchen was filled with gray smoke and the acrid air of burnt meat. She walked over to the windows, cracking them open and letting the cool air of late September struggle through.

She left the pan for Napoleon to clean himself and perched her purse on the table. Something white caught her eye and Gaby turned to look at the towel Napoleon had apparently dropped in his haste to make it to the stovetop in time. With a sigh Gaby walked over and picked it up with a sharp pull, ready to remind the American agent that she was, absolutely and positively, not playing mother. Bright red stains withered the words on her tongue and she stared down at it dumbly and then walked over to the bedroom, knocking once and entering without waiting.

“Hey,” Napoleon started.

“I just saw you completely naked,” she reminded him and walked into the darkened bedroom. The blinds had been closed and the room felt cooler for it. Napoleon looked up from the edge of the bed where he sat and was in, thankfully, pajama bottoms. His torso was bare still and Gaby held out the towel. “Let me see.”

“It’s nothing to worry about,” Napoleon said. He turned to ignore her and presumably put on the white undershirt that was in his hands.

“Did you re-bandage it?” she asked. She folded the towel haphazardly and walked closer. Water glistened on his shoulder in the weak light, trailing down from his hair. Ah. He had been taking a shower. That explained some things.

“I’m perfectly fine,” he reiterated.

“I’m sure,” Gaby said dryly. She stood in front of him. “And I can let our lovely friend Illya know you were running through the apartment when you should have been resting and pulled your stitches that I spent so long on last night.”
Napoleon glanced up at her and sighed, putting the shirt to the side. “I didn’t pull them.”

“Oh, I know.” she said and knelt down to examine the wound. The skin around it was irritated and red, but not with infection. In fact the skin and the stitches were dry. She stood back. “You should put more bacitracin on it and cover it. How did you keep it dry?”

“Shopping bag and tape,” Napoleon said and twisted slowly to look down at the wound. His lips quirked when he tugged at the skin too much and he sighed as he gently returned to his original position.

Gaby wordlessly walked out to the common bathroom and pulled out their first aid kit. She walked back in, and took her place back on the floor to bandage the wound. “Do you need medication?” she asked as she put on more bacitracin.

Napoleon hissed through his teeth at the cold ointment, but quickly silenced himself when Gaby looked up at him with a frown. “No.”

She hummed and capped the ointment, placing gauze over the wound and taping it. Napoleon watched her careful ministrations from under dark lashes and she stepped away when she was done. “Thank you,” he said quietly.

“You’re welcome.” she said and disposed of the gauze wrappers and trash. She tossed out the bloodied towel as well. After scrubbing her hands, she returned to the kitchen, pausing at the entry to Napoleon’s room and looked at the sink. “What happened? It’s not like you to let something burn.”

That was truly what had set off her concern. Napoleon was as good in the kitchen as he was out in the field. Graceful, fast, and capable. She didn’t think she could remember ever having seen him ruin a dish before. At least on purpose. She and Illya had more than once quietly complained that sometimes too much seasoning was worse than none for simple foods.

“I forgot that I left the burner on when I went to take a shower. Realized I had left it on when I smelled something burning,” Napoleon said from the edge of the bed. He had been staring at the wall in front of him as he spoke, but finished by turning to Gaby and giving a bright and perfectly unreal smile. Gaby frowned, knowing her partner better than he perhaps hoped.

She watched him from the door silently and his smile dropped, like a bird twirling out of the air. “I’m afraid you’re taking too many notes from our Russian friend. Lurking in dark doorways isn’t really a good look for you.”

Gaby snorted. “I’m not lurking.”

“Ah, and that’s what he says as well.” They both grinned. Gaby crossed her arms and leaned against the door frame. “I hope you didn’t choose that shade,” Napoleon commented.

“No,” Gaby said, fanning out her fingers of her left hand to look at the pumpkin manicure. “I let Janice choose it. She doesn’t know anything, by the way. And doesn’t care either. She’s kept her nose out of whatever Pablo is doing.”

“A waste of a day then?” Napoleon questioned. She pulled one of his legs up, turning to look at Gaby more square on.

“It seems so,” Gaby said sourly. She tucked her fingers back into her arm. “So what did you do all day other than burning your lunch and becoming a naturalist?” She glanced out at the kitchen. “Rest well?”
“Of course,” Napoleon said easily. He fanned his fingers along his thighs (Which had a scar on the back of the left one, and freckles above his right knee her brain unhelpfully provided) and briefly kneaded at the muscle there. “It was downright luxurious.”

Gaby laughed at that. She glanced at the threadbare apartment, “I’m sure.”

“Well it’s not often I get to send out Peril to do the work and I just get to lounge in bed. “

And now that he had said that, Gaby realized what was off.

The bed was still perfectly made. She knew Napoleon was fastidious and clean, but even she was sure that he wouldn’t turn down the same exact corner to the same length of the bed after sleeping in it and remaking it. She’d put money on that the idiot hadn’t rested.

“You should take a nap,” she said.

“Sure,” he said. ‘I’ve been asleep all day though.” She watched him brush aside his damp curls, putting them in place and becoming more the image of his usual coiffed self.

Gaby shrugged and pushed off the door frame. “I’ll be out in the living room working on that transmitter.” She left without argument, and went to collect her things from her room.

She set up shop, putting out a towel to not stain the coffee table she sat on the floor next to. She was messing with her screwdriver as she tried to pop off the cover to the prototype she was tinkering with. It was calming to work with her hands, and she had taken an instant liking to it when Illya had shown her how to work with some electronics while he had been toying with a new tracker. So now she had this radio and communicator project to pass the time with. It was easier to carry around than a car.

She looked on in satisfaction when her forefinger nail chipped, peeling off a corner of the outrageous nail color, when Napoleon came out of his room about an hour later. “Mind company?” he asked.

She shook her head and gestured to the old green couch behind her. “Be my guest.”

Napoleon silently took a seat on the couch, a paperback in his hand. It was well worn and he flipped to a page near the beginning, silently reading. A minute sluggishly passed and she found herself asking, “Where did that scar on your thigh come from?”

When he didn’t answer for a moment, she turned to look at him. She shouldn’t have asked. Maybe it was tied to bad memories. But it had looked old and was unusual as it was in the shape of a cross. instead of the closed off expression or frown she was expecting, Napoleon’s blue eyes sparkled as she met his gaze.

“So you were looking.”

She huffed and turned back to her work, ears surely pink as he chuckled. But he fell silent again and she muttered, “You don’t have to answer.”

“I got it as a kid,” he said and put the book down. She glanced at him over her shoulder, pliers in hand as she was ready to strip a wire. “I was messing with my friend Jack and jumping off a retainer wall into a leaf pile bellow. Anyway, I slipped and fell into a freshly cut stump of a bush. That’s why it’s criss-crossed.”

“It looks like a cross,” Gaby agreed.
“My mom always said it was Jesus’ way of claiming me.” He chuckled. “Not that that seems to have done much.” He looked back up to the ceiling and a shadow of something passed over his eyes. Gaby wondered what kind of memory it had stirred. He turned back, hair rasping against the pillows of the couch and Gaby smiled.

“Thank you.” None of them really talked about their pasts at all and the rare glimmer of insight was always treasured.

He gave a one shoulder shrug and returned to his book. “Thanks for patching me up.” He paused and then looked down, “Although your stitches could be a bit smaller next time. I’m not a needlework project.”

“Have Illya stitch you up then,” she sniffed and returned to her work. She hummed at the smile she caught on Napoleon’s face before returning to his book. They sat in companionable silence until the light got too low and Gaby went to turn on the lamp in order to see. She stopped when she realized Napoleon was asleep, fingers curled loosely around the paperback.

Gaby shook her head and pulled down the afghan from the side of the couch, cover him loosely with the blanket. She stopped in the kitchen for an apple and some cheese and retired to her room, turning on the light to read. She could finish the communicator in the morning.
The heat of the September sun left a heavy layer of heat against Gaby’s skin. Nearby she could hear the soft pop beat of whatever could be picked up on the small portable radio they had brought and seagulls lazily called over the rhythmic crashing of the blue, blue waters. She opened her eyes and Gaby blinked through her sunglasses, shielding her eyes as she stared up into the cloudless blue day. It was perfect today. She sighed, stretching out her languid limbs, buttery warm and utterly content. There was a soft grunt as her foot accidentally hit someone and she rolled over, looking over the edge of her round sunglasses.

“Have a good nap?” Napoleon asked from over the pages of a tired looking paperback. He rubbed his abdomen dramatically where she had lightly kicked him.

“I wasn’t asleep,” she said with a yawn.

Gaby watched as his eyes crinkled with a smile. “Of course not. My mistake.” He glanced back down to the book, flipping a page and Gaby sat up, draping herself over her knees and looked out at the Aegean waters.

“Where’s Illya?” she asked as she pulled her wide-brimmed sunhat off the sand next to her and perched it on her head. The hat tugged with the soft ocean breeze and she put her hand over the top to keep it from flying off while she glanced around for their partner.

“Off brooding somewhere. Probably scaring the locals again,” Napoleon said flippantly. He thumbed to the next page and with a sigh shut the book, although his finger was still tucked in the spine to save his place.

“I wish he would relax a bit,” Gaby muttered and adjusted her glasses against the bright afternoon sunlight.

Napoleon chuckled at that. He sat up from where he had been lounging on the blanket near Gaby, propping himself up on his elbows and put the book down finally. He surveyed the empty beach and pulled his own hat lower to shade his eyes. “Our hedonistic pleasures may be too much for the delicate sensibilities of the Red Peril.”

Gaby snorted inelegantly, turning so she faced him as she lay down, gently folding her arms to pillow her head. Her skin smelled faintly of the briny sea from her earlier plunge and the remnants of coconut from sun lotion. “I should do my back again,” she said mainly to herself as the sun quickly heated the skin left bare from her high-waisted bikini.

“Well, then we really should look for Illya,” Napoleon said. Gaby flicked some sand at him and he brushed it away from his red swim trunks with an insufferable grin. “Ah, see? There he is. Must be looking for sea glass or something.” Gaby craned her neck and saw the faint outline of Illya near the water. He was still a distance away, but he was walking towards them.

She watched him in silence for a minute, studying his slow walk along the edge of the water, but never getting close enough to put his feet in. Although she couldn’t see it from her spot on the blanket, she could envision the yellowed bruise gripping his thigh. A mostly healed reminder of a mission in Warsaw that had gone critical. She shook her head and sighed. Despite the lovely day he was still dressed and had refused to go into the water. In fact the whole time he had looked like he was casing out a location rather than enjoying the small reprieve from work. She dipped her finger into the sand, drawing nonsense. “Solo, you’re a gambling man.”
Napoleon, who had been in the middle of pouring a glass of some rum concoction he had brought for them from a thermos, turned to look at her. A smile tugged at the corner of his lips and he recapped the thermos, taking a sip of the dink before answering, “So I’ve been told.”

She lowered her sunglasses, leaning in slightly. “What’s the chance he’ll go in the water and enjoy it?”

“On his own accord?” Napoleon said and shrugged, taking another sip. Gaby reached out, pulling the drink from his hand and taking a long sip. It tasted like pineapple and orange and something else citrusy. He frowned. “Unlikely.”

“With intervention then?” she prompted and frowned when he plucked the drink back out of her hands.

“Much higher.” Napoleon tilted his head as he looked down at her. The sun had reddened his nose and cheeks already. Luckily he had kept the loose white linen shirt on while they relaxed out of the water, otherwise she would have wagered that he’d be slightly pink on his back and shoulders. “Although it would be hard to guarantee the fun aspect of it.”

“Then I have a proposition for you,” Gaby said and sat up straight from the sandy blanket, crossing her legs under her in a fluid motion.

“Oh?” Napoleon looked out again across the beach and watched as Illya stopped, looking out at the water. Gaby could see tension in his shoulders. Not the stiff and jagged kind that she saw during missions, or while waiting for bad news, or when he was hurt. Just…tension. But they were on vacation! Or, at least, the closest they could get to it. Babysitting an embassy not under direct threat and acting as consultants for their security team was not exactly taxing for three top international spies. The fact that Waverly had even mentioned the location of the secluded beach to them said plainly that this was a moment to take to breath. And so she wanted to see the tension out of Illya’s shoulders just for a little while.

“Do you think you could get him in the water? To have a bit of fun?”

“Your definition of fun or his?” Napoleon said dryly. “Because I might have to snag a chessboard for him to enjoy dipping a toe in the water.”

“Oh, come on,” Gaby said, pushing his arm.

He shrugged, picking up the book. “Of course I could,” he said, drawing out the syllables. “But why would I want to?” He took his hat off, fixing his hair with a sweep of his fingers. Curls bounded out of place from the salt water. “A high risk, but what’s the reward?”

“I have a tin of Beluga caviar,” she offered.

That caught his attention. “Really?” he asked, and the surprise in his voice made her smirk. “And how did that happen?”

“The embassy,” she said with a shrug. “One of the gentlemen was smitten enough to offer it to me. Apparently his brother is a supplier of the stuff to the region.”

“Well,” Napoleon said taking off his shirt and folding it up and placed it on the blanket, weighing it down with his book. “I accept your wager.”

“Wonderful,” Gaby said, taking off her hat and sunglasses. Her long hair danced around in the breeze. They shook hands quickly and Gaby watched him jaunt off in Illya’s direction. She followed
a few paces behind.

“Illya,” Napoleon called. Gaby watched him turn, looking at the two of them before glancing over at their blanket. “Oh, it’ll be fine. We’re the only ones here,” Napoleon said, anticipating Illya’s comment. Gaby pressed her lips together to suppress a giggle when a look of annoyance flashed over his face. “Care for some company for a walk?”

“I just finished,” Illya said. He held his arms behind his back, looking out to the sea.

“Just to the pier and back,” Napoleon said with a smile and grabbed Gaby’s hand, pulling her next to them. “Gaby decided to reenact Sleeping Beauty and needs a walk.”

Illya looked down at her and Gaby smiled pleasantly. He sighed, turning back to the direction he had come from. “Fine.”

“Excellent,” Napoleon said. “Aren’t you hot? You’re still wearing all your clothes,” he commented as they began walking to the small pier a short distance away. It was easy to see from the blanket.

Gaby glanced at Illya’s attire. He wore shorts and a loose linen button up. A cap was turned down on his head and he carried his shoes and socks in his hands. “This is appropriate for hot weather,” Illya said dryly. Gaby had to agree. It was already a far cry from his usual stoic dark sweater and dress pants.

“Yes, yes,” Napoleon said, waving away the comment and leading the walk towards the pier. Illya glanced at Gaby with a long suffering look and she gently patted his arm as she stepped past him to follow Solo. Illya followed a moment after, his long strides keeping up with Gaby easily. “But we are at the beach, my friend, and that is not beach attire.”

“If I wear at beach, it is beach attire,” Illya countered, lips twitching with a grin. Gaby smiled up at him. Illya had dry humor, but there was no one who found Illya funnier than Illya himself. Humor that was rare and came in silver flashes like the bellies of fish in cool blue water.

Napoleon’s look over his shoulder just seemed to cement that fact. “My point is we should go for a swim. Perhaps a race around one side of the pier to the other. Our lovely Ms. Teller can be the official starter.”

“No,” Illya said.

“Well? Is that a yes?” Napoleon walked backwards as he waited for an answer. Gaby nudged him slightly with her arm and Illya frowned at her, the grave look melting away after seconds and he sighed. “Fine.”

“Wonderful,” Napoleon said. He turned around and finished the short distance between them and the water. He stretched for show, as though limbering up for an important event. Gaby giggled and Illya
looked up at the sky, as though ready to mutter a question to the universe, what did I do to deserve this?

Illya pulled off his shirt and shorts, the black and white swim trunks on already underneath. He folded the clothing up and Gaby took them from him, along with his shoes and watch, which he undid and tucked protectively into the shoe. “I’ll keep them safe and dry,” Gaby said. Illya nodded and pat her shoulder once before taking up his position next to Napoleon.

“Try not to loose too badly, Cowboy,” Illya said.

“That’s a lot of trash talk coming from someone who refused to go in the water at all today,” Napoleon replied.

Gaby held her hand in the air and yelled crisply, “Ready!” Both men shifted, ready to run to the water. He paused, watching Napoleon teeter a bit from eagerness to start. “Go!”

They ran to the water, water splashing against their legs and chest as the waves crashed into them. Illya dove in nearly the same time Napoleon did, but resurfaced just a little further ahead. It was a close race. Gaby ran to the pier, walking along side them as both swam against the incoming tide. Illya’s strokes were faster, hands cupped just slightly and elbows sharp in a way that clearly marked training. Napoleon was similar, his strokes were slower but powerful and he took fewer breaths in between. They were nearly at the end of the pier and Illya lead the turn.

Gaby jogged the rest of the length of the pier, stopping at the edge of the planks and sitting down, feet dipping down near the water’s edge. It was still close, but Illya, perhaps predictably, was the first to come crashing out of the water. He stood in front of Gaby as water ran off of him, crossing his arms and watching as Napoleon came out, wiping away the saltwater from his eyes with his hand. He looked disappointed, but Gaby could see the lightness in his eyes and shoulders that belied his true thoughts.

“And what does the official say?” Illya said.

“Illya wins,” Gaby declared. She smiled as Napoleon mock splashed the water in disappointment.

“Allright,” Napoleon conceded. He took a few steps closer to Illya, shoving his hair from his eyes and shook his head. “I guess this deserves a proper American congratulations,” he said and clapped a hand on Illya’s shoulder. “Good race.”

And then Napoleon pulled him back, toppling them both into the water as he dunked Illya.

Gaby couldn’t help the bubble of laughter that burst forth, watching as Illya sprung back out from the water, saltwater pouring off him as he sputtered. Napoleon stayed submerged up to his chin, grinning up and schooling his features into an innocent mask when Illya rounded on him. And then he took his hands, squirting a small jet of water that hit Illya’s chest and he lunged after Napoleon who grunted at the contact, both of them disappearing under the water as Illya returned the favor.

They grappled in the water, dunking each other and then splashing large waves of water at the other when they came up for air. Gaby pulled up her legs when one spay from Illya got too close to hitting her, tucking Illya’s things behind her to shield it from the possible droplets. Napoleon had dodged fish like by diving back into the water and re emerged by Gaby’s dangling legs. He grabbed her ankle playfully and she shrieked, pulling back with a laugh.

Illya took advantage of the moment of their distraction and looped his arms under Napoleon and tossed him out to sea with an inhuman heave. Napoleon went inelegantly from surprise, limbs flailing
and crashing with a loud splash. Gaby giggled and smiled brightly, cheeks hurting when she heard Illya’s chuckle.

“Like a drunk duck,” Illya said and chuckled again when Napoleon came out of the water with a gasp.

“Caught me off guard,” Napoleon admitted, once again wiping saltwater out of his eyes.

“That is because your are a terrible spy, Cowboy,” Illya said, his smile more muted, but both Napoleon and Gaby could see it a clear as day.

Gaby stood up from her spot on the pier, moving back just in case Napoleon had any ideas on trying to drag her in. Napoleon and Illya walked out of the water and she met them further up on the sand, handing Illya his clothes back. “Thank you,” he murmured and put his watch back on.

“Of course,” Gaby said and turned to see Napoleon looking over by the rocky start of the cliffs that enclosed the beach. He ran his hand through his hair and turned. “Something wrong?” she asked. Illya stopped walking and looked over his shoulder.

“No,” he answered and walked quickly over the hot sand, “but it is going to rain soon.”

Looking up at the sky, it was still beautiful and blue above them. In the distance, fat heavy clouds listlessly floated on the horizon. “Maybe we should pack up then,” Gaby said.

“No rush,” Napoleon said with a shrug.

“You are both starting to burn,” Illya said critically as he followed a step behind Gaby and Napoleon.

“Well, I plan on changing anyway.” They came to a stop at the blanket and he sat down lounging on the towel. “After I dry off fist, of course.” He plucked his hat from the sand and put it over his eyes, shading himself and settling for a nap.

Illya shook his head. “I am going to change and bring some stuff to the car,” he said as he grabbed a towel from the blanket and walked off to the small cinder block hut that served as a changing station. It had been locked up for the season when they’d arrived, but, well. Spies and all.

Gaby sat down on the blanket, pulling her hat and sunglasses back on. She wrapped a towel over her shoulders to stop them from reddening.

“Sufficient, Ms. Teller?” Napoleon asked from his spot on the blanket without removing the hat to look at her.

“Mission success,” she said and took a long breath of the warm ocean air. “Thank you.”

Napoleon didn’t say anything but she could see the cool edge of a smile from under the shade of the hat. Gaby watched the water for a while, slowly putting things away and dusting the sand off. She switched the radio off when Illya came back, his wet swim trunks wrapped up in a towel. He grabbed some of the items that Gaby had pulled together, as well as the radio, and the car key Gaby fished out of her beach tote.

“C’mon,” Gaby said, pushing Napoleon’s calf with her bare foot. “Let’s get changed.” He made a low sound of distress and she rolled her eyes. “Come on, up!”

“The beach is meant for relaxing,” Napoleon grumbled and pulled the hat away, sitting up and
fanning his hand over his eyes to look out at the water again. He looked back at the rocks, studying it for longer than just a casual glance.

“Alright, what was it?” she asked as she stood and brushed off sand from her thighs.

“There was someone climbing the rocks earlier. Just checking to see where they were.”

Gaby stopped and looked up. There didn’t seem to be anyone there. “How long ago?”

“When we arrived, but I haven’t seen them again.” He turned, noticing her watching the rocks and shrugged. “It’s a public beach. Not uncommon for others to be there.” When she didn’t move he reached down and grabbed a towel, drying off his legs more. “If it was someone with nefarious intentions, they would have gone after peril when he was along on his walk, don’t you think?”

“Perhaps,” she agreed. Then shook her head as if it could clear the distressing thought that she hadn’t even noticed anyone. “Let’s get changed.” They packed the rest of their gear, leaving the thermos, book, and blanket on the sand to grab when they were ready to head to the car. Gaby turned into the women’s room and stepped into a changing stall, not bothering to pull the curtain fully shut as there were no other occupants.

She was in the middle of shaking out the bikini top of sand when she paused, the hair on the back of her neck pricking with the knowledge that someone was watching. Gaby put the top away, slipping on the white dress she had in her bag and imperceptibly looking around the room. She was in the middle of tucking her top away when she realized three things at the same time.

One, the small cloth bag that held her bra and underwear were not in the bag. Two, her gun, which had been with the undergarments, was also not there, and third, there was a man outside trying to peer in. Gaby cursed under her breath, keeping the man (who was hidden poorly) in the corner of her eye. Napoleon must have accidentally grabbed some of her things. Which included her undergarments and gun, unfortunately.

She was fixing the thin shift dress when the man moved away from the open window, passing slowly by the thin open slits in the wall by the mirror and sink. Gaby left her bag in the stall, quietly padding barefoot over to the open window the man had been standing at and slowly glanced out of it and then back into the room when no one else was outside. The stranger’s shadow threaded in and out of the room and it blocked the light. He was slowly walking the wall and going towards the entrance. Which wasn’t even a door, it was just a staggered hall to stop people from outside looking in. There wasn’t a way to block them from coming in.

So she left. Gaby grabbed hold of the window, pulling herself up and frowning when she lightly grazed her knee against the rough stone. She leapt out, swinging over in a fluid move and grabbed hold of the window to the men’s room and hoisted herself in.

Admittedly ungracefully, she tumbled in and nearly crashed into the first changing stall and was righting herself as she heard, “I hope this isn’t going to become a habit of yours.”

She glanced over to where Napoleon was changing in the middle of the room. Naked. Again. He looked amused though and pulled on his boxer shorts.

“Sorry,” she muttered, moving her gaze to search for the bag he had mistakenly grabbed and darted over, pulling out towels and finally the bag that held her clothes. She pulled her gun out and motioned towards the entrance to the men’s room. “There was a man at the women’s room. Moved to the front.”
Napoleon looked sharply to the entrance as well, and quickly pulled on his shorts before grabbing his own gun. He walked silently to the entrance and Gaby followed behind him. Both edged the corner slowly and then something in Napoleon’s posture melted and he put the gun away.

“Peril seems to have made a new friend,” he said, turning back into the changing room. Gaby frowned and put her own weapon away, the flow of the thin material hiding it easily and she stepped out of the hall. Peril looked over with a frown.

“Was trying to look into changing room,” he growled and returned his furious glare at the young man in his grasp.

“I noticed,” she said dryly and walked over to them. “Just a peeping tom then?” she asked.

“Appears to be,” Napoleon said coming out of the changing room fully clothed. His hair had been combed back to its regular neat presentation although a wisp of a curl could be seen near the nape of his neck.

The man looked terrified, as he should have been, and eyes darted between the three of them quickly. “Is the same man from the rocks?” she asked.

“No,” Napoleon and Illya said simultaneously. Napoleon shouldered his bag while Illya glanced at her, taking stock of her frown and question.

“Did you not notice—“

“–We should go back,” Napoleon said. “What to do with Tom here, though?”

Gaby sighed and walked into the women’s room, grabbing her things and leaving the bikini bottom on rather than changing fully. She stepped back out, bag in hand and glanced at the man who was now hanging from a hook on the wall meant for towels.

“You should stay,” Illya said, “Think for a bit.” The man nodded hastily and both Gaby and Illya walked away. Napoleon had sauntered off ahead to grab the blanket and the last of their items and was back just as quick. She stood at the edge of the sand before the walkway up to the parking lot, holding back a sigh as she watched Illya’s back. So much for the tension going away for a bit.

“I still expect payment,” Napoleon said, coming to a stop next to her and apparently noticing the same thing.

“I still expect dinner and wine,” she said and started up the path.

“I’m glad we’re on the same page.”

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