Silence of the Monkeys

by MzD

Summary

AU, based loosely on the Silence of the Lambs but held firmly in the Dragonball Z universe.

A young FBI cadet, Bulma Briefs comes to South City Prison to see the most feared creature on Earth, Prince Vegeta. Only he can help stop the mysterious serial killer. Can the young but jaded Bulma get any information out of this mass murderer or will more innocents die?

Now ongoing onto its own Hannibal style sequel, though which way will it end, movie version, book or its own special spin on the tale?

Notes

Warning: This is going to be a dark tale featuring gore and human flesh eating. If you get queasy or don’t like things like that turn away now or even if you’re looking for a normal B/V romance you won’t find it here. There will not be any real romance/sex in this story. It is purely psychological and the chemistry between the couple, possible manipulation.
** Chapter 1 **

In the secluded part of South City lay a prison filled with the most terrible and insane monsters that had ever terrorised the people of Earth. One young lady, Bulma Briefs looked upon the building with some dread she tried to find the courage to go inside. This was her big break; this was what was going to help her become a member of the FBI. She buzzed at the door and was lead up to the Warden’s office. They had been expecting the cadet ever since her boss; Director Piccolo had sent word. Nobody had thought that they would have sent the fresh faced beauty that came to them that day to the hellhole that was the Asylum.

Bulma was a very pretty woman and prided herself in her appearance though lately she had let some things slide due to lack of finances. It was all in her past though what mattered was getting to interview the man she had come to see today. No, that wasn’t true man would be an inaccurate word to describe the alien. He called himself a Saiyan and even though his appearance was that of a human he was an alien monster. Bulma tried not to think about it. A lot of people had died that day 5 years ago, her own family included. She couldn’t hold onto such blame. He was where he belonged now. In a prison rotting away till he died.

“Warden Oolong will see you know Miss Briefs.” The guard told her. Bulma bowed slightly and walked inside. She was greeted by a pig, literally. Warden Oolong was a humanoid pig and just oozed sleaze as soon as she walked in.

“Why Miss Briefs, I had no idea you where such a beauty.”

“Thank you sir, now about my visit.”

“Yes, we have made the necessary preparations.” Warden Oolong assured her. “There is no way that beast is going to be able to lay one finger on you. Not that he needs to do that to kill you.” Bulma gulped she had heard about the energy balls he could produce from his hands.

“Not to worry he is unable to use those ki attacks as he called them.” Warden Oolong told Bulma as he came too close to her. “I could of course accompany you to ensure your safety.”

“That won’t be necessary.” Bulma said quickly. She was restraining herself from hitting the pig. He was incredibly annoying and if he intruded on her personal space any further she was tempted to let loose her temper but she couldn’t. She didn’t have the luxury anymore to give into those urges. Instead she gritted her teeth and tried to hold it in but the pig wasn’t taking her hints.

“As you wish, though I hope you harmed by him.” Oolong said. “You are such a delicate flower, we wouldn’t want your petals bruised.”

“Ew…” Bulma couldn’t control that and stood up. “Please excuse me before I do something I regret.”

“Okay, you can jump me later.” Oolong called after her. Bulma shuddered and tried not to retch. There were no words to fully describe the hatred she felt towards men that abused their power like that. The only thing she knew it was going in her report.
“Sorry about Warden Oolong.” Bulma looked at the man that had been standing waiting for her. He was a kind looking man with dark skin and strange red lips.

“Nothing to apologise for,” Bulma sighed. “If he came any closer to me I would have hit him.”

The man chuckled. “Warden Oolong seems to bring that out in the ladies. I’m Mr Popo the guard, I’ll be taking you down to see him.”

“What are the things I have to do, I would have asked the Warden but…” Bulma struggled to find a politically correct way to say, ‘your boss is a sexist pig.’

Mr Popo nodded understanding her meaning. “Just stay away from the plastic cell.”

“Plastic?”

“Yes, it’s the best way to conduct the ki negator field but if you get too close to the plastic he has many other ways to kill you. Just be sure to stay behind the yellow line. Only trained professionals are able to cross that line. We are able to subdue the beast with tranquillisers and gas if he gets out of hand but for an untrained person like you it is best to remain behind the line. No matter what he says to you do not cross it.”

“Right, stay behind the line.” Bulma repeated as she tightened her grip on her briefcase. “I have something to give him though…”

“I doubt that he would accept it but if you have to there’s a tray to pass things through to him.”

“I see, thank you Mr. Popo.”

“You’re quite welcome Miss Briefs, but it is a nice change to see a pretty face around here.” They walked down the stairs, going down further and further. The natural light was now a subtle glow from the top of the stairs. The neon yellow lights flickered trying to bring light into the darkness of the basement dungeon. There was no better way to describe the place that held the worst offenders on the entire planet. This part of the prison was a dungeon made to keep these people till they rotted away and died. There was no parole or getting out of this place because of good behaviour. The fiends that resided in the South City dungeon was there for life, the Saiyan being the star resident, the almighty Prince Vegeta. Mr Popo unlocked a heavy door and lead Bulma inside. A few guards looked up from their monitors surprised at seeing the slim woman smiling back at them. She could see the silhouette of the man on one of the screens. He looked so small from what they spoke about on the news.

“Is that him?” Bulma asked pointing to the screen. As she did he turned round and looked directly at the camera with a slanted grin. Bulma jumped back astonished.

“His Highness has incredible hearing,” Mr Popo explained. “Also it is best if you address him as a Prince, he seems to react to respect better.”

“I know, I remember the report I read.” Bulma answered her eyes still locked on the screen. He had turned around again and was watching the television. Apart from the insanely spiky hair he looked like an ordinary human being. She couldn't believe this was the alien responsible for all the deaths five years ago.

“Please Miss Briefs when you go to see him, do not cross the line at all.” Mr Popo told her again. “Especially when you walk down to see him, there are other prisoners in this part and it is for your own safety to stay away from their cells.”
“So I stay to the right?” Bulma asked as she looked down the small window leading into the dark corridor. She could see the light from Prince Vegeta’s room, she wanted to go there and face him. All this standing around was making her fear worsen.

“We’ll all be watching you on the monitor,” The guard said unlocking the next door to the corridor. “Just remember what we told you and you should make it back alive.”

Bulma nodded knowing they weren’t over-exaggerating the seriousness of the situation. She clutched her briefcase tighter, adjusted her hair and walked through the doors into the hallway. She stayed right up against the wall avoiding all eye contact with the demons that leered and shouted comments at her as she passed. Some whispered what they would like to do to her body, most of it Bulma tried to block out. The rapists and murderers where not something she needed to dwell upon. She made her way to Vegeta’s cell and saw the plastic chair seated just behind the yellow line. The cell glowed around the edges, the ki negator working at keeping the monster’s power drained.

He stood watching her, his arms crossed and look of superiority graced his regal features. He did seem like a Prince, though he lacked the clothes the white T-shirt and dark grey pants did nothing to hide his bulging muscles. This was the Saiyan that had killed and eaten hundreds of people all because he was hungry and they had given him disrespect as he had ‘purged’ the planet. If it had not been for the actions of another Saiyan acting in the defence of Earth then the planet would have been destroyed. The mysterious Saiyan that had saved Earth remained nameless, not even Vegeta once captured wouldn’t speak much about him. Another thing about the alien, he would not speak of say anything about himself except he was a Prince. Other than that and the observations made he was a complete unknown. “Good morning your Highness,” Bulma said dipping her head in a small bow.

“I’m Bulma Briefs I’m here from the FBI.” She held out her ID card to show her authority. Vegeta nodded,

“Let me see the card.” He said. “I can’t quite see it from here.” Bulma strained her arm out past the line and closer to the cell. Vegeta smirked as he read it fully aware of the wide-eyed stare from Bulma.

“It says cadet on the card, you’re not even fully trained,” he scoffed. “They send such a low class cadet to the Elite of the Elite, Prince Vegeta!”

“It means no disrespect,” Bulma snapped annoyed at his elitist attitude. “I’m the best of my class and I was chosen to come to you as an assignment.”

He merely gave her a slanted smile at her answer. His eyes hiding whatever emotion he felt but it was obvious he was just pushing her buttons. Bulma didn’t realise this and continued to fume, biting her bottom lip to try and keep her temper under control.

“So, Cadet Bulma Briefs FBI what do you want from Vegeta, Prince of All Saiyans?”

“I have a questionnaire for you.” Bulma said it out of her briefcase she paused as she saw Vegeta was tutting and shaking his head.

“What?” she snapped at him, he really was making her angry plus she had the built up aggression from dealing with the Warden.

“You where doing so well little Cadet, I was starting to open up and you force your little paper questions on me,” he chuckled. “I would have expected you to at least talk in a more civilised manner towards a Prince, you started off well but this little temper tantrum, dear, dear.”
“You asked me what I wanted so I told you,” Bulma said trying to calm down. She clenched her fists, burying back the anger. “How would you respond to ‘What do you want?’”

“Hmm interest retort,” Vegeta purred but shrugged and answered her question. “I would have asked ‘I want to see how you are finding this place.’ Really just a polite question about how I was.”

“I see,” Bulma said understanding the game he was playing. “Then Prince Vegeta how do you find our Planet Earth and your prison?”

“I find this planet a scab on existence desperate to be purged of all life and my little prison as you call it is as close to Hell as I would like to get.”

“You seem to like the entertainment we provide.” Bulma said pointing to the muted TV.

Vegeta frowned and looked back at her. “That is a hideous torture device, I’m too weak to destroy it. Once you’re gone it will be turned up again to drown out my hearing. They don’t like my superior senses, they need to deafen me so they feel safe to talk behind my back.”

“But you heard me in the security room.”

“It had just been switched off little Cadet for your grand arrival.” Vegeta sneered. “I have others senses to rely on so don’t let your heart bleed because of my living conditions.”

“I won’t.” Bulma said as confidently as she could. She really did want to hate this man, to be frightened but there was a charm he was giving off that captivated her. She could feel her defensive instinct weakening and she inwardly tried to remind herself that this was a dangerous alien in front of her. She looked about the small plastic cage. The TV was positioned in the centre of the room, beside that a small and uncomfortable looking bed. Then on the wall she spotted drawings in red chalk.

“I see you’re an artist.” Bulma said trying to break the silence, he was beginning to stare for too long.

“They give me paper and drawing materials,” Vegeta sighed still staring at her. “I believe they think they can analyse my mind this way. Not that they’ll ever figure out a being that is too far above them.”

“Are you glad that the government decreed that you where not to be cut up for experimenting on?”

“Like you little apes would know what to do with my handsome flesh,” he grinned, “I know fine enough what to do with human flesh, it is rather delicious.” He licked his fangs making Bulma turn away. He chuckled at her reaction; she was an amusing toy.

“There are still so many things we don’t know about you Prince Vegeta,” Bulma said. “Why do you still refuse to answer our questions?”

“Perhaps there’s never enough give, you all want something from me, what do I get out of all this?”

“Are you wanting something for answering questions?”

“You know what I want,” Vegeta grinned his fangs still showing. “I want to destroy this waste of a planet and return to my home.”

“That’s not going to happen.” Bulma said. “If someone was even going to rescue you then they’ve taken a long time about it. It’s been 5 years, no-one is coming.”
“And no-one shall.” Vegeta agreed. “It is pitifully weak to be rescued, only if you where a child would it ever be deemed acceptable to launch into something like that. Even then the child would have to prove his worth afterwards. My people would rather live without a Prince than have one that they had to rescue from a weak planet such as this. It is beneath them.”

“What does that mean that they won’t come for you because that would be considered beneath them?” Bulma asked. “Doesn’t that make you angry?”

“No what makes me angry is annoying women that ask too many questions, how many of your little paper questions have you already asked?”

“Only one,” Bulma truthfully answered. “I won’t ask anymore questions Prince Vegeta if you don’t want to talk about this.”

“No, it is only him that I don’t want to talk about.”

“Who?”

“Didn’t I say I didn’t want to talk about it?”

“But the way you said it made me want to ask who? You want me to ask you.”

“That’s an impertinent assumption from a low class Cadet, nothing more.”

“You said ‘him’, it made me want to ask who.”

Vegeta was obviously getting angry now; he paced up and down his cell glancing at Bulma. “I will not talk about the humiliation, not here, not with that PIG watching.” He pointed to top corner of his cell where a CCTV camera focused on the Prince. Bulma understood, Warden Oolong must be watching. He was a name that turned up in all of Vegeta’s files as an expert on the Prince. The sleaze would use whatever information Bulma got from him and use it as his own. She knew he was that type of person, he had met people like Warden Oolong before. They where always nice and flirting in your face and as soon as your back was turned they stuck the knife in.

“No more questions Prince Vegeta.” Bulma assured him gently. “My purpose here isn’t to upset you. It is just to get you to answer my questionnaire, Warden Oolong has no authority to take whatever you put down on it.”

“But you can’t assume that.” Vegeta said. “The pig makes me want to strip him of his skin and make crackling with it.”

Bulma covered her mouth, as much as she hated the Warden a punch would all he would get from her. “You have no limitations to your actions, do you?”

“Limitations are for the weak.” Vegeta said, “Besides I never said I was going to touch your little paper, no matter how much your little pretty face amuses me there is not a chance a bit of skirt is going to make me open up to you weak human scum.”

“I am not here as a bit of skirt!” Bulma snapped.

Vegeta chuckled, “Oh how foolish you are, you where chosen not because of being top of your class but because you look beautiful and would make any male say anything to get into your pants.”

Bulma stormed up to the plastic, she wanted to slap him across the face. ‘How dare he?’ “I am more than just a pretty face, I’m a goddamn genius!”
“Yes, so smart,” Vegeta sighed as his hand moved to the small hole and smelled the air. Bulma felt her hair being pulled into the small hole, she realised her mistake and leapt backwards. Vegeta didn’t pull on it but only had it to his nose for a fraction of a second. As Bulma rushed to move away a stray hair stayed on his hand. He looked at it as if it was a rare flower.

“You tricked me!”

“If you had been really annoying me you would have been dead by now.” Vegeta said he dropped the hand with the hair but he kept it held tight. "Just be thankful you were only slightly annoying.”

The security door at the end of the corridor opened and Mr. Popo rushed out. “Miss Briefs?!” He yelled out.

“I’m okay!” She called back.

“Leave your paper Cadet I shall write something down for you.” Vegeta said motioning towards the drawer. “Just be sure to pick it up personally.”

Bulma nodded her heart still thumping from that experience, the killer had almost had her. She placed the questionnaire into the drawer and bowed to the Prince.

“Thank you Prince Vegeta, I'll be back in a week’s time.”

Vegeta grunted acknowledgement and went to fetch the paper from the drawer. As Bulma turned to leave he watched her go all the way to the end of the corridor. He gently held the thin blue hair as a souvenir as the thick security door slammed shut.

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Author's Note: In this Universe Vegeta came earlier, before Bulma set off for her quest for the dragonballs. So she has never met Goku and the Saiyans were defeated by a mysterious person, leaving Vegeta for dead. He was captured and sent to a new installation that somehow had ki suppressing technology. A lot of this is tied up in the mystery of the story and how and why some things have happened shall be explained later. For now, we only have Bulma's knowledge of events. That the Saiyan came to Earth. A lot of people were killed in their purge and we now have the main killer Vegeta locked up. To be held for his crimes for life. Meanwhile Bulma has joined the Bureau that was made to combat any more invasions. She's determined to train herself and join this different style FBI to fight against any more invaders.

To be continued...
**Chapter 2**

Give and Take

A few days had past since the time at the Asylum but Bulma was still shaking. She waited outside her Director’s office; he would have read her report by now. The memory of that awful place in South City had given her nightmares. Not only that but the alien called Prince Vegeta, he had been able to manipulate her so much that it scared her. That was the real thing that she feared, how easily it had been for him to taunt her into getting close to him. If he wanted to he could have killed her by now something that wasn’t helping her nerves. She had promised him she would go back there, to pick up the questionnaire. Not that she thought he would fill it out with any truthful answers. He was a murdering alien that had wanted to destroy everyone on the planet.

“Mr Piccolo will see you now,” the secretary announced.

Bulma got up and entered the cool office. Principal Director Piccolo motioned for his young cadet to sit down and held up a paper.

“It seems that you where quite successful in making contact with Prince Vegeta,” he said reading it. “Though I have a report from Warden Oolong asking for more information about your visit, I don’t feel obliged to tell him.”

Bulma smiled, she was grateful that Director Piccolo had the sense to see through the Warden’s petty act.

“If you must Sir, why was I put forward to see Prince Vegeta?” Bulma asked it was something that had been bugging her since the interview. Especially when the Saiyan had mentioned she was only a bit of skirt. “It can’t be that you just want answers from a simple form.”

“Ah I see you’ve picked up your father’s intelligence.” Director Piccolo said. “Forgive me but we had to use your female charm and naivete to this case. There was a suspicion with the psychiatrists involved that he may figure out any alternative motives if we sent someone in knowing the truth behind wanting to contact Prince Vegeta.”
“What is the truth Sir?” “That we’re not after Prince Vegeta, but rather another alien.” Director Piccolo explained. “We believe that a serial killer is loose in West City that is connected to the purging mission from 5 years ago. We have no other clues other than that. Really, Prince Vegeta is the only lead for us to go on. Have you heard of Scalpel Jones?”

“The one that’s in the papers recently, of course.”

“All the leads we have point to the fact that he or ‘it’ is not human.” Piccolo explained. “That and the overwhelming evidence that Jones is using ki attacks to skin his victims alive.”

“Is it another Saiyan?”

“We doubt it, from the three we have seen on this planet the mentality is rather more up front and direct.” Piccolo said. “They don’t hide in the shadows if there’s someone they want killed they come right out and face them.”

“At least they have some warped sense of pride.”

“Indeed, these pictures have not been released to the press. It is too gruesome for the families involved to see these splashed across the headlines.” Director Piccolo set out the photographs he had ready to show. Bulma covered her mouth, she thought she was going to be sick. All the corpses where striped down like an autopsy. The skin had been completely removed and on one picture she was sure she spotted maggots or some sort of insects lodged in a cavity on the cadaver.

“What has this got to do with the suspicion of aliens?”

“The way they are cut up.” Mr Piccolo said. “From just normal appearances it seems to be done with a scalpel of some sort but under an electronic magnifier it proved that the it was burned not cut.”

“Burned?”

“Yes, just as the victims of Prince Vegeta, the ones we found that he had cut up with his ki. The marks are similar but as his was more crude there is a finesse to this dissection of the victims.”

“I suppose there is no better way to describe it.” Bulma agreed. “So this is why you wanted me to go to Prince Vegeta to ask him the connection with this murderer?”

“In a way, yes.” Mr Piccolo admitted. “Your good looks and flirtatious manner would work well in winning over the Prince but not if you knew the true motives of our interview. He would see straight through that and not talk at all.”

“So he was right.” Bulma thought, thinking about what the Prince had said. “I see so you still want me to go back to collect the questionnaire now I know?”

“It is best we admit to him now what we are up to.” Mr Piccolo admitted. “From your report on him it seemed he suspected more was to this little cadet coming to meet him and the one I received from Warden Oolong. As much as you don’t like this man, he is an expert on the Prince.”

“But I wonder how much of that the pig stole from other hard working people?” Bulma wondered but kept her mouth shut.

“We need to catch this Jones before he causes any more panic and alarm.” Mr Piccolo said. “If word got out it was another alien that had escaped our attention 5 years ago then there would be huge uproar from the public, maybe even riots. The memory of 5 years ago with Prince Vegeta and his fellow Saiyans are still fresh in everyone’s minds.”
“I understand Sir.” Bulma said. “I will try to ask Prince Vegeta for assistance but I doubt he will give anything without having something in return.”

“If it helps keep this other alien under wraps the government may agree, but do not let him know that until you have played all your cards. As you where Cadet, you’ll be speaking to Prince Vegeta tomorrow morning.” Bulma stood up and said her thanks. Director Piccolo handed her the case file on Scalpel Jones. She held onto it not sure what one young FBI cadet was doing getting wrapped up in a complex case like this. But if this helped Bulma get to the top again then she would do it.

“Bulma understand, don’t let the resentment you feel about loosing your parents to one of Vegeta’s men get to you.” Director Piccolo said as she held the door to leave. “I chose you not because of your looks or my connection with your father, but to test to see if you’re ready to put the past behind you and help this organisation against its fight.”

“I’m willing to do whatever’s necessary.” Bulma said and closed the door.

”Another reason why I chose you.” Piccolo said under his breath.

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West City was a sprawling metropolis that was forever buzzing with new technologies and people busy in their own world. But at night as the dark moonless sky came, people rushed home to safety. The news of Scalpel Jones moved fast so even if a lot of the truth was hidden from the public, they knew the rumours. It was always at night he struck and it was always a sole victim that he chose. One walking by themselves, male or female he/she/it didn’t care. But still some people ignored these little rumours, it was only things been blown out of proportion by the press. Just spooky stories to keep the people in check. A lone woman believed this, she was an independent businesswoman. She knew West City like the back of her hand this was her city, her place to shine.

Betty Walker thought nothing of the haggard man that coughed and choked in the alleyway. There were always homeless people on the streets. She thought nothing about why he had a large hood over his face. She really didn’t think anything when she saw under the light that the skin on his hand was bright pink. But she did begin to think when he came up too close to her.

“Excuse me…” She snorted in disgust but by then it was too late. There was a muffled thump as Betty Walker was grabbed by the cloaked individual and dragged off to a van just in the back alleyway. She screamed out but there was nobody around to help. All the sensible people were safely locked up in their own homes.

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A full week had past and just as she promised Cadet Briefs now found herself back at the Asylum in South City. Bulma looked down the dark corridor. The light from Vegeta’s cell beckoned her near like the proverbial moth to the flame. She now knew why she was being sent here. It had angered her slightly but then as Director Piccolo had said he needed a way to test her. He had known her parents before the incident 5 years ago. If anything Mr. Piccolo had come to her and encouraged her to put her genius into becoming a member of the FBI. She had started from the bottom, 2 years of hard training after years of being alone and depressed. She was going to join this new force, to help defend the Earth against Aliens such as Prince Vegeta. As much as she hated the Saiyan meeting him face to face was different. She couldn’t hate him as much as she wanted. He saw nothing wrong in what he had done she could tell, it was only natural to him. There was no guilt in his face only enjoyment. He got pleasure from her fearful stares.

‘Did it make him feel powerful?’ She wondered. ‘Tormenting the weak like he did?’ She tried to
hide the resentment she was feeling as she walked down the corridor. But she had become careless. She was just on the yellow line but a little too close. The fiends in the cages could smell her femininity; they wanted a piece a taste something from the bitch that walked past. A hand touched her ankle and she let out a shriek. As she jumped back she looked directly into the eyes of the one that had touched her. He looked back licking his lips. Vegeta thumped the plastic growling and the others squeaked hiding back in the cells. Bulma sat down looking at her ankle. The tights where torn and he had scraped his nails across her pale skin. It hadn’t cut her but it was too close for comfort and Bulma didn’t want to think what had touched her. Vegeta was watching her like a hawk. His eyes focused on her ankle. He didn't say anything about it but remained silent the same deep growl in the bottom of his throat.

“Sorry, I got careless.” Bulma said. “I’m back as I promised. How are you Prince Vegeta?” This seemed to snap him out of his spell and he returned his gaze to her eyes.

“I am still alive Cadet.” Vegeta said. He smirked at her. “I filled out that little test for you, now what do I get in return?”

“In return?”

“Yes, there has to be a bit of give, I don’t do things for nothing.” Vegeta kept smirking. “I wouldn’t give you any sympathy for your little attack, I won’t get anything from it but this little test I wager is worth something to someone.”

“You have a very good business mind.” Bulma said astonished.

“Surprised at finding that business is not just in your little world?” Vegeta sneered. “I bargain for my own gain, I ask again what is this test worth?”

“It’s worth not much Vegeta I’m afraid.” Bulma sighed. “It was just a way for them to introduce myself to you.”

“Ah, I see the little Cadet has had her mission briefing, very good now I’ll finally get to hear what this sudden interest in me is about.”

“They won’t set you free,” Bulma said.

“Of course not they want to keep me like a monkey in a cage.”

Bulma flinched and looked away. She didn’t want to think about him in a sympathetic light, he was still the alien monster.

“You consider yourself kept like in a zoo?” Bulma asked. “How about improving your conditions here?”

“Hmm, maybe a window.” Vegeta said. “If I am to remain here how about a view of the scum planet that holds me. These walls can get a bit boring after a while and my company is nothing but hideous. I wouldn’t want to be compared to those other maggots.” The rest of the prisoners shouted abuse at Vegeta, they didn’t seem to like him either. Bulma sat down quietly wondering she had no powers to make any deals. But then Director Piccolo had said the government might agree if it was acceptable enough.

“You know I can only ask Prince Vegeta,” she said. “I can’t guarantee that we will move you to a new place. I am after all as you keep reminding me, only a little cadet. I would only be the messenger.”
“Then tell me now, why is it that they need information from me?” Vegeta asked. “Surely they must have told the errand girl why she was doing this.”

“If I must it is about a fellow alien of yours.”

“All my comrades are dead.” Vegeta scoffed. “There are no others.”

“Then what type of creature that uses ki as a way of cutting up flesh?” Bulma questioned. “We don’t know much only that he dissects the victims and takes the skin. No tool on Earth could make marks like that on human flesh, we want to know what or whom is doing this.”

“Ah you weak humans and your need to protect each other.” Vegeta smirked. “A tactic of the weak but still it does sound intriguing, I may know but then that would give away the game. I don’t have anything else to go by. If I get case information, explicit pictures of the kills I may try to help but as I said I would want something back.”

Bulma nodded, “May I have the questionnaire you completed then as a gesture of good will?”

“Only if you are going to continue being the liaison.” Vegeta said. “I find most of your Earth experts to annoy me. I only want one person to talk to and that would be you.”

“I’m flattered.” Bulma said coolly. “I’m sure you’d love to play your head games with me.”

“Head games are all I have,” Vegeta leered. “If I had my way, head games would be ripping off heads and kicking them around.”

“That’s not going to happen.” Bulma said.

“Never say never,” Vegeta said. “If I ever do get out of here what do you think I should do?”

“I would like you to leave and never come back.”

“I would look for him, try to find him and kill the bastard.” Vegeta spat.

“You mean the mysterious Saiyan that defeated you?”

“He walks among you,” Vegeta scoffed. “A lone Saiyan in among the humans, eating your food, dressing up like you and even acts like you. He isn’t fit to be a Saiyan just a brain washed traitor.”

“Is he the one doing the attacks?”

Vegeta laughed looking at Bulma clutching his stomach.

“If he was I would embrace the fool and call him my brother!” he chortled. “No, the idiot does not harm people, he loves you little tasty flesh bags. But not in the same way I do.”

“You love us?”

“Hmm yes, your flesh is so delicate and rich.” Vegeta said. “I love how your little organs are fattened ripe for the eating, everyone of you are fleshed out and fat.”

Bulma looked at him more enraged at the ‘fat’ remark but she held it in.

“Of course I only really eat people when I’m hungry, any other time it is just barbaric,” he chuckled, laughing at Bulma’s angry face. “Ah, still want to take me on Little Cadet? Sure being my little messenger won’t go against your principles?”
“I’ll be fine,” Bulma hissed.

“I can almost taste the anger in the air,” Vegeta said holding his nose up towards the holes in his cage. “So fresh and vibrant, unlike any of the smells that come into this place.”

He loudly sniffed the air and Bulma stiffened at the sound. “You have been grazed by that scum, but it hasn’t released your blood. Yet you cut yourself shaving this morning, didn’t quite wash the blood completely off.” He paused sniffing some more, “You don’t use perfume, but maybe a moisturiser. Interesting shampoo, it’s mostly soap but with a subtle ting of fruit. Oh but that’s a shame your shoes…”

Bulma kept quiet he was taunting her again, she was not going to fall for his bait.

“You have such nasty smelling shoes, not made of skin at all but plastic.” Vegeta sighed, “It was good up until the shoes.”

“Leather shoes cost money.” Bulma announced.

“Do they?” Vegeta asked. “I never really pay much attention to your little ape’s economy. Perhaps I should start learning.” A gleam crossed his eyes, Bulma didn’t know what he had just thought of but she doubted he would ever tell her.

“Prince Vegeta, I didn’t come here to talk about the cost of shoes.”

“The questionnaire is in the tray Cadet Bulma Briefs, FBI.”

“Thank you Prince Vegeta.” She stepped up to the cell watching him. He stayed standing watching her movements as she retrieved her paper. As she sat back down Bulma felt herself letting out a sigh of relief.

“Now, shall I start telling you what I want?” Vegeta asked.

“You told me a solitary room with a view.” Bulma answered. She looked up to the wall to see his drawings, a few new ones had appeared. Now instead of red chalk there was a couple in blue. Lines of what looked like ocean and sky all abstracted into a beautiful variety of landscapes. “I see you’re already trying to choose your view.”

“If that’s what you think it is,” Vegeta grinned. “I left one in there as a souvenir for you a thank you for this.” He held up his hand, Bulma couldn’t see what was there.

“What?”

“The hair, it has an pleasant fragrance though it is loosing it potency.” Bulma choked and tried to hide her fear and embarrassment.

“Yes, what I need is to share information,” Vegeta explained. “I give you information about what I know about this alien and my views on it and you give me information.”

“I give you information?” Bulma asked not quite understanding.

“Yes, tell me about yourself.” Vegeta said. “I want to learn about the Earth, prove to me it isn’t a scab like I say. Tell me everything you can. I want to learn.” The same gleam was across his eyes as before. There was something he wasn’t saying to Bulma, a fact he was hiding.

“That’s going a bit personal.” Bulma huffed.
“That’s what I say when you apes start asking me similar questions, now it’s my turn.”

“Is that the true reason?”

“Nothing is 100% true Bulma,” he said pronouncing her name in an emphasising tone. “Truth is blunt and hurtful, facts are always lies laced around half truths and opinions. Some people call me a cannibal but that isn’t true, I’m not human so how can I eat my own kind? I am the only survivor of my race, bar that human willed fool, yet here I am in your human prison charged with cannibalism. I was only a superior being eating the weak prey that I caught.”

“You where charged with murder and violent anti-social behaviour.”

“Yes, blowing up a town was anti-social was it?” Vegeta mocked. “Your laws are pitiful, you couldn’t even sentence me to death. You will understand little Cadet that killing me would have been the best thing to have done when I escape.”

“You’re not going to escape Prince Vegeta.” Bulma snapped. “We have figured out your anatomy, designed drugs to sedate your powers. You won’t be blowing anything up ever again!”

“Careful what you say to me,” he hissed. “My humour can only last so long, disrespect me and you will know about it.”

“I mean no disrespect Prince,” Bulma snarled. “Yet here you are baiting my anger wanting me to get mad at you. I don’t want to be used as your little doll to play your mental games with. You can find another dumbass to liaison with the government for you.”

“No, the reason I rouse your anger is that you’re attracted to me,” Vegeta grinned. “I’m such a mysterious being it makes your pants wet just looking at me. You’re angry that you can’t hate me because that’s what’s expected.”

“I do hate you Vegeta!” Bulma yelled. “I hate you with every fibre of my being, your purging of our planet destroyed my very way of life. There is no way in hell I would ever think about you in such a way! You’re a monster, an alien bent on destroying everything I hold precious! If you want some female to start lusting after you because you’re a prince we’ll get you a whore because in truth that’s all you deserve! In fact you don’t even deserve that.”

“So that’s the truth is it?” Vegeta said after a long silence, “Go. Leave me be, I’ll answer nothing more from you.”

Bulma quietly placed the paper into her briefcase and stood up. She made no eye contact with him, not wanting to see his stare. She walked back up the corridor holding back any tears she wanted to cry. ‘Not here Bulma, don’t give him the satisfaction of making you cry,’ she told herself. There was giggling from the monster’s cells, she was too close to the line again. This time something flew at her face and landed in her hair. The laughter from the cells increased and the hands clawed at her leg again. She kicked the hand back stabbing her heel down. The inmates all began shouting and throwing abuse at her. The security door opened and the guards ran in with the hoses. They began spraying into the open barred cells pushing them all back with the water.

“Cadet!” Vegeta yelled at her. Bulma went up to him as the Prince was pushed up against the plastic.

“I will do this for you,” Vegeta said. “But remember our deal, you ask questions, I ask questions a simple exchange. I think you should look around the east side of South City. You might find something worth looking at. Go see the round building and come back to me and tell me what you find. Then we shall start from there.”
“Thank you Prince Vegeta,” Bulma said, then turned and ran past the rest of the chaos of the taunting prisoners.

Chapter End Notes

Author’s Notes: So getting interesting? I read the original book and watched the movie years ago and I want to try and do this story with my own twist. Not just pick two characters from separate universes and plonk them in another. For a change I want the characters to stay in character well, I’ll try. Which is why Bulma’s getting angry instead of the cooler Clarice’s actions. Yeah and as you all can gather it really is a merged world of Dragonball and the Silence of the Lambs. So differences are going to appear.
The Abandoned Building

Chapter Summary

Bulma follows Vegeta's clues that leads her to a nostalgic building.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Dragonball Z or Silence of the Lambs. I am not making any profit from this story. The original characters are not based on anyone in real life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 3

The Abandoned Building

The Asylum was still in chaos as Bulma left her mind racing. She had just avoided an inquiry from Warden Oolong. It was obvious he was annoyed at the questionnaire that she had retrieved from Vegeta and now there was the riot in the main dungeon. That only added to the annoyance the pig had towards Bulma. He had tried to stop her leaving but he had been called away to help clean up the mess. She would hear about it when she returned to FBI headquarters near West City. But for now she was free in South City where she had to go on a mystery hunt.

Why she trusted what Vegeta said she didn't know. He was still the man-eating murderer she had condemned like the rest of the population. She hated him for what he was and had done. There was no redemption for someone that didn't feel any remorse for his actions. He took pride in it, also the fact that he had revealed so many truths about himself. He had said he was the only survivor of his race, he somehow didn't count the mystery Saiyan. This was something new. Vegeta had never told anyone before. It was assumed that there was a planet of Saiyans somewhere just waiting to pounce. Also he had mentioned the mysterious Saiyan and how he thought like a human. In truth he had told her more than anyone, Vegeta trusted her. This was the fact that suddenly dawned on her as she drove to the east of the city.

There were so many questions she wanted to ask but she guessed this was as much as she was going to get from him. Warden Oolong still had his spy camera and Vegeta didn't want to say too much. It was obvious how much contempt he held for the pig. She looked out the window of her car searching for the building. She felt stupid looking for something Vegeta had told her to, but it was her only lead. She wanted to help solve this case. It wasn't a matter of anything that these young people where being kidnapped and taken somewhere to be tortured. The case file on Scalpel Jones told her that much. Parts of bodies where missing from the victims but it was always something different. Bulma couldn't understand the killer's mind, the motivation and need where something she couldn't spot. Other cases like this it would be sexual or fantasy fulfilling, but not this one. There was something cold and clinical about the way it had all been taken care of.

She slammed her foot down on the brake this was it!
The round building of an abandoned Capsule Corporation facility loomed down at her. She felt a pang of homesickness but tried to let it quell down. She couldn't trust her inventions anymore. She needed to be more than just an inventor; Bulma wanted to become a force to fight these aliens. With the FBI she could do that and if she could use her genius to help then she would give them it. She walked up to the building her gun secluded under her suit jacket. If there was Scalpel Jones inside she could take him down now!

**

Betty Walker opened her eyes and wished for freedom. She didn't know how long she had been down in this dark dank hole but she wanted to go home. She wanted her mommy. What she wanted was to be somewhere that wasn't here! The silhouette of the monster that kept her appeared above her.

“Eat.” It hissed.

She couldn't tell if it was male or female. She was a prisoner, she couldn't tell how long it had been, weeks maybe days she didn't know. Food was thrown down on top of her with a messy slop noise. It did this three times a day. It would throw food at her and expect her to eat it. It tasted horrible, she suspected it was drugged. Everytime she got so hungry that she would want to taste the foul slop she fell unconscious.

“Let me out of here!” Betty cried. “I wanna go home.”

“Don't we all,” The stranger said sarcastically. “But it will eat now, no demands from stock!”

“I'm not stock!” Betty yelled, her voice starting to crack, “I'm a human being.”

“The Stock will eat then we'll start to take.” It said mysteriously.

“What the hell…” Betty whispered as she kicked the slop away from her. She hated the muck and didn't want anymore. She hated the thing, whatever it was.

“It will EAT!” The dark creature said. All of a sudden the frightful scene was interrupted by a faint knock.

“Stay silent!” It warned. “HEY, HEY, I'M DOWN HERE! HELP ME!” “It will stay SILENT!” It threw down a cylinder that spewed out purple gas. The frightened girl coughed and spluttered, her voice completely gone. The figure hunched across as the knocking continued. It picked up its disguise and made its way to the door.

****

Bulma knocked again, the Capsule Corporation was no longer operational but the building might have new owners that had security guards on patrol. It was better to check she decided. Besides it was only a faint lead from the Saiyan Prince, for all she knew he could be sending her straight into a trap. She gave a final knock, the night air starting to chill her; she was getting really fed up. The shutter finally juddered and opened.

“Hi, Bulma Briefs FBI.” She said in her most confident voice and holding up a card.

**

The creature looked at the card held out to him. “Flower delivery?” It asked, his disguise mask crinkled slightly as it tried to comprehend. “I didn't ask for any ...flowers.”
“Well sir, we have your address here.” The Deliveryman said putting his ID away.

It squinted at the print, “That's across the street.”

“Oh I'm terribly sorry.”

“Hmph, that's okay.”

“Have a nice day sir,” The Deliveryman said as he ran to the correct address.

“Filthy flowers,” The creature hissed and closed his door.

**

“FBI?” The security guard asked.

“Yeah, I'm checking out a lead.” Bulma said. “Do you mind if I have a quick check of the building?”

“I dunno,” The Guard said scratching his head. “Not sure if I should be able to let you in without the right authorisation.”

“Well, I could go back to my head office in West City and ask for the authorisation but that would take another day and it really is just a quick check.” Bulma said fluttering her eyelashes.

“Okay,” the guy said giving in as if she was a child asking for candy. “Just let me come with you.”

“Sure, I don't mind.” Bulma entered and took out her pocket torch from her bag. (It is well known that all FBI agents should have a torch.)

“This used to be an old laboratory for the Capsule Corporation, say Briefs that name does sound kinda familiar.” The Guard said.

“It's a really common name.” Bulma lied. “There's tons of Briefs in South City.”

“I didn't know that.” The man said.

“What's in these boxes?” Bulma asked. “I thought all the Capsule Corporation equipment was taken away.”

“This is just left over junk that no-one wanted.” The Guard said. “I don't know why they need it guarded 24 hours but it pays good money.”

“I see.” Bulma glanced into the nearest crate. She spied another one close by that looked like it was almost open.

“Are you sure it's okay to do that?” The Security Officer asked as he watched Bulma opening the box.

“Oh it's fine, it's already open see.” Bulma said. “I'm just nudging it to get a better look.” Bulma moaned disappointedly as she saw all the box contained was rusted Bunsen burners and microscopes.

“Aw gee is that all?” The Guard asked.

“Looks like I should check the next room.”
“Do you know what you're looking for Miss?”

“I know when I find it, sorry I never caught your name.”

“Dave Burns.” He held out his hand but Bulma just smiled and carried on.

“Nice to meet you Dave, this must be awfully lonely in a place like this.”

“Not really, eh do you mind if I go make a quick call?” Dave asked. “It's time for me to check in with my Head Office.”

“Sure, I won't touch anything.” Bulma said still smiling her eyes focused on the box. As soon as he was gone Bulma ran over to the crate and moved the lid, she peered inside hoping to find some hidden secret. All she could see was empty capsules. ‘Great Bulma good detective work.’ She sarcastically said to herself. She picked up an empty capsule and pressed the button, it made a faint hissing noise but it was broken as she suspected. It was crates of broken empty capsules. She kicked the box and went over them all, just to check. They all had the same label on them `default stock.’

She glanced around there wasn't anything worth protecting here. If this was just a warehouse filled with faulty and out of date capsules then why hadn't they been disposed of? Seeing as her father's company went bankrupt five years ago, she still remembered a lot about it. She had been making all her preparations to take over after her father retired but the Saiyan attack made sure that wouldn't happen. At 15 she had been orphaned and left to stray. She wiped her eyes hoping to wipe away the memories that this warehouse was giving her. She couldn't let herself mope on the past anymore. She was doing something about it. She was a FBI agent ready to take on all those murderous aliens that took lives away.

Bulma leaned on the boxes as she kept looking around the place. Had Vegeta sent her on a wild goose chase? One that he would taunt her about when she return to question him. She felt like such a fool trusting one of those murderers. Bulma moved into the next room, the boxes although looked the same as the one in the previous room had one thing missing, the Capsule Corporation logo. 'This has to be it!' Bulma beamed proud at herself. She pushed at the largest box; it was huge big enough to hold a small car. Which wasn't right as any large equipment should be contained in a capsule. Bulma got her crowbar and worked away at the hinge. It broke off and with a loud clatter the box completely opened. The Security guard Dave came rushing in to see what the noise was about.

“Silly me I nudged it and the box almost exploded!”

“Don't worry I'll have the correct paperwork round by tomorrow…now what's this?” Bulma turned her attention back onto the mysterious object and was amazed. It was a space ship, a huge round space ship. The design was similar to that of the Saiyan invaders but there was something different about this. There was no Vegeta stamp as she had come to call it, the crest of the Saiyan Prince. All of the Saiyan space pods had this crest on it. Vegeta denied that it had anything to do with him but it was all over his clothes that they had recovered. He was the only one with the crest on his person.

“So this didn't come in the same group as Vegeta?” Bulma gulped, she drew closer looking for clues.

“Miss I wouldn't really want you to touch anything…” The Security Guard warned.

“Your company has been hiding Alien technology without the FBI knowing about it. I wouldn't worry about just your job Dave.” Bulma sighed. This was quite a serious matter. The Space Pod
looked in better condition than the other Saiyan space pods. She clicked a few buttons on the side and the pod opened.

'Yes, it is the same as Vegeta's and his bunch of savages.' She looked down at the abandoned clothing, the armour that Vegeta and his crew wore on their first visit. This space pod hadn't been opened; it had only been boxed and put into storage.

“Well done Dave Burns for letting me in,” Bulma said. “This clearly means that we have some charges to file against your employers.”

“Oh no…” Dave groaned.

“I'm sure our offices are always short of a security guard or two.” Bulma smiled. “I could put in a good word for you.”

“Could you?”

Bulma nodded.

“Then I'll leave you to it miss, I really need to tell my boss now.”

“Remember, I've got all the proper paperwork!” Bulma winked. She let her flirty facade drop as soon as Dave scurried off. Bulma didn't know what to do; it was completely out of her depth. The only thing she could do was look for more clues and call for back up, asking for the paperwork to come on the way.

She picked up her phone and made the call, luckily her boss was in late. Director Piccolo was surprised at her announcement that she had found an alien craft. But he was quick to pick up that she needed forms and red tape cut as soon as possible. This may be tied up to his case or it may not. Bulma wasn't 100% sure either way she had managed to find something thanks to the murderer, Vegeta's help. Although this could have been a huge coincidence, Bulma didn't believe it for a minute.

She stood back from the craft as she hung up her cell. This was what she joined the FBI for, sure she could have been in the labs but this fieldwork was worth it. Coming here and finding something like this! She checked about the rest of the room it smelled quite strange almost as if someone was growing mushrooms. But there was something else a much muskier smell. It was coming from the back of the room. Bulma move towards it the stench getting stronger as she covered her mouth. A sheet was covering whatever was in the corner. Bulma lifted it up carefully her gut clenching as her imagination went wild. The sheet was whipped off and revealed its secrets.

The young cadet gasped as she saw the remains of a dead body. A human body, one that had been there for at least 3 years maybe more. 'It looks like a mummy from a museum,' Bulma thought, 'But how could something like this be in an old Capsule Corporation building?' She kept looking at it her morbid curiosity wanting to know more. She could see moisture beside the cadavers mouth. She wanting to know everything about this person's death. Along the side of the wall she saw strange burn marks that outlined the victim. 'Had this person been burned alive?' She wondered but marked it off the list this was not the corpse of a burn victim.

“Oh my god…” Bulma turned to see the shocked face of the Security guard, “Lets get some air Dave...” Bulma said to him. She was starting to feel nauseous the adrenaline was wearing off. She leaned against the wall as she felt her way along to the exit. As soon as the cool night air hit her Bulma buckled over feeling her stomach churn. Dave the security guard had left her alone as he went to light up a cigarette.
“Do you mind if I have one?” Bulma asked weakly. “I'm trying to quit but I can't not just now.”

“Oh yeah sure...” Dave handed her over one from his pack and gave her his lighter. Bulma took a moment to place it in her mouth and then sparked the lighter. The thick smoke filled her lungs and reminded her she was alive. She took a deep breath of the cool air and handed back the lighter. She felt her hand tremble as she tried to puff on her cigarette. The bitter taste became soothing for her though her lungs felt like they were on fire. Her mind was racing as she tried to bring everything together. The body, the spaceship, Scalpel Jones and Vegeta. In some way these were all connected. As much of a genius as she was she wasn't sure if she had the mind to solve this case. She didn't know how to figure out how people worked, she couldn't figure out this killer. She needed Vegeta's help to see into the mind of this murderer.

Whoever or whatever Scalpel Jones was, Vegeta knew. He had seen or knew aliens like him, he knew of the motives of the drives to kill. This wasn't out of sexual pleasure, revenge, wrath or anything as simple as a normal killing. She sighed and stubbed out the cigarette, she wished she hadn't smoked it now. The taste of nicotine was in her throat and she felt like having a drink in a bar. She stood up and tried to get her professional manner back. The flashing lights in the distance told her the reinforcements were arriving. As soon as she got the body report she knew what she had to do, she had to see the Saiyan Prince again. She needed Vegeta.

**

In South City Asylum Vegeta looked up to his tiny barred window. His acute Saiyan hearing could make out the sirens. Even though he was dulled by the restraints of his cell this bought a smile to his lips and he continued with his deep blue picture. He swept a blue/green chalk adding hair to his figure. Yes, this was getting interesting for him. He looked up to the camera and smirked.

“Tell Bulma I hope she found it.” He said knowing full well Oolong would hear. He continued with his figure drawing a dark black being added behind the figure, making it seem like a looming shadow.

“Yes, Bulma is very interesting...”He whispered. “Maybe even my key to escape and revenge.”

**

Chapter End Notes

Author's note: Well there you are chapter 3, not much from Vegeta but then he'll have more next chapter. Do wait till then!
Chapter Summary

A Mayor's daughter is kidnapped by the killer and the stakes are raised.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Dragonball Z or Silence of the Lambs. I do not make any money from this story.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 4

A Life at Stake

Bulma lay down on her bed as she tried to mull over in her head what exactly happened the other night. She had listened to the murderer and trusted his advice, explored a building to find a three year old body that had died a mysterious death.

“Hey... don't space out on me!” Her roommate said.

“Oh sorry, I've got a lot on my mind.” Bulma said.

“No kidding!”

“Launch it's not as if I got told by Vegeta 'go here there's a body','” Bulma sighed. “How could he have know about something that happened 3 years ago?’”

“Gee I don't know,” Launch shrugged. “I'm more a combat person than a thinker I'll leave those kinds of things for genius's like yourself.”

“Thanks...” Bulma sighed, “Damn I could really need a smoke...”

“I thought you quit?”

“Seeing a dead body can make life seem really short to care.” Bulma moaned.

“Okay that's it time for a us to go round the assault course!” Launch pulled Bulma up on her feet and threw her trainers at her. “We're going for a jog!”

“Can't I leave the running for you? You're the fittest one!”

“No excuses, our physical examine is going to be coming along soon, you can't slack off and start smoking again!”

Bulma gritted her teeth hating the fact that Launch was right. She didn't like being told what to do
but she guessed she would have to get used to it. Being an FBI cadet was tough and soon it was going to get tougher. She just hoped that she didn't have to worry about Vegeta for a while. Even though she had a hundred things she wanted to ask him. It was as if there was some hidden link that she was missing. Something that connected him with the alien that must have appeared three years ago. She shook her head trying to loose these thoughts about Vegeta, Launch was shouting at her and a jog really looked good.

**

The news crew gathered around a large hallway. An urgent press conference had been called by the Mayor of West City. There hadn't been such a call since the Saiyans had landed 5 years ago. It had been peaceful times since then. The mixture of photographers, journalists, television crew and police waited patiently as they could see the Mayor in the background. He was looking quite stressed and tired and already the journalists were making frantic notes. This was going to be big, they could smell it. Some of the reporters had spotted well known members of the FBI. This had to be something serious, something that might mean another alien invasion. The Mayor took the news stand and straightened his tie. A layer of sweet graced his brow and he mopped at it briefly. The crowd remained silent, all except the sound of the news reporters talking directly to their camera's could be heard. “Mayor Walker has taken the stand, we’re all waiting to see what is so important to call this emergency news conference,” The reporter said into her microphone.

“We were only notified an hour ago and.... oh I believe Mayor Walker is going to speak, I'll let him tell us what this is about...”

“I come to you today bringing urgent news, my daughter has been kidnapped.” There was a murmur among the crowd. “There has been no ransom note nor have we had any phone calls from the kidnapper. We know she was taken 5 days ago in this city, she was spotted being bundled into a van and that was the last we have seen of her...” The Mayor paused as he tried to find his voice again. “I'm asking as a father please for the of my only child, Elizabeth to be returned to us. Her mother is frantic and wishes to only hold her in her arms.”

The sadness showed in the Mayor's face, as he continued his plead. “This is a Security camera of Elizabeth's last known moments, please watch and if anyone has any additional information my wife and I will be very happy. We are offering a large reward for her return, 5 million Zeni. If you witnessed the kidnapping of Elizabeth and can give us any hints more rewards could be available. We are not interested in punishing the criminal, we only want our daughter, Elizabeth back.” As the Mayor said this the back screen started showing the van and daughter. The white van was hidden and it was hard to make out the details. The cameras focused on the screen as they watched Elizabeth Walker getting kidnapped by a cloaked individual. This was big news, there was a huge reward. The reporters lapped up every word and scribbled notes and took photographs. The news started being broadcasted instantly, across the globe the news of the kidnap was aired.

Bulma watched at the news from the FBI cadet recreation room. She made a quick analysis of the Mayor's tactics.

“Seems to be trying to humanise the victim,” Bulma said, chewing her pen. "He keeps saying her name and using she as much as possible."


“Cigarettes,” Bulma hissed chewing her pen harder. Launch giggled and looked back to her own book.
It was a minor incident, the kidnap of a daughter but it did hold a hidden meaning to someone. Vegeta watched from his cell. The only time he actually paid attention to what the humans said. He noticed something and smirked. Oh yes, he knew the woman would be back. Things were going to get interesting from here on in. He looked up to the camera and smirked.

“Tell the Woman that HE has got that girl,” he said. He waited, it was so predictable these Earthlings. Such patterned based creatures, he heard the anticipated clink of the heavy door being opened. Warden Oolong walked briskly down the corridor. Vegeta tried to restrain his chuckle.

“What do you mean 'Tell the Woman that HE has got the girl!?'” The Warden snapped. "WHO?"

“You should address me correctly if you're wanting an answer Swine.” Vegeta huffed. “I will only speak to the woman....”

“That little spec of a girl that you're obsessing about!?” Oolong ranted pointing at the portraits lined up against the cell wall. “She’d never let a monster like you into her pants!"

“She'd never let a Swine like you in either...” Vegeta said, knowing full well what consequences came from saying such a thing. The shock of pain was instantaneous, Oolong pulled the lever beside Vegeta's cell and he was hit with a hundred volts of electricity. It was enough to kill an ordinary human being but it couldn't kill a Saiyan. Even with the dampening shield draining his power, his body was still strong and could survive from being fried by the electricity. It still hurt though, Vegeta grunted in pain as he restrained from screaming out. He hunched over panting and waiting for another blast from Warden Oolong's toy. It never came, looked up to see the angry pig watching him from behind the glass.

“I'll pass on your message, Vegeta,” Oolong whispered. “But don't expect to be rewarded, we have other ways of finding out what you know without waving a pretty girl in front of you.”

Vegeta smirked as he heard the pig leave. He wasn't going to say anything more, it gave the Warden too much satisfaction to hear his broken voice. He would wait till they sent the woman. The pig was bluffing if they had any way of making him talk as Oolong threatened they would have done it a long time ago. No, this was going to have to go the old fashioned way, from a simple chat. The planet wasn't advanced enough to have any psychics that weren't fakes. He’d seen plenty from the television all vowing they could see ghosts or speak to the dead. If he was a prisoner on any other planet then the psychics would have been brought in to tear the information from his brain. He rolled over onto his back and looked at the familiar and hated ceiling. This was all now a waiting game and Vegeta had been waiting for almost five years now. It was nothing to wait another few weeks. He winced as the TV changed to the evangelist channel and the sharp voice of the man preaching yelled out. He covered his ears and tried to block it out.

'Yes, all I have to do now is wait.' He thought, 'The woman will come to me soon enough,'”

**

Two days later....

**

In a small office a young cadet entered her superior's office. She looked as if she was being worked too hard and had bags under her blue eyes.
“Ah so glad you came Bulma, please sit down.” Bulma nodded and said her thanks to Director Piccolo. This was the second time this week she had been in the Head of the Department's office. The portraits along the wall were starting to become familiar to her.

“I assume you've read over my report sir.”

“Yes, and I think it's very interesting but still didn't explain why you felt the need to go to that warehouse in South City.” Bulma blushed she had tried to omit anything too personal, what could she say she trusted what a murderer said? “Um... it's hard to explain in words Sir it was just a gut feeling.”

“Ah...” Director Piccolo said, “So when Prince Vegeta spoke to you here in the confusion of the controlling of the prisoners, he never said anything of value.” He placed a photograph down on the desk it showed Bulma right up against the cell wall talking to the Prince.

“What he said was crude and not something I'd like to repeat.” Bulma said blushing again. “He mentioned something to me about a warehouse but it was incredibly vague. I went to the warehouse by my own violation.”

“Yes it was in the report and what of the questionnaire?” Director Piccolo asked.

“I'm still reading through it Sir, I'm almost finished but I've been really busy with my classes.”

“Yes, I understand, but now we'd like you to concentrate on helping us be a liaison for Prince Vegeta he has chosen you and it is clear he knows something.” Director Piccolo's face became grim. “Have you heard on the news about the Mayor's daughter?”

“Yes Sir.”

“Prince Vegeta saw the news report and made another of his vague comments, perhaps hinting that Scalpel Jones has the girl.”

“How can we be sure?”

“We can't Bulma, that's the problem so it's not as high a priority as it should be but the Mayor has ordered that we use any leads to find his daughter. If it is Scalpel Jones that has her then she could still be alive.”

“I read the report Sir.” Bulma shuddered. “The scientists believe that he keeps his victims alive for weeks trying to fatten them up for whatever reason.”

“Yes, so we may have some time but not much, you're going to South City today and I'd like a copy of the questionnaire and whatever else smallest detail you've omitted from your previous report.” Piccolo said sternly. “We don't have time to skirt around any politeness, I want all the facts crude or not.”

“Yes Sir I understand.” Bulma stood up.

“Here's an envelope with all the necessary information your plane leaves in four hours, make sure you're on it.” Director Piccolo said, “Please remember to be careful Bulma, this creature though he looks human is far from it. I want a phone call from you after your interview with Vegeta. I want you to stay safe, your mind and body.”

“I understand Sir but Prince Vegeta is a monster I know that.” Her bottom lip trembled slightly as she spoke. “If he hadn't come to this planet then my parents would still be alive and I would have a
business to inherit instead of worrying about FBI training.”

“Well, I can relieve you of that worry Bulma.” Piccolo said. “Your tutors have been informed of your private mission for the FBI and they know you will be absent these next few weeks as you help with our case.”

“Thank you Sir,” Bulma sighed. Piccolo noticed the sigh, but he intended to ignore it. “The plane is leaving in four hours Cadet Briefs, you best make preparations now.”

“Yes sir!” Bulma said and turned quickly to leave.

“I want all the information you retrieve from Vegeta. A life depends on you now Bulma. Don't let that young girl down.”

“Understood Sir,” Bulma said as she left. Though part of her was dreading what waited for her. The monster Vegeta was the only thing that had ruffled her resolve. These past few years all her focus had been on her aim of becoming a Federal Agent, to investigate and stop aliens, killers and any law breakers from changing people’s future. She had a future five years ago, now all she had was a cadet agent being used as a message girl between a killer she hated.

She arrived at her room and collapsed on the floor, why did she need to go back there so soon? It was a few minutes before Bulma could find the strength to stand up again. She needed to do this, if she didn't face him now then he would forever haunt her. There was a life on the line now. A girl probably about the same age as her. She couldn't let this happen again. Not to another person just like her. That was why she had joined the FBI now she had a chance to start doing what she wanted to do. She just wished it didn't involve the one that was responsible for changing her life so much. He was the monster she had blamed for so long for the deaths of all those people, of her parents. Bulma knew if she needed to move on with her life she had to face this demon. There was no silencing the screams of the past until she did this.

**

A dry scream cried out as a young girl woke up from her nightmare into a real living nightmare. Betty Walker didn't know how long she'd been lying on the floor for. She didn't know how long this thing was going to keep her alive. She had refused his food but she was starting to get too hungry. Anything was starting to look good for her now. The slop the he threw down at her everyday, it was drugged with God only knows what. It always made her collapse and wake up with a sick feeling in her stomach. Her father had to be looking for her by now. Even though she was independent of her parents he still looked out for her.

“Daddy...” She sobbed. “I don't want to die...”

“It will be quiet!” Hissed the voice.

“I don't want to die...” She repeated.

“It makes unnecessary noise!” The voice yelled. A high pitch noise came out of nowhere and Betty rushed to cover her ears. She didn't know what the sound was but it always made her fall unconscious. She struggled to stay awake but it hurt so much. She sobbed as she felt like her ear drums were going to explode. She gave one last cry of protest and then dropped to the ground. Something jumped into the pit and landed beside her. The thing inspected her body pinching the skin tightly. It made a clucking noise and threw the arm back onto the ground.

“Its not fattening up...” The monster hissed. “I picked a stubborn one.” It kicked the girl making a
strange clucking noise and leapt out of the hole. The hole was at least 8 foot deep but this seemed like a small jump for the strange alien.

“Just this last one, then I will be ready...” It hissed, “Fatten up my little stock, we need you to be bigger. How am I going to reach the Prince till then.”

It walked in a crab like fashion out of the prison room and into a slightly cleaner but still dark room. It pulled at some papers and looked at its prize. A large board pasted with yellow glue of different newspaper clippings. All of them very old looking and as if they'd been taken from the garbage. Each news article was about a certain Saiyan and the invasion. It made a different clucking noise as if laughing.

“Soon I'll find you Prince...” It clucked. “Soon you'll be dead just like that human scum will be.”

**

Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: Ooh, mostly talking this chapter and no Bulma Vegeta interaction. I think that was why I wanted to write this story for the B/V chatting, zero sex but plenty of chemistry.

Next chapter: Bulma's back to the dungeon and facing the Prince again.
Chapter Summary

Bulma revisits Vegeta in his cell.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Dragonball Z nor Silence of the Lambs. I don't make any moeny from this story.

Chapter 5

Visitor

The South City Prison for the Criminally insane hadn't changed, it was still a tall grey building with zero endearing characteristics. Bulma Briefs tried to find her courage, after a unrestful sleep in a hotel she had been dreading this morning trip. She had things to ask Vegeta but she knew it would come a price. He would want to know information about her and her past. Ammo for him to use against her if she did tell her. She gripped her briefcase tight, it contained information for Vegeta about this case. She had papers for the Warden that she knew he would ask for. This was her third time here. Bulma wished this was finally her last time, but she doubted it. Bulma flashed her ID to the guards and made her way inside. Warden Oolong was in his office and seemed to be refusing to meet her. Mr Popo was standing there in his place.

“Nice to see you again Cadet Briefs,” He said, “Everything's been made ready though it might seem a little different from last time.”

“Okay, I'm ready.” Bulma said. “Just take me down there. If I hang around here I might not find the courage,” She winced as an inmate let out a loud scream in the background. Bulma warily followed Mr Popo down to the place she had so many nightmares about.

“It's changed a little since you last came,” Popo explained. “All the other inmates have been removed. There was an accident....”

“An accident?”

“The man from the cell next to Vegeta, Donny swallowed his own tongue.” Mr Popo said. “We don't have much proof but we believe Vegeta's midnight whispering to the man drove him to it.”

Bulma looked appalled. “Was that the man that threw that stuff at me?”

“Don't take that as a compliment.” Popo said. “He just used it as an excuse to get rid of his neighbour. He hated Don as much as Warden Oolong, it was only a matter of time really.”

“I see.”

“Even though there's only Prince Vegeta down there, the rules still apply.” Popo said. “Stay behind the yellow line and don't let him intimidate you. You're all alone down there if something were to
happen it would take us a minute to get to you. That would be all the time the Prince would need to
destroy you.”

“But I thought he was as weak as a kitten because of that draining shield.”

“Ever been scratched by an angry kitten?” Popo asked. “He may be weak but that only means he has
the normal strength of an average human. His strength before the shield was probably a level you
couldn't imagine.”

Bulma was reminded of the time she gave into his provoking and went up against the barrier, he had
only taken a single hair, but what if he hadn't liked her. She would have been killed. “I'll try to
remember.” Bulma said faintly.

“Well here we are ‘ma'am.” Popo said and pointed to the door. “We put a chair out for you and I'll be
watching. If anything happens it'll be a few minutes before my men and I can get to you.”

“Understood.” The thick door opened and Bulma made her way down the dreaded corridor. The
same cold light beckoned her forward. The empty cages that had once held screaming prisoners were
silent. It felt eerier than before and Bulma concentrated on the chair, putting one foot in front of the
other. As she got closer she could see the Prince standing in the middle of his cell as before. His arms
crossed as he watched her walking.

“Cadet Bulma Briefs you're late,” he said. “I didn't know I'd made an appointment Prince Vegeta.”
She said sitting down and staring directly at the saiyan. “I asked for you personally, aren't you
flattered?”

“Not really, I wasn't aware that I had made such a good impression.”

“Maybe not a good impression,” Vegeta sneered. “More like your easily readable face and gullible
character. Did you find the building I mentioned, I bet you found the first one. It must have been a
pretty corpse.”

“The scientists haven't finished analysing it.” Bulma said. “We know the victim is human but what
we don't know is why you knew where it was. It happened three years ago. I don't suppose you
could shed some light on that Prince Vegeta?”

“I'm sorry, that's all I really want to say on that subject.” Vegeta said. “I have sources I'd like to
protect.”

“Sources that you're not going to name I take it.”

“I want to change the subject Bulma, what happened three years ago is old news.” Vegeta purred.
“Let's talk about what's on the news now.”

“You mean the Mayor of West city's daughter?” Bulma asked. “That's another mystery you've
brought up Prince Vegeta. How did you know from a blurry CCTV footage that the man that
abducted Elizabeth was the one and only Scalpel Jones?”

“I never said that, I only implied that HE had got the girl.” Vegeta said. “You humans read too much
into things when it's really quite simple.”

“It would make it simpler for us if you'd just tell us.”

“No, that would be easy and painless.” Vegeta said. “I want something back in return for what I
give. An exchange, as we talked about last time.”
“You've got the solitary you asked for even if you enforced that yourself.”

“The vermin tainted my senses, sharing the same air as them made me want to puke.” Vegeta sneered. “That fat slob took the easy way out, I had much nicer plans for him.”

“But you can't do anything Vegeta, the most you could do was talk to him.”

“Whatever makes you feel safe Cadet.” Vegeta smiled crookedly and made Bulma shudder. “The fat slob was only in this prison because he'd raped some women. Really it makes me wonder about this world's justice.”

“What do you mean?”

“That he actually got punished for raping women, in my home world that would be considered a perk of being a male.” Vegeta chuckled. “It's a way of putting women in their place.”

“That's disgusting!” Bulma snapped.

“Oh I see it's disgusting, shall we change the subject again you look as if you're going to explode with rage.”

“I'm fine...” Bulma hissed.

“If it makes you feel any better little Cadet I've never raped a woman.” He stepped forward looking directly towards Bulma. “Every woman I've met have either thrown themselves at me like some desperate animal in heat or they've been persuaded by my charm. I can be very persuasive.”

“You're not that charming.”

“Hmm, I see, is that what you think.” Vegeta nodded. “Then tell me, why did you go to that building that I told you about, the one I couldn't possibly have known was there.”

“I believed you...” Bulma whispered.

“There you go see, I'm persuasive.” He smirked again showing that he had won this small battle. “Well, I feel I've said enough. Now I need to know about you, Cadet Bulma Briefs.”

“I'm a cadet in the FBI soon to graduate and become a full agent.” Bulma said. “That's all I really want you to know.”

“But I'd like to know more, this is an exchange is it not?”

“Why is my personal life important for this case?” Bulma asked.

“So I believe that I can trust the woman that is my liaison.” Vegeta stated shrugging his shoulders.

“No, it's so you can get information about me so you can play those head games of yours.”

“It's all about trust Bulma, if I get to know you human woman, I'll trust you. If I trust you I'll feel I can help you and solve this little case for you. Then you can be the star of the FBI and run home to daddy to tell him how well you did.”

“My father is dead.” Bulma said in a flat voice.

“You seem quite angry about that Bulma, tell me more.”
“I don't want to talk about it, especially to you!”

“It happened five years ago didn't it?” Vegeta smirked watching the woman shake with anger. He could smell her hatred it was like an exotic perfume to him.

“Yes,” Bulma said sharply. “It happened during the Saiyan attack on Earth.”

“I see so you blame me for your father's death?”

“My parents, they both died from a large energy blast caused by one of your men.” Bulma explained. “Their home, pets everything was destroyed in that large blast. I wasn't there at the time when I came home to the large crater that was my home a few days later I found out the truth. I found out I had become a homeless orphan. We never did find their bodies, your men left nothing but dust.”

“How old were you?”

“Fifteen, I wasn't old enough to take over my father's business so I ended up being looked after by my uncle.” Bulma sniffed trying to hold back the tears. She didn't like talking about this. There was still so many painful memories she wanted to keep hidden.

“So that's why you're an FBI agent then?”

“It took me four years after that to get to this stage.” Bulma said.

“I bet you hate me then,” Vegeta said.

“I don't hate you Vegeta, I despise you.” Bulma hissed. “But I know my duty, a girl's life is in danger and she comes first over any personal feelings I have.”

“How noble,” Vegeta said in a patronising voice, “but don't try to push your human morals onto me, I don't have any. I don't care if this girl lives or dies.”

“You only care for yourself.” Bulma coldly said, “will you look at these case files as you promised?”

“I will,” Vegeta sighed. “Place it in my box, at least it will numb my boredom for a moment.”

Bulma nodded and stepped forward towards the drawer. Vegeta stood back his hands behind his head. He smiled at her showing his canines. Bulma shuddered and looked around his cell, something was missing and she couldn't quite tell what.

“Oh, your drawings!” She gasped as she closed the drawer.

“Told you to notice Bulma,” Vegeta whispered right beside her. Bulma leapt back as she saw that Vegeta had somehow got right up against the cell. She stared at him wild eyed her heart pounding. The warning from Mr Popo was still going through her head.

“Glad to see you looking so lively,” Vegeta chuckled. “The drawings were confiscated as part of my punishment. The warden is probably burning them in the boiler as we speak. He's a little shaken by your visits you see, his masculinity isn't as strong as mine, he's threatened by a woman in a seat of power. Though I must say your seat of power is the weakest one I've ever seen.”

“I'm only a cadet as you keep reminding me Vegeta, I wouldn't call myself a woman in a seat of power.” Bulma said shaking her previous scare.

“Oh but you are Bulma,” Vegeta continued. “I only intend to speak to you, do you know how much that pisses off that pig?”
Bulma shrugged, “I guess a lot.”

“Right, and now you see my other reasons for keeping you as my liaison.” Vegeta said. “Which is why he tries to hurt me in his petty ways. At least I know one of my drawings is safe.”

“What do you mean?”

“You've forgotten, I'm hurt,” Vegeta said in a mocking sad voice. “The drawing I put in your little questionnaire, I thought you would have looked at it by now. It is my favourite piece.”

“I was afraid to look to be honest.” Bulma said remembering, “it's still in my case file back at the hotel.”

“Then I suggest you look at it and tell me what you think.” Vegeta said, “Or are you worried that it will be a naked picture of you.”

“That thought had crossed my mind.” Bulma answered truthfully.

“At least your honest.” Vegeta smirked. “Then look at my drawing and when you come back tomorrow tell me what you think.”

“Tomorrow?” Bulma squeaked. 'I have to come back so soon?' she added in her head.

“Yes, then I will tell you what I think of this Scalpel Jones, time is running out as you said for the girl.”

“I thought you didn't care?” Bulma asked.

“I don't but I know if she dies then there will be little hope of me ever having any bargaining power like this again.” “So this is about power?” “Everything is about power,” Vegeta grinned. “Who has it, who wants it and who serves it. That's all there is to this little existence of ours.” “You make everything sound so cold.” Bulma sighed. “I promise I will be back tomorrow then. As you said time is running out.”

“Bye-bye Bulma,” Vegeta sang, “Don't forget again, next time I won't be so forgiving if you hurt my feelings again.”

“Understood Prince Vegeta.” Bulma said, standing up. She walked back towards the heavy security door all the while listening to Vegeta chuckling to himself. “Heh, heh, heh, heh” Bulma would never understand that alien and she didn't want to know. Mr Popo greeted her and he escorted her off the property.

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A few miles from the prison there stood the large Police station of South City. At the moment it was in a panic. A parcel had arrived marked for 'he who is in charge'. It had been brought to the Chief of Police and after he opened it the whole building was in chaos. The Chief had cried out for the top forensic units on the double and it hadn't taken long for the gossip to spread around the station. The parcel had contained a slice of skin, bloody and freshly cut. It had been placed inside a plastic bag and a letter along side it was being analysed.

“What the hell is that?” The chief choked as he tried to recover from the shock.

“Skin... sir.”
“I know that!” The chief shouted. “But what kind of skin is it?”

“Um, chief Bradley we can't be one hundred percent sure at this time but I believe it's human skin.”
The scientist said meekly. “There's a tattoo of a bird and it has stretch marks. At a guess I'd say it was
the thigh.”

“Good lord!” chief Bradley exclaimed. “That explains this letter.”

“Sir what does it say?”

“Here Hardy see for yourself, I wasn't able to read it all. I noticed the skin half way through.” Chief
Bradley passed the letter across to the expert with a tissue. “As soon as I found out what it was I've
used this tissue so I don't get fingerprints on it but I think there might be one or two.”

“That's okay sir it can't be helped.” Hardy sighed and began to read out loud for the other forensics.

“I have the Elizabeth, it is my stock. It is not being returned. It will take you many days to find me
and by then it will all be too late. The Earth is doomed and I will soon free myself from its bounds.
You keep a bad evil Saiyan but I will soon have power to kill it. It will be dead just like everyone of
you. Prince Vegeta is next after my Elizabeth stock is finished. Prince Vegeta is dead. Kill him now
if you want to live Earth.”

“What the...?” Bradley snapped. “Get the damn FBI on the phone this is beyond our jurisdiction!”

“Right away sir!” “Someone get me a coffee and move those chumps listening in by the door!”
There was screams as the eavesdropping officers were discovered and the chaos continued in the
police station. The identity of the killer was now apparent to them, it wasn't a human it was an alien.
It was just like five years ago only now more terrifying, this monster was hiding soon to pounce!

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On the other side of South city Bulma was unaware of the problems the police were facing. Her only
problem at the moment was the electronic door to her hotel room. 'Okay slip in key, green light,
open...shit locked.' She tried for the fifth time when she finally got the correct combination of key
and handle coordination.

“Damn hotel doors.” Bulma muttered as the reluctant door swung open. She threw her briefcase on
the bed and kicked off her cheap shoes. She collapsed on the bed and stared at the ceiling. She had
survived her third meeting with the Prince. He was charming, she couldn't deny it. Vegeta had a way
of making her speak her mind.

She hated him, she shouldn't trust him as much! Her own personal hatred was because of what
happened to her parents. The explosion that had ripped apart Capsule Corporation, making it
bankrupt in one foul swoop. She wiped away the stray tears, she had held it in. She had wanted to
cry so badly. She expected Prince Vegeta would enjoy that, watching a little human suffering would
give him comfort in his cold cell. She would never give him that pleasure. To think that she had
never told anyone what had happened. They all knew as soon as they heard the name Bulma Briefs.
She was a famous casualty of the war. Her sad story had been everywhere and she never got
anything but sympathy for it. The sad tale of a rich girl made penniless. It didn't make for any charity
money. There was a lot sadder stories across the world after the Saiyans had attacked, a lot more
people that didn't even have a long lost relative to go to.

She sat up and looked across at her large case file. The questionnaire was in there. Bulma was
curious about what he had drawn. Though she always thought it would be something crude put there
to make her mad. 'But I don't really understand the Prince so why should it be what I think it is?' She
walked across and picked up the large portable filing cabinet. The original questionnaire was still in
here, she had still to hand it in for the experts to analyse. She had never found the time, she had never
made the time. Bulma found it and took it out. It hadn't really been answered correctly. Vegeta had
skirted around the questions or refused to answer. It was pretty much worthless. It had been the FBI's
way of introducing her and making the Prince interested. Which was why she had never handed it in.
It reminded her how much she was being used like a tool. She hated knowing that they had used her
gullibility and naivety but then Vegeta had said he liked that about her.

'Yeah, he can read me like a book.' she thought to herself. “Well Bulma, time to face the drawing...”
Bulma said out loud. She flicked to the last page and held her breath. She let out a squeal as she
looked at the chalk drawing. It was beautiful a combination of blue and red chalk with a bit of black
and white. But she was drawn in the middle of the drawing naked! It was similar to the famous Birth
of Venus, in the original the goddess rose from the sea on a shell; but in Vegeta's drawing instead of
a blue sea it was red, like blood. The shell that the original stood on was now a circle of human
skulls. It was grotesque and beautiful in the same time. Bulma stared at the naked drawing of herself
unable to form any other thought. She had been right! 'That bastard....' In the back of her mind she
heard the cold chuckling of the Prince. The same laugh that had followed her out of the prison.

“Heh, heh, heh, heh,”

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Chapter End Notes

Next chapter: Bulma has a new task and Vegeta makes a deal.
Things are Changing

Chapter Summary

A small clue is found in the charred body remains Bulma found.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Dragonball Z nor Silence of the Lambs.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 6

Things are Changing

For Bulma Briefs this had been the worst month in her life. She knew that she should be concentrating on her studies but this was not going to happen. Not when a mass murderer wanted to use her as a go between. She wasn't going to fool herself into thinking she was important here. She was just a flag to wave at the bull. She accepted that fact now though it only made her angry. She shook herself as she was reminded of that man.

She had ripped out the drawing and crumbled it up. 'That obnoxious man, since when had he been able to copy an old painting from Earth's history?' She thought. He had drawn her naked just to provoke her. He seemed to live off her anger, he always smirked when she snapped at him. That wasn't the reaction she was used to. People usually backed away when she starting getting angry. He just laughed like she was some sort of puppy. Bulma vowed to herself not to fall for his bait. She picked up the offensive paper and looked at it again. It was evidence, she couldn't throw it away no matter what her personal opinion.

'I guess it won't hurt to omit it.'

She remembered the warning she had received from Director Piccolo, no matter how obscene... she should not hide anything. Her hands shook, she did look beautiful in the drawing it was so delicately done. If she compared it to the previous drawings she had seen then thought his marks on the paper were thinner, as she said it looked delicate. Bulma wavered, she felt like this was meant only for her eyes. Not for others, not the pig or her boss, only her.

As she'd proven to herself she did understand the prince. It made her despise herself. Bulma knew her previous promise she'd made on the day her parents died. She wasn't going to give into her own desires. If she hadn't been running about looking for a mystery magic balls then her family would be alive. If she had just been there to force them to evacuate. She knew why her parents hadn't ran for shelter. They never gave a second thought for their own safety they had been soon laid back and easy going. If the Saiyans had arrived at Capsule Corporation she knew her mother would have just invited them for tea. The idea of running for your life didn't even enter into their heads.

They had stayed...
She had thought it was the Saiyans fault, but it wasn't.

She even thought for a moment, as she did now, that it was her fault.

'No, that's not it. The only people who were at fault were my parents. My parents were the ones that stayed. They would have had the choice to evacuate.'

She slumped down on her hotel bed, tears coming from her eyes. Bulma took one last look at Vegeta's drawing. Her heart told her to keep it, it wasn't for anyone's eyes but her. She held it tight and continued crying, her parents death seemed like it happened yesterday.

Bulma heard her mobile ringing and ignored it. She was only a messenger she wasn't needed.

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This was the best month for Vegeta since he'd come to Earth. He sat flicking through his book, chuckling at a part he found funny. Since the woman had come the FBI had been bending over backwards to keep him happy. Though Warden Oolong was trying harder to keep him down in the dirt. It wouldn't be long the one they called Jones would make his move.

Vegeta knew he was at his most weakest. Now was the best time to strike him down. Jones was his enemy, it helped him as well, if they caught him before he could fully become a threat then he would live a little longer. He had to admit that the culture on the planet he named Dirt was much more interesting than he would let others believe.

He put down the History book, he'd had enough enjoyment. He could smell the pig coming. It slighted his good mood and made him snarl again. He hid his book with his foot and stood up. Even though he didn't respect or like the pig he still considered himself a solider. He would still stand to attention when a superior officer entered his presence.

He would stand for the pig, for now...

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The FBI didn't know what to make of the message sent to the police. The experts couldn't confirm if the handwriting was done by an alien or human. It seemed like an impossible task. The only thing they did know was that the blood type matched Elizabeth's. They had taken DNA samples from the parents and were busy analysing and comparing the samples. It would take a few days for the results even with the labs working at full capacity.

Director Piccolo scowled and tried his cadet's number again. She wasn't at the asylum that was the only reason he could think of why she wasn't answering.

He held the phone to his head and finally heard a click of someone picking up.

"Eh..(sniff).. hello?"

"Cadet Briefs, Piccolo here. There has been a change in situation can you come to the city morgue I will meet you there and fill you in."

"Yes Sir!" Bulma answered.

"That's a better answer and Bulma whatever emotional problems you have at the moment please leave at the hotel room. You'll need a clear head for what I'm going to tell you."
"Yes Sir, understood."

"Very good, I'll see you in an hour then."

"One hour, okay. Goodbye Sir."

Piccolo cut the phone off, he hated them. Talking on the phone was such a hassle, he always liked to keep it short and to the point.

"Okay, whoever is not busy with work get me a coffee!" He shouted.

"Yes Sir!" A young man volunteered.

Piccolo looked at the copy of the note again. There was no doubt, this Jones was connected to Vegeta. It was confirmed, this just meant that any interviews with him were now at a higher priority. He shook his head and picked up his small phone again. There was a man he needed to tell about this straight away. This changed the situation with Vegeta immediately.

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Warden Oolong stood looking at his prisoner with complete contempt.

"I don't get you Vegeta, really I'll be a man and admit that." Oolong said. "Here you are in a maximum security asylum charged with mass murder and destruction of whole towns and cities. Yet you're reading."

Vegeta said nothing, he could see the paper in Oolong's hand. It had to be his library check out list.

"Let's see, this one's interesting. The Art of the Renaissance Period you check that one out after the woman arrived. A murderer interested in Art?"

"I don't expect you to understand me at all," Vegeta sneered. "Though I bet all your papers you've written claiming you do makes an extra little bit of profit on the side."

"That brings me to these other books," Oolong said ignoring his taunt. "Frugal systems, some law books and a book on the Geography of Earth. As a casual observer it looks like you're learning about Earth so you can survive when you escape."

"That would be your assumption, is it?"

"Yes it is," Oolong snapped. "Also this last book sickens me, the anatomy of humanoids. I see you've returned that book and the page was bent over at the pages detailing the pig humanoid."

"That was the most fascinating part of the book." Vegeta said showing his fangs as he smiled. "Such delicate meat, it made my mouth water."

"Which is never going to happen!" Oolong yelled. "You're my little caged monkey. Trying to act smart and do some tricks for the pretty cadet doesn't really impress me but I'll let you into a secret. You are forever my prisoner. I will die of old age in full knowledge that you are still in a cage with drool coming down your chin thinking of the good old days when you had a young girl at your beckon call!"

"That is a nice vivid image."

"Yes, and what's more my lab boys have finally completed that serum they have been working on."
Vegeta stayed silent he didn't like the sound of that.

"It's such a work of art. We want to test it out today, that's the good news I came to say," Oolong grinned. He looked back down the corridor and shouted, "Okay bring the nurse!"

Vegeta stared at the pig who was gloating at him.

"What's with that face Vegeta?" Oolong asked. "Just wait till you see the nurse I found, she's such a uncanny resemblance to your only friend."

The nurse appeared along with a few security guards and it took a moment for Vegeta to adjust. At first he thought it was his little Cadet Bulma but the smell was wrong, very wrong. The hair and eyes were the same colour but the woman just looked at him blankly. There was no fire in those eyes, she had a vacant look and smiled at Oolong. It was really the smell that attacked Vegeta's senses the most. The woman had some sort of artificial fragrance on her, it stunk of flowers and chemicals.

"Warden Oolong, I brought your medicine for the patient." She said in a floaty voice.

"Good work Nurse Marron," Oolong praised her. "Now just wait a second while we get this monkey restrained, he's a bit of an animal but not like me."

The girl giggled and thanked the Warden. Vegeta curled his lip, this woman was a slut he recognised her type.

"Now Vegeta as I was saying, this serum will sedate all your powers."

Vegeta laughed not believing him.

"Look at this ki shield, do you deny we created this?" Oolong asked. "This is just one step further, it goes directly into your blood and attaches to your DNA structure that is responsible for ki control. It represses it and makes you into a helpless normal human. In fact it might even reduce your strength seeing as you use your little power in everything you do."

Vegeta stopped laughing and stared at the bottle.

"It may be permanent, the boys in the lab aren't sure of that one." Oolong said. "But we're going to find out once we inject you, won't that be fun?"

Vegeta kept quiet, this was not a good development.

"Okay guys, get the animal restrained." Oolong said to his guards.

The large men bowed to Vegeta, "Please step back Prince Vegeta." they asked.

Vegeta could tell they had been speaking to Mr. Popo. He did as they said and stepped towards the holes in the back of his cell. The two men came in and pushed him against the wall, then bolts came out of the holes wrapping around him. The prince grunted and continued to stare at the woman, her smell was sickening. He could see her from the corner of his eye. She was staring at him not in fear but in lust. She liked his body he could tell, her hormones were giving off what would be an arousing aroma but combined with the strong perfume turned into a clashing stench that brought bile to the back of his mouth. That woman was not coming near him. He didn't fear the injection he knew his Saiyan genes could not be suppressed so easily, it was the woman that repelled him.

He was strapped into the restraints and pinned against the wall. The guards stood back and motioned to the nurse to move forward.
"You're so short yet muscular," she chirped.

"Miss, please don't speak to him." The guard advised, he saw the look of disgust in Vegeta's eyes.

"No, Nurse Marron, make your patient as comfortable as you like." Oolong shouted from the safety of outside the cage.

"Of course Warden." Marron called back she came towards Vegeta unafraid. The woman was one of those airheads that never thought there was any danger. That men would do anything for a woman because she had a pretty face. "Okay darling, this won't take a minute."

She didn't notice the twitch of Vegeta's eyebrow as she said the word, 'darling' but he muted any objects he had.

She lifted the small bottle of pale green liquid, Oolong's miracle cure. Vegeta remained confident, he was a Saiyan prince it would take more than a chemical to stop his birthright. They hypodermic needle was stabbed into the bottle and Nurse Marron tapped it to get rid of the air bubbles. She smiled at the Saiyan, she didn't think he looked that dangerous. Especially as he was held down by steel restraints.

Vegeta's large muscles tensed and the needle tapped against the hard skin.

"Please relax, it will be less painful," Marron advised.

Vegeta grounded his teeth, her smell was stronger when she was close to him. The needle was forced into the muscle, Marron grunted it took all her strength to push it into his arm. Vegeta jerked with pain and lunged at the nurse. His fangs bared, he tore into her flesh, she screamed and fell on the floor. The Saiyan roared in triumph, the taste of blood was his again, so fresh. Yes, the woman was better as a meal than living.

One of the guards pulled the bleeding female to safety while the other flicked the emergency switch. Electricity cascaded into Vegeta's body and his small victory was lost. He slumped in his restraints as he fell unconscious, the screams of the woman making him smile. He felt as if it had been worth it.

"My ear, my ear!" Marron stammered, shock taking over her. The large guard lead her out of the high security. Warden Oolong watched the girl go, fear was obvious in his face.

"When that scum wakes up make sure he's fully restraint! I mean the works!" Oolong snapped.
"Damn what made that alien bastard do that?"

"Sir, I thought you were an expert on him?" A guard asked innocently. His eyes hid his real contempt for the Warden.

"Shut up, did I ask you to speak!" Oolong yelled. "And wipe that blood off him it seemed to make him go crazy!"

"The Prince is already crazy..." The guard muttered under his breath.

"SIR!" A new guard appeared in the doorway.

"What is it, did the nurse say she was going to sue?"

"Uh... no it's not that, just there's a phone call from the FBI." The Guard answered.

"If it's that cadet it can wait."
"No Sir, it's from the Chief Director of the FBI, he said it was urgent."

"Oh very well, there's nothing more to do here now anyway." Oolong walked into the cage and pulled out the empty needle. "I've done what I've came here for."

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In the city morgue, Bulma waited in a small room. She could feel herself being watched by the camera. The table in the centre of the room had an ashtray she tapped it thoughtfully.

"Have I kept you long Cadet?" Piccolo asked as he entered.

"No Sir," Bulma said, she stood to attention.

"You may sit Cadet. We might be here a while." Piccolo sighed. "The situation with Vegeta had changed slightly. Jones wants him dead."

"Huh?" Bulma was confused. "I don't understand, how do we know this?"

"Because Scalpel Jones was kind enough to send a letter saying so. He even included a sample piece of skin to prove he was who he says he was."

"We're not going to kill Prince Vegeta are we?"

"No, but now his profile has been made more of a priority and a Cadet being an interviewer would not look good." Piccolo said. "This is coming from higher up in the command. You'll need to be quick and go back to Vegeta and get the last bit of information that you can. Time is shorter than we thought now."

"I see."

"It gets worse, the Mayor is wanting to deal with the Saiyan Prince directly." Piccolo said. "He thinks he can appeal to his better nature."

"Prince Vegeta has a better nature?"

"I doubt it, but there's nothing I can say to convince him otherwise." Piccolo said. "I'm going to have to give you a meager job to fill in. I still want you on the case. It's not much but the body that you found has been identified as a Capsule Corps employee that stayed on after the takeover. It's just we don't know who that person is, no-one has reported missing."

"How do you know the body was from Capsule Corps?" Bulma asked.

"The ID chip that is implanted in the hand of every employee that worked in your father's lab. After the takeover that system was thrown out."

"It was my father's invention." Bulma explained more for herself than her boss, "He said his staff always lost their cards so it saved on making new ones. He was really just making it for himself. He was the only one that lost his card."

"That's right," Piccolo said softly. "Your father was a bit forgetful."

"Just a bit..." Bulma mumbled. "But won't ex-employees recognise me?"

"Maybe, it doesn't matter now does it?" Piccolo said. "We've listed as many men and woman who left the company after and during the start of the takeover. They're our best lead to finding where the
alien went after it killed this mystery man."

"So the body was male," Bulma said. "But if there was still an ID chip wouldn't that give his identity?"

"Any information on the chip had been completely destroyed, we only knew it was a Capsule Corps ID chip because of the icon."

"So this is the only lead to the person's identity." Bulma stated.

"Right, there's a slim chance that this alien has taken the first victim's identity. The victim was definitely a Capsule Corps employee, just no one has died or been filed as missing. It's strange, we need to investigate it and it'll take a lot of footwork."

"So after I speak to Vegeta I'm going to be knocking on doors?"

"I'm afraid so Cadet Briefs," Piccolo said. "I still want you on this case, this isn't the end for you. You're going to make a fine Agent Bulma, you'd make your father proud."

"Thank you sir."

In a way Bulma was glad, she didn't like facing Vegeta. He was hard to get out of her head thought she tried to shake the odd feeling of disappointment. She tried to look forward to the dull footwork that waited for her. Something that would take her mind away from the Saiyan Prince that was able to get under her skin. Bulma lifted up her new assignment from her Director and gave her thanks. She had only one thing left to do now, visit the Prince and say goodbye.

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"You've got a visitor Prince Vegeta," Mr Popo called out.

"Good I've been expecting her." Vegeta smiled.

"It's not Cadet Briefs," Mr Popo said. "It's the Mayor, please be on your best behaviour your Highness."

"Oh don't worry I will," Vegeta grinned. His fanged smile was hard to see behind the mask he was wearing. The new punishment for Vegeta for ripping off Oolong's favourite nurse's face. The Saiyan pulled at his straightjacket but it held him firm. It held him in a metal frame that was on wheels.

"Mr. Popo do apologise to the Mayor that I won't be able to shake his hand." Vegeta said loudly. "I did want to do so..."

"I'll let him know Prince Vegeta." Mr Popo said calmly.

The large guard left the Prince to collect the guest. Vegeta heard the clank of the shutting door and was left to the silence of his own thoughts. Things were starting to move now, the one named Jones must have made a mistake.

'He should have waited the fool,' Vegeta thought. 'Now, I am free to make a deal. You have given me more power than you realize. What an impatient idiot you are Jones, I can't wait to see what they'll do when they catch you.'

The door clanked open again and Vegeta heard the heavy footsteps of a fat man and woman. They smelled of fine rich things, they had money and power. They were the new tool given to him by
"Good Morning Prince Vegeta." The Mayor greeted him. "I am Mayor Walker and this is my wife Clara. I'd like to make a proposal to you."

"Indeed?" Vegeta said hiding his smile. "Please do go on, I hear we don't have much time."

"I would like to make a deal with you Vegeta for information about the serial killer that has my daughter Elizabeth."

"Would you do anything to get her back?" Vegeta asked.

"I would do everything in my power." Mayor Walker said firmly.

Unseen by the Mayor and his wife was a very large grin on his face.

"Then let us talk, Mayor Walker about certain conditions I have." Vegeta said. "If you can make these reality then I will talk."

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Author's Note: Oh dear, what will Vegeta ask for? You'll have to wait till next chapter.
Chapter Summary

Bulma feels this will be her last visit to the imprisoned Vegeta.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Dragonball Z nor Silence of the Lambs.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 7

See You Soon

In South City Mental Institute for the Criminally insane, a deal was being made. It was not on the books, this wasn't how he wanted to go. Mayor Walker hoped to negotiate with the mass murderer Prince Vegeta but the caged alien only chuckled behind the mask that hid his expression.

"Damn it don't you care about anything?" Mayor Walker screamed.

"Oh I care, but only about myself." Vegeta said. "I know Jones's real goal and your daughter is just a tiny part of that. An insignificant spec to such a being with higher goals. I know because I am such a being myself."

"Listen you..." The Mayor hissed.

"Temper, temper Mayor Walker." Vegeta scolded. "Let me ask you something, is your daughter a virgin?"

"What?"

"Has she fucked anyone Mayor Walker, you're her father, you should know."

"How dare you!"

"Has her little prom date with Billy, the boy across the street got her into sticky fumbling making her moan out as she experiences such pain and ecstasy for her first time."

"I don't have to listen to this." The Mayor said shielding his wife and walking away.

"Hold on Mayor, isn't it Jones you want?"

"Yes, and I can see you're not going to talk."

"Oh I can talk but I can offer much more than that."

"What could you possibly offer."
"Myself." Vegeta said simply. "Jones wants me, I know he wants to kill me."

"We're not going to release you to fight the monster." Mayor Walker snapped.

"I'm not suggesting that." Vegeta gave another hidden grin from behind his mask.

"Then what are you suggesting?"

"Use me as bait," Vegeta said. "He can't reach me here, I'm too buried. Set me up in a place of your choice with hidden security and let him come to me. Your daughter will be back and safe before you know it."

"That's sounds dangerous." Mayor Walker gulped. "What if he were to kill you and escape."

"I doubt he can," Vegeta sneered. "Let him try. That is my offer, take it or leave it."

"I'll talk to my people," The Mayor said bowing. "I'd like to say it was a pleasure speaking to you Vegeta but it hasn't. I will telephone you tonight about any arrangements I can make. If possible I want to start soon. My daughter doesn't have much time."

"No, no she doesn't," Vegeta agreed.

The Mayor stared at the monster in the cage and lead his wife out of the dungeon. She was white and silent, dumbstruck by the presence of the Prince.

"C'mon Clara, I'm sorry I brought you along."

The woman shook her head and grabbed her husband's arm. "No, I'm sorry I couldn't help or say anything," Carla whispered. "Just promise me you'll do what you can to get my baby back."

"I promise," Mayor walker whispered back. "Just lets discuss this outside, we don't want him to know how desperate we are."

The security doors slammed shut and Vegeta who had heard every word simply leaned back and sighed contentedly.

'Soon...'

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Bulma knew this would be her last visit here. After this, it was no longer in her jurisdiction. She had been taken off the Jones case and reduced to footwork meant for police officers. It was nothing but humiliating. She couldn't hide the fact that she was suffering mixed emotions from this. One part of her was thrilled at finally being free of talking to the murderer, another would miss him he had become part of her routine. Their conversations were always more interesting than anything else she had. He was so intelligent, she had never met an intelligent man that had been interesting to her.

The Saiyan Prince was a mystery that she wanted to crack, he had hidden secrets about his defeat. How was he captured, what was his connection with Jones? She felt that she would never find out. As she entered the large gates she could hear a scrabbling from the main office. Warden Oolong burst out of his office, furious and looking directly at her.

"Can I help you Warden?" She asked as politely as she could.

"What the hell are you doing back here?" Oolong screamed. "I'm not just some turn key for you to use when you like Miss Briefs. I'd like more information about your visits to the alien scum!"
"I thought you found out your own ways," Bulma said under her voice looking at a camera.

"What, speak up woman!"

"I said you'll have to find out from my headquarters, I am not at liberty to say." Bulma said courteously. "My Director will be able to relay any facts we've found out about the Prince."

"I can't take these visits anymore Miss Briefs," Oolong spat. "I've waited patiently so far but now I'm going to make some changes!"

"Whatever you think is best." Bulma said bowing and walking towards the dungeon. She didn't understand why Oolong was always upset, she was after all only following orders.

"Wait, I should warn you!" Warden Oolong said waving something from his pocket. "He's been under special punishment but I've just released him."

"Special punishment?" Bulma asked.

Oolong was smiling as he held his prize photo. "Yesterday we were applying some medicine to our Prince. I thought I should warn you now he's loose from his mask."

"Please, just tell me." Bulma sighed. She didn't like this sense of drama Oolong was trying to build up.

He thrust a photograph into Bulma's hand. "This is the nurse from yesterday, she's having her skin grafted as we speak, she's scared for life. She has a remarkable resemblance to you don't you think? I believe he was acting out his own fantasy of what he wants to do to you."

Bulma's hand shook as she looked at the photograph, the nurse with the blue hair did have a similar features to her. It was slightly hard to see past the blood and the fact she was missing part of her face.

"Makes you think, just when we thought beauty had tamed the beast he did this," Oolong grinned glad to see Bulma's paled face. "Just remember who you're dealing with."

"Is that about you or Prince Vegeta?" Bulma shakily asked.

"Both," Oolong warned and snatched the photograph back into his pocket and walked away. He seemed to keep it like a trophy.

Bulma could feel bile rising in her throat. She was really glad this was her last visit now. She went into auto pilot and walked down the now familiar corridors to the cell of the Prince. She greeted Mr Popo with a quiet voice.

"He's just out of his straitjacket Miss Briefs, he's exercising at the moment." Mr. Popo explained. "He'll be a little irritated at being disturbed."

"I don't have time to wait till he finishes," Bulma said as she stood in front of the large cage doors. Mr Popo nodded and pressed the button to open the first security door.

The door slid shut and the second door opened. Her heels clicked as she walked down to the last cell. She could hear some heavy breathing, it didn't stop as she got closer. She stood in front of the Prince's cell and stared at the sight. Vegeta was doing push ups but with one finger. He was sweating and making low growling noises as strained to move his body.

"Excuse me, Prince Vegeta," Bulma said softly.
"You're excused Cadet." Vegeta gruffly replied and stopped with a loud sigh. He cursed under his breath and grabbed a towel. "You've interrupted me at an inconvenient time. I am finally free of those bonds and able to test the limits of my abilities after that serum the swine applied."

"A serum?" Bulma asked, she sat down on the floor, she had come unexpectedly and there was no chair like last time.

"Yes, one that supposedly limits my ki abilities permanently." Vegeta sneered, "I thought you would have been told about that."

"There are many things I'm not told about. I'm not Warden Oolong's favourite person at the moment." Bulma said.

"I think I have that title Cadet." Vegeta sat down on the floor opposite Bulma. "Though you are right about not being told a lot, you are so ignorant of many things."

She looked around the cell, ignoring his taunt, unsure what to make of the news. If that was the case then the nurse must have been administering the serum.

"Are you ready to tell us more about Jones yet?" Bulma asked. "Have you looked at the case file?"

"Yes, I believe it's possible to find him from the facts in that file."

"What?"

"He's not smart, the idiot sent a threat to the police to kill me," Vegeta chuckled. "As if he would rather let the humans do it than himself. That was lazy, he's slipping up."

"You think he's making mistakes?" Bulma asked.

"You did know about the letter and slice of skin sent to the Police?"

"Yeah, I heard about it today but how did you know?"

"I've been having an interesting chat with the Mayor," Vegeta smirked. "He's probably able to do more for me than you are."

"That's very possible, you know this will be my last visit here then."

"Yes little cadet." Vegeta smiled. "Do you feel sad? Will you miss me?"

"No," Bulma said in a dead pan voice.

"I'm also a little curious, did you find my drawing?"

Bulma's face turned bright red and she tried to find the words she wanted to say that didn't include swearing.

"I found it disgusting that you see me that way," Bulma choked.

"Every male that looks at a beautiful woman pictures her naked." Vegeta said still smiling.

"Did you imagine that nurse naked as you bit her face off?" Bulma asked shaking with rage.

"That vile wench was only chosen as my nurse because of her similar looks to you. Her smell was so revolting in comparison, she was needed to be taught not to get so close to the monsters of this
"I don't think she ever will again."

"No." Vegeta said simply. "No she won't."

"Would you like to tell me more about Jones Prince Vegeta?" Bulma asked. "We don't have much time."

"No, tell me more about you Bulma." Vegeta said. "What did you feel as you found my drawing of you naked."

"I was frightened, then very angry," Bulma said truthfully. "I wanted to slap your face."

"Is that right?" Vegeta chuckled. "You know if you tried that you would die?"

"Yes, but I always follow my instincts."

"As do I." Vegeta said. "We have a lot in common you and I Cadet Bulma."

"No we don't," Bulma disagreed.

"Oh but we do," Vegeta said. "More than you think."

"I wouldn't think we had anything in common," Bulma said.

"Normally I would think the same as well," Vegeta replied. "But my years in this box has made me more reflective."

"Perhaps you could put that strong perceptive skills to use and tell me more about Jones."

"He is more of an it, the thing doesn't have a gender. It's asexual, not a single person that was taken was a specific gender or race." Vegeta explained. "It has no concept of the differences, the cattle for him are just stock, ingredients in his final transformation."

"Final transformation?"

"Yes, it is weak just now the same as me but as it progresses it shall become almost as powerful as a Saiyan." Vegeta said, "Maybe not as powerful as me in my prime but rather one of my underlings."

"It will be able to shoot large energy blasts that destroy towns?" Bulma asked.

"Without a doubt but it's target will be South City, especially me." Vegeta answered. "It is on a mission to kill me, I've been captured by a weak race; to die this slowly and humiliatingly is punishment. If I was at full power and free I could crush Jones like the bug that he is."

"If you knew it's goal was all along why didn't you say?" Bulma demanded.

"Where's the fun in that?" Vegeta shrugged. "Now tell me more, what about your father. Was he an officer in the law are you following in Daddy's footsteps?"

"No, my father was a Scientist, a genius inventor." Bulma said. "He was the cleverest man in the world. His inventions had helped so many people."

"Why didn't you follow his work?" Vegeta asked. "Or was it because you were too stupid?"
"I'm a goddamn genius as well!" Bulma snapped. "I just... I just don't want to do science or inventing. I'd rather hu-hunt criminals of Earth."

"There was a lot of hesitation there." Vegeta analysed. "There's a reason you're not in science, what is it? Did you make a bomb that blew everything up?"

"No nothing like that," Bulma sighed. "I've said enough, tell me about Jones. What kind of alien is he?"

"A spider," Vegeta smiled as he saw Bulma's face. "A really big fucking spider."

"But the victims didn't have any webbing or drained like a spider would."

"The first victim was drained remember." Vegeta said arching his eyebrow.

"Why was that?"

"Who's to say, but it's certainly where it started." Vegeta said. "The little hatchling was so young and inexperienced."

"Why is it needing body parts?"

"I told you for it's evolution into a stronger being."

"That doesn't make any sense!" Bulma moaned.

"It's an alien, why would it follow your logic rules. You've got to think differently, stop viewing this case through the eyes of a human," Vegeta said. "What happened to you after your parents died. Where did you go?"

"I went to live at my Uncle's." Bulma said. "But after two weeks I ran away."

"Why?" Vegeta questioned. "Did he try to rape you? Was he forcing you to perform sexual acts?"

"No nothing like that." Bulma said sadly. "My uncle was a good man. I just had many issues over the death of my parents. I ended up living alone."

"I see so you became a loner." Vegeta smirked. "Interesting."

"I was 15. I was old enough to look after myself." Bulma said.

"I was able to look after myself at 5." Vegeta replied. "We do have a lot in common."

"Why do you keep saying that?" Bulma asked, she was getting annoyed at him.

"Because it's true." Vegeta stated. "You have the same character as me though you hide it well. That's why you understand me."

"I don't understand you at all Vegeta."

"You knew I had drawn a naked picture of you, even back then," Vegeta taunted. "You expected the worst but in denial you tried to prove it wasn't."

"You're not making sense,"

"Think about it Bulma, why did you look at that picture?"
"To see what you had drawn." Bulma said.

"What did you expect."

"A dead body," Bulma lied.

"No, at first what did your instincts tell you?" Vegeta asked looking at her intensely. "I can tell when you're lying so don't do it again."

"I thought... I thought you had drawn a naked picture of me." Bulma admitted.

"So why did you look?"

"To prove that I didn't know what you were thinking," Bulma said through her teeth.

Vegeta chuckled, "You see we are so similar!"

"I don't kill people!" Bulma snapped, "I don't rip a woman's face off because she annoys me. I am nothing like you!"

"So cold." Vegeta sighed. "But you're right you're a good little girl that never does anything wrong."

Bulma nodded, "Right, nothing like you."

"Cadet Bulma Briefs, let me say this to you." Vegeta stood up and came close to the plastic. "You follow orders, you never question them but one day soon you will make a decision and everyone will be against it. It will change everything and the ball that you started rolling down the hill won't stop."

"Becoming a fortune teller?" Bulma laughed.

"Maybe, but only because fate always turns in the same way." Vegeta explained.

"That doesn't make sense." Bulma complained.

"Have you shown my drawing to your boss yet?" Vegeta asked.

Bulma blushed and shook her head. "I-I don't want to."

"Not following an order?" Vegeta sneered. "Afraid he might have erotic thoughts about you."

"It's not that I just, I just know it's not important to this case."

"You're own decision is it?"

"Maybe..." Bulma breathed.

"Run along now little girl." Vegeta said smugly. "Our time is up and you have a killer to catch."

"I won't be back here," Bulma said dryly.

"It's okay, I don't need you as a liaison anymore. I've been talking to the Mayor I think I can negotiate with him." Vegeta said. "You will not be missed."

"I won't miss you either." Bulma declared.

"Ah that blunt honesty..." Vegeta sighed. "Maybe I'll miss that. Goodbye Cadet Bulma Briefs, you know we have unfinished business you and I."
"I don't think we do Prince Vegeta," Bulma said sitting up. She looked him in the eyes, he was still trying to find a reaction to his closeness but she wasn't spooked by his actions anymore. "Goodbye, I hope you get what you want."

"I always do," Vegeta smirked watching her leave. "See you soon little Cadet."

The large security doors slid open with a loud rattle and Bulma left the cell room. She sighed with relief. It was over for her. The case for her was finished. It was only petty footwork that was left. Bulma glanced back and swore she could see his nose up against the glass.

It wasn't really over, he was inside her head now. There was no-one that had affected her in this way before. It wasn't love Bulma knew that. It was nothing sexual, Vegeta just had that magnetic personality that pulled her in. Someone that could challenge her and make her think on her feet. No man had ever come close to that. No other woman for that matter. If he was a real human living in Earth she may have admitted to having a crush.

'It's just not like that though,' Bulma thought as she walked upstairs. 'He's just so mysterious yet I know how he thinks. He understands me, nobody has ever understood me before. I was always considered a loud mouth genius heiress, I'm more than that. He can see who I am and that scares me. To think that if pushed far enough I could become someone like Prince Vegeta. We are alike, just life took us down different paths.'

She woke up from her self reflection by the slamming of Warden Oolong's door. She shook her head and continued out the doors. She was glad to see the last of this hell-hole. Bulma only regretted not getting more information from Vegeta. He knew who the killer was. It was his only card and he held it very close to his chest.

The outside of the Asylum was the same as she came in. Strong men in white uniforms guided straightjacketed criminals who mumbled to themselves and didn't seem to be in the same world. Only this time there was something different. A large van parked near hers didn't fit in. It looked like it would fit better outside a music hall with roadies pulling instruments out of it.

Her heart froze as she saw two men come out of the van and smile at her. She grew slightly suspicious and checked she had her gun in her jacket.

"Miss Bulma Briefs?" called out one of the men.

"Yes, can I help you gentlemen?"

"I do hope so," The man grinned like a piranha.

"Uh-huh?" Bulma unclasped her gun holder. "And who might you be?"

"Oh sorry, I'm Yajarobi of The West City Gossiper."

Bulma tried to hide her repulsion, the newspaper was nothing but a rumour spreading cheap rag.

"What do you want from me?" Bulma asked.

"We just want an exclusive on why the ex-heiress of Capsule Corporation is doing visiting the Prince of Saiyans who destroyed her future fortune." He said rolling it off in one breath. "We got a tip-off and would like to know all the details, is it for revenge, have you fallen in love with him? C'mon Bulma give us the scoop."

"There's nothing to tell," Bulma said trying to hide her anger. "I'm an FBI agent working under
orders, I'm afraid I can't tell you anything else."

Bulma unlocked her car, Yajarobi continued talking while the other man who hadn't given his name took photos.

"Is this related to Scalpel Jones?" he interrogated, "Does Prince Vegeta have any clues on the case?"

"No comment." Bulma slammed her door shut and quickly fastened her seatbelt.

"Does the Mayor want to deal with the Prince?"

Bulma started her car, the man stood in front of her still speaking.

"Do you know how long Elizabeth Walker has to live?"

Bulma shifted into reverse and drove backwards over the grass barrier. She speed round turning towards the exit and drove off rapidly. She breathed when she left the building and was finally free of the grounds. The obnoxious reporter was far from her view but still in her mind. It was obvious to her that Oolong had called in the press. He was furious with her and the Prince. This was the petty act she expected from him.

Bulma hoped she would never have to deal with the pig ever again. All that was expected of her now was to wrap up the footwork and go back to the Academy to graduate. Elizabeth Walker's life was out of her hands. It rested in the killer Prince Vegeta and whatever he was bargaining for. Bulma felt powerless again, she felt fifteen lost and abandoned living on her uncle's small laboratory. There was nothing she could do for Elizabeth, she was the helpless teenager.

She tried to hide her thoughts and concentrated on driving to her hotel. Bulma bit her lip and kept trying to ignore it. A trickle of blood rolled down her mouth and in the back of her mind she could hear screaming.

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Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: Wow, Bulma's full of issues and self reflection this chapter and it looks like the end of Bulma's little visits to Vegeta. (cries) Well probably not, as Vegeta did say, 'See you soon little Cadet.'

When that will be? You'll just have to wait.

Next chapter, Bulma is doing some sleuthing and Vegeta is getting more abuse from Oolong! Ah that darn piggy.
A sliver of Hope

Chapter Summary

Bulma has a small clue, a lead and possibly a sliver of hope to find the whereabouts of the killer known as Jones.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Dragonball Z nor Silence of the Lambs. I do not make any money from this story.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 8
A Sliver of Hope

The FBI headquarters was in chaos as news spread about Prince Vegeta. Bulma arrived back to the halls and looked at the scene in bemusement. Usually it was so controlled and everyone looked calm, but people were in a rush, panic on their faces.

"Bulma!"

"Launch!" Bulma cried greeting her friend.

"Thank goodness you're back!" Launch gasped.

"I wouldn't go that far," Bulma said. "I still have things to do."

"You're still on the Jones' case?" Launch asked.

Bulma shook her head. "Taken off that for obvious reasons."

"We think the Mayor has gone crazy," Launch explained, "But no-one has the authority to oppose him. He's got everyone in a mess."

"He's agreed to Vegeta's deal then."

"FBI is being brought in as back-up security." Launch said. "I guess as cadets we're not going to get involved but whatever little errands need done the cadets are being left with it."

"How's everyone coping?" Bulma asked.

"Well, Yellow-belly is missing. He apparently proclaimed to the boys that he would do something but when all the girls turned up he ran and hid again."

"Has he locked himself in his room?"
"Maybe who knows, we're all too busy to go get him." Launch sighed. "Other than that, the rest of the cadets are fine."

"I am still on the Jones case, but I won't see Vegeta again."

"I'm glad for a moment there I thought you might be falling for him," Launch said.

"Why would I fall for that monster?"

"I dunno just a thought that was all," Launch laughed. "Hey don't take it so serious, geez everyone is uptight just now."

"They don't think Elizabeth has long, maybe two or three days," Bulma said grimly. "Whatever Jones does to them in the few weeks that they're captive we still haven't found out."

"I can't figure it out either, no clues," Launch said. "I have no idea how this alien murderer thinks."

"Yeah, because he's an alien," Bulma bit her lip, something was wrong. "Y'know that's right Jones IS an alien. We shouldn't treat this like a simple murder case. We should be thinking outside the box. To look at this from the alien perspective."

"Bulma?"

"I've just got a vague idea that some clue might be hidden that's all." Bulma said. "Something Vegeta said to me, to think like an alien."

"You sure there's no feelings for that Saiyan?" Launch asked worriedly.

"Positive, I know he would rip my flesh off if he had a chance." Bulma said thinking of the nurse, she refrained from telling her friend she was already too stressed. "Listen I'm going to go down to the labs and check out something, you wanting to come?"

"Is this for the Jones case?" Launch said.

"It is actually. I just feel like I think we may have missed something."

"You're going into Scientist mode!" Launch cried. "I haven't seen you like this"

"It's been a while," Bulma agreed. "I haven't felt this curious about something since before my parents died."

"So this is the true genius scientist showing." Launch smiled. "I wondered when the Briefs genes would start to kick in."

"I'm not like my father." Bulma said darkly.

"Okay, talk about issues," Launch sighed.

"I do not have issues," Bulma hissed. She walked on to the labs, she hadn't done anything scientific for a long time but her mind was buzzing with an idea. Something she needed to find out. It was in a way because of something Vegeta had said and her mind tried to block out the rest of her thoughts about him. Whatever deal he had struck with the Mayor, it didn't matter. What mattered to her was to get some information on Jones and save Elizabeth. Vegeta was not the important factor in the case, he had knowledge about the alien but he had said that the facts were already there. There was something the other scientists had missed that was obvious to the Prince.
The Prince of all Saiyans looked down at Warden Oolong. He was annoyed but there was nothing to be done now. The pig had managed somehow to worm himself into the Mayor's good graces.

"Don't think you're going to be held in a luxury hotel in your little bait trap you're setting." Oolong sneered. "I have your cage set up so you won't feel homesick."

"How nice..." Vegeta said quietly but he decided to remain silent. Being quiet while the pig taunted him was probably more annoying for Oolong. He could smell the frustration, the venom. It was the sweetest smell that Warden could ever hope to have.

"Your pretty girl Bulma Briefs won't be coming to see you anymore."

Vegeta kept his gaze still not batting an eyelid.

"I bet you have so many visions of tasting her sweet flesh but that's all over. I've recommended that no woman shall ever step 10 meters near you. All your nurses and attendants are going to be male. You'll have to start fantasising about men instead."

There was still no reaction.

Oolong irritated by the silence tapped his pen on the clipboard. This got Vegeta's attention and Oolong smiled while clicking the biro.

"It's going to be a long flight, I hope you have packed everything... oh wait all you have to bring is yourself."

Vegeta lunged at Oolong, he was still strapped into the trolley but he swung at the pig knocking the clipboard and pen out of his hand. Oolong squealed and Mr Popo and some other strong looking attendants ran to his aid. Vegeta lay on the floor satisfied and a smirk on his face. The guards pinned him down and made sure he couldn't move again. Even with a mask and straightjacket Vegeta was considered dangerous. Oolong picked up his clipboard and kicked Vegeta in the stomach.

"Damn monkey!"

There was no sound from Vegeta, he didn't even grunt as the hard kick hit his stomach.

"Get the simian prepped for departure, we leave immediately." Warden Oolong said straightening his suit. "I don't want any muck ups."

"Sir, will I be going?" Mr Popo asked.

"No, we need you here Popo."

"But I could advise the new guards and attendants for Prince Vegeta."

"I know the routines, Mr Popo you won't be needed."

The guard nodded the words stung. Mr Popo had looked after Prince Vegeta since he came and everytime he was on duty not one incident had occurred. He felt uneasy as Oolong walked away. The sideways smile on the Alien Prince was enough to shake anybody. He pulled Vegeta up and dusted off the dirt from his outfit.

"I understand sir." Mr Popo said sadly. "Looks like you're on your own now your Highness."
Vegeta stayed quiet, not answering the man and only bowed his head slightly. The guard only stood watching his calm stoic expression, the Prince was an expert at hiding his feelings. The snake like smile he had seen for a brief instant had shaken him. He felt like this was a horrible mistake and the people that were going to suffer was everyone on this planet.

'There has to be something I can do...' Mr. Popo thought desperately as he wheeled the dangerous Saiyan to the transport that waited outside.

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Deep in the laboratories of the FBI building Bulma Briefs finished with one of her many blood samples. All the blood of the previous victims had not been fully analysed in the autopsy, it was a discrepancy that Bulma couldn't overlook. The blood samples were old but Bulma knew if there was any trace of alien substances she could find them.

'After all I'm a genius,' she reminded herself. Her self praise had quietened down over the years and now had become a quiet inner voice. Her confidence was something she had thought to be unshakable.

She stretched as she put the last one for a certain poison into the machine for testing and stood up to get some coffee. She was living off caffeine and sugar, she was still fighting her inner urge for nicotine. They went so well with sugar and caffeine.

Just as she poured a cup her friend Launch burst in, she looked anxious. "Bulma!"

"What, I'm not finished, I told you leave me till it's time for dinner at least."

"No, this is important it's all over the papers!" The girl pushed what Bulma instantly recognised as the West City Gossiper, the rag newspaper that spread lots of lies about Prince Vegeta. She stared in disbelief at the front page.

A photograph of herself in highschool smiling innocently was next to one of the better pictures of Vegeta. (One where he looked like a human and not a murdering alien monster). The headline read: "The Princess of Saiyans"

"You've got to be fucking joking!" Bulma swore. She read further:

It has come to light that Ex-Capsule Corporation heiress Miss Bulma Briefs has become infatuated with her parents killer. Now acting as a temporary agent for the FBI, Bulma has sought out to interview the nightmarish monster Prince. We at the Gossiper believe her motives were originally revenge for the destruction of her parents estate which lead to the bankruptcy and her loss of fortune. The current owner of the rights to Capsule Corporation did not comment about this lewd action by Miss Briefs. The twenty year old is almost completed her training at the FBI and according to our sources she requested that her final training mission would be with Prince Vegeta. The Saiyan alien that came to earth and devoured nine people and destroyed hundreds and thousands of property. The Gossiper feels that Miss Briefs has lost her mind and would be unfit to graduate as an agent. She has fallen in love with the monster. It is well know that he holds a certain allure to the ladies while some find him the ugliest thing on the planet. Could Bulma be looking for some comfort in the cold alien's strong arms? Has she become mentally unstable due to the loss of her family at such a tender age? The Gossiper aims to find out. More on Page 4.

Bulma breathed through her teeth making a loud hissing noise. The reporter that had followed her yesterday had went ahead with his story even though he had nothing.
"It's not true is it Bulma?"

"Which part?" Bulma demanded. "It's all bullshit other than the part about my name and I'm the ex-Capsule Corporation heiress! Honestly, where's their proof that I asked to go to Vegeta? I was given this damn assignment by Piccolo!"

"Shouldn't you tell them that?"

Bulma laughed, "Sorry, no. This rag doesn't work this way. It was like this when my parents died and they tried to make me out as a poor innocent girl, I yelled in a reporter's face once and they changed the story to I was a bitch that deserved everything I got."

"Really?" Launch said quietly. "Sorry I didn't know I don't read this newspaper. It was yellow belly who gave this to me. He actually came out of his room screaming and well, he dropped it actually when he saw me."

"Nice reworking of the word 'give' you should be a reporter." Bulma scoffed. "Look, I know the truth and Director Piccolo knows the truth that's enough for me."

"Don't you feel angry at them?" Launch asked. "I want to rip the little bastard that wrote this and shove it down his throat."

Bulma smiled at the angry side of Launch, it usually appeared when she got worked up. "Yes, the thoughts do enter my mind but I'm not going to give into my anger. If I did I would be nothing more than a monster like Vegeta."

Bulma tried to force away the inner Vegeta voice that had appeared recently. 'We are so alike cadet, you should give into your anger.' She downed her coffee hoping to drown the voice inside.

"Are you really okay?" Launch said. "You look like you've got one hell of an indigestion problem."

"It's nothing, maybe I am a little mad but there's nothing we can do." Bulma said. "I'll continue with my work, come back later when it's near dinner time. I could do with eating something that's not sugar."

"Sure," Launch said kindly. "Good luck and hope you find what you're looking for."

Bulma waved and took one last look at the paper. It was a nice picture of her, sure with an added Princess crown but she did look good in anything. 'I just hope Vegeta doesn't see this.'

'Why do you think he'll get turned on?' The Vegeta voice asked.

Bulma cursed to herself and tried to focus on the work at hand. There were still many substances she needed to try and find. 'Maybe an overall element scan of the blood will tell me if there's anything unusual?' She nodded her head and prepared her next experiment. In a way trying to ignore the inner voice that was growing stronger and louder.

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Director Piccolo was facing a large headache. He was not the one in complete command of the FBI. There were people of higher authority than him and he was facing such a person just now. To many people in the FBI he was considered God, but to Piccolo he was just father.

"Yes Kami, what do you want?" Piccolo asked trying to hide his disgust. "I took Cadet Briefs off the case. We're now busy because you authorised the back up of the Mayor's police."
"You didn't take her off soon enough!" Kami snapped. He threw the paper down on Piccolo's desk.

"So, it looks like there's a leak somewhere. I'll put bets on the insane Asylum."

"Possibly, but this kind of publicity could be avoided if you had sent someone else." Kami hissed. 
"Bulma Briefs is a too high profile to send to Prince Vegeta. The damn press love everything about him, they're eating this story up about him getting visits from the ex-capsule corporation Heiress. What possessed you to send this girl anyway, you knew who her father was!"

"Maybe I wanted her to prove she's more than her father's offspring."

"Vegeta is going to tell the Mayor what he knows and we have full authority to act on that information."

"Vegeta has been known to lie, what makes you think the Mayor can convince him to tell the truth."

"We're going to give him a legitimate offer not dangle a bait of a pretty girl."

"In a way, yes I admit it."

"You're speaking from experience then."

Kami didn't reply and walked back to the door. "You're on standby till Vegeta gives us a name. I have a team of men backing up the police with Vegeta's new short term prison."

"I'd like to ledge my complaint on how I think this is a damn stupid idea."

"Noted and ignored, Director Piccolo. I'm in charge and I want Vegeta to tell us everything he knows. Keep the peace at headquarters when I passed there all the cadets seemed to be running about like headless chickens."

"Sir, all our field agents are on Vegeta duty."

"It won't be necessary. I've picked my own team to assist the mayor. You do as you're order and standby for your next mission. We're going to save Elizabeth Walker, she will survive this ordeal."

"I see Sir, we'll stand down and await orders then." Piccolo saluted and turned his back. "Whatever father wants father gets."
"That's it exactly boy," Kami said closing the door.

Piccolo restrained himself from making a childish face. He merely grimaced and wished the old man would either drop down dead or retire. He personally hoped for the drop down dead option. He picked up the phone and made a quick phone call to his second in command. Vegeta would be a second priority now. Scalpel Jones was a bigger threat.

Somewhere in very dark place, Elizabeth awoke to the sound that she had become to find comforting. The rumbling snore of the monster sounded like a jack hammer drilling but it was the sound of blissful peace. She knew this was the time she could try something to escape. That thing did not want her to escape alive. She tied the rope that held her slop bucket tightly around her hand. The small hole she knew was somewhere above her. Elizabeth knew now which way was up, gravity was a good way to help her. As she tossed the bucket upwards it hurtled back down twice as fast and always seemed to land on her hurting her. It wasn't much but the pain made her feel alive, instead of the numb void she was becoming used to.

Everyday as she ate more of that filth he fed her she felt more sluggish, more tired. It drained her of energy. Soon she knew she wouldn't have the will or ability to pull herself out.

'Betty Walker is not a giver-up!' She reminded herself. It was her little motto that helped her keep going. It was dumb and 'giver-up' wasn't a word but it made sense. She didn't want to quit on life, she wanted to live. She wanted to kick this son of a bitch's ass so badly it hurt. She swung up again and Betty felt a reassuring thud as it latched onto something.

She felt like laughing, her dumb plan worked! 'No, it's not dumb Betty, it's a wonderful plan. Now stop feeling smug and pull yourself up.' Her inner monologue reminded her and she obeyed. The girl yanked hard and dragged her body up. She had done rock climbing once when she was in the girl scouts. This was similar only there was no cute guy giving encouragement.

Elizabeth clawed her way up and felt in the dirty blackness. The top of the tunnel was sticky, she couldn't move very far. She lay on the ground breathing softly, she had made it! She was on top of the tunnel that the asshole had thrown her down.

'I'm gonna kick his ass!' She reminded herself. She sat up on her knees and crawled forward.

It was then she noticed, while she had been busy climbing the sounds had stopped. It was silent, the monster was now awake.

"Crap..." Elizabeth whispered to herself.

"Interesting choice of words little meat," Hissed the dreaded voice. "You're too early to come out yet, you haven't eaten enough. Ah well, if you really want you can stay up here with me."

Elizabeth pulled on the bucket line to use the bucket as a weapon. She wasn't going to let him take her. She was not a piece of meat! Elizabeth pulled hard again on the line it was stuck! She didn't have time to find out on what as she felt something wrap around her throat and lift her up. Soon she felt a cold sticky substance cover her and she was hanging in the air, suspended by what felt like rope.

"Let me down!" She screamed.

"No, it wanted to stay up here and here it'll stay."
Elizabeth felt her spirit break and the tears fell. The thing imitated her sobbing, mocking her.

'I want to die...' Elizabeth thought and her usual peppy inner voice grew silent and didn't give any encouragement. There was no hope left as far as this girl was concerned. In her last efforts for freedom it had killed the one thing she had left. Her hope that she was going to survive this.

Chapter End Notes

Author's Notes: Um... sorry lots of inner voices in this chapter. This is what happens when you end up alone a lot. (You start speaking to yourself). Poor Elizabeth for a victim character I'm starting to feel a little sorry for her. (Just a little)

So next chapter will Bulma find what she's looking for? Will Vegeta tell all to the Mayor?
The Waiting Game

Chapter Summary

A true hunter knows how to wait.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 9

The Waiting Game

Ever since five years ago after the Saiyan attack and sudden defeat the Earth has gone on alert. It was clear that Earth was not alone and that the other aliens are very powerful and could have destroyed the planet at that time. An organisation was established to deal with any alien invaders and the best minds worked together to fight against any threats to the world peace. The main prize was Prince Vegeta of the Saiyan race, whom was held in constant captivity for study and experiments; with him as a test subject many fields were open and the organisation formed into the FBI. It was the centre of recruitment of talented people and made a lot of space explorations with the stolen technology. Most of all was the research and training building positioned 10 miles from West City.

The FBI building was huge and down in the basement many floors went further and further beneath the ground. Bulma felt like she was journeying to the centre of the Earth. She had been in the elevator for a while now going down. It finally came to a halt, last floor. This was where the real research of the FBI took place. This was the top secret area, it had taken her so long to get the clearance but as it didn't involve a certain Saiyan Prince she was given it quickly. I bet they'll think I'm safe from all that media shit down here. Bulma thought. It looked as if not even cleaners had been here as she swept some cobwebs away from her head. What she had found in the samples she made didn't make any sense and she had come here to get a clear idea. If there was anyone in the labs that would know what it was it would be the specialist scientists that lived here.

She came up to the door that she wanted and knocked. She waited a few minutes before knocking again, this time harder. There was still no response and Bulma yelled out, "Hello? Anyone here, I've got some samples for you!"

The door creaked open and a small white cat peered up at her. She noted quickly that it was humanoid and she offered the blood samples. The cat snatched them from her hand and shut the door.

"HEY!" Bulma snarled barging into the door. "That was very rude, you don't even know what I want analysed!"

The cat looked at her with his slanted eyes. It was obvious why he was down here, no people skills. "You want it checked for alien substances, yes?"

"Um...yeah." Bulma blushed. "I found something but I don't have enough information to reference, I
need you guys to tell me what I've found."

"I had a call explaining, you can go now."

"Did that call explain that this is a possible alien insect were dealing with?"

"No."

A very short answer, Bulma wished that she had more patience. "Then now you do, this is very important. Whatever this is in the bloodstream is there might be a connection with the Jones case."

"Jones is an alien insect?" The cat asked amazed.

Bulma was amazed she got him looking interested and asking questions. She was invited in by the humanoid she found out was called Korin. He was an expert on alien plants, insects and anything smaller than himself which to Bulma seemed to include a lot. She noticed there were other even shyer co-workers who made themselves look busy. She calmly noted that they were all male; this was probably the first female they had seen that had two legs for quite a while. Bulma knew that the basement area was like an underground network and even had its own sleeping quarters and canteen.

"It's to be kept top secret if you don't mind." Bulma said; she was still the main speaker.

"Absolutely and you say these blood came from the victims?"

"There's also the small white things I found inside the blood which is worrying me. I don't know how it was dismissed as a contamination in the sample. I looked closer and it seemed to be something more."

"I quite agree, they are something more, they are in fact eggs."

"I don't know what species as they appear to be microscopic but I shall do some research, everyone here will help." Korin said. He spoke not directly at Bulma but while he was looking at the sample through his microscope. "These samples are quite well made; I can see the poison now as well. Who did make up these slides are they any of my team?"

"That was me." Bulma said. "I may be FBI but I have some scientific training."

"What was your name again?"

"I never said. It's Bulma Briefs."

"Briefs eh? Any relation to Dr Trunks Briefs?"

"He was my father."

The whole room now were staring and looking at Bulma now.

"I see, that does explain a few things." Korin chuckled. "This makes me want to work twice as hard. Your father was a great man and I wish you'd followed in his field. Unfortunately Capsule Corporation is not what it used to be."

"That is quite out of my hands." Bulma said getting up. "I'm taking up your time; I'll let you continue your work."

"Ah, but won't you stay for tea?" There was a chorus from the enthusiastic staff members behind Korin, from being terribly shy they had gone 180 and decided to be over enthusiastic. Bulma blushed
at such treatment, it did remind her of her past days when she had been the Princess of Capsule Corps. She shook herself free of her nostalgia and made her excuses.

"I need to report back as soon as possible."

"Then give us your number so we can call you if we find something."

Bulma gave a coy smile, "Just go through Director Piccolo please. My number is private." She winked and she was sure she saw a few guys at the back fall down. You've still got it Bulma. Although that was now the victims blood sample sorted there was also something to do with the first victim; the one that had been found on Capsule Corps property. Bulma knew that a few more demons of her past were going to be dug up. Just as she was finally feeling like she was burying her latest one, The Saiyan prince Vegeta. As she looked at the clock he would be miles away from her now well out of reach in an undisclosed place in West City. A full armed guard; tranquilized and surrounded by ki suppressors. She hoped it would be enough and that the demon Prince would stay buried.

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The plane from South city touched down and hundreds of men ran out in line. An army of guards waited in rows as the plane made its taxi to the small terminal building that had been evacuated of all normal passengers. This was all for one very special passenger. The Mayor of the city came out with his wife watching from a safe distance. It was unfortunately a very sunny and bright day, there should have been sounds of laughter but there was a tense feeling in the air. The monster that had changed everyone's world was being escorted out of the plane now on an upright trolley. The bars of the trolley glowed to show the ki suppressants were active.

Vegeta watched from his mask as Oolong walked beside him. He seemed to strut a little; he had the upper hand on Vegeta. He could still feel the sting in his neck. He thought back to when the Bulma copy nurse had injected him with that serum. It was made to genetically suppress his strength. At first he thought it was just a lie but he could feel it. The poison sat in his body like a lead weight. He could feel the lack of power that was his pride. He had been stripped. It did not however change his plan. He wanted that pig dead. He glared at him from his mask and ignored whatever useless chatter the Mayor said.

"Are you listening?" Oolong snarled at him.

Vegeta grunted his response.

"It doesn't matter, you're now bait and your room is waiting." Oolong huffed. "Don't worry Mayor Walker we'll lure that alien kidnapper here."

"Don't forget mass murderer." Vegeta murmured, waking up from his thoughts. "I wonder how safe little Elizabeth is now. Is she screaming out for her Daddy or is she giving up and letting herself die. Hope is a very fragile thing, it breaks so easily."

Mayor Walker was shaken by these words but he said nothing. He had learnt the hard way there was no way to really speak to this animal. "Take the alien bait to his lure."

The army escorted the alien Prince to the waiting armour van. Everything seemed so secure. In the background photographers went crazy trying to get a shot of the elusive Saiyan. For appearances sake the guards were informed to shoo them away. However Mayor Walker smiled, it all was coming to plan. 'Just wait Betty, Daddy's coming.'
In the FBI Canteen Bulma shifted uncomfortably in her chair. Every person around her was either looking or talking about her behind her back. The newspaper article had been mostly believed by the cadets that didn't know her and that was over half the populace.

"Thats her... the ex-heiress..."

"How could she with that monster?"

"Why is she still here, she should have been expelled."

Bulma felt the bile rise; she couldn't get angry, not here not in front of these nobodies. She had to keep her cool soon she would graduate and her record would be cleared.

"What are you all talking about?" A girl shouted angrily. Bulma looked up it was Launch but her hair had turned blonde. The violent other personality had made its appearance. "If you go around gossiping and believing this tabloid rubbish then you're all not fit to be agents!"

"Launch, please its okay."

The blonde huffed and sat down. She glared at any of the stragglers that hadn't escaped.

"Damn newbies; think they know all the rules. Well show em once we graduate; eh?"

"Sure, Launch, whatever you say." Bulma smiled. She did like this other side of her friend; especially when it allowed her anger to become sated. She felt the rising bile settle and she continued eating her coffee and cake.

"So finished with your science stuff?" Launch asked as she sat next to her.

"I've gone as far as I could, without the reference files I couldn't continue so I handed it over to some experts that were left out last time."

"Strange that, it was an alien attack and yet the blood was never analysed."

"I read the report; it said that the only analysis done on the body was cause of death. The blood had only been tested for sedatives and other chemicals from Earth. I thought there was a gap and I took a long shot, maybe this will pay back all my hard work."

"Well its unfair you're taken off this case because of some stupid newspaper rumour."

"It doesn't matter; it was coming to an end anyway. I was just the bait to get Vegeta to talk, now he has my usefulness has run out. My next task is going to be easier though and it's still with this case."

"What?"

"It's slightly confidential but I have to investigate the ex-Capsule Corp employees."

"Hey, that's something the local police should be doing!" Launch snapped.

"Perhaps but for me, it's some much needed footwork." Bulma wiped her mouth and stood up. "I'm going on another trip, thats for sure. So I'll see you in another week."

"Take care Bulma."
The girls hugged and Bulma left, as she closed the door to the canteen she heard an eruption of talking and Launch shouting again. Bulma laughed quietly and walked the now very familiar corridors to her sleeping quarters. She wanted to keep busy, the experiments had helped but as she had said to her friend there was only so much she could do. She was more mechanical than a genetic scientist. If this alien had been a robot she would have been so happy, something that had gears and maybe even some alien for of gadgetry that she could dismember. She sighed and opened her dorm door. She noticed the mail had come. It sat on top of the table, but she hardly ever got any mail so she was surprised to see her name carefully written with neat letters on the top of a plain brown envelope.

'To Cadet Bulma Briefs'

She felt a shiver as she picked up the envelope; it had so many postmarks as if it had been passed around to different places. She noticed the envelope seemed scuffed as if there had been something else on top. She held her breath trying to convince herself she was being crazy. It couldn't be...he couldn't...

She opened the paper which had been cut from drawing paper, it was thick and rough it reminded her immediately of a certain cells drawings. She opened it up to confirm her fear. It was a letter from the Prince.

*My Dear Cadet,*

*How are you doing without you regular visits? It may not have been very long since we last parted but this letter was written after you left that last day. I want to make it clear what I know about Jones is actually quite a lot. He has been communicating to me while I have been in prison. He has even tried to enter but the ki suppressors were effective against him as it was against me. His main aim in his pitifully short life is my death. My capture and humiliating declawing is my death. I am not the commander of a great army as you'd imagine. I am but a pawn; a very expendable pawn to an ever greater power. I do not wish to tell you more about that person; its not important now; but you should know one thing about Jones. He is obsessed with my death; just as I am in the death of the traitor Saiyan. He came two years ago in a ship and was able to make contact with me. I will not tell you how I know. It is currently only card I hold over the pitiful mayor who misses his little girl. She should be dead by now but I won’t let his hope die yet. It is useful for me and my survival. If this Jones had not picked such a high rank piece of meat I would not have as much bargaining chips as I do. It will be the first of his many mistakes. His obsession with killing me has blinded him, just as I find myself blinded by wanting the death of that traitor. Which lead to my capture by your pathetic race of humans. My obsession with that Saiyan was quite strong and still is.*

*Although I find myself dealing with a new obsession; I find you quite alluring. True it may be that you are the only female I have been around but that is wrong. There is a similarity in our characters that I see. I see the fire of vengeance in your eyes; the fire of wanting more power to take control of your pathetic life. There is of course big differences, you have never killed anyone but with your current job I think it only a matter of time before you extinguish another life. It will be part of your job just as it was part of my job and you will come to revel in it. This killing is a form of power that I don't think you're ready for my little Cadet. I should warn you that we have unfinished business. You are the only one I will talk to and I have yet to hear your full story. You will find a way to come to me and we shall discuss our unfinished business. It is quite simple and not something to worry about. Not that I doubt you shall, this letter will make you so angry that you might even rip it in two, before you do take a look of the last page. I left a little present for you to remember me. I doubt you will forget your prince but if I find it amusing the gossip the pig has started to spread about us. I think this will add fire to the rumours but it pleases me. I think we would make a wonderful couple but then I would rip open your head after I was done with you and cast you to one side. You
understand this well. That is why there will never be anything but the chemistry between us. I think I
like the smell more than the taste. Isn't it strange how sometimes the food smells better than it tastes.
I think of you like that little Cadet. You are something that will never be mine and it is sweeter like
that. If I possessed you then you would rot and taste bitter, maybe you would even wilt like a flower.
Although I promise not to eat you in the way I ate others. I would have you in a very different way.

Come to me one more time and I shall tell you the full story of Jones; just as you will tell me the full
part of your story. It will be a fair exchanged just as we agreed on that day so long ago.

I promise I won't bite,

The Prince of All Saiyans, Vegeta.

Bulma dropped to her knees. 'How did he get this letter out, how?'

Her hand shook as she looked at the last page. The eyes were the first thing she noticed. Those eyes
that were dark pools that drew her in; the drawing was a self-portrait by Vegeta. Somehow he had
managed to capture the way he always had looked at her. Her eyes scanned the picture and she felt
blood rush to her face. He was completely naked, including showing off his proud member sitting in
the middle of his legs. His slanted smile as he knew he looked good naked, he knew he would be
getting the reaction from Bulma. She let out a gasp and turned it round.

'Why does he do this to me?' She demanded from her body. She hugged herself tight and went to
wash cold water over her now very hot face. She hid the charcoal picture in her luggage and picked
up the note and envelope. The picture could be left out but this had to be important. She hurried out
the door to her Chief. She didnt have time to worry about any consequences the time was drawing
thin for the girl held captive. Bulma may not have a direct way of helping but she could do what she
could to help.

Just keep busy and don't think about it. She reminded herself as she ran down the corridors unaware
at how red her face really was.

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Vegeta sat up in his new open space cell and smiled. 'Yes, she should have got the letter by now. I
wonder if she will come to ask some of the unanswered questions. She's not done with me yet; just
as I have still some unanswered questions to do with her.'

He knew he would have her interested and she would come to him one last time. 'Unfinished
business must be done before I can move on from this place.' There was also the noose of Jones, the
name given to him by the humans; as that alien arachnid made its plans to get to him. The creature
would be at full power soon and Vegeta knew if he didn't get him stopped then with his current
weak self he would be dead very soon. There was a way out and he had to be very careful in how he
worked it. If all went well he would soon be free.

"Guards, could you play that CD you were given. The concerto by Beethoven; I feel like sitting
quietly and waiting with music."

The guards looked at each other and read down the list of instructions and requests. The CD was on
the list, the man nodded to the other and from a safe distance they started to play. The booming
sound of the powerful piece echoed around the empty room. In the centre was a large metal cell that
was lit up with ki suppressors. Vegeta sat down in his plastic chair and continued doing what he had
been doing for these five long years; he waited.
Author's note: Things are starting to build up. I want to make it slightly different than the plot of Silence of the Lambs but there will be similarities of course since it was the inspiration for this fanfic.

Even though this is technically a Bulma Vegeta fanfic, remember there is no planned romance, only chemistry. So if it does ever happen it will be right at the end and will not be so bright and happy. This is a very dark story.
Chapter Summary

There are times when you need to follow your instinct.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Chapter 10

Instinct

It was a long day for Bulma she had been up all night examining and preparing blood samples. Now she was waiting in the office of her superior with a very strange letter she had received from the Prince of Saiyans, Vegeta. She had already tried to defend herself against the gossip that said she was in a relationship with Vegeta. Now she had even more damning evidence. Why would he send a letter to her? It didn't make any sense. He did say in the letter he was attracted to her, but then he also said he would kill her without a second thought. This was a monster that had been responsible for the slaying of her family. Not directly, but his invasion to the Earth had lead to her downfall in the past and her current mental issues.

“The Director will see you now.” The Secretary said as she looked up from her work.

Bulma hadn’t heard the buzz or any call through but she had spaced out. She made a murmur of thanks and walked into the office.

“Cadet Briefs are you unaware of your new assignment. You’re to go to West City and investigate the ex-employees of Capsule Corporation.”

“I know that sir, but something came up.” Bulma handed over the letter; she had sealed it in a bag. “I thought I should deliver this first. It came today.”

“This is... from Vegeta?”

“Yes Sir.” “You still deny any relationship with the Saiyan?”

“I do Sir; there is no romance on my side. If you read the letter you can see the Prince’s feeling on the matter.” Bulma stood waiting as her Director and Chief read through the letter. His dark green face clenched as he read a few parts. Bulma guessed it was at the part that mentions Jones and only mentions. There was nothing to lead them to the killer.

“He’s baiting you to come to him.”

“That’s what it looks like to me too Sir.”

“Thank you for bringing this to me but tell me; where is the second page?”

“It’s in my room.” Bulma said guiltily. “It was only a picture; I thought the letter was the important part that you needed to see.”
“Understood, but I don’t like this Bulma.” Piccolo waved his hand for her to sit. “You are not in High School anymore. You don’t need to hide anything from us.”

“I’m sorry sir.”

“I’m glad it’s me that picked this up and not my superiors. They don’t believe the rumours of course but there are still doubts about whether you are fit to be an agent or not. You would do so much better down in one of our research labs.”

“I’d rather be on the field. Which is why once we’re finished I’m going to the first address and going through all the ex-employees as you’d asked.”

“I put you on this assignment to help keep your reputation. In this building gossip likes to spread and tempers have been known to flare.”

“I’m quite calm actually.” Bulma smiled.

“That’s partially why I’m worried. Go to a gym on your time off and beat the crap out of a sandbag before coming into the office. You’ve got a lot of aggression in you; I remember when you were a young recruit.”

“Gee, thanks…I think.” Bulma said, unsure if that was a compliment.

“By the way, this is a photo of the nurse that Vegeta savaged.” He passed it along the table.

“Sir… Dr Oolong was very kind to already show me that.”

“There’s also her ID and her details in there. She still works as Vegeta’s private nurse.”

“Do you want me to talk to the nurse sir?” She stepped forward and looked at the photos. One was of the wound and the others of the nurse in her state before the accident.

“I just think she looks uncannily like you.” Piccolo said lifting up a newspaper and turning round. “I would even bet you could pass yourself off as her and get into see Vegeta to ask those important questions one more time.”

Bulma stayed silent but she understood where this was going. Her heartbeat increased at the thought of doing such a thing.

“It’s a shame we won’t get to know what Vegeta knows. He seems quite determined to say it only to you.”

“A real shame Sir.” Bulma said taking the photos and ID from the desk. “It would be completely against the rules to do such a thing now.”

“Indeed.” Piccolo agreed. “If anything were to happen I would deny everything.”

Bulma walked out of the office clutching the photos.

“Just remember Cadet, don’t get caught and don’t forget that last page of the letter. It may not be any clue but it would not look good if you were found with anything of the sort if there was some sort of surprise search of Cadet’s quarters.”

There was a deep warning in that last part and Bulma knew that it wasn’t to be taken light heartedly. If she assumed right then they really did doubt her and were going to search her room for any evidence to suggest she was in league or even in love with the Saiyan monster. She tried to hold
back a laugh as she walked past the secretary. It was a ridiculous suggestion but then to others it might not be. The Alien Prince sickened her more than she could say. It wasn't hate but she had absolutely no love or sympathy for the human eater. She understood though that people have a nasty habit of believing what they heard rather than what they know. It was something that Bulma knew too well.

‘The humans can be so predictable, can’t they?’ The ghostly voice of Vegeta purred in her head.

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It was pure instinct that lead Jones, instinct to breed, eat and sleep. It wanted to kill Vegeta it was the only goal it knew since it came here. That time was close, that time was so deliciously close. The smell of victory filled the air. It was going to be soon that it would hatch. The feed was almost ready, it just needed to eat and fatten out.

“Why does it refuse to eat?” Jones hissed and the spinning lump above him. He crawled up onto the ceiling and looked into the now dead eyes. It checked the stock’s life signs. It was still alive, but only just.

“Answer me human!”

“It tastes like shit.” Betty croaked. She liked it when he was annoyed. It meant she had done something to mess up his plans. She wanted him to choke on her.

“I can get you human food, I got you human food.”

“It’s rotten...” Betty gasped. ‘Doesn’t this thing understand the simplest thing? You can’t eat rotten food, especially with maggots crawling across it.’ She threw up again as the memory hit her and this irritated the alien arachnid more.

“Filthy stock, it messes up my floor.”

‘It’s already a mess.’ Betty thought but she had no energy to say it. She had no more will anymore. It was just her and this strange creature that had no empathy no understanding of human taste or morals. She didn’t know anything now except that her world revolved around this thing. The comforts of home were a faint memory and she only had her stubborn need to keep breathing that kept her going. Betty’s will had broken and the faint threads of hope she had were now gone. She was living on her instincts now and her world had shrunk to the small dingy place and her captive. The thing sniffed her face; she could feel the mandibles of his mouth caressing her body.

“Still not enough...” It muttered and swung down to the ground floor. The scared girl was suspended in a ball of web in the ceiling of what was a basement of a large house. Betty didn’t know this though; she only knew this as some sort of cave. Although the hidden human gadgets and junk did lead her to believe this had once been lived in. She focused again as it switched on the television.

“You were a prize catch.” It chuckled as it saw the news story about her father the Mayor speaking about his kidnapped daughter.

“Daddy...” Betty whispered, a tear run down her face and she closed her eyes. She didn’t want to see him. He couldn’t help her.

“So we are moving the Alien Prince to an undisclosed location as another Alien has come in contact with him. It is nothing to be alarmed about and the threat is being subdued as we speak. Prince Vegeta is still in captivity and is very much under tranquilizers. He will not be causing anyone any harm. He couldn't even hurt a kitten.” The creature laughed hysterically as it heard this.
“Oh, monkey has been moved. Monkey will maybe tell me my secrets. We can’t let this happen oh no. It is best to hurry with my plans.”

“That is all we can let you know for now. My main focus is finding my daughter safe and sound. If anyone has any leads there is a large reward for any information that will bring my daughter, Betty back to me. I miss you my dear Elizabeth, we’ll see each other soon.” The TV was switched off and silence flooded the room.

More tears ran down her face and she choked on the hot salty water, it was impossible. Nothing could save her from this thing.

“It will be quiet!”

Something pierced Betty in the leg and she felt that now familiar buzz of the poison working. She fell unconscious still crying desperate tears. She didn’t believe that there was any way out. She just wanted to fall asleep and let it all go away.

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The guards of the new prison had been handpicked by the Warden. They were the most elite soldiers that had now retired and were looking for an easy job still following orders but with no real danger involved. This new mission however had that ting of danger that had excited the older men. This was HIM. This was the Prince of Saiyans! This was the murderer that most of the men could link to a death of some relation or friend. To put it lightly the Guards all disliked him extremely and did not have any thoughts to stop now. They followed his requests for music and food grudgingly but it had an air of defiance. His tray of food was thrown down and spilt; although most of it was still edible. The music was put on after a five minute silence and under no circumstance was Vegeta referred to as his majesty or even by the name Prince Vegeta. It was always “him” or “that Saiyan” in his presence and when the guards thought he was sleeping, “bastard” and “fucker” were used as his nicknames.

It was nostalgic for Vegeta. It reminded him of his first year in confinement with all the guards he had seen and eventually see sent away. Every one of them had used the same tactics and every one of the disrespectful ones had been dealt with. He was powerless they thought but their minds were such open books for him to attack. All he had to do was wait and find the weak one. He may be in a cage but Vegeta considered himself the hunter. He had the patience to wait for the moment and it would have to come soon.

Jones would be closing his net soon trying to trap the fallen warrior. He was a disgrace to the army of Freeza and he would be killed by Jones. The worst possible death for a warrior like himself; slain by a creature that he would flick away easily at full power. Now though was a different story and Vegeta was the fly being used to catch the spider. If it all worked to as he planned then he would reverse that situation. “Hey guys these are the weapons to use to restrain Vegeta!” One guard said holding up the large electric prong.

“We’re ordered not to use it unless he acts up.” The older Guard warned. One of the younger boys, Sid chuckled and ignored the warning. He walked over to the cage.

“Everything all right in there for ya?” Sid asked chewing on a piece of gum.

Vegeta didn’t reply, it was a stupid question. He ignored him and returned to reading the newspaper.

“Y’know you’re pretty rude for a Prince.”
This made Vegeta’s eye twitch but he did not look away from his reading. “Hey, I’m speaking to ya!” He reached in to prod Vegeta but his arm was caught.

“Sir, May I ask what you’re doing to my patient?” A woman dressed as a nurse and with a head bandage had appeared before Sid. He looked at the beauty and put down the weapon. He was sure there was a rule about beautiful woman interrupting a man’s false bravado.

“Miss, you have to wait, we’re still checking with Dr Oolong!” The Guard at the desk called out to the young bandaged lady.

She walked forward ignoring him.

“You can’t go in yet!”

“I’m afraid I didn’t have much time.” The Nurse said. “As I told you, I’m Vegeta’s nurse Marron Mont Blanc.”

“I got that, your ID checks out but I thought woman weren't allowed in here.” The Front Desk guard sighed but he seemed hesitant. The woman had seen what had gone on in the room and she seemed the smart cunning type of girl. She was the type that could make trouble for you if you pushed her the wrong way. The Guard had seen this type before and been burned.

“Would you like me to tell my superiors that your underlings were going to torture Vegeta for no good reason? I think he was being asked unnecessary questions that did not need any reply.”

The Older Guard flinched; she was definitely the type that was dangerous. Vegeta had folded up his newspaper and was sitting with attention watching the scene.

“I do believe Prince Vegeta looks quite comfortable in his new cell and would prefer not to be asked every five minutes if it was okay.” Marron sighed. “If he had any trouble I’m very sure he would not hold back to complain.”

“Sid, Bert.” Vegeta purred. “My nurse is here now. I need my check-up. You do want to know that the ki suppressants are working.” He smiled like a tiger baring his fangs. “It would be such a pity if they weren't and poor Sid was made armless as well as dickless.” There was a snap from Sid as he heard the insult and was about to lash out. Bert held him back and the pair retreated for a break.

“Miss we’ll be watching from the cameras. You don’t need to go in to examine him?” Bert asked nervously.

“He has a monitor here for all that.” Marron said touching the machine that the Guards thought was just a ki suppressor.

“I won’t be more than ten minutes. That’s all I need.” The door closed and the nurse stepped closer to the cell checking around her to make sure they really were alone.

“Welcome to my new home Cadet Bulma Briefs.” Vegeta said smiling.

“I don’t call this a home.” Bulma answered plainly. “I want to know how you did it, posting the letter I mean.”

“That’s not really that interesting.” Vegeta said. “I do like the disguise, that uniform suits you better than that airhead did. I see you even got a bandage on the correct ear. Her blood was too sweet. I think she ate too many cakes.”
Bulma unconsciously touched the bandaged that covered the ear. Nurse Marron was now in hospital getting a fake ear graphed to her head. It was thanks to Vegeta that it had been ripped off in the first place. “Spare me those details.” Bulma said. “You know why I’m here.”

“Yes. Of course.” “Then tell me what is Jones really?”

“You already know.”

“It’s a big spider.”

“Correct.”

“One that wants you dead.”

“Correct again.” He smiled at her like she was a pet that had done a trick well.

“So tell me Vegeta how you knew about Jones.”

“Ah, now there is the gem of a question.” Vegeta said. “You’re asking the correct questions now. Although you do understand this does not come for free. First I want my payment from you.”

“You want to ask questions about me?” Bulma tried to hold back her shiver. “It’s not that interesting.”

“I think you’re wrong little Cadet. This is where we will disagree. I feel a great anger in you that you hold back. There is something you hide from the normal creatures on this planet. You have a mask just as I do.”

“Perhaps, but it’s part of being an agent I feel.” Bulma said coolly. “There is no need to show emotions in this line of work.”

“Then answer me my first question little Cadet. Your family were killed by one of my men, yes?”

“Yes.” Bulma shook slightly with anger. “It is my mission to come here and to hold back any personal feelings.”

“Although now people think it is different personal feelings.” Vegeta smirked tapping the newspaper on his desk. “I never read this type of thing but it is quite interesting about how big a company your father’s business is.”

“Capsule Corporation used to be the largest capsule company on Earth. We had the patent for the best design. No other company came close to our easy and safe capsule design though others followed.”

“How about now?” Vegeta said with a sadistic smile. “They’re perhaps only third or fourth on the market. It was bought by some other company and the patent was also sold along with it. There are other companies now that can make a cheaper capsule for storage of vehicles and other equipment.”

“Do you feel angry at the selling?”

“No, not really. I was only 15 at the time it happened. I was young and foolish, full of dreams of love rather than business. If I had taken over it would have maybe faded to nothing.”

“So the Princess never really got to take her rightful throne.” There was a something hiding behind his eyes as he said this.
“So tell me how did Jones get your attention?”

“He sent me a letter.” Vegeta answered simply.

“Where is it?”

“There isn’t anything important in it.” Vegeta said. “It’s hidden very well in my cell. All it says is that Jones is here for my skin and I will die in 3 years.”

“He contacted you then so early?”

“Rather clumsily as it turned out, he posted it from that Capsule building.” Vegeta said with a tut. It was obvious he disapproved of such easily found methods. “Those buildings do have their own postal service, don’t they? The post mark was almost like an address for where he was.”

“I guess, he didn’t know about that Earth custom.”

“Exactly, if that was me I would have researched everything.” Vegeta smirked. “Now it’s your turn again, tell me about your uncle that took you in.”

Bulma remained silent as she felt the danger that this conversation was leading. He was worming into her head, trying to mess with her mind. It was the only ammunition he had now.

“Don’t tell me he had his own little farm somewhere and took advantage of your young body.”

“Nothing of the sort.” Bulma said sharply. “The family was good to me. I had everything that I needed.” “You’re not there now, what happened?”

“Nothing much.” Bulma shrugged and looked at the ground. “It was better that I move out as soon as I could.”

“You ran away didn’t you?” Vegeta guessed.

“Yeah, I did I was 16 when I up and left.”

“What was the trigger?”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean there must have been something that made you snap and want to leave.”

“I might remember, but tell me Vegeta what does Jones need his victims for?”

“Finally a good question; let’s make it a fair trade then little cadet. My facts about Jones for your little trauma that’s hiding in your head.”

Bulma shivered and looked into those dark pools. She would have to recall that night that she had blotted out from her memory. It was coming back and in the distance she could hear the screams.

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Chapter End Notes
Author’s Note: This chapter came out so much easier than the last since we had a bit of B/V interaction. I love the chemistry side of this story more than any final outcome of them getting together, which again is not the real focus of this story.

Next one might take a few months as we get to the conclusion of the B/V final interaction and we move onto Jones the spider alien thing.
The Screams of the Monkeys

Chapter Summary

Bulma continues her talk with Vegeta, revealing traumas she thought she'd hidden.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 11

The Screams of the Monkeys

There had been no doubt in Bulma's mind that it would come to this. By entering the prison once again; she had to face his most personal questions. His threat was there he wanted to know what her darkest thought was. He knew she held it back in a cage deep in her mind; just as he held his darkest thoughts for all to see. He saw through her mask that had taken her so long to cast over herself. She wondered though if it really was because they were so alike that he could see this. Or was it another mind trick made by Vegeta, his power now only lying in these words and barbs that he used.

"Is some girl's trauma really so interesting for the Prince of all Saiyans?" Bulma asked, she tried her last stand.

"I find you interesting, isn't that enough?" Vegeta gave her a slanted smile. "Tell me or I don't say anything about Jones as you've come to call him."

"I understand." Bulma said but in her own mind she didn't, why did it matter?

"What set you off from the safety of your uncle's house? You left suddenly why?"

"I found something that I shouldn't." Bulma explained. "They were scientists like my father and I thought I would be safe there with my inventions. I made something I wanted to test out but it never came to fruition. At the time I still had confidence in science that it could be used for good. That was until I found out what type of science my Uncle did."

Vegeta remained silent but she had his attention.

"It was only one month after I had moved there and I was finding it hard to sleep. Something kept waking me up in the middle of the night. It gave me nightmares. At first I thought it was just the shock of losing my parents but one night I was awake working on my invention when I heard the same sound from my dreams. It was a high pitched scream, like nothing I'd heard in the daytime. I thought it might be a trapped animal but it wasn't coming from the forest around the house it was coming from the research building."

Vegeta stayed silent and let her continue. The words seemed to flow from Bulma as she let out something she had never told anyone.

"I followed the sound it was so loud now. I couldn't figure it out. It led me into the laboratories and into the basement. The screams were so loud I had to cover my ears. It was coming from monkeys, cages and cages of monkeys. They had tubes and shaven parts; I'd never seen anything like it before. 
All those animals were for my Uncle's experiments. All of them were screaming in agony because of science. One of the animals had somehow got out and was screaming loudly. He had been shaved and some chemical was burning on his skin. I managed to grab him somehow. He tried to bite and scratch me. He was such a stupid monkey. I gave him a bath and decided that we would escape together. I took the chance to start my search for my experiment. It was a stupid dream of mine, a thing of legend."

“A legend...?”

“It's not important.” Bulma said quickly. “I never found what I was looking for the stupid monkey I took with me broke my radar and I was caught long before I had a chance to fix it.”

“Radar to find your dream legend?” Vegeta contemplated, it wasn't a question expecting an answer.

“So after that you were banned from your Uncle's home.”

“In a way, I couldn't stay with his experiments and the monkey was killed. I'd even named him Sun Wukong after the monkey king of legend.” Bulma struggled to speak clearly. That monkey had been annoying but it had been her friend for a short time. After it had learned not to bite and scratch her. “I never forgave my uncle. I didn't think that science could be so cruel; that you could use helpless animals to test your experiments on. The monkey Sun Wukong in the legend couldn't die but this monkey did.”

“That's not the legend you were chasing.”

“It doesn't exist. As I said it was a teenage dream. To find something that can grant your wish so easily without any real effort; it's all a fantasy.” Bulma said sternly. “I've learned to live in the here and now and not to put my hopes onto any easy way out.”

“I agree.” Vegeta said. “Do you still have the nightmares?”

“Yes, they've never gone away.”

“Maybe it's reminding you how you gave up on your dreams.”

“Very likely, it was because of my running away that I gave up all my rights to Capsule Corps. My Uncle sold the rights as soon as he could. I was no longer the scientist heiress and I was glad, I want nothing to do with science; but I have new goals now.” Bulma said. “I want to see Jones caught and that girl saved. Tell me what you know.”

“Nicely deflected, I will tell you what I know.” Vegeta said. “It's not that much really. I'm an orphan as well, everything I knew taken from me. I am the last of my race; they have been destroyed when I was a child. I have lived my life working for a being, a monster that rules the central universe. To escape him is not easy. He rules a large army and conquers what he feels is a useful planet but he uses his army to purge any useless planets of weaklings. I've been one of the army that would make the attack.”

“Then there is someone more powerful than you out there.” Bulma said shocked.

“Be grateful that this dirt ball of a planet is on the edge of the universe and has no tactical advantage. Our interest here was to find our missing Saiyan warrior who had been sent here as a child. He was a traitor and not what we had expected so as punishment we did the job he should have done and started to purge this world of all its weakling inhabitants. Call it really a force of habit.”

Bulma couldn't hide this disgust in her face. This didn't put off Vegeta but made him smile quite cruelly.
"We were all defeated however and you know the rest. That traitor who is now no longer a Saiyan is hidden on this planet; settled down with a wife and child. It's amazing that our superior species can breed with such inferior stock."

"What about Jones?" Bulma said ignoring his attack at her species. She did want to ask more about his defeat and this other Saiyan but she would miss her chance to ask about Jones. This was a game of 20 questions she couldn't mess up now because of her curiosity.

"I am now a disgraced warrior as I've said. Jones is an insult to my skills to be sent here. My previous Leader has disowned me and has sent this alien insect to attack my weakened state. It does it slowly, building up its body, taking in fluids and information from the inhabitants on the planet. It first arrived in a Capsule Corps building as you know and took on the identity of one of the staff. I received the letter shortly after its arrival. It was taunting me, letting me know that death would be waiting for me in 2 or 3 years. A death that would be made worse as I would be drained by the bug and my life-force taken slowly; it would make me watch as my body withered and died. If it catches me in its web I will die the most humiliating death a warrior could have."

“So it can take on a person's identity?” Bulma asked she needed the main facts quickly.

“Yes to a point, it can make a crude copy of a body but if it wants to get at me it will need a stronger body to break in and take me away."

“Will the girl be the last piece?”

“Possibly, its letter to the police seemed to be in a way to taunt at me. It must be close to fruition of its battle body.”

“Battle body?” Bulma exclaimed.

“Yes, it won't be as powerful as me but it will have enough power to destroy a few cities. It won't last long, bit of a Frankenstein creation really, but long enough to get through all this.”

“Anything else?”

“I want to hear your feelings,” Vegeta said. “I want to know how you find it so frustrating, when you know something is wrong but you can't do anything about it.”

“What do you mean?”

“I would kill to rid me of my frustration. You however seem to seek Justice by the more boring way,” Vegeta smirked. “Isn't it twice as frustrating knowing something is wrong and you have no power to do anything about it?”

Bulma's lip quivered as her freshly dug up memories ran through her head. He was doing this on purpose to agitate her. “I live with it Vegeta, I live with the screams. How can you live with your screams by making more?”

“The noise drowns out if you make more.” He smirked and held up a piece of paper, it was an envelope. “You'll need this.”

Bulma stepped closer. He waved it close to the cage; she'd have to reach in to take it.

“You need to start from the source, here...” He offered the envelope. Bulma couldn't resist and went to take it, ignoring her survival instinct that it was a trap. She was pulled into the cage and Vegeta's face was so close to hers. She held her breath as she waited for death trying not to flinch. It was her
mistake for trusting him. She could hear him intaking the air his nose so close, his lips almost
touching her skin. His grip though was very weak, almost the same strength as a small child and she
broke free amazed at how easy it had been. He only kept that cryptic smile on her face.

“You'll need what I gave you to find Jones.” Bulma looked at the envelope, it had a scrawled
address. She placed it in her bag and backed away from the cage. Her legs were starting to shake
from the shock. She could still smell his sweat on her and was sure he had almost kissed her;
although it was probably more likely to be a bite. She had expected to have died at that moment.

“I've told you all you need to know, everything is there for you to work it out. You just need to find
him now, the clock is ticking.” His eyes glanced to the security monitor that showed the view to the
elevator. There was a small and distinct person getting off.

“My time with you is over.” Said Bulma quickly recognising the Warden and so called Doctor. “I'll
find Jones myself but not to save you Vegeta.”

“I plan to live.” Vegeta smirked. “You should try that sometime. You've let your dreams and real
goals escape you. You have no idea how close you were...”

Bulma wanted to say something back but she bit her tongue and hurried. She hated not getting the
last word but now was not the time for any of her previous ego. She was also fighting back the tears
as she had recalled her past. Her hopes that had been shattered so easily were now gone and she had
her work now. She partly wondered what Vegeta had meant but she tried to shrug it off and focus on
leaving by the stairs.

She made it in time as Warden Oolong passed by barely missing her. It became a blur as she passed
through security and she heard the screams of Oolong as she left. He found by the cameras that she
had been inside. She tried to block it out and went to her car and drove off. No-one had stopped her
going out the gates and she kept checking to see if she was being followed. Bulma took off the ear
bandage and placed it in her bag along with the illegal ID of the nurse she had impersonated. It was
she had to admit a bit of a thrill to get in and out so easily; although it made her dread how safe
Vegeta was held there. Not because of Jones breaking in and taking him away to kill but of Vegeta
escaping before that happened.

She pulled over as she felt she was a clear distance. Her breaks came to a screech, the sound echoed
in her mind reminding her of the recent mental scar that had been unearthed. She forgot everything
else and gave in to her need to cry. The screams echoing in her head as the constant stream of hot
tears poured from her eyes.

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Director Piccolo was prepared as his secretary told him she had a very angry Dr Oolong on the
phone. He smiled a little, he guessed as he was angry that Bulma had got away safe. “What do I owe
this pleasure?” He said in a monotone voice, he knew it would be no pleasure.

“Mr Piccolo is it?” The Director made his reply without wanting to correct him too much. The pig
was angry enough. “One of your cadets has been in my personal prison I've made for Vegeta.”

“I don't know how that happened.” Piccolo lied. “My cadets have all been very busy lately with this
Jones case.”

“I am speaking of that little tart Bulma Briefs!” He ranted. “Just because she's an ex-heiress doesn't
mean she has full rights to trample on my parade!”
“I thought this special prison was for Mayor Walker to bait the Jones, not for your own parade.” Piccolo replied.

“That's....that's not the point.” Oolong stuttered. “I mean that she was banned from coming to see him. They had some un-monitored conversation! I want to know what she was talking about!”

“It couldn't have been Cadet Briefs she's in West City investigating some link to the Jones case. It's very basic detective work, something that needs no interview with Vegeta. Are you sure you have her ID on record?”

“I have video proof!”

“That's not enough; do you have a log of her entry?”

“No of course not she was in disguise!”

“Then how do you know it was Cadet Briefs?”

“Vegeta has been in a strange mood since it happened; only that woman can make him do that!” Oolong snapped.

“I'm very sorry to hear that.” Piccolo said. “If you find anything to it, please let us know. We want to give as much co-operation in catching Scalpel Jones.”

“I think you'll find that it will be me that makes the break through.” Oolong sneered. “No matter how many underhanded tricks or floosies you throw at him. It will be ME!”

The line went dead and Piccolo put down the phone. He had a bad feeling in his gut that something would happen with Vegeta in the hands of that Warden. “Miss Bell?” He called through to his secretary.

“Yes sir?”

“Order the emergency Alien escape team to be on stand-by.”

“Understood.” Piccolo sighed and swung his chair round as he thought deeply. The nagging feeling still wasn't going away. Somehow it felt like it was already too late.

Bulma managed to recover her composure and raided her bag for some tissues and a notebook. She needed to jot down everything she could remember. She went into her usual pocket where she kept her pen. It wasn't there. Somehow she found one in her glove compartment and wrote down what she now knew. It wasn't much but the most she could understand was that even if Jones was a huge spider; it could take on a person's life. The worker she would be looking for would have left CC very suddenly and would have made no contact to the outside world.

This narrowed down her list and Bulma went ahead and scored out some names that she knew were still alive and working in other companies. She was feeling better already now she was making herself busy. She knew she could look at what Vegeta had handed her now. She looked at the badly written address. It had been posted to Vegeta 3 years ago. She checked the post mark closer and could see the recognisable CC logo. She opened the envelope and was not surprised by the fact that the original letter was not there. She didn't think Vegeta would have made it THAT easy. She held her breath as she saw the paper was Vegeta's drawing paper. She opened it to see that it was a picture of Bulma again. This time she was dressed in a strange costume. It was disgusting but in a
way it was more disturbing. The strange lettering at the bottom Bulma noted was Alien standard which she was quite good at. She read it as “Princess Bride.” In the background she could see a blur of a figure that reminded her of the alien Prince. She felt sick in her stomach and resisted the urge to crumple it up. She would be in trouble if she didn't own up to this.

Bulma pushed the paper in her bag and vowed to burn it. What didn't exist anymore couldn't harm her. She rubbed her arm; it felt like it was burning. It was where Vegeta had grabbed her. She pulled her sleeve jacket to look closer and saw a red hand mark the same size as Vegeta's hand. She cursed the Prince and tried to push the thoughts of him out of her head. Her time with Vegeta was over. There was never going to be another chance to see him again and she was going to do everything in her own power to make sure that happened.

That was her final visit. There wasn't going to be any more interviews. It was the last, the final. All she had to do now was find the girl or at least help to narrow the suspects. The clock was still ticking as Vegeta said, it was all going to be over if they didn't find Jones now. If what Vegeta said was right if they didn't catch him before his new form hatched then they were going to be facing another destructive alien. What would it do after killing Vegeta? She knew it would turn to destroying as much as Earth as possible. It wasn't just Elizabeth's life on the line now. It was the whole of Earth.

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Deep in the bowels of the basement, the creature stirred. The prey was finally fattening up.

“It's making good progress.”

The unconscious Elizabeth couldn't reply. The creatures improvised IV drip was attached to the girl and going directly into her bloodstream. It was a high glucose formula that was working at preparing her body for the last part that he needed. This time it would be ready and nothing would stop it! Prince Vegeta would die by its powerful hands. All as his Lord had told him to do!

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Vegeta looked up at the ticking clock and smelt his hand again. The fine perfume of the woman's scent was quite distracting but it was now time for his move. His time to rise again would come.

“Here's your meal, your...ahem.. Highness.” The Guard said as he entered with the Monkey brains soup Vegeta had ordered.

Vegeta fingered his new toy in his hand as he saw the Guard getting closer. If all went to plan then it would be in just a few moments. He smiled and tried to hold off his laugh.

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Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: Oh I am a tease! I know I said no romance but I couldn't resist that last moment in the caged room. Evil LOL. It's also quite a cliffhanger as all three threads are slowly winding to a climax! I swear the next chapter will be soon!

Although if you've seen the movie you'll know what happens next with Vegeta! I will try to make some changes so it's not completely copying the book/movie!
Also Jones is an original creature as I couldn't find a DBZ character that fitted the creature I wanted.
Cat and Mouse

Chapter Summary

Bulma moves on from Vegeta and gets back to the chase for Jones, her small footwork job becomes more than she bargained for.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Dragonball Z or Silence of the Lambs. I do not make money from this story.

Warning: There will be some fighting scenes in this chapter that will be a little graphic and gory. There will also be some strong language, you were warned!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 12

Cat and Mouse

Down in West city a young lady stepped out of an express delivery company and watched as the mail she sent get flown directly away. She smiled, this was her job done. Bulma Briefs was through with Vegeta. He could no longer tease and torment her like his little prey that he would kill at any minute. Now all she had to do was her boring detective work in South city. Although first she had an address she could look up here in West City. It was a tempting thing, an old employee on her list that had changed address and moved to West city.

She checked again, there were a few names now living in West City. She never recognised any of the old Capsule Corporation employees on her list. None of them had been in her home laboratory. She thought this was just as well. She had plenty of dredging of the past with Vegeta in her last interview with him. All she needed was the break of getting through this case with the mundane footwork and leave the action hero thing to her superiors. She was only just a little cadet after all. She was like a mouse in a very big world of cats. The express letter held in a Capsule car delivery service zoomed overhead. It went over the city and towards a large building in the distance, the FBI headquarters.

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Oolong looked up and down at the alien prince sitting in front of him. He was stark naked and there was nothing wrong with his scared body, no hidden item that the wench Bulma Briefs had smuggled to him. There was no proof at all that she had done anything but talk. Vegeta just stared at him straight and unafraid. He stood his arms apart to show how he was hiding nothing. His strong body was riddled with scars. One of them was very recent; the electric prod that Oolong had shoved in to attacked him with. “What did that little tart want?”

“She wanted what all girls want.” Vegeta broke out a smirk and twitched his large upper muscle.
“That frigid wench has an icicle up her cunt!!” Oolong snarled.

Vegeta’s smile disappeared. “You’re only saying this as no woman would want a podgy little female underwear thief.”

“How did...” Oolong wanted to shout “…know about my underwear stealing?” but he stopped himself. The bastard could smell his latest hoard that he had in his pocket. He didn’t have a chance to get rid of his evidence and cleanse the smell as he usually did. He knew Vegeta’s nose was able to catch the smell. He’d caught him before. He turned red in frustration at himself and at Vegeta’s outwitting him.

“Put on your clothes scum.” Oolong snapped. “We expect your visitor soon anyway. I need to prepare the traps for my new project.”

“So you mean to keep Scalpel Jones?”

“Yes I do.” Oolong grinned. “In a little cage next to you, to study and hear all that you have to say to each other. It will bring me my fortune after I write book after book about you both.”

Vegeta gave a breathless laugh that had no real humour in it. The pig didn’t amuse him that much but the length of his greed was forever a fascination to him.

“Greed is only a low level sin.” He hissed at Oolong.

“Just wait till you see wrath.”

“I know of that one too.” Vegeta smiled.

Oolong snapped and marched back to the guards to give orders to take away all luxuries and food. Vegeta watched and listened. It wouldn’t be long now. He crouched down in his cage, his muscles tight and ready to pounce. It wouldn’t be long at all.

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There is a game of Cat and Mouse to be played out. However will the cat realise it’s really the mouse, or will it be too late? These were the horrid thoughts that plagued a man deep in a secret base east of West City. Not too far away was a dangerous alien monster that was in an insecure prison. Supposedly subdued but that was very doubtful. Director Piccolo looked at his men all positioned in a nervous line up. This was their first real alien mission. The team had never worked as a full unit before and it showed. Piccolo walked up and down in an agitated manner. He had to wait for the full authority now. It had to be soon, surly the old man must have realised what was being built up? As if on cue, the elder Chief Director Kami made his appearance as the doors slid open. He took a dour look across the room and the troops armed and ready to go. He took one look at his son and looked away again. He was secretly pleased at this show of power and organisation but felt that he’d hide it some more. “So this is all your men?” He asked.

“Under what authority do we intend to let them go out into West city for?” I just need five more minutes to wait for your clearance and then we will proceed with our plan.”

“Which is?”

“Sir, we intend to surround the temporary prison that Prince Vegeta is being held and contain him under improper management detainment. The Prince’s current situation is a possible risk to us all.”

“You do understand that this is all a bait trap for Jones?”
“Yes Sir I do, but I do not feel that the aggressive alien will wait that long. Our operative Bulma Briefs has sent me a message already by express mail and has raised concerns.”

“Why is a Cadet your operative?” Kami asked coolly. “Especially one Cadet that had been ordered to stay away from Vegeta.”

“She was the only one that Vegeta would speak to and the alien Prince has given her enough clues that we can now track down Jones without the bait plan.”

“How did some little Cadet do this?”

“I have no idea.” Piccolo lied. Well the full truth might be too long an explanation.

Kami merely smiled calmly. “I may overlook this fact depending on what information she got.”

Piccolo held out the urgent express envelope. “It just came five minutes ago. We can confirm this is the original envelope that Jones sent to Vegeta 3 years ago.”

Kami opened the express envelope to see a scribbled note of female handwriting and also a tattered envelope.

“Are we examining the postage?”

“Already done, we have the old Capsule Corp Employee number on the stamp coding and we’re tracing his address now.”

“Excellent” Kami said cracking into a slight smile. He knew this was the break they needed, it was like a miracle.

“I will split my team into two, the main group to contain Jones and the back-up to protect the citizens from Vegeta if he breaks out.”

“Forget that.” Kami said holding the envelope up. “Let’s take most of our men there and leave just a small team back in West City. We’ll show Mayor Walker to trust us FBI agents; this will be our first dangerous alien containment. This is what we were created to do.”

“Understood.” Piccolo saluted. He already had in his mind his best men that would be left behind to look after the city from Vegeta.

“Get organised and be in the chopper for take-off in five minutes.” Kami said. “We’re taking Jones down!”

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Vegeta watched from his hunched position as the guards scattered around his area to continue with his punishment. They were to surround his cage on continual watch. He glared at the sweaty men that leaned against the walls some with their eyes on him and many others looking at anything but him. The glare from Vegeta could freeze their souls and for others it made their stomachs churn. There was a menace from the alien that set them at unease. The men could instinctively feel that something was going to happen soon. Whether it was something from Vegeta or an expected visit from Scalpel Jones they didn’t know. It was just that gut feeling that something was wrong. They would be right.

Vegeta cracked his neck and stood up. He had clothed himself now but he had only got as far as his briefs. This made some men stand up and pay attention. The alien had been still for half an hour. It
was a long wait for them with this tension in the air. Vegeta turned his stare at the young guard.

“How’s your Mama doing?” Vegeta hissed. “You have a scent of an old sow on you. Seems like she pisses herself and puts her panties in with your wash.” Vegeta sniffed, his nose knew he was right. The guard moved forward, his knuckles white clutching the long taser prod. Another came forward and grabbed his shoulder.

“Let him go for it Bert.” Another guard snapped his own anger surfacing. “This bastard needs a lesson. Your Julie died because of him!” The old guard turned back to the speaker and told him to be quiet.

“Shh, this is against the rules! You don’t speak about personal things near the prisoner!” Bert was at his wits end, he was surrounded by some very good solders but some very terrible guards. He was the only one that had any experience with being a prison guard. It was starting to show.

“Poor old Bert...” Vegeta sighed. “Looks like you’re outnumbered.” Bert turned to the cage to see that the men had all surrounded the old guard. Vegeta had come closer to his bars to watch. His smile was quite terrifying.

“Look guys you should be looking at the prisoner!” Bert pleaded.

“Not until you step outside for a bit.” One Guard said. They had circled around him.

“What if I don’t?” Bert cried. He had lost sight of the cage now and he tried to push some of the men out of the way. They were bigger and stronger and didn’t budge.

“We would escort you out.” The largest man said.

“Bill switch off the cameras!” Young Sid shouted, he was grinning at the thoughts going through his heads. “We don’t want any evidence.”

“Oh no, wouldn’t that be a shame if there was evidence.” Vegeta whispered. He didn’t want to turn their attention, not yet.

“We have a job to do; we need to keep this professional!” Bert tried to reason. “This is a dangerous criminal that needs 24 hour observation!”

“We’ve been watching him for a whole day now.” One guard hissed. “He’s helpless little kitten in that cage! He even struggles to lift any weights. We’ve all been watching the fucker and we know that he has no strength left. It’s all been sucked out of him!”

“That’s no reason for this.” Bert said he knew what the men wanted to do. Revenge was something he could feel from these men, he knew he had it himself but his job came first.

"Your Julie isn’t a good reason? Our boy Sid’s Dad, isn’t a good reason?” A guard raged. “He killed at least one person in everyone’s family and friends here. It was in his blast attack on West city! He destroyed our homes our lives! Tell me that isn’t a good reason! I sure as hell think it’s a good reason to torture this bastard within an inch of his life!”

Bert had crouched down and was shaking his head. He was the only one that saw what was really going on. He now curled up and wished he was somewhere else.

“Don’t do this!” Bert sobbed.

“Sorry Bert we have to get it out of our systems.” Sid smiled. He wasn’t sorry at all.
“DON’T DO THIS!” Bert shouted he was rocking back and forth his arms covering his head.

“Bert….listen we’ll take you outside.” A Guard offered. “We’re doing this whether you like it or not.”

“Who says Bert was talking to you.” A hushed voice behind them said. It was immediate as Prince Vegeta lashed out to the nearest guard. Bert had been slowly watching while the men ranted as Vegeta used the pen he had kept hidden to unlock his cage and open the door so quietly that it was eerie. He had calmly walked over with soft footsteps his eyes fixed on Bert. The old man couldn’t speak until it was too late.

A guard’s arm was twisted into a painful position. He crumpled to the ground that left him open to a stomp on the throat. His treatment was kind compared to Sid who ran at Vegeta with the taser charging a pulse of deadly electricity. Vegeta took the hit but then two fingers reached out and prodded Sid’s eyes into his skull. There was a nasty crack as his nose broke with it. Vegeta took the prod and quickly used it on the large guard that might have caused him some problems. The man was dead instantly with the high voltage. His body twitched and convulsed adding to the terror.

There were cries to help but the men had locked the door. The cameras were off. This was all just a field day for Vegeta. He licked his wounded hand as a bullet had grazed him. Without his large ki he was exposed to damage from these primitive weapons. He was however a warrior from birth. He had the skills to kill thousands and he had read some very good literature about the Earth humanoid anatomy. They were a large opening of soft tissues, perfect little pressure points that even with the strength of a kitten if you got the right spot, you could kill.

Vegeta demonstrated this on one guard who tried to fight back by punching Vegeta in the face. He dodged, not as fast as he used to be but he still had the skill. He then jabbed the man in the throat sending him backwards. Then the man was caught by the back of his knee making his fall complete and he was down on the ground. It took another second for Vegeta to make the killing blow by the top of the temples. This Guard had a pocket knife hidden in his uniform. Vegeta pulled the blade out as the other guards screamed for mercy.

“What was it you were saying recently, Ray, isn’t it?” Ray turned round frantic that his name had been remembered. He pounded on the door to be let out.

“For God’s sake Bill, hurr..” His throat was slit mid-sentence. Vegeta licked the blade and spat out the blood instantly.

“Such bad habits of fatty food and drink Ray.” Vegeta grumbled wiping his mouth. “You’ll never live long eating that kind of crap.” His attention was now turned to the last guard, Bert. He was a cowering mess besides the wall.

“Smells quite bad from up here Bert.” Vegeta sniffed. “Although you’re going to do me a favour...”

“ANYTHING!!” Bert sobbed. Vegeta smiled. “Yes, that’s the way to treat a Prince. Now you guards finally understand. You are going to do everything I say and you might just live through this.”

Bulma stopped her car in front of the first address. It wasn’t that far away from the express mail in the centre of the city. This was the closest one and she checked it on her list. All she needed to do was make some short enquiries and be onto the next one that’s all there was to it. She stepped out of the car and noticed that the once clear blue sky was being overcast by some dark clouds.
‘Crap and I forgot my umbrella as well.’ Bulma huffed. She walked up the driveway and rang the doorbell. There was some muffled talking and then the door opened to reveal an elderly man.

“Good afternoon Sir, I’m an FBI agent doing some routine check-ups.” She flashed her card to the surprised man. “I hope you can be of some assistance. Were you an employee of Capsule Corporation 3 years ago?”

“No, not really.” He said scratching his head. “I’m Benjamin Matthews, is that the name on your little notebook there.” He pointed to the obvious list in Bulma’s hand. She blushed and checked the address. “No it’s not. Is this 17 Forrest Drive?”

“Nope, 16, 17 is across the way.”

“Does a Frank Furter live there?”

“Yeah, he’s still there. Be careful speaking to him. Since he left CC he’s moved back to his Mother’s and been nothing but a recluse. I’ve never seen him much. He used to be such an out-going boy but then after that incident 5 years ago the world is a changed place.” The old man sighed and gave Bulma a good look over. He had only seen the badge and notebook before that. “Hey don’t I know you?”

“I look a lot like a famous person; I get this all the time.” Bulma tried to laugh it off. ”I’ll let you be Mr Matthews.”

“Always a pleasure to be interrupted by a pretty lady.” The old man laughed.

A female cry of “Ben!” echoed past them and the old man looked guilty and quickly made his excuses. The door shut as the background could be heard a small domestic argument.

Bulma ignored it and went on to the correct address. This would take a lot longer than she thought if she didn’t get her mind clear.

‘Just a few more rounds of this and then I can go to my hotel for a nice hot bath.’ She tried to remind herself. Although we should all know that Bulma wasn’t ever going to get her wish.

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The alarms sounded in the facility made up to be Vegeta’s new cell. The guards were scrambling into action. The alarm had been raised once the Guard at his station Bill couldn’t get in contact with the other men inside. What was also worrying was that the door was jammed. They got the large sledgehammer designed for knocking down doors and hurried to break it open. Guards from all the different areas were rushed into position over any and all exits. If the Prince had escaped there was no way out. They knew he had been reduced to the strength of a normal person but that didn’t make it any less frightening.

“Keep your guns aimed and ready!” The Captain shouted. “This is not a drill, be ready to shoot on sight.”

The men held their guns up and the large thumps from the door being forced opened sounded like their hearts. The large doors finally gave in and there was a flash of a body moving. The men opened fire instantly and the body of one of the guards was splattered across their faces.

“Jesus Christ!” the Captain cried. “Hold your fire!”

It was clear that the man had been strung up to look like he had been standing in front of the doors...
when they opened. There was a small sign from his gasping breath that he had been barely alive before they fired. The men all felt this guilt and with shaking guns they entered. Some men stayed behind in formation ready to get rid of any escape attempts from Vegeta. “Damn it the window is open!” A guard shouted. “Why is there a bar missing on that window?!”

“Get some men up to the next floor up, check the side of the building!” The Captain commanded. “CCTV hasn’t seen anything from the first floor; the outside of the building is completely monitored!” A communications officer informed them. “FBI has this place surrounded.”

“Thank God someone’s doing their jobs.” The Captain muttered. He checked around him, it was clear that this situation had occurred because of the men’s error.

“Hey! We got a survivor!” A small guard shouted. “It’s Bert!” They gathered round the old man, his face was unrecognizable. It had been slashed into pieces. The only sign that it was one of theirs was the uniform and name badge soaked in blood.

Captain Pavlova looked down and took out his pistol. He shot Bert between the eyes. “Oldest trick in the book.” The Captain snapped as his men looked at him appalled.

“Sir, we’ve spotted bloody footsteps upstairs! Vegeta has climbed to the 6th floor!”

“What?!” The Captain bent down and pulled at the mess of face that had once been Bert. The skin didn’t pull away. The senior Guard made a guttural sound as he tried to clear his throat. He had been so sure when he pulled the trigger. “Get more men upstairs and look for that bastard!”

Up on the 6th floor the men already there followed the footprints but it was lost in the water storage room. The whole floor was awash with water and the blood trail tapered away. The large access pipe was open and the small group of men peered into the pool of water. A bubble came up to greet them.

“Where does this pipe lead?” One man asked.

“It’s a direct line to the reservoir lake, it is water all the way for miles, there’s no way a human can hold his breath that long!”

“Plus this pipe is so narrow!”

“This thing isn’t human.” A guard reminded them. They all stared at the pipe in disbelief, it was a far reaching idea but maybe, just maybe the Prince had done it.

“Who’s going to tell the Captain?” A guard whispered.

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Deep down below them in the reservoir water supply pipe a dark figure clawed its way to freedom. It was the Prince of Saiyans a warrior trained to kill and to stop at nothing until he reached his goal. There was only one main thing that he wanted and he was going to do everything in his power to get it. The chaos of the building was far behind him as he made his was slowly, slowly along the narrow pipe. He made his next move in his head and the one after that. He had researched this building thoroughly before he was moved. There was no margin for error. There was more than one way out of a rat trap and he had found the best way. Even without his power swimming such a length was no trouble, he had been practicing holding his breath secretly for the past 3 days since he had made this deal.

‘It was all just too easy.’ He thought as he struggled on in the dark pipe.
Author’s note: Hope that wasn’t too much for anyone. Just going to say, I did warn you all at the top of the page, so don’t blame me! Some people said on previous comments on other sites they didn’t find it that scary. I did want to make it a different escape from the movie since that was Hannibal’s way of doing things and not Vegeta’s. I will need to proof read and get a beta for this story I know, doing it all by myself I may overlook some things. If you spot anything obvious let me know and I can correct it.

Thanks for the small support to those that have read this story, I love how this is going and I’m enjoying it so I hope you are too. It’s a shame this doesn’t get as much support as my romance/comedy B/V’s. It’s not long now till this story comes to its crux. I know people are expecting a big finale and I hope I can give it to them. Maybe it’s not the end though? You shall have to wait and see.
Hunt the Hunter

Chapter Summary

Bulma finds herself against the last thing she expected.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Dragonball Z or Silence of the Lambs. I do not make money from this story.

Warning: There will be some strong language and scenes not for the faint of heart, you were warned!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 13
Hunt the Hunter

The helicopter swerved around as the crew of FBI agents all set up for direct confrontation sat in silence waiting for the drop. This was what they had been trained for 5 years for. Since the evil aliens attacked the Earth and almost purged the planet of all life. The original title of the Bureau was the Federal Bureau of Investigating Alien Aggression Against the Earth. That made the abbreviation FBIAAE, which was very quickly shortened to FBI.

Kami overlooked his men that sat in the main part of the helicopter. They were all nervous and he wanted to say a kind word to help, but he fought against it. He needed to be aloof to help lead the men he could not show them any soft emotions. He hadn't always been such a hard person but he had found it much easier to put on this mask. Even when in front of his own son he could not let it slip. Kami had a duty to protect and watch over the Earth and he was going to do that no matter what; even if it sacrificed his own relationship with his son.

"How is Director Piccolo's position?" Kami asked the Communications officer who was ready with his radio.

"Not yet Sir, the Director has taken 10 of our men into West City after Vegeta." The soldier answered.

"I can't believe it just when we're closing in on Jones he does this." Kami hissed through his teeth. The men did not have any authority to answer and stayed silent. It was perfect timing from Vegeta; he knew that the distraction of catching Jones would make the FBI lessen their watch on him. It was a brilliant strategy to give that letter to Bulma at that time. All the information they needed was on that envelope. They could trace where it had come from and follow the link. The alien had taken up a human identity and that could be traced so easily. They still didn't know exactly what kind of alien they were up against but with all their anti-ki equipment the size and powers wouldn't last long.
"Be ready for anything Men." Kami said thinking aloud. "We don't know what we're fighting really other than it's a giant spider. Prepare for the worst."

The men answered with a quick affirmative and returned to the silence. They needed to focus to get ready for whatever was going to be thrown against them. It wasn't worth thinking about the other trouble; that Vegeta the killer of millions was now loose in West City. No, it was best to focus on a small serial killer of a dozen people. Best not to think of any mass murderers at all when they were going towards another killer.

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Piccolo sighed a deep 'I thought as much' sigh and listened to the Captain of the personal Guard. There was chaos in the building that had once held Vegeta. Ambulances, fire fighters and Police all ran about looking for something to do. Director Piccolo looked at his small army of 10 men and wished for more. This was not something he had prepared for really. He knew Vegeta would be trying to escape. That he would take the advantage of being moved to a less secure position. What he didn't expect was that they would have made it so easy for him.

"There's no need to be crying over the incident now and trying to place blame." He snarled at the arguing Captains of the Security, Police and Fire Fighters. "I want detailed maps of this facility and specifically the sewage systems! Where do they come out? Is there a Treatment Plant that he will get caught up in? Get me these answers now and secure the perimeter so no press can get in to hear about this. No one say a damn word to them until we get the official statement organised! If we're lucky we can catch this alien before there's a full blown panic!"

The men and woman around him listened and saluted. This was better to have someone shouting orders rather than listening to random orders from different Captains. The Captains too were glad in a way that the strain had been taken away. This was not their fault; it was the FBI's it was better if they took charge now.

The small group of FBI agents ran towards the last position of Vegeta and surrounded the area. Piccolo made a quick view of the chaotic mess that had been left. The lock had been easily picked by Vegeta and he found in the cell the very plans he had been asking for. There was a reason Vegeta had been making efforts to be moved here. He had the damn blueprints in one of his library books.

"Damn clever of you Vegeta." Piccolo said in small admiration. "No real power level but still enough to escape and kill like these ordinary humans."

"Sir?" One of the Agents seemed confused by his words.

"Don't worry about it." Piccolo said, "Just concentrate about the situation at hand."

The agent saluted and continued to scout around the room.

'There's clearly nothing here anymore. Vegeta's had this planned for a while.' He checked the stamp of the book; it came from his original Prison library. 'He's planned this for quite some time and we were all too stupid to underestimate the Saiyan.'

He threw the book down and focused his mind. He needed to think quickly, if they didn't catch Vegeta soon he would destroy everything he and his father's Bureau had built to protect.

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In another part of the city far down in the Industrial quarter away from the hectic noise of the city; a lone figure sat panting on the edge of gutter. The dark form was hunched over vomiting out the bad
water he had swallowed. It had been worth it though. His silent training of holding his breath had all been worth it. He wasn't used to this weakened state; he could have swum that length a lot quicker at his peak. He could have escaped by ramming a huge hole in the wall and flying away. That was far from his ability now. He was feeling the limits of a body suppressed of power for 5 years.

Vegeta crawled along the embankment and rested his back up to look at the night sky. The stars sparkled back at him and for once he had a view he could feel he could enjoy. Even the smell of the open water pipe with its foul unclean water was an odour he could enjoy. It wasn't the stale cell air he had been breathing for 5 years. No this was the air of freedom. He was in every mind to make sure he stayed that way. He had timed it right though the length of pipe from that State Courtroom to the Industrial Water Works that was a good 30 minute swim. He had worked it all out perfectly.

Now he had to hope that the clues he had given would clear up the last mess left. The creature sent by Freezer to kill his weakened state. The Lord of the Galaxy would trust him to be dead soon and he would be free to grow more powerful to rise up to his rightful throne. He held his breath and tried to muffle his laugh. He wanted to bellow it out loud but the humans would be after him soon. It wouldn't take a genius to find out where the pipe led to.

He cast a sad eye up at the moon and wondered about Bulma. It wouldn't be long till they found that Spider scum. If he was lucky they would find it before it got to evolve to its final form.

'If not, too bad for Earth, they'll have another massacre on their hands.' He grunted back another laugh and tried to hold back the full echo. He had to move and he wobbled onto his feet and slowly limped away being careful to mess up the footprints as he walked. He wanted a more exaggerated walk to make it seem he was in a worst state than he was. He looked across the area and saw a dim light nearby. It was a dim light of a parked car, his ride out of the hell he had known and a big step into the freedom he was becoming very used to.

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Bulma Briefs was unaware of the chaos in the centre of the city and after a long afternoon of chasing down people that were no longer at any of the addresses, she was slowly feeling she was losing her mind. 'It's as if this was out to just waste my time, not one former employee is at the same address.'

"Well here we go, Mr Mustard, let's see if you're still where you say you are." She rang the door and waited.

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Meanwhile at the exact same time...

FBI agents had surrounded the small house that was the last address of a certain employee who had posted the letter to Vegeta. This was the last clue that had been the nail in the killer's coffin.

Kami watched from the van as the disguised deliveryman with a hidden gun moved in first as Scout. A hand signal was issued and the Scout pressed the doorbell.

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Bulma checked the address it was the right place this time, 444 Mortimer Drive. She rang the doorbell again and huffed impatiently. This would be the last person on her list after this it would be South City and checking the addresses of all the ones that had moved. There was a thump from behind the door as something moved. 'Great, bet I got someone who was in the shower. Boy, are they not going to be happy to see me.'
A shadow loomed in the window of the door and snipers aimed at their target. They had no idea what to expect other than it was a killer. The door rattled open and a face grimaced at them.

"I didn't order any flowers."

"I'm sorry Ma'am I was told this address, are you Mrs Mustard?"

"Who? No my name is Baba! The old woman hissed. "Mustard used to live here but it was 3 years ago. She died and I inherited the house as the son didn't seem to want it."

"The son?"

"What's it to you? What are all these questions?" She snapped. "Why is there a man standing with a gun on my begonias! Hey you get off my lawn!"

"Move in... as FBI!" Kami ordered. This couldn't be a mistake! It had to be correct; they'd piled all their bets onto this place being the killer's assumed identity.

"I'm sorry Ma'am we're FBI."

"Do you know how long I toiled over those flowers, you get off them already. Oh my stars, there's someone in my Cherry tree as well!"

"Get as much information as you can and get ready to check the next address!" Kami shouted. This was not going well. He couldn't let two murderers escape in one day. It just wasn't possible that fate could be this cruel!

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Bulma cricked her neck as she looked down at the old person peering past the door.

"Is this Mr Mustard's residence?"

"I haven't heard that name in yearsss my dear..." The woman lisped. She had a strange way of speaking and was making Bulma shudder a little. "The young man moved out when hiss mother diedssss."

"Do you have a forwarding address?" Bulma asked.

"Perhapss, please wait..." The figure fumbled as it turned awkwardly and Bulma fought her urge to help the struggling woman. The dress seemed too long for her and just seemed to drag on the floor. She glanced into the door and saw the horrid state of the room. It was in total disrepair, the cobwebs hung down low and she saw the rusted box that the woman shuffled through seemed to be collapsing as well.

"The mothersss addresss is in Ssouth ssCity..."

"I see." Bulma held her breath and continued to look around. There was something incredibly off about the house other than being just some strange old lady's home. The sink and dishes seemed to be completely unused. In a reflex action Bulma unclipped her gun. There was no sign of any recent cooking or any sign of use in the room. The dust and lack of footprints on the floor seemed unusual as well. It just didn't seem like someone had walked through it with human feet.

"How long have you lived here Miss...?"
"3 yeartss..."

"I see..." Bulma reached for her gun. A spider now swung down from the ceiling and crawled into her ear.

"I have foundsssss it!" She exclaimed and her clawed hand showed the piece of paper.

"KEEP THOSE ARMS OR WHATEVER THEY ARE RAISED!" Bulma shouted, her adrenaline rushing into her body as she aimed her gun at the creature's head. Now she could see in the house and the thing wasn't hiding behind a door or a funny head scarf she could see how wrong it looked. It was just a light skin wrapped around something else that moved in an unfamiliar way.

Something shot out at Bulma's eyes and she winced back. She had no time to lose this was Jones! She fired some shots and heard a thud as it hit the wood of the door. The thing had escaped! Bulma pulled out her phone and dialled quickly. It had moved down into the dark basement that Bulma hoped did not have any escape routes.

"This is the FBI, please state the emergency."

"This is Cadet Agent Bulma Briefs at 444 Mortimer Drive West City! I request back-up! I have the suspect for the Scalpel Jones case in my sites and I am making an arrest!"

"That is not advised Agent Briefs you do not have authority for such an act."

"I don't have time for this! It's Scalpel Jones; this is his real address, get as many men here and I'll try to keep him in the basement."

"Understood, you're in his house now. Please do not endanger yourself, I'm currently issuing assistance and help should be there in 10 minutes."

"I'm not sure if I can last that long, I've no idea if the basement is secure."

"We understand and units will be on the way. I have called the police and they should be there first."

"Okay thanks." She hung up the phone before she could get the "Stay safe Cadet" message that she cut off.

Bulma knew that she wasn't a full agent and that a full agent wouldn't have as much difficulty getting authority to take down a suspect. She pushed those thoughts behind her and kicked the door that the creature had gone through.

A dark stairway leading down greeted her and she cursed under her breath. This thing had escaped; she noticed the splatter of green blood. She had clipped it at least. It was injured and crawling away for safety. Bulma pulled out her mini torch she used for her keys at night and wished it was brighter. If she had time she could have waited for back-up and guarded the entrance. However the shot had been fired the hunt was on for Bulma and she was not letting this alien monster out of this house! She had no idea if it was able to find an escape route in the basement and she didn't have the will to wait to see if there was.

The steps down into the basement were dirty and covered in webs. She stepped through the thin silk as the daylight behind her got dimmer. She could hear some muffled screams and she followed the noise. Bulma found a large web hanging a humanoid shape. There were tufts of hair and eyes glaring at her from the wrappings. It was Elizabeth! She was alive!

Bulma pulled at the mouth and watched the girl gasp for breath.
"Get me out of here!" Elizabeth whispered.

"I have to take down the suspect." Bulma answered. She wanted her to stay quiet. She wished she hadn't removed the wrappings now. "I need you to do me a favour and stay quiet a little bit longer. Help is on the way."

"I've been waiting for over a week in this hell!" Elizabeth snarled. The sight of another human being was making her regain some strength. "Just get me the hell out of here!"

"I can't do that yet..." Bulma said averting her eyes. The girl was pleading at her. She could save the girl and wait for the back-up but... it could get away. "This place isn't secure yet, you're safe where you are."

"I'm dangling in the middle of the fucking air you Bitch, get me the hell down!"

Bulma didn't answer as she heard scuttling in front of her. Jones was still around. She hoped that was a good thing.

"I'll be back." Bulma said. "Just stay calm, help is on the way." She wanted to say that she didn't want to be lumbered with an obviously injured civilian that could endanger herself even more.

"Fuck you!" Elizabeth squealed. Her voice was cracking. "I hope it bites your head off because I'm next!"

Bulma signaled to her to be quiet but Elizabeth had turned frantic with fear. There was nothing more she could do for her; until the real help could arrive. Bulma swallowed as the abuse continued from Elizabeth until she was sure she had run out of energy. She clicked her torch off and crawled forward. The weak yells from Elizabeth still continued but Bulma found a way to block it out. The very real threat from the alien was in front of her. There was no time to worry about any name calling.

The room she walked into was completely dark and her finger lingered on her little torch. She had no advantage here Bulma was walking into the parlour of the spider.

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Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: It's such a terrible cliff-hanger but this is the best place to stop so I can build up the fight next chapter. Bulma will be facing an unknown alien enemy without any back up. Yeah I know the thing speaks like Gollum but how else is a spider with a very bad skin disguise going to talk? I promise I won't let it say "My preciouss" I swear! I'll be good!
Chapter 14

Enter the Parlour

It was needless to say that Bulma Briefs was incredibly aware of the danger she was in. She was also aware that this was not a normal situation. If she let this alien escape now it could reach its final form and reign terror and slaughter across Earth. They could not afford another tragedy like the Saiyan Massacre. The screams from Elizabeth still echoed behind her that seemed to reassure her that there was someone with her. True the girl was tied up in some weird web but she was there. She needed to get rid of Jones before she had any chance of taking her down. This needed to be done before anymore people suffered under this creature's murder spree.

The darkness that welcomed her as she opened a door deeper into the basement sent a chill up her spine. Bulma kept her gun cocked and ready to release at any sign of moment. The dim light from behind her seemed to grow weaker as she walked further in. Any windows from the side of the house had to be blocked up. This thing liked the dark and it was a fair bet that it could see in the dark as well. She had her small handbag sized torch but it wouldn't help. It would only blind her and lead the creature directly to her.

Bulma tried to keep her breath shallow; she didn't want to pant so hard that she showed her position. It was probably too late as she heard the door slam behind her. It was totally pitch black now and the musty smell of a long forgotten room full of dust and cobwebs filled her sense of smell. She felt for the edge of the wall and kept her back against it. She didn't want to be surprised from behind and she silently cursed every time she shuffled along the edge and banged her foot against anything.

The buzzing from the insects that fluttered in vain against the blackened glass was rumbling in her ears. Her careful footsteps creaked against the floorboards. The blackness was now all enveloping and the faint hiss that seemed to be mocking Bulma made her even more aware of her danger. This was not the sensible thing to do but she needed to catch him, she needed to take Jones down so this nightmare could be over.
Bulma was a fat juicy peach in the alien's eye. It watched her as she entered; the human was an appetiser for its next evolution. It would suck out her marrow and devour her flesh before she got a chance to shoot that useless weapon she held up high. It was a pathetic primitive gun that could do little damage to its far superior body. It had time; it could toy with this prey. The fleshy young flesh would taste sweet in its mouth.

She walked unsteadily past the creature; her foot feeling the ground as if she was a new born lamb. Her hair brushed past its eyes and it smelled the scent of her sweat. It could hear the pounding of the young woman's heart as she searched for a sign of where it was. The alien found some amusement in the audacity of this human; that this little creature with no power level could even harm it in any way. This was the closest it had ever come to the law; it had always managed to stay clear of authorities. There was something amusing with the idea of having a small game with this helpless and foolish human female.

It let out a hiss and it was amused at the human frantic turning at the slight noise.

"I am armed and I have full authority to shoot on sight!" Bulma shouted. Her voice was steady and strong but she shook as she held her gun. This was nothing like the training she had been receiving. There was no back-up or an instructor only a meter away watching her and ready to give advice. She was desperately alone and Bulma could sense how much she was over her head with the situation.

A scuttling noise near where the hiss had been let Bulma know it was on the move. She was being watched and it hadn't attacked yet. Bulma knew that this meant it was either evaluating how much of a threat she was to it or that it was just playing a game with her. She shuddered in dread as her gut told her that it was most likely the last one. There was no way such a creature that was here to destroy Vegeta could consider herself as a threat.

She had an idea of where it was but she was unsure how her ordinary gun would work against such an unknown beast. She had a slight understanding that this was similar to a spider but how much was it similar to an Earth spider she had no idea about. This fact and the darkness she was swimming in kept her senses screaming of the danger she was in.

The screams in her mind increased as something hit her leg making her stumble. The hissing increased and she shot out towards the direction she could feel it moving to. There was a flash of blinding light as the gun fired and a glow of eight eyes stared back at her. There was a sickening thump as the bullet found something soft and fleshy.

"You triesss to hurtssss usss." Spots sparkled in Bulma's eyes as her eyes tried to adjust to the light that had dazzled her. She shot another bullet but this time there was a 'ching' sound as the bullet hit something metal. She cursed under her breath and knew that it was only a matter of time before it retaliated. The hissing echoed around her in a raspy gloating laugh. The monster had been hit but it was only a flesh wound. It was nothing compared to the pain it was about to inflict on the weakling human before it.

It drew closer as Bulma threw her gun around in panic, she could hear it all around her but she couldn't tell from which direction. Her trigger finger shook on the cool metal waiting for the moment to pull. She held her breath in fear that she could miss the vital sound with her own loud pants. The faint scurry noise of what she imagined had to be what a spider sounded like if she was an ant. She flicked the switch on her torch and pointed it directly at the noise. Eight eyes flashed red at her in the darkness as it was blinded by the sudden light.

Then the beast leapt on her, it was in slow motion for her as Bulma fired her gun in rapid succession. She felt its jaws on her arm and cried out in pain. The furry legs pinned her down; she fired her last
bullet towards the large bulky body that towered over her. There was a sickening splatter and she felt her face being covered in a mess of goo that had to be whatever major organs that were now scattered around. Her torch had landed on the floor and light shone across the monstrous body. The light shone on something bright and with a large red danger sign. It was some sort of flammable gas, she reached out and knocked the can over. The contents started flowing out towards her and the monster still writhing on top of her. Bulma kicked hard into the wound that she had caused, there was more sickening squelching noise as she shattered open the soft insides. She rolled to the side and went into her pocket where her cigarettes and more importantly her lighter were. She thanked her bad habits as she clicked it alight and put the flame down into the liquid. She singed her hand and she backed away from the billowing fire that sprung up.

Bulma used the last of her strength to get up and move further away as the flames encircled the screaming alien. It tried to follow Bulma to bring her into its fangs and into the fire but it was too late for it. The large body had begun to burn and the flesh wound was slowing it down. The fine hair on the creature was like tinder to the flames and it engulfed the beast. It lurched up in an attempt to get to where Bulma was but it was now blinded by the light and missed by mere feet.

There was another hideous squeal from the thing as it gasped in a sudden death throw. This could not be his demise! It was almost complete; it was almost the perfect killing machine to take down the now weakened Prince! The bullets though small had gone into the abdomen where his softer underbelly was exposed. The fire was burning its flesh and was now reaching its essential organs.

"Lord… Freezzaaa….forgive meeeee…” It groaned and spat. The weakling human that had taken it down wouldn't have long to live, there was no way the human could escape the basement in time. It gurgled a hiss of satisfaction. It could die knowing that at least the woman would soon follow. The giant spider let out a slow sigh as it finally crumpled to the floor leaving an exhausted Bulma Briefs.

She staggered to her feet but her knees wobbled, unable to support her. The main danger was away but her heart still raced and tears streamed down her face. Her lungs were slowly being choked with the thick smoke that was filling the room quickly. She couldn't believe that she had done that and she winced with pain as her arm twitched from the bite. She could smell the stench of the creature now as it cooked and it was overwhelming. She gagged and tried to crawl away from it. There was no way for her to know the actual exit or the way she had come. The light that the fire provided was blocked out by the smoke as the junk from the previous tenants caught on fire as well. Her head began to spin and she could hear the shouting of the kidnapped girl.

"I got him Elizabeth…” Bulma gasped but her voice was too weak to be heard by the terrified and furious woman in the other room. As far as Elizabeth was concerned she had been abandoned by this FBI agent and was left to her death. The shouting led Bulma to her but her energy was gone and she could only reach the edge of the door where the girl shouted. Bulma knew she had left a message with her office, they would be coming soon.

"My back-up…where are you…?” Bulma sighed and her eyes rolled back as she fell unconscious.

The blur of colours and smells assaulted her in her dream. It was as if she floated above it all and light soon dazzled her eyes. She could hear the screams of Elizabeth; she could smell such a strong scent of sweat and smoke. She nuzzled into something warm and comforting and very familiar. It carried her safe above it all away from the monster. It made her feel secure and she clung to the warmth but it soon so cold as she felt the hard ground and her wound woke her up. She was being attended to by a medic who was poking her very painful arm and burns.

Bulma glanced around and could see she was sitting outside on the ground. Her arm was bleeding heavily and the medical staff around her were quickly trying to wrap her up and put her on a
stretcher. She managed to mumble a few answers to the questions being asked by the emergency crew. She was confused and she tried to get her bearings pulling the mask off her face.

"Why am I outside..?" She groaned but no-one could answer her.

"You're going to be fine, Agent Briefs." The medic assured her as she was lifted up. "We got here just in time by the looks of it."

Bulma couldn't comment as the oxygen mask was placed over her again to help her breath. She managed to grunt. She saw in her blurred vision the house being surrounded by officers. She couldn't stay awake anymore and slowly fell back under. The chaos raged on around her as the survivor of Scalpel Jones. The FBI officers that had been drafted in on helicopters at the last minute to give the back-up that Bulma needed had arrived too late but just in time to get the media attention. The one person that could explain it all was away in the ambulance and the men and woman left were only able to make small comments that the situation had been contained. A shaking and still bound Elizabeth had been pulled out of the building with the camera's flashing. The traumatised woman was escorted into the emergency vehicle and her head covered from the prying eyes.

Piccolo arrived just as she was being put onto the ambulance and made a quick check with the staff that she was okay. For a horrible moment he had thought the distress call had been about Vegeta and that he had started his rampage but all was still quiet. The monster had appeared to have disappeared. Whatever trail that had been left at the sewer outlet had been well masked. He had left his men searching the area as he came to check up on Bulma. The other men that were with the Chief Director Kami were in another city, the back-up almost didn't reach her in time. The full city police force had closed down all routes out of the city but he knew that with this incident as well they were stretched to their limits.

"Where did all these reporters come from Agent Pistachio?" He demanded.

"Sorry sir, we didn't have the back-up, all main team members were out on duty." Agent Pistachio explained. "I just got here myself but the police were the first on the scene because of the fire. The media seem to have been tipped off from the Police or someone with connections to the Police. The damage is done now."

"Any sign that the alien escaped?" Piccolo asked.

"None Sir, the small fire has now been brought under control so we're searching it now." Pistachio said. "We think we may have a body, it's like a giant crispy bug. We're waiting till we get the cover of the tents till we bring it out to the van."

"That's good." Piccolo sighed. "At least we got one of them. I want that place cordoned off and under full FBI jurisdiction! This has been no common house fire!"

The Agent `saluted and ran off to speak to the Police that were trying to contain the now growing crowd. Piccolo only had to reflect slightly on his instinct that made him put Bulma Briefs on this case. He knew she was nosy enough to be an Agent but she really did surpass his expectations. She had an amazing amount of luck to be able to go up against such a creature with only the most basic of training. She had been at first just a front to fool the Prince into speaking to them but somehow it had worked and unfortunately that had led to his escape. It had been manipulated all by that Prince of Saiyans and now he was loose on the Earth as his power would surely return to him.

'It's now only a matter of waiting till he makes his move; I doubt we can catch him before that.' Piccolo sombrely thought to himself.
Far from the city limits it could be said that the Prince was also thinking of the same thing. He was now much weaker than he thought. As he was out of the influence of the Ki restraints it was becoming clear that the chemicals that were also pumped into him had been effective. He glanced into the pick-up cabin where he could see the homely couple that had picked up the lone hitchhiker. They had no idea that they were harbouring a fugitive. If they did find out Vegeta knew how much more work it would be to make them silent about it. He ran his hand through his now blonde and short hair and adjusted his hat. It had been a sacrifice to destroy his once proud haircut but this was about survival. It had been a rule that had been drilling into him since childhood; once the Saiyan hair was cut it would never grow back. He had managed to sweep it down into a shorter pony tail and once he had left this couple's truck he planned to change the colour and make it even shorter. His only pride he had now was staying alive so he could get closer to his own goals.

It had now been a whole 12 hours since his escape and he had as much use as he could of the time. He listened to the faint engine and as the couple listened to their droning country music he could phase that out and silently keep his plans fresh in his head. He had researched the human culture well and as long as he was as weak as a human he would have to act like one and hide like a hidden thorn.

"Excuse me Son; this is as far as we can take you." The Old man said. "We're turning off here to our farm."

Vegeta jumped off and looked at road ahead. "This will do fine, thank you."

"Such a polite young man, you're a rare breed."

Vegeta smiled and tipped his hat. "I believe I am."

"If you keep going along this road you should come up to the village of Korn." The man said.

"I think that will do fine, it's been a while since I did a long hike."

The pick-up drove off down a side road and Vegeta was left to his own thoughts again. It had crossed his mind at killing the old pair but it was an unnecessary death, it may lead to a clue as to which way he left West City. It had been so easy to slip out a small road and find the highway, completely missing any road blocks and checks. He needed to get away from the Chaos that the now dead Jones and his own escape had left. He smiled at his new found ability, he had found it hard to use it in the jail but outside away from the cell and restraints he found the energy flowing around him. This was the so called ki sense that the Warrior that had defeated him had used. This was something that needed no technology it was something from within. It proved to Vegeta that he still had his innate abilities; he still had the chance to recover and find his vengeance. Even if for now his body was weak his mind was still active and able to use something beyond all the humans.

He walked on down the road a free Saiyan and his mind full of all the wonderful possibilities that lay before him.

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Chapter End Notes
Author's Note: Am I finished? No, this will be continuing. We need an update from Bulma and Piccolo and also probably from Vegeta who is on the road to freedom! (I have the song "Road to No-where" stuck in my head with this image!)

So no cliff-hanger this time but a small conclusion. Shocking!

Next, an epilogue to this arc.
Unsettling Conclusions

Chapter Summary

After everything is concluded, we realise something a little unsettling.

Chapter Notes

Warning: There will be some strong language

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 15

Unsettling Conclusions

In the local hospital of West City Bulma Briefs was in a private room and making a slow recovery. She was amazed at her own daring and wondering whether it was bravery or stupidity. To settle her mind she resolved on thinking that it was a little bit of both. If she hadn't gone in the girl, Betty would have been killed. If she had gone in and failed she could have been killed as well. It wasn't something she was proud of no matter how much praise she got from her Director, friends and tutors.

It seemed to her that it had been an empty victory. She had got lucky, that was all. She had an intense time battling the venom and smoke inhalation. Not to mention the wounds that the creature had made were deep and painful. It had involved some stitches that Bulma knew were going to leave an ugly scar across her belly. Her inner vanity was simply too hurt, she would never wear a bikini again but she could be thankful she was alive. There was a knock at the door and for the second time that week Bulma was faced with a stern looking Director Piccolo.

She sat up and tried to hide the pain as her stitches pulled with her movement.

"Bulma is it okay?" He asked. He seemed to have brought paperwork instead of the usual fruit or flowers. "The doctors have been saying that your body is reacting well to the anti-venom."

"I know. I think I should be out by the end of the week." She smiled weakly. "I'm getting sick of looking at these walls. I really just want to get back to my studies."

Piccolo stayed silent for a second and wondered if she was just trying to keep herself busy. He could see her looking directly at him and decided it was just the way she was.

"So you know by now that Vegeta has escaped." He sighed. He put the paperwork next to her bed. "This is really just a witness statement that I'm asking you to make. Both for Jones and Vegeta. The Jones one we've already got your unofficial statement but just write it down. Take your time I don't need it till next week."

"Why for Vegeta?" Bulma asked, she really couldn't escape him. The newspapers that were scattered across her bed were covered in stories about him. She couldn't avoid him and for some reason she
didn't want to. She had even had press people that had tried to visit her but they were quickly sent away with no comment. She wasn't that important of a news story since her capture and killing of Jones hadn't been made public yet.

"We now think you're one of the last people still alive that may have seen Vegeta." Piccolo said grimly. "We just need a statement about everything you talked about and whether he left any hints."

"I guess the video camera's captured my visit." Bulma sighed; her disguise hadn't been that great.

"There was no sound recorded." Piccolo said, frustrated at the incompetence that just kept on showing up the more he investigated. "The cameras that were installed were the original ones from the building. They hadn't even bothered to equip some extra ones when setting up Vegeta's prison cell."

"It was made at the last minute." Bulma said remembering how fast Vegeta had been moved from South City Asylum to the Court building in West City.

"Still no excuse." Piccolo said. "Although that's not your worry, Cadet Briefs. As of next month you'll be completing your graduation. Then I can finally call you Agent Briefs."

"It's got a neat ring to it." Bulma sighed complacently. She always had an issue with her name, but it seemed better with the Agent in front.

"You're one of the first to graduate without doing the hard obstacle course; we've passed you by your outstanding merits."

Bulma felt at least grateful for that. She doubted she would be fully healed to be able to do the final physical test. There was an awkward silence as Piccolo had run out of things to discuss.

"Sir, I need to know." Bulma said. "Is Warden Oolong among the missing?" She knew she hated the pig but she couldn't stand the thought that he was amongst the casualties.

"I'm afraid he's a missing person but he had survived the Court building incident." Piccolo said. "He's been on the run since Vegeta escaped and hasn't been heard of since."

"I see..." She said dully, there was nothing more to say.

"I also have a message from Elizabeth, to say thank you." Piccolo said. "She wants to come meet you with her family if possible. I said I would get your permission first."

Bulma had a vague memory of Elizabeth or Betty as she preferred to be called; screaming obscenities at her. It would probably be nice to get a nicer memory of her.

"I can't see the harm, so long as they understood why I left Elizabeth in the hole for so long." Bulma said looking down. "I wouldn't want to be made to blame for anything. I did what I did for a good reason."

"I believe she has calmed down since then and has accepted all of your decisions." Piccolo said. "We managed to find her in time before the building got too badly burned. She was quite safe in the separate cellar room that she was in. As you know they will make their more public statement next week and they want to sing your praises."

"They really have to do that?" Bulma asked. "I was enjoying the peace and the lack of my name in the papers."
"I have informed them to keep the praise to a minimum." Piccolo said. "I honestly would have announced it along with the statement that Elizabeth had been found safe. It was thanks to you going in when you did that saved her. She was certain that he was getting ready to kill her when you interrupted."

"I guess." Bulma said, she was still unclear about how she had escaped the cellar. She had been enclosed in that small room, in the dark and with flames all around her. She had fainted from the venom and as far as she knew no-one knew she was in that exact place…unless Betty had told them. There were just too many holes and Bulma has spent many sleepless nights trying to figure it out.

"I'll leave you be." Piccolo said as he saw her going silent and thoughtful. "We'll need those reports by next week so take your time. You should be out of here by then."

"Trust me Director, I have a lot of time on my hands." Bulma said. "I'll contact the office when I've completed them."

The large man stood up and Bulma gave him a slight smile. She was still too weary to be really happy. It was times like these that she missed her parents. She would give anything to be annoyed by her mother again. To have her next to her fussing over her while her father would be nearby with his happy carefree way, probably playing with his cat and getting told off by the nurses for bringing the little guy in. Her friends from the Agency had been and given her support but it hadn't been the same. Even her roommate Launch had been kind to spend some time but everyone else were too busy with the final exams that she was gratefully skipping.

The Director left as she stayed silently thinking, she didn't even look up as he shut the door. Even when her friends had come Bulma had been too exhausted to be cheerful or even slightly social. She took a short glimpse at the papers. It was weird to see Vegeta's name in print. As far as the main press were concerned she hadn't been involved in anything. Next week there would be the press release that would sing her praises but Bulma wasn't looking forward to it. Her luck with the press had always been bad; they always seemed to just print what they wanted to help sell. Especially that low brow gossip types.

She sighed again and tried to rest. She didn't want to think about it but she was stuck in the bed looking at the walls and feeling really blue. There was another knock on the door and Bulma turned to see if it was another guest but noticed it was just the nurse and opted to save her stomach pain and stay still.

Her own thoughts were not really on graduation but just circling round the things that had happened in the last month. She slipped back down into her bed and let herself fall back into a deep sleep.

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Bulma knew she was dreaming because she was back in that house. The basement lair of that thing. It was where she never wanted to return though in her dreams she always seemed to return here. She turned in the blurry surroundings as smoke filled the room. She knew where the exit was. She had imagined her last moments in this place over and over. She had stabbed that arachnid and set him on fire. She had thought of Elizabeth and how she had done something right for once. She had saved someone. She didn't regret anything. The ground became like thick tar grabbing at her feet holding her down as the smoke got thicker. This was always the part that was different and the world she remembered began to warp into her fear as her body failed her, she couldn't move to escape.

Bulma tumbled down as the tar began to cover her. It was slowly enveloping her and she accepted it as she felt herself getting more tired. She just wanted to leave, to wake up. This wasn't happening, not again. She wasn't dying in a tar pit in a fire in that basement. She could hear the high pitch squeal
from the thing. It always upset her, she heard it every night. It was like the screams of the monkeys once more, her childhood torture coming back to taunt her.

"You did seem to make a good job of this Cadet." A voice said to her in the darkness.

The voice blocked out the high pitched death call of Jones and she could see the silhouette of a man. Hands grabbed her and she was pulled up out of the goo. She rested her head her lungs burning because of the smoke. She couldn't breath the tar was covering her face. A hand wiped away the tar and she felt for a moment safe. Bulma knew she was being carried outside. This was what always upset her. This figure would appear and save her and she was sure it had to be a paramedic or another Agent. All until he wrapped his hands around her neck.

"It would be so easy to kill you now and no-one would know."

Bulma couldn't answer him but she looked up into the darkness. He seemed to be a cloud of smoke, she could never get a clear shot but she just knew and she would try to say the name that came to her lips. 'Vegeta…' It never came and she was left in the cold as the warm hands left her neck and she was lying on the wet grass. The wetness making her colder and she shivered as the sounds of sirens surrounded her.

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The young girl woke up with a jerk from her dream. She had knocked over her water and the bed was soaked with cold ice water. Bulma pressed the button for the nurse and tried not to cry. It had to be a dream, he hadn't come for her. It was impossible. It was like the tar in her dream, just a symbol for something that she could write long essays about and get an A. The tar was the venom that had disabled her body, the screams of the monster were her past traumas resurfacing. It was just the Vegeta part that made her feel uncertain and fearful for her own sanity. However she was never telling this to a shrink. It would be just be too crazy. She had felt safe in his arms. He had been her Knight, her Prince that had come to save her. He was a killer, she knew that. Even her dream reminded her by making him threaten to kill her. Yet he had let her go. There was no way it happened like that. She looked across at her paperwork. She'd need to write it all down before the medication made her forget and turn it all into a muddled mess. She had to make sure she wrote down the reality and not the dream.

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One Month Later

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The Exams came and went and Bulma Briefs had managed to attend the last week of her training. It was now the time of Graduation and Bulma had to deal with another press interest in her. It had been small in comparison with what had happened with Prince Vegeta. It was really more interest in how Elizabeth had survived. The girl had managed to get some good counselling and was making some excellent progress. Bulma was in a way jealous, she wished she had the same done for herself but she was now far too twisted for that. She had her work to focus on. There were more cases turning up and now the whole of the planet were on the look out for the most notable refugee of them all. The Prince of All Saiyans. He was still at large and more disturbing was the amount of aliens that were now coming out of the woodwork and making the FBI a very much in demand service for the world.

Bulma adjusted her new suit and tried to give her best prayer to her parents. She looked over to her friends and especially Launch that sat next to her in the assembly hall.
"I guess we need to listen to the speech first." Bulma said. She hated being at the front but she was getting the honours awarded to her in the year. "I refused to give any."

"I think you should have Bulma, people really want to know what you think." Launch said. "You're getting the nickname, the Ice Princess."

"Well, that's better than the Princess of Saiyans." Bulma joked, the title had finally become one to her now. "I wouldn't know what to say in my speech other than, 'Sometimes you get lucky.'"

"If you say so." Launch said though she thought differently.

The Director stood up and he gave his speech. It was short, enough to let everyone know that they had done some good work. It moved so fast, Bulma was walking up as her name was announced first and she could hear the applause almost coming quite loudly from the men's side. Bulma tried not to make eye contact but the yelling from the male idiots in her class made her turn and give a little bow. She would have loved this treatment 5 years ago, now it was just annoying.

Bulma had only just sat down when a receptionist came over. "Agent Briefs, there's someone that would like to speak to you."

"Oh okay." Bulma said. She wondered if it was Betty, the girl had been an avid pen pal to her for the past month but her letters were slowing down. She had told her it was her graduation today, just for something to say. She didn't know if the girl genuinely wanted to keep in contact or if it was orders from her therapist.

The award ceremony continued and Bulma gave Launch a quick hand signal to let her know she was going out for a bit. She wasn't needed now other than the final photo shoot with the diploma. She followed the woman out to the reception area were the phone was being kept. Bulma took it into the room in case it was Betty. She wouldn't like to publically speak to the Mayor's daughter with all the people moving through the corridor.

"Hello, this is Agent Bulma Briefs."

"Indeed, it should be Agent Briefs now. Congratulations on your graduation."

Bulma froze as she heard the voice from her dreams. He was there in real life. It was him. "Vegeta?"

"So glad you remembered me." The Prince said.

"How could I ever forget?" Bulma's mind was racing; she needed to get a trace on this call. She needed to keep him talking.

"I wouldn't try anything, I have an encrypted line… it would take you far too long and I only wanted to say something quickly." Vegeta said, quieting down her need to get help.

"Then tell me." Bulma said.

"I was going to say that I was so proud of your efforts." Vegeta purred, his voice was so smooth but it had that dark undertone. "I did think you would die from the creature's bite but your weak human body did seem to come through after all."

"I got better."

"Indeed, I also wanted to mention that now you're a full fledged Agent don't bother coming after me." Vegeta said his voice was now becoming much deeper and threatening. "I would kill you if it
ever came of it."

"I know that." Bulma said. "I will only follow what orders I'm given so I can't make any promise."

"We really are similar." Vegeta laughed. "I wonder if you'll ever get to break out of your little dog kennel? It is of no matter, I am quite far away and I have no intention of coming for you."

"I feel relieved I guess." Bulma said. Her legs were like jelly, she knew she would have to keep him talking, maybe get some information from him. Everytime he spoke she remembered all her dreams and nightmares that she had been slowly sealing away in her mind.

"You should be, I had many an opportunity to kill you but it seems more fun having you in this world." Vegeta said. "Now please excuse me, I have to meet an old friend for dinner."

The line went dead and Bulma quickly went through to the telephone operators. "Any way to trace this call?"

"No, we'd need to get the records; you'll need to go to a different department." The receptionist answered.

Bulma cursed and she headed back to the Assembly room. She wasn't in any mood to deal with this. It was going to be her day today, she was graduating and getting made Honour Valedictorian, not that she took that offer up. This was her day, not Vegeta's but in one foul swoop of a phone call he'd turned it all around. She made her way through to the front row of seats and to the one person that needed to know now.

"Sir." Bulma said quietly to her Director. "I think I have something I need to discuss. It's him."

Vegeta hung up the phone. It was quite hot in the jungles and his new suit was getting stained. It had seemed like a necessary thing to do, the little girl was a hidden tiger. It was still unbelievable she had managed to take down that arachnid. He would be sorry to see her skills go to waste if she ever tried to fight him. He was no easy push over as that 'Jones' was, even as depowered as he was he had decades of experience. He was born to be a warrior, a hunter.

"What do you mean there are no more car capsules?" An angry pig ranted. "I want transport to the local hotel and you primitive people have no buses!"

"We have these bike capsules."

"Fine fine, that'll do." Oolong snapped and handed over his money. He glanced around the crowd, not wanting to make a scene. He never saw the short man in the back with the blond hair and the fine white suit. He looked like some tourist and Oolong just blanked him out. He wasn't what he wanted to be afraid of.

It would be a great mistake to think that, but for Oolong it was already too late.

Chapter End Notes
Author's Note: Well here's my conclusion to this arc. Yes, I am continuing and I will just continue from this story and not make a new one. It seems a lot easier than having two separate stories. Plus if I go by the way the next book was worded the next story would be called "Vegeta". I don't think that would pull in anyone since how many fanfics are there that are probably called that? I'm guessing hundreds so I will just stick with updating a new arc on the end of this.

If anyone knows the books they'll understand where this is heading and my no romance words could be eaten but do you really think of Hannibal and Clarice as romantic? I'll just go along with there will be a far darker attraction and that will not be happening until much further on in the next arc. You all know it will be coming but I'll decide if I want it to go the movie way or the book. Add your thoughts if you like; I'm always looking for input.
3 Year Gap

Chapter Summary

A time skip of 3 years, many things have changed for Bulma and Vegeta

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Dragonball Z or Silence of the Lambs/Hannibal.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 16

3 Year Gap

Three years have past since Bulma Briefs had graduated. Three very hard and long years and Bulma had kept her nickname of Ice Princess. Though some people seemed to refer to her as Ice Queen sometimes just because she had now grown in the few years to her mid-twenties and she was now a very beautiful woman if a little hard to approach. Bulma didn’t really acknowledge it though as her main duties kept her so busy to date anyone. It just added more ammunition to her now popular name. She had been in some important missions to help subdue the increasing discovery of alien immigrants. Most were kept secret from the community and especially monitored by the FBI. These were the peaceful ones, or ones that had technical knowledge that could be bought and sold.

The world was now changed from when Scalpel Jones had been captured. The death of the alien had been the final brick holding back the dam of escapees. From what the FBI had discovered from their interviews. There was something out in the Universe that was worse than any Saiyan and more powerful than they could conceive. It was a waiting game to see if this being would ever appear but for now Earth was too far away and safe. It had become a refuge, its resources too few to be of any interest and too far from the main Warzone to be of any strategic advantage. These aliens were not just immigrants they were refugees.

Bulma still had no time for them; but they were not to be judged by her but by the system. She worried that the incoming populous would be a red flag to this mysterious Emperor that they feared. It wasn’t far from the truth there had been too many close times when some dangerous aliens had come. They were almost on the same level of the Saiyans and thanks to their experience of capturing Prince Vegeta they had the technology now to fight them. Even though the general public were unaware of the new creatures joining their world, the leaders knew and they had the one main pressure that they kept hitting the FBI with.

Vegeta was still missing; the only lead had been that phone call Bulma had received at her graduation. It had lead to the jungles in the far south. It had been there that they had found Oolong,
or what had remained of him. The fact that he had been found with an apple in his mouth and on a spit had been repulsive to her at the time. Now Bulma could see the humour in such a thing. She had become so much more jaded by the three years of FBI service. She missed her old carefree self sometimes. She had been happier before, with a much stronger will to entertain the boys and flirt when she wanted to get her way.

“Agent Briefs!” Bulma was knocked out of her nostalgia trip and looked up to see a young Cadet speaking to her. “You’ve been asked to Director Piccolo’s office.”

“Thanks.” Bulma said, he looked so fresh faced and eager. It was such a distant feeling to her now. She had been waiting in the room for a while and she figured she was just getting too deep in her thoughts. She tried to shake her self out of it and picked up her report and went through to the office. She watched the young nameless recruit return back to his duties. He’d obviously just been in for a briefing, much like she had been three years ago. They had sent her on a mission that she thought was just a standard task that was too menial for the higher ranks to do. She sometimes wondered if she hadn’t been sent that time to Vegeta, if it had been anyone else, if they would react the same way to him as she had. She wasn’t sure if she would be in the same dark place as she was now. If she had just completed her training like all the rest and hadn’t fought the killer Jones. She may have had one less scar across her heart.

She entered the office and the tall green man rose to greet her.

“Take a seat, Bulma.” He said. “We have an old friend of yours up to no good again.”

“Who?” Bulma asked she knew that when Director Piccolo called someone her friend it meant someone she’d arrested in a big case.

“This time is Sable Biscotte, she’s on the loose again.”

“Oh her.” Bulma said, she knew the alien well, she’d arrested her a few times but it was always minor offences. It wasn’t the main worry though. It was her blood. “Why do you need me? I’m not in Immigration.”

“This time she’s dealing with illegal substances, we need to catch her in the act and get her the full prosecution she deserves.” Piccolo said. “We can’t deport her to the Space station again; she just finds a way to escape.”

“How big of a team? Am I in charge this time?” Bulma asked eagerly, there was a chance, maybe this time she could be Team leader.

“No, you’re set as Advisor for the Team, your knowledge and run-ins with Biscotte will be what gives us the edge.” Piccolo explained. “It’s under the jurisdiction of Narcotics division I have no say.”

“I guess the murders by aliens have thankfully been quite sparse lately.” Bulma said, she hadn’t had any missions for a while. She tried to hide her disappointment. She had never been made a Team Leader for any of her missions, even though she had been in the Bureau for three years with commendable arrests and take-downs.

“For now, we still have a few missing aliens to try to track down.” Piccolo said. “The main being the Prince.”

Bulma didn’t answer; she knew exactly who he meant. Vegeta’s escape was the heavy weight that hung over the Bureau and kept their reputation low in the public’s eye. The only thing that the FBI
was known for being around was just to capture Vegeta. It was now so bad he was only referred to as “The Prince”, new recruits were starting to just call Vegeta, “Him”. Bulma didn’t see the point, he wasn’t a mythical beast, he had been captured before and he will again. It was all a matter of catching him off guard.

Piccolo handed her a file of papers. “This is the case file.” He said. “You are to meet with Agent Tao tomorrow.”

Bulma bit her lip, she knew the name well. He had been in charge of a few of her missions and always had given a negative report about her. It was as if he had something against her but she’d never taken the time to confront him. She inwardly wished this time she could find out why he had such a stick up his ass about her. She flipped open the file and took a glance. Biscotte’s face was at the front, if apart from the red skin colour she could have been mistaken as a human.

“I will do my best.” Bulma said. “She never goes down without a big fight.”

“Exactly why we need you on this case.” Piccolo sighed. “We’ve had two agents that were on surveillance of Biscotte go missing, we have no proof that she’s involved but I think this time the alien is up to her neck in trouble.”

“Well I will read this up and meet with Agent Tao tomorrow.” Bulma said. “Biscotte is a lose cannon and we can’t really judge her actions. I’ll try to advise them as much as I can but I can’t guarantee.”

“I know you’re the best Bulma, I hope this mission proves it and gives you that promotion you deserve.”

“Thanks Sir.” Bulma stood up and took her leave. It was a chance she supposed but she wasn't going to put her hopes on it. Director Piccolo had been helping her for the last three years and she was still being held back. All she could really do was hope and pray that she could have Biscotte behind bars before any real damage could be done. She may not be a power house type but she was unstable and very deadly when she wanted to be.

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In a darken room a husk of a man awoke to the sound of his personal nurse and secretary.

“Sir, the person you requested has come.” She said gently as she opened the curtains enough for the light to come in but not reach the bed.

“Show him in…” The man gasped. His voice was harsh and wispy as he struggled to breath; to speak was a battle everyday and he tried to keep it short and to the point. His life was a sliver of what it had been but he still lived. The anger and raw need for revenge was what kept him alive. The more he stayed in the dark room with such limited view the more twisted and demented towards his goals he became. There was only one thing left for him and he wanted it done before he could give out his last pathetic breath. He wanted the Prince of all Saiyans to die.

“Sir, is this okay to enter?” The kind man asked as he entered. “I can wait if you like.”

“No… STAY!” He ordered. “I want to… talk!”

“This is Mr Popo, he came with the items you asked about.” The nurse explained. “Dr Gero you should rest and not exert yourself anymore.”

“Shut-UP! One ear Marron, useless…we-n*cough*” He gasped and wheezed as he tried to sit up
but he started having a coughing fit.

Nurse Marron squealed, she had been under his service for a year now and she feared everything about him. She hurried to his side and put an oxygen mask to his face. She needed to calm him down and get him breathing. Dr Gero’s face was half eroded and seemed to have melted. In the light it was hard to look upon. It was made worse by the words of bile that always seemed to come out of him. The only thing he had was money. It was what kept the people loyal to him.

Mr Popo looked on silently he had never met such a worst case of twisted body and mind. He was a survivor of Prince Vegeta. He had lived where others had died. It seemed only like some cruel joke that Vegeta had let this mad scientist live. He had once been in charge of a whole science division in an army that was on the verge of conquest when the Saiyans attacked. It had been the correct thing at the time for the Red Army to try to form an alliance with the leader of the Saiyans. It had ended in such a pitiful way that only Gero was left out of all the army.

“Bring the items here…” Gero said in a weak voice.

“I hope you’re able to pay in cash as you said.” Mr Popo said. He carefully placed his bag on the bed and took out what seemed like a mask. “This was used to restrain Vegeta; it was one of the last items he wore when he was transferred to the Cell in West City.”

A shaking hand grasped onto it and a gurgle could be heard. It was a laugh. “So this was on his face…” Gero sighed. “Marron…. Do you recognise it?”

Marron nodded her head. It was used after Vegeta had bitten her. She knew why she had this job; Dr Gero used his money to collect things related to Vegeta. Those things sometimes included people too.

“Well… SPEAK!”

“It’s the same mask!” Marron squeaked.

“I could pay you to help me here…Popo” Gero said to Mr Popo. “I need more strong men like you with medical knowledge…this wench is useless, I have no idea how she even passed her medical training, probably her good looks, not that she’s got that now.” He gave another gurgled laugh. Marron put the gas mask over his face to shut him up and she turned her head.

“I do have college fees to pay.” Mr Popo said. “This is why I do this black market stuff. A man needs some money.”

“Money is what…has made me LIVE!” Gero laughed pulling the mask off and shooing Marron away. “Money can bring me anything… except HIM; I can’t buy Vegeta but I can get close… I feel it I am so close!” He rubbed his hand over the mask as if to see if he could feel any vibration from the Prince.

“Show me… what else…."

“I have his ki handcuffs, they are so strong that they can even weaken a normal human so I don’t advice you to touch them.” Mr Popo said. “It’s look at only.”

“I see, fine, fine, bring the suitcase of money I had prepared Marron.”

The nurse hurried to the side of the dresser where a silver suitcase had been placed.

“So will you work for me?” Gero asked.
“I’ll consider it Sir.” Mr Popo said. He kept his eye on the suitcase, this felt so wrong to him being in this room with this twisted monster. It wasn’t human anymore; it was only a buckled body with a single objective. “I am surprised at seeing Nurse Marron here but I can understand why. It’s the same reason you want me.”

“Yes, you have lived after touching the Prince, why did he not come after you like he did for Oolong?” Gero snarled.

“Maybe I was inconsequential to him.” Mr Popo shrugged. He could guess the true answer but he didn’t want to give Gero anything more without more money.

“Why did he not go after his woman?”

“You mean Bulma Briefs?” Mr Popo said amazed. “I never saw anything romantic between them, no matter what the newspapers make out; she was professional all the way.”

Gero snorted, he had hoped for some gossip about the one that still eluded his requests to come. All she had sent back were official “no comment” like statements with her precious FBI signatures and authoritative requests to no longer contact her unless there were any leads to the capture of Prince Vegeta. It was such a waste of his time; the stuck-up bitch wanted nothing to do with him.

“I do believe that Prince Vegeta did see something in her, he spoke with her much more than any other visitor.” Popo said. “I have some video recordings of their meetings but it sadly did not come with sound. There were some sound recordings made but I think Warden Oolong had them and had taken them with him. They are most likely lost or destroyed now.”

Gero nodded and grunted his understanding he made a hand movement to continue. He was getting tired from this meeting but he couldn’t stop from listening.

“I’m not sure what else to say Sir.” Mr Popo said. “Bulma Briefs is not in league with Vegeta; she looked to me like the kind that stuck to the books, though I was surprised at her breaking into the courtroom cell to talk with Vegeta. I guess going undercover was part of her job too. I respect Miss Briefs she stood up to him and he didn’t look down at her for it. He seemed to respect her; he even killed someone that tried to mess with her.”

Gero moved to look directly at Mr Popo. “Go…On…”

“The person next to his cell; he threw some fecal matter and spit at her; the next day Vegeta had used his influence on him to make him kill himself. We still have no idea how he did it.”

“Interesting… so he will kill for her…” Gero slumped down. An idea was forming in his head. “I will… buy those tapes… speak with my secretary… about contacting… me later… now I must rest…. And think.”

Mr Popo picked up the suitcase and placed it in his plain shopping bag. He felt like he’d said too much. He was feeling dirty but as Dr Gero said, money was everything and he was desperate for money. It just made him feel sorry for Miss Briefs. Something had been started here in this room and he felt it held nothing good for someone that had always been nice and polite to him. He looked at the familiar face of Nurse Marron as she led him out. She looked very similar to Bulma Briefs but there were obvious differences in her attitude and smile. She now had her hair in a straight bob covering her ears, her eyes seemed dead and afraid compared to how she had been. The vague happy innocent eyes and smile were gone forever. He had been there at the time when he pulled Vegeta off her. She had screamed and cried so much she was given sedatives to calm down. She had left the Asylum soon after Vegeta’s escape in some sort of self aware fear that she would be next
after Oolong but Vegeta never came for her. He never expected her to return to nursing and in such a prominent placement. He had to assume that she had been paid quite a lot for this job. He was tempted to ask but he could see from her silence at leading him out that she was too shaken for too overly familiar talk. She was no longer the bubble head she had been.

“Thank you Nurse Marron.” He said.

She only smiled and said goodbye handing him a business card to call later. That girl had completely changed. In a way it made him nostalgic to see Bulma Briefs to see how much she had changed as well. He shook his head and thought better of it. He wouldn’t think he would be so welcome to the girl he had barely spoken too. The link of the Prince was all they had in common and he doubted she’d like to reminisce on those nightmare days. It was the same for Marron she was so eager to see him out and gone. Though the girl working for such a man as Dr Gero he shuddered to think what kind of nightmares she relived everyday thanks to that man’s obsession.

Mr Popo looked back at the large mansion and wished to never see it again. It was something out of a horror movie and he didn’t dare look back in case something came out to drag him back in. Dr Gero seemed harmless enough, he was only a cripple now with no face and barely any life left in him. Yet as Mr Popo walked away he couldn’t help shaking the feeling that he had said far too much.

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Far away from any crooked mansion and FBI headquarters; in the north of the country where every winter is harsh and the summer is mild. The number one wanted Alien of Planet Earth was sitting down to lunch. It was a basic workman’s lunch that he’d prepared himself. A nice chunky sandwich with large quantities of meat. The Docks were busy with other forklift truck drivers all taking their lunch break. The shorter but muscular Saiyan seemed to have found a place that he could stay undetected. He had an odd habit of always wearing a hat to control his short spiky hair, but no one really questioned it. He worked hard and kept quiet so no-one really bothered him unless it was Foreman Shanks.

“Hey Yasai!”

The Saiyan cocked his head slightly annoyed at the lunch time interruption. “What is it?”

“We still haven’t found Bernard!” The Foreman shouted. “Did you see him at all yesterday?”

“No it was my day off. I was off hiking that day in the mountains,” Yasai Hoang smirked. “I don’t associate myself with losers like Bernard who has to have more than one woman.”

“Aah c’mon ye’re just jealous.” Shanks joked. “It’s a dream to have two at a time.”

Vegeta was offended by that so called joke but laughed at it anyway. “Maybe so, but I think one is enough, all that nagging in stereo… no thanks.”

“Aah so true,” Shanks chuckled unable to see through the fake laughter from his underling. “I’ll let you to your lunch, big as always.”

“I have more appetite for food than women.” Yasai said. He took an another bite out of his sandwich to hope his Supervisor got the hint.

The foreman walked off to speak to the other men and Vegeta was finally left in peace. It was such a stupid pun of a name Yasai Hoang but for some reason it was common in the north so he fitted in with no problems. The whole city was full of yokel men and women that were simple minded and
never questioned anything. Even when some odd people went missing it could be attributed to some bad hiking decisions gone wrong. For now it was perfect before he needed to move on again. Just a few more months training and his next stage would be complete.

He bit hungrily into his Bernard sandwich and wished he could bring a larger lunch box but that would attract more attention than necessary. This human survive game would soon but over and his next trip home would come. The world had become such an interesting place in his three years of freedom. He looked down at a newspaper that had the latest mysterious crime horror stories that were causing more tension in this world. The strange increase of technology the world had leapt to in 3 years was incredible and could only be because of one thing. It had to be some sort of Alien stolen technology. It wouldn’t be long till Space technology was on par to what Vegeta was used to. Not that any of the workers knew he was an alien. For all they knew he was just some unlucky guy that had come up from South City looking to start a new life. It was true the best lies were ones that came from a sliver of truth.

It was all a matter of lying low and biding his time. It was something he had become quite scarily good at and it surprised him as well. The truth for all beings is that when cornered your survival instincts kicked in and Vegeta’s pride had been swallowed for the most part. Although, he had to let off steam sometimes and unfortunately when some people witnessed something they shouldn't then they just had to meet a very delicious end. Vegeta let out a small laugh to himself and lifted the paper to read the latest gossip. If you could read between the lines there were always some very interesting things to read.

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Chapter End Notes

Author’s Note: Yeah the FBI have become more like the MIB that I had originally imagined them as! (I have only watched the first movie; please do that instead of watching the latest one!)

This chapter is mainly set up which is probably quite hard to write and maybe a bit boring. I hope you guys enjoyed it and if you’ve noticed that we’re now in Hannibal story mode. How it ends will be up to me as I really don’t want this to be a main focus of romance. I wanted to write something that had some sexual tension and a bit of horror theme that I feel Bulma and Vegeta seem to pull off really well in a dark situation.

There’s a hanging question of why Gero hasn’t made an android body for himself, but that shall be answered in future chapters.

As usual if you notice any grammar or spelling errors, please let me know! I have yet to find a beta reader that can put up with my inconsistent writing style. (As in one chapter a year!)

Next Bulma has a surveillance mission.
Preparation Time

Chapter Summary

Bulma clashes with her new superior Agent and the plans begin for Dr Gero.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Dragonball Z, Silence of the Lambs and Hannibal. I do not make money from this story.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 17

Preparation Time

Another morning had come to the FBI headquarters and Bulma Briefs made her way into the familiar building. She flashed her card at the Guard on duty who made a polite bow to her and she walked onto the elevator without even giving him a glance. This was her territory. She knew these floors like the back of her hand. She nodded to a few of her fellow agents and stood in the elevator. She wasn’t overly excited about her current mission but she knew she had to keep her temper. She didn’t have time to throw a tantrum over being placed in such a low position after so long in service and so many arrests under her belt.

She kept her case file close to her chest, it was her own work and not something she wanted to show, not yet anyway. She was to give a presentation about the Suspect in the prepping meeting. It wasn’t much that she was on duty as a character evaluation for the suspect. She knew Special Agent Tao didn’t like her and always made an effort to give her the worst feedback report.

She saw him entering the meeting room and he just gave her a sideways glance and continued into the room. He didn’t seem to want to even greet her. She followed in after him and was met by the others on the team. They seemed friendlier to her and she was quickly making introductions to everyone. She sat down at the front of the meeting desk near the computer. She quickly uploaded her files and prepared her slides while Tao had a loud conversation to his subordinate.

“We’re sure there are only one female on this team it’s probably for the best for you.” He said to the tall man with dark hair.

“Sir, I’ll be fine I was in the same graduation team as Agent Briefs.”

Bulma glanced up to see it was a familiar face, Yellow Belly was his nickname but she blanked at his real name. He caught her looking at him and he tried to smile at her but his eyes suddenly turned away and he looked down at the ground. At least it was an improvement from when she knew him as a Cadet. He would always have to leave the room when a girl was present or he would choose the furthest seat from any girl. She could tell this was what Tao was talking to him about, she just wished she remembered his name.
A faint part of her wondered if anyone else had the same trouble, her own nickname was so enforced in people’s memories that sometimes people forgot her own name. She was the Ice Princess to new person she met or rather her old nickname the Princess of Saiyans. She was grateful that the previous name had died down and the ice one was more popular.

“Well now Agent Briefs has graced us with her presence we can begin.” Special Agent Tao said.

Bulma glanced at the clock she was two minutes early, it was just after nine twenty-five and she was sure the meeting was arranged for half past. She bit her tongue and just smiled while placing her paperwork on the table in front of her.

“Quick round of name call for this team, I am as you know Special Agent Tao, in charge of illegal alien substance division. This is Agent Yamcha Mein, he’s my second in command. We all know Agent Briefs; she is assigned to give us character background on our target. She’s more use to homicide but seems they have been a little sparse of late.”

There was a nervous giggle in the group. They weren’t sure if that was a compliment or an insult. Bulma knew which and just kept her fake smile.

“For tech we have Agent Cello, also Agent Viola. We’re sure for them to be able to help with all surveillance.” Tao continued. “Agent Jaffa will lead any arrest and Agent Hobs is here for medical. There’s a special reason as to this which is because of Biscotti.”

He gave Bulma a raised eyebrow and pointed at her paperwork. “If you please Agent Briefs, let us hear everything about this alien female.”

“She’s been associated with a number of homicide cases of late but she’s only been an accessory to the crime and let off with warnings.” Bulma switched on the computer screen and booted up her power point. If she had known she was going to be given no preparation time she would have come sooner. The picture of Biscotti was up and the others were greeted with a red faced woman with white hair.

“Her species is humanoid and has blended well into the populace but there’s been some concerns of late because of her blood. She’s got a dangerous spawning ability and it can lead to some dangerous lung infections if breathed in. She’s able to release some sort of spore that on her home planet would be like a mating call but for us it’s been something we’ve needed to put an injunction on her for. She’s legally not allowed to do this act but she is still capable of doing so even with a special collar placed on her. In a close range she could be a biohazard to the public and agents. She’s not to be taken lightly. Each time she’s been arrested she’s been with child and been highly protective of her offspring. She will use any means necessary to try to escape and will not see anything wrong with using her hidden ability as a weapon. Biscotti has got a bad habit of keeping bad company and they’re usually murderers and thieves on our top ten list.”

“What like the Prince?” An agent whispered.

Bulma continued as she tried to ignore the snide remark. “If a push comes I’d like to be the negotiator with Biscotti, she knows me and is less likely to attack. If anything she’ll think she can make a deal out of the situation. As far as I can tell she’s got no idea of how much trouble is too much. She’s one of the refugees that we have no place to send. If anything a peaceful takedown will be the best we can hope for.”

“Thank you Agent Briefs. I will let you know closer to the time if you’ll be the negotiator but first let us try to work with what we have.” Special Agent Tao said.
Bulma nodded and sat down. She pulled out her hand out sheets of the summary of her report. There was more she wanted to say but she was unsure herself of what the real task was. She passed out her notes and Tao continued with the facts of the matter.

“Biscotti is up to her eyeballs in trouble.” Special Agent Tao said. “Her new lover is a drug trafficker and is getting Biscotti to do the dirty work and being his main dealer; but we want to know how deep it goes. This suspect has got let off before because she claimed innocence to any knowledge of wrong doing, we want to get the facts on her before making the bust. She has to go down for this one, this is her last chance. We need to go into surveillance and get the evidence before we bring them and this drug ring down. The evidence we have just now are all circumstanceal and rumours, we have nothing concrete that will stand in court. Biscotti could escape again if we come down on her now.”

“We will all assemble today at 1500 hours in West City Docks.” Yamcha said bringing up the map of the area. “We will go in separate teams to the meeting area and set up our surveillance there.”

Bulma looked on the board to see the team placement, it all seemed to be set up fine. She just wondered if it was going to go as well as she liked. If she managed to get this job done she might even get Tao on her side for once. She couldn’t let her temper show. This could be her chance for her promotion.

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Far off from West City in the Southern islands a large island was covered in security and didn’t even let a fishing boat near the shore. This was the land that belonged to Dr Gero. It was his haven and no-one could come without his permission.

Dr Gero’s Estate was vast and covered hundreds of acres. His own personal house was at the front and gave easy access for his many doctors and nurses that came in to help keep him alive. His surviving business that he had made from the remains of the Red Ribbon Army was now a giant industry that leads the technological world. It had totally out shone the failing Capsule Corp which had gone bankrupt a long time ago. There was a gap in the market and he had taken in the shares and the sold technology. It was worth it as all the profits fell into his medical care and his plans for revenge.

At the back of the huge estate was the research for his plotting revenge. The previous time his army had fought Vegeta it was a complete joke. His Androids had been destroyed in mere seconds by Vegeta and his men. It had taken his best Android to destroy the weakest one but it had not been enough. The Prince had selected such suitable revenge for the death of one of his men. Gero had been ripped of his spine. His skin peeled off in the slowest way possible. All the while Vegeta just kept him alive for days as if he had all the time in the world. He had been humiliated constantly jibed for being such a sniveling weak man. The memories of that time haunted him and he knew he had to recreate his androids. He had to recreate his own body but not yet. He needed to know that Vegeta could be defeated. It was the only way he could be satisfied in a new body. He wanted to be able to make the final blow, to make Vegeta suffer as long as he has. It would be more than days though; it would be day by day, year by year of every single gasping hour Gero had lived past his intended death. He would keep Vegeta alive and suffering for a complete tit-for-tat for the same amount of time and more.

The most difficult part was capturing the Saiyan but before that Gero made his plans and his machines of intended revenge. They would be perfect, they would be monsters. Just as cruel and inhuman as the Saiyan. The Androids that he would create next would be brainless machines with only one thing on their mind. To capture and incapacitate the Prince so his new tortured life could
The field was covered by trees and fenced off. In the centre was a dummy with strangely familiar hair. Gero was pushed up to his observation deck next to the field and watched as two boxes were wheeled in. As he found it hard to speak with such a scarred face he made a weak hand signal to let the men continue. Nurse Marron fussd around him to make sure he was in a stable condition. He was a walking open wound and being outside was dangerous for him. She secured the tent that covered him and protected him from the sun and falling debris that could fall onto his exposed flesh.

He hissed at her as she prodded him too much and she backed away with a yelp. This was the moment he had been waiting for. He gave a glance to the guard who motioned to the scientist. The man stepped forward.

“We have done everything you stipulated Sir.” Dr Frappe said. “I didn’t think it was possible, but your calculations were impeccable and seems to have done as you said it would.”

“Of course.” Gero coughed. “Just let me watch my creations that you made with your hands.”

“These two are made to be the ultimate killers.” Dr Frappe fiddled with the tall boxes to open them up. “All memories and feelings have been erased and they only care about making people scream.”

“Good.” Gero said, if he had lips he would be smiling. “I really want them to torture our target, the screams will be a melody of my own pent up rage.”

“They can do that fine…” Dr Frappe said moving quickly out of the enclosure. “I have some pigs for our practise.”

“I can’t scream like I used to.” He said with his husky voice. “I want to hear others scream for me.”

Dr Frappe had nothing to add to that, he was used to the sort of dialogue with his employer so he moved on to demonstrate his new creations. He made a motion to his assistants who were standing next to some grey boxes. They nodded their understanding and began to open the boxes, gas released into the air as the pressure was released. Two forms stepped forward out of the gas. They looked like ordinary teenagers. Their eyes were different though. They had a cool icy glare and seemed completely expressionless.

Gero coughed a laugh. He was pleased with the results and now he just needed to see them in action. He motioned to Frappe and he commenced with the tests. The wild pigs were released and ran around in the pen unsure what to do with their sudden freedom. The two figures watched silently until they heard the start of the classical music. They started to blur as they quickly went after each pig, pinning it down and slowly ripping its limbs off in time with the music.

The screams that called out where like music to Gero’s ears and he started to hum along to the tune that was in his head. It looked like his creations were a complete success, now all he needed to do was find the prey. Though with that it seemed he would need some bait. Though they did not seem to be completely perfect. They needed to prolong the kills more. He would need to see more print outs, they needed to be machines. They needed no emotions at all apart from inheriting his thirst for revenge. It would take more time but he could wait.

Deep in the Northern Mountains a large animal roared out in defeat as a punch from a small human landed on his jaw and dislocated his head from his spine. The giant beast let out another large roar but it was in anguish as it died. The man stood over it panting but with a accomplished smile on his
Vegeta sighed as he breathed in the fresh mountain air. It was something that was good about the North city. It was so close to the mountains and just as remote that it was rare that there were any visitors or new people. Vegeta in his own way enjoyed the physical work of the docks, though he had to use forklifts when he knew he could lift them easily by hand at his full power. The thing was he still wasn’t at full power and he didn’t dare push himself to set off any alarms. He knew that the FBI had him as their number one target and they would be on the look out for any large energy signals. They could have scanner technology by now, he couldn’t chance setting it off. He was neutered though and whatever bursts of energy he soon lost it. He had his nice long walks in the mountains to let off his frustrations. The one good thing about the planet was that there were lots of strange creatures for him to take out any of his frustrations. The large beasts were never really a challenge but at his suppressed power level he felt a thrill from fighting them.

He gave a low kick to the defeated bear that seemed to have thought he could take him on. These creatures never did learn, then again he never left any survivors to learn from their mistake at taking on the Prince. This left him to hazily think of his only survivor that he had left, the human woman Bulma. It was still a mystery to him why he hadn’t killed her yet. He had his chances, quite a few to be honest. She let her guard down too easily. Almost all of the people he had interacted with since his incarceration were now dead except her and that strange large man Popo. There was one other which he sort of wished he had killed but it just seemed to add to the fun. For one it would have been a waste, she had been one of the few to have called him by his correct title. She also reminded him of what he could never return to being. She was a dog for that military organisation, just as he was for Freeza. Though with the death of “Jones” as he had been called had sealed his own fate with Freeza. He was now an abandoned soldier to the Freezer Army. That creature Jones was a minor creature for a minor threat. He wasn’t worth it in Freeza’s eyes and he never would be. That would be the monsters undoing and Vegeta would see to that. His goals were too far off now. He looked down at his pathetically weakened fist. He couldn’t even create a blast to destroy the bear that had tried to attack him. The body would just have to be left to be consumed. He pulled out a hunting knife and set to work. This was what he lived for, just a body at a time. All creatures that opposed him would be cut down, he just knew it would be a long fight ahead.

Little did Vegeta know that those very survivors he gave a passing thought to as he cut his prey; would soon come for him and make his current mundane life very interesting.

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Chapter End Notes

Author’s Note: Yes, Yellow Belly which was a character mentioned all those chapters ago vaguely by Launch and Bulma was actually Yamcha. I did have plans to have him have more parts earlier but I wrote it out as it didn’t fit with the mood. If anyone’s curious I can post a short summary next chapter but it’s not really important to the main story; which is slowly getting there though it’s still frustratingly set in three parts.

More on Bulma’s part next chapter.
Chapter Summary

The surveillance of the dangerous alien starts and very quickly gets out of Bulma's control.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Dragonball Z, Silence of the Lambs and Hannibal. I do not make money from this story.

There are some scenes of violence in this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 18

Miscalculations

In the early morning Bulma Briefs arrived to her meeting point and with a slight feeling of unease. She was with a team that she didn't know that well and she was under orders of Tao, someone who clearly just saw her as an accessory to the assignment. She had her regulation gun in her holster and was in just normal jeans and a jacket to hide the gun. She wasn't dressed up, she had herself looking as plain as possible, no make-up, nothing that would stand out. She felt slightly unsure about her hair colour but she just put on a cap to hide the full effect of her colourful hair. It made her a liability in an under cover mission like this.

She saw the van pull over; it had the blackened windows and an advertisement for a plumber on the side. The door slid open and Yamcha greeted her with a red face. He stuttered a "Y-Yo!" and she just nodded and stepped in. The others in the van had their heads down silent. Special Agent Tao was to be in the other vehicle but Bulma could already feel the tension that had been in the meeting. The men in the van were all trained and under the command of Tao. It was clear to Bulma how much distrust they had for the girl Agent from the other department.

The radio cackled and spluttered and Tao's voice could be heard coming over it. "Is everyone accounted for?"

Yamcha grabbed the radio and turned his back to Bulma. Somehow his stuttering voice went away and he replied clearly to his superior. "Yes sir, all present in Van B."

"We'll be arriving soon, Agent Briefs, Agent Jaffa and yourself are to go out in the field, The rest will remain in position in the van." Tao said. "My agents will be accompanying me on Van A. We will be doing the main arrest so be sure to just remain as back-up. I want no heroics from Agent Briefs especially."

"Understood Sir."
"Over and out."

Yamcha turned back to Bulma and his face reddened. "A-Agent Briefs, if-if it's okay… you should be at the front."

"But, we're to hold back." Bulma said. She was feeling a little angered at what Tao had said, he was singling her out again, like the bully he was.

"I meant that you should be at the front of the back-up, you know our target well and I want you to be giving feedback to the tech guys in our van." As Yamcha said that one of the tech guys, Agent Cello started pulling out the equipment to attach to all the members going out on the field. "Be sure to keep visual contact of Biscotti, you're our link to what she could be thinking or going to do next."

"She's a hard one to predict but I'll try." Bulma said. Yamcha was starting to lose his stutter now he was going into his work mode. For Bulma it was making him look less than the wimp she used to know from their student days.

"I-I think T-Tao is wrong ab-bout you and that y-you can do a g-good job."

Bulma sighed, she'd thought too soon.

The van pulled into the Dock area and they parked up in a small alley for them all to get out and move into their positions as unnoticed as possible. Everyone had hidden earphones and radio contact was to be at a limit. Bulma made her way into the crowds of the morning market and tried to find her way to her position at Dock 21. The instructions of other people reaching their points came over the radio and she could only nod her head as she got into her own. She took out her phone and made a fake call.

"Hey, sorry I need to leave a message. I made it to the docks, just need to wait for you now."

She pressed the button to pretend to hang up and looked across at her target. The red skin of Biscotti stood out, she wore a thin tanktop even though it was the middle of winter. Her species didn't feel the cold. She was sure brave showing off her skin colour but it seemed like everyone around the docks didn't even stare. There were some strange races in her world and somehow the aliens always seemed to fit right in. They would always say they were from some rare race from a far corner of the world.

'Humans are so easily fooled by the lies.' Bulma mused and tried to shake herself from her inner thinking. Now was not the time for her theology, she needed to keep her vigil. She spotted some other team members getting into their positions. She looked back to Biscotti she was busy talking to someone from her group. She seemed relaxed and comfortable as she kept talking to the group she was with. Some notes of paper seemed to be handed out and Biscotti seemed to be counting.

'The deal is going down.' A message came through her ear piece. "Stay alert, we're going for the arrest after the exchange has taken place."

Bulma kept her eyes down as she fiddled with her phone and tried to not seem like she was watching. All the other agents would be circling. She just had to hold her position. Biscotti seemed calm and unaware of the snare that was slowly circling. It was almost too easy. Bulma wondered what happened to the paranoid alien from a few years ago. She glanced over and saw the large bag on her back. It looked a little strange. 'Why does she need that for her dealing?' She wondered but as Bulma looked further it started to make sense. That wasn't a bag… it was a larva… it was a baby!

Bulma crouched down and spoke into her communicator. "There's a child with her, this race keep their infants in a cocoon… it's on her back!"
'Stay in position Agent Briefs.'

Bulma gritted her teeth as her stomach began to clench as the bad feeling settled in further. This wasn't good; Biscotti would protect the child if they did anything. She had written it up in her notes but had they not known about it? Should she have pushed more to get everyone to understand this felon's personality? She could turn into a type of Momma Bear without any warning and go into a frenzy.

Biscotti was still continuing with her deal and seemed to be handing over a package of something, most probably the drug they were after.

She tried again. "I repeat, the target has a child with her!"

"Negative we see none, moving in." She heard the reply and was in shock; things started moving slowly as Bulma could foresee the worst. Her gut instinct kicked in and she moved in. Biscotti was being confronted, her face became contorted and a large ki energy erupted. People were thrown backwards as the alien female protested to the arrest. Her arm thrashed out and Bulma could see the spore needle coming out of her hand. This was not good this could cause a mass infection if she left it.

Bulma pulled out her gun and shot straight into Biscotti's shoulder. She heard the woman cry out, the ki dampening bullet will be making quick work of her strength.

"Biscotti! Calm down! We have the right to arrest you, nothing will happen to you or your child if you just come in quietly."

She kept running forward, the alien was looking straight at her. "YOU!" She hysterically yelled and stretched out her arm, she needed no energy to release her spore. "I should have known it was the monkey loving Bitch who was behind this all!"

"Stand down Biscotti!"

"You want to take me back to that false sanctuary! I ain't going!"

"Please, calm down Biscotti, think about your child!"

The alien wasn't responding and seemed to be focused on escaping the men surrounding her and heading to Bulma at full charge.

Bulma shot again, this time at her hand hoping to disable her use of the spore stem. There was a 'ping' and some sort of rebound had occurred.

The agent got to red alien woman and looked down, she was still alive but tears were streaming down her eyes. "MY BABY!"

As Bulma kept her gun extended she looked to behind, her bullet had ricocheted into her back. It had pierced the cocoon of the baby and the small red body had landed on the ground. There was a horrible stain of blood and fluid from the cocoon. It was also coming from the child's head as it had landed on the hard concrete street.

"AGENT!" As one of her team called out Bulma saw that Biscotti was no longer in a surrendering position and was lunging at her. Bulma turned her gun and shot again, it was a clean shot and aimed straight to the outraged woman's head. Her forehead exploded in a shower of brains and scarlet blood. Bulma knelt down to the body and made sure the hand spores were still closed. They were and Bulma calmly took out some special rubber gloves and pulled them on her twitching body.
"Agent Briefs what are you doing?" Agent Viola asked as he was carefully cradling the baby up into a blanket.

"This is just a precaution."

"My God, you're more of an Ice Queen than you let on." Agent Viola said he had tears in his eyes. "The baby's fine by the way….well it's breathing."

"My first duty should have been to talk to her." Bulma sighed. She looked down at the now still face of Biscotti. Her white hair seemed to be turning red with the blood from her wounds. Bulma checked the alien's hands; the gloves were covering her spore stems safely.

"She's a walking biohazard you know." Bulma added more to herself.

"Agent Bulma just stop." Yamcha said to her. His arm touched her shoulder and it was like cutting the string of tension that had been holding her up. Bulma's legs gave in and she leaned against the wall. She wanted to keep herself upright; Bulma didn't want to show herself becoming weak. Not with Tao being so close, she could see him on the phone in her peripheral vision. Yamcha noticed though and tried to give her a supporting hand.

"I'm going to take the infant to the paramedics…" Agent Viola said as he cuddled the small bundle. "It's got a head wound, but it's just on the surface."

"It needs its cocoon; you need to get it in some sort of protective encasing." Bulma said calmly. "The same sort of incubator for premature babies should work fine." She knew the species well, the infant was harmless and had no bio-hazardous spores. It was only very vulnerable outside the protective case, much more than a human child the same age.

"It is a girl; 'she', not 'it'." Viola replied giving Bulma another stare, the agent walked away to the incoming ambulance. Bulma welcomed her going she couldn't take another of the woman's attempts at emotional blackmailing her into feeling some guilt. She felt bad enough as it was.

"I need to return to complete the report, we're getting a car to take you away." Yamcha said. "A lot of people saw the shooting and they may be some journalists coming."

"Great my favourite." Bulma grimaced. "She was attacking me, she had her hand stem extended… that's where the deadly spores come from." She knew she had to make her story clear now. This was such a large storm that she had created. Part of her knew it wasn't her fault but she had reacted on her instinct. If only she had been able to make her point across more. If she had just managed to talk more to Biscotti; maybe if she had been there at the front line when the arrest first happened instead of charging forward like she had.

"You have to repeat what I said Agent Yamcha…" She said looking at him her face flushed. "It's important. She attacked me first! Ask them to check her hands!"

"I understand Agent Briefs, I mean Bulma." Yamcha said. "I'll tell them what you said, it should be all right." He didn't stutter for once and Bulma was glad of that. He stood by her for a moment before leaving to talk to other agents.

She dropped her head down as she felt the adrenaline slipping away from her. The world was starting to spin and she could hear people speaking to her. She managed to answer the basic questions but she knew she wasn't being that coherent. When the car arrived for her Bulma was escorted into the car.

"We'll speak to you later in the day." Agent Yamcha said but it hardly registered with Bulma she just
nodded. She saw more police and ambulances arriving as she was driven away. She looked down at her feet, they were covered in blood. Her whole outfit was splattered with blood. She knew that there had been a time in her past where this would have freaked her out. Now it just reminded her of how much she’d changed. All she was really thinking about was the coming storm and the possible cleaning bill.

In the car she felt safe. Now she was away from any prying eyes she let the tears roll down her cheeks. She knew this wasn't going to be the last of her problems it would continue even further into an even bigger possible mess. Bulma could feel the edge of a deeper chasm of despair upon her. She could regret all she wanted, but it had happened. She had engaged a target when she could have waited, she could have held back. She had caused this mess and she could place blame as much as she liked she still had the main accountability for her actions. It had been an impulse, something that she instinctively felt she had to do but no-one would really understand it.

She had to try though; Bulma knew that this might affect her future career, what she didn't know was that her future was much more unbelievable than even she could understand. The events of this day would roll into a much bigger consequence than Bulma could ever imagine.

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Far in the North of the Chaos in West City, North City was quietly enduring the winter. At the warehouse Vegeta worked at he entered quickly, he hated to be outside for too long. It wasn't the cold he hated it was more the inept cheerfulness of everyone out working in the frosty weather. He knew this dead end job paid the base but he wondered why the humans kept going on so happily. As if there was no care in the world for them, it made Vegeta doubt their sanity but he knew the reason. They were either too naïve to care or just ignoring the monotonous slog that it would become. He had to admit he had become weak recently, not with energy but with his will power. He had done more than he should have.

He looked around the foreman's office. This was his now. It had been a little passing thought that he'd had recently. He wondered if he could get it easier for himself if he became his own boss. So far it seemed to be working. Shouting orders at idiots pleased him on some level, though now his darker side was showing more. It was just he as thought, perhaps he had got sloppy. He looked at the paper that mentioned his previous foreman's body that had been found in the mountains inside a dead bear. His plan had failed and he wasn't happy about that.

He sat down in the large chair and tried to let those thoughts go. So far no-one had said it was suspicious yet he couldn't let another human die so close to him again. He was getting comfortable in this little city. It was nothing like West City which was filled with officers keeping the new immigrants in check. North City was still too cold for those refugees to come to. They needed to stay close to West City and keep their behaviour monitored. None of the new comers seemed to have any power level and as far as he could tell the Earth had been lucky.

Vegeta looked at the memo pile that had filled up during his break. The primitive Earthlings still used paper, the only computer on the lot was in Vegeta's office and the Boss's office. As far as Vegeta knew the boss had come in only a couple of times to check up on things but he left it mainly for the foreman to control the ants. That suited Vegeta just fine, it wasn't too high up to get him noticed and it was ranked high enough to set him apart from the other apes that worked here.

He stood up to look out the window. He needed to check they were actually working. Though there seemed to be something disrupting them. An unfamiliar car had pulled up. It was nowhere near the shift end so it wasn't a basic worker.

‘A guest?’ Vegeta mused. The car looked a little run down but well looked after. It wasn't the usual
heap of junk that the workmen drove. It was also nothing like something the Boss would drive or any of his ever further higher-ups. 'Interesting.'

He watched as a bald man stepped out and pulled at his ill fitting suit. Vegeta made a good guess that he was a detective; it was long over due he guessed with all the suspicious disappearances of the staff. Vegeta knew there was no evidence that they could pin on him though they might be able to find out who he really was. His decent disguise could only keep him safe for so long, he needed to act like one of these apes. Now would be a true test of how well he had blended into this small minded society on Earth.

For Vegeta he had no idea how far this test would truly go.

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Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: Oh, poor Bulma! She's become a lot tougher than in chapter 1 and is definitely tougher than her original universe version. I've also started hinting at what will be affecting Vegeta in the next few chapters. Bulma will also have a lot more to deal with as consequences start to really escalate.

It's great to see people are interesting in my story which I really want to be different from the usual BV, I'm not sure how the action scenes are. I always end up getting myself confused. So again, if you spot any glaring errors or plot holes please let me know, I'll be more than happy to try and fix it.
Chapter Summary

Everyone wears a mask of some kind. How long till it slips and your true nature is revealed?

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Dragonball Z, Silence of the Lambs and Hannibal. I do not make money from this story.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 19

The Mask of Sanity

The North City Docking yard was busy as usual but there was someone there that didn’t belong there. The man was lead into the small foreman office. Vegeta looked up as the tall man walked into his office. He was much taller than him and he could tell that he had some sort of fighting ability.

“How can I help you?” Vegeta asked. “This is a simple shipping yard, we don’t usually get suits down here.” Vegeta wanted to add something derogatory about his scruffy suit but he held it in.

“I’m the NC police department, Detective Tien.” The Detective said. “I wanted to ask you and a few of the workmen a few questions.”

“I’m Foreman Yasai Hoang.” Vegeta said trying to keep his voice calm and free of any of his contempt. “I understand why you’re here, but it has been a bit tense for everyone with all the disappearances I don’t want the men worked up more than they already are.”

“I will be discreet.” Tien said. Vegeta instantly distrusted what he said. The guy stood out like a sore thumb in this place. Vegeta really didn’t like his crumpled non-dry cleaned suit that maybe once had looked good. It really didn’t match Vegeta’s tastes that he had accumulated over the year. The Earth had so much better tailoring than that thing he was wearing. He wondered if he could rip it off along with the guy’s skin. He might end up looking so much more palatable.

“So let me ask you some questions.” Tien said, pulling out a notepad and totally unaware of the thoughts rushing through Vegeta’s head. “Where were you on the 2nd? The night Mr Bernard Venison went missing?”

“I was hiking at the time.” Vegeta answered. “I already explained this in the original report. A Mr Yama will attest to me being there at the time as I hired a shack from him in the mountains.”

“You do much hiking?”

“Yeah, it beats the city.” Vegeta said. “I don’t know why you’re asking about Bernard too.”
“I thought I could tidy up any loose ends if I could find them.” Tien muttered, writing down what Vegeta had told him.

“I thought old Bernie’s was an accident too?” Yasai sighed. “He had a wife, though it didn’t need a police investigation.”

“Like the former Foreman, he met a nasty end to wild animals.” Tien said. “I don’t like coincidences.”

“It’s a peril of living in this wild land. This isn’t a soft city like South City or East… there’s actual work to be done here to live.”

“Spent any time in those other places, I take it you’re not from here.”

“I travelled a lot when I was younger.” Vegeta answered not sure why these questions needed asked. “I grew up in a small farm near West City.”

“Your folks out there still?”

“Nope, I’m an orphan.” Vegeta said but he couldn’t help but ask back. “Why is my background necessary? It’s all in the company files which I’m sure you have access to and if not I could let you have a copy.”

“Eh, that would be great.” Tien said thrown off from his questioning a little. He didn’t really need to question Mr Yasai as much as this but his presence unsettled him. He felt like a wolf in a tiger’s den, he was just trying to figure out what kind of man Yasai was.

“It might take a while to print out.” Yasai said writing down a memo on his desk.

“You can post all the relative files to my office.” Tien said though his face seemed to be mildly uncomfortable with the idea of more paperwork.

“I’ll see what I can do.” Yasai said. “Anything else, the men have just finished their lunch break. You have some bad timing. They might not be in the mood for talking.”

“I guess you know them well.”

“Last month I was with them, working on the same dull shifting of boxes.”

“So you got promoted?”

Vegeta kept his face still and tried not to twitch any muscles, yes it was true he was glad of the promotion but he had to hide any clue that he was happy about it. “I still feel out of place, they needed someone with experience on the dock and they didn’t want to bring in new management.”

“It was by your suggestion.”

“I think self-promotion is not a crime detective.” Yasai said smoothly. “I believe anyone in my position that saw this tragedy as a chance said something similar.”

“I understand that Mr. Hoang I just wanted to know if there was any strong motive, would you suggest to your previous foreman to go hiking or anything like that?”

“I never took him to be an outdoors man, Shanks was quite weak.” Yasai said. “He never showed any interest in anything other than going to the bar for drink and women. He was an ordinary North City guy, he stayed safe and he knew the risks of the wilderness. That’s why I found it so surprising
that he actually went out there."

"You never took him to be the type of guy that would go out hunting or for a nature walk?"

"Can’t say we shared the same interest.” Yasai said. “I never could talk to him about any of my hikes, he would maybe only go out there if there was a girl involved.”

"He was married."

"I don’t think he was against there being any extra-marital activities with any ladies."

"You think he had affairs?"

"No proof but he always found his way to gossip about other worker’s social lives with such things.” Yasai grimaced as he made sure he showed his displeasure. “He would never hide his interest about such matters so I thought he was a pretty easy-going guy with the ladies.”

"It could have been just bravado."

"I never got that impression; he sounded proud of other workers affairs as if they were in some sort of club.” Yasai said. “I never like such gossip, but there is no way to stop it in an all men’s club like this; when the men talk about their multitudes of conquests, but it doesn’t interest me.”

"You’re a one woman guy then Mr Hoang."

"I always will be, there has only been one woman in my life and I’ll keep it like that. I don’t need any more trouble.”

"Women are always trouble.” Tien laughed there was an awkward pause until Vegeta released that the Detective had tried to make a joke and so he gave a forced snort of a laugh that seemed to unnerve Tien. He had other workers to talk to but he didn’t think there would be anything more to add. He gave one last look at the blond recently hired foreman, taking his likeness into his memory. There was something about this Yasai Hoang, something that buzzed in the back of Tien’s mind just out of grasp.

"Women just find a way to get into trouble.” Yasai said to fill in the silence. “I only ever hear from mine when she is in trouble.”

Vegeta moved his glance to a drawing he had placed in his room of a blue woman. It was quite symbolic and featureless but his imagination filled in the rest. For any other person it was just a blue blob with shining white eyes that seemed to be angry.

“So you say, my girl’s not quite like that it’s more the other way around.” Tien said. He gave a glance at the weird artwork that seemed to be ill fitting for a foreman’s office. It just added more to the mystery that was Yasai. “I take it your girl isn’t in touch.”

“She’s not the type to keep in touch; we’re a bit separated at the moment.” Yasai sighed. “As I said, I’ll only know when she’s in trouble.”

“Well sorry to bring up some old demons then.” Tien said and made his way out the door. “I’ll come back if there’s anything else I need.”

“That’s no trouble.” Yasai said and as the door closed the veil of Yasai Hoang slipped off and Vegeta was once again in control. He didn’t like that detective, he had some small trace of power and more unfortunate, he seemed to be the questioning type. His persistent need for small talk that
was really hiding his way of questioning him for information was annoying. It was testing Vegeta’s patience. It was a nice set up he had in the port area he would hate to kill some dumb Detective and have to move on again. This would need to be approached carefully. He had been pushing his luck recently. He looked out the window to see Detective Tien start his enquiries.

He stepped back in case the man looked up again. He needed to be under the radar for a while and this dog detective was not going to make things easy. He went back to his painting and wondered if he should really take it home instead. Vegeta had a passing thought if he should go to West City and look up his old friend but he shook it away. He really didn’t like to think about her, he only talked about her to show to the others that he had relationships. Though you could never really call what they had anything like that. For now it was all about his own survival; he needed to keep his own thoughts on himself.

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Bulma Briefs knew this was bad she was shaking as she was driven down the road. The car was taking her home, she would feel safe there. It was out of the way from the bustle of West City and far away from the FBI office to make her feel out of the shadow of work. Though if Bulma was honest with herself she would admit that her work was all she had. Now she was not sure if she had any at all. After this her work would be over. She was going to be knocked down for this. Bulma just knew she couldn’t play this game of promotions, she couldn’t make herself grovel or simper to her bosses. She always spoke her mind and felt the consequences of it all through her career. Now she could strike this down as one of the worst.

It was more the waiting she knew that would be the main headache for now. The tsunami that was coming was only really the tip of what she was feeling now. It was pure anticipation of the horror that would be coming and Bulma didn’t know if she had the strength to deal with it in her now cool character that she had built up for so long.

“Miss Briefs, we’re here.” The driver said.

Bulma shook herself awake and made her basic thanks to the man. She had been rotten at any small talk on the short journey. She could see from the kindness from the guy that he understood and she really wished she had taken a mental note of his name. Bulma had a quick urge to ask as he was driving away but she felt it was too late. It was better if she didn’t know. She would probably be doing a similar job as him soon.

‘Bulma Briefs, chauffeur.’ She thought of the title. It just gave her a twinge of anger. She had plenty of that and she kept her temper down, not here, not on the lawn. ‘I have to wait… soon.’ Her house was similar to other houses in the area, each with a big enough garden for privacy but close enough to be a community. The nearby wooded park area was perfect for morning jogs and dog walking. For Bulma it was a quiet place that was her sanctity. Her only place that was safe from her constant chaos that was her job. She did admit that her neighbours were more uncomfortable with a single woman living in a family orientated area but they never really said it.

It was just indirectly hinted in their conversations about the weather or them going on school runs. It was subtle in their mind but for Bulma that had been trained to read between the lines it was obvious and slightly irritating. She never hinted at it though. She just kept her mask on and slowly lifted the veil when she stepped in her house. The neighbours were not around just now and it was just as well, she went into her house uncertain if she’d seen a curtain twitch and sure that she didn’t care if there was.

As she entered she made sure to lock it behind. “I’m home.” She called out into the echoing empty house.
There was no answer and Bulma didn’t expect any, the only other person that had a key to her home was her cleaner and she should have finished hours ago. Bulma went into the kitchen, everything was tidied from the mess that had been her breakfast. The cleaner had been and gone, it was all clear.

Bulma opened her cupboard and took out a few mismatched cups and plates. She grabbed a giant glass vase that looked really cheap. Bulma arranged it all on her low coffee table. She snatched a cute rabbit ornament and stuck it on top of a cup. It was a weird arrangement and one that was quickly destroyed. She brought down a baseball bat into the centre and let out a scream.

“I TOLD THEM!” Tears ran down her face as she just released all her emotions on this one act of destruction.

“WHY DIDN’T THEY LISTEN?!” She side swiped the rabbit and saw it hurtle into the wall. “WHY!” The crockery was all in pieces when she was through. She panted a strange metal taste in her mouth. She had bitten her lip in her rage. She went over to the small ornament and saw that most of it was in one piece.

She stomped down on it. “IDIOT!”

Bulma let out a large sob as the anger left and there was only the regret left. She was determined not to regret her actions but she couldn’t do it completely, she had messed up somewhere. She had been there at the time. She had a chance to keep things in control and she messed up. The only idiot was herself. She looked at the pitiful rabbit ornament. It was something she bought on an urge as it was similar to something her mother had. It wasn’t quite the same but it was something her mother would have giggled over.

If her mother had been here she would have just laughed off the mess she made and told her to go fix something instead. Bulma didn’t have that anymore, she had no mother and no urge to fix anything. She wasn’t the mechanical genius she used to be. She wasn’t a scientist now. She was only a warrior that couldn’t follow orders, she followed her gut instinct instead.

‘Just look how far this instinct got me.’ Bulma wondered to herself. Sure she had caught a mass killing alien psychopath on that skill but for the three years it had not really brought her anymore luck. She needed to get her focus back. She just followed her orders till she messed them up or tried to do what she felt was right. She was the FBI Ice Queen who showed no emotion on the field and did everything her own way.

Bulma wiped her blood stained face and wondered what the rumour club would make if they saw their Ice Queen now. She was covered in cuts and blood and crying uncontrollably. She was nothing like her image she had built up. She only let it out in the quiet of the house with plates and ornaments she bought from garage sales. She doubted she could put that down as her hobby. She somehow found the strength in her legs and forced herself to go for a shower. She took her whole clothed self in and tried to wash all the alien blood off. Her jeans became too heavy and she slid them off. She got undress in the shower as she felt the hot water slowly cleansing her thoughts. The tears still ran down her face but they mixed well with the shower. It was as if she wasn’t crying at all. Her dirty wet clothes were discarded in the bath tub, to be dealt with later.

She tried one last time to convince herself that she was okay but she gave up and hunkered down naked in the shower. She let the beads of water massage her aching back and she tried to clear her mind. This was only a small hurdle, she could do this. She would rise again like she always did. This didn’t have to go this way. She hardened her heart again and tried to breath. The calmness that she believed was her ice entered her body and she sighed as she could feel her strength returning.

Bulma stepped out of the shower and rubbed herself down. The blood was gone though the splatters
on her clothes seemed to be there forever. Bulma knew she would be having another bonfire in her backyard just to annoy her neighbours. It made her smile thinking of how they would be moaning about it in their houses just loud enough for her to hear but pretending that they were trying to be quiet.

‘It’ll be fine, I’ll just take my grievances out of the Bakers-next-door rather than the crockery.’ She smiled to herself as she thought about how much passive aggressive things she could do to annoy them.

A hot cup of tea and a quick clean up and Bulma could feel the benefits of letting out her rage. She took her time clearing up her mess. It was knick-nacks from garage sales that didn’t match her style. They had only been bought with the intention of to be broken in her rage. She still had it just under control but there were times when her spoilt self wanted to have her way. It was a bad habit she’d taken up but it was keeping her away from the cigarettes and that was what really counted to her. When the stress gets too much for her it was her only release. She knew she needed to find a new hobby but it was a satisfaction that was hard to imitate. She made a move to switch on the TV but stopped herself, she didn’t want to know just now.

She moved instead to her CD collection and selected something more soothing and lay down on the couch. Tomorrow would bring all the mess that she had made, for today she would just try to cool her head and not think about it. The storm was coming and she would stand her ground and face it.

“Maybe they’ll listen this time.” Bulma hummed to herself along with the music.

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Chapter End Notes

Author’s Notes: Long time no see Vegeta! I hope no one’s too confused by my calling Vegeta Yasai during his interview with Tien. I wanted to show that he was acting in character. Bulma too is keeping herself a façade that she’s built up. This Ice Queen act of hers is hiding her real short temper that I made her show that she’s still not got some control of. I hope to explore that inner friction in later chapters and I hope I can do what I envision some justice.

Next chapter the storm breaks and we’ll see more of Detective Tien. He’s got a back story that needs fleshed out and Bulma will have her consequences to face.
Chapter Summary

It seems like the end for Bulma's career.

Chapter Notes

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See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 20

Guillotine

Another day drew to a close in North city; the heavy snow storm was just starting and was probably going to be continuing all night. A scruffy man got out of his car, pulled a woollen hat on his bald head and ran to his house. Detective Tien had returned home from his day of interviews at the docks. It hadn't really thrown out any leads but there was something about the new foreman that was giving him a strange feeling. This was what the Police always called their gut instinct. He sighed as he saw a note from his fiancée stuck on the fridge door. He guessed she'd be down at the bar as usual. His lack of any funds to get them out of this hell hole of a town was starting to drive them apart.

He needed a break and to get his transfer confirmed somewhere sunny like the South islands or even a dead end village down south. Anywhere south would do him fine. He adjusted his hat, the heating had been switched off and it would take a while to heat up. He walked through to his study and switched on the PC. There were some small reports he could get done in the morning but he had to check something. Tien prepared his coffee and settled down in his comfy computer chair, wrapping himself up with a blanket.

The police intranet was easily accessed from his PC making some of his paperwork less of a hassle. He didn't need to do those interview reports today but he could just start writing it up. The coincidence of two men working for the same company and being found dead in the wilderness was too much for him. There had to be something going on even if it was some stupid dare that went wrong. He spent a while looking at the files of the men that had died. There was nothing outstanding about their deaths really but the amount of missing dead people had been too high recently. The amount of missing reports had increased and it was always with no real trend, all genres and creed of people were missing. The dock workers were his current only link that seemed to connect to something. He just didn't know what. His attention needed to be elsewhere and he decided to send a message to his girl. 'At home, when u coming home?'

There was a pause as he waited for the return and after a minute he gave up. She was obviously ignoring him; he clicked back onto the internet and kept looking over the same files. He went to the FBI site, he needed to drag himself into his work to forget. They had updated their site with a list of most wanted refugees. It was strange how the number one was that damn alien psycho. That killer
was responsible for the changing world he now lived in. The main public knew little about where these refugees came from but Tien knew thanks to some links he had to the FBI. He knew that for some reason Vegeta was unable to go on his killing spree again and so had gone into hiding. He had not escaped the planet, there was no way he could get past the current shield that surrounded Earth. It was what was keeping the current immigrants in check but it also kept those going out in complete control too. There was no leaving or entering unless the FBI deemed it suitable. They were the ones really controlling everything and Tien hated them for it. It didn't help that he had been rejected from the FBI selection process 8 years ago when it started and had been forced into law enforcement instead.

He looked across to his photo by his computer. It was a picture of his younger days when he had been training under his master and where he had met his best friend. Those days were past now, Chao Tzu was dead and gone thanks to Vegeta and his small but devastating invasion. He needed to honour his friend's death and continue with his fight against these invaders. He had given up on getting into the FBI their methods and psychological evaluations always let him down.

He stared at the picture of Vegeta, he knew those cold black eyes well. The picture of his smirk just for the camera, as if to say he knew he would be able to escape and kill them all. He shut down the browser in annoyance and rubbed his temples. His head was throbbing and he could feel another killer migraine coming on. There was something in the back of his mind clicking the pieces together but they just hadn't linked yet. Tien had no idea how close he was to figuring it all out but he wasn't quite there yet. He was thinking too much about other people's interviews and his partner worries.

He called it a night on his work and went to get his dinner that was sitting cold in his fridge. All he needed now was to get that break and show his girl that they could finally move out and get married. Then he could get all the things he wanted to buy for her. He could buy back her love, there was nothing Tien would do now to keep his only companion with him now. He just knew these missing people cases were just the ticket he needed.

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The next day in West City, Bulma Briefs drove up to her Head Quarters and wondered why there was such a crowd outside. She felt her stomach tense as unease crept over her. This was not a usual press day, this was because of that incident. She tried to drive past to get to the parking lot but a sharp eyed reporter spotted her and tapped on the glass as she slowly made her way past. Bulma didn't wind down the window she let the reporter shout through the glass.

"Agent Briefs! Any comment about the death of an innocent mother and child?" The woman yelled at her. "Why are you still working here?"

Bulma drove on. 'Innocent mother?' She was fuming, her temper was about to explode again. She needed to get past them and into her work, just what was going on? She tried to drive past to get to the parking lot but a sharp eyed reporter spotted her and tapped on the glass as she slowly made her way past. Bulma didn't wind down the window she let the reporter shout through the glass.

"Agent Briefs! Any comment about the death of an innocent mother and child?" The woman yelled at her. "Why are you still working here?"

Bulma drove on. 'Innocent mother?' She was fuming, her temper was about to explode again. She needed to get past them and into her work, just what was going on? She pushed her car through as slowly as she could but the crowd had now realised it was her and started to pin her in. She knew it was too late to try to escape to the back entrance. She stepped out of the car, awkwardly parking it in a bad place. She pushed through as the cameras flashed and the endless chattering echoed around her.

"Tell us why you did it!"

"We need to know!"

"Daily Jupiter needs a scoop, please let us have an interview!"

She ignored them all as it seemed to merge into one large noise. The guards came forward and tried
to shield her as she kept muttering "No comment." The only thing that can be said at times like this.

She wondered how this had been leaked in such a short time but then she had ignored the news all
of last night and had a stayed in her room listening to music. As she reached the safety of the Reception
Hall she stood panting to recover for a few minutes. She could feel the glare of everyone around her
and looked up quite shy.

"Sorry, seems I cause another ruckus." She said embarrassed and inwardly angry that she had to
apologise. She tried to keep her head up and walked on to her meeting. She had to remain as the Ice
Queen it was not just a mask anymore it was her armour. The inside of her was a swirling mess as
the sense of dread became more intense. There was no way an undercover mission should have been
exposed as soon as this. She wished she knew were Director Piccolo was but his phone had been on
answer machine all of yesterday.

The long journey to the top floor of the FBI building was quick as things started to swim around her.
The whispers of gossip were starting to get to her and the dread became stronger. She had been in
this situation before when Vegeta had escaped. Though then she had the support of her friend
Lunch. She silently wondered if it was time to go take a trip away and pay her a visit.

"Agent Bulma Briefs, I have an appointment with the Chief Director." She said to the Guard at the
elevator.

The Guard nodded and let her enter. Chief Director Kami's office was on the top floor and was only
accessible by one guarded elevator. She had only been up there once a few years ago. She never
forgot how long the elevator took. It always took so long to get there. She silently wished it was just
Piccolo's office instead. With Kami she always had the feeling he wouldn't tell her the hard facts. He
seemed kind but cold at the same time. At least with Piccolo, no matter how scary and serious his
face got he always told her the full truth.

The elevator stopped and the doors opened to reveal the white office. It felt much cleaner and more
sterile than the rest of the building. It didn't seem as if many people came here. The woman at the
desk who seemed to be the secretary motioned for her to sit down. She didn't even need to say
anything. The cameras surrounded this place and Bulma only found a place to sit down in the
waiting area.

She tried to calm herself and bring back the cool façade she needed. Bulma knew that the reporters
should not have known about this incident already unless there had been a leak. This could be the
end for her. She looked down at her phone and saw all the missed calls, all from numbers unknown.
She switched off the phone. It looked like she'd need to find a new phone as well.

"Agent Briefs?" The secretary said. "You may enter now, the meeting is being called."

Bulma murmured her thanks and walked in. She'd taken down multiple dangerous aliens before but
now it seemed that she was facing her biggest challenge. She mused that she would even prefer if it
was Prince Vegeta waiting for her than what was in there. Inside Chief Director Kami sat at the
centre with Special Agent Tao to one side and an unfamiliar female agent with sharp eyes and short
purple hair.

"Take a seat." The woman said. "We haven't met before, I'm Special Agent Violet."

Bulma nodded, she didn't feel the need for pleasantries. The woman wasn't even holding out her
hand for a shake.

"We'll get down to the main issue here, which you must be aware of." Tao said.
Kami had not yet spoken or even opened his eyes to look at her.

"I have an idea, but…" Bulma tried to find the words, her mouth was so dry. "I-I haven't watched the news or returned any calls since yesterday. I was too much in shock."

"You shot an infant Agent Briefs." Kami said in a deep and disappointed tone.

"It was in a cocoon, I was more concerned about Biscotti's spores."

"Her spores were not really a problem at all." Tao said. "She has had the spore sacs removed. She only had the hand needles as a form of self-defence."

Bulma looked at Tao, he had a slight smirk on his face. It clicked into place for Bulma; he knew Biscotti's updated information all along! 'That asshole!' She inwardly cursed.

"Agent Briefs, you failed at your task of being an advisor for the undercover operation." Violet said to her. "You were not ordered to make any move forward as Biscotti knew you. You were a risk to the operation and needed only to give your opinion on the suspect. As it turns out your advice was certainly out-dated."

"When did she have the spore sacs removed?" Bulma asked trying to keep her voice calm. She could hear sharpening blades as she felt herself getting closer to the chopping block.

"She needed the spores removed to stay in the civilian area." Violet explained. "Otherwise she would have been only a resident of the Sanctuary. It was done 3 months ago."

Bulma nodded, she thought that Biscotti had escaped the Alien Containment Village, nicknamed the Sanctuary. It was well known to her that Biscotti hated that place. The alien female had been screaming at her before she died how she wouldn't go back there. The Aliens though called it the "False Sanctuary" which was in a way true, it was just a prison disguised as a village.

"We know you acted in the best wishes of the civilians." Kami said. "Though there were innocent casualties. The infant's shooting was seen by some people on the street. They managed to film it with a shaky camera. It has spread like wild fire across the media."

Bulma nodded, she was starting to understand the fury of the reporters at the front of the building now.

"You have left us no choice Agent Briefs, you are officially suspended from duty starting from now. Please relieve your gun and badge now."

"What?" Bulma asked. "No, trial?"

"There shall be a trial at a later date." Kami said. "This is just a formal meeting to set things in motion. I would ask of you to attend the press conference and make an official apology to the family of Biscotti."

"Sir." Bulma acknowledged and took out her badge and gun. She wanted to protest, that Biscotti had no family but she felt she had no right to say that. She had killed the only other family the alien woman had. She placed the gun down along with her badge and kept her head down looking at the desk where they lay. The first blow to her career had been done, she was finished. Her short 3 year career was never going to recover from this. All she could hope for now was some office work in some back room somewhere. She could feel the tears forming and bit her tongue to try and stop it. There was no use having a cry in front of these people.
"If only Piccolo were here now." Tao sighed. "You were his prodigy, I'm grateful he's away in the space station just now. He'll be unable to see the state that you've become."

'Oh, gloat you ass, go ahead.' Bulma hissed inside, whatever tears she feared would fall stopped as her anger rose. 'No wonder Director Piccolo wouldn't answer his phone, this is too good a timing to be real.' Piccolo had always been the one that would back her up when she'd come across the bureaucratic barriers that people seemed to throw in her way. She never seemed to be good enough. There were just so many things that were too good a coincidence.

"We have written a speech that you are to read." Agent Violet said. She pushed forward the paper.

"What if I don't read it exactly?" Bulma looked down at the simple piece of paper with suspicion.

"We want you to read it first and change anything by my authority only." Violet said. "I do warn you that this will be taken as evidence in your trial, so read it through carefully and sign at the bottom."

Bulma's stomach clenched in anger and stress as she reached for the paper and read it. The apology was vague enough but she scribbled a few words out that made it seem like it wasn't an accident. She sat quietly checking it over and over till she finally decided and handed it back signed. It wasn't like she had much of a choice.

"Thank you for your co-operation Miss Briefs." Violet said making a hinted stress at the now ex-agent. She was no longer 'Agent Briefs'.

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The News Conference was called and a world wide televised news broadcast was made. For some people up in the cold North City this was a nice break for the normal slog of the day. Just to see what those crazies down South were up to. For the Foreman of the Docking Yard he joined his men around the small TV in the break room. Vegeta sipped on his coffee as they made the announcement.

He paused in his drinking as a familiar name.

"We're joined here live to hear a public apology from the now suspended Bulma Briefs. The once heiress of the Capsule Corporation has once again found herself in the frontline of a scandal. Only three years ago she was suspected of having an affair with the World's most dangerous criminal Prince Vegeta. She was cleared of all charges of aiding the criminal's escape but she still is subject to many conspiracy theories around his notorious escape."

Vegeta took a seat and put down his coffee.

"That's the bitch that was with that damn killer!" One man snapped. "Makes me sick thinking of how she got away with it for years."

"Quiet Joe." Vegeta hissed. He really didn't want to have to kill another co-worker.

"Agent Briefs was seen yesterday morning in an FBI shoot-out that went horribly wrong. An innocent woman and child were killed in the drug raid and Agent Briefs was filmed as the main aggressor in the attack."

A wobbly and out of focus video was shown with a giant mosaic hiding the victim. Bulma's face was zoomed in on and frozen as she fired her gun. Vegeta seemed to notice how her hair had grown longer and was able to go into a ponytail. From the wobbly film he could see how she had become a competent fighter now, if not unbearably weak still and needing hand weapons to fight.

"We're joined live as she makes her announcement...."
The scene changed from the still frame to a conference hall and on stage was a panel, the blue colour drew Vegeta's eye and the camera too focused on her someone off camera talked about the tragedy. The camera went to that person who seemed very old.

"We at the FBI are aware of the public safety at all time and we were doing everything in our power to protect and serve."

Vegeta zoned out from the vacant speech and looked across the room, some men had gone back to work, loosing interest while others stayed. Vegeta thought about the red mosaic he had seen on the footage. It had obviously been a very dangerous type of alien she had been fighting. As usual the reports failed to mention the race but Vegeta could make a guess.

"I am aware of my actions and I apologize to the family of Sable Biscotti, she was not an innocent but she was under surveillance for drug trafficking. She was only to be brought in for questioning about her current activities and no firearms were meant to be used. I acted on my own indicative to take on Miss Biscotti as I believed she was armed and dangerous. I was wrong in that assumption and I accept my punishment of suspension for my shooting of Biscotti. The infant involved was hit by a rebound shot and was alive at the time of the shooting. We did everything we could to try to save her life. It was unfortunately not enough and she died later in hospital. I will be accountable for her death as well and I will have a full hearing in the FBI court."

"I guarantee that will be rigged too." Joe huffed. "She's going to get off Scott free again."

Vegeta gave the man a glare, "Break finished 5 minutes ago…"

"A'right" Joe and the rest of the men made their escape. They preferred to stay on their new foreman's good side.

Vegeta took one last look at Bulma; he lightly touched the screen as he saw her desperate face reading off the card. Those weren't her own words, the script was too obvious. She had been thrown to the wolves of the reporters to save the image of the FBI. This was a typical gesture in any civilization and she was just blindly following orders again. They needed a scapegoat and Bulma was a perfect match. He switched off the television and made an inward decision. It was time to make contact to his little lost princess, whether he saved her or damned her, he was still to decide.

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Chapter End Notes

Author Notes: If anyone has read Hannibal or seen the movie you'll know this isn't the end for Bulma and her career. I still need to decide if I'm going the way of the movie, book or some weird twist of my own. I never planned on having Vegeta in this chapter but I thought it fitted well enough though it made this chapter longer than I planned. The next part we'll get further into Dr Gero's plans as I have not forgotten about him. There's also the new menace of Tien for Vegeta to deal with.

This universe I've created for this Silence of Lambs/Dragonball cross is much more centered in a weird version of the Dragonball Universe rather than the more reality version of Earth. So that's why there are giant bears, and the strange city names.

Final note, I would also say that I have been watching the new Hannibal series and I
liked it but I felt there were a lot of misused Red Dragon quotes in the wrong places. I don't know why that particularly bugged me, but I liked it overall. I doubt I'll add any of what I watched into my story as it's all stuff to do with the guy before Clarice, no spoilers as it has some nice twists that change the way the book went. It's worth a watch; just beware people that read the book. I made a fuss every time I noticed something taken from Red Dragon in the wrong place; I should have watched it without worrying about that. (Well, I am a fangirl.)

As always, thanks for everyone's kind reviews and if you spot any mistakes let me know and I shall try to correct them. We're still a long way from Bulma and Vegeta meeting again but you know it's going to happen. Let's enjoy the twisted journey getting there!
Azazel

Chapter Summary

Bulma is now suspended and reeling from the shock. Meanwhile Vegeta has an annoying pest called Tien to deal with.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Dragonball Z, Silence of the Lambs and Hannibal. I do not make money from this story.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 21

Azazel

It was too much for one person to take. The shot had been fired, the blade swung to the neck. Bulma Briefs had been hung up to dry and she knew it. She felt all the attention fall to her in that one moment after she made the speech. The bloodhound reporters could smell a wonderful story for them that they could sell and they had asked question after question. All of which Bulma was under oath not to reply. She just added more fire to their curiosity as she just gave the ‘no comment’ reply. It was up to Tao to give a general statement which made it seem that Bulma was even more to blame for everything that had happened.

She was nothing but a distraction to take away from the real reason. That an alien species had set up some drug cartel in West City and was hiding behind being an innocent refugee from a war torn planet. The public were still to remain clueless of the alien part, everything about Biscotti was smoothed over and she became just a mother led astray by her partner. She had nothing to say except what was in her hands; the speech was all she was authorised to say. Though the press couldn’t understand her position and she could sense that they would just make up things like before. She had lived through it before, when Vegeta escaped and when she lost both her family and company 7 years ago.

Bulma sat in the waiting room her hands shaking. She no longer had the authority to move around the HQ. She was told by Kami to wait until she was given an escort out of the building. It was all messed up, the whole lot of it. She clenched her fist and sighed angrily. She lost count how many times she’d wanted to punch something or someone. She would have to find a way to let off steam soon or she would end up having a screaming fit.

“Miss Briefs, you have a call!” The secretary motioning for her to step up to the desk.

Bulma’s gut twisted as she thought of her graduation. Something similar had happened to her after her more joyous day. The Prince Vegeta had called to give his regards, she knew he might have watched the live broadcast. It made her feel sick thinking of how he would be laughing in glee at her. His need to gloat would be quite strong, but would he have the audacity to call her straight after? She
shivered and prepared herself in case she heard that deep grasping voice again wanting to pull her down into his abyss.

“Agent Briefs!”

“Assistant Director!” Bulma gasped. She was so relieved to hear a friendly voice of her superior and not the one she had anticipated.

“I’m sorry, this has totally got out of my hands.” Piccolo explained. “I’m currently on the Space Station dealing with some nasty newcomers.”

“I understand Sir.” Bulma said. “I think I really messed up this time.”

“I will be back as soon as I can.” Piccolo said. “I can’t believe how quickly this report got spread.”

“I had a bad feeling about that too.” Bulma lamented. “I don’t want to say any more about this though.”

“I will discuss this another time then on a more secure line.” Piccolo agreed. “Hopefully face to face. You hold yourself up and keep out of anymore trouble.”

“I’m not sure I could get myself any deeper sir.” Bulma sarcastically said.

“I may be hard to get in touch with but you can rely on some of my team to back you up.” Piccolo said.

“I know Sir, I just… don’t like asking for help.”

“Now is the perfect time to do so. You keep yourself safe Agent.”

“I’m not an Agent at the moment, I’m under suspension.” She sighed.

“You’re still an Agent, keep telling yourself that.” Piccolo assured her. “We will get to the bottom of this. I’ll speak to you later on in the week.”

“Thank you Sir, Goodbye.” Bulma handed back the phone as she heard Piccolo’s faint replies. Her spirit had somehow been slightly lifted. She could weather this storm. She hadn’t fallen yet she was just a scapegoat for them. She could still be back on Homicide doing what she could to keep everything safe. Her job was everything to her and Bulma wouldn’t give up on this not without a fight.

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The news of Bulma Briefs suspension from the FBI came to the ears of one bitter and twisted old man. He listened to the explanation from his servant. Dr Gero never looked at the Butler as he spoke but stared manically into space. The news though pleased him and he flashed his lipless teeth, a sign that he was smiling.

“Everything is starting to take shape.” Dr. Gero said in his low gravel voice. “It’s so good that Kami is still the trusting fool that he ever was.”

The servant known only as Mr Black nodded. “I do believe your mole has done everything you asked of him.”

“Of course, he always will.” Gero rasped. “Tell him to make a start with our next plans. The Saiyan will come out of the woodwork soon. We have to be ready to get the information before the FBI
does. No amount of bribery and coercion will stop them from trying to take the Prince down. He’s too big of a target we need to get the upper hand.”

All the planning and effort was all for one thing. To let the Briefs woman become a damsel in distress. If only to get a certain person’s attention and lead him into a trap. He would make an effort to gloat. That was something he loved to do. Prince Vegeta would soon be reaching out to his woman either to rub in the salt or help. He was still unsure which it would be but it would be interesting to find out. Maybe this time the Briefs woman would answer his calls to give him the answers she needed. She would be more desperate to get help now. She would soon be begging for mercy along with her would be lover.

Gero coughed dryly, it was his form of a laugh. He tried to calm himself and focused on the ceiling light as he tried to control his breaths.

“Bring in the TV, I want to hear the news.” Gero croaked. “I want to see that woman’s face as she makes her excuses.”

“Shall I prop you up, it might be a bit painful?” Nurse Marron asked.

“No, let me swivel my head around till I break it! Of course prop me…ghff.” He couldn’t finish his reprimand as he went into another coughing fit. The timid stupidity of his nurse always burned him up. “Just do it! You useless… ghff… whore!”

Marron’s cheeks burned red as she nodded quietly and continued to attend to her only patient. The butler went away for the small trolley with the television to be rolled in on. It was not long till the recorded report could be found in high light form.

“Find the full recording, I want this on repeat.” Gero sneered.

“I’m sure we can find it from the TV stations.”

“Then we can get that advertisement out for some bounty hunters. Increase the reward for any information about Vegeta.” Gero gasped. He shook his head as his nurse struggled to put on his oxygen mask. “I’m… ghff not… finished… gff.

The tall butler waited as the mini battle of nurse and patient continued. For Mr Black the idea of vengeance on Prince Vegeta was more than enough to let him keep up with this impatient and unpleasant man. Everyone in that Gero hired had some form of history with Vegeta. All of them with no sense of forgiveness for his sins.

“Get, the bounty… increased… 20,000zeni for any type of lead and make it 400,000 for anything concrete!” Gero snarled but it slowly moved into a coughing fit. The crippled man had exceeded his limits and was slowly brought down by a sedative from his nurse. He calmed down but his eyes were still on his butler looking for a confirmation of understanding. “We still… need anything confirmed of course with….ghhh…. evidence…. Be sure to stipulate that….ghhh.”

“I’ll get it done.” Mr Black nodded and left the old man to order Marron around. He still had some strength to make her life hell. The nurse was now shakily holding the remote control and flipping through the channels. The horrendous cough from Gero and the blare from the television echoed around the empty mansion.

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The next day the newspapers had caught onto the story of the FBI star agent suddenly brought to shame. Bulma’s name was thrown all over the papers. It wasn’t of any surprise for Vegeta as he
walked to work. He had stopped to pick up his daily newspapers and saw that everyone carried a
pale looking familiar face. He looked at the headlines in quiet interest, he knew after her scripted
press conference that this would just take off. The same happened three years ago after he escaped.
Bulma was somehow thought to be to blame for his escape and was highly scrutinised by the press.
It was a few years ago now but the press still hadn’t forgotten. The nickname “Princess of Saiyans”
came up on one of the papers that Vegeta picked up. They also seemed to be tagging her as a killer
now, this gave him some mild amusement.

Vegeta took a selection to the counter and prepared for the usual small talk. This was his local shop
and they always seemed to remember him. He had to be polite, if only to keep his own act up.

“It’s not safe these days when even your county’s own security is shooting babes.” The old man
commented with quite spiteful venom.

“It’s terrible what happened.” Vegeta lied. “I’m taking some extra copies today.”

“You interested in this woman? She brings down the name of her father’s company, I used to own
one of their cars too. Real beaut!”

Vegeta tried not to growl, the man was feeling more talkative than normal. The jingle of the door
behind him but he didn’t turn around. He felt the aura before he had entered the shop. It was
Detective Tien. For some reason he had followed him on his morning walk to work.

“I’m taking some papers for the staff room.” Vegeta said. “I never had any of these Cars… so I
wouldn’t know.”

“They’re collector items now, the company was bought over and they just ain’t the same.” The old
man rambled on.

Vegeta could feel the cold stare from behind as Tien thought he was out of sight. “I prefer hiking to
be honest.” Vegeta continued the conversation hoping to bore the detective.

“They sold everything that company, the man was a real genius, shame about the kid. Real shame.”

“I best get going Barney, work starts soon.”

“Ah, I’ll let you go son.” Barney smiled. “I’ll see ya tomorrow.”

“That you will.” Vegeta smiled back. It was quite cool and without warmth but for Barney he saw a
smile and he smiled back. He took up his stack of newspapers and made his way out while not
looking in the direction of where Tien was hidden. As the door closed the detective stepped out
picking up a random item off the shelf to pretend to be interested in. As Vegeta headed away in his
car Tien turned to the shopkeeper.

“Is he a regular?” He asked. “He looks sort of famous.”

“I don’t know about that, he’s just a foreman at the docks.” Barney said surprised at the question.

“It’s nothing, really.” Tien muttered. He had found it hard to sleep all night and Mr Hoang’s face
kept popping into his head. The real reason he was here was because of the warning signs flashing in
his head and had finally clicked. Hoang was hiding something and the more he thought about it the
more it irritated him. He hadn’t slept at all that night, the nightmares of the Saiyan invasion had
flashed through his head. It had been a while since he’d had a flashback like that but he could never
forget. Not to what happened to his best friend. The old nightmares would always remain while that
scum ran free.
He could have mentioned all these inner thoughts of his to the nice old man but he spared him his personal drama and made his purchase of the paper and a few other supplies. He was following Hoang but for now, he knew where he was heading and he was going to stay close by him.

He had made the decision that morning to keep his eye on Hoang. The man still gave him the creeps and it was most likely from the fact that when Hoang smiled his eyes were steel cold. They were the type of eyes that haunted his nightmares. He couldn’t let this slip, there was a small chance and he needed to watch Hoang to be sure. He really was starting to think about those eyes being the same as Prince Vegeta. All he needed now was the proof.

Those eyes were the same for him but that just wouldn’t hold up in court. He needed to find a way to catch him out. He needed Vegeta dead.

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Bulma lifted the heavy box of her desk items and made her way to the car. She had been given a driver that picked her up from outside her chaotic house and was going to drop her at a hotel. She needed to hide for a few days and she hated that. She detested that her career was now in tatters because of this accident. Her face being once again spread across the papers. Her past demons being aired out for more unnecessary news. She was the hot gossip of the week and she knew it would eventually die down. It was just too unbearable while it happened. They had a way of finding out the stinging truths and of elaborating such extravagant falsities. Bulma didn’t know what to be mad at first, the lies or the intrusion into her private life.

“This is everything.” Bulma said to the driver, Cassis.

“Then I’ll take you onto the hotel.” Mr Cassis said.

Bulma knew that she couldn’t risk any of her files or contact numbers being on her desk. It didn’t take much to bribe a lower level employee to snoop for the press. It had happened before and she didn’t want to take that chance. She had been herded away so quickly yesterday she hadn’t had the opportunity to clear her desk.

“I know this is outside your orders, Mr Cassis.” Bulma said. “I really appreciate it.”

“All really part of the job.” Cassis said. “My boss is your boss after all.”

Bulma nodded and gave a thin smile. She was grateful that some influence from Piccolo was showing through. He couldn’t clear up this mess as well as he could if he was here in person but it was comforting that he could do much more. Bulma pushed the box onto the back seat and let out a sigh. This would be a long week she knew and all she could do would sit and wait it out. The worrying thing for her was how fast everything had come about. The news of the incident was spread much faster than it normally did. She could just be paranoid and the press could have got wind from the hospital but everything was just making it seem like the whole FBI had turned against her. There was also the bad feeling that there was some sort of spy in the ranks somewhere. It was such a sting on her career that she had built up for so long. It had all been too easily shattered.

From the tinted window in the safety of her car she stared back at the FBI HQ which had been her life for so long. She lived to work there; it was what made her get up every morning. Now she had an uncertain trial and future ahead of her. The drive to the hotel was silent and she was thankful. Bulma needed time to gather her thoughts. Her fight against the invaders, to keep some sort of law and order in her world; it was all crumpling apart. She could feel the stinging of the tears and the pain in the back of her throat as she held it back. She couldn’t cry here, not yet.
She silently swore to herself that she had done nothing wrong. She regretted nothing and that she would find out what was behind this. It would just take a lot longer now that all her power was taken away. Bulma looked down at her phone wondering if it was safe to turn on yet. Somehow her number had been leaked and she had already had a lot of press phone calls. She let it stay off and slipped it back in her bag. It was just a thing of convenience; she wouldn’t need it for the next few days.

She thanked the driver and walked into the hotel. She had wrapped a scarf around her head to hide her hair and stay in some for of disguise.

“Miss Chinos, room 628.” Bulma said as she walked up to the front desk.

“We have a letter for your room, no messages.” The clerk showed her the letter titled with her real name.

“That’s fine.” Bulma said. She took her keys and mail and glanced at the mysterious letter. The handwriting did not seem to be from Piccolo and she knew it was not Vegeta’s there was no way he could find her like this.

She slowly wondered if she would ever escape Vegeta’s shadow as she looked at the newspapers in the lobby. She picked one of the less tabloid papers and made her way to her room, trying hard not to make any eye contact with the people sitting around. This was a 4 star hotel but she didn’t want to make a scene. She was aware that the FBI was paying good money to keep her here and would probably be bribing the staff to keep it just as hushed up. She just had to make it to her room and stay there for a week maybe two.

If anything Bulma wondered what she would have to do to escape this. It was all just a waste of time as she had done nothing wrong. She really couldn’t understand why the team she had been in didn’t listen to her or why they never backed her up as she took on Biscotti. The more she thought about the incident, the more suspicious it seemed. She had done everything correctly, it just seemed like something had been working against her. These thoughts plagued her as she went to her room. She had no idea how close to the truth she was or what real trials awaited her.

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Chapter End Notes

Author’s Note: I have such a weird title for this chapter, Azazel, also another word for scapegoat; but I thought it fitted. It’s also the name of a demon, I’ll let you all decide if that’s on purpose or not. I always try to give each chapter a meaningful title, whether it’s something light or much deeper, all really depends on my mood.

This is still a slow build up chapter but the pressure is building. I hope everyone has had a great new year and I do plan to continue this story to its conclusion. Things are about to heat up next chapter as Tien gets closer to trying to catch Vegeta. We all want Bulma to be getting closer to Vegeta but that will have to wait for a few more chapters. Don’t worry, it’s coming soon; I can’t wait myself. I really want to get to writing the scenes I have in my head.

Again, if you spot an error don’t worry about pointing it out. So long as it’s a fair critic, I can take it. I will try to fix it if it’s something glaring like the wrong spelling used or it's
a formatting typo. That seems to be happening a lot recently.

See you next chapter,
Tien shifted in his car and looked at his watch. He needed to go into the station and sitting out on watch on Hoang all day had been a complete waste of time. He needed to come back and track him when he was doing his so called hiking. Mr Hoang was the right height, and body build. Everything else, even down to his thin eye brows were different. It just seemed those dark brown eyes seemed so familiar to him. It brought back all the memories of his friend, Chao Tzu. He had died in the Saiyan invasion 7 years ago. All Tien had been able to do was to watch his friend die as he sacrificed himself.

He shook himself free of these thoughts and started up his car. It was now early afternoon. He could go back to hand in the last of his paperwork and get back to his stake out. As he drove his car to the junction to exit from the dock areas. He took one last look back to the Yard and thought for a second he saw a shadow in the window. His old fighting skills flared up as he thought he felt a power surge but it was gone in an instant. The energy was perhaps a passing monster or worse. Tien wasn’t so sure and he stared at the junction for longer than necessary before he drove away. His whole being was at a buzz. It was a feeling he hadn’t felt for a while and his suspicions kept building up inside him. If he was a man on the run, wouldn’t he find a way to change his hair, face even eye colour?

It all seemed possible but it would be harder to prove. They were all suspicions at this point. The death of his friend was still a bitter pill in his mouth. It gave Tien the motivation to continue even if he knew he would have trouble waiting for him for extending the investigation into these “accidents” at the Dockyard. It was one company with two recent deaths and one man that gained from both of them. The previous foreman Shanks, found in the wilds ripped apart by wolves. The other worker from the Docks Bernie Venison found half digested in a dead bear. It was too bizarre a coincidence that he felt they had to be connected. They were from the same company, a similar time frame of death and found in close proximity in the mountains. One had supposedly gone for a secret meeting with his mistress; his wife was desperate that it was kept hushed up. The other had had a sudden hiking trip with other co-workers. Both happened while Hoang had a solid alibi.

Both times he’d been on the other side of the mountain in a campsite. All while being in the company of Mr Yama, an old man that was the owner witnessed that Hoang never left during the night. They had some sort of poker tournament. He had gone to Yama first when he started the investigation, just to tick the box of having checked on the alibis of any suspects. It was only now that he wanted to go back and ask that old man some more questions.

The detective arrived at the police station and before he went in, he made a quick note on his notebook. If he was right then he would need to do this carefully and by the books. At some point he
would need to bring in the FBI to take down Vegeta. If it really was that flesh eating monster. He paused to calm his temper and his stomach from retching as his past started to cloud his vision. He needed to keep those memories dulled and focus on his motivation. He wanted Vegeta to pay for what he did. He felt how much they had let everyone down by allowing that monster to escape. It was under their supervision that it had all happened. The alien was loose because of them and their need to catch this Jones creature. One that seemed to have died in a fire. He was unsure what to make of the claims that the traitor Briefs had been responsible for it.

Tien always read a weekly magazine called “The Karma Times”. It told him more than any newspaper ever could. It had been the only one that had mentioned the full horrors of the alien invasion and everything that had followed after that. He tucked his copy up along with his newspaper and made his way into his office.

Inside it was as quiet as always. There never was much action in North City and everyone considered this place to be a nice retirement place to be. There were very low crime and only recently had the increase of disappearances been something to just give everyone a minor headache. For Tien it just showed how lazy this whole force was. He wanted to go to where the action was like in West City. That was where he needed to be. Not in this backwater hole full of hicks and wild animals.

He switched on his desktop and got himself a coffee. He passively talked to his colleagues being sure to avoid talking about his case. They were more concerned on working overtime on the weekend. In the North City precinct it was always quiet so they never needed a full force as with other places. Tien longed to see the actual bustle of a real city precinct. He needed the excitement more than he knew. This job was more relentless with the paperwork.

He sat down at his workstation and being the dreaded work. He needed to hurry, he had left most of his work that he could at home but there were still things he needed printed off and signed for his boss to see. It was such a waste of his time. Out there the Prince of Saiyans was walking free under a pseudo name and everyone around him none the wiser. How they could not tell his false smile and evil in his eyes was beyond the Detective.

As he waited for some reports to print he clicked to the internet. He checked around him but most of his co-workers had been doing the same for the past 2 hours. Tien instantly went to the FBI page and to the top most wanted list. Vegeta was still at the top. As Tien looked at those eyes again he was reminded of his suspect. They were the same shape only a different colour. It still sent a chill up his spine as he looked at the image. The site didn’t mention any reward just that they were looking for any information about the missing killer. A flashing advert popped up at the side. At first he ignored it but it mentioned Vegeta. He clicked on it and clenched as he saw another window opened up. He secretly hoped he hadn’t got into a viral site, his boss would have a field day with that.

The page loaded with a picture of Vegeta in his bite guard mask. Underneath the image it mentioned a reward for the smallest of information. This peaked Tien’s interest and he read on. His worry about the site he had wandered onto disappearing as he carried on reading about the need to capture him alive. Vegeta needed to be captured alive for any full compensation to be paid. They seemed quite focused on the one thing Tien truly cared about. That there would finally be justice served towards this beast of a man. Not like the FBI that had let them all down before.

The detective sat at his desk reading the details carefully and jotting down notes in his notebook. It seemed that Tien had finally found one real way to get out of this dead end place and finally enact the rightful vengeance against the murderer and cannibal. He would sell his alien ass for the highest bidder and not regret anything. The vengeance for his friend and all the hundreds Vegeta killed would be finally his to bring down upon him. His hatred for the killer was so deep that he was
unable to control his actions. He put the number into his top pocket and began to finish off his work. He would call this later tonight, his decision made in one instant swoop.

Vegeta would finally get what was coming to him and he would have the money to get out of the city and the high stress job.

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In a hotel in West city Bulma lay down in the soft bed waiting for her tears to come. If this was her 8 years ago it would have been a full tantrum and most of the FBI HQ would be in ruins. Now she could feel like she had become her nickname of the Ice Queen. She would keep her cool and not let them see her tear streaked face. This wouldn’t be a repeat of when her parents died or when Vegeta escaped. Last time the papers jumped on her connection to Vegeta and they were trying to do it again. She just couldn’t avoid the shadow of the alien. Though now she just felt like a husk of her former self. She was really becoming Ice in mood and character.

She looked at the table to the letter she had just received at the front desk. She wondered if it was Director Piccolo with some instructions. She couldn’t trust the phone lines as much as she wanted. If there was some form of corruption in her Bureau then she couldn’t rely in the usual way of communication. She ripped it open and sat up on her bed to read. Her hands started to shake with anger and her Ice that she thought she was becoming soon became her fire.

Dear Miss Briefs,

I will get straight to the point. I do not want to flatter you with any false sympathies or give you any critic for you actions. It is in my interests to simply give you this small hope of escape with your failing career. I have always need of staff. I have offered you many times a lucrative deal to participate in my data gathering of the Saiyan Prince. I know of how upright you have protected your government Agency. You have never been one to be bribed at all no matter how many zeros I added to my offer. You are truly an outstanding worker and very loyal. Though how has this loyalty been paid? I see nothing but disownment. Even a little stool pigeon gladly gave out your address to me to track you down. I sent an invitation to come to my house. I hope you will agree and bring anything that have that was something of Vegeta’s. I am an avid collector as I have such a unique past with that Beast of a Prince. Or will you finally tell me of your true relationship with him, I would pay as much as possible for you to be as explicit as possible. I could help you retire for life even if you did not work for me.

Think about it.

In your current situation, money will soon become an issue. You do not have your Daddy’s funds to save you now and your knowledge could be put to waste in some guard duty.

I remain, as ever fully expecting your reply,

Dr. Gero.

Bulma felt herself burning up as her anger took hold. ‘How dare he?’ The man had absolutely no taste. He had hounded her for information about Vegeta since her graduation. She had been glad this past year of the lack of letters and phone calls; she had hoped he had given up on her. He must have bought his way to getting her temporary address, the stool pigeon he mentioned could be anyone in the FBI. She had only been here one night. She checked the envelope again, it had no stamp. It had been hand delivered.

Bulma ripped the envelope in two with a determined action and threw it on the floor. She knew she
would have to pick it up and sent it into the office to be reported, but for now it could lay on the floor like the trash it was. She slumped onto the bed and threw her arms back. She felt like a prisoner in the hotel room. She couldn’t risk going outside now, even if she disguised herself. Gero knew she was staying here and her room number. If anything she should get herself moved but he wasn’t really a threat.

He had, despite his deep obsession with Vegeta, been non-violent with his actions. He was only on a low threat watch list on the FBI because of his information on the aliens but in his own way he helped the FBI were he could. Dr Gero was not someone she wanted to ever deal with. She hated his existence; he had survived Vegeta’s attack on his science base and somehow had drawn strength from it. He was barely alive and yet he had more drive and support for the FBI in the way he sent in sponsorship and technology. Bulma had no idea how far his influence went and was now starting to wonder about it. She would find out tomorrow when she planned to report his letter. For now she could only sit and watch the TV or slowly pamper herself with a long bath. She knew the wait for her story to cool down would be a long one. She had no plans to take up Gero and his request for her help. He never needed her help, he just wanted to amass more people under his control.

She still had her pride despite being suspended from the job she loved and with no clear escape. She felt her anger recede and the ice covered her heart again. She needed to think coolly about this and work out what she needed to do. If anything she needed to speak to Piccolo as soon as she could. Though that would still hold a problem since he was still away on a long mission. For now all she could do was keep under the radar and wait it all out. The frustration and helplessness she felt had a stinging familiarity. She was reminded of when she had been a teenager and had lost her family and fortune. This was something she had hoped she never would feel again.

She placed the letter on the desk and dumped a few other papers on top so she didn’t have to look at it. Though she knew it was there. It would be a long few weeks of this fate that had been thrown her way. Bulma didn’t want to believe in fate anymore, she wanted to be the one that took control. She sat some more on her bed and meditated to try to keep her cool. It was going to be a long couple of weeks for her. She could find her way through this even though it looked like she was now lost in a very dark tunnel and being carried away by the river of fate she kept telling herself she didn’t believe in.

‘We can survive this again.’ She thought to herself as she could feel the tears she’d been denying all morning coming back to the surface. This time she let them fall and she let herself weep. In the darkness in her mind she could hear a deep and shadowy voice as a memory replayed in her mind. The last time she had seen the Prince that now eclipsed everything she did.

*Vegeta was behind the bars and had looked straight at her with that unflinching glare and asked. "I want to know how you find it so frustrating, when you know something is wrong but you can't do anything about it."

"What do you mean?" Bulma questioned.

"I would kill to rid me of my frustration. You however seem to seek Justice by the more boring way.” Vegeta had said. "Isn't it twice as frustrating knowing something is wrong and you have no power to do anything about it?"

Bulma's lip had quivered as she gave her answer. "I live with it Vegeta, I live with the screams. How can you live with your screams by making more?"

"The noise drowns out if you make more." He had smirked showing his fangs.

She had meant it at the time, she just lived with it. Now as the tears slid down her face she began to
wonder. She began to think that even the manic babblings of a killer trying to get into her mind was making sense. That maybe now was the time to make some noise.

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Chapter End Notes

Author’s note: So we get more of Tien’s motive and the letter is revealed. No sign from Vegeta about contacting Bulma but that may be coming soon. (hint, hint.) Though we got a flashback from Vegeta as I copied what I wrote all the way back in chapter 11. Interesting it’s come back in 22. Total coincidence with the numbers.

Anyway, the story continues as we bring it all to a head and we get closer to a reunion if it may even happen. This story is now up to date with my ffnet and other net postings. I will update when the chapter is written. That may be another few months.

Next, someone needs to watch their back.
A Waiting Game

Chapter Summary

It's all a waiting game as Tien makes his move.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Dragonball Z, Silence of the Lambs and Hannibal. I do not make money from this story.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 23
The Waiting Game

Tien's paperwork was all finished and he wanted to hurry to return to his watch over Vegeta; but first he had to make an important phone call. He drove down a side street that was deep in snow. He knew of a phone booth out of reach of any cameras that was on the dimly lit street. As he parked his car he checked to see if anyone was going about, the street was clear and he got into the glass booth. His hands shook slightly as he dialled the number he had written down.

"Welcome to the information call centre, please state the contact you have with Vegeta. All calls will be recorded," The operator spoke in a slow automatic way. It was as if the person had said this millions of times over and over again.

"I found Vegeta. I know where he is right now and I have the proof." Tien said with conviction.

There was a pause and a small snort. "Please wait while we put you through to the correct contact."

He had to endure the light plinking tune as he was put on hold but he didn't have to wait long.

"I don't want any time wasters, tell me what you have!" A deep male voice suddenly snapped.

"I live in North City, I'm a police officer, and I believe I have found Vegeta." Tien replied.

"If you are the police why don't you go to the FBI?"

Tien grunted a laugh under his breath. "They didn't do the real justice I seek. They just kept him as a pampered pet that let him be able to escape, I want him dead in the most painful way possible. The money helps too."

"All payments of anything would be only done after a confirmation of the Saiyan Prince."

"What do you need?"

"Some proof of his DNA, you would have to get very close. Is he aware that you know his
identity?"

"I don't think so, I'm a detective I need to ask questions and there have been a few suspicious deaths around this man that is most likely Vegeta." Tien snarled. "It's my job to stick close to suspects in a murder case."

"Understand, you will need to be alive to receive the reward. It would be transferred to you by a Safety Deposit box." The man said over the phone. "The DNA needs to be deposited there as well. So we could arrange for it to a bank near your city."

"How long would this all take?" Tien said gruffly. "I want him caught; the longer we leave it the more likely he will run!"

"Do you think he could?"

"He's possibly committed two murders in his work place, possibly more in the city. We need him contained."

"Then get us a photograph first, we can make some quick arrangements if needs be." The man assured him. "We could not make any full payment until we got a DNA analysis. It would need to be not just a hair but a full follicle, or perhaps some salvia, there would also need to keep the sample clear of any cross contaminations."

"I may not be a scientist but I know my forensics." Tien said. He could see some problems occurring from this task. A photo could be possible. "I may be able to get his fingerprints. That might be more accessible."

"That may be an acceptable solution; with a photo and fingerprints we could wire a quarter of the reward and send the rest on the Prince's capture and full examination on his identity."

"I might be able to do that, we just need the bastard caught and given the justice he deserves."

"We can very much guarantee that our interests are fully shared Mr. Detective."

The conversation continued as Tien gave more details they needed and he received the ones he needed to know. Where to go and drop off his evidence and most importantly for him, where the money would be put once he had given them what they wanted; it was perfectly anonymous just as Tien hoped.

The North City snow continued to fall as the winter weather continued. A storm was coming soon; the full fury would set even more things in motion though Tien was completely unaware. All he could see was the vengeance he sought and he was blind to everything else. The symbolic weather was meaningless to him and the time for Vegeta's take down was coming.

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In West City the next day, Bulma answered her hotel door as a fellow agent made a visit. She handed over the note in silence with the ripped envelope. She only shrugged at the questioning, she was tired and weary. The long hours in a hotel room with nothing to do was wearing her down.

"Do you want to be moved Bulma?" Agent Magenta asked.

"What I really want is to go home." Bulma said.

"The Tabloid press are starting to lose interest in your story." The Agent said. "Just a few more
days."

"I just want to get home to my own bed and gym." Bulma sighed.

"At least two more days, keep it together." Magenta smiled, her smile was sort of frozen unflinching. It was a perfect camera pose photo; Bulma imagined she'd be the type that would always smile the same way in every photo.

"Thanks for taking the time to pick this up." Bulma said trying not to think too much about her inner bitchy comments. She had to keep her professionalism.

"We need to check the room for bugs as well," Magenta explained. "You may need to go down to the café while we scan the place. There are also some confidential reports you need to read and hand delivery seemed like the best way considering the circumstances."

Bulma picked up her laptop on instinct and smiled. "Sure, search away. I'll be where you suggested. I'm incredibly free at the moment."

"All the more to fill in your forms, you don't need your laptop do you?" Magenta asked pointing at the laptop bag she was packing.

"The information I need for the forms is in the laptop." Bulma quibbled back. She knew exactly what this 'search' was all about. She wasn't born yesterday.

"Here are your report forms," Magenta said. "You have a pen, I assume."

"Of course," Bulma said mildly irritated.

She didn't let the young woman talk to her anymore and just left, leaving the unimportant packed suitcases for them to 'search'. She was glad she had her gun taken away as Bulma had never felt the need to go on a rampage as badly as she did now. If she was a teenager all over again she would have whipped out some automatic from a capsule and let loose but she was an adult now and knew of the consequences. She was already feeling from her impulsive actions on the mission. She had gone over her actions so many times; wondering what would have happened if she had taken more self control.

Bulma took her time going down to the café. She had a few books on her laptop she could read. She doubted these forms would take her long to fill out. It just needed to copy all her previous statements. She was half tempted to just stand outside her room and see if any other people entered while the search continued. Bulma had every mind to move rooms once they were done just in case their search for bugs was to place some of their own.

'No, I just need to let them spy on me if that's the case.' Bulma thought. 'I need to be one step ahead. Someone in the Agency doesn't like me and wants me fired.' It was a depressing thought but it had been one that was hanging over Bulma since this happened. She doubted Tao had the smarts or the need to go this far. He enjoyed being passive aggressive at her at every turn. She really doubted it was him. She was never his favourite and he mocked her at every turn, but this was not his style.

She took a seat as she ordered her coffee and took her time as she thought things over. Her actions had been fine, really, she had acted on her instincts but it was within reason. The alien was a dangerous risk that needed to be taken down quickly before she released her spores. She had seen the secretors ready to release, she knew that any operation to remove her spores would have taken out those release points. She had meditated over the situation and had come to only one conclusion. It was a cover up of a huge proportion and one Bulma was overwhelmed with how much she had
been taken down. It would be just a waiting game while she hoped whoever was behind this would make a mistake. She just wondered if the injustice of it all could let her wait. Bulma was starting to grow impatient.

The latest newspaper fell down on Vegeta's desk, brought to him from the staff room from one of his subordinates. He made his thanks to the workman as he left and skimmed over the front page, Bulma wasn't there. He checked inside and his smirk appeared as he saw the familiar face. Bulma was now only third page news. It wasn't much of an article and more going over the previous day's news. The infant Bulma had shot was dead and having a government burial along with her mother who had died on the scene. If it was the species Vegeta expected them to be the bodies would need to be burned. The toxins of that species, especially from the females were potent.

Vegeta pulled out his scissors and cut out the article. It was another one for his collection. It was perhaps damning if found, but then he could always say he was a fan of her work. He smiled at that idea, he was also unsure himself why he continued to focus on the woman. She was the first one to ever speak to him as an equal, though she was far inferior to her. He was careful to put it away; he could feel a certain energy coming closer.

The small bug had become more of a mild irritation and was now almost a threat. A threat however would need to be dealt with and Vegeta felt that he had come to the end of his life in North City as comfortable as it currently was. He turned the page on his paper and didn't look up as the expect knock came.

"Come in." He said as the Detective entered.

"I've just got a few more questions Mr Hoang, hope you're not too busy."

"Shipments are all done for the day." Yasai Hoang said, his mask slipping on perfectly. "Ask away Detective…I forgot your name…?"

"It's Detective Tien Crane."

"Crane?" Hoang asked intrigued. "Is that your full name?"

"Yes, I usually go by Tien, please call me that or Detective." He said as he scanned Vegeta's face for any sign of nerves but he was completely relaxed.

"I see, Crane is not a name to be ashamed of." Vegeta smirked. "I heard it is quite an interesting martial art in the mountains near East City."

"That's where I'm from." Tien said sitting down and taking out his notebook. He was hoping to spot anything, a mug, a hair but the place was spotless. It was fine if he could keep up the innocent talk and keep "Yasai" no, he was Vegeta he was sure. There was no power level from him but then there shouldn't be any. He was neutered by years of imprisonment and was technically powerless but he would still have the abilities of a normal human. He looked into those strange blue eyes. They were cold and unsmiling unlike his face. They could so easily be contacts.

"I might move there at some point." Yasai said. "Nice weather, not like here I assume."

"Ah, yeah it's really hot in summer but not that cold in winter. Certainly no snow like here." Tien said.

"Got another storm coming soon." Yasai said. "So, what are your questions, Detective Tien Crane."
"I just needed to confirm when the last day that the previous foreman was seen."

"The Friday, as you know, it was his weekend of his big night out." Yasai laughed. "He bragged to everyone about it as he left. I wished him luck with his hussies and went to the mountains. I never saw him again."

"You never saw him in the mountains?"

"I don't go bear fighting, that would be suicide." Yasai smirked.

"You do know Shanks ended up in the mountains as well."

"As you've told me." Yasai said. "They never released any details of his body. I've only got what you've told me. Shanks was found in a bear, well part of him, in the mountains. I always wondered how you found the bear?"

"It was caught coming close to some campers and acting weird, it was running from something."

"Bears don't have many enemies."

"Neither do Cranes," Tien smiled. "Though I'm sure they find some."

"Is that all I can help you with Detective?" Yasai asked.

"More of an update on events Foreman Hoang." Tien said. "I wanted to ask some more about the atmosphere at the work place. I need to ask the men some more things."

"Four weeks ago I was one of those men." Yasai said. "All I can say about Foreman Shanks was that he treated everyone like a drinking partner rather than a subordinate."

"You look down on that style of leadership?"

"Never said I did, every one is their own unique little snowflake." Yasai grinned and Tien wondered if that comment was slightly sarcastic. It was hard to tell, he could almost feel like he was on a razor edge talking to him but Vegeta couldn't know that he was onto him.

"Well, I'll take my leave, I guess nothing has changed since last week but I need to build up my profile of Shanks."

"I'm sure my men will help you out in any way they can." Yasai said. "They still miss him, you might be dredging up some painful memories for them."

"I'll be as cautious as I can." Tien said offering out his hand. Yasai looked at it for a second like it was an alien concept then brought his hand into Tien's for a firm shake. It jerked back as his hidden blade did its work.

"Son of a… what cut me?" Yasai said holding up his hand, there was a small trickle of blood.

"Oh, no, my bracelet has broken, sorry Sir." Tien said as he scrambled and pulled off his bracelet placing it in his pocket. "I hope it's okay, got some band aids I hope."

"That I do…" Yasai grumbled, he watched exactly which pocket the bracelet was put into. He turned his back to get his First Aid kit from the box in the wall. He could hear a clink of something as Tien pocketed something from his desk. Vegeta understood what the Police Detective was doing but decided to play dumb, he had his guard down as much as he suspected who Vegeta was. He was still under some illusion that he had the upper hand. It was a better hand to play this way. Vegeta just
had to maintain the act for as long as he could.

"Did you cut yourself as well?" Yasai asked as he fumbled with the box on his desk.

"I'm fine, I'll get this thing fixed. It was given to me by my Girlfriend; she'll never forgive me that I got it damaged." Tien said shyly.

"Just be sure not to lose it." Vegeta said. "Women tend to notice these things."

"You mentioned before you had a woman back home waiting for you?"

"It's unfortunately at one of those off again moments." Yasai said. "We can never make that commitment."

"I understand." Tien said. "I'm almost in the same state with my own girl. Listen, thanks for all your help Mr Hoang, I might call back again if I need anything else."

"Good luck with your investigations." Yasai said. "I'd show you out but I have a few invoices to go through."

"Again, thanks for your time Mr Hoang, till next time." Tien said moving quickly to the door.

Vegeta remained sitting as the door closed his head down. As the footsteps echoed away on the metal walkway, he stood up and looked out of the window. He leaned back at an angle so he wasn't apparent but as he thought Tien placed something in a bag in his car before leaving. He had no questions to ask his men at all.

'There may have been your last chance I gave you little Crane.' Vegeta thought as he saw him speeding away. 'That was really sloppy of me, little mistakes like that are what got me caught the first time.'

Vegeta glanced around his desk, a pen was missing, nothing else, but the blood from his wrist was still bleeding. He slowly licked the small wound. That was not from a broken bracelet but from an obvious blade attached to the bracelet. Vegeta knew he was such a low level now that blades could cut him easily, especially when he was off guard. He had let his guard down around that detective once too often and now the price was being paid.

Vegeta couldn't be certain who Tien was working for, he could guess. If he was being a true police detective he would have got a warrant and made a huge fuss with arresting him or even worse the FBI would have been brought in and he was sure to be captured. This had not happened and the Detective was using such underhanded ways to get any data that could link him to his real identity. He was not doing this by the books and that would work fine for Vegeta.

"Hey, Ben." Yasai said over the intercom. "I'm going home early you're in charge."

"Alright then Boss, have a good weekend."

"You too Ben, see you on Monday."

Vegeta switched out of the nice guy mode and continued to watch the car of the Detective drive away. He had a new prey to hunt. Detective Tien may have the upper hand now but the Prince had no intention on letting that last.
Author's Note: Well, looks like Tien has dealt his cards and is planning to get Vegeta captured by some bounty hunters. Though will Vegeta stop him in time? What could Vegeta possibly do to someone like Tien who is probably more powerful than him now?

All shall become a little clearer and Bulma might get a break… maybe.
The Wolves are Circling

Chapter Summary

Tien feels like he's finally caught a break but he's living on borrowed time.

Meanwhile Bulma receives an unwanted package, though it might give her a chance to get out of her mess.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

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Chapter 24

The Wolves are Circling

North City at night was always alone, cold and dark. Especially in the winter when the snow was deep and random animals could wander the streets looking for food. People knew to stay inside at night, only the foolish wandered the streets at night for no reason.

Tien though was no fool and stepped through the streets in a deliberate fashion he was almost there. He had it! He somehow managed to do it! His heart was almost leaping out of his chest. He was just moments from his home. First thing tomorrow he would go to the bank and access the safety deposit box. The key had been mysteriously delivered that morning and Tien had come with the plan that day. He was amazed it had worked and he could feel the adrenaline rushing through him at the thought of all that money. He could finally get out of this frozen hell hole.

At the door he rummaged in his pockets for his keys. He jumped back as some snow crumbled down from the roof as he tried to open his door. He was partially thankful it wasn’t an icicle. ‘I just have to get out of this barren place, once and for all.’

As he walked in he was mildly surprised to see the light on in his house. “Hello?”

There was no answer and Tien stepped carefully towards the kitchen where the light shone. “Hello?”

He repeated.

Without any answer and an obvious clatter of plates Tien unlocked his gun. He wished he had one of those ki negating guns but without it he would have to rely on his strength if it came down to it. The rummaging noise continued as he came closer. He didn’t want to make a scene, if it was Him, he had to be careful.

He kicked open the door and pointed his gun. He heard a scream and saw a foot flying towards his face. His girlfriend leaned over him her headphones still blaring. Her blue eyes staring down at him as if he was the devil.

“What the HELL Tien, you almost killed me!” She snapped.

“Sorry Launch.” Tien mumbled. “If it makes you feel any better you almost killed me too.”
“It does not!” Launch snarled and took off her headphones. “Why was I listening to this anyway?”

Tien sighed. He had blown it again. Lately his girlfriend had always been in her blond persona. She had a split personality which had got her disqualified from the FBI. She took her foot off his head and he was able to sit up and looked across to her. He didn’t want to start a fight, not now. They were so close to making the change to something good.

“Why didn’t you answer when I called?”

“I was listening to this drivel… Hold on, need to change it.” Launch mumbled and fiddled with her player.

“Well, I have some news.” He said, trying not to think about how he had just missed his chance to see the dark haired Launch. They always listened to different music, one sign that the other personality had been in control. If he had just walked into the kitchen like normal and not scared her into a change he may have found a sweeter person.

“You got a promotion.” Launch scoffed as she didn't really believe it. She didn’t look at him but started tidying up the cooking items her other persona had been preparing and replacing them with a large bottle of alcohol.

“Almost, I have a break in the case and I’m getting a large bonus.” Tien said. “We can move away, I’ll get a transfer, you can do whatever you want.”

“I have my favourite bar...” Launch said idly, “But if you have the cash, let’s sell this place and get a camper van, we can go drive around the country, somewhere a lot warmer. We could have a road trip adventure!”

“Your idea of a road trip involves robbing and blackmailing, I thought you quit that lifestyle.” Tien said.

“I never said anything about robbing, I got over that.” Launch said. “I was an FBI Agent you know, I was part of the system that kicked me out as I didn’t fit their ideal little picture! You too, you didn’t even make it in, though it didn’t stop you trying!”

“How they accepted you I’ll never know.” Tien moaned, he wanted to ask her about the blackmailing part which she hadn’t denied. He was tired and the adrenaline was wearing off, he really didn’t want to fight with her over the small details. “Pass me a glass, I’m joining you.”

“You don’t drink!”

“I do now!” Tien said. “We’re going to get a chance to escape this place and we’ll do it together, let’s drink to it!”

“Look, last time you drank you went on and on about your friend Chiaotzu!” Launch growled. She still passed him the glass and one for herself and poured a large helping.

“You’re all I got now girl, we’re going to make it!” Tien said. “No more thinking about the past and sorrow, we’ll make a new future!”

“Oh heck yeah, I’ll drink to that!” Launch said kissing him on the cheek. “Sorry I’ve been so snappy lately, I do love you really.”

“Well you didn’t try to shoot me.” Tien laughed as he sipped his glass. “I think you’re really improving.”
“Makes a change you trying to shoot me, huh?” Launch cackled. She downed her drink and gave him another kiss on his bald head. “I don’t mean it, I just get carried away.”

“I get that.” Tien said. “Glad you’re in a good mood for my news, shall we toast to getting out of this ice box?”

“Cheers!” Launch laughed topping up her glass again. “Central City might be good or how about the island south of South City… whatzitsname…”

“Very accurate, yeah,” Tien laughed back, his tension was easing. He wondered slowly as the alcohol took hold why he was so worried. He got away with it. Vegeta was none the wiser and he was just a few steps away from getting him captured and to have all the riches he could hope for. He partially hoped that a brighter environment might help his girlfriend and they can finally settle down and marry. No more fighting, no more war.

“I can maybe have my friend over,” Launch smiled. “You hold such grudges.”

“Maybe, we’ll talk about that later, let me first get my bonus first.” Tien said.

“Let’s go watch a movie and snuggle under the blanket.” Launch said hugging onto him. “The heater’s been broken since this morning. I’ve been really cold.” She seemed to be in a really great mood now. Tien grabbed his girl and led her through. For the first time in months they actually seemed like a couple. He knew it would all be worth it. The money, the love of his woman and the destruction of Vegeta.

As the couple sat in the safety of their home a dark shadow passed in the window. It was unseen and observing them, it had been observing them for some time, Tien watched his movie in peace, unaware as there was no power spike to alert his skilled senses. He drank through the night talking to his lover; certain of his victory and it made it all the sweeter with the knowledge that his vengeance against Vegeta would be complete.

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It had been three days since Bulma had been sent away from her home. The taxi ride back there was silent as she refused to give the driver any answers but one word comments. He didn’t seem to notice who she was or was under orders not to ask. He had been sent by the company, this time the limo had been downgraded to a taxi. For Bulma it was a sign that she had no power over what was happening. The car pulled up to her house and she looked at the familiar scene.

“We’re here Miss Briefs.” The driver said. “No need to pay, the company will pay.”

“I thought as much.” Bulma said and gave her small thanks as she left the cab. The typical curtain twitching could be seen from her neighbours and Bulma tried to keep her eyes forward. She dreaded how much of the Neighbourhood watch and major gossips would be talking about her face being all over the papers; but her few days away in a hotel had helped calm her down. She wasn’t a walking bomb of hissing anger and fury about the injustice. Now it was simmering just below her ice wall and was under control. She was the Ice Queen again.

She kept her head up high and carried her bags inside her house. A pile of papers were on her side table at the door. The FBI had been here, she looked at one that seemed to have been unsealed and stuck back together. It didn’t look any different unless you knew what you were looking for. There was also a pile of calling cards from lawyers, press agents and a host of strange people. As Bulma sorted through the pile and put any cards in the “trash” pile, bills in the “later” and one for the “Urgent” pile. There was only one, a ticket from a missed delivery.
It had been left at a neighbour’s house, Mr Green. He was an old grump and would most likely grudge having to do her any favours. She pulled her suitcase into the room and dumped it down. The living room seemed to be untouched but Bulma couldn’t trust it. The mail being moved instead of in a pile on the floor was a bad sign. She had slept badly since Agent Magenta had come by to her hotel room to give her items a “check”, it was an obvious search and as an Agent on probation she didn’t have much say against it.

Bulma opened up a kitchen window and drew the blind down. The whole room was stuffy from not being lived in for a while. She wondered for a second if there were any listening devices in the house. It didn’t seem too disturbed apart from the mail.

‘I really am getting too paranoid.’ Bulma thought to herself and she switched on the radio to distract herself. She started cleaning up the stuffy house, that while still immaculate as she had left it, there was still a bit of dust around and she convinced herself she wasn’t for looking for any disturbances in that dust.

She had been cleaning for about 20 minutes when there was an angry thump at the door. Bulma switched off the vacuum and braced herself. She could guess who it could be.

“Good afternoon, Mr Green.” She said as she saw the short man glaring directly at her. His wispy hair was unkempt and his large hooked nose made him look like a brother of a wicked witch.

“Nothing good about it, here, your package.” Mr Green snapped. “I had to get up during one of my favourite shows.”

“I’m sorry for the inconvenience.” Bulma found the best way to deal with this guy was not to argue. He lived alone and found any excuse to shout at people for the smallest things. He was mostly harmless, really.

“Well, it’s not like I get paid to be your servant Miss Briefs.” Green snapped. “Seemed you got yourself into a lot of trouble.”

‘Oh, so you’re fishing for gossip?’ Bulma kept her cool and tried to not look as angry as she was becoming. ‘It’s a lot of trouble, but nothing that can’t be sorted out. You shouldn’t believe what they write in the papers.”

“I’ve been reading the papers for 50 years and I always take it as a load of crap.” Green spat. “You keep your head up sunshine; you were just doing your job.”

“Thanks.” Bulma said. “Um, … do you want any money for taking care of my package.”

“None, I don’t take bribes.”

‘That wasn’t a bribe.’ Bulma retorted back in her head.

“Just be sure to take out your garbage, it’s starting to smell and you missed the delivery day!” Green snarled. “Almost took it out myself, but old Bob said just to leave it!”

“I’ll be sure to do that tomorrow morning.” Bulma said still wondering who Bob was and what to say or do as thank you. She let him walk away as she examined the package, it had been unopened and there were none of the usual marks to show it had been tampered with. She took it inside while reading the address and sender. It had been delivered to a few different places first and warning lights started flashing in Bulma’s mind. It had some familiar writing on it that made her gut clench.
She took out a camera and her kitchen knife and snapped a photo. She needed evidence before she opened this if it was from who she thought it was. A minute of slowly cutting the tape and seals and the contents were revealed. A light yellow envelope with “To Bulma”, written on it, caught her attention first. She took another picture, she could feel the heart in her chest going crazy. This was not the writing like the previous letter. It was scrawled in black ink like the front of the box. She needed evidence of her innocence in this unboxing and the photos she hoped would show the state of the box as she found it. She should be phoning a bomb squad or at least the FBI forensics. Though this time she wanted to see it all first before they came in and took it away.

Her hand slightly trembled as she took up the letter with a handkerchief. ‘I need gloves…’ She thought carefully. She really wanted to read it, it would probably infuriate her but it was the exact type of distraction she needed. Three days locked up in a hotel room had made her long for some action. She scrambled among her room as she tried to find any gloves that could keep her fingerprints from contaminating the box. After a short time she came back with some light latex gloves from her work bag.

This wouldn’t look very good with any of the higher ups. She knew this wasn’t the correct procedure but she was suspended. Technically she wasn’t obliged anything to the FBI. This is what she told herself as she cut open the letter with her knife. Her own mild anger at her current conditions blinded her from her usual common sense.

The letter had the same writing as the others and she held it up to read. She subconsciously held her breath as she began,

To Bulma,

I have read some interesting things about your current circumstance. Little FBI agent I have mildly followed your career in this veiled news that your common people still eat up. They have even changed my birth place as not from outer space but from some strange country I’ve never heard of. It is interesting that the sheep of you planet all willingly believe these lies. Even the lies that I read about your killing of that alien female. I know that race well; their spores are quite deadly when inhaled. You of course would have known that too and killed the Filth before she made her underhanded attack. The infant will not be missed, the male of the species can be surprisingly strong and fast. We called them Brench-Seijin.

Your defeat of that Brench scum was necessary for your own survival. Do not more the infant, the race were almost wiped out by my previous leader. You will not encounter them much, they are better off to be left to rot. Your own life must be preserved after all. You are a survivor, like me. I have sent you something to help your need for revenge.

Do not come to look for me. I have no quarrel with you, life is much better with you in it. The trash papers seem to continue to remember our mild contact together. It was a fond memory for me as your interference was the catalyst for my own escape. I am enjoying my life outside though you have no wish to hear this news. I have thought of you when I see the sky; it is as deep as your hair. Though I long to return to space, you should wish that we never meet again as I will kill you if you get in my way. Take these presents and use them for your amusement. It should become useful in the future as your current career becomes so uncertain and the Earth continues to be overwhelmed by these coming refugees. It is only a matter of time before we are all found by something much worse than me. Though maybe we will get away with it and fade into oblivion without seeing that fate.

As ever, I am the Prince of All Saiyans, bound by no-one but my own. The last of my kind, forever in your debt,

I remain,
**Prince Vegeta.**

**PS. I couldn’t resist and added some drawings for old time sake.**

Bulma let the paper drop, all her instinct of the contents were proven to be right. She read the letter again. It was unbelievable that the Saiyan would still think of her after three years. She wondered how this could be twisted by her superiors into her being in collusion with the number one enemy of the FBI. He had never made any contact with her ever since her graduation. She had lived free of any fear that he would ever come for her. That he would be captured eventually as he was powerless, but not by her. The Prince however had eluded them all, he hadn’t been found for all this time and many suspected he may have found a way off Earth. Now it was clear he was still here, he was still a threat and he still thought of her as something he owed a debt to.

She peered into the rest of the box, two daggers glinted in the light. There were also some new shoes wrapped up in tissue. The bottom contained the drawing Vegeta had mentioned. She pulled up one and shuddered. It was a blue winged Valkyrie raising her spear high in a battle charge, the corpses of children and women under her feet. Their faces were all distorted and similar to Biscotti, some eyes were blank but some seemed to stare directly at the viewer. She felt her gut wretch as she felt tears come over her for the first time. She felt the weight of what all the consequences she had to bear. She could fight her war but it seemed that she had to destroy all that stood in her way.

“Damn him!” Bulma snapped and threw the box across the room spilling the contents. She couldn’t understand how Vegeta knew exactly what to do to bring out this feeling in her. She sighed out in anger as she reached for the phone, her cool completely broken from reading one letter and looking at one drawing. She tried to hiss out her anger as she finally did her duty and call her work. She looked down at the knocked down box and the scattered contents. It was a shame she could never use those, the shoes looked comfortable and made from good leather. The daggers also seemed like they would be useful as he said but they would all be taken away as they should. These gifts were not wanted and should never be accepted from such a monster as Vegeta.

“I hope you’re caught soon Vegeta, you cocky son of a bitch!” Bulma spat wiping the angry tears from her face. She regained her cool and dialled up the FBI. She wasn’t going to take this pity gift from such an alien. If anything this may give her a way out of her situation and something she can use to her own advantage.

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In the frozen North City a dark figure moved away from a dimly lit apartment window. It was Vegeta, his new prey had now been selected and seemed to be making their own plans. He could kill him tonight as he drunkenly slept but that would be playing his hand too soon. He needed to find out if everything about him had been exposed to the Police or even worse the FBI. He somehow doubted it as they would have been coming for him now. There was one other option and it would be a lot harder to escape. Detective Tien would need to live for a bit longer but it wouldn’t be long.

‘No long at all…’ He mused and he gave a mild thought to the package he had sent out a week ago to his supposed “Princess”. She should have received it by now and would be throwing a fit of anger, the anger she tried so hard all the time to keep under control. For him it was an amusing weakness that was unfortunately too similar to his own for him to get any real enjoyment from. He leapt onto a nearby roof and made his way back home as the storm continued. His own anger was beginning to boil over again and he was needed to make a release of it soon. All he needed was to make the correct preparations as it was going to be a glorious finale to his time in North City.
Author’s Note: Well the expected letter from Vegeta came! So did a whole lot of mess that needs cleaned up. Bulma is back home and finally feeling like she can maybe do something. Though how or if Tien is going to escape from Vegeta or if he and Launch are going to die will need to wait for the next chapter. This chapter was longer than normal as I really wanted to work on Tien’s character and the reveal of Launch being with him. That if anyone knows their DBZ aren’t surprised I’m sure.

Again, if there are any errors, spelling or weird grammar let me know.

Things will be coming to a head with Tien next chapter, it may take some time before the next update but I’ll get there.
The Price of Greed

Chapter Summary

There's not much action from Bulma or Vegeta here but a lot of plot devices are set in motion.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Dragonball Z, Silence of the Lambs and Hannibal. I do not make money from this story

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 25

The Price of Greed

Morning in North City and for once it wasn't snowing. Tien had made his way from his car and checked his back. He had a great night with Launch and had slept really well. He had woken however by a nightmare of being stabbed from behind. He shuddered from the memory and tried to focus on his task at hand. It was simple; all he had to do was to go into the bank with the safety deposit key he had received in the mail and place the evidence. If it was accepted, then he and Launch would be rich and set for life. He knew his girl wasn't the most honest of people but part of her was. If she knew what he was doing, who it involved, she wouldn't be as happy about it as she was this morning. Her split personality was part of what made dating her exciting but he knew both sides of her would not like to be lied to.

It was only a white lie, he told himself. It was something that all couples did at some point in their relationship. He vowed it would be the only thing he would ever lie about and would never let it spiral out of control. Maybe, once it was all over he could come clean, face her wrath for a few years and let all the money buy back her love. That darker side of Launch loved money, she would easily be bought back and her softer side would forgive him eventually. It was what he had convinced himself as he walked towards the grey building of the bank.

The bank was opening for business, Tien would be obviously late for work but this was far more important. If it all came together then he would be able to quit his job and go be a private eye somewhere in a south island. They could live their lives out in the sun rather than this constant snow.

He came out his inner thoughts to check his surroundings. The light was still quite dull, the North City winter was always this harsh. The street lamps were starting to flicker off though and he could see the usual amount of people going to work. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary apart from himself. He knew his bulky coat and beany hat didn't match the smarter people going into the bank with him at the same time.

The bank clerk he spoke to lead him through the back to his box number and stood and the door waiting for him. Tien looked around, he was alone and only the camera above him seemed to be
watching. The box though was in a blind spot and no cameras seemed to be focused on this box. It had been chosen for a good reason. He slipped his plastic bags of evidence out of his coat pocket and placed them in the small safe. He clicked it locked and returned to the clerk. It was all done in moments. His heart was thumping loudly and he was a little breathless. He hadn't felt this exhilarating since he had been training with his master and his best friend.

They used to be painful memories but his heart through the chaos felt glad, he had made his revenge the only way he knew how to. He was never going to be as strong as Vegeta and a direct fight was useless against him. He had no idea how much power he had gained back from his imprisonment. He didn't need to risk it. He didn't have to confront him in a fight, he could get him taken away to have God knows what done to him; and get money in the process. The usual empty feeling of revenge could be sated with the gift of gold. He didn't have Chaotzu anymore but he had the love of Launch, she could help him forget.

He made his way into the main hall of the bank. He let his old half forgotten fighter skills take over and he scanned the crowd for any power levels. They were all normal humans from what he could tell; businessmen and women in suits and huge warm coats, only a tall lumberjack standing in line appeared to have some strength about him but none like his own. There was no-one hanging around or being suspicious. It all seemed perfectly normal, now all he had to do was go to work and act as he usually did. He would need to close the case on the bear mauling case and try to erase his involvement with Vegeta. The alien scum would be getting a very nasty surprise soon enough and Tien could rest easy at night knowing that the evil killer faced rightful justice. He smiled as he left the bank; everything was finally working his way.

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A phone ran in an old mansion and a tall dark man picked it up.

"Gero Residence, Black speaking."

"The delivery has been made, Mr Black."

"Excellent work, how was the bank, was our little pigeon followed?"

"Pigeon?"

"I mean the police detective…Tien." Black sighed. "Was he followed out of or into the bank?"

"He left the bank alone and entered alone."

"How are the samples?"

"There are two pieces, one had a blood sample I could use the tester you gave me. The blood sample has given a positive result. The blood is Saiyan."

"We'll need more tests to check the identity but I think we can assume we've hit the jackpot." Black smiled. "Let the reward be deposited and return with the evidence."

"I understand, Sir."

"Dr. Gero will be pleased with your results Android 8 and will not be placing you in any of his test areas for the foreseeable future, finish the mission and return as soon as you can."

"Sir."
The phone call ended with a click, sort and to the point. The Android was a failure product but it always did as it was programmed; only it would never kill. It was defected but wonderful for doing such minor tasks. There had been a few times when anyone claimed they had found Vegeta it was useful to just send Android 8 to scout it out and report back. He looked almost human in a suit and with some basic training on spying he made an excellent Scout. There had been so many failures and false reports over the years, Vegeta's bounty was a tempting lure for con artists. This time it had actually had some positive results.

Mr Black felt confident as he went up the stairs to the bedroom of his master. He would soon be closer to reaching their goals. They had to move fast though before their prey had any chance to escape. He could see Dr Gero agitating in his bed as the nurse tried to get the skinless man to sit down. His rasps and gnashing of his teeth intensified as a smiling Mr Black entered.

"Se Ne-s!"

"He's trying to ask, what's the news?" Marron translated. "He's been like this all day. His lips aren't working so well and we tried to get him to use the machine but he…." Black held her hand and gave it a rub which stopped her frantic explanations. There were days when Gero was not well mentally and physically but he was too stubborn to rest or take any of the medical advice. He'd seen it too many times before.

"I understand." He said. "We have news and it's good. So far, the test has been positive. It looks like we've found him."

"Ge' im, ssen' the houn'ss"

"We sent out the hounds Sir." Mr Black said. "But not immediately, Vegeta will be caught. I shall make all the arrangements. More tests will be done but we'll send in the second scouting team to confirm what condition the Prince is in."

"I wanss… 'im aliee…"

"You want him alive, we all want to see that alien bastard to suffer for what he did to us, please rest and leave it all to us," Black repeated the words he knew Gero was trying to say. It seemed to calm him but the sharp glare from his eyes continued.

Dr. Gero though finally settled down and closed his eyes, his raspy voice sounding slightly content and across his burned ripped skin a horrendous smile broke out and he began to chuckle.

Mr Black left one last glance to the Nurse who seemed thankful; she had her hands full and made no further attempts at talking to him. She returned to her work of placing cooling palms on the burnt skin of Dr Gero and tried to keep him from cackling too much. The sound of his frantic gasping cackle echoed through the large mansion as Black made the frantic preparations. Vegeta was so close to their grasp, they had to get him this time. Revenge was all that the Gero Corporation was made for, no longer a Red Ribbon Army but re-imagined for the world and for trying to get to the Prince. This was finally their chance! The Hounds would be sent and their prey would be caught. He would finally pay for everything he had done!

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The Police Station of North City was quiet as usual. Many officers had become compliant to the desk job style that kept them in the warmth and out of the cold mountain winds. Not many men did patrols unless they had to. Local people seemed to freely come in to talk to the officers about little details of what happened in the day or if there was anything they needed to investigate. It was freer than any
other city Station mostly because it was so quiet.

In amongst all the noise of the local chatting, Tien finished his report on the computer. The Bear attack case was officially closed and seen as a mountain accident that coincidentally happened to two people from the same company. If anyone were to ask about it in years to come he would be far away and miles from being connected. They would be coming for Vegeta soon. He had been sent a small note in his office mail that had a hidden message.

Dear Detective Tien,

Thank you for connecting us back with our long lost father. We shall soon reunite with him before he disappears again. I wish I could give you a reward but we are grateful for it all. Expect to receive a cake very soon as our thanks..

Timmy and Jenny.

HDMS

That was all he needed to read to know his deposit was going to be delivered soon. His cake was on its way and the "father" would be taken away to receive his own reward. He could wash his hands clean and start anew. He got up from his desk and made his way round the office saying his goodbyes.

Tien didn't think he could wait anymore. He had to go check the box. The codeword at the end, he had been told to have half delivered and the rest would arrive soon. He needed to check. The good thing about being a detective was that he could step out of the office any time and it wouldn't seem suspicious. He'd been out of the office most of last week on Vegeta watch and he was almost caught up with his paper work. He didn't want to really continue without the real assurance that the money was in the bank. He could take it home for Launch so she could start with the preparations. She wanted a camper van to tour the world; he could give her the money for it today. They needed to be out of here as soon as possible. The hunters would be coming soon for Vegeta and it could start another Saiyan purge or the fight could level the whole city. They needed to get out and to a safe distance, far away from Vegeta and any danger.

He made his way through the office passing his co-workers and acting as if he was going out for another part of his job. He gave a quick glance to his Chief who was sitting in her room busy on the computer. She would be the only one that could stop him now and he made his way out without her noticing. The drive to the bank in the dimming light was good. He put on the radio and hummed along. It was some cheesy Country rock song that he usually would change instantly. He let it play and he drove along to the bank. He parked his car and went in. The bank was quiet as usual, most of the business being done in the morning. He made sure he got a different staff member and was escorted to the security boxes.

He made his way to the box and opened it up. The vile and plastic bag was gone and in its place was a briefcase. He opened it up his back hunched over so the staff couldn't see and he was please to see a large sum of money. He checked underneath, it was all notes, it was all for him. This was only half of what was promised! He really couldn't wait till they sent the rest but he wondered if he could have a chance to come back. A scrap paper on top said, 'The other half is due in a few weeks after DNA testing.' He shoved the note in his pocket and closed the case. It was everything he could have wished for. He put his handcuffs on the case and around his wrist. The case wasn't going anywhere, not without him knowing about it.

He made his way out of the small room and checked the bank visitors. There were hardly anyone there, the staff seemed bored and were looking at the clock waiting for closing time. There was no-
one watching him. They were all busy in their own worlds. He said his goodbye to the clerk who had helped him and made his way out.

Tien got into his car, he felt inside his coat where the security box key was. He would need it again soon. He didn't know if he could wait that long. Once he got all the money he and Launch could make plans for their future and he could hand in his notice. He could say goodbye to the mountain frozen town that held him prisoner for years and finally see a hot sun again. He may even go back to training and finding some inner peace.

He started the engine and switched on the heater. It always took a few minutes to get over the steam inside the car. He leaned his head back and slowly wondered why the car was steamy before he got in.

A sharp pain erupted in his neck and his eyes swivelled round. Someone was in the back of his seat!

"Shh, it'll all be better soon little crane." Vegeta whispered in his ear. "What you're experiencing is shock as your body is taken over by the sedative I've just injected you with directly into your spinal column."

Tien tried to pull at the hand and needle in his neck but his world was starting to spin and he found no strength as he pawed against the hand. His body was tingling all over as if he'd been sitting the wrong way and he could hardly move his arm.

"It's quite quick acting you'll find." Vegeta said. "Look at your eyes so full of questions, you thought you were clear? Home free as you Earthlings say? That I could let you walk into my office and take away my blood and skin and I wouldn't notice? I've been following you ever since Detective… you every move, your every act of love. Your perfect little wife and happy job of working at a desk all day. Your little sing-song in the car, I don't think you should ever sing again. You have such a boring life no wonder you want the money from the bounty…"

He couldn't answer. Tien's tongue had become so swollen in his mouth he was finding it hard to breath and he gagged as Vegeta forced open his mouth. He was still talking to him as he put him in the passenger seat. He couldn't hear, he couldn't see. Hands moved over his body as he was safely buckled into the seat. The feeling too was becoming numb and he could only focus on his breath. He had to stay alive, he could fight Vegeta. He had to now! This wasn't about honouring his dead companion anymore it was about his need to survive.

'I'm going to kill you!' Those vengeful thoughts pounded through his spinning head and what light he could see finally became pitch black.

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Bulma was unexpectedly shaken by the delivery from Vegeta. She didn't expect to get any of the items back from the FBI by reporting it but she didn't want them. She had thought of the monster on occasion or she had a nightmare that involved her going to that asylum again. This time he was filling her thoughts. She was alone with no work and the idea that a minor experience could shake her so much was disturbing to her. She didn't like Vegeta, she hated him. He was the reason her whole world had changed, his very existence had made it so she would be an orphan at 15 and without a home to go to. He was part of the reason she had entered the FBI to ensure her situation wouldn't be repeated again.

She was shaken from her thoughts as the doorbell rang. She knew it would be the FBI, she opened the door in confidence and tried to freeze her smile as she saw Agent Viola.
This was the agent that had scolded her at the site because of the baby. The woman's cool blue eyes looked at her with less judgement than on that day.

"I was asked by Director Assistant Piccolo to come and back you up." She said.

The name of Piccolo sent Bulma into a small pang of safety, she wanted to trust this woman. "I have the box all wrapped up."

Bulma welcomed her in but tried to keep up her guard. She couldn't trust her completely; the warning that something wasn't quite right within the FBI was still in the back of her mind. Agent Viola came into her house, she seemed to be waiting for invites to enter, her body language was much better than the last time she had seen her. The small alien baby that died because of her had been in her arms, she had been the agent that took the injured to the ambulance. Her previous irritation at Bulma's coldness towards the death of the babe still vibrated in Bulma's mind. She felt like she should feel ashamed, as if Viola was the real caring agent she wanted to be when she was 17.

"This is all?" Agent Viola asked as she took out some plastic gloves and bags and started sorting out the contents of the parcel.

"I may have contaminated it; I didn't know it was from Him until I fully unpacked it." Bulma tried to explain.

"It's fine, it's been 3 years after all. You couldn't have expected it, I think no-one did." Viola said her voice soft. "We have Vegeta's other taunts sent to other places. This seems very similar. The post marks, everything matches up to what we've seen before."

"He's sent other things?"

"I mainly work in the Most Wanted Department." Viola explained. "I've seen all of Vegeta's notes that he's sent, there's never a single address and they'll all be fake. This is the first time he's sent one to a house."

"Well, the Press did think it was a good idea to publish my address." Bulma sighed. "I really like this neighbourhood, looks like I'll have to move."

"Do you think he'll come after you?" Viola asked.

"No, it's more about the Vegeta Hate Squad, or some random crazy… I'm a sitting target here for those people." Bulma sighed again. "Vegeta would never come here, it's not his style."

"You sure you're not his Princess?" Viola gave her a sly smile to see her reaction. Bulma just looked back in horror. "Sorry, bad joke." Viola quickly apologised.

"It's fine…" Bulma said in a dull voice. "I've heard it a lot before… I'm used to it." She wished she wasn't used to it though and really wanted to kill the rumour.

"I have a message from Assistant Director Piccolo," Viola said changing the subject as she saw how uncomfortable Bulma had become. "He said, 'I'll be back tomorrow', I'd expect a phone call."

"Thanks, I hope this stuff gives you some clues to work on." Bulma said.

"I'm amazed you haven't been sent to my department yet, you could lend us so much insight since you've actually MET him." Viola said shaking her hand. "I apologise for what I said at the Fishing Market with that baby. You did what you had to."
"I could have done things differently." Bulma admitted. "The damage is done, but thank you."

"I'll just try to finish this packing up and see myself out." Viola said.

Bulma sat down flicking through the TV unsure what she could do to distract herself from her thoughts. This was not something she needed to think about. If she let Vegeta invade her mind she would be back to when she was a trainee and feeling helpless against him. She was helpless now but all for different reasons and Vegeta being out there and how he knew her address was something she wanted to quickly forget. She could see a small way out but she had no idea how a real opportunity was about to arise.

Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: Well, there is the inevitable for everyone! Sorry Tien! He's in a lot of trouble now! I may be spoiling things by saying it won't turn out well but I think that is a given. I have a huge back story to this Alternative Universe but that will be slowly be revealed. The Space Station being one of those parts and you'll find out more soon.

Real life again raised its ugly head so that's why there was such a delay. I tried to make up for it by packing in as much as I could in this chapter. So that's why I wanted to get a bit from Bulma in at the end. More to be revealed soon enough as things are about to kick off!
Flight of the Crane

Chapter Summary

The fate of Tien hangs by a small rope.

While Bulma gets out of her current bad situation and into one that's even worse.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Dragonball Z, Silence of the Lambs and Hannibal. I do not make money from this story.

Warning: Gore

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 26

Flight of the Crane

Gero Industries is the world's number one electronic company. It is what made Gero all his money, most of which he invested into the hunt for Vegeta. His passion for machines and war bots were made into ones specially meant for what he wanted. Mr Black watched the monitors as he did as he was ordered. The hounds that Gero wanted released were in every way hounds, but 100% artificial. They could be controlled from the control room but they needed to be monitored. They had a bad habit of attacking anything in their way.

They were sent into the helicopter and he programmed all 5 of the dog like robots into sleep mode. They would hunt down any scent of Vegeta, they would blend in enough for most people to think they were someone's pet and not pay the dog androids any attention as they were on the hunt. That was the plan, it sometimes didn't work but it just meant they needed to be kept on a lease to a point. Two supporting Android soldiers were sent with the hounds. They were only Scout level; they did not have the full confidence that this really was Vegeta. The Scouts were only ordinary humans with a little modification to help with their eyesight and communication. They had no orders to kill, just to let the dog Androids do their work. If it was the Saiyan Prince he would be found and neutralised by the dogs. Though this time it was almost certain. For Gero that meant everything.

The Red Ribbon Army that was once the main drive of Gero had been disbanded years ago. They were destroyed by the Saiyans, Gero was tortured and made to watch as most of his creations were shattered before his eyes as he lay there burning. The Prince had only stood back and laughed, the haunting taunts of the alien scum kept Gero awake at nights as he listened to the bleeps to his ventilator. He lived for this moment and he would see Vegeta in the same pain as him, hopefully worse.

The old man watched from his bed, the security camera picking up every moment for him. The monitor flickered as the helicopter took off into the air. Dr Gero said nothing and focused on
breathing, he was still alive as he burned with the need for vengeance.

"How long till they get there?" Gero snapped impatiently.

"Maybe a day, might take a while to catch a scent." Black mused. "Low temperatures don't work well with these models."

"For now a Scouting party is enough, ready the main collective team to get ready on my command."

"We will be waiting and ready Sir." Black saluted.

"The Saiyan will be found and he will pay!"

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Vegeta at the time was feeling the time counting down. He was on a timer as he could feel his identity had been released by the Detective. Fortunately for him, as he found out the man was greedy and had paid for one of his ransoms instead. He looked in the case at the amount Tien had been carrying. Yes, it was a lot of money. More Zeni than any common detective could ever dream of having. He had been following Tien all of yesterday, ever since he left with the evidence. It was the end of his time in North City and Vegeta felt it was time to go out with a bang.

"You should wake up," He said slapping the side of the bald man's face. "You wouldn't want to miss this view, the aurora is quite beautiful at this time of year."

He saw the drugged Detective struggle his head to the side. He couldn't speak not with the tape across his mouth but then that would just spoil Vegeta's fun. He held up the money bag.

"Quite a lot of money you took out from the bank..."

Tien looked back defiantly; his disorientation of where he was couldn't blind him from who his captor was. He pulled at his ropes but he couldn't feel his body he was numb from the neck down. He mumbled through the tape gag, "I'll KILL you!" The words were too muffled to be heard and Vegeta only smirked at the last ditch bravado.

"I sort of like you in my own way." Vegeta said. "Perhaps we met at the final battle, but you see I would have no memory of that event. It was just another annoying insect in my way for me, while I was the big giant crushing your world."

Tien wanted to retort but he saved his breath. He had to focus his ki, he needed to break the bindings.

"I see you have a warrior's training." Vegeta said. "It will be of no use for you now, your body is still numb from the anaesthetic."

The wind whistled blocking out the rest of Vegeta's speech and Tien could see were they were. The docks were below and they were high up on one of the towers of a crane. He couldn't see clearly but it seemed like Vegeta had tied him there.

"I wanted to thank you for the money, it will be most useful for my road trip I have planned."

Tien looked down at the bag, the bag he was sure he had cuffed to his hand.

"You seem a little confused...so I shall make it simple for you to understand." Vegeta sighed. "I'm taking your money, your life but I am prepared to spare the woman if you'll tell me who you sold me
to. I have a lot of enemies, it's hard to keep track."

Tien remained silent and he just stared at Vegeta, 'He can't kill me, I have a chance.' He thought to himself.

Vegeta moved forward, "I'm going to remove the tape, you can scream as much as you like. It's too high up for anyone to hear you or even care." With one smooth motion the tape was swiped away and Tien gasped for breath. He spat towards Vegeta and hit his shirt.

"You still plan to fight I see." Vegeta taunted. "I wonder how you'll do that in your position."

"You have no idea what I'm capable of!" Tien shouted. "I am a student of the Crane school!"

"So that's why you have such an interesting false name?" Vegeta asked. "I couldn't find much on you going back for 4 years, you just appeared…"

"That's my own business." Tien hissed.

"Well, your business is my business for now, as your life is very much in my hands." Vegeta said in a low voice.

"Then just do it." Tien said.

"So you want your pretty little double personality girlfriend to die too?" Vegeta asked. "She's an interesting one… such a nice catch you have there and you were busy being all proud of her. I would have broken her neck as soon as she tried to raise her hand to me. You were under a lot of domestic abuse, perhaps you liked it."

"Leave Launch out of this!"

"Don't you understand yet, she is very much involved. As soon as you made the decision to sell me to the highest bidder her life became forfeit. Her very existence is held in the balance of whether you will tell me. If you do, she lives. If you do not, you die, she dies and I move on to the next town."

"No, wait, you can't…" Tien panicked, he tried to bring up some more ki, he just had to break out of this paralysis.

Vegeta held out a key. "This is your spare house key, you kept it in the kitchen along with your spare car key. I broke into your house last night while you were cuddling with your bimbo. I don't need it but I could go pay her a visit just before I leave with your money."

"How did you get that money?" Tien snapped, he had feel of his shoulders now, they were alive with stinging pain. He had to push past and just build up more ki, he could push Vegeta off the tower and take him with him.

"You're short a limb," Vegeta explained waving something bloody in front of him. It was tossed down to the ground. "Now tell me the name of the Bounty hunter or I might start moving to your other limb to make it symmetrical."

"You're a monster, you only torture humans, and you deserve to die for everything you've done!"

"You seem to forget your predicament." Vegeta moved closer and brought out a knife. "I don't use my fists anymore, not after what's been done to me but you see, even the strongest fighter is only the muscle. Everything can get cut and destroyed by even the weakest if you hit just the right spot." The cold blade edge dug into the side of his neck.
"You'll get nothing from me! Let Launch live she's innocent!"

"I doubt that, no-one is truly free from guilt, I bet she's done something she regrets, and dating you would be the top of her list once she finds out what you did. This is blood money you have here Detective. It comes at a cost, of someone's life, I feel that I do not want it to be myself, so you must go." He was behind him now and Tien could feel more stinging pain. He was feeling the start of his left arm's pain at the amputation. He needed to break out to find some time. He was on some sort of trolley and being pushed forward.

"I got the number off the internet. It was a Bounty site run by Gero Industries…I need the money, just let me live and I can let you have it all, there's more to come!" Tien cried.

"No deal Little Crane, your time is over."

Tien scream as he tried to power up for one last burst, he heard a laugh from Vegeta as he continued to push him forward. "That's it! SCREAM!" Vegeta yelled. "Let out all your power, let me see it!"

The ki poured out of Tien as he let one last attempt to break out of his bindings. His aura flared around him the ropes burned as he was tossed over the side of the crane. However he was still bound by metal cables that were attached to the crane, his body jerked backwards. The white aura flared and his skin was on fire. Blades had been embedded under his skin were ripped out by the intense heat of his power surge. His neck snapped from the jerking action as his body was suspended from the crane his aura flare disappearing as a shower of blood descended from his body.

There was silence as the roar from Tien was gone and only the creak of the supporting cables that held his captive body in a pose. The way he was hung he looked like a man in the middle of a Crane Kung Fu pose, blood showered down from his arms as if they were his wings.

"It's a work of art." Vegeta said as he climbed down. The wait had been worth it. The unsubtle irony of hanging a Crane from a crane pleased Vegeta in a way that would make him laugh about it in years to come. This was his best work yet, he was going to leave this city with a bang.

'Now all that's left is Bulma.' Vegeta mused over one his other loose ends.

West City the next Day

Bulma Briefs, unaware of what was happening in the rest of the world, made her way to the FBI headquarters and ready to face what her Director Piccolo would say to her. She hadn't been to the office for more than a week. The one thing that had changed was the lack of reporters outside. There were only other Agents coming in and out of the building. She kept her head down not wanting to make eye contact. She knew where she needed to go, she just had to head there without running into her previous co-workers. The front desk staff looked up and smiled as she came up.

"Director Piccolo wants to see you straight away Ms Briefs." The Receptionist said. "Please make your way to his office, he's expecting you."

"Thank you," Bulma said and tried to hide her bemusement. She was still under suspension, she didn't think that this package she received would be so important as to rush her to her Boss's office.

She was escorted into the main building as a guard walked with her up into the main office area. It felt different from the last time she was here; when she had been given her suspension and was walking through the office. People were staring as she passed and there was a low murmur of gossip. This time everyone seemed far too busy to even notice her. Bulma was partially glad but her still
surviving narcissistic side was slightly objecting.

When she arrived in the now familiar office of Piccolo his door swung open just as she arrived.

"Thank you Guard, you're dismissed."

The man that had walked her here in silence bowed and left and Bulma continued to feel confused.

"I have good and bad news for you Agent." Director Piccolo said sharply.

"Sir, I'm sure you know, I'm suspended at the moment."

Piccolo didn't answer and instead threw her old badge on the desk. "You're currently being reinstated as of now, we have no time."

Bulma stepped forward and picked up her badge. The cold metal was reassuring but she was still very confused. "Sir, I didn't think you could work miracles, why?"

"We have an emergency situation, Vegeta has been spotted!"

"What!?"

"We have sources that have told us a bounty hunter has reported Vegeta in North City and to make it worse a body has shown up this morning that has a bit of a mystery about it."

"Do you think Vegeta is responsible?"

"He's a key suspect as the person that died was the bounty hunter." Piccolo growled.

"I thought he was powerless…" Bulma was in shock, the news rushing into her head as she tried to figure what this was building to.

"We need to have you on a plane and to North City by today." Piccolo said.

"Are you sure I'm the right person?"

"We're sure, I'll tell you now that you're being put in as bait."

"Again…" Bulma said in a low voice.

"We're not letting you go alone, a group of agents are preparing at this moment and you will be part of their team."

"Who's the leader?" Bulma asked and secretly prayed that it wasn't Special Agent Tao.

"It's Special Agent Yamcha."

'Oh Yellow-Belly, great.' Bulma thought internally but was mostly relieved. She knew that she could get along with him at least and he wouldn't be trying to screw her over. She felt like she could trust him a little.

"I'm to go today?" Bulma asked confused.

"We're under a timer, investigate the death and see if you can find any clues to his whereabouts." Piccolo said. "Get equipped up and borrow an overnight bag, we want you to leave asap, there are other people coming after Vegeta too."
"Who exactly?"

"That's confidential, just know that the real bounty hunters are moving in, if you find Vegeta do not confront him. You are not in our Assault Force."

"So the fabled Assault Force One will be making an appearance?" Bulma questioned. The only fighters on Earth trained to take on major Alien threats like Vegeta. It was a Fabled section she had dreamed about entering but was always sent on the investigative side.

"No, we're strained from an incident on the Space Station; there will be only the main investigation team only." Piccolo explained. "If anything, Vegeta should still be subdued by the ki represent medicine that was given to him 3 years ago. Our key staff in the Science Division was responsible for it and quite confident about the use. According to him it should have permanently restricted his ability to use ki."

Bulma nodded, not sure what to make of it all. She needed to mentally prepare herself for going out in the field again. Some things other than her own personal drama had been going on and Piccolo seemed quite distracted by it.

"I suppose those reports of his ki treatments are confidential too?" Bulma asked.

"Not unless you wanted to join the Science Division."

Bulma grimaced and shook her head.

Piccolo gave a dry laugh, he never did give up asking that question. "Go immediately to briefing room 6. They're having a meeting as we speak, I'll send a message to Special Agent Yamcha about you being on your way."

Bulma grasped her badge and bowed her head to her Boss. "Thank you, I'm glad to see you back."

"It's been a tough few weeks for everyone." Piccolo said. "Just take care, you're back on the Investigation squad, you're not to take down Vegeta by yourself. You just need to confirm if he's there and the rest of the team will take care of that."

"I understand Sir." Bulma said. "I'll get to that Briefing then."

'I know I'll be told the same thing.' Bulma thought to herself.

She made her way down the floors to the room. Nobody paid her attention as she moved through the corridors. All agents seemed to be in a rush and it made sense that there was a trace of Vegeta found. He had been so well hidden for three years. His ki medicine had done a good job for suppressing his power and making him less of a threat it also made him invisible for any of the power scanners the FBI had. Vegeta was probably aware and using it to his advantage.

Briefing room 6 was slightly open and everyone inside were silent, they seemed to be waiting for her.

"You're here Agent Briefs! Close the door!" Yamcha said and Bulma shocked by the sudden address and did as she was told.

Yamcha seemed much more confident than she last saw him. He still didn't look her in the eye but he was up at the front of the desk with computer ready to give the presentation. Bulma sat down and made a quick glance around. There didn't seem to be many members she was familiar with. She saw Agent Viola, she knew she was in the Most Wanted Department; they had the most interest in this.
"Let's make this quick." Yamcha said bringing up the projection. "A Police Detective from North City has been killed, we don't have the full details on the death yet, that's were the investigative side comes in. We need to get there today and get as much details as we can. A reliable source has stated that this Detective was currently selling information about Vegeta being in the city, we believe that Vegeta is responsible for the death but we need to get a team there to confirm. Agent Briefs and Viola are on the investigative side, the rest of us are on as back up. We can't make a move unless we scare Vegeta away. He's probably in hiding in North City and going to move away soon once the heats down. We need to keep the heat and draw him out."

He pointed to Bulma.

"That's why you're here Agent Briefs, we're not going to lie, you're our bait and we need you to just be in the main Investigation Team to try to bring him out of the woodwork. You're one of the best investigators we have and you have enough combat training, though Vegeta's methods have changed. He now seems to use blades and I would not discount the idea that he would steal any guns to use as well. He is not to be confronted at all, defend yourself if you must but the main Attack team will be waiting to take him down."

'I knew it…' Bulma thought. She nodded to Yamcha not confident that she wouldn't give a snide remark.

"We need to make a move, the plane leaves in 2 hours to North City, get suited up with trackers, weapons and body armour and meet on the air strip. Also be sure to have an overnight bag ready for a few days, we have no idea how long this will take. We need to secure Vegeta alive, those are the orders from higher up."

As the Briefing ended Bulma could feel her heart racing, this was her chance. She was out of one terrible situation and into another but here was her moment to try to shine. She would help take down Vegeta and bring him back to his cell. She could finally be free of the stigma of being an accessory to his escape and he could go back to being a prisoner.

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Chapter End Notes

Author's Notes: Goodbye Tien. You tried your best but we'll see the final state of him next chapter. It should be no shock that his death was coming.

The Space Station thing and Freeza is really just a background detail, so no-one pay much attention to it. Freeza is staying out of this story but will be in the background as a threat. It's to bring to the front that Bulma really is just a small solider while all these much bigger events are going on behind her. Maybe they'll be brought in at some point but not till much further down if Bulma and Vegeta survive that far. They're meeting is coming closer though so look forward to that, the tension is building for this very reason.
Cold Killer

Chapter Summary

Bulma makes her way to North City to investigate and lure out Vegeta.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Dragonball Z, Silence of the Lambs and Hannibal. I do not make money from this story.
Warning: Slight gore

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 27

Cold Killer

The same day Bulma had went to the FBI to have a discussion with her boss she was rushing back home to pack an overnight bag for an assignment. It was just too crazy! She couldn't believe that Vegeta had come out to the public like that, his letter must have been a pre-warning. She wished she could remember exactly what it said but the main warning had been clear. 'Do not come to look for me.'

'Well tough, I'm coming to find your ass and help bring you in!' Bulma thought as she pulled out her empty suitcase and started packing. She was going to find him and bring him to justice. She knew how much of a killer he was. Millions of people were dead because of Prince Vegeta. He deserved to be imprisoned for life. She used to doubt whether he deserved to die, though now she was sure he did deserve it but it would be too easy. He needed to put forever in prison away from that blue sky he said he loved. Bulma finished quickly and made her way out to the company car still waiting. She had to pack lots of winter clothes. Where she was going it was colder than she was used to. She knew a few people in North City though they might not be welcoming. She would spend all her time at hotel that the company would provide and she would probably have no time for socialising.

She smiled awkwardly as she thought about how she never really had time to socialise outside of work. The horn of the car outside beeped loudly to hurry her up and she was rushed to grab her winter coat and try to find her gloves. She hated being rushed so much but they had a schedule to keep. They had no time to loose the killer was still in the city. The trail was hot and they had to find him no matter what. She was going straight into danger, she had been warned not to do this. She couldn't let it go. Vegeta was part of her life now and she needed a way to get him out. The best way was by having him captured.

She locked up her house and clutching her bags made her way to the car. Viola was standing waiting for her. She was going to be with this woman for a few days and Bulma forced herself to smile. She didn't need to make her an enemy and she hated how she had a bad start with her. She had been at the shooting with the baby in her arms screaming at her to be more human. It hadn't hurt at the time but now she was feeling the guilt of the situation.
Bulma tried to relax her face so that she wasn't frowning as she entered the car.

"All set, though I'll need to buy some gloves and hat."

"We'll get some at H.Q." Viola confirmed. "I need to pick up some as well. This is such sort notice but we have no choice."

"We'll do what we can to catch him." Bulma said. "There's always a chance he's left town."

"We can deal with that when it comes to it." Viola said driving down to the FBI airport.

The FBI building just outside West city had to have its own airport. It was full of only private jets and helicopters for the Agents use. Bulma had hardly used it as it was only for the Force One agents. The investigative side had to use the normal public transport. She knew that for her it was a chance to really get back her job. This could prove her wish to be part of the team. She had been set up and this was a way out of the trap that had been set up. She wanted to trust Viola, Piccolo said she could. She needed someone to trust just as much as she needed to get her job back. At the moment she was feeling like Piccolo was the only one out there that had her back.

Fifteen minutes of a silent drive later Bulma was looking out the window at the private airport. The team were gathered waiting for them. She didn't like being the last to arrive. As an agent there was no such thing as fashionably late.

"Glad you made it!" Yamcha said smiling at them both. He blushed and looked away as they both smiled back at him.

"We need to get a few things from the equipment room." Viola said. "What's the weather in North City just now?"

"Heavy snow." One Agent piped up. "You make sure you have all the thermal wear you want."

"I got you Mikan." Viola replied. "I just hope all you guys have left some warm undies for us girls."

Bulma felt a little envious at her ability to quip back without sounding like a bitch. She kept her envy inside and just smirked at the guys. They were all members from Force Two, the second hitters from the FBI. They were not their strongest fighters but they could handle themselves more than she could. They were also highly trained by Kami and knew how to handle much more powerful weapons than the old ki represent pistol that Bulma had.

She checked her pistol and grabbed some more ammo while in the equipment room. There were thankfully plenty of black gloves that would do the job to keep her hands warm. She had no need to play in the snow of North City. She just needed something that would stop her fingers from freezing.

"You won't need so much ammo." Viola said. "We're only the investigation Team."

"This is just a precaution, I'll feel safer." Bulma answered. "I may need some thermal underwear though…"

Viola laughed and passed over some bullet proof armour. "That's the thermals we'll hopefully not need."

"Yeah, same as the bullets."

"I know." Viola said. "I know this is your first mission back from the incident, but we'll find out who messed up the investigation reports."
'It was Tao…' Bulma thought but kept it inside. They never believed her, it was enough that Viola said this. "I hope so, my career lies on the line for this."

"You're a good agent Briefs, don't let this stumbling block let you stay down."

Bulma nodded and patted Viola on the shoulder. She was feeling better about working with this woman. She could feel a little joy for the first time in such a long time. They walked back to the private plane that was warming up the engines. The roar was quite loud and Bulma could hardly hear the instructions from Yamcha. He ended up pointing to the plane and a few men shook their head laughing at the new Special Agent. Bulma let out a little snigger as well. In this moment she could feel her ice heart melting just a little. Even with the most daunting task ahead of her, Bulma felt that she could truly be a part of this team.

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The jet with the android hounds was coming close to North City. The team landed outside the city in the plains before the imposing mountains that circle the city. The storm had forced them to land in the fields. The men came out dressed in casual clothes with the robot dogs on leashes. They pulled as they tried to get a scent.

"This is going to be hard work." Android 4 mumbled flipping her hair back.

"I hope not." Android 3 grumbled back.

"We'll do what we must for Gero." Android 7 said strongly. The men were all artificial humans, none of them were strong enough to be considered in the Front line of action but they were allowed to exist if they looked after the hounds. The pets of Gero that were built with the intention of capturing Vegeta.

"We need to walk don't we…" Android 6 sighed.

Android 7 looked down the field and towards the road. "We will acquire a vehicle."

"That's why you're the leader." Android 4 chuckled.

"Shh… I need to radio in to Black, as far as he knows we're in the city!"

The androids all nodded in agreement and the message was sent. They were loyal to Gero but only when it suited them. The 4 walked through the snowy field to the road. The hounds pulling on their leads. The beasts were on a constant track and hunt for Vegeta. They were tools made by Gero for one mission only. The dark bodies and lean bodies like a Doberman but with an undocked tail. Their larger mouths were not like the breed and there was a slight discolouring around the front of their face. The low glow from the eyes gave away their mechanical nature but for anyone that looked at them they only looked like large Doberman like dogs with a bit too much energy to be safe.

The first car that stopped to give the group some assistance did not survive the encounter.

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A few hours later and the private plane entered North City air space. The turbulence was bad and the Agents were all strapped into their seats and praying to whatever Gods they believed in.

"Apparently we just missed a huge storm." Mikan said. "We're just getting the tail end of it."

Ugh, it's enough for me." Viola said.
Bulma nodded, she preferred being in the pilot seat but she hadn't flown since she was 16 but she never had an actual license. She didn't have the riches anymore to buy planes on a whim. It also didn't match her goal of being in the FBI.

The plane shuddered again and she clicked her tongue trying not to give into the panic. It was easy to feel like that when you're not the one in control. The window was a pure white from the cloud as it skimmed past.

"Ready for landing!" The pilot called out over the intercom. The whole team were already strapped in and ready way before his call.

"I hope we survive…" Yamcha gasped. He was sitting in front of Bulma and he could hear his whispering slightly panicking voice. "I haven't even dated anyone yet…"

'That is surprising…' Bulma thought. She could at least admit to going on dates, actual anything more than that was another matter. Her cool demeanour made any relationship hard work for her. She could probably count the amount of dates she'd ever had with one hand. Though she knew they all didn't go anywhere because of her own stubbornness of living for anything other than work. She was an Agent first before anything and this mission which could be her last was her one way out. If she died now in this plane she wouldn't regret anything. She would only regret not finishing her mission.

'I want to live the rest of my life with no regrets.' Bulma thought as the plane made a wobbly touch down.

The team cheered and they seemed to sigh in relief. Bulma found it funny in a way that they were scared of crashing but she supposed she had been a little worried as well. She glanced out the window; the ominous mountains were hidden behind a sheet of clouds. She had been to North City a few times but it had been sunny then. Bulma switched on her phone and wondered if she should message her old friend.

"Agent Bulma, Agent Viola, we'll let you take a taxi from here to the hotel." Yamcha said as the plane made its way down the runway. "We're going to be close but not in the same hotel. If you want to communicate you'll need to do it via e-mail. In an emergency you have to radio us for help. We'll be keeping our distance but will be monitoring you all."

"So if I see a blip in the energy readings I shouldn't worry?" Bulma asked. She held up her small device that was attached to her belt. It was made to scan for energy readings and made from alien technology.

"We're not that powerful…" Yamcha blushed. "We're under orders to stay low and off any radar." He scratched his head and looked away. He seemed to want to say more.

Bulma thought it was a little cute for a second and turned away her own face turning pink. She couldn't forget what he'd said on the plane earlier. It made his character a little clearer than what she had originally imagined. She coughed and tried to cool herself, she was talking to her superior; she needed to keep it professional.

"We understand Special Agent." Bulma said. "Viola and I will keep in touch, we're start the investigation as normal."

"Just be sure not to set off our Scanners." Viola called back as they disembarked off the plane. "That goes for you too Mikan, I scanned you at 100 that one time."
"Agent Viola, we'll behave." Mikan scoffed and waved them away.

"Is it me or are you purposely flirting with Agent Mikan?" Bulma whispered to Viola.

She giggled in response and said nothing. Bulma could tell by her grin that she enjoyed working with the guy at least. She wished she could say the same for working with Special Agent Yamcha. It was just pure awkwardness with him.

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After checking in at their designated hotel, they quickly made their way to the crime scene. They were lead into a police car and driven down to the docks. There was quite a crowd that had gathered when she arrived at the place she could see why.

At the top of a huge crane for loading boats a body was still dangling. His arms out stretched by ropes in an odd position some sort of blades were hanging from the ropes along with the ripped skin it looked like wings. For a moment Bulma thought it was a grisly beauty and had some art to it but she had to remind herself this was a human being up there.

"Can we take him down now?" An officer asked.

"Have you taken photos of all the scenes as you found it?" Viola answered with another question.

The man turned and spoke to his officer to confirm what they had done. "It seems so, all angles and every small crumb of possible evidence has been bagged and tagged."

"Then let's do the humane thing and take him down, he's already lead a crowd of people here."

"Need to inform everyone what to say to the press too." Bulma added. "What is the FBI's official response to this?"

Viola checked her notes. "We're not to mention HIM, but we just say it's a possible one off kill by a crazed man, we have a suspect in custody."

'What a complete lie.' Bulma thought and held it in. "I got it. I'll accompany the body to the morgue then."

"I can stay here, call me if you have anything." Viola said. "We need to meet up at the police station later."

Bulma nodded her understanding and looked up to watch the crane move the body. Viola made it clear that she was fine with doing the clear up. She avoided looking at the body as it was taken down. The face and everything about it had become quite disfigured and frozen.

"Don't you think it's strange that Vegeta did such a public execution?" She asked Viola.

"Execution?" Viola questioned. "I never thought of it like that, I guess, he was insulted by this man reporting him for the bounty."

"Maybe… I just feel like this was a public execution, like an old style hanging with flair."

"Or maybe he wanted to get someone's attention?" Viola asked.

Bulma stared back at Viola speechless; she knew what she was implying but she couldn't think of a come back. She just silently mouthed, "No." while shaking her head.
Viola didn't quip back and left to go to the noisy crowd of press that had gathered. It made more sense that they should split up, the death had cause too much of an uproar with the locals it needed to be smoothed over. Agent Viola was the best choice since she wasn't a public figure as Bulma had regretfully become. This didn't seem like a normal killing by Vegeta but then this was the first one recorded after over 5 years. The body was moved down slowly and Bulma waited by the hearse for them.

It took another five minutes of the coroner instructing the policemen how to wrap up the body. The 'feathers' were delicate and some of the scraps of skin had ripped as it had been moved. They needed more bags to keep it all in.

"All set to go!" A policeman called.

The wrapped body passed by and Bulma got into the car with the coroner. "I hope you don't mind the company, Agent Briefs." Bulma said flashing her badge.

"I know who you are Agent, I was informed you would be coming." The coroner said. "I'm Chu-hi Lime, I only need you to make notes so you can make your own report for the FBI."

Bulma gave her affirmative and pulled out her notepad. She looked down at the cadaver; it had been wrapped up into a plastic bag.

"Just to start, while we're on the way, has the body been identified?" Bulma asked.

"He was a good man, Detective Tien Crane, been on the force for more than 4 years." The Coroner sighed.

Bulma's pen froze on the pad as she was halfway writing the name. It was too familiar; a faint memory was alerted in the back of her mind and painfully came to the front.

"I know this man…" Bulma said. "He's my best friend's partner…" The coincidence was too much for Bulma and she was reeling with the idea of what she needed to do. The confliction within her to do her job and to let her friend know in the most painless way possible. 'Is there even a way to let this be less painful?'

Bulma's mild curiosity to message her friend had now changed to something she needed to do. "Excuse me I really need to make a call before we go."

"Don't be too long, I want to get this over with."

Bulma's hand was shaking; she needed to phone her friend Launch, what could she say? She wasn't even sure if she was allowed to continue the investigation. She needed to call Piccolo as well. She could feel the dread in the pit of her stomach as she searched her phonebook for a long unused number. It looked like she may have a reunion after all, in the worst possible circumstance. She took deep calming breaths and dialled the number.

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Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: Well things are coming to a head. The Androids 3, 4, 6 and 7 are not mentioned specifically anywhere in Dragonball but that they were past failures in canon
so I thought it would be fine to add some numbers to them as they hunt down Vegeta.

Find out next chapter more about Vegeta's side. Sorry, there was no room for his sexy ass as Bulma really needed to go on her journey and have time with her team-mates. Also we should note for those that read into things too much on the romantic side… Yamcha and Bulma aren't going to get any development on that side. I'm just keeping it awkward attraction on either side.
Chapter Summary

Bulma continues her investigation into the death of Tien with an autopsy of his body.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Dragonball Z, Silence of the Lambs and Hannibal. I do not make money from this story.

Warning: Slight gore and descriptive corpse scene.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 28

Clipped Wings

It took one minute of Bulma focusing and trying to calm herself before she hit the call button. She hadn't spoken to Launch for a few years. All she received from her now was the odd letter or e-mail updating her about her life. Tien believed the stories about her and Vegeta or thought she was to blame for his escape. It didn't help that Launch had sided with her man over her and had basically cut ties and had reduced it to such a vague contact.

The phone began to ring and Bulma tried to clear her mind. She didn't need to think of the past, or whatever Tien had thought. He was dead and Launch needed to know.

There was a click and a light sob. "Launch here… who's speaking?"

Bulma's heart broke, she was obviously crying. "Launch honey, it's Bulma. I guess you know the terrible news."

There was a garbled reply that she guessed was affirmative. The Police must have already gone to deliver the bad news.

"I'm on the case to find the guy who did this." Bulma said. "I'm in North City just now, you have my number, call me tonight and we can meet up."

"Go find him and kill him." Launch snapped.

Bulma gasped at the change of pitch, the gentle sobs had been replaced with a more fiery voice. It was Launch's alter ego, or her other self. It was a weird mental health issue she had hidden for so long during training. "I can't promise that, you know it!"

"I'll kill him too if I could." Launch snarled. "Call me later B, we'll catch up. I may want to pump you for info."
"You know I can't..." She was cut off midway. Launch had hung up on her. She tried to redial but it was a dead line. Bulma could only guess that she was going to have to tread lightly. It was her duty to tell her friend she was here to investigate her lover's death. Though she knew she would be making herself too involved in the case to make a clear investigation. She was here as bait after all, the real investigator was Viola. That was clear as to why she had been assigned someone to work with her. She sighed deeply again, there was another phone call she needed to make, to Director Piccolo or even Special Agent Yamcha. She opted for the easier option and decided to tell Agent Viola later at the hotel. The coroner was getting agitated and giving her looks as she had obviously made a private phone call on his work time.

Bulma shoved her phone back in her bag and went back into the ambulance. She never glanced at the crowd or even seemed to notice that one of the rowdy mass was quietly staring directly at her. A sly smirk crossed his face and he turned around to leave, pulling his cap down further over his face as the cold North City winds through the docks. The chaos of the event that had happened there still shaking the city.

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Far away in the Gero Mansion an old man was watching the news seething with anger.

"The body of a man was found today in North City docks. The body was suspended from a crane and his skin flailed. Viewers are advised the following scenes contain some graphic images."

"That's HIM!" Dr. Gero snarled... "I know it... damn..."

The nurse rushed to his side as he violently rocked his body to try and sit up. Marron did her best to hold him up and adjust the pillows. She tried to keep herself as quiet as possible. She had a bad habit of saying what she thought and it was hard for her to control herself. If she wasn't careful with her words, he would find a way to make her pay for any impertinence towards him.

"Who... V-Ve..." She struggled to say his name. "The Saiyan...?"

"Yesss. Also... our little rat hasss been caught..." He was gasping for breath.

"The man that was killed?" Marron asked. "You think he was the bounty hunter?" The nurse turned to the news and looked; there was nothing left to see any details of who the person was. It just looked like some hanging flesh in her eyes. She wanted to turn it off but she knew she would only risk his anger. For the nurse the past few years of taking care of the man had taken their toll. It didn't help that she was constantly reminded of her previous trauma with the Saiyan Prince. She had lost an ear because of him. She wasn't allowed to cover he scar. She had to show her mangled side. Her beauty she felt was ruined forever.

"Get Black in here... we need... to check on those... rejectss of mine!" Gero hissed some more. His anger only rising. "Vegeta will know... he'll know they're... coming... It'll make... it all... the more interessting..."

"Please Sir, I'll get Black, just calm yourself." Marron pleaded. "Save your breath."

"Don't tell... ME.... Wha... t'... do...I'll... gaa..." He struggled to continue his threat but his eyes glared at her as she squealed and left to find Mr. Black. "I'll.... Cut .... That... other... ear... maybe... your tongue... TOO..."

The nurse had already left before he was finished but his voice echoed down to hall after her. He would follow up with his threats, the scars on her arms and hands told her that. He may be physically
unable to do it himself, but he found ways to get his staff to do as he pleased. She wanted this nightmare to end. Once Vegeta was captured, his revenge, her revenge too would be complete. She could run away and never come back. He could rot in this mansion and all his robot toys till he died a lonely death.

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For Vegeta though, he knew he had very little time in North City. It was his farewell party after all. The city had suited him more than most. The weather made wearing hats and scarves covering your face a very necessity of life. He was glad he could give them such a memorable send off. The Crane that had been caught by him seemed to have frozen beautifully by weather. The skin strips of feathers and knives seemed to sparkle in the sunlight. He had noticed how Bulma had looked at it with not a shed of disgust in her face. She was a mask of no emotions. She had changed a lot since he'd last seen her.

He paused at the corner looking back at the docks. The crowds were being dispersed and the police were pushing people back. It was time for him to leave the cover of the crowd was being lost.

The ambulance that had taken Bulma away was heading downtown. There was no doubt that was where she was going. He got into his car and started the engine.

'This game is really only just beginning.' He thought. 'I never actually thought they would send her, but here she is. Right in front of me…'

It was too tempting, she had to be there as bait, there may be other opportunities for him too get closer to her. The chance was too good to pass up. He would play along with their game for now. As he had his own game to play along.

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In the Police morgue Bulma sat on a seat waiting for the coroner. She had hoped it would be a quick job, one where he would take the body in and do it all quickly in front of her. She however was told to wait while he made the preparations. Bulma took out her phone and checked her messages.

"Okay Agent Briefs, we're ready for you." Chu-hi said as he looked down at her phone.

Bulma nodded and put her phone away.

"Do you have any recording devices?" He asked.

"Only my Dictaphone, standard FBI issue." Bulma replied. "Would it be okay to use?"

He smiled at her for the first time. "Sure, that's just what I hoped you'd have."

He seemed like the old fashion type. Bulma could have done it with her phone but at least with her old Dictaphone she could count the amount of recordings easily.

"This is Agent Bulma Briefs in the North City Police Morgue." She said into her device. "The coroner, Mr Chu-Hi Lime, is present for the autopsy of Detective Tien Crane."

"Very Good, I shall begin." Chu-Hi nodded as he unzipped the bag. There was the surge of meat smell, it hadn't yet decomposed but the smell of human flesh was not pleasant. The body had defrosted on its journey and the skin flaps that had formed the feathers were turning to mush. "The death is most likely from suffocation and blood loss. The cuts are strange… the knives seemed to all have been imbedded in the flesh. Take a photo of this part here."
Chu-Hi motioned to his silent assistant who moved in on command and there was a flash. Bulma kept her hand steady as she recorded the autopsy. She tried to trace the face of Tien to see if she could see any resemblance of what she remembered. It was all vague memories of photos but she did notice the lack of hair and sharp features. They were the only things she really remembered about him. His face now was slack and his tongue poked out of his mouth. There was another flash as another angle was selected for a photograph.

"The bruising and ropes on the neck are all connected to the knives by small threads and strings. This wouldn't have enough force to pull out the blades when he was swung over the make-shift gallows of the crane."

"Was he hung or cut first?" Bulma asked. "Maybe the knives were pulled out of him before he was hung?"

"If that was the case… why are they all done in the same fashion, the same angle? The person who did this had some good surgery skill to accomplish this especially since they were a hundred feet in the air. The skin though is ripped as well as cut… I'm not sure what to make of this."

"That's why the FBI is here Sir." Bulma said. "Please, some more detail about your first impressions."

"Very well, before we get to the main autopsy. The body was restrained, bruising at the side and his arms show this. He would be aware of his capture. There must have been a struggle for him to get out. There are rope burns on this scrap of skin here. There seems to be some unknown trauma across his face, almost like a burn but no fire could do this type of skin damage…" Chu-Hi was deep into his talk while Bulma zoned out.

Tien had hung like a frozen bird midflight, now he was just a mess on the table. The feathers were now bloody scraps that were being cut now as Chu-Hi decided to look at skin cuts under a microscope later. It seemed unreal to Bulma that this dead body in front of her used to be a full man. He looked like a slab of meat on the butcher table. Only his head and legs gave away his human form. It was hard for her to imagine him alive, making Launch smile. The body seemed so far away from an actual living person.

She was slightly worried in the back of her mind she would have to meet Launch and try to console her. All the while having this nightmare image of her friend's dead lover flashing in her head. She tried to bury it down and continue with the investigation. It was clear this death was done by a warrior, once she took all this back to the labs in the FBI they would have a quick break-down of the events. For now Chu-Hi struggled to understand what was in front of him and could just make descriptions of what he saw. The ki burns Bulma saw clearly on the skin were noted down by the doctor as unknown trauma and she had to stifle her voice.

The FBI kept this kind of death under deep secrecy. The less the general public knew the better about the greater threats in the Universe. She'd done this type of investigation many times before but this was the first that had hit close to home.

An hour later and Bulma was out of the morgue and trying to hold in her shaking. No matter how much training she had it was still harrowing to see the mortality of humans. She made her way to the ladies restroom and checked it was empty. She held her Dictaphone up to her mouth to make one last comment. There were some things that common officers and doctors were not allowed to hear.

"This is now 3pm after the autopsy of Detective Tien Crane. My first impressions must be noted that this is a code 3 death. Ki burns were on the body, inflicted by the Detective or from contact with another ki user. I would recommend the body be placed in FBI custody and a full analysis of any
residual energy readings be made. Blood and tissue samples were also taken and should be taken under FBI jurisdiction as well. I would also recommend checking if Detective Tien was a listed warrior. I cannot comment further on the matter as I have found I am acquainted with the victim. His life partner was a very close friend of mine. Autopsy report end.

She sighed, it was over. She'd done the horror part of the investigation which she always got lumped with. This was one reason she had become such an Ice Queen. She'd seen some worse things than this and it had always chipped away at her armour. Bulma knew she could recover; she always bounced back. Her expertise on alien attacks and ki related injuries had been what had kept her ahead of the rest of her fellow investigators.

She dumped her bag by the washbasin and went into the toilet. There was no time to get sentimental about things. As she sat she switched on her phone. It only took a few minutes before it buzzed alive with missed calls and messages. She took the time to flick through all the mail messages. The voicemail ones could wait till she was in a less echo filled place. She heard the door clatter and someone went into the next cubicle. Bulma remembered she was in the lower part of the police station and made her move out. She checked her bag and tidied herself up.

As she walked slowly out and up to the first floor she listened to the voicemail. One was from Launch, the usually more calm side of her. She told her to meet her in a bar after 8pm. She had a strained voice of one that had been crying too much. It wasn’t a meeting Bulma was looking forward to but she had to go. She just needed to shake off her watcher, Viola.

The front of the police station was busy and Bulma was knocked aside by someone rushing past. She saw Viola by a desk looking through paperwork.

"I'm back, it over with for now." Bulma said and looked at the desk. "Was this Detective Tien's desk?"

"Sure was, he left a few paper trails of what he's been up to." Viola said proudly. "How did your side of the operation go?"

Bulma looked around, Viola had deliberately not said 'autopsy' in front of the other officers. This woman knew when to be sensitive, Bulma felt like she could learn a thing or two from her.

"I called it code 3." Bulma said. "We need to get the lab boys to work on this."

"We'll make the calls when we're out of here." Viola whispered. "I've got the hotel name where we're staying."

"Great, I could do with a hot bath." Bulma sighed as she checked Viola's notes she'd been making. "I really hate the winter here, it lasts 8 months of the year."

"Some people get used to it." Viola said. "I personally have two hot thermos packs stuck to my back. Take a seat I'm going to be another 20 minutes."

"Fine, I'll get started on my own paperwork."

Bulma sat down at a spare desk and fumbled through her huge bag. A piece of paper dropped out and Bulma almost ignored it except she knew she never put loose paper in her bag. Especially not ones shaped into origami. She picked the strange object up. It was a small blue paper crane. Her stomach sunk in an instant and she looked around the busy office. No-one was looking at her. It was too much of a coincidence. She'd only let her bag alone for a second. She checked for her notebook and other more importantly her Dictaphone. It was there, the recorded message counter had increased
"I just need to go to the restroom." Bulma snapped and dashed back down to the basement. Her senses were in full impulse mode as she followed her instinct.

"Sure girl, just don't be long." Viola said confused at Bulma's sudden franticness. "She must have got a hideous case of the runs." She said to an officer that had been trying to do work nearby.

Bulma burst into the toilet unsure what she was looking for. The place was empty again. She pushed open the door that had been closed when she left. There was nothing inside. She didn't know what to expect as she held the Dictaphone up to her ear to hear the last message. There was a chance she had miscounted. Maybe she had just made a simple mistake.

"Tell me Agent... Did you really give up your dream?" The crisp voice hissed at her from the small machine. "Dreams are what makes us and pushes us onward... Take back your dream... Bulma. Learn to spread your wings and fly."

Bulma looked up to the mirror, her pale face looked back. She half expected the shadows behind her to warp and produce the monster Vegeta. He had been here, it was him. It really was his fault that Tien was dead and her friend Launch was now in mourning. He was hunting her, for what reason she was unsure. She was just another face in the crowd of the FBI. She wasn't anything special, at least she didn't think so now. It was true of what he said. Her life before, her dreams, her goals. They were all changed.

'Stop messing with me…' Bulma thought to herself and her imaginary Vegeta. 'I don't want to remember my past.'

'I'm only following my instincts; don't you love to follow yours?' Her ghost Vegeta taunted back.

"My dream now is to see you in Hell Vegeta!" Bulma spat out loudly hoping he could hear. She kicked open the door of the room to see an empty corridor. He was long gone. She looked at the small crane and wondered when it had been placed in her bag. He must have been close, she was too wrapped up in her job she'd not been observing her surroundings. She never thought he'd have the gall to break into the police station. She clenched her fist and wondered how much she could tell her partner. How much Viola would believe her and how much she needed to conceal.

Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: It's getting to the good bit so I'm able to push through and I managed to write this chapter in a few weeks; (Which is good for me.) I expect the holiday off work helped a lot too.

I don't know if you get thermos packs were you are but they're really good! Just like a warm band aid you just stick them on your undershirt and it's like a mini-heater. I need them in winter as I'm such a wimp with the cold. Not sure of the real name as they're called Hot Karero or pocket warmer in Japan. I think it might be an Asian thing, never seen them in the UK.

Bulma is so messed up right now, she really does have an imaginary Vegeta running
around in her head, trust me it's going to get worse for her as she's going down a dark path. We'll find out exactly what the real Vegeta has planned for her eventually; though you'll all just have to wait and see.

Thanks for all the kind feedback!
The Storm Builds

Chapter Summary

Tensions build as the FBI and Bulma try to close down on Vegeta, there is also the issue around Gero's Androids that have come to North City as well.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Disclaimer: I do not own Dragonball Z, Silence of the Lambs and Hannibal. I do not make money from this story.

Chapter 29

The Storm Builds

Bulma returned to her temporary desk her eyes wide as she looked at her partner Viola. She was boxing up all papers from Tien's desk and gave her a nod as she passed. Bulma looked around the room, he had been here. Vegeta had been in her bag somehow. She had only left her bag outside the cubical for maybe a few minutes, did he have his speed back? He had to be long gone by now. He was crazy taking her down in the middle of the Police Station. He had to know she was bait. She had to report it, but not now. The men and women working around her didn't need to know. The normal Police ranks were to be kept unaware of the appearance of the Saiyan Prince.

The whole part of this being a killing by Vegeta was pretty much confirmed by today but it would probably never be revealed to the public. Bulma tried writing down in her notebook, it just seemed so insane even written down.

He's here, he's in the Station. He knows how this place works. Could it be because of he was stalking Tien?… then what about Tien's home life…

Bulma paused with her writing of her memo. She had hit the nail on the head. Vegeta's power was gone, but his hunting skills had not. He was a fully trained warrior, more than anything he had enough survival skills to stay under the radar till now. She picked up her small ki detecting device. It was pretty much useless if her theory was right. She needed the lab technicians to inspect Tien's body for any residual ki and have more examination done to the knife marks. It was weird as if the knives had flown out of his body.

"All done here, Agent Briefs." Viola said as she stepped up to her.

Bulma smiled but she couldn't bring herself to, she passed her notebook to Viola with a small message. 'V is here!'

She saw her face grumble into confusion and panic. She looked back at Bulma to see if she was joking. Bulma just gave a wide desperate look.

"I'm done…" Bulma said quietly. "I think what I saw is long gone."

"We need to get back to our hotel and report in." Viola said sternly. "Are you 100% sure?"
"There is no doubt in my mind, I never saw him but… I have proof." Bulma answered.

"I'll get an agent to come here and keep watch then." Viola said picking up her phone. "We need to try to subtly sweep the area."

"Agreed." Bulma said. She wanted to add how he would be following her rather than staying where he'd shown himself. As Viola made the call Bulma focused out, she was just the bait after all. It was the same as the first time she was put to the Criminal Asylum. She had been a fresh faced recruit to tempt Vegeta in playing cat and mouse with the little naive girl. She was a lot more jaded now but it was happening all over again. She felt like she was out of the loop and not being told the full story. The nagging feeling kept going as Viola stepped away and lowered her voice to talk to the person on the phone.

"It's done." Viola said. "We need to go to our hotel and hold a conference call."

"Right." Bulma said as she followed the tall woman out the door. She gave one glance back behind her half expecting to see a smirking apparition. There was only uniformed police that ignored the agents as they left. It made Bulma realise how easy it would have been for Vegeta to wander around here. If you fitted into the Station they didn't even question you being there.

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Vegeta was high above them on the roof looking down as Bulma left with some strange green hair woman who also seemed to be an Agent. The chase was on and his prey had been alerted. It was careless of him to have come in contact with her so soon. She was a temptation he couldn't resist. He didn't have the speed but he was still faster than her because she was daydreaming. He had been lucky she had been particularly ditzy and not even noticed him getting so close. He was amazed she'd even left her bag out for him to take that little talking machine she had been using. She was making mistakes and he would take all the advantage.

It wouldn't be so easy after all. Her partner seemed to be scanning the area with that darn machine they had. It was useless of course as he was now so low levelled that he could hide amongst ordinary people and not stand out. His strength was low but he had more skills that he had found good use for. Human bodies and even animals had so many weak points, if you pushed them in the right direction their own strength could be used against them. It had been how he had killed Tien with his own ki. The knives had been embedded in his body as he was unconscious. He had placed them with great care following the lines of his energy lines. If you focused you could learn to read someone's power level. If you focused even more you could see how the energy flowed through their body. That flow could be manipulated, it could be a way to find the point were these energies merged and you could use that energy against them.

He had been experimenting for the past few years with how far he could push it. No matter how hard he trained, his own energy never rose. He had needed a new way to fight and he had found one that required a different approach than he was used to. He had learned patience, something that needed more strategy rather than just charging forward.

He listened as the pair spoke to a taxi driver. His Saiyan genes had not let him down with his other senses. His hearing, sight and general stamina were still higher than any weak humans. He could easily hear the conversation above the noise of the street. He made a mental note of the hotel name and turned to leave. Even with his care and low power levels, he couldn't chance the fact that they would now be looking for him here. He would not go to her hotel; she was obviously being guarded to lure him out. His chance was gone but this was not the time or the place.

"Later, Agent Briefs." He whispered to the wind. "We'll be meeting up soon."
In the hotel half an hour later, Bulma and Viola sat round a large monitor to make the call. Bulma was trying to wonder why her gut was twisting so much. She had got careless and now she had to explain to her superiors. This was supposed to be her chance to redeem herself and get her position back. She really didn't want to explain everything that had happened.

She set her Dictaphone down on the table, ready to replay it. She couldn't explain her real apprehension.

"I've made all the arrangements. Director Piccolo wants to join as well as Agent Yamcha." Viola explained. "Hopefully the signal is clear enough, we have another snow storm coming."

"Any updates from the Police Station?" Bulma asked even though she knew the answer.

"There was no sign of him. The Saiyan is long gone from there." Viola said as she typed into the panel. "Setting up the connection, do you see us Special Agent Yamcha?"

"Um… yeah, hello Agent Briefs."

Bulma restrained a giggle as she heard Viola sigh and gave her a sideways glance. The man's face was beet red, Viola knew how much of a crush the guy had on her.

Another screen flickered and Piccolo appeared on the other side of the screen. "Good to see you Director Piccolo." Bulma said.

"Let's keep this short, what's happened?" Piccolo asked ignoring all formalities.

"Sir, Vegeta has made contact with me." Bulma said straightening her back. "I did not see him directly but he left me a little message on my recording device."

"How?"

"I left my bag unattended in the Ladies restroom near the morgue and I believe he took it at that point."

"Is there any way he could have taken it before then?"

"It's all numbered in sequence, the last message was from him. I don't know how he got it back into my bag or when he took it but it must have happened after I'd finished the autopsy report in the morgue and when I got to the office with Viola on the first floor. I was only in the cubicle for a few minutes and I can't remember if I heard anyone come in at the time."

"Does this mean he has his speed back?" Yamcha asked.

"It's still possible… I'll ask all our scientists." Piccolo added.

"As an additional note the autopsy of Detective Tien, his death was possibly caused by a combination of being hung and having his flesh flayed by knives. All the knife cuts were made while he was alive. The labs will need to do a full analysis of any residual ki but it was a death by a higher powered being. I can't confirm it was Vegeta as we've never seen him make a kill like this. I have made the arrangements to have the body moved to our labs."

"So, it's safe to assume he's not at full power?" Yamcha added. "If he was then Tien would have just been burned into dust."
"There were signs of ki burns but that may have been from Tien himself."

"He was a warrior, it's very likely." Piccolo said. "He's a drop out from the FBI. We can't add this to the official report for the police but he was unstable and not a good team player. He was rejected despite his higher fighting abilities. If he had been more controlled he could have become one of the Special forces."

"Did you know that this was Tien when you sent us?" Bulma asked.

"He's changed his name but I suspected it was him. From the photos I've seen of the crime scene today I can confirm that it's him." Piccolo said grimly. "He couldn't have been taken down by a weakened Vegeta unless he was using more underhanded techniques and taken by surprise."

"From the first autopsy report I'll be sending to you Sir, this is not an ordinary fighter's death." Bulma said. "I'll give my preliminary report by the end of the day."

"Very good." Piccolo said. "I need you to understand Bulma that you are only here to investigate and lure Vegeta out. The tracker for high ki levels you're wearing is equipped with an alarm, Agent Yamcha and his team are ready at a moments notice to come to your aid. You are to assure me you will not talk or engage Vegeta alone. Even with Viola's back-up, he is not someone two investigative Agents can take on. You need the Fighters to back you up and even then you're only allowed to give support."

"I understand." Bulma said. She wanted to give some joke back to him that this was the 500th time he'd reminded her of her low standing in the FBI. "I do have one request though…"

"What is it Agent?"

"My friend and ex-FBI Agent Launch is involved in this. Her partner was Tien, I'd like permission to go see her."

"I remember her; she's rather unstable as well." Piccolo said. "If you go to meet her take Viola with you. She'll complete the official interview with her. Launch may have seen something that can help the investigation. Also be sure anytime you're outside you have the tracker device with you. You're our main lure to Vegeta and we want you to act as you normally would on an investigation."

'Like a worm on a hook.' Bulma thought.

"I will follow your orders Sir." She replied with solid resolve. Bulma knew she had only one chance to keep her job. Vegeta's message was suppose to make her doubt herself. 'Did you give up your dream?' He had asked her. As far as Bulma was concerned he was just taunting her. All it did was make her remember why she joined. It was to bring down aliens like him and return peace to the Earth. Her dream was still very much alive.

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A group of three large men and a smaller one entered North City followed by four large hounds pulling on the leads. They were all artificial lifeforms, the strange yellow glowing eyes of the travellers had a low glow. The snow storm had returned though and the people in the city were too busy getting shelter to pay them any attention.

"It's too cold Four!" The taller one moaned. "Why didn't we stay in the car?"

"Because it's not ours." Four explained, for him it was the one time too many. "I've told you we need to start our mission and not get caught. Driving into the city crawling with police with a stolen car is
Android Three nodded and still shivered, "I want the heater back."

"I understand." Six said punching Android 3. "Stop being a dummy, Gero will really make you into scrap."

"We all ready are considered scrap." The leader Seven snarled. The shorter male gave his companions a glance. "The hounds can't smell anything in this storm, we need to go to the meeting point at the old HQ and hole up there."

"Yeah, but where exactly is that?" Four asked.

"I have the map." Six said lowering it down to the shorter Android. "We need to move to the west of here."

"I wish we'd had some GPS upgrades so we didn't need to rely on maps or cars." Three sighed.

"You're in need of more than a GPS upgrade." Six snorted.

"The hounds are going crazy, they can't pick up a scent at all." Seven sighed as he pulled at his large artificial beast. "We need to get into shelter and switch them off before they go out of control."

"It's too much of a pain if they do." Three said. "Do they need a reboot?"

"We all do." Seven said. "Let's move, we've wasted enough time. We need to contact Black and give him an update. Our mission is clear we need to track down Vegeta."

Everyone nodded, their main programming was focused on one thing, find and capture Vegeta. The keyword was said and all the robots eyes slightly glowed as they moved towards their hideout. They knew they did not have much time but with the storms they were confident that Vegeta wouldn't be moving either. They had to move as soon as it stopped and then he would be hunted down to be delivered to Gero.

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After a long meeting Bulma finally got some peace and retired to her room. All paper work had been done, faxed stamped and sent off. The investigation would continue according to Piccolo and she was free to meet her friend. She had made arrangements with Launch to meet her at her favourite bar. She hadn't warned her that Viola was going to come along too. Bulma had just wanted to meet her off duty and try to find out how she was. It had been so long since she'd seen Launch that it would maybe be a bit awkward. So much time had passed between herself and Launch that she knew things had both changed for them. They weren't the same people they were back when they were roommates together as Trainees. They had such different lives now, she wondered if she could find a connection with her old friend again.

She checked herself in the mirror and a small pang of her vanity surfaced. She wanted to change her clothes, put on more make-up, at least some more accessories. The girl looking back at her in the mirror seemed so plain and different than the teenager she had been before the Saiyans came. It had all started then, not just when Vegeta had escaped and she became blamed for it. Her childhood life was too distant now. She had new goals and she was going to keep to them.

'I've still got my looks though.' She mildly smiled at herself as she noted with pride how she still seemed a beauty. She looked at the watch and made a quick call to Viola. She was as ready as she ever was to meet up with her old friend. She just hoped that she would be in a stable enough state to
The androids gathered in a small abandoned warehouse marked as Gero Inc property. This was their main rendezvous and they were behind schedule. The leader Seven gathered them around a small screen as the hounds were chained up and deactivated to recharge.

"Mr Black, we have arrived." Seven announced on the video call. "We are all ready and willing to make a start tomorrow morning."

"NO!" A rasping voice snarled and a dark shadow loomed behind Mr Black. "Get out there now!"

"There's a storm, the dogs are unable to smell anything." Seven explained.

"We have no care for such excuses…” Gero snarled.

"Get a hound and do a sweep of the murder area." Black explained. "Go in shifts if you have to but get the hounds tracing the scent as soon as you can."

"But it's a blizzard!" Three moaned.

"I don't want to hear anymore excuses… you're all scrap… if you don't…do it." Gero gasped at them. "Find him…”

"You heard your orders. Report back every 3 hours of an update. Vegeta will be getting ready to leave the city unless he's already done so."

"This is the worst timing…” Six mumbled.

"Get to it!" Mr Black ordered.

"SIR." They all shouted and the call was cut off.

The androids stood upright and started moving, they instantly did a quick paper, scissors, stone to choose the first Android to go out. Three made a groan as he lost and took up his hound switching it on.

"I'll be back in an hour looking like a snowman." He sighed.

"Remember Gero wants him alive." Seven told him as the reluctant Android left with an overexcited hound.

The wind continued to howl and batter the dilapidated building. The storm continued to rage as the night came on North City. It was going to be a long night.

Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: More tension building, more teasing of Vegeta influencing Bulma
somehow. More Vegeta stalking, as his plans seem to be focused more on Bulma.

The next chapter will see a little bit of a finale in North City as I plan to make some things collide. We'll also see how Launch is doing without Tien.

Side note: I drew a cover for this story which I should be showing in thumbnail form on ffnet and you can see the full picture on my deviantart page under my penname there Mz-D.
Grief and Pain

Chapter Summary

Bulma finds out how Launch is coping and they have a surprise visitor.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Dragonball Z, Silence of the Lambs and Hannibal. I do not make money from this story.

Warning: Slight gore

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 30

Grief and Pain

The second storm to hit North City was coming to its climax. Everyone with any sense had stayed inside. Bulma however was cursing herself for her lack of judgement. She was closely followed by her fellow officer Viola who was also cursing under her breath as they arrived in a taxi. They entered the small bar clutching to their jackets.

"We could've changed the day…"

"This is Launch's workplace." Bulma explained. "She's usually asleep during the day."

"Surely, she's not working after everything that happened?"

Bulma shrugged, She knew she would be doing the same, throw yourself into your work and focus on other things. She thought Launch would be the same but she saw the taller woman slumped over the bar where she was suppose to be working.

"That would be what I would do, Launch however…" Bulma approached her unsure who was in control. She was aware of Launch's split personality and had learnt the hard way not to surprise the mean side of her. "Launch….it's me… Bulma!"

The blonde swung her head round her green eyes sharp and deadly. "Good, give me the dirt!" She grabbed Bulma by her shirt and dragged her to her face. Bulma looked back at Viola who was moving to get her gun out.

"Launch let go… I'm not alone…"

The drunk woman kept held of Bulma and her attention moved to Viola. "Who's this?"

"FBI Agent Viola." The tall woman introduced herself, she took Bulma's shirt and released her from Launch's grip. "I'm the babysitter."
"I thought we were going to be alone." Launch snarled under her breath.

"This is the only way we can meet, it's not my choice but it's better than being in a police station and having interrogators listening and recording our full conversation."

"You're going by the books then…pfff." Launch scoffed. "How boring. I'm so glad I left that Dog House." She gave Viola a determined look slowly going up and down trying to figure her out. She came to some internal conclusion and went back to her drinking.

Bulma sat down on a stool next to her. "I need to make a report, you're being investigated." Bulma said. "I'm here now as a friend first. It may end up as official interviews later."

"So this isn't official business then." Launch snapped. "I was hoping you'd give me the first suspect you have that killed my Darling."

"We have ideas that nothing conclusive yet."

"That means ya got the prime suspect but y'all can't say shit!" Launch announced.

Bulma looked around, the bar was thankfully almost empty but it was still not the best place to have a private conversation. She couldn't mention Vegeta at all as this was still being kept quiet.

"I can't tell you." Bulma said. "Director Piccolo's orders."

"OH!" Launch reacted quite violently to that name and slammed down her glass. "HIM! Of course it's Mr-you're too unstable for the FBI-you're OUT-Piccolo!"

"That's not his name and you know it." Bulma said. "You need to cool down and we'll talk again."

It was clear that she needed to speak to Launch when she was sober; it was more time wasted on the case. Bulma stood up and patted her friend on the head. She shook her hand away and turned her head. Bulma sighed and went to leave when she heard a clear small sneeze. This was followed by a large bawling yell.

"Don't leave me too…. BUUULLLLMAAA!" A dark haired woman clamped onto Bulma and she was suddenly reunited with Launch's kinder side.

Bulma hugged her back. "It's okay, we'll get the SOB, don't you worry."

"He- he's GONE and now I have nothing…" She kept crying.

"Can we take you home?" Bulma asked her kindly. She wasn't so shocked at this transformation; she'd seen it many times before. It was mostly the amount of grief she was seeing that was giving her flashbacks to her own past traumas. She gave a look to Viola who had sat back in shock.

"Shall I call a cab?" The other agent asked.

Bulma nodded and continued comforting her friend. "Keep telling yourself it's not your fault, okay?"

The woman sobbed and nodded her head. "I could have stopped him from going… he had some sort of plan… some sort of big break…. I should've known."

"You couldn't have known."

"We've been in such a rut and I'm such… I was such a Bitch to him every time I saw him… he was so happy about whatever it was…"
"He never said what it was?"

Launch shook her head looking up and wiping her tears. The alcohol was taking effect on the brunette; she was weaker in this form. She slumped forward a little. "I feel so sleepy."

Bulma helped her keep standing. "Just so you know, we do have a suspect… but keep it to yourself."

"Lips are… sealed." Launch slurred and rolled her head.

By this time Viola came over the cab was on the way.

"Looks like I need to see her home." Bulma said.

"I shouldn't leave you alone, Piccolo's orders." Viola said. "I left you alone at the mortuary and look what happened."

"Yeah, I have no idea what he was thinking." Bulma replied.

"I'm alone, all alone…" Launch started to sway as she fell deeper into her grief.

Bulma gave her another hug and grimaced as she inwardly wished she could tell her friend everything. They needed to catch Vegeta soon, the sooner he was taken in the sooner she could help her friend get closure.

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The alien in question though wasn't too far away. In a small lodging in the city centre, Vegeta was preparing his departure. The room had been rented out for the week under a different name. His old place was now cleared out and abandoned. He had planned to leave North City and make his escape much sooner. He had already taken too long but the chance to interact with Bulma had been too enticing for him. Vegeta knew he had been careless with his pursuit of Bulma today. It was an opportunity he couldn't resist.

He went through his items checking each one. He had to travel light and take everything he needed in a duffel bag. The night was coming soon and a huge storm was raging through the city. The weather made it so he couldn't leave yet. He'd wasted too much time playing cat and mouse with his prey. He needed to rest for now. He couldn't return to his original home, it was too easy to trace who he really was. Yasai Hoang was now dead. He had to find a new persona.

He had checked into a boarding house making sure it was far enough away from Bulma and her FBI team. He didn't want to be accidentally found. He wanted to keep the advantage of being invisible. He only had the advantage while she was unaware. She was weak but still carried a weapon that could immobilise him on sight. Last night had been exhilarating with the death of Tien. He had felt like he had power again, the stronger human was a puppet in his hands. The way he had dangled perfectly was too good to be true. He had stayed to bathe in the glory of the death. No longer did he need to hide his kills by giving them to bears or eating them.

He wanted to taste nothing of that three eyed freak. His blood had smelled bitter as it spilled in a fountain around him. The memory was etched in his mind and it was more glorious than any of his thousands of other killings. This had taken pure skill and planning. It was a total thrill of the hunt. The blood he did want to taste was not that far from him now but she was protected. The little prey would need to wait and he needed to escape the attention he had brought.

For now he had to prepare and change everything about himself visually. He looked at the packet of
red hair dye. It was going to change the blonde to red and add some extensions. He checked over the other items he had on the bed. There were new coloured contacts and a different style of clothing. Tien had known him before somehow and with the amount of agents that would be backing up Bulma there was still a chance there were others like Tien not too far away. He needed the power of surprise and if they could recognise you it would be over for him. He could not directly fight anyone of a higher level than a normal human. He double checked his blades; years ago he would have scoffed at the idea of using such tools. Now they were necessary for his own survival.

The storm rattled the window of the bathroom and he could hardly see the street below for white. Tonight was not the time to hunt or escape. He would leave Bulma one last message if he could. He wanted her to fear him as her life was going to be his to control.

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Android Three was out in the storm dragged along by one of the hyper android hounds. The robot beast had got a scent so even the large Android struggled to keep control as it pulled on the metal lead. The tall Android was a reject and as such was not made for fighting. He secretly wished he wouldn't find Vegeta even though the hound would be doing the capture. They Android Hounds were built to capture people alive, more specifically Vegeta. They had been used on trails before in small towns, Three knew exactly how quick they could grab someone and tie them up with ki restraining shackles.

All it needed was to bite onto the person and the capture programs would automatically get to work at subduing the victim. There was a small risk that the person could be injured by the bite or maybe if they were strong they might not let the hound get a chance to bite. This was what Three really wanted to avoid. He was programmed for fighting but he knew his limits. He was a reject for a reason, he was made so long ago that he felt a relic compared to these newly made hounds they were relegated to handling. He felt his joints creek and groan in the cold weather and it was only a matter of time before he was broken beyond repair and would be scrapped for spare parts. He did not fear death only Gero's command that he was useless.

"What now?" He said as the hound jerked him across the road. A colourful car, perhaps the city's taxi. He couldn't tell the snow was blurring his vision. He would need to switch to heat vision. He pulled back the dog to try to listen. All he could hear was wind whistling loudly and maybe a female voice.

"This is your place?"

"I don't wanna go….

The dog tugged hard and Three could hear several beeps from it that sounded like the dog was preparing to take down a victim.

'I don't think that's the target.' He thought but if he could get a hostage that knew the whereabouts of Vegeta that may add to his usefulness to the Dr. His vision gave him three red figures that had got out of the car and were going to a house. They hadn't seemed to notice him as one of the women seemed in some trouble. Two of the females were helping the other walk and had propped her up.

"Terrible night for walking the dog…ha ha!" A girl laughed as he got closer.

"He's full of energy." Three tried to explain and he slightly panicked. His vision had become stuck on heat and he rattled his head to try and correct himself. 'No, don't break down now! Not here!'

"Are you alright?" One of the sober one's asked.
"Just c-co-cold…" Three muttered and his hand lost his grip as the error code continued shutting down his body. 'Can't… move…'

The hound was loose and Bulma cried out as her bag was snatched by the hound. Launch yelled out in anger as her friend was attacked and she threw her fists onto the dog's head. "Gettoffa ma friend!" She drunkenly raged at it.

Viola tried to hold the enraged Launch back but her blonde violent side had come out and she was much stronger than the woman expected. The hound spat out the bag, the smell of the target was on it but that was not a humanoid.

"Target miss, self protection mode activated."

"That thing just talked!" Bulma shouted, "It's a robot!"

"Get out of the way!" Viola said trying to pull on Launch but she was kicked backwards by the shorter blonde and she fell backwards into the snow.

Launch tried kicking the robot mutt but she quickly regretted it. She yelped in drunken pain and rage as the dog bit down hard on her leg. There was a loud snapping noise as her bone cracked under the pressure. Bulma grabbed the chain that the Android had dropped but she felt her strength was no match to pulling this dog down and she had to let go before her arms were ripped off.

Viola jumped forward out of the snow her fighting skills kicking in. She may be weaker than the Force two operatives she was working with but she had some skill as a fighter. She quickly tried to remember her training and charged up some ki to connect a punch with the head of the dog. It only made things worse as the dog ripped through Launch's leg and it snarled as it lunged at Viola. Launch was on the ground sobbing tears but her rage was now past all cause of reason. Launch roared in furious anger catching the hound by the neck while it was in mid jump and she flung her head into the beast's torso knocking it down.

"For Tien!" She cried and was amazed when the robot limped back obviously hurt.

Viola swung her leg round to knock the beast back even further.

"Self Protection mode failure… error…" The hound said. Bulma watched it carefully, the noise wasn't coming from the mouth of the dog, it was from the collar around its neck. She didn't hesitate as she pulled out her gun and shot the flashing light on the dog's collar. There was a spark and the hound's eyes seemed to flash red.

"The weak point is the neck!" Bulma said.

This was enough of a hint for Viola as she also drew her gun and fired in the same area as Bulma had done.

A drunk Launch let out a laugh as the hound's head rocked backwards and flew off its body. The laugh soon turned into hysterical sobs as the shock and adrenalin wore off and she could feel the pain from her leg.

"Use the panic button!" Viola snapped. "We need to get back up now!"

Bulma nodded in agreement and pushed down on her gadget on her belt. The small ki sensor had been unable to pick up the threat from the robot dog. Bulma examined the man that had been with a dog. He appeared human, but that could mean anything. To be safe she put her ki restraining handcuffs on him and rolled his large body onto its side.
"Well, not to put too dampener on things but I think we did okay…" Viola said out of breath. She was tending to Launch making sure to wrap up her stump to stop the bleeding by applying a tourniquet. "Sorry, I couldn't get the dog to let go…"

"Is… Is… alright…" Launch gasped. She was feeling terribly sober now. "Just need to rest a little…"

"Keep your eyes open." Bulma ordered. She was busy finding something to keep the mauled leg in. "I want you to live for me!"

"I got nothing… no more…" Launch sighed.

"From what I could tell you made an excellent FBI agent." Viola chatted to her softly. "Those were some fierce moves you've got."

"I could have been …in….Force Two if I really had trained hard ….or been sane." Launch laughed sadly.

"Might even try asking for a job back." Viola said. "There's a shortage of capable fighters like you. There might be a chance to get taken back."

"If… I live… I might try…” Launch gasped.

Bulma stayed quiet as she used snow to pack the leg up in. She had felt her uselessness again as she had been unable to draw any strength at all. Both these girls had demonstrated to her the use of how good ki control worked. It was something Bulma had always failed at, she would be always Force Three investigator till she retired at this rate.

She heard the beeping on her phone and quickly answered.

"We're on our way to your location now." Yamcha said in an urgent voice. "Are you okay? Is it Vegeta?"

"No, just something… else." Bulma said. "We have one casualty and one suspect, no main target. Come quickly we need emergency treatment."

"Understood. Just light a flare and we're going to drop in as soon as we see it."

Bulma cut off the call. "Help's coming." She rummaged in her slightly tattered bag and found a small stick flare. It sparked up.

"There's so much blood." Launch mumbled.

Bulma sat down next to her slightly shivering as her coat was being used for the leg.

"It's going to be fine." Bulma said. "We got it under control."

Launch nodded silently her strength to even form a word was leaving her.

"Keep it together, help's coming." Viola repeated to her.

As she said that Bulma watched wide eyed as Yamcha and two other FBI agents flew silently down beside them.

"The Calvary's here." Yamcha said looking round. "What is that?" He pointed to the black mess of bolts and half a dog shape.
"A robot, get someone to wrap it up as evidence against this suspect and bring him in."

"Contacting the local hospital." Mikan said as soon as he saw Launch. "Keep her talking… she's too quiet."

"We know…we're trying." Viola hissed at him. "We're just a bit tired now, right Launch."

"So…tired…." Launch slurred as her head nodded down.

"Mikan's the trained medic; let him have a look at her." Yamcha said. "What the hell just happened here?"

"I tell you what I think did happen." Bulma sneered as she looked at the pieces left over from the dog. "There's more than just us looking for Vegeta."

"Get that suspect under guard at the hospital then, he's a key witness." Yamcha ordered.

"Look at Yellow Belly… all full of orders…." Launch tried joking but she could only flop over as Mikan checked her leg was securely bandaged.

"Nice to see you too Launch." Yamcha blushed as hearing his old nickname. "You're not looking so good."

"Bit… drunk too…” Launch sniffed. "Could even say… legless…” She softly giggle but gagged as it made the pain worse and she clenched over instead.

"Try not to make her laugh Special Agent." Bulma lightly scolded.

"I…I didn't…” Yamcha objected and turned away his blush getting too out of control. He didn't like being so close to all these women. Bulma just smirked at it finding it totally adorable.

The group of agents soon got the scene cleaned up and a large heli-plane came down to pick them all up. Once they were done the street was cleared of all signs of their activities.

"So lucky this happened at night." Bulma said. The need for secrecy was very important in the FBI.

"Only lucky thing about it." Viola agreed as the craft lifted them up and onto the hospital. "I really need to get back to training."

Bulma silently agreed but knew she still didn't have the skills she wanted no matter how much she trained.

The five agents rode silently to the hospital Android Three lay unconscious inside the plane wrapped up next to the shivering traumatised Launch. No one seemed to notice the small light flashing on him under the blankets. It would be an important fact that they would all miss until it was too late.

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Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: Such a rollercoaster of a chapter! I hope the pacing of it was okay for everyone. I wasn't sure if I could get the confrontation would be too much but I think it
added an exciting conclusion to this chapter. We're not yet at the confrontation between Bulma and Vegeta we're all waiting for but it is coming. I tried to add more to this chapter about Vegeta's feelings for Bulma. As I said this is not going in the way of romance and whatever Vegeta is feeling it's not going anywhere nice.

Force Two of this Universe's FBI do have high level fighting powers but it's no where near the same level as Goku or Vegeta at full power.

Next time: We're off to hospital and we'll see what's happening with those androids.
The early morning of North City in winter was dark and cold. Bulma looked out over the twinkling lights as the illuminations lit up the city below. Launch had become stable but it had taken all night to amputate the mauled part of her leg and work on saving her life. She had lost so much blood, the high alcohol in her blood hadn't helped the matter. The doctors had done their best though and she was now asleep but she would probably never walk again. Not without some sort of artificial limb.

Even though Bulma had done her best to save her limb but the severed part was too broken to reattach. If it had been a clean cut there was a good chance to restore the leg but the dog had ripped her leg and shattered her bone. It was mauled beyond any repair. Launch had taken it well but she was heavily sedated. Once she really woke up Bulma expected another rampage or a drunken adventure. She had tried to warn the staff, but they didn't seem to believe her.

All that was left was the unknown man that was still asleep in the prison at the police station. Bulma also had to have a closer look at the dog to make a basic report.

"Ready to go?" Viola asked. They needed to go back to the police station to box up the body of Tien.

"Not really, I've not really slept much."

"Me neither." Viola scoffed. "If we get the victim wrapped up and sent back to the labs we might get some downtime back at the hotel."

"I want to come back to check on Launch." Bulma admitted. "I might not sleep till I'm back home in my own bed."

"You really go all out in an investigation." Viola admired. "Just don't forget to keep me as your back up."
"Seems you've noticed my technique or lack of it." Bulma smirked. "I still wonder where the Ice Queen nickname came from."

"You've got bad people skills." Viola explained. "Don't know why, you seem to get on fine with Launch."

"I don't trust many people anymore." Bulma said.

"Well, I've got your back." Viola said as they walked to the rented car.

"Is it okay if I drive?" Bulma asked as she wanted to change the topic and not really reply to her.

"Sure, go ahead."

"I feel calmer when I drive." She tried to explain as she shifted the manual car into gear.

"Just as well I'm not so good with the stick."

"We really need it in the weather." Bulma explained as she smoothly moved up the gears. She hadn't driven for a while but it seemed to naturally come back to her. It made her wish she could get into the pilot seat of the helicopter and give it a go.

"The prisoner still hasn't woken up so I might not have much to do." Viola said. "Will you be wrapping up the robot?"

"Yeah, need to make sure it's completely disabled. It's just basic robot engineering but I can do it fine."

"You really should be in the science division."

"I hear that all the time." Bulma sighed as she decided not to repeat her stubborn vow. "I just want to be an Agent."

Viola nodded but could see the tense way Bulma clutched the wheel and decided not to distract her any further. They keep driving in silence down the hill as the early morning sun began to rise.

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The Androids hidden in a small warehouse in the city were now down to three. The leader Seven had stayed up by the door trying to track down the signal from Android Three. The other two stayed with the hounds to try to keep them under control.

"They're getting scent signals from this area." Four said. "I guess this is near where Vegeta worked. The scent is too weak but we have something to track down once the sun rises."

"We need to split up, Three is still AWOL." Seven sighed as he jumped down from his vantage point. "We must track him down and if we need to activate his self-destruct."

"You think it'll go that way?" Six asked. "I know Three hasn't called in for four hours but maybe he's hiding somewhere or broken down."

"If that's the case, we can get him back here and recover him." Seven said in a flat voice. "If he's been captured, then we're detonating his bomb and taking out everyone with him."

"I guess that's why you're the leader." Six scoffed. "You never do things with any empathy."
"I am a machine." Seven retorted. "We are all that, do not misunderstand your faulty sense of survival as anything else."

Six winced at that remark, it was part of why he was a reject. He would often refuse orders above his own self interests. That small programming error inside him had been slowly building to include his whole team. He wanted them all to keep functioning together. They had been a team for so long now that it made him wish even deeper that he was in charge and not the almost perfect Seven.

"We know Three is weak to cold, if he hadn't lost the rock, paper, scissors he would be here now." Four sighed.

"Never mind that, lets head out, Six you're in charge of tracking Vegeta's scent, send a transmission if you come in contact with the target." Seven instructed. He didn't trust Six with the important mission of finding Three. "Four, you're with me, take out the remote tracking and find him."

The robots saluted each other and split up. Two of the hounds left, setting them into sleep mode. Six didn't speak as he left Seven and Four to tend to their hounds as he tried to focus on his task. The fact that Seven didn't trust him didn't hurt him. He was a machine, all he felt was a state of uselessness and frustration. Six considered himself a better leader than Seven, they needed Three to come back alive. The way Seven was looking he was intending to shut down Three forever. He didn't like leaving the group alone but he inwardly hoped he could find Three on his travels.

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The police station was in a busy state when they arrived. Bulma and Viola looked around in amazement as it seemed even busier than yesterday when they had a murder investigation.

"Why is everyone in such a rush?" Viola asked at the front desk.

"Today's the Snow Festival." An officer explained to the pair as they walked into the main offices.

"That's today?" Bulma said surprised. North City was only famous for two things, snow and their festival about snow which they had every year.

"I didn't even check when that was." Viola sighed. "That does explain the huge amount of illuminations."

"Some investigators we are." Bulma chuckled. "I'm going to go check on the left over robot dog, it needs packed up for HQ, there's also Tien...

"Want me to go down and check up on how the transportation is doing?" Viola asked. "I don't think our suspect is going anywhere soon."

The pair split up and Viola made a little tap to her belt and radio to hint to Bulma, 'stay in contact.' Bulma gave a little wave of acknowledgement and made her way through the maze of corridors into the small room that the robot dog parts had been placed. The charred remains of robot were in an evidence box on the table. She took out some plastic bags from her backpack and was ready to label them all up. A quick look over the hound it seemed a very familiar design. It reminded her of the monkeys she had seen in her Uncle's lab. The ones that gave her nightmares and a need to never think of science and technology in the same way again.

There was a strange smell coming from the remains. She pulled on her rubber gloves and tried to block it out. She was just going to tag and bag it and call it a day. She had her hotel bed waiting for her and maybe even a hot shower. She took her time taking out her equipment from her bag. She was tired and she had to make sure it was all done right. She charged up the electronic magnetic
disrupter and placed her own electric items in a safe box. It would take a minute to charge up so she placed the tripod for the EMP on the desk and lined up the remains under the three legs of the tripod. Everything under the tripod would be charged with a large shock of electromagnetic energy that would disconnect any working sensors or tracking devices.

Bulma put her goggles on and pressed the button. The large crack of the electricity lit up the room for a second and Bulma coughed as the smell got more intense. She guessed it had scorched some hair or something similar. She didn't pay any attention to it trying not to look too carefully at the robot. This was bringing back some bad memories of her trauma. She didn't need to let her get triggered by anything now and she promised her inner teen she'd have a good cry later. She had some work to finish.

She numbered up the bags and started placing the smaller pieces in first. They all seemed to be metal and covered in a fake fur. She had assumed that was what the smell was, but she got to a larger part, the part that had been the head. There was a fluid dripping from the metal skull and as she looked closer she could see that the fluid was red. She poked her finger into the dripping hole and coiled back as she felt something soft. Whoever had made this android had used real brains inside the animal. It was half organic!

She threw the metal skull back onto the ground and she began gagging uncontrollably. The memories were spinning as she was brought back to that warehouse full of caged monkeys. All of them screaming as electrodes were stuck into their exposed brains. Their small bodies missing normal limbs and with large robotic ones attached to them instead. She felt herself cry out and couldn't stop the large sob coming from herself. The imaginary world inside her head faded and she came back to the small evidence room.

The tears came down and she hunched down, turning away from the dog and looking at the grey wall. It had been a while since she had gone into a full traumatic episode like that. Robots and animal experiments always seemed to trigger it for her. It disheartened her to think that she could still be bothered by it after so long. If anything this android dog would not be the last of them. She had spotted the obvious number on its side to realise there were probably more of these creatures.

"Why did it have to be cyborgs?" She wondered to herself. If anything it told her that this was not an accident, the dog and man were bounty hunters of some sort.

These Bounty hunters must have had a tip off as well. They needed to track down Vegeta soon and get him under lockdown. Bulma was now more afraid to take on these androids than she was Vegeta. The fact that they used real organic parts sickened her so much. She didn't know if she could face those hounds again.

"This one was numbered 10, what about the others?" She wondered to herself. She made a small memo to the technician this would be passed about to give her a report on the scale of the cyborg parts used. There were few companies that made these, it would be easy enough to track down. She continued to pack away the parts. The monotonous job managing to calm her down and her hands had stopped shaking. She finished it up with labelling the post to be sent to HQ and she started to pack up her backpack.

She was only halfway through when a shaking through the building and yelling from the hall. She dropped what she had been doing and rushed out to see what was going on.

"There's an attack, all men to the holding cells!" An order yelled out.

Bulma looked at the smoke and checked she still had her gun in her side pocket. The holding cell was where the man that assaulted them was being held.
"FBI! Let me through!" Bulma snapped and flashed her ID that was swinging on her neck strap to make sure she could get through. A fire had started and some of the Police officers were rushing forward with fire extinguishers.

She had to stand back as she let the officers move forward to deal with the huge flames. "Has anyone seen Agent Viola, my partner?" She inwardly cursed at herself as she already knew she didn't have all of her equipment with her.

There were some blank stares and a mumble of negatives from the ones that heard her. Bulma stared into the main area and could see a hole in the wall with two figures standing. The Captain of the Police was a tall man who was facing up against these intruders. He had charged towards the smaller man but he had easier flipped the large Captain back as if he was a fly.

"Mission complete." He said and held up his hand which started to glow.

"Blast attack, back off, he's a ki wielder!" Bulma shouted and some of the officers took to hiding for cover. It was not enough though and a flash of light followed by a large explosion sent some men falling backwards and lying silently still.

"We do not need to aggravate this any more." The man said.

His dress was similar to the captured man and Bulma assumed this was a rescue mission of some sort. Bulma looked down to her belt to find her emergency call button but she hadn't taken it out of the box in the evidence room. Her ki detector was also there, she couldn't even check their power levels.

"Federal Agent." A voice called out. It was Viola she had her gun drawn and was pointed towards the men. "Back up of a fighting force is on its way!" The taller woman gave a quick glance to Bulma and she nodded back standing up from cover and drawing her gun. She shot towards the man and panicked when it ricocheted off him.

"This does not concern the FBI." The man said ignoring that they had their guns drawn to him. He hovered above the ground and looked to his companion. "We will not meet again, detonate Three." The pair had left from the hole they left jumping down a few stories below.

"Wait…detonate?" Bulma echoed. 'Oh, crap, a bomb?'

Viola had the same thought and grabbed onto Bulma dragging her backwards as the inside of the cell exploded into more fire and shrapnel. There were cries and screams as the explosion rocked the building. Bulma moaned as she felt the weight of Viola covering her she was a low ki user and seemed to know some barrier skills. It didn't stop her from getting hit backward from the blast as she and Bulma were thrown into the wall.

"All able men get the injured out of here!" The Captain ordered as he tried to shout orders through the chaos. His strong voice seemed to be strained in the smoke.

The attackers were gone and with them a large hole had been left in the wall. Flames were being brought under control by the sprinkler system but the groans and gasps of the people around her told Bulma there were probably a few casualties or even dead bodies.

"Did you get an energy signal from them?" Viola gasped. "I think my detector isn't working, the alarm didn't sound off."

"I left mine in the room." Bulma answered. "Are you able to move?"
Viola rolled over and gave a small gasp of pain. "Best I can do." She said bravely.

"Have you got your radio?" Bulma asked and saw her tapping to her belt. "I'll update the situation to back up." She took the walkie talkie from Viola's belt and tried to summon her strength to stand up. She wobbled slightly and walked forward. The attackers were gone but as she went closer to what once had been a cell she could see something all too familiar to her now. She felt a dread in the pit of her stomach and moved closer to check. The body of the suspect had been left there what part of him had remained made it clear to Bulma what they were dealing with. It only took her half a minute of inspecting the remains before she walked back to her partner who had propped herself up to the side of the wall.

"I don't think the ki detectors would be any good. I think they were a new type of threat." Bulma explained. "The man in the cell was some sort of android. I guess the attackers are too."

"Seriously?" Viola groaned. "A grade one threat that we can't even detect?"

Bulma patted Viola on the shoulder. "Thanks though you saved me."

"I told you, I got your back."

Bulma felt herself smile to the woman, her first real smile she felt she could genuinely give for many years. "It's a nice feeling." Bulma said and clicked on the radio. "Agent Briefs, requesting back-up."

"Back-up is almost there, please state the situation." Agent Yamcha replied.

"Two men are possible Grade One threats are running away from Police HQ now, possibly flying unable to confirm. Their ki and power levels are unknown. Possible robot threat. Send word to FBI HQ we need clean up crews and medics stat!"

"What is Agent Viola and your condition?"

"Unable to pursue attackers, Agent Viola is injured but I only have minor lacerations. Suspect has been destroyed. Confirmed robot, possible bounty hunters."

"Understood." Yamcha said. "Stay safe, do not pursue any further and back up is on its way."

"Affirmative." Bulma replied. "Suspects last seen heading West over the HQ. Agent Viola and I will be taking some downtime to recover."

"Take care Bulma." Yamcha said and signed off. "We'll be there soon."

"You know, we shouldn't ever say, how can this day get any worse?" Viola joked and gave a tense smile to Bulma.

"I think you're right." Bulma agreed. "Let's not taunt fate." Though secretly inside she was wondering how her day could get any worse.

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Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: Still no Vegeta but it is building up, soon, I promise. Only don't ask how
long soon is, I don't do deadlines.
Deadly Encounter

Chapter Summary

Bulma tries to recover from the Android attack but there is no rest from her continuing nightmare.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Dragonball Z, Silence of the Lambs and Hannibal. I do not make money from this story.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 32

Deadly Encounter

It wasn’t long till the rest of the small team joined them at the Police Station. Special Agent Yamcha was first on the scene and directed some of his men to search the area for the androids. Bulma watched with some envy, it would be nice to have that kind of power to control the situation. She was feeling powerless again and the feeling of fatigue was catching up on her. She slowly spoke to the medic Mikan as he came to check on both her and Viola.

“Looks like you got out with just a scratch.” He told her as he stuck a band aid on her cheek. He turned and shook his head towards Viola. “Can’t say the same about you.”

“I just wanted to get your attention.” Viola joked but her gestures made her wince over in pain.

“Agent Briefs, you’re free to go, YOU Agent Viola however are going to have to come with me!”

“Sounds nice, speak to you later Bulma.” Viola said as she saw Bulma taking the chance to leave.

Yeah, the most thing I need right now is my sleep.” She stood up to leave both Mikan and Viola to quarrel almost like a married couple. She sort of felt some envy for how light hearted Viola was about it all. To come face to face with something that was impenetrable to bullets terrified Bulma. The guns she had relied on to go up against all the monsters in the world were now useless. The Force 2 FBI agents were at least trained in a form of fighting. Viola had shown that even in moments she was able to pull her out of harms way faster than she could comprehend. Her ability made Bulma even more envious.

She walked over to Agent Yamcha she needed to report in before she was able to really leave.

“I got the all clear.” She said giving a small salute. “I don’t have any injuries to report.”

Yamcha stopped writing down his notes and his face went red as he tried to look at her. “That’s great, Agent Bulma. Though it looks like you got a scratch.”
Bulma touched her scratched cheek and tried to smile but she felt herself becoming embarrassed about it. “I got hit with a bit of shrapnel. It’s nothing that a band aid won’t fix.”

There was a quiet pause as her superior seemed to struggle with what to say. It was hard not to find his pained efforts a little adorable as he tried to find the words to comfort her.

“Am I free to leave Special Agent Yamcha?” She leaned over and turned her eyes up, it just seemed too easy to tease him now. Once she had figured out he was just weak with women it made things so much easier to understand. He avoided her gaze and tried to keep his voice calm.

“You’re free to leave….” He said with a cough. “Take care…”

“You’ll receive my full report later.” She said.

“Just be sure that you keep yourself out of any more trouble.”

“Sorry, I just attract it.” Bulma gave an awkward shrug and tried to laugh it off but he gave her an uncomfortable smile and looked away. In the back of her mind she wondered if she could ever get a similar rapport as Viola did with Agent Mikan. She felt like she was back in Junior High school with the amount of stiffness in their interacting.

“I wish we could give you an escort but we’re short of agents just now, you need to go straight back to the hotel and stay with your back-up alert and GPS switched on.” Yamcha said as he focused on reading his clipboard rather than looking at her.

Bulma nodded, she knew that her GPS was not there for helping her with any navigation but for them to keep a track on her current location. A small reminder to herself that she was still on probation and not really a member of the team. She was just their bait. The cool reminder made her lean back into a more defensive position.

“I’ll make sure I do.” Bulma said with her Ice Queen mask coming on.

“You have my direct number, keep me updated when you’re back at the hotel.” Yamcha said. “I don’t want you to feel like you’re not part of the team. Your knowledge of robots has really helped us out. We’ll be sending all your findings back with the remains of the robot.”

“My investigative skills are going to be tested at least.” Bulma answered and turned away to leave. ‘For the time being, I can still prove to myself that I’m more useful than just bait.’ She thought to herself as she made her way out of all the chaos of the police station. She took one quick check of her equipment before she got into the car.

North City seemed to be unaware of the Police Station’s current situation and the streets were filled with people getting on with their own business. The large hole on the side of the wall had already been covered with a large poster.

The Androids were not an immediate threat as far as she could see. They only seemed to be interested in leaving no real evidence behind and detonating their disabled team-mate. As Bulma made her way onto the main road she found herself being held up by the traffic as the start of the festival seemed to be in full swing. The dim winter light was being illuminated by lanterns that lined the streets with lots of twinkling fairy lights. It was such a different feeling than anything she’d seen in West City.

She turned onto another road and felt a small jolt as she saw the car behind her follow her path. This wasn’t a normal main road; most of the other traffic had flowed on down the other road. She peered into her rear view mirror and was unable to see the driver but her instinct was in full alert. The stress
and tiredness of the full day was blown away by the sudden rush of adrenaline. She couldn’t completely rule out her being a target for the Androids.

‘I can’t let myself get complacent.’ She reminded herself. She made a detour from her hotel and turned back onto the main road. The blue car followed her manoeuvre. The blood was pumping in her head as her full suspicion was confirmed and she turned into a car park. The car was right behind her. Bulma slipped her hand into her heavy coat and unclipped her gun. She still couldn’t see the driver; the dim light didn’t seem to give her much of a hint.

She pulled her car into an open parking spot and looked behind her. The small blue car went past and she was able to catch a glimpse of an old lady hunched over the steering wheel and slowly making her way to another empty space.

‘I am getting far too paranoid!’ Bulma groaned, but she couldn’t really blame herself. She clipped her gun back into the safety of her holster and exited her car. She needed some fresh air to try to clear her head. Her heart was still thumping, she was sure she would have a heart attack by the end of the day. The cold icy air helped as she was reminded of the minus temperature and the glory that is the car heater. She watched the car that had been following her and see the little old lady step out in solid snow boots and make her way towards the carnival that was near the car park.

‘Back to the hotel, I’ve wasted enough time.’ Bulma scolded herself and as she turned on the smooth ice she felt her smart business shoes slip. She cursed her need for fashion over function and was surprised when she was caught by a kind passer by.

“Be careful, one wrong slip and you could break that pretty neck of yours.” The stranger said to her.

She moved to say thank you and to perhaps rebuke him a little but the man was already moving away and in the direction of the old lady. Bulma’s ears where burning where he had breathed those words to her in such a low voice. The chill and eerie nostalgia about it was too much and she knew… it had to be…

“Wait!” She called out. ‘Goddamn it that voice!’ It was Vegeta, she could see the man with the cap enter the crowded carnival and she tried to keep tabs on him. His hair had changed, no longer a large spiked crown of hair. It seemed to be chopped and firmly placed under a hat. She could tell though from the body build that he was perhaps larger but the height was right, but she had to confirm her sighting and she made her way into the gleaming lights of the small fun fair.

Bulma had no time to use her radio but pressed her panic button, she wasn’t going to let this fish off the hook so easily. The support team would come to her as soon as they could. They weren’t too far away; she had a real chance to catch him.

A carousel was in the centre as crowds of children and young couples were gathered to wait in line. She pushed past them all her sights set on the stocky man that was moving quite fast. The Ki alert wasn’t alerting her to any energies, it was safe to assume he didn’t have any of his powers but he was more likely a better hand to hand combatant than Bulma. She knew she had to get a clean shot of him with her gun to knock him unconscious. The amount of people wasn’t helping her anxiety.

“Please move, FBI.” She snapped at a mother as she blocked her way, she flashed her card and quickly regretted it. The crowd became a little alerted to her presence and some adults moved out of the way. The children and some of the couples seemed oblivious to her. She kept moving forward the distracting cheerful music of the carousel clashed with Bulma’s inner terror she was feeling. She didn’t really doubt who she had seen, she had to stay close and get the others to come join her soon.

She continued on through the gorgeous illuminations and skilful snow sculptures. If she had any
sense of her surroundings other than her goal she would have taken her time to admire them all. The people around her were moving at a slow pace and she kept pushing through, following the bulky man in the green coat that was getting further out of her sight. As she came to a large queen statue made of snow a rush of school children blocked her path as they moved together as one class. She silently cursed and locked onto that hat and coat. The moment was gone and she felt the terror in her stomach as she knew she couldn’t even catch a glimpse of the suspect.

She felt the side of her body and for the hard assurance that her gun was still in her coat. It was all for nothing she felt. He would be long gone by now and she couldn’t hope to find him. He was perhaps shorter than she remembered but it had to be him, that chill she had felt was real. It was a feeling of dread she had hoped she’d never feel again. She glanced over at the large Queen that seemed to be holding a shining ball. It was quite pretty and Bulma felt a twinge of reflection. There was a real Ice Queen, though it was made of snow. She felt distracted slightly as she wondered if this was how others saw her. It lightened her darkened mood and she took it in for a moment before returning to her search.

“See anything you like?” A whisper came up behind her and before Bulma knew it she was held in a tight grip. He had been stalking round behind her as she got sidetracked by the children in the way. He had seen his chance and he pounced.

“Let me go!” Bulma hissed as she looked into the dark eyes she wished she’d never see again. They were so devoid of any emotion other than pure malice and cruelty. She tried to stare back at his intense stare but couldn’t. She squirmed and tried to find her way out of his pincer grip.

“Let’s not make a scene little agent, you’re useless when you’re not behind a gun.” His arms had wrapped around her as if she was in a hug but she could tell he had a knife pinned into her coat. The blade had sliced through her shirt and was too dangerously close to her skin. “Now don’t shout or you will be gutted.”

“My back-up is on their way.” Bulma said.

“But we’re only lovers out on a walk my dear.” Vegeta sighed ignoring her threat as he led her to a more quiet part of the display. “It’s best to cuddle up when it’s cold.”

“I don’t like your form of cuddling.” Bulma snapped, she wondered where her confidence had come from. She was petrified as she felt the blade digging into her skin. His movements though not fast were very deliberate and he knew exactly how to hold her and how to disarm her. The straps to her gun holster were cut and there was a thud as her gun dropped down into the snow. A sharp pain told her he’d already cut her slightly and it wouldn’t take much for it to be much deeper. She could feel herself sweating so much that her undershirt was becoming drenched.

She pulled in her courage and continued to ask the question that was on her mind. “What do you want Vegeta?”

“It’s too soon to reveal it all now my little one.” His deep voice hinted. “I just wanted to say hello since we’re only passing.”

“I thought you wanted to kill me…”

“The thought has crossed my mind but I have such a more interesting plan for you.” He said his face so close to hers she could smell his natural odour. The rough skin seemed to scratch her skin as he cradled her body still. “Be a good girl and keep your head down. There are others that may be more dangerous than me out there.”
Bulma couldn’t answer any more her bravery had completely left her and she could feel tears welling up as the knife digging into her skin really started to sting. It seemed to her that this was how she was going to die.

“That’s a nice face you’re making, you should do it more often.” Vegeta breathed on her as she felt his tongue lick up one of her stray tears. “Your smell is too tempting than you know, I could gut you open right here and now.”

“Leave…” Bulma panted. “Leave me… alone….”

“I can’t do that little agent, we have a connection now.” Vegeta purred in a low voice. He sounded more like a tiger than a house cat. “Till we meet again Bulma. I know we will, I’ll make sure of it. For now it looks like your little toy on your side has attracted your white knight.”

Vegeta could sense a power level approaching them; it was too dangerous to stay any further. As a parting gift he clutched onto her as the knife grazed along her side cutting into the skin. Bulma gave an empty breath from the shock and she felt herself thrown to the ground and into the snow. She cried out finally as she was free. It was a scream of pain and frustration being let out with that one cry. The people around her seemed to suddenly notice her presence.

“AGENT BULMA!” A man ran out of the crowd. She couldn’t recognise him; the world around her had become a blur of tears and blood. She watched in horror as the beautiful snow began to turn crimson around her. Other screams were heard as the people around her saw how injured she was.

Agent Yamcha clutched onto her and tried to find the knife wound. “Stay with us Agent!” He snapped at her. He had come running when the alarm had sounded. “I thought you said you were going to stay out of trouble?”

Bulma rolled her head back as she realised it was Agent Yamcha and she reached up to him. “Sorry, I goofed.” She tried to laugh but her side was screaming in pain and it was taking all her effort not to scream and cry along with the pain. She felt some safety as he found her wound and started putting pressure on it.

“Agent Mikan! Where’s our Medic?” Yamcha shouted in panic as Bulma was beginning to go limp in her arms. The larger man burst through the leaving hoards of people complete with his medical bag.

“Here Sir.” He said and landed right beside them.

“Bulma, Mikan’s here, just say hello. Don’t black out now.”

“Keep her head up, that’s fine.” Mikan assured Yamcha. “It’s okay Bulma, don’t worry if you faint. We’ll patch you up good as new.” Her coat was pulled to the side and her shirt pulled up. “It’s not so deep but it’s cut into an artery, there’s also a lot of scratches, it seems to hit her side, maybe her kidney or liver could be in danger. We’ll have to move her once I get a bandage on to stop the bleeding.”

The words Mikan spoke were floating around Bulma. She was desperately gasping and pointing to the crowd where Vegeta had ran away. He was getting away, why weren’t they chasing him? Yamcha noticed where she was pointing and rounded up a few of his men that were trying to manage the mass of people. “Agent Bramble, we’re going after Bulma’s attacker. Agent Cassis and Mikan will stay here to tend to any injured…”

“Aye, no danger.” Agent Bramble replied and sprinted into the throng. There were small scattering
of blood from the knife that lead the agents on. He was the best tracker on the team.

“Let’s not let him get away!” Yamcha said as he followed the large Agent Bramble into the mass of people. Bulma blinked back the tears as she wondered to herself if she really was a danger magnet. She thought as the drugs kicked in that Yamcha had really come for her. He was like a white knight for her childhood dreams only for now it seemed like she was in a never ending nightmare.

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Chapter End Notes

Author’s Note: Aw, Damn Vegeta! Why you do that? Oh yeah, ‘cos I made him a soulless literal flesh-eating evil bastard. Whatever relation Bulma and Vegeta have it won’t be the usual romance, not in this story. Though that doesn’t mean I can’t have fun with their chemistry.

We leave in a cliff-hanger as I honestly thought so many things happened in this chapter that I needed to break it up as the action will keep continuing as we’ll get the show down between Yamcha and Vegeta or will something happen to make this situation worse.

So next chapter we’ll find out if Vegeta gets caught or not.
Thanks for the reviews and if you spot any errors in this chapter let me know and I’ll try to fix it as soon as I can.
A Lucky Escape

Chapter Summary

Vegeta needs to escape from not only the FBI but the Androids too!

Chapter Notes

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See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 33

A Lucky Escape

The Snow Festival in the centre of North City had come to an abrupt stop as stalls began to shut down. Someone had been attack and no-one were taking any chances with the latest murder that was still in the news. People were flocking away out of the Snow Statue area and heading for a safer place.

For Vegeta he wasn’t far enough away, he was cursing his own weakness. He licked his hand that had held his knife. Bulma's blood was like nectar to him. She was so much more delectable than she had smelt. It would be a pleasure to cut her down a piece at a time. He only had to get that chance again and to do that it was necessary that he retreated for now. Bulma had seemed to be trembling in his arms, her cool mask slipped in that moment and she was a pawn in his hands.

He inwardly scolded himself. He had got a little out of control for that one moment. He had been watching the Police station when he had seen her exiting and driving away in her car. He had only intended to follow her and find where her hotel was. It hadn't been his plan to touch her but he had seen her panicking in the car park. Her weak body almost tempting him to slice her open. It had been his own temptation to play with her that had him in this position now.

The little FBI dogs of Piccolo were after him by the feel of the energy and shouting behind him. He hurried his pace up and kept his hands in his pockets to hide the blood stains. He caught a glimpse of one of them and made a sharp turn hunching over to hide himself amongst the people. He had not expected Bulma to carry some sort of tracking device, they had come to her in this mass of crowd too quickly to be anything else. He had made sure to get rid of her pesky gun which could damage him. He hadn't expected there would be anything else for him to worry about.

Yamcha was almost upon him. The other agent Bramble was a tracking expert and wasn't going to be fooled so easily. He turned following Vegeta's footprints in the snow.

"Over there Sir!" Bramble snapped pointing in the direction of Vegeta. "Suspect is below average height, wearing walking boots."
"Good work Agent." Yamcha praised the tall man.

Most of the people were aware of an incident in the centre of the snow display and were trying to move away. However, one person moved through against the flow with a dog pulling at the front. A small clearing had been made where the Agents were trying to herd the people back to the car park or the main street and look for Vegeta. He pushed through his one focus was clear. The two agents didn't see him till the hound jumped up.

Vegeta was aware of the danger and had already moved backward into the crowd, the android dog was something that he had seen before. They were easy enough to trick if you got enough people around you and the Snow Festival had given him enough targets to spread his scent around. This he was prepared for ever since he'd inspected the police station in the morning. The attack had gone unnoticed by a normal passerby but it had caught his attention and he knew the hunting squad was here. His old friend Gero had come to try to collect him again.

The robot dog was confused by the lack of scent that it could pinpoint and was taking into his second back up which was power levels. Yamcha and his other friend were generating a power level that the robot hound saw as a threat and it lunged at Yamcha.

Bramble moved in and kicked the dog to the side, the pair went into battle stance and the android pulled off his jacket and stepped forward standing beside his dog.

"Show us your power." The android said as he felt the stand off between two FBI agents and the possible target of Vegeta. Android 6 was not going to let the objective get away; Vegeta had to be in the crowd. He switched his vision into an energy level detector. He quickly analysed the two, they were not at the level that Vegeta was expected to be but they would be difficult to beat for him. Android 6 was not a fully combat Android like 7 was, though he could fight. He signalled for back up, a silent beacon that took only a nano-second for him to set off. They were nearby, the confirmation was sent just as soon as he sent it. Android 7 and 4 were not far away.

"Sir, you are interfering with a FBI investigation, please step back." Yamcha warned.

"F-B-I?" Android 6 sneered, the dog was making some mechanical barking. It knew Vegeta was nearly. "What is this F-B-I to me? I am no alien."

"This guys off his nut!" Agent Bramble shouted and charged into an attack. He kicked the Android in the groin expecting him to wince down so he could grab his head but the android only dodged back out of his grab and kneed the large agent back into the crowd.

"You are the ones interrupting my investigation!" Android 6 snapped and commanded his hound "SEEK!" The Hound moved off from attack mode and started sniffing towards the crowd.

The strength of the Agent's kick hadn't affected Six as much as he thought it would. His confidence in his ability to fight the Agents was rising. The continuing transmission in his head from his Leader that they were on their way furthered his bravado. He kept his guard up and looked directly at the large man that had attacked him. He was weaker than him, he could take down the agent

"Agent Bramble, I trust you can handle him, I'll get the dog." Yamcha ordered his subordinate. He leapt onto the dog pinning it down and stopping it from running into the crowd; but the robot started trying to shake him off and bit at him.

Android 6 swung his fist and knocked the Agent to the side the large man landed into the crowd.

Vegeta was there in the heap of people and reached out to push the Agent pack towards the android.
He rolled to the side covering himself in the snow and acting as if he was injured and merged back into the mass of people. The added scent onto Bramble alerted the dog and it swivelled out of Yamcha's grasp and snapped at Agent Bramble.

"Oh, you Fucking persistent beastie!" Bramble cursed at the snapping hound turning his attention away from the Android. He left an opening and he was knocked back to the ground by a swift punch from Android 6. Yamcha leapt between Bramble and the hound and hit it to the side but his jaws had clamped on. Yamcha inwardly grumbled as he knew what he had to do. It would get him into a lot of trouble but he needed to save his agent. His hand glowed and a ki blast smashed into the dog breaking it in two.

"Thanks Captain…" Bramble huffed. "I feel a bit weak…"

"Stay still Bramble and save your strength." Yamcha said to his crouching Agent. "Seems that they're part of the same group that attacked the Police Station." The enemy were obviously robots of some kind, Yamcha had assumed as much and the dog wasn't organic either. He had felt the hardness of metal rather than muscle. He wasn't sure if it was the extent dog's ability but he couldn't take any chances. The people though escaping to safety were still too near for the Force 2 fighters to really break loose. He had enough control to shock the dog and make it look like a gun. He went into an attack pose and swung his fists forward aiming at the Android.

Six dodged out of the way his inner sensor scanning his attacker. The power levels seemed to be rising to dangerous levels. He kept on moving back and dodging as the Special Agent continued to go on the attack. His punches getting faster that he was struggling to locate the direction.

"Error 501…" He said as a fist collided with his face. The other Agent grabbed him from behind and got him in a hold.

"Got ya!" Bramble chuckled.

Six elbowed the large man and he struggled to escape the hold.

"There's no way for you to escape Bramble's grip." Yamcha said. "I'd like you to answer some questions."

"No…no… not now… I had them… please Seven…" The machine stuttered looking away from Yamcha.

Bramble looked confused and blankly continued to hold tight squeezing the neck of the Attacker.

"Agent!" Yamcha shouted. "Let go!"

Bramble did as he was told and he yet out a yell in surprise. Just as he did that the head of Android Six flew up into the air exploding. The small boom knocked the 2 men back as they were able to defend themselves. The people that were still around were hit with the shrapnel and there were a chorus of screams and more panic as what seemed like a large firework lit up above them.

"Ah…I knocked his block off!" Bramble gasped in amazement and slammed down in the snow. The crowd that had gathered to watch the fight now fled in unison away from the explosion in panic.

Vegeta took this moment to run quickly, he'd seen the other android in the opposite side. It had simply been watching the fight rather than joining in. He needed to escape in the mass of fleeing people before that other Android noticed him and the FBI went back to their tracking. He guessed it was the adrenaline, but he could feel a small surge of energy in him and he outran the crowd and took a turn into an alley. He assailed quickly up the building and continued over the roofs only
stopping when he knew he was far enough away. He was finished with North City. He needed to leave as soon as possible. He knew it was dangerous but the thrill of the hunt had been too much for him.

Vegeta licked the last of Bulma's blood off his hand. The sweet taste was now sullied with dirt. He had marked his prey at least and he could feel that she would still come back to him eventually. They were now bound in a fate that neither of them could escape. The closer Bulma got to that truth the sooner she would come looking for him. He had been impatient but for now he would have to settle with mildly marking her. He was sure that by confronting her today he had resurrected a few memories within her.

'Let me take up all her thoughts.' He inwardly sneered. 'I won't be satisfied until she hates me with every fibre of her being.'

He took one look out at the fire spreading out in the Event space and disappeared into the shadows.

The two FBI agents had taken the small explosion to their faces and were lying on the ground. Yamcha sat up to check on Bramble who had been badly burned but seemed to be alive.

"Agents down, middle of the display. The target has escaped." Yamcha yelled over the radio.

"Captain, I did what I could." Bramble coughed but was patted on the shoulder by Yamcha.

"Rest easy, we were out numbered after all." Yamcha looked back into the crowd. He was sure he had seen a man standing and watching the fight. He had stuck out; unlike the frightened onlookers the man had been staring emotionless at the fight. The person had gone now but he knew it had to be an important. Their mission was ending in a total disaster. He had hoped this mission would have let Bulma a way out of her current situation but as it stood she was much worse off.

Yamcha sighed and waited for the helicopter to come. As the once crowded streets emptied it revealed the blood and shattered metal flung around the area. 'Oh man, this is going to be one hell of a clean up to do.'

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Android Seven and Four were the last of the Android Hunting team left. They were down two Androids and two dogs. Seven did not see it as a disaster as his main objective had been completed. He had kept the evidence of the Androids a secret and had ignited the self destruct. The only thing left were the hounds, he had no control to destroy them, he needed to call Commander Black and inform him. They had failed at capturing Vegeta but his current appearance had been updated in the memory banks. The last transmission from Six had seen to that.

"Four, prepare to leave." Seven instructed his last man.

"Yes Sir." Four replied. He did not like how this had turned but he couldn't go against his superior. It had been a succession of error inducing situations after another. The main protocol had been withheld that Dr. Gero's work was kept secret. That was the main motivation for Android Seven. For Four it was that Vegeta needed to be subdued and each time they had come close Seven had over ruled everything and went with his own annihilation plan. His team mates had been wiped out by their own self-destruct bombs that were triggered by Seven.

Android Four feared more than anything that he would be next and his own survival had exceeded everything. The lost lives of his team mates and the loss of their chance to catch Vegeta had been overcome by his own self protection. His electronic mind was filled with error logs and he knew he
needed to get back to his control console to get the unnecessary data erased to ease his conflicted mind. It was the only way he had survived for so long.

He ignored Seven as he began a one sided rant about the importance of destroying all evidence left and he went to attend to the hounds. They were half android and had a canine mind, one that needed mild stimulation. Four kept with his protocol and gave the dogs the required 4 pats each.

"These Hounds need to be returned soon." Android Four said more to himself.

"Then you should return the Hounds." Android Seven said sternly. "I must however let Command Black know of the other two hounds that have been captured."

"They blew up…" Four said.

"The broken parts still remain, I shall track them down, you must return with the remaining two to our home base." Seven ordered. "The vital data must be purged out of FBI hands, those are my orders." His eyes glowed dimly and Android Four understood in that moment that Seven's protocols were a lot different than his own. The orders were not the same, for him it was to capture Vegeta but Seven seemed to be working on a higher level to cover up any sign of Gero's involvement. He was the strongest fighter amongst what remained of the Android forces.

"What if you get caught?" Four asked.

"That is why we need to split up, if I am caught you must exterminate me."

"Detonate your bomb?" Four confirmed. "I hope it doesn't come to that."

"We are machines; we have no need for hope." Seven told him sternly. "We are failures as we hold on to these irregular programming that has given us these unnecessary human-like emotions."

Four nodded, he knew his own was fear and that he was not good alone. Seven's last orders would be hard for him to do but he could manage if he was able to hide. An all out attack was pointless with him along. He had shown that at the Police Station when he had been unable to do anything but stand behind Seven. He loaded the two hounds into a stolen car they had prepared earlier and got ready to leave. He could hear Seven making the phone call in the background to Black. There was just something very wrong with Seven, even coming from a faulty robot as himself. He secretly shared Six's distrust of him as a leader but he understood the strength was what he needed.

They had failed for maybe the last time and the Home Base he was returning to was maybe not going to be so welcoming. Android 4 left in the car unsure of what his fate would be in home base but in part he was glad he was getting as far away from Android 7 as possible.

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Bulma awoke in hospital in a familiar Ward. It was the one that Launch was in that the FBI had bought for this occasion. She looked across to her friend's bed but the curtains hid any hint that Launch was awake or even able to talk to her. Bulma winced as she sat up the side of her stomach were she'd been pierced was bandaged and obviously been stitched up. She tried not to move too much as every small twist in her body brought the stinging pain and the memories back to her. The room was dark and she must have slept through the day. A small box was next to her bed and she gingerly grabbed it.

Inside the box were her cell phone and other devices that were all switched off. 'Well at least I have my work that still follows me wherever I go.' Bulma put them all back and settled back down in her bed. She gingerly pressed the nurse bell and waited. She wanted to know what had happened. The
door opened and she was surprised to see Agent Yamcha come in along with the nurse. His face looked slightly red and he was bandaged up.

"Bulma!" Yamcha called out and then coughed. "Agent Briefs, so glad to see you're up."

"How are you feeling?" The nurse asked.

"Sore." Bulma winced as she let the nurse adjust her bed so she could sit up and let the nurse check her over.

Bulma gave a faint smile to Yamcha and just focused on the nurse who was checking her stats. "I'm fine… I just needed some sleep."

"Looks like you'll be out by tomorrow, we'd let you go now but the FBI have rented out this ward, you might as well use it rather than a hotel." The Nurse said. "We had to give you some stitches so don't move around too much."

"I see." Bulma said.

"All you need is some good rest and to be back home soon." The nurse said and left the room. She didn't know the full story of course, Bulma wasn't sure she really could go home. She wanted out of this frozen hell of a city. It had only brought back bad memories.

Yamcha waited till she left and sat down beside her. "I've kind of got good and bad news."

"Oh great, has Vegeta regained his powers or something?"

"No…" Yamcha shuddered. "That would only be only bad news. The good news is that Deputy Chief Director Piccolo will be here soon."

Bulma brightened up, that was good news.

"The bad news is he's bringing Special Star Agent Beri with him."

Bulma tried to hide her smile, 'What's with the stupid title in the name?' she thought but said. "Who?"

"She's part of the Psychic Division and has been called by Chief Director Kami to scan your mind."

"You're joking…" Bulma gasped. She'd never met Special Agent Beri but now she said the name in her head it did seem familiar. "Why can't I just make a basic statement, don't they trust me?"

"I'm afraid this is your second run in with Vegeta and he hasn't kidnapped you or tried to kill you so you're very much under suspicion." Yamcha explained with a lot of regret in his voice. "This is coming from the higher ups. They need to check your involvement with Vegeta."

"I have no involvement with that murderer!" Bulma snapped. "He tried to stab me!"

"He could have killed you but he didn't, they want to find out why." Yamcha said. "Look, this is the best way to prove your innocence. It's intrusive, but it's the only way to be certain."

Bulma groaned and felt a dread in her stomach. She'd never had a full psychic examination before, only mild ones to test for sensitivity during her training days. "I suck at psychic anything." She moaned.

"Me too." Yamcha smiled. "You've been asleep since this morning. Me and Agent Bramble also got into a bit of trouble…"
"With Vegeta?" Bulma asked.

"No, not him." Yamcha said. "There was a robot in the crowd that was after Vegeta as well. We ended up clashing so we never got to find where Vegeta had run off to."

Bulma tried to smile back but she shifted in her bed and a sharp pain from her stomach that reminded her of why she was here. Her attempted smile turned into a sneer as she was reminded of Vegeta. He probably stabbed her on purpose so she would continue to be under suspicion. She just couldn't escape him so she might as well hunt him down. She zoned out as Yamcha continued to talk to her but all her focus had turned to what she would do about Vegeta.

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Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: This is a strange chapter since it's split with the action from the last chapter. There's also very little Vegeta and Bulma. My OC's the Androids are taking over a little as their part in the story now is important. I have a lot of OC's in this story since there are more roles than what fits actual Dragonball characters. Though this chapter Yamcha had more than a few lines and he got some action, so go Yamcha. Though I think any romance with Bulma at this point is very slim. She seems more focused on catching a certain Prince and that's exactly what Vegeta wants, that manipulating bastard.

Thanks to the kind reviews that were more than a few lines. I think this story as my little baby project. I should post up all the plot notes I've made but there would be spoilers everywhere as I've worked out all the background of this world. Any kind words keeps me motivated as this story needs to veer a little away from the Hannibal plot a little just because the world of Dragonball is a lot more magical. As ki fights and psychics exist in this world and we'll find out next chapter how that works with another OC coming next chapter.
Yamcha gave a slight worried look at Bulma before he left to check up on his other team members. The entire investigation had been a complete disaster and most of it was down to those mysterious Androids that had attacked. He was so sure they had almost had Vegeta. He had no doubt about his subordinate Bramble's tracking skills. If they hadn't been interrupted he could have found him in the mass of people.

His next concern was Special Agent Beri. He knew her very well as she was a regular in the Force 2 teams and would always make her presence known. She had also been the one that had helped hypnotise him to conquer his fear of women. He owed her and she was such a person that would always remind him what she had done for him. He went into the small waiting room that had been converted into their small mission room. His fellow Agent Bramble was sitting at the table looking troubled at the paperwork he needed to fill out. He saw Yamcha come in and the large man struggled to stand up to salute. Yamcha waved him to sit down and joined him at the table. His time in the army had made Agent Bramble treat him like his Captain which Yamcha didn't mind, it was a nice nickname.

"So how are you doing Agent Bramble?"

"Fine Captain, except for this broken arm and these second degree burns." The large bandaged man sighed. "I kind of smell like a barbecue."

Yamcha laughed and turned his own attention to his paperwork. "I wish we could just fight and let others do this." He sighed.

"Agreed." Another agent said in the corner. Agent Cassis was the Communications Agent and was know for having a strange superiority complex. He respected Yamcha and was happy to serve under
him but as Yamcha found on a constant basis this didn't stop him giving some sarcastic comments. "I would offer to do all that for you Special Agent, but I believe that would deny you the pleasure of the forms."

"Ah lay off Cap you bum fluff!" Agent Bramble snapped back.

Yamcha didn't respond and just tried to focus on his paper. He was worried about how Bulma would react to Special Agent Beri. The strongest Psychic that the FBI had. She had joined after Bulma had graduated so she had been safe from meeting her in Training as Yamcha had done. In one way it was good as her ability was able to subdue his fear of women and helped him graduate on the other he now had a strong fear of Beri. So much so that she had hypnotised him to say Special Agent Star Beri every time he mentioned her name.

"So are the rumours true, is that woman coming here?" Cassis asked.

"You mean Special Agent Star Beri," Yamcha said and inwardly hated himself as he saw the smirk on Cassis' face.

"What was her name again?" He sniggered.

Yamcha shook his head refusing to reply and he saw Bramble getting red in the face.

"I told you to lay off the Captain!" Bramble snapped which only got a mild shrug from Cassis.

"Yes, yes, my friend." Cassis smirked. "We best stay in the Mission room for now if that woman is indeed coming here."

"Nothing wrong with Special Agent Beri, she's bonnie!" Bramble argued.

"I think nothing of her appearance other than a glimmer; the pink alien is nothing more than fooling with all the Force 2 squad."

"When Special Agent Star Beri joins our team she's a great assistance to us." Yamcha said. "But I agree, let's stay in the Mission room for now till Assistant Director Picollo calls on us."

"No doubt for a meeting." Cassis scoffed and stood up with his cigarettes. "I shall go to the smoking area and see if she's arrived."

'More like he's going to make sure he's no where near her.' Yamcha thought to himself. He wished he could do that himself but she would be sure to hunt him down. He gazed back at the paperwork and wished he really had warned Bulma better.

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The front of North City Hospital was busier than usual as two guards rushed after a hooded figure who had just stepped past without answering their questions.

"Excuse me, Ma'am, we'll need to see some ID."

The small 4ft woman continued walking and going towards the elevator. The taller of the two guards had lost his patience and pulled at her arm to make her turn. "We need to see your ID, Ma'am."

She turned her eyes flashing for a moment and the man smiled. "Very Good, carry on."

"Wait a minute…" The other guard said but she also looked up to him, her eyes sparked and he nodded smiling with a similar expression as his friend. "I see, thank you for your time Ma'am."
"I need to see the FBI wing, which way." The Woman ordered.


"ID indeed," She scoffed under her breath and carried to the elevator.

The Guards stood there dazed for a minute before a tall man came and placed his hands over their eyes. "I'm terribly sorry." He sighed.

Director Piccolo easily removed the hypnosis and made a low inward growl. He hated having to come up behind Special Agent Beri. She had no control over her powers and had the ego the size of the Moon. As much of a powerful Psychic as she was Special Agent Beri couldn't be let loose without some sort of supervision. It was better when she was on the Space Station, she had no where really to go but here it was too simple for her to leave if she wanted. He classed her as a Level 8 danger to Earth and if it wasn't for his father's insistence he would have held her incarcerated for life if he could or even had her executed. She could manipulate weak willed people and if pushed control stronger minded individuals. Thankfully she saw no benefit in ruling the Earth and her mind control was limited but it still made Piccolo doubt her a lot. Her way of dealing with people was worse than his own.

He saw the Guards shake their heads and wake up, they returned to the front desk where he hoped they wouldn't file a report. He had enough of this clean up already but he wanted to come to make sure Bulma was kept safe. He was responsible for her in his own way. Though no matter how much he pushed her to move into the science division she wouldn't budge. At least her investigative skills were the better than most he couldn't argue too much with her.

He entered the elevator as Beri stood there waiting for him. "You didn't need to remove it." She huffed. "It had a time limit."

"Those Guards have a job to do, how long would they have stood there dazed for?"

"Maybe a few hours." Special Agent Beri shrugged.

Piccolo tutted and held his tongue, he knew she could feel his anger about it and she just didn't care. She would be dangerous if she was left alone. She gave him a flash of a smile and walked towards the Ward that Bulma was held in. Piccolo had hoped to protect Bulma from this side of the FBI but his father had been adamant. She had come in contact with Vegeta and lived. It made no sense, she should have been killed and he wanted a full investigation on her.

As they entered she saw her wince in pain as she tried to sit up to attention. Her face was even paler than usual and she had been warned at least by his coming as she didn't seem surprised. Special Agent Beri went straight to work and touched Bulma on the hand to greet her. It was her way of starting a psychic bond. There was nothing he could do to stop this psychic interrogation but at least he was able to come to observe. He could protect Bulma in whatever small way we could.

"I assume you've been informed of my coming." Beri smiled at Bulma who looked at her in confusion. "Yes, I am an alien… how nice of you to notice."

"Agent Bulma, we need to give you a full psychic exam to take as much information as we can about your contact with Vegeta." Piccolo explained.

"I understand." Bulma said shaking her hand free from the small alien's grip. The violet eyes of Agent Beri glowed slightly making Bulma feel even more apprehensive. If it wasn't for Director Piccolo's presence she would be running for her life right now.
"Have you any latent psychic ability I should know about?" Beri asked.

"None, Ma'am." Bulma made a quick reply.

"Then this should be easier for me and harder for you." Beri said. "I mustn't fight my psychic probe, that means you need to relax and let me ask questions which you must answer honestly. If you try to hide something or lie I will try to force it out from you and it will give you quite a migraine."

"I see…" Bulma whispered slightly looking at Piccolo who gave her a nod. He should have given her a reassuring smile but that wasn't his style. A nod was the best she could hope for.

"Now, we need to see the mighty Prince Vegeta." Beri smiled. "I shall dream walk into your memories while they're still fresh, this may bring back any physical pain you experienced. It's a strange side effect."

The alien woman continued to explain while Bulma got deeper into her feeling of dread. She had no proficiency at psychic ability and had failed any tests they'd done with her. It had been something she had no understanding of. How could you use your thoughts in such a way? It made no sense to her.

Beri guided her to place both of her hands out flat and she put her own hands on top. The words Beri said as she begun were purely alien and could have been just babbling words for all they were worth. As the chant continued Bulma felt the room around her disappear and she was dragged into the darkness.

"Take me to the point before you meet the Saiyan in North City… Take me there Bulma."

Bulma thought hard and she was brought to her rental car. The cold bite of the snow shocked her slightly as she looked around. The world seemed similar but it was blurred in places.

"This is your memory world Bulma, things will not be exactly as they are in the real world." Beri's voice called out from behind her. "Explain to me what you were thinking here."

"I was being followed." Bulma said. "There was a car behind me, it hasn't changed direction for five blocks even though I've turned a few times."

She turned the car into the parking lot and unclipping her gun from its holster. "I decided to face them…" The car passed by harmlessly. "But it was nothing…" Bulma repeated her actions of slapping herself and getting out of the car for some fresh air. She watched the driver that had been following her. She knew it was an old lady but her memory had recreated her into a blob of blue and grey. "There was no threat and I was just tired…" She made the action of reclipping her gun.

Bulma breathed out into the cold air her mind had brought back. She turned on the smooth ice and fell down again. "That's when he was here and gone in seconds."

A giant black blur caught her and mumbled something then left just as quickly.

"STOP…rewind!" Beri snapped appearing floating above her. The world fell into a rewind as the alien waved her arms angrily. "Is that REALLY how you remember him?"

Bulma was frozen mid fall as the large black mass held her upright.

"This blur?" Beri scoffed. "And what did he say?" Her eyes glowed as she worked through Bulma's memory the blob became more human shaped but it was still in shadow.

"I didn't see him…" Bulma gasped as she couldn't move mid freeze. "I only saw his shoes… I was
looking down." The blackness of the Vegeta memory's feet reformed into solid walking boots.

"What did he say to you little human?" Beri hissed.

"Be careful, one wrong slip and you could break that pretty neck of yours." The voice boomed out clearly. Bulma felt her heart repeat the same shock she felt hearing that voice again.

"Pretty… huh?" Beri smirked. "I guess he does have a soft spot for you."

"If you can call it that." Bulma said frustrated. "I had to follow him once I knew. I could see the back of his head."

The memory world flashed brightly and Bulma was unfrozen and back in the crowd chasing a man wearing a cap. "I called for back-up but I needed to keep on top of him."

"Are you a fighter?" Beri asked. "What benefit does this have?"

"I just needed to chase him down." Bulma muttered. "It was our only chance since the investigation to catch sight of him."

"You're very impulsive." Beri said. "When did you see him clearly?" The memories of snow sculptures, people and Bulma seemed to whirl as she tried to bring back that memory.

She stood in front of the towering Snow Queen and she winced as she felt the hand again coming in to grab her. She felt the knife slide in under her shirt and coat scraping along her skin. The sting of pain shocked her and she gave out a gasp.

"Oh, yes, pain is a worthy memory tool." Beri said. "I will be sure you feel it all to get the best understanding. So I can't really dull the pain you're going to feel. You're changing the memories by reacting this way. I told you not to resist."

Bulma whimpered as she was held back the world paused again as Beri worked her way around in her mind world.

"He's still all dark, didn't you see him?"

Bulma couldn't answer all the words she wanted to say were curses. She looked up and the dark shadow face formed into a clearer shape. First the eyes gleamed out looking straight at her then the skin tone returned and she could see his full face. The deadly stone cold eyes leered directly at her.

"So he dyed his hair blonde? Even his eyebrows? Interesting." Beri said. "He does look quite handsome though he's too short for me."

"I don't think he's dating material."

"What did he say to you?" Beri waved her hand returning the time.

"Let's not make a scene little agent, you're useless when you're not behind a gun." His arms had wrapped around her as if she was in a hug but she was held with a blade digging into her. "Now don't shout or you will be gutted."

"My back-up is on their way." Bulma answered him falling into step with her memories.

"But we're only lovers out on a walk my dear." Vegeta sighed ignoring her threat as he led her to a more quiet part of the display. "It's best to cuddle up when it's cold."
"I don't like your form of cuddling." Bulma snapped. She was trapped again in his grip and she felt the weight of her gun dropping to the snow. His moment had not been so smooth and he'd cut her slightly with his movement.

"What do you want Vegeta?" She asked him again.

"It's too soon to reveal it all now my little one." His deep voice hinted. "I just wanted to say hello since we're only passing."

"I thought you wanted to kill me…"

"The thought has crossed my mind but I have such a more interesting plan for you." He said his face so close to hers she could smell his natural odour. "Be a good girl and keep your head down. There are others that may be more dangerous than me out there."

Bulma felt tears coming back as she remembered her full helplessness.

"That's a nice face you're making, you should do it more often." Vegeta breathed on her as she felt his tongue lick up one of her stray tears. "Your smell is too tempting than you know, I could gut you open right here and now."

"Leave…" Bulma panted. "Leave me… alone…"

"I can't do that little agent, we have a connection now." Vegeta purred in a low voice. "Till we meet again Bulma. I know we will, I'll make sure of it. For now it looks like your little toy on your side has attracted your white knight."

"AGENT BULMA!" Yamcha shouted out and Bulma looked round as she was dropped to the ground. Vegeta seemed to disappear into the crowd of faceless people and she let the world become a mass of blurred colours around her. Beri reappeared and froze the world again. Bulma kept crying as the pain in her knife wound continued. She had to relive one of the worst moments of her life and Beri was flying around making notes.

"He licked you!" Beri shouted astounded. "You sure he's not in love with you?"

"What kind of twisted love is that?" Bulma coughed.

"What is this connection he speaks of?"

"I don't know… please the knife wound…"

"Yes, yes." Beri sighed and returned Bulma to her normal state and erased the world around them. They were in darkness again as Beri hovered over her. "Now, answer me, what is this connection?"

"I don't know." Bulma repeated. "It's something only he's thought of."

"You remembered his voice very clearly." Beri mused.

"It's in my nightmares…"

"Yes, well. I can see you have a nasty stalker situation on your hands my dear." Beri finally smiled at her. "I do believe you're innocent of any collusion with the enemy."

"I'm glad it was worth it then…" Bulma said as the tears continued to stream from her face. The blackness became bright and she was back in the whiteness that was the hospital ward. Director Piccolo was by her side checking her tear stained eyes. Bulma could only give a faint smile back
before fainting with exhaustion.

"Well, she sure is an interesting one." Beri said.

"She's one of my protegees." Piccolo said proudly. "She's never going to be a fighter but she has more intelligence than anyone else in the current investigation force."

"Just so you know, that little star of yours is being hunted." Beri said sternly. "I recommend you take her far away from here or anywhere Vegeta could find her. He wants to do more than just kill her, I don't know exactly what but he seems like he could do anything to her."

"Exactly what I was afraid of." Piccolo sighed. "Maybe the time is soon to tell her everything about the FBI."

"That's your call not mine." Beri shrugged. "Now, if you'll excuse me I have some Force 2 Agents to go play with."

Piccolo let her be and looked down at the exhausted Bulma. He feared he'd taken his bait method too far and now he knew the fears were totally justified.

"I'm sorry Bulma." He said under his breath to her.

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Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: Special Agent Beri is an OC I made up based on a random race from DBZ. She's a strong psychic but a weak fighter. She won't take over the story but she had to become the main focus of this chapter as she's the only one that could retrieve Bulma's memories and finally get her put in the clear. Though now it seems Piccolo has noticed he's gone and messed up by putting Bulma in danger. Yes, Vegeta is going to come for Bulma and it won't be a pretty sight.

Sorry for the delay, I had real life hit me hard again and now I finally have a breather I could focus back on my story again. Next time we'll find out what's happening with Vegeta as he makes his escape from North City.
Vegeta looked back at the rugged mountains that surrounded North City. It had been a good place to stay and train for a few years but he had been pushed to reveal himself too early. Gero was still after him and those androids he had created seemed to be a huge threat. He had witnessed the fight in the Snow Festival with great dread. If those machines had found him he would have been dead or worse captured again.

'I have no time for that.' Vegeta thought to himself as he settled down into a cave recess. He had trekked for hours and had finally reached the edge of the North City boundary. The small safe shelter he'd prepared a while ago was still as he'd left it. The small box of supplies he'd hidden in a crevice would see him through a few days but he needed to keep moving. The Android hunting party would not be a limit of two dogs and a few robots. There would be more of them and the tracking ability of the hounds was the most troubling thing. He could survive if he got far enough away.

He clenched his fist. The fight had been a small thrill to watch, it brought back his memory of a finer time in his life. Sure, he had been a dog solider in a Galactic army, a low grade clean up crew as Freeza put it. But he had power in his small team; he could fight the lesser beings and rip them apart. The power and sensation of fighting to your limit was something he missed the most. That moment he pushed the FBI fodder he had felt his ki. It had flown into him in such a way that made him feel a burst of power. It was something he needed to experiment with. The same had happened with Tien, the flow of his energy had been so easy for him to manipulate and use. He was empty of all ki energy now, his cells working against him.

'Is it because I'm at a negative now?' He wondered. 'Could ki work that way?' He had never been around powerful enough enemies to really see what would happen when he fought them. He had thought it was suicide but it was possible that there was a way for him to fight. He smirked, there was one place he would need to go to really try. A place where all the scum of the Universe gathered on Earth. It would be a perfect hiding spot in complete plain sight.
It would be a few more days of hitchhiking and trekking to get there but it would be worth it. He shifted back and began to rest his eyes. For now he would sleep with one eye open. He was back to being on the run again but that was fine by him. He just needed to stay alive till he could fully find a way to get his revenge. His blood right was denied to him, he would take what ever measures it would take out his vengeance to all of them that denied him. Bulma would be the start and the key to it all.

He took out his knife and held it ready as he began to go into a half-awake, half-asleep state. The low energy of Bulma was still on the knife, a faint smell of her fear was also still fresh. It made him smirk at how much he would make her beg for her life. The fearful face of hers lulled him into his rest.

'I will come for you, Bulma.'

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Bulma though was fully asleep, unaware of any plans being made for her. She was caught in her own nightmares brought on by the intrusion by the Psychic. She kept going over the snowy scene with Vegeta holding her in a deadly grip.

"Let me GO!" She shouted. Vegeta didn't react or even smile he was just frozen like a statue of ice. She felt the numbing cold and her side ached where the knife still grazed against her skin. Tears poured down her face, why did she have to relive this scene? Why didn't anyone believe her?

"I'm not involved with this monster." She snapped the tears forming icicles as she pressed against the statue. She felt like she was finally becoming the Ice Queen image she had put up for herself. She had done it for her own sake. To hide her quick temper and fiery nature, it wasn't suitable for investigating. She had to hide who she really was. She wasn't a scientist anymore she had no other skills other than her mind. She needed to make use of it and fight the Aliens.

"Now some scummy pink Alien freak comes and messes up my mind and makes me into this emotional wreck?" She was ranting to herself in a way shouting out all her frustrations. She felt a moment in the grip that held her and she began to wiggle free.

"I am Bulma Briefs!" She yelled her face red with anger. "This isn't going to stop me."

"I will come for you, Bulma." Vegeta's statue seemed to whisper to her.

She punched him square in the face watching the ice shatter. She could only see red now and the familiar screams of the Monkeys echoed around her. "Just come for me you Bastard, I'll fucking kill you if you touch me again."

The Ice world around her seemed to glow as she yelled this and instantly melted into flames.

"I'll find you first Asshole!" Bulma snapped to the melting lumps of ice that had been Vegeta's statue. "I'll find you and lock you up again and throw away the key!" Her sides and everywhere were alight with fire. She panted in shock and confusion as she was blinking at a white ceiling.

She was awake in her hospital bed a nurse hovering over her and a tall familiar face.

"Chief!" Bulma croaked. Her fiery voice from her dreams was far away. She reached out for some water embarrassed at her reaction and quickly tried to wipe the tears from her face.

"I see the effect has worn off." Director Piccolo sighed. "I came to see if you're up for attending the meeting. This involves you as well."
"I'd need at least 30 minutes to get ready." Bulma said. 'A quick shower, grab a piece of fruit, I can do it.'

"That's fine, we start in an hour." Piccolo said. "We've got so many casualties and fall out from this mission we've had to set up a Mission room in the hospital. It's the Staff room down the hall from here."

"I see." Bulma replied. "I can be ready on time."

"I feel that you may be suffering some after effects from Special Agent Beri's mind probe." He sighed. "I was afraid that might happen. It may be just a case of some bad dreams for a few days."

"I did have some nightmares…" She looked down at her hands as they were mildly shaking. "I'm sorry I'm in this state."

"They should be gone in a few days, if not tell me and I can try to get another Psychic officer to come and try to heal whatever Beri's shaken loose."

Bulma just nodded. It was true some bad memories had seemed to have resurrected themselves.

"She's the star of our Psychic division; you never join in the Force 2 investigations so you've never been in a position to meet her." Piccolo explained. "She's still quite new to Earth but she's a fast learner."

"How new?" Bulma questioned. She couldn't help but feel a slight jealousy at a newbie that had rose in the ranks.

"Three Years, she graduated the training in under six months and had become a Special Agent on her graduation." Piccolo said with a slight hint of pride. "She's a valuable Psychic we've had our lives saved by her powers quite a few times."

"Wow, a real genius then." Bulma said in amazement.

"You'll see her in the meeting so be sure to hide your mild jealousy. Though knowing her she'd get a kick out of it." Piccolo patted her on the head. While Bulma pouted, she forgot that he had mild empathy, it only showed up when she was unguarded.

"Understood." She said and as soon as he was gone she limped straight into the shower. She wanted to look as good as she could get in front of everyone. She felt like hell and knew she looked it too. In the shower she checked the stitches on her wound. It shouldn't scar too much but it was just another mark upon her once perfect skin. He had sliced across into her old scar cause by Jigsaw Jones. In a way it was just slightly coincidental place. 'I'm sure it just means everyone loves to stab my liver.' She sighed as the hot water pulsed over her. It didn't wash her worries away but it did seem to finally make her feel calm.

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An hour later and the small meeting room in the hospital Bulma appeared she was bandaged up and still in t-shirt and sweats. She gave a nod to Piccolo and sat beside the grinning Yamcha. She found some comfort in the goofy guy for once. Beri looked at her from the side with a slight smile.

"Should I have dressed up?" Bulma asked.

"No, don't worry about it. I mean Agent Mikan is still in his pyjamas." Yamcha smiled as he pointed over to the sleepy looking man in bandages.
"I see Viola is still giving him a hard time though." Bulma commented as she saw her fellow agent sitting next to Agent Mikan and teasing him.

"That's what he gets for coming in Pyjamas while actually not a patient in the hospital." Yamcha chuckled and looked down as he turned to Bulma. "I'm glad you're okay, I hear you'll be discharged today."

"The knife wound is all stitched up and it was only blood loss they were worried about." Bulma said as she tried not to look up to Yamcha. She could see Piccolo getting ready and that usually meant shouting at the first people having any kind of conversation.

"I was really worried but I'm glad we got to in time." Yamcha said his face furiously burning red. "I would be really sad if we lost you…"

Bulma gulped and turned to him her own face burning up. "Um… thanks…"

"If you two are quite finished." Piccolo said in his loudest voice. "We will now start the meeting."

Bulma noticed they were the focus of everyone in the room. This was exactly what she didn't want to happen. She slid back into her chair and tried to avoid eye contact with everyone. The small snigger from Special Agent Beri made her glance over to her though and she silently fumed at her giving Yamcha the thumbs up. She closed her eyes and tried to quell the flames that were soaring up inside her. The ice mask that she'd made for herself over these past few years was completely gone and she was an emotional wreck. She was fighting her inner temper that was close to breaking.

'I need to get back in control…' She reminded herself and sat quietly in small meditation as Piccolo repeated the summary of their failed mission.

"The target has no doubt left the city. The power sensors we thought we could use are totally useless against Vegeta. He has no power still and we can assume he's the same range as a regular civilian."

The computer projection came up and a sketch drawing appeared. It was Vegeta exactly as Bulma had seen him in her encounter.

"Special Agent Beri has made up this composite of the Target. His hair has changed but he may yet alter his appearance again. No eye-witnesses have come forward to the attack on Agent Bulma or the incident with Launch. We can't rule out that Vegeta is in collusion with these machine people, these androids. They let him escape."

"Sir, I believe they wanted him caught." Agent Bramble added. "That doggie was ordered to 'seek'."

"From the robot?" Piccolo asked.

"Aye, it was." Bramble said. "It could speak, even though it was filled with wires. It was strong as well, almost broke my arm when he twisted it. I kicked it straight in the goolies and he didn't even wince."

"What…goolies?" Piccolo was confused by the Agent's words.

"He means the testicles." Yamcha explained. "Bramble is from up North, he uses a few interesting words sometimes."

"I see…" Piccolo said trying to move on the conversation. "So we can assume these are Grade 2 fighters since both you and Agent Yamcha fought the robot but still survived."
"I had a run in with them as well Sir." Viola added. "They knew how to use a sort of power blast from their hands."

"But they're undetectable to our radar." Bulma said. "Bullets also didn't slow them down any, though as we found out with the dogs, you can disable them."

"They also seem to come with a self destruct bomb," Yamcha said. "I think it can be set off remotely."

"That may have been what happened to the android in the Police station." Bulma said. Piccolo listened to his agents intently and nodded, writing up on the board everything they said. "So we're dealing with a low level risk, though as a team they could prove quite dangerous."

"There may be more." Yamcha said. "The Android I fought was looking at someone in the crowd."

"Next problem we'll need to deal with is where do you think they came from?"

"I can think of only one man." An agent in the corner spoke up. He was the technical specialist, Agent Frambrois. "We may need to think about the Gero Industries."

Bulma winced at the name, she knew it would be coming. Out of all the companies around the world other than her own beloved Capsule Corporation, Gero was the one that lead the market now. The owner had a weird obsession with Vegeta and had tried to buy her information more than a few times.

"I sense some friction about this Gero." Special Agent Beri said. "Care to tell the visitor to your planet?"

"The company is the forerunner in computer cars and technology. The CEO is severely disabled after the Saiyan attack. He even came face to face with Vegeta and lived. To say that the man has a grudge would be putting it lightly." Yamcha answered her.

"Sounds like an interesting mind to study." Beri said and swept her hair back. "So you'll need someone to pay him a visit I guess."

"That could be arranged." Piccolo nodded. "Next up, Agent Briefs, Agent Viola, I want you both to continue the hunt for Vegeta. We have an account of a witness coming forward and I'd like you to contact him."

"I can't go home yet then?" Bulma asked.

"No, Agent Briefs, from your mind search what we can ascertain is that though you are innocent of collusion with the enemy you're not safe while he is free. Agent Viola is to continue to be your bodyguard and you're not to approach Vegeta under any circumstance. South City is far enough away and you should be safe there for a while. We may bring you in with the Gero Investigation but for now find out what the witness knows in South City."

Bulma nodded sadly, she was back to the place where she had first met Vegeta. There would no doubt be some clues leftover from his previous prison. She needed to investigate this from a distance it would seem. She looked across to Viola who seemed quite happy about the arrangement. ' Didn't she once say that was her home town?' Bulma wondered.

The meeting continued for some time and Bulma found herself nodding off at the longer speeches from Piccolo. He needed up reprimanding them all for the carelessness. It would have continued into
more detail of the current situation when there was a cry from Agent Frambrois. He had only left a few minutes ago to take a call and he had rushed back into the room.

"Sir!" He shouted. "The helicopter going to HQ, it's down!"

"What?!" Piccolo snapped and stood up at his full height. "What happened?" He towered over the smaller agent as he tried to get the words out.

"There was a rocket; it blew up our chopper, all the android technology we had recovered! It's gone!"

"This is just what we needed!" He snarled. "Force 2 Fighters, move out and recover what you can! This is a Red Alert, the FBI are under attack!"

He charged out of the room Agent Yamcha, Frambrois and a few others of the main soldier class followed him out. Bulma looked across to Viola who shrugged "Looks like I'm needed."

She was left in the room with only Agent Beri and Agent Bramble.

"What a kerfuffle!" Bramble said. He was still too injured to join in.

"Red Alert, looks like they're going to fly." Beri sighed. "Makes me wish I was a fighter."

"I think I'll go back to bed." Bulma said.

"Agent Briefs, I know Piccolo said not to interfere, but I'd just like to add that you're running away from yourself." Beri said.

'I'm just going to bed!' Bulma thought.

"That's not what I meant." Beri smiled as she read her mind. "I just mean you'll need to be true to yourself if you want to succeed. I mean I'm no fighter, I'm always jealous of those that can. But I make up for it and use what I have to fight."

"I'm a good investigator." Bulma said. She could feel the fire in her head burning up and she worked on her own mental blocks. She needed to get away from this alien she was dangerous for her mental well being. "I do what I can to fight as well, all those notes we saw today about the androids were all ones I made myself."

"That's lovely, but I bet you can do more." Beri gushed with a wide smile. "That fire inside you is so interesting, I just wish…." 

Her hand was about to touch Bulma's forehead when a bandaged arm stopped her. "Beri, Hen. I know you mean well, but you ought to listen to the Big Man."

"The Big Man?" Agent Beri seemed confused then as she scanned Bramble's mind she realised and turned around.

"I thought I said, Force 2 move out?" Director Piccolo snarled. "You're a danger to leave on your own."

"I… I didn't…. I never…" Beri protested as she was effortlessly lifted up and over his shoulder and they were gone with a rush of air as they moved faster than Bulma could comprehend.

"Ah, that girl never listens." Bramble chuckled. "She doesn't mean any harm by the way Agent Briefs."
"I guess..." Bulma said in low voice as she was still in shock.

"Let's get you to bed then, pet." He said as he escorted her down the hallway to the ward.

"It sure has been an eventful week." Bulma muttered.

"Aye, at least you can say that!" Bramble laughed and continued to lighten her mood till she was safely to her bed. Though no matter how nice Agent Bramble was he hadn't chased away the real threat as the terrors in Bulma's mind returned and the fire burned on as the screams began to rise up.

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Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: Yes, Beri really should be that annoying. I wrote her like that on purpose, she's not mean; she's just one of those characters that do things on impulse and is very selfish. She's really messed up Bulma's mind right now. So Bulma may be a bit unstable in the next few chapters. I know in this chapter nothing much happened again, but I like to make the set up and let things take their time.

Though the breaks in writing the story are not on purpose. I'll try to get another chapter out this year at least! We need to find out how Vegeta is going to fight and what exactly he wants with Bulma! One hint I will tell you all, it's not romantic. I know what we all want and maybe that will come but not for a while. Let's simmer in the suspense for a lot longer.
Look On the Bright Side

Chapter Summary

Bulma's time in North City is at an end but has it cost her too much?

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Dragonball Z, Silence of the Lambs and Hannibal. I do not make money from this story.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 36

Look on the Bright Side

The Force 2 team rushed out of North City, all pretence of being ordinary humans was out the window as soon as Director Piccolo had announced it was a Code Red. Usually they would fly by helicopter or plane but this time they were flying under their own means. Seven small figures were hardly noticed in the darkness of North City as the team flew to the wreckage. Director Piccolo landed placing his reluctant passenger down to the ground. The tiny pink alien adjusted her clothes and muttered under her breath.

"Begin the search, Beri stay by me and search for any witnesses or suspects." Piccolo ordered.

This made the alien psychic stop any pouting and began scanning the area with her mind. Piccolo made a hand signal to his men and let them divide up.

"I did warn you not to wear your PJ's." Viola laughed at her partner Mikan who was slightly shivering.

"Keep your voices down and use signals only until we get an all clear." Piccolo hissed. The main reason was that conversation would distract Beri whose violet eyes glowed as she let her mental feelers reach out.

Viola stopped her laughing and ducked her head down the surrounding area was a mess of shrapnel and fire. What was left of the helicopter was unidentifiable. The Technical Specialist Frambois had his scanner out looking for the black box. Other fighters spread out some going high to get a view and others circling the area. The mountainous area was so secluded that there was no-one around. Special Agent Beri shook her head. It was useless there was only the frantic noise from the other Agents. Those minds she could filter out but all around the mountain there was nothing but small animals.

"There's no other person here." She said with a lot of caution.

"Stay on alert, it may be another Android!" Director Piccolo ordered. "Agent Beri stay close and
keep yourself safe."

"Got it." Agent Beri sighed and looked up to Agent Yamcha who was flying above her. She would have preferred him to guard her over the giant grump that was Director Piccolo.

Yamcha had flown above to try to get a view of the whole area. The devastation was mostly contained and he tried to scan for any footprints. A black shadow moved in the bushes and he dashed across. There was a noise of snow being scuffled and moved but as he reached the area there were only the left over marks.

'Wish Bramble was here.' He thought to himself as he couldn't understand the tracks he was looking at. He made a signal to Agent Viola and Mikan and they came to him to see what he'd found.

"Take photos of this area." He ordered. "We might have disturbed the culprit."

"I'm not Agent Bramble, but looks like they left in a hurry." Mikan said. "They even left their rocket launcher!"

"Found the Black box!" Agent Frambrois exclaimed as he waved over Director Piccolo. "Might take a few days to analyse the full data."

"That's no problem, seems like whatever hit the helicopter are long gone." Piccolo said in a low gruff voice. "Step down from Red Alert Agents, we'll focus on tracking the attacker for now."

"My guess that it was one of those robots." Agent Beri said. "There's no other psychic residue other than the pilot's last thoughts." She glumly held her head down as she tried to focus her thoughts on happier thoughts.

"Well, good work." Piccolo said without looking at her. He focused on the others that were roaming the debris. "Time to move back and let the clean-up crew come. I'll let Agent Frambrois stay to continue analysing the crash site, a few men can back him up, Agent Ringo and Agent Durian you stay here to stand guard. The rest of us will head back to the temporary HQ. Agent Viola I want you to keep tabs on Agent Bulma, you're going to be her shadow. It's very important you keep her away from coming in contact with Vegeta. You don't fight him, you run away and make sure Bulma is safe."

"Understood." Viola said and joined the team to fly slowly back to the hospital.

"What is it with this Briefs human?" Agent Beri asked. "She's like your daughter almost."

"Let's just say I knew her father, I have some dues to pay with I've neglected as of late." The Director mumbled in a low voice so only Beri could hear. There was no use lying to her but he could give her the basic facts at least.

"Hmmm." Beri looked sideways and tried not to comment. She could tell there was something being hidden, it was the same feeling she felt when she had been inside Bulma's mind. There was some sort of strange block and it was very powerful. "I still see her as a liability; her fighting ability seems to be the same as mine."

"Which is why she has Viola with her, that Agent is a force 2 fighter and she knows how to fight." Piccolo growled and grabbed Beri by the hips and slung her over the shoulder. "You're the real liability. Take care not to ask too many questions, especially around my father. Even though you're a Grade A psychic you would have no chance against him."

"You have no manners!" Beri snapped as Piccolo flew with her back to the hospital. It was still quite
Dark and the team managed to move back to the safe point without many people noticing. The general public were to be kept in the dark about the full fighting force of the FBI it was part of the plan that came from Kami. Piccolo would have preferred a more direct approach but he had to follow his father’s will to keep them as ignorant as possible.

Director Piccolo landed and made his way back to the quiet meeting room. It was empty and he dumped Agent Beri back into her chair. "Stay there and out of trouble, we're taking the next helicopter out of here."

"Why can't you fly me again?" Beri smirked. "I was getting used to the taxi service."

Piccolo only grumbled and ignored her light hearted teasing. She was only joking he knew and to talk back to her would just make her joke more. She was more annoying for him than anything else as she always clashed with his more serious nature. He walked down the corridor and into the ward that Bulma was in. She was packing her bags by the looks of it.

"Good, you're getting ready Agent." Piccolo said as he entered. He glanced over and saw a glare from his previous ex-agent Launch who was pretending to sleep but he had caught her stare as he entered. He ignored her and returned to prepping his current agent. "I'll get you on a flight to South Island tonight. Your contact is an old friend and you'll be staying in the Prison Warden's home rather than a hotel. It will be safer. We will have some agents go to ask some questions to Dr Gero as we're sure he's involved in this somehow."

"What am I investigating in South City?" Bulma asked.

"Mostly the Asylum and to find any information on the serum that the previous Warden administered on Vegeta." Piccolo said. "Vegeta should be as weak as a kitten but he was able to kill. There has to be some clues we've overlooked that can help lead to him and explain why he still has some power. Your turn as bait is over. It wasn't our intention to have you hurt like you were."

"It was my fault." Bulma sighed under her breath.

"It was what any agent would do in the circumstance, be more aware of your inability to fight. Vegeta seems to still have a way to do so."

Bulma nodded her understanding and watched as Director Piccolo turned to where Launch was lying in bed. "I know you heard all that highly confidential material Launch but there's a reason. We know who killed Tien, you can find out if you come back to the Forces. We're short of fighters at the moment. You could be a great help."

Launch turned round in bed her hair blond and her eyes furious. "What if I say no?"

"We have a way to make you forget, it might be better to stay and fight."

"I don't suppose you missed the update on my situation Director Piccolo, but I'm a cripple now." Launch snapped. "I only have one leg."

"We can get you a new robotic one, join the FBI again and you'll have full access to the technology."

"I'll think about it..." Launch said. "I have a time limit, right?"

"Tell me by 8pm tonight or we're wiping your mind and we might wipe something important, our Psychic isn't that good at the finesse of the human mind."
Launch snarled to herself and refused to reply. Piccolo turned his back and motioned to Bulma. "Meet in the Helipad by 8pm Agent Bulma. We'll perhaps see your old friend as well. I'll let you both discuss it, I apologise for the harsh words but we have our protocols to uphold."

He walked out and the women remained silent till he was away from their sight.

"Launch…" Bulma said tentatively as she walked over to her friend's bed. She had her head down in deep thought. She noticed that her blonde hair was now back to the dark blue. "What will you do?"

"It's this again, huh?" She sniffed. "They wiped my memory before, not that much but there are blanks about fighting for the FBI."

"Oh…" Bulma said gently. "You were such a better fighter than me, you have potential."

"Thanks, I guess." Launch smiled. "Though you do know they'll shut down one of my personalities. I've seen that Psychic as she came in, she's not human. She'll have the power to do it. They tried to do it before and failed, they'll try again."

"You don't know that for sure." Bulma tried to reason with her.

"I know. Piccolo wouldn't have offered if he couldn't 'fix' me." Launch explained. "I was kicked off the force because of my instability. It used to be with a sneeze but it changed to when I got stressed and the FBI missions stressed me out a lot. I have some mild memories of my time; they're not as good as you think they are."

"We fight to protect the Earth." Bulma said firmly. "You could join us again. We could come live with me till you sort yourself out."

"I'm not saying that…" Launch trailed off. "I… can't quite recall but… I just mean the FBI isn't as clear cut as you think it is."

Bulma looked at Launch trying to understand what she meant. She knew that the organisation took risks, she lived the risk by becoming the bait for Vegeta on this mission. "I just think if you joined again you could find out what really happened to Tien." It was a harsh thing to say but Bulma wanted to shake her friend up. She was mostly repeating what Piccolo had said. She was also slightly hurt by what she had inferred about her current company that was her life now. Her words against the FBI were like a direct attack to herself.

"I'll consider it Bulma." Launch said coldly. "Just know it was more than my mental health that made me leave the FBI. Just look out for yourself."

"I will." She awkwardly squeezed her hand and left to her side of the ward to pack up what little luggage she had. Bulma had one last check up with the doctors before they would let her leave. She gave a long look to her friend who had her head down refusing to look up.

"I'd like to see you back with me." She said softly as she closed the door. Bulma turned to see Viola leaning against the wall and not looking up.

"Hey." The tall agent said with a soft smile.

"Hey." Bulma smiled back. "How long were you there for?"

"Not long enough to understand what you're talking about." Viola answered. "I'm back on as your shadow. I'm not letting you get away from me again."
"Right, I already got told by the Chief." Bulma sighed. "I'm not running off anywhere. I still have my own mission to complete."

"Well my mission is clear, it's to protect your cute ass." Viola said. "No going off and getting yourself stabbed, you make body guarding someone actual hard work."

The two of them walked down the corridor as Bulma explained her next investigation.

"It'll just be us two in South City, what a change from here!" Viola beamed. "It's my home town, I can't wait!"

"Glad you're looking forward to it. That place only has bad memories for me." Bulma sighed.

"Vegeta's not going to get close to you again, we have orders!" Viola reminded her. "If we see even a sniff of the killer Saiyan we have to run, not fight."

"But what if we could catch him!"

"No, Bulma, you're not a fighter!" Viola scolded her. "I'm telling you not to take any risks, we were warned."

"There's no need to baby me, I got it." Bulma huffed. She had no idea why everyone protected her so much. Other Force 3 agents were able to do their jobs fine without powers or with any back-up. She silently fumed at her own incompetence at fighting and the injustice of being treated like a doll. There was still more she needed to do to prove herself it seemed. It was never enough for them; she just had to keep trying to fight till it was. Secretly she still wondered if she ever caught Vegeta if that would be what would force her up to a more leadership level role. Though for now it was a dream. The mild stinging pain in her side gave her the warning that Vegeta was not someone to mess with lightly.

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A few hours passed and it came near the time. Bulma was clear to go by the doctors and all she had to do now was meet up with her boss. She held her breath as she walked onto the helipad and smiled as she saw Launch in a wheelchair by the side looking quite grim. She walked towards her friend.

"I'm not joining up again for me." Launch said. "I'm doing it for Tien, for you!"

"Wait, me?"

She saw Launch looking so sad at her again. "I'm going to find out everything I can about what they took from my mind." She whispered. "I'm going to fight for the truth."

Bulma bent down and gave her friend a hug. "I wish I was going with you." She sighed. "I have another mission to go to."

"Just stay safe and let Viola look out for you." Launch said smiling. "I need to go back to training by the looks of it."

The other door opened and the rest of Force 2 arrived. Viola made her way over to her friends and teammates to say goodbye and Bulma sat quietly next to her friend not saying a word and holding her hand. She had been through so much and when she'd find out about how and why Tien had died it might break her friend's heart. She couldn't say and she understood there was something else going on in the FBI. She needed all the allies she could find; her set up for her suspension had taught her that.
Director Piccolo followed by the smaller hooded figure of Agent Beri walked towards them.

"You're making the right choice Launch, we'll get you back to fighting form and you may even be good enough for Force 2." He said.

"If you say so, I just want to fight for what's right." Launch said looking up and directly into his eyes.

"I understand, Launch, you will have to stay in the hospital for a little longer and you'll be called to training with your new leg." Piccolo said and looked to Agent Beri. "We will need you to undergo a psychic scan as well."

"Yeah…" Launch gave a sideways look to the small alien who was smiling and primping her hair.


Bulma cursed inwardly as her geek self noted how it was one of the latest version, part of Gero Inc new models that copied her father's designs. She gave a last look at her friend. It was good in a way she was coming back to her but it would be at a cost. She gave another quick glance at the alien Beri and tried to clear her mind of any ill feeling she had towards her. She was obviously had some empathy along with her strong telepathy and able to understand basic emotion without reaching into your mind. Director Piccolo always seemed to be near her and she felt that he was in his own way protecting everyone from her full power.

Bulma threw her light bag into the back of the winged van and climbed in. The others that were gathered there stood back and Director Piccolo seemed to be chatting to his Force 2 team rather than watching her leave as the vehicle took off vertically. It was a nice design but Bulma knew her father could do better.

"Did you want Daddy to wave you goodbye?" Viola teased her as she saw her looking out the window.

"What?" Bulma said in surprise.

"Director Piccolo didn't wave…. Sorry, was that a bad joke?"

"Oh!" Bulma sighed, she had to learn not everyone where telepaths. "I just thought we would be more of a goodbye or a mission statement that's all."

"Don't worry, we've got that in our Mission file. We need to be in constant contact with the Director, he feels guilty for your time in hospital."

"He always said that he owed my father." Bulma explained. "I still can't get away from riding on my Dad's name."

"Nah, I'm sure it's more than that." Viola encourage. "Director Piccolo is a Dad to all of us. I didn't mean anything by it."

"I guess." Bulma shrugged and tried to remain silent. She had more things to think about. Launch coming back was great she had one more ally in the FBI but it still gave her the unsure feeling of why she needed to feel glad about that. She used to think they were all a team and could work together but recently she was feeling unsure about it all. She felt a mild churning in her stomach and she laid her hand against the scar. It was somehow burning and she could still feel the stinging pain bringing back the memory of when she was cut.
"You okay?" Viola asked.

"Yeah fine, we're going far away from Vegeta." Bulma said. "I still feel like he's watching me."

The Air-Van flew on up over the mountains and away from North City which for once had a clear sky so they could see the stars as they got further from the glare of the city lights. The two agents could see the scenery clearly from their windows.

"It's all so pretty from up here." Viola said.

"Space has always been so beautiful, yet has such hidden dangers." Bulma agreed.

"I meant the city lights, but yeah the stars are good too." Viola said as she pointed to the twinkling lights down below.

"I always find the stars more interesting." Bulma said as she gazed upwards. The stinging warm pain was getting stronger in her stomach the further she left North City. She tried to keep it quiet as she was sure it was just some stress related trauma. She could fight this herself she had done similar before when the bug Jones had mauled her.

'Till we meet again Bulma. I know we will, I'll make sure of it.' Vegeta's voice came into her head so clearly she turned round to see if she could see him. The feeling of him watching her came back stronger and she shut her eyes forcing her mind to focus on the here and now.

'We are not letting him win.' She hissed inwardly and punched her gut where the scar was. She winced in pain but it brought her out of the trance and she gasped as she scrambled to swallow some pain killers.

"Bulma?" Viola was concerned she leaned over to her seat and felt her head.

"Just a bit of PTS showing itself." Bulma assured her. "Let me rest."

"Okay, if you say so. We're going somewhere totally different than North City, it'll take your mind off it all."

"Exactly what I need." Bulma said in a small voice. "I'm going to try to get some sleep." She didn't want to continue talking; she'd packed some extra sleep medicine as well. She needed it they had a 6 hour flight. She enjoyed Viola's company but she needed more alone time than she cared to admit. She had some nightmares that Beri had awoken and only a mindless chemical sleep made her rest anymore. She turned her head to watch the stars again and let the medicine take its effect. The next city also had terrible memories for her but there were few places left like that anymore.

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Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: Surprise Vegeta right at the end. I did have a passing idea to have him as the driver but it's not time yet and would be too silly. There's more plot to be uncovered in a few other places. So the reunion of doom is still many chapters in the future. I just need to speed up my writing speed.

Next chapter we'll catch up with Vegeta and see where he's run to.
Journey to the West

Chapter Summary

We follow Vegeta's escape and find out about his inner fortress

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Dragonball Z, Silence of the Lambs and Hannibal. I do not make money from this story.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 37

Journey to the West

It was almost a day's travel but Vegeta had kept walking till his feet had begun to bleed. He had finally decided to take a rest in a small forest. It was good cover but he took the time to set up his tent and look like an ordinary camper. He'd dyed his hair to a darker brown colour when in a nearby gas station. He was sure that no one would notice the extra mess in the washbasin. He fiddled with the small bike he had acquired from his stop off. It was going to be missed but he could drive it for a while before abandoning it.

The roads he planned to go would be quiet and there was a low chance of any patrols. It was already deep into the night and the small light he had from the fire would soon be extinguished. He sat down on the tarp sheet as he double checked his map. He made a small circle of where he was camping now, off a main road but the surrounding forest would hide his camp. The small byroad that was near here would take him further towards his goal. He needed to get to West City. He had to get closer to Bulma, he knew where she lived. It hadn't taken much to find that as the newspapers had been very forthcoming with that little bit of information. The only issue was he knew she wouldn't be there. They would have figured out he had plans for her. That didn't mean he couldn't mess up her things for a bit. The psychological warfare on her would be the most fun part about his hunt. It was dangerous for him too but he planned on doing so much needed training on the way.

'Nothing like visiting an old haunt.' He smiled to himself as he circled his midway goal on the map. He got to work on the bike ripping out the unnecessary navigation parts that ever vehicle seemed to have these days. They were good for giving GPS but that also worked the other way and it would allow the police or the owner to track the bike himself. He taped up the gaping hole and left the blinking GPS down into the forest. If anything they would come for it in a day or so and he would be long gone by then.

He smothered the fire and plunged into pitch darkness. For his Saiyan eyes this was enough for him to see as he went into the tent and began wrapped up his blistered feet. He found that he never healed as fast as he used to without his ki. His Saiyan body had the stamina but when he damaged it he
never felt himself getting stronger. It was always the same mundane feeling of weakness. The only time he had felt a spark of power was when he killed Tien and that other time when he'd been near the other warrior. Vegeta clenched his fists as he remembered that surge as if the power had come into him and he could manipulate it for a short time. It had gone very soon after he'd lost contact but it had been that one touch of skin on skin contact that he could sense the other warrior's power. He could sip on it for a brief time and use a borrowed person's ki, to tap their power. The only thing was he had no idea for how long or what limit this side effect had. This had to be an unexpected side effect there was no way they would have given him a neutering serum if they thought it would at anytime give him a new way to fight.

If he remembered right that pig warden had said this was an experimental medicine. He had told him it had been made by his lab boys, whoever they would be. Though if the FBI knew wouldn't they understand he had no ki and not have those cheap energy scanners? It also wasn't obvious to the robots that were hunting him by his ki, he had passed by them as they targeted the larger ki users which meant he could escape effortlessly while the more powerful Agents drew in the robots.

Those robots would be a problem. Doctor Gero had seemed harmless; he had shredded him and left him to die years ago during his first rampage. If he had known that Gero would survive and come back to take his revenge then he would have ended Gero's life there and then. The pretensions of that doctor that he could make a robot warrior. The machines he and Nappa had destroyed had been mere toys.

The ones he saw in North City, they seemed similar to what he had seen before but the dogs were something different. He'd seen those hounds a few times before when he had been hiding. They had his scent and were hard to evade but not impossible but when paired together with those toy robots they were a problem. His current power level was a mere zero. He had nothing to fight them with. The Androids had no ki, nothing that he could tap into. He had been unable to sense any energy from them at all. If he wanted to survive till he'd caught his prey he'd need to ensure he never got that close to them again.

'Not until I'm prepared.' He mused as he let his mind wander; he had found that his inner mind was his only seclusion now. The years of solitude and prison had let him walk into in his own mind like it was his freedom. No matter the four walls and chains that bounded him his mind was his own fortress. He had built up his own world inside, his memories, his feelings of revenge, his frustrations, all his emotions where sectioned off and tidied into rooms. He was free to roam these rooms as he chose. To let out the demons within the walls of his mind and bathe in the blood of past conquests.

One other reason for these defences was they were a good way to defend against psychic intruders. He opened a blue door in his mind. The smell was the first thing that always hit him, now he had the taste of her blood as he carefully stepped in. There was a strange pink blur interrupting the room he was constructing, something had got between him and his little prey. He stared at the blur for a while; the small connection he had gained to her was being blocked. It was quite weak and he was sure that the conscious mind of the psychic wasn't there but it was a sign that someone with more powerful abilities had come into contact with her. Her address was written down in this room but it was too dangerous to stay. He closed the door on the room; it wasn't ready yet and needed locked away in his mind. For his plan to work he needed to get closer to the little agent. He would use her as his tool for revenge in the most devious way possible. His link to her at the moment was weak but if it was discovered now by a prying psychic then it would all be for naught.

He entered the Planet room as he called it the wide expanse of bloody corpses and a meandering blood river was the home he could never claim again. It was only a memory in his mind. One that was embellished with the body of his fallen victims and future hopeful victims. The world that he was taken from when he was still too young to have any memories other than the red of the planet.
had been warped by his own bias of what his home World would really look like. Amongst the blood and gore a pure white statue stood. It was female and had a mild light blue hue that shone from it. The bottom had become dirty and the blood seemed to be seeping in. This was only an avatar of his image of Bulma. She stood there as a sign of something that he could have and crush at any moment.

She still stood pure and untainted but he believed his corruption had started the shine was still strong but where it was placed down onto the ground was where a dark vein had started to creep up the smooth leg. This was only his perception though; the truth might be more than he hoped for. He would need to see her in person to see any effects and enforce it further. The place where he had stabbed her was on the statue to it covered over the hideous mark that the Arachnid Jones had left. There was a need in him to destroy that scar, to mark her as his prey. There would be other scars now he was sure but they would have been made as she fought like a warrior. They would be updated when he could strip her down and examine the flesh. Then he would have more for the blue room too, he could add the taste of her flesh and bones. It would make it complete.

He sat and meditated for a while, his real body lay in a tent weakened and pitiful. In his mind he was on the bones of his victims and began to organise his fortress. The memories all required to be placed in order and he could wander through the corridors and enter the memory rooms when required. The one containing Bulma's address was currently engaged but he had time. He had a new training technique to find as he had a smell of power. A nostalgic smell that had bought him to the planet room. The bones of the victims that had no name they were dumped here broken and bloodied, scattered around the statue like an offering. They had been stripped of all their flesh and skin. There was another room for that too.

For now there was only a form of resting trance as he focused on his goal. It was still a far but it was now closer than ever before. He was growing impatient but after years and years of waiting he could not rush to the end just yet. He had learned to go slowly and savour the experience. It would all be stored in his mind fortress for later too. The towering structure would always be changing and expanding as Vegeta used the technique to defend his mind. It was perhaps the only real power he had left and he was going to use his mind to its fullest capacity.

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Bulma Briefs still travelling in the large air-car and getting nearer to South City. It had already been 5 hours and one fuel stop and they were almost there. It had been a quiet journey as she had tried to sleep or study her Investigation details. The leads for Vegeta were now cold as he would be gone from North City and she was no longer allowed to endanger herself as bait. They needed to update their files as some parts were missing about what was actually done to Vegeta while he had been held in the Asylum.

It didn't make any sense to Bulma. Warden Oolong was someone chosen by the FBI to manage the prison, he worked for them. How had he failed to give them any information? They should have been working together; there were just too many contradictions that made her investigative skills tingle. There was of course some information but it was all highlighted as "Care of Dr Oolong" and seemed abridged of the full facts. Bulma was starting to doubt his doctorate credentials. It was all set up for enquiring to the Warden in person but the Warden had died a while ago. He had been found on a spit with an apple in his mouth. Large chunks of flesh were also missing but he'd been left to be found. There was a new Warden there now and he was a familiar face.

Bulma looked at the contact file and felt that she had at least a chance to get to the bottom of this. 'I hope you have the answers I'm looking for, Mr Popo.' She thought to herself.
The driver turned round for a second, "We'll be landing soon, best buckle up." Viola shifted in her sleep as she heard him. Bulma took the chance to give her a gentle shake and started packing up her files. She had been frustrated at the slow pace of the air-car and she was sure if she had her way it would be rocket powered but she had to bite back those urges. She would get a rental car later she was sure she would let out any impatient feelings she'd have then. She didn't like science but when it came to machines and especially cars she couldn't quite hide her adventurous side.

"This is the best time to come to South City." Viola mumbled as she started to wake up. "It was winter in North City but here it's mid-Summer. It's a real tropical paradise."

"Last time I came here it was colder." Bulma said as she recalled her own experience. "I think it must have been winter. I had to wear a jacket."

"This is close to my home town." Viola said getting louder as she was fully waking up. She stretched and adjusted her seatbelt. "I'd like to visit there but there's no one waiting for me now."

Bulma nodded in silent understanding. There were many similar stories from other FBI agents, many lost family members from the time of Vegeta's purge. There was no need to ask any more questions, no matter how much time passed it was still a sensitive subject to talk about. Most people made a suggestion that they had a family but there was a very strong sense of the past tense. That there had been a family in their life, but not anymore. Viola's tight smile as she looked down to the shiny beach down below showed she was fighting her own internal emotions and Bulma didn't feel like provoking her.

"I don't remember much about South City." Bulma admitted changing the subject. "I just know I hated it, but maybe because of a certain someone."

"There's no way he can make it here." Viola tried to assure her. "South City is on an island, you need a passport to travel here, there's no way he can make it."

"He could swim." Bulma said dryly and smiled to try to show she was joking. Although there was a part of her that feared Vegeta really would. After her recent encounters with him she felt like he could really do anything.

"Reminds me I actually want to go to the beach while we're here." Viola gushed she was still excited about reaching South City which was in the midst of summer. "I used to surf but I doubt I would do well now. I would just wipe-out."

"Don't ask me to join you then..." Bulma shuddered. The idea of having to wear a swim suit of any kind while she had her injury made her stomach turn.

Viola caught on to what she was meaning and made an apologetic shrug. "Maybe next time for you then, you need to rest after your injuries."

"Yeah, and what better way for that is more walking around and asking questions." Bulma said sarcastically. "I just hope this new Warden will be able to tell us anything that can help." Bulma knew this was just a distraction to get her away from Vegeta. To gather some information that another more junior agent could have done. It was obvious he was being overprotective and just sending her as far from North City as possible. Though she remembered the last time they sent her away she ended up getting extremely lucky with the lead. Her first case of Jigsaw Jones still gave her nightmares of what could have happened that night. She just hoped she wasn't coming to meet a similar coincidence.
Mr Black was in a small state of apprehension as he looked at the full report he had just received from the Android technician. The team they had sent out of four humanoid robots and four sniffer dogs had come back to a team of one and two dogs.

"Has Android 7 given any reason as to why the other 3 were destroyed?"

The technician was an old man but had been with the army much longer than Black. "None Sir." He replied. "I think I know what's happened but the robot is saying his reasons."

"Dr Grey is there anything you can get from his memory core?"

"I will need to do a full shut down and analysis, he has the character flaw of believing he has done what is right for Dr Gero. There must be no evidence of the Androids, you see. That's what Android 7 really thinks and he will speak to only Gero about the full details of the mission. I would not recommend bringing him before the great Dr. I sense he would be ordered dismantled on site. I'd rather do the memory recovery and let Gero read this without Seven in any danger."

"I think it's too late for that." Black sighed. "Any of this report will need to be sent to me. Don't give the data directly to him. He has no patience these days, I seem to get away from his rage a little."

"You are his second in command."

"I prefer to be called Mr Black, I am after all only his butler." Black reminded him.

Grey nodded and went back to his report. "I will trust you to pass the message to Dr Gero."

"Leave it to me." He assured the technician. "I always have my Master's best interests in mind."

"Understood." Grey said a grim look on his face.

The Reformed Red Ribbon Army, now Gero Inc was now only a scattering of bitter vengeance seeking people and a load of robots. It was nothing to really be proud in leading. He was technically the Commander but he had never officially accepted the title. They all had the same goal, they wanted Vegeta dead, not just dead but a slow suffering death. The injustice of his imprisonment was nothing in comparison to the suffering they had endured. Dr Gero was too much of an invalid to really take charge but his drive for vengeance was the strongest. Just one look at the scarred and flesh exposed face told you that.

"We will all do what we must." Mr Black said. "I must serve my Master till the end."

"I will run that diagnostic immediately." Dr. Grey said and ran back to his laboratory.

Mr. Black took another look at the offending report. It was not the news Gero was expecting. It was a complete disaster, they were suppose to capture Vegeta not get themselves destroyed. He would have to balance it with another report about his Vegeta killing robots that were now operational. He would have to take the bad with the good. He looked through a few other sources to see if he could sweeten the Dr with any other good news. There were only spy reports about the FBI, though they had been involved with the Androids too and had started an investigation. He scanned through the short summaries till he found one that would peak Gero's interest. The whereabouts of Bulma Briefs.

'That should be enough for now.' Black smirked as he thought up a little idea to give to Dr Gero. The FBI plan of using Bulma as bait had been aborted but that didn't mean that they couldn't do the same thing. 'I'm sure the Dr will be very interested in this.'
Author's Notes: It's another three view chapter as I base out some more set up. Vegeta's on the run in the North, Bulma's safe in the South and Dr Gero is going to be making more plans for the pair. Especially with Bulma.

I've decided to introduce the inner Palace from Hannibal as it's a cool concept and one that goes back to the Ancient Greeks. (Check it out in Google, search Ioci). Also I've been playing the heck out of Persona 5 and I love the whole inner Palace concept. Vegeta's is more or a fortress as he lives in a world full of psychics that can break into the world, so it might be a little weird but it made sense to me.

Thanks for everyone that's reviewed and told me how they like the different style of story I'm writing. I don't want it to be a typical Bulma/Vegeta love story. As I've said countless times this will be more about obsession and will be far darker than it has been so far. Seriously, this is not a romance! My build up is what I enjoy the most as it makes the conclusion and confrontation that comes all worth it.
Chapter 38
Unwanted Nostalgia

Mr Black was right about the reaction from Dr. Gero. The hissing and gurgling of his rage as he went into incomprehensible angry rambles left the butler with his head bowed as he let the rage of his master continue. One of the nurses was attending him and he was interested to see that it wasn't Marron for once. Mr Black only adjusted his tie and held onto the rest of his report. He had been prepared for this.

"Tell me we have at least some of the Hounds!" Gero rasped desperately.

"Two have returned to us." Mr Black answered. "The other two have been destroyed and the remains have been dealt with."

"So what does that leave us with?" Gero snarled.

Mr Black understood this was a trick question, it was not meant to be answered. He remained silent and met the angry gaze of his master.

"We need to make countermeasures now!" Dr Gero snapped.

"I have begun that very thing." Mr Black said smoothly. "The Vegeta Buster Androids are primed and ready and we have found the very thing to lure Vegeta to us."

"It's her isn't it?"

"Our sources have told us some interesting interactions between the Agent known as Bulma Briefs and our target. He recently stabbed her as she got close to him but he didn't kill her. The FBI even became suspicious and took in a psychic to investigate. Agent Briefs has been cleared of any involvement with Vegeta but it has been confirmed that she is in danger from Vegeta as he has started to take some interest in her."
"He wants to kill her?" Dr Gero snickered.

"That would appear to be the case. His methods involving Agent Briefs aren't his usual killing ways, but the Bureau do believe she is in danger from being stalked from him and he sees her as a possession."

"These experts on Vegeta again. They didn't do so well the last time they had him in their hands." Gero scoffed but he seemed to understand what Mr Black was hinting at. "So she is something of interest to him? She does work as a good little carrot"

"Yes, the plan to use her as bait worked too well that they have retreated the agent to South City. An island far from the North and one that is hard to gain access to without a passport."

"So they've gone to hide their precious hidden gem away?" Gero said still unimpressed. His breathing was still raspy but he had recovered for the moment. "We don't want her to go to waste do we?"

"No Sir." Mr Black said.

Dr Gero chuckled deeply making him cough up some more blood. The nurse glared at Mr Black as if he was the cause but quietly attended to the sick man.

"I will make arrangements for you to meet with her then?"

Dr Gero couldn't respond well but he merely nodded. His trust in his number two was unmoveable.

"I suffer like this everyday and every drop of blood, every wince of pain I shall give back in return to Vegeta." Was what he had said to Black when he first met Dr. Gero and it gave him a comparison on his own anger against Vegeta was miniscule compared to the Doctor's. His vision of vengeance was almost inspirational to him. The nasty comments and rants, he took it all over the years and Gero had grown to appreciate him. They had a mutual understanding of the final goal of everything. Vegeta needed to die in the most gruesome way possible.

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Bulma stood in awe at the South City Asylum for the criminally insane. It hadn't grown so much as shrunk over the years as the publicity of Vegeta's escape had taken its toll. She got out of the taxi and adjusted her skirt. Viola was right behind her. The building had increased its defences since she'd last been here. The road into the place had an ID check on everyone and the gate surrounding the place had increased. Bulma forced herself to smile as she saw the welcome party coming, a few random guards by the looks of it. None of them she recognised at least. She was also silently fuming at not being able to get a rental car at the airport. Viola had insisted that they didn't need one this time and that was the end of it. She had pushed her guard duty authority on the matter and Bulma was helpless to argue.

The taxi driver took his money and made a swift exit. The stories about the Asylum still hung over the town and he had been nervous to come here.

"If we'd taken a rental we could have saved his stress level." Bulma mused as he watched him speed away. Viola only scoffed a laugh and didn't take her bait. She had her sunglasses on and was in a good mood.

"Let's get to work, we're on a mission." She reminded her.

It had been Piccolo that had given her an increase in authority, Bulma was under her lead according
to the Deputy Director and she had to follow her lead. It was a stark difference of the partnership they had in North City. Viola seemed to love it and was keen to show her worth to Piccolo. As soon as they'd stepped off the air-car and gone through passport control she'd seen the change immediately.

"Nice to meet you both." Viola said to the guards. "This is Agent Briefs and I'm Agent Viola."

"We've been expecting you the Warden would like to see you." Guard 1 said while Guard 2 stood behind watching them.

They were guided through the gates and as Bulma showed her ID again she was given a familiar view as the building came into view. Part of the hospital part had been knocked down and there was a pile of rubble but where Vegeta had been held was still standing like a monument surrounded by more fencing and guards. There was strange netting hanging over the roof of the building. It took Bulma a second to realise it was camouflage to hide the building from any planes or air cars coming overhead. The radar tower to the side made it seem like any unwanted air craft would be taken care of.

They stopped outside a new building that seemed to be the main security and a large and very familiar man came out to meet them.

"Mr Popo!" Bulma gasped. "You're still here?" The large man smiled at her and held out his hand to shake hers. Viola stood back and Bulma turned to introduce her. The man hadn't changed but Bulma was amazed to learn that he was now the Warden. He had been there when she'd met Vegeta. He'd warned her about the rules and thanks to him she felt that she had made progress where others had failed. The man may have been a simple guard but he had more understanding of the way the Asylum inmates worked that it made total sense to her that he was now in charge.

"We don't have many guests these days." Mr Popo said as he pulled up a chair from another room so they could both sit in his office. Bulma looked around apart from the location change from Warden Oolong's office it seemed simpler and slightly cosier. The previous office had been filled with the pretentious Oolong's certificates and framed newspaper clippings of his previous successes. This room was bare and of those and the only things around were interesting cups and decorations.

"Seems comfortable enough." Bulma said as she sat down on the offered chair.

"This place has changed a lot since Vegeta has left. It's become a Death Penalty prison so all the worst ones have been slowly taken care of."

Bulma didn't reply to this news mulling it over in her head if she should say she's glad or if that was a terrible thing. Viola reacted for her and she just stayed silent.

"I never heard about this!" Viola said visibly shocked. "I thought we were going to reform them and send them back into space?"

"Even space doesn't want some of these guys." Mr Popo said grimly. "It wasn't my call but after Vegeta escaped this place was marked to be downsized. There have even been many wardens changing over the years, I'm really just appointed. This place is pretty much unwanted."

"But, for it to be changed so… I never imagined." Viola gasped.

"Only 6 are left." Mr Popo said he gave Viola a sad look. "Don't take it too hard my dear. The FBI have many reasons for why they do these things. The Earth is only a pebble in the ocean that is the Galaxy and there's even more beyond that. We've been doing our best to hold back the flood of
"What if more illegal aliens come that are deemed too dangerous to enter Earth." Bulma questioned. "It seems a bit strange to get rid of the only prison for the worst offenders."

"That is not for me to decide, I'm sure the great Chief Director will have some ideas that will meet the needs." He said and was silent for a while as Bulma and Viola were left deep in their own thoughts. Bulma seemed to be the braver one and had another question but Mr Popo raised his hand and just gently shushed her.

"Now, this is not why you're here though." He said with a smile. "A little chat about the future of South City Asylum is not a happy tale and I was informed by your Director that you require some information about our most famous inmate."

"Yes, we're also under the understanding that we're going to stay here?" Agent Viola asked. Her chirpy smile seemed to have gone and she looked more concerned.

'Now you know why I wasn't happy about it.' Bulma inwardly thought. 'I did not want to come back to this hell hole.'

Mr Popo stood up and called another person in. "This is the Chief guard, Mr Tofu. He's got the keys to the mansion you'll be staying on. If you'd like to follow him Agent Viola, he'll show you where to go and to get you the keys."

"Isn't that the old Warden Oolong's house?" Bulma asked.

"I have no need for such a large house; it's part of the FBI South City Headquarters now." He explained. "The previous Warden used it all for himself but I think it's under better care when it's used by everyone. I do stay there but only in one room, that's enough for me."

Agent Viola nodded and walked out with Mr Tofu as the door shut Mr Popo seemed to spin on his heels and turn to Bulma with a big smile. "Now, I shall give you something special Agent Briefs."

"Um…. I'm not sure I follow you." She smiled back nervously.

"These are for you." He said, bringing out a roll of papers. "I have sold a lot of Vegeta's goods over the years, I'm ashamed of that as we're never paid that well. These drawings though, I could never sell they were confiscated from Vegeta a long time ago before he moved to the temporary cell in West city."

"His drawings?" Bulma took the pile. "Is this all that's left for us to investigate?"

"No, I left a box of things that are left over but all his manacles and straightjackets were things that held more value." He said. "The drawings might sell but they're perhaps a way to look into his mind, I feel they've got more value that what they would be sold for."

"I never thought you as an appreciator of the arts." She said randomly unrolling one to take a look as Viola walked back in. She looked over Bulma's shoulder.

"What's with all the orange and red?" She commented.

"It's one of his favourite colours." Warden Popo added. "I had to buy a lot of red chalk for him over the years."

"Thank you for these." Bulma said as her hands slightly shook and she tried to hide it by putting her
hands down onto her lap. These drawings were not the investigative items she had hoped to find and she was getting flashbacks to finding the mailed drawings of herself. She could see his thumb prints on a few of them. The side of her stomach was beginning to sting and she was trying her best not to think about him.

"We've had a long journey so we're going to go freshen up in our rooms and perhaps come back here in the afternoon." Agent Viola said patting Bulma on her back. "You're looking a little pale Agent, maybe best to let you rest."

"I was just discharged from hospital. It's probably a good idea." Bulma agreed and she stood up and shook Warden Popo's hand again. "I'll take care of these drawings, thanks for saving them."

"I hope they'll be of some use, there's a box in the mansion with the rest of the leftovers from Vegeta but I'm afraid they may not be that useful."

"It'll all help." Bulma said as hopefully as she could. She knew she was just here on a wild goose chase to keep her out of trouble but she couldn't quite explain that to Mr Popo. He seemed to really want to help their investigation.

"Do you need to lie down?" Viola asked her as they left the tiny office. Bulma shook her head and gritted her mouth.

"I just want to get to cataloguing all this evidence, let me work and I'll be fine." Bulma said. She truthfully didn't want to sleep as she knew there were some nightmares brewing in her mind. The more she avoided sleep, the more she could avoid those waiting dreams. She somehow doubted as the corridors and smell was bringing back the hidden memories of her visits here. The old Warden's office now seemed to be a large staff room and Viola went back to speak to Chief Tofu to get clearer sense of the directions. The man seemed only happy to escort them to the premises.

"Warden Popo lives there too but you ladies will be in a different area." Chief Tofu said calmly. "I think there aren't many men that are staying the night there this week. It's separated into three parts now."

The outside was too bright and sunny and Bulma shielded her eyes from the sun, she barely took in the change to the buildings. The shadow of the mansion loomed over her.

"This place is huge!" She cried out. She'd never gone to this side of the Asylum before and she was sure Oolong had made sure she never did. This was a total abuse of power if it had been only the Warden that had stayed here.

"The FBI wing is all yours; there are no agents other than yourselves that have come here recently." Chief Tofu said. "The Barracks is at the back of the building called the South Wing, Mr Popo and a few other high level staff stay in the East Wing. There is also housekeeping staff that will know you're there, everyone should have clear ID."

"I'm not worried, I know this place is secure." Agent Viola said.

"You'll have full run of your own kitchen so you best take care of your own meals," Tofu said as he opened the door and lead them through to the entrance of the West Wing. "This place will be pretty much all yours. I'll let you know if there are any agents coming in to stay, but it's just the two of you."

"Thanks very much Chief." Agent Viola shook his hand. "We'll be taking up a lot of your time this week as we raid your old files."
"Just to warn you that may be hard with Warden Oolong's old files." He warned them. "The corrupt idiot had so many dodgy deals that a lot of the Asylum's data was erased or covered up. I just want to put it out there on record I was only a guard at the time."

"We'll take note of that." Bulma assured him. She could tell there was still a lot of left over damage from Oolong's reign. She didn't want to say the real reason that they were just wasting time to keep her out of harm's way but she felt responsible in a way for bringing up the man's worries. It was stressful in any long established place whenever an investigative team came to enquire. She'd seen it before and he was making sure to let himself be free of any blame. From that clue though Bulma guessed the Asylum had more than Vegeta's secrets to uncover. 'This might be more interesting than I originally thought.' She kept that thought to herself and let the worried Chief go.

"This really was a mansion." Viola breathed under her breath. "I wonder if they have a pool?"

"I just want a quick shower to be honest." Bulma sighed. She wished she could be so positive but she was secretly dreading sharing with someone again. At least with North City she got a hotel room all to herself.

"Okay, let's choose our rooms." Viola charged up the stairs with an inhuman speed. She was more of a warrior than Bulma gave her credit for. She slowly followed her up and tried to keep herself upright as she was really starting to feel the fatigue taking over. There were over 4 bedrooms and Bulma was quick to choose the one with the en-suite bathroom. It seemed to suit Viola as she had the room with the largest bed. It wasn't as luxurious as she thought as they had been obviously stripped down to just the basics but it was enough for Bulma and she landed on her bed with a faint sigh. She finally let go of the sketches she'd been clutching on to and tried to block out the growing screams in her head. Vegeta's voice was faint but she was sure she could hear it in amongst the background noise of her troubled mind.

' Seems like you want to cry... ' He seemed to be saying and Bulma shook her head to see only Viola standing over her.

"You okay?"

"Yeah, just everything's catching up on me...." Bulma said weakly. "I need to rest for a bit." It wasn't him, it couldn't be.

"It's fine, take your time. I'll just start bringing in the suitcases from the front."

Viola was gone and Bulma had silence again except for the murmuring voices in her head kept talking. Bulma tried to push the sketches off the bed, sure they were the source but the hissing voice got louder as she closed her eyes. She forced back her tears as she let herself inwardly shout. 'Just leave me alone!' 

'I'll be waiting...'

She sat up sure she would see him but it was finally all quiet and she tried to compose herself before Viola returned

'That damn psychic messed with my mind and brought it all back!' She inwardly fumed as she thought about how she had been warned there may be some side effects to the Psychic examination. The lingering paranoia and her own mental scars were something she'd learnt to cover up and deal with but now it felt that not only had she been sliced open physically but mentally inside her mind as well.
She scrambled into her purse for her medication and tried to reason away the buzzing noise she could still faintly hear as her head continued to throb. All she really knew was that this stay was going to feel longer than it would be. Being in the same place as Vegeta had unnerved her stability to say the least. Usually nostalgia was something welcomed but this wasn't anything like that at all.

Chapter End Notes

Author's Notes: So here we are back at the Asylum and it's all changed. Viola might get a bit annoying as she tries to stay in charge and keep Bulma from being too impulsive. Though the mental scars that are going on inside Bulma will be building and she really needs someone to back her up. No Vegeta this chapter but we'll see what he's up to next and only a little bit of Bulma as she checks the Asylum for any clues, if any. I may have missed an opportunity to explain more back story with how the Asylum works and the Space Station, I'm sorry, but there's something else coming soon that will cover it all. Bulma is only a lower rank agent and she won't be able to find out everything by following her around in the story.

Next time we will follow Vegeta and the tension will just keep on building.
Hiding in Plain sight

Chapter Summary

We follow Vegeta as he runs from North City and chooses a very unusual hiding place.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't make any money from this fan work

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Silence of the Monkeys

Chapter 39

Hiding in Plain Sight

It had been a hard drive by bike but Vegeta was finally where he wanted to be. He had set out before dawn and destroyed any evidence of his temporary camp. He was heading out for the remains of Central City. It was slightly nostalgic for Vegeta as this was the area he and his team had first landed in. The signs of their devastation were still scaring the landscape by the unnatural craters and holes in the mountains. The signs along the road warned all travellers that this was a highly secure area. The early morning sun beamed down and Vegeta could see the swarming mass that was now what was left of the city. This looked from the outside like an abandoned ghost city but it was a thriving hub of activity. This was where the unwanted were dumped, the alien misfits that weren't as high a danger level but couldn't be returned to space just yet. He could see from his vantage point at the top of the valley some smoke and the odd shimmer of the hologram shield.

Some of the inhabitants were actual refugees in need of a new home; they would be educated in the culture of Earth and given the hope of a new place to live. Others were more dangerous and would be forced to stay here as a type of prison camp being given the so called chance to reform. Vegeta had no idea the percentage of aliens that did make it out. He had never spotted them himself but then he had been in hiding in the cold north. It might be a different story in other parts of the world but somehow from the newspapers he had read he doubted this. There seemed to be a blanket of misinformation and the whole alien invasion had been swept under the rug.

He'd been inside the hidden camp once before. It was the last place anyone would think to look for him. He blended in quite well and so long as he didn't say who he was the others left him alone. This was a low key prison as far as he was concerned and it felt almost comfortable compared to the solitary cell he had before. He could speak most alien languages and with a little bit of make-up he didn't even get looked at twice. He checked himself in the mirror of the bike. His naturally tan skin was now a light shade of blue and he buttoned up his jacket to hide his muscles. A quick ruffle of his hair and his hair naturally spiked up and tried to reform into his previous style. He would never again have his large spike of hair as his race's hair never did grow back but he had come to accept that fact now. It wasn't too similar to his old hairstyle but this coloured blonde hair still hid his Saiyan origins.
He tossed the bike down into the ditch and followed it down to cover it up. He had no intention of staying long but he had to ensure the bike would be hidden while he stayed. He only needed a few days then he would move on to his real goal.

He crouched down low and followed the river bank down to the refugee camp. He soon came across a barricade but he was able to swim under it through the river. The sensors around the area flickered by his movement but it was only followed up by an automatic energy signature scan. This was to test for any dangerous power levels. It quickly switched off and Vegeta moved up onto the bank of the river confident that his low energy would have only been instantly dismissed as a small animal. The serum that had neutralised his ability to build up his ki was now insanely useful for evading these scans.

The next security area would be harder and he hoped the hole in the fence was still there from years ago. The shield gave way as he crawled through, the light projection not giving any other defence other than camouflage. He could now see the real Central City, the guard towers dominated the once skyline filled city. Any ruined tall buildings now were filled with spotlights and guard posts. The spot by the river had an outlet by the wall that was easy enough to slip in if you knew how to swim and hold your breath. This was thankfully one of the skills Vegeta was confident in. It had helped him escape his make-shift prison in West City all those years ago. There was no need for him to use any force with his body even though he had no strength, he had the muscle and the lung capacity. If he took it slowly and didn't try to use any speed he could move effortlessly in the water.

It hadn't changed since he'd last been here, no one of any power could slip through the sensors. The place was lit up with the ki detectors. It flickered as he advanced towards the gap and dove into the water. As far as that sensor was concerned he was no more than a wild animal.

'Well, that is very true.' Vegeta mused to himself. The darkness of the murky, dirty water was intense to his sensitive nose. The make-up he had applied was waterproof and his backpack had nothing in it he didn't mind getting wet. He had no need for material things, only survival was what matter.

He gasped for air as he emerged on the other side of the wall. The darkness was welcoming as he lifted himself out. The river exit from the city had a small bridge over it as the guard tower was above. It was a nice hiding hole to stay while he got adjusted to the surroundings and could work out the best time to slip out into the crowd.

The Refugee camp seemed as busy as it ever was. A lot of large, small and colourful people walked around in scruffy clothes. The place was marked out into sectors and numbers. The separation had worked itself into a class system and the unwanted were pushed out to the outskirt sectors while the ones that could bring something to Earth, to fight with them or accelerate their technology were re-educated in the Central Sector.

Vegeta examined the small shack from outside. It was near the back of the settlement away from the training facilities and markets. It had been a large van once but the wheels were gone and it lay open at an angle. Vinyl tarp hung over it like a make shift tent and there were wooden boards covering up any gaps. This was where he had stayed 2 years ago. His small hidden stash was likely not there anymore but he needed to check just to be sure.

Small footprints were in the mud leading into his old shack. Someone was living there now. He didn't want to kill anyone just yet. He had to keep a low profile.

He sniffed the air. There was a strong alien stench. Perhaps a Makyan he pondered or a Nameken. There was a distinctive plant odour. Either could be a considerable threat if it was a warrior class, so he would have to be careful.
As he pulled at the shoddy wooden door he did a quick search and scanned for any powerful ki.

He noticed some far off to the centre of the settlement and around the perimeter. It was most likely the guards and any aliens under high scrutiny or reconditioning as they called it. It was an easy way to keep the ranks of the FBI army or Forces as they called it, as powerful as possible. Vegeta had been denied that very early on in his imprisonment. He never submitted to their tactics to try and bend his will to their way of thinking and to be recruited. He had experienced enough of being someone's attack dog. He brought his mind back to the task at hand and wrenched open the door.

The place was empty but there were clear signs of something living there. It was similar to how he had left it a few years ago. The boards on the floor were the same but the vinyl tarp and small bedding was new. He pulled at one of the boards and lifted it up. He reached into the small hole and pulled out a can. It was his small stash, untouched by whoever lived here now.

The can contained some of the local currency. He had no use for it outside the camp. There was also his ID card that could be out of date. This had his picture as a red alien rather than blue. He reached in again and a jar if his red homemade make up was there too.

'Looks like my ID card might be fine after all,' he mused. He slipped all his items into his duffle bag and returned the board to where he had found it.

As he began to leave, the smell from before grew stronger and he could hear the soft shuffling of a humanoid. He pulled out his knife and tensed. There wasn't any power signal but that meant nothing if this was the species he expected. They had a way of hiding their true power.

The door opened and he slid up behind it grabbing firm and positioning his knife to the throat. He couldn't use any real strength but he still knew how to surprise attack someone. It was a Makyan, the small stature and light blue skin gave that away.

"Don't move, not unless you want your throat slit."

"Do you have any idea who I am?" He snarled back.

"Not one and I don't really care," Vegeta said digging the blade further in and holding the small alien tighter. He could feel the ki building and he knew that he had to bluff his way out.

"I am Garlic Junior, son of the great Garlic who will strike down enemies without any remorse."

"You're a tough guy using the name of his father to boost his own image. Those pretty bracelets of yours are glowing quite strongly. To me it seems you're neutered just like the rest of us."

As Vegeta had held the alien he had felt his ki rise but not really build up. It had led his eyes to the restraining cuffs. They were similar to the ones he had worn when he had been in prison.

"If you kill me, my men will find you and take revenge." The small alien hissed.

"I don't care about you or your men. I'll just take my leave and we'll never meet again."

"Thief, you stole something from here! Don't think that you'll get away so easily."

"What makes you so sure?" Vegeta asked.

"Idiot! As my ki rises, the enforcers will come running!" Garlic spat. "They're monitored fool! Every single one of us with any fighting ability has them with tracking devices. Where are yours weakling?"
Vegeta remained silent as he could feel the little alien building up his power but it was being siphoned off into the bracelet cuffs. He could feel it flowing through his body. It wasn't as strong as he had ever been but it felt nostalgic and similar to what he had felt with Tien but also how he had been when at the peak of his ability. There was something there almost tangible that he could reach, the flow of energy could be his not the bracelets'.

The inner blood lust within him was coming out and a satanic grin was spreading across his face as he gripped harder.

Garlic could feel the change in mood and moved from threatening to begging for his life. "You don't want to do this, join my men; I'm building an army to release us all from here. We can destroy these humans and traitors together."

"Traitors, you say..." Vegeta purred the blade had cut into the skin and he could smell his blood. I have my own traitor to find.

"Let us work together then!" Garlic gurgled. The panic was in his eyes and he wasn't sure how long the guards would really come to check on his spiking power. He glanced down to his hand and the cuffs but, they were only glowing a faint orange and not the red he was expecting. A faint glow was coming off his assailant.

Vegeta was reveling in the flowing power that was passing through into his body. Where his hand was clutching onto the little snivelling insect he could sense the draining as his ki hungry body seemed to latch on by skin contact and suck up as much as it could. The power was soon dispersed but he could taste it like electricity on his tongue, a snapping desperate power as the alien struggling for his life but he wanted more. The life force, the strength, everything. In that moment he was back on another planet killing just one more flesh bag for the glory of Freeza.

He started to laugh a guttural low cackle as the more Garlic fought back and threw out ki the more powerful he felt. The smell of real fear, that sharp pungent fragrance of absolute hopelessness in the face of a foe you could never beat, was surrounding him in a nostalgic bubble.

As he choked out his breath, he dropped his knife hand and using the borrowed power he had gained, he crushed his windpipe. The frantic darting eyes and gasping, pitiful croaks let him know that he was still alive, but only barely.

Vegeta came back to reality as he felt the power disperse. He was back in dangerous territory; this was not the time or the place to kill some random alien. He had let the power control him in those moments and he cradled the dying Garlic in his arms.

'Well, looks like I am a monster.' He thought but with no real regret to the life that was being lost only that this wasn't what he had planned.

He grabbed a blanket and swaddling him up like an infant. Garlic was vaguely looking upwards with a vague gaze of terror and hatred. His life force almost completely drained and his skin was starting to wrinkle.

Vegeta pulled out a long hooded cloak from his duffel bag and covered his own head and shoulders. The small alien was gasping for air as Vegeta kept him held tightly. He had stopped struggling and his energy was slowly fading. Vegeta's hand had latched onto his neck and continued to suck his ki through a strange form of osmosis.

He had come to understand how this new trick worked and it all depended on skin contact or
through a thin layer of fabric. His other hand that supported the dying Garlic could feel the power but it wasn't as clear as the hand on his neck.

He picked up his dropped knife and slid it back into his sleeve. He could hear faint rumblings of an engine of some sort. The time he had was short and he needed to get rid of the evidence.

He hadn't intended to kill; it had been a long time since he'd ever spontaneously done anything like that. His way to survive was to plan out each killing and to have all links to himself erased. He hobbled over the now dead body and cradled it to keep his disguise.

The river was close; he could get there if nobody stopped him. He lurched out the door and moved with slow determination. He heard guards talking above him, but they were busy trying to track down the signal that had recently expired.

"Hey, what's target 71393-J's known shack?" Officer 1 called out to his partner.

"The target only gave us an area number. This place isn't regulated like your pretty Sector 1."

"Just looks like a dump, any energy signal?"

"It's disappeared but 71393-J is known for trying to hide his signal." Officer 2 sighed.

"He's a Makyan, isn't he? They should all be locked up. They cause nothing but trouble."

"Send that one to the chief, we've tried telling him, but he never listens."

"Running a scan, no sign of any powerful ki."

The two officers were riding a type of hover bike. Vegeta could just see them from his hiding place. They seemed like ordinary humans with a little bit of power but it was enough to overpower him. He couldn't rely on being able to lay a hand on either of them or ambush one without the other noticing. They would also be armed with some sort of guns. A full on attack was not an option for him.

They turned around and left to find a clearing to land in. He moved quickly and hunched over so as not to attract their attention. His mistake could cost him everything. Though in a way the confrontation had brought him to realise the potential his body still held.

'The Saiyan will is not so easily controlled by your science. It adapts and grows, our race is far superior to anything else in this universe and I won't let it die here with this lone Prince.'

He reached a bridge and slid down into the mud underneath the arch. For now he felt like a worm but he had tasted it. The power could be his again. It was all too easy for him to lose control when he felt any form of power. It happened with Bulma and he slipped up again with the Makyan.

The last of his strength had passed through him and seemed to disperse as quickly as it had come. He needed more guinea pigs to test out the ability. It was most likely a side effect and he was sure he could make use of it. He just needed more time to play with it.

The two guards were on the ground now and Vegeta could hear their voices from yards away.

"Not here..." Officer 2 said in an irritated voice.

"The cuff signal has stopped completely, possibly he's laying low somewhere or he's got the cuffs off somehow."

"Send out a warning message to the cuffs let's blow them up." Officer 2 told 1 finally fed up of the
search. "That guy's caused us enough trouble; no one will miss one more Makyan."

Vegeta felt a low rumble from the body as the light on the cuffs turned amber. He slid off the half buried body in the mud and made his way into the river. He had to get away without drawing attention from the guards.

He was submerging into the murky water when there was a large bang and part of the bridge was hit from the exploding bracelets. He didn't look back and swam down and away. He couldn't stop till he was further down from the explosion.

Other aliens from the surrounding slums had come out to see what the noise was. Vegeta emerged from the water unnoticed and shuffled like an old man his hair drooping and clothes soaking wet. Nobody cared as there were Sector guards charging towards the smoking bridge. They were barking orders to each other and towards the nervous crowd that was gathering.

A large overflow pipe was nearby with a broken grate. It was big enough for Vegeta to slip in and rest. He was exhausted; the combination of adrenaline and ki leftovers had sapped his body. He could just sit upright in the tube and try to focus on his breathing.

He had misjudged his own impulsive nature. He had planned everything out but he had still slipped. He couldn't blame Bulma for this one. He inwardly cursed himself and focused on resting and sharpening his mind.

The pipe was blocked and no longer in use. The small area was hidden from view and not near the main pathway. It was still damp and had a trickle of water in the bottom but it was a temporary sanctuary for him.

He controlled his breathing and let himself go into a trance. His real sanctuary was within him. His mind fortress was growing taller. A new room had been made for Garlic. His sacrifice was to be remembered as it had given him an insight into a new tool he could use.

He climbed the bone staircase to look at the other new room. This was the memory of the power he had wielded. He needed to examine it more. Inside the room his body was a giant statue, posing in the same way as he had held onto Garlic. Golden ki was flowing through the body like a light show. It showed him how his body had been constantly diffusing the ki and expelling it. There was a good chance when he was draining power his ki became noticeable. He watched himself kill the alien again. The outside view giving him the feedback he needed.

The shrivelled up remains of Garlic lay beneath the statue. He needed more bodies to build up his monument. He also had to experiment more to gain understanding. Bulma would have to wait for him.

He slowly pulled himself back out of his mind, setting up small mental traps in case of any unwanted mind scans. He set up his alternative persona; the man in the ID card was his wall guarding the front of his inner sanctum. Any light scans would see the Red alien instead of his true face. If they scanned deeper they could see through it but for a thin smoke screen for psychics, it worked well. He gave the red alter ego a name and basic back story. A refugee running from the expanding Cold Army was good to use, almost everyone in the cesspool of scum had something similar.

If he was at full power, he would have purged the whole lot of the snivelling maggots that lived here. They were nothing more than total weaklings on the run. However Vegeta was now one of those weaklings, his power was gone and he had just his instincts and fighting ability left. In this giant melting pot of aliens he fit in disturbingly well.
It was ridiculous how lax the security was in the colony. It was far too easy to take advantage of and now he had an insight to how the guards reacted. This outer sector he was currently in was ripe for any experiments. He would just need to keep his calm and keep his impulses in check. He needed to be colder, his plan was slowly forming and he had more pieces to the wonderful creation of his revenge.

Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: Sorry for the delay. I had an emergency last year as my old laptop of 5 years finally died on me and I lost a lot of files. I upgraded to windows 10 and had a lot of trouble changing my old programs over as they're non-compatible. I now have a smartphone now though and I've linked it to my new laptop so we share a cloud file for the word documents. So I fear there may be format issues from this changeover, but at least I can work on my stories where ever I am. (Let me know if you spot any mistakes!)

Onto the story and we're getting deeper into the world that has changed from what you know. The government has a penal colony or even a refugee camp. This was mentioned a while back by another character but it wasn't explored much. This time we'll see the other side of the FBI that is in the DBZ world.

Next time will be Bulma in the old asylum looking for clues to find Vegeta.
An Island Paradise

Chapter Summary

Bulma investigates the clues left behind from Vegeta's stay in the Asylum. Though she feels she's just being left to do the paperwork.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own or receive any money from this work of fiction; all rights belong to Akira Toriyama, Bird Studios and Hannibal inspired by the works of Thomas Harris.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 40

An Island paradise

On the South City Asylum Bulma looked into every room of the mansion that was to be her home, she secretly hoped would be only for a few weeks but Piccolo hadn't really specified exactly how long it would be.

All she knew was that the Warden's mansion was far too big to feel comfortable. It reminded her of Capsule House but a much older styled place compared to her parents' modern tech filled house. After the warden had been removed, any excessive decoration had been removed but there was a gaping space or marks on the wall were paintings had once hung.

The previous wallpaper was still there but was painted over. The marks of what would have been some elaborate design were now only faint texture on the wall.

Some of the furniture remained and seemed out of place. She sat down on the fancy mahogany chair while faintly listening to the chatter of Viola as she was in the other room.

It was as her fellow agent had said her first mission without any other superiors watching over her. For Bulma she felt like they were no longer partners but senior and junior. Despite being younger, Agent Viola was a Force 2 member; she could fight and hold her own against most threats. However Bulma was a mere Force 3 Investigator and Viola was under instruction to guard her. It was clear to her that she was just here to investigate any substandard data left behind about Vegeta and catalogue it.

She had a basic data entry job while Viola relaxed in the tropical heat. She saw the agent emerge from her room clad in a bikini which just confirmed all her suspicions.

"I saw a pool outside, might as well take advantage. Do you swim?"

"I still have this nasty cut, best not." Bulma blushed. She imagined her previous self jumping at such
a chance. It only made her feel mild frustration. "I might burst my stitches." She added to cover her ambiguous face. She felt such a mixture of emotions as she went from embarrassment, frustration and slight irritation.

"Oh, right... Just rest up here. I want to check out the swimming pool." Viola tried to laugh off but seemed to be embarrassed herself too as she was reminded that Bulma was just out of the hospital.

"No problem, I can get started on the filing."

The dark haired girl made her exit and left Bulma with her roll of papers. They were all Vegeta's old drawings. The task of cataloguing all of them made her head ache.

She rifled through the equipment cupboard before finding a camera she could use. She unrolled the drawings and started laying them on the floor, using some leftover ornaments as paper weights.

The pictures themselves were weird as they were all abstract, only shapes and lines. She remembered how some of his pictures on his cells had intricate details and featured either blood or corpses. The one that was burned in her mind was the naked one of herself. As if she was a goddess of Venus rising from an ocean of blood and bones.

That one should be in the FBI's storage safe from any prying eyes. Other similar gory images would have been sold. These seemed worthless as they never would be considered as works by Vegeta. If anything they looked like art she might find in a modern art gallery and not even take a second look at.

For Bulma each drawing gave her a small chill as she touched it. The knife wound in her gut stung and would ache with each one she them flattened out. She never showed any psychic abilities so she instantly dismissed any weird feelings she was experiencing as just trauma that her own mind was bringing upon herself. By being in this place again where she had first met the monster and looking at something of his, just made her skin crawl from the anxiety.

She tried to set the camera directly over but she couldn't get the full drawing in the frame. She stood up and tried again but it wasn't quite right as she still couldn't get it in the frame. Bulma considered standing on the expensive looking chair but changed her mind. Her aching stomach would probably get worse.

She walked up the stairs and looked down but she doubted she could make the photo flat. It took a few minutes of arranging the pictures on the table and going upstairs to the balcony overlooking the dining room before she was satisfied. It wasn't perfect but it would do until they could be scanned at the HQ.

It felt better being further away from them as well. Her imagination was making her believe that they had some sort of aura. She could zoom in and get a nice flat image for the record.

Bulma paused after the first photo was taken. She noticed that when the images lined up beside each other there seemed to be a connecting theme.

'Not just a theme... No, it can't be...' 

She came down the stairs and checked the edge of one drawing. It came up right to the edge. His previous ones were mostly in the centre with a border. She took two similar ones and lined them up, they matched. Her whole body shivered with chills as she felt her instinct taking over.

Each drawing she took and found similar lines and shapes on the edge.
'It's just some sort of giant puzzle.' She gasped inwardly.

She ran out of space on the table and she pushed it back to the side of the room as she filled the floor with drawing after drawing. They could all be linked up but there were some missing. It wasn't exactly clear as she crouched over them.

'What exactly was he trying to do?'

She walked back up the stairs and peered back down. She turned her head, sure that it was the wrong way round and things began to click together.

There were at least 6 orange circles and a green snake that wound around them. She guessed there was another circle in one of the gaps from a missing drawing.

"No way..." She gasped to herself. It's just a myth. But this was something she had believed in before. It was something that she'd given up and literally buried in her past.

It had been her teenage adventure when she'd been full of hope and dreams about boys or strawberries.

'The bastard, he knew about the Dragonballs!' She inwardly said and raised her camera to take a full image. As a whole the drawings became an image she had seen in the books she had researched. It wasn't a snake but a dragon curled over 7 orbs. It was far too incredible to believe, but here it was staring back at her. It brought back some memories she'd tried to forgotten.

As a teenager, Bulma had found only one of the balls and she had started her quest and on the road when the Saiyans had attacked. She had been forced to return home but Capsule House had been destroyed, there was no home. She'd been utterly traumatized by the destruction that she had buried her single Dragonball in the wreckage of her home. It had been a type of funeral for her family.

Those magical balls had taken her away from her home on a mad hunt. She should have been at home to drag her parents to safety. She knew how stubborn they could be. The balls were a fake dream; reality had shown her that it was far too easy to shatter her dreams.

As she stared at the vague orange spheres she felt her past guilt coming back to taunt her. She still believed that it was her fault her parents had died.

She could hear the splashing of Viola from outside as she climbed out of the pool. She jumped down the steps and gathered up the drawings.

'Don't let her see.' She heard herself thinking and she piled them up on the table and left one on the ground. She felt like she couldn't let anyone else see this.

'Not yet... I shouldn't expose this till I'm certain. Otherwise I will be a total laughing stock.' Bulma thought convinced that this was still some stupid dream she would wake up from. She could see Viola outside the window drying off from the pool. She began to try to look busy, unsure why she felt like she was being caught.

She snapped a photo of the one she had set up just as Viola walked in.

"Wow, that's a lot of drawings." She commented looking at the pile. "Need any help?"

"I'm fine." Bulma answered biting her snide remarks she wanted to add to Viola pointing out the obvious. "Only issue I have is taking photographs, just one is far too big for me to fit into the screen."
"Looks like it might be better to scan them at HQ instead."

"Good plan." Bulma agreed and started to roll them back up. "I might just number them and write each one. It's a shame; I thought some photos would help."

'It's certainly given me an eye opening moment.' Bulma thought.

"You look pale Agent, might be an idea to go get some rest." Viola said gently. "The pool has done wonders for me. Take it easy we don't need to sort all this mess out immediately."

"I guess so." Bulma sighed. "I did check out of hospital yesterday."

"You'd never believe it the way you're moving heavy tables and running up and down stairs."

"You could see me?"

"You were making a big fuss over these chalk drawings. I couldn't miss it. That's partly why I came back."

Viola was dressed in a dressing gown and her hair was in a wrapped towel. It seemed to Bulma like she had rushed a little as the towel wasn't as tight as she usually saw her in when she shared a hotel room.

"Yeah, every thing's fine, I was only getting too involved in taking the perfect picture. Although I think you're right, I need to use the HQ's equipment."

"I never took the mass murderer as an artist. Not sure what you could find in his sketches."

"There are a few psychologists back in the Force 3 team that would love to analyse this." Bulma explained.

"Okay, I'll go get changed and help you seal them up for HQ. I might get water on them as I am."

"I should be able to do it, thanks." Bulma said, she'd come so far setting up for the photos and it all seemed like a waste of time.

'It isn't though, I have this clue about Vegeta that I think he set out for me to find. How is that even possible? I need to ask Warden Popo for more details. Why did he give me these specifically or is there no reason other than to help the investigation?"

"I'm going to seal them up flat and mark the pictures in order."

"Doesn't seem to matter, they all look the same to me." Viola shrugged. "If you're sure Bulma, I'll get changed and back to writing our report on North City."

"Sounds fun."

"I will be back in that pool by the end of it... I've no idea where to start."

For the first time that day it sounded like she was asking her for advice.

Bulma gave her best smile and said, "I would start with the murder of Detective Tien and go from there."

"It all sounds so crazy once you write it down though."
"Trust me, what you saw was nothing compared to me. Bulma said with certainty. 'You could have saved yourself a whole lot of trouble if you'd done it all daily.' She inwardly thought but only said. "How much have you done?"

Viola blushed, "Only the murder facts, which I got from you."

'You're the bane of Force 3,' Bulma snarked inside her head. 'So many Force 3 agents' time and energy are used up to finish your paperwork.'

"How about reporting backwards?" She said instead, biting her tongue with this woman was becoming a bad habit.

"Huh? What do you mean?"

"Report today's arrival, then our departure from the hospital and work out day by day from there. Flip it into the correct order once you're done."

"Oh! Good idea." Viola said sounding relieved. "I thought you meant to type it... Ah nevermind. I need to get started."

She tried laughing her embarrassment away as she went up the stairs and Bulma laughed with her until she vanished from view and the fake smile from Bulma disappeared as Viola did.

It wasn't unusual for a fighter level agent to be terrible at any paperwork. It gave Bulma a small assurance that she was Investigator class for a reason. She found the more she worked with the Force 2 agents the more frustrated she became. If she had any aptitude for combat she was sure she would be better than anyone on the Force 2 team that she had met.

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It took most of the morning but Bulma had finally tagged and bagged all the remaining pictures. A cold nagging in the back of her mind was telling her that what she had found was too important to hide. She needed to check on a few things back in West City as she was sure there was more to this myth.

The Dragonballs couldn't really work, if they did so many bad things that had happened could be wished away. It couldn't be that easy could it?

Her youthful self hadn't thought that hard about it, but now she felt she had to research this more. What were the limitations? Could people be erased or brought back to life? Could time be rewound? If that was true, then had she missed her chance back when she was younger?

Her head was buzzing with all these questions that she jumped when Viola tapped her on the shoulder.

"What's up?" Viola asked. "You look like you've seen a ghost."

"I have bad memories of this place. This was where I met Vegeta for the first time." Bulma sighed and let the awkward silence hang for a moment till she added, "It was the second worst thing that has happened in my life. It's where my career really started which I should be grateful for but it came at a price."

"I get it." Viola said. "This island used to be my home, not South city but a little town that's now a crater. The Saiyans completely destroyed it."
"So there are bad memories everywhere." Bulma said her smile twisted as she fought back she fought back the tears. She was surprised at her own emotions, her mind was stirred up by the secret she had discovered. "There are many things in life I'd want to do differently."

"Ah, I have no regrets about my own actions." Viola said coldly. "Just the actions of others. I wish I could reverse time sometimes."

"I wish…" Bulma sniffed. "I.. I think I reached my limit for today." She was starting to shake from the shock. "I'm going to take a nap."

"No lunch? I was going to see if this place had any kitchens or staff meals."

"Well, with security so tight I doubt we could get any pizza delivery."

"Listen, you've pretty much finished here, just get a rest and I'll see if I can get some food."

"Sure, if that fails there's always the kitchen in the mansion."

"Okay, but don't complain if it's just a cheese sandwich. I don't really cook."

Bulma laughed a little and picked up the previous evidence packages she'd made. The drawings she had once thought as a time wasting activity to keep her busy and away from trouble had given her something more than she ever expected.

Viola watched her go before going into the kitchen. She didn't open the fridge but took out her phone instead.

"Watchdog reporting... Subject B is exhausted from the injury and seems emotional. Possibly due to the psychic scan."

"That's to be expected. The voice answered. How is the file work going?"

"Sorry, mine might take a while but Subject B has completed the first task despite her lethargy. We may need to increase the work load or she may end up investigating the previous Warden."

"That can't be helped. Questions are going to come up whatever she looks into the asylum, Warden Oolong made too many mistakes. They would be impossible to hide."

"Subject B says the drawings are of no importance. They're only suitable for psychological analysis."

"Well, that's nothing we're looking for. Keep an eye on her and let us know when you're moving back to West City. Report back only if Subject B has any information on the main Target."

"Understood, Watchdog signing off."

Viola checked the area again using her energy reading skills checking for signs of life. The faint weak signal of Bulma was above her and almost invisible to her. Nobody else was in the building. She had checked before as she went to the pool. She could scout out the mansion's surroundings. It was sheltered from the main facility but was close enough to walk to. The cliffs behind were a natural barrier behind the building.

It was her job to protect Bulma especially from herself. The woman had a way of finding trouble. She placed her phone back into her pouch and proceeded to check the cupboards.

Upstairs, Bulma shifted uncomfortably in her bed as she tried to process her own thoughts unaware of anything that Viola was doing. She was struggling with the idea of possibility being able to fix all
that had happened, Vegeta had known about them. He had known of the Dragonballs and their power. She could bring it all back, everyone that had died and finally defeat the shadow of Vegeta that always seemed to be around her.

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Chapter End Notes

Author's Notes: Well, there we are. I don't know why but for some reason all my Dragonball stories end up going to the power of the Dragonballs. Probably as they're an easy way out. I will say this, it's not going to be an easy task at all. They do have their limitations as Bulma will find out.

What's going on with Viola will be revealed soon too, so hold on to your pants.

Next Chapter, we follow both of our heroine, Bulma and anti-hero, Vegeta.
The Forgotten Room

Chapter Summary

Bulma revisits a place she had long locked away in her nightmares.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I make no profit from this work of fanfiction, all rights belong to the original creator of Dragonball Z.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 41
The Forgotten Room

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In another mansion, far from South City a sick man listened to his chief Scientist.

"So due to the changes in the main android's bodies they have yet to reach maturity mentally."

"Why is that a problem?" Gero snapped.

"Their biological bodies are small but strong. That's not the issue, it's more about how they moralise any orders. They see no difference between killing a human and an insect."

"That's exactly what I wanted, fool. A child's mind has no morality compass. It's something that needs to be taught."

"We run the risk of them developing into psychopaths."

"My last android 8 was a failure because it lacked the killer instinct, even orders it will disobey if it involves taking a life, it's totally useless!"

"But Sir... These beings are part human too."

"That's why they will be the perfect killers. No remorse, no empathy. Just perfect killing machines."

"This causes problems when we try to program them to only kill Vegeta. They can't differentiate between a Saiyan or a human."

"What real difference does that make?"

Dr Boxer sighed and tried to reason with him. "It means they could start targeting our own men if they can't find the target. They already ripped apart a pig we put in for their training program."

"I don't care, I want them contained and trained up to focus on Vegeta. Stop putting useless
distractions in and keep using the photo of him."

Dr Boxer bowed and said nothing else. It was useless fighting with the man. He inwardly planned to be as far away as possible when the 2 monsters were finally released. They weren't instruments of revenge, they were more like ones of chaos and destruction.

However this was exactly what Dr Gero wanted. His eyes gleamed as he resisted laughing evilly. His plan was getting closer and closer to fruition.

Dr Boxer left bowing his head down as Mr Black opened the door for him.

"Any news on our hunt?" Dr Gero asked his head servant.

"So far the bait is being held in a secure place and is being kept busy."

"They know how close they got to almost loosing her. She was gutted like a fish I heard, find me photos I want to see his work."

"I will see what I can do." Mr Black said. "On the topic of the little rabbit, she is being watched by one of our best spies. Any movement, no matter how minor will be reported."

"Just be sure to bring the summary." Gero joked.

"Popo is not answering our calls for assistance so I think he can't be depended on."

"He has the job he wants now and any money problems are gone. He was only using us for an easy cash flow, not for revenge like our other contacts. Let him be for now. We have what we need from him.

"He has information about us though. Mr Black warned. Perhaps he needs to be silenced?"

"No, it is of no consequence... Besides it might help bring the little rabbit to us. Leave me now... I wish to rest... Check up on that Chief scientist of mine... Be sure he follows my request. I want my newest androids to be absolutely remorseless.

"Certainly." Black bowed and left the old cripple to his raspy breathing. He signalled to a nurse waiting outside to go in and attend to him.

Dr Gero was good at gathering his help and spies, every single one of them wanted Vegeta dead. He wasn't alone. For Black this had been years of abusive servitude that was soon to come to an end. His revenge and also freedom were interlaced. Bulma Briefs or rabbit as she had now been named was crucial to it all. He had confidence in his contact, they were a family member after all.

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The Central City Camp was a hidden place surrounded by security officers and electrical fences. The large hologram shield covered the refugee camp from the outside.

It was a temporary shelter from some but for many it was a prison.

For Vegeta it was a perfect place to stay as everyone else ignored him and tried to stay out of trouble. The drainage pipe he now slept in wasn't comfortable but it was out of sight from the guards. He had managed to plug the small leak redirect the flow of the water into a smaller pipe. It wouldn't hold but it was a good temporary measure.

During the day he hid there sleeping and snuck out in the night to forage. Today though was the first
time he dared to go out in the daylight. It was early morning and the grey market had just started.

It couldn't be called black as the guards were in full knowledge of the place. It wasn't an illegal market only one that had a trading area of unwanted rations or possessions that could be sold or exchange. Most of the refugees had any dangerous items confiscated but they sometimes still had some old things from outer space.

He scanned the goods, it was a lot of mish-mash but he recognised a few things. For Vegeta they were mostly useless. All he wanted was some rations, basic food and hopefully one specific item.

He showed his watch to the vendor.

"How much food and water can I get for this?"

The bug alien gave him a stare. He was speaking in the Universal language from Freeza's Empire.

"You should speak the Earth language, not the Cold Empire's one."

"Bad habits are hard to break." Vegeta snorted. The bug seemed to be a wannabe Earthling. He had no chance with his inhuman features. "Just give me a deal."

"Three bags and a bottle of water."

"Add in some batteries and we have a deal."

"I don't have any Earth batteries."

"Didn't mean those... The stock down there, I can see them or should I call a guard?"

"Now, now, no need to be hasty friend."

"Just being an honest citizen." Vegeta leered.

"It is a good watch. An authentic Earth brand. Just let me examine it."

Vegeta grudgingly handed it over and it was gone in a second. The Saiyan snarled and grabbed the antenna of the insect.

"I'll give you one chance to return it."

"Seems you lack any kind of strength, or shall I now call the guards?" The shop keeper smugly said.

"I would rethink your actions as you will pay for it all with your life." He threw the small amount of credits and supplies to Vegeta and slipped out of his grasp. "A weakling like yourself has no bargaining power. I on the other hand am the Mayor of section 3. He had hovered up using his clipped wings. This was attracting the attention of the guards. Mayor Batta at your service, long time merchant and now leader of my people."

"Nice to meet you," Vegeta said in a flat tone.

"Now begone, stop speaking in the tongue of the Universe's enemy and learn some respect."

"As you wish." Vegeta hissed. He couldn't fight him in the enclosed and observed space. He took what was thrown and made no more threats. Inwardly he was a roaring fire of rage. This Mayor would need to die but he needed to wait till he was ready to leave. A being of this high a status would be noticed when mysteriously dying.
The Garlik creature's death had caused a stir for a few days but he seemed to be a known troublemaker and his death was declared an internal alien dispute. He gave one last look at the bug gaging his power level. He wasn't that powerful. Tien had been stronger but there were others from the same species as Garlik behind him. Unofficial bodyguards from what he could tell. All with a good fighting aura but with the familiar repressed ki bands. For most people this would be too great of an obstacle that they would give up or try something foolish. For Vegeta he saw an opportunity to try out his power. That moment however was not now, he needed to make a tactical retreat. His pride had long been pushed back for his own survival's sake. It just made his wrath build, his revenge, his frustrations they would be released in a controlled and calculated manner rather than the explosive way he did before.

"See you next time." He said bowing, slipping into the Earth language.

"Keep an eye on him." The Mayor hissed.

"But Sir, his power level wasn't anything at all."

"Perhaps he's hiding it, he spoke like a Freezer Elite."

The guard walked towards them. "Do you need another warning? You swindled that humanoid and flew!"

"He was asking for something illegal. I would rather you watch him not me. He almost took my arm off!"

"I doubt it. His power level was well below 90."

Mayor Batta sneered as he checked the entrance scanner gate the mysterious humanoid had exited from. The power level over 90 was always displayed in the overhead panel for the guards. Even someone who could hide their potential power had trouble keeping the score below that. The humanoid had no strength but he had still been able to pull him down by surprise, he needed to be watched though he wouldn't be informing the guards.

"I think I will get back to work." Batta said shifting his body into a bow. "His body was mostly exoskeleton so his bow was a 90 degree dip. The guard looked down without any reply and returned to his own station at the gate entrance.

Vegeta had already moved to a safe distance. He had been watched by the guards but not followed. His power level always let him slip past. They had a familiar scanner on their heads that was fused to their helmets. It was all technology that had been taken from his old Scanner equipment, he knew how they worked. The combination of gate scanners and the guards own personal ones made walking freely with a high ki signal impossible. He was never thought of as a threat. He didn't want to be upgraded to a instigator or trouble maker. It was almost time to move on again. His preparations were almost complete.

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Bulma awoke to see the concerned face of Agent Viola looming over her.

"Time to get up, sleepyhead! best eat and get your strength back."

"Are we supposed to be meeting the warden today?" Bulma gingerly sat up trying not to look at Viola. She pushed her late night reading of myths and legends to the side.

"I think we were going to get a tour of the cell today."
"I'm dreading it." Bulma admitted. "Most of my nightmares are linked to there."

Bulma swung herself out of bed as Viola left the room talking about changing into a suit rather than the bath robe. Bulma didn't mind the loneliness. It gave her some time to wake up and frantically collect her thoughts. She needed to find out more about the Dragonballs, they seemed like a key piece of information. She could find some facts in old reference books but it made them seem further out of reach. They were something Vegeta had known about but hadn't told anyone. She felt like this secret was too big to hide but she couldn't write it in any report. She really needed to speak to Piccolo and figure out what to do from there. The past few days had been like a form of limbo. She had no control only following orders from Viola as she catalogued anything related to Vegeta. It was all work she felt should have been done a long time ago. It felt like everything she was doing was a distraction. Things that were meant to keep her occupied.

She had slept but it had been restless and she had woken up often. She felt like bugs were crawling all over her body. She couldn't shake the feeling that Vegeta had left those drawings for her to see. It was a selfish thought, one that she had no supporting evidence other than her gut feeling. She really wanted to build up her courage to tell Viola what she'd found, she was getting nowhere from reading her Mythology books. It would be the first step before telling Piccolo at least.

After 20 minutes and a strong coffee later the pair were out of the mansion and heading to the main building.

They had found the mansion to be a large house for two and had limited themselves to just a few rooms to keep the place feeling more homely. Though Viola still insisted on going for a swim every morning. She had a regular training regimen that she would use to get out of the endless filing they were supposed to be doing.

The strong sunshine made the dull uniformal building that looked like a large grey rectangular cube seem slightly appealing. Flowers were being planted around the building and the guards who seemed quite free were making themselves busy with the work.

"Strange, isn't it?" Viola said "Everyone has so much time to focus on the decoration now."

They were greeted by Warden Popo who stood by the door. "Ready to see the main cell?"

"I heard that there's a ki dampening field around the whole high security area."

"You're currently training for Force 2 I take it." Warden Popo said gently. "The effects are temporary. It shouldn't effect your ki generating ability."

"I actually just got promoted to Force 2." Viola said proudly.

"Oh I see." Popo said blankly. He was smiling gently but it seemed he wasn't too impressed.

"Are there any high level prisoners at the moment?" Bulma asked. With or without Viola she dreaded walking down that long corridor with the jeering audience.

"Currently, we're down to just a few in a different part of the prison. We're going to shut down soon. We have a new facility opened in the space station."

"That explains a few things." Bulma said as she thought of the gardening guards and extreme training they had been doing for the past few days.

This was the first time since she arrived that she was entering the main facility. The main reports and filing had taken longer than she thought as she had lower stamina than usual. The central hallway
was still as dark as she remembered. Even with the added Summer sun, the enclosed space and tall staircases in the entrance hall made it dark. Warden Popo took them past the stairs and into a side door. It was one of those thick metal security doors with a key pad and card. He unlocked it and held it open for them.

Bulma knew the route well. Down stairs after stairs till you came to a barricaded guard post before another caged door. The dull dusty single light bulb hung sadly above them. The guard post where she had talked to Mr Popo many times was empty. The Warden slipped into the tiny office and released the door lock.

"I need to wait here to reopen the door so take the cell key. It's all yours." He said sitting down at the desk wiping off some grime from the desk.

"Looks a little nostalgic with you there." Bulma said.

"Honestly, I'll have nightmares tonight for sure." Popo said in a low voice.

Bulma nodded silently agreeing. She had dreamt this walk many times and now it was flashing in her mind a faint recollection of bad dreams and sleepless nights as she struggled to overcome her fear of this place.

It's exactly as I imagined. Viola said staring into the dank empty cells. It's much creepier without anyone inside like there's only ghosts.

"Trust me, it was a lot more creepier filled with those monsters. They all snarled or babbled at you as you walked past."

"This is it?" Viola gasped as she saw the vastly different cell. The high plastic cell was white and spotless.

"Damn, looks like it's been stripped. Viola said looking at the single bed with no blanket, toilet and tiny sink. A filing cabinet that had been installed for passing mail and documents to Vegeta was now an empty space.

"No this was it." She looked up to see the familiar security camera whirling round to view them. "There was something here but it's gone now."

"I feel a little weak with these repressing barriers up."

"I can go in, just wait outside. I doubt there's anything." Bulma took out her camera and snapped the inside of the cell. There was a flash as the plastic wall reflected back. Bulma unlocked the door and took another inside shot.

She looked across to Viola who was flat against the wall clutching her head. Bulma resisted the urge to make a cruel remark. She wasn't being much help. Her so called superior and bodyguard had grated on her nerves since the start of their investigation.

"Why don't you wait with Warden Popo?" She said instead of her, 'You total waste of space.' floating in her head.

"Ok…” She quickly agreed unaware of the daggers Bulma gave her. She turned back to the room and tried to compose her anger.

'It's what makes you so exciting.'
She looked around the cell, she could hear the familiar voice taunting her still, following her around. Inside the cell she could feel how Vegeta must have looked out from his perspective. The lights shone down almost blinding you from seeing outside. It took a few minutes of blinking and staring down before the retina burns stopped.

Bulma made a few more shots inside and then inspected the bed. Underneath was a solid foam mattress supported by wood. No metal springs or screws were used. It looked uncomfortable and she took a quick seat to confirm her suspicions.

Nothing hidden in the bed. She rapped on the boards underneath but it was solid. The sink was next, a tiny one she'd seen before in cheap hotels. The pipes were covered in plastic covers hiding any bolts and had been touched but mostly untampered. She looked at the camera as it swung round the room. The bed and sink were always in plain sight. It was only the toilet in the corner that was hidden for half a minute or less.

She moved onto the toilet to inspect it thoroughly. Thankfully it was clean and unused. The water at the bottom seemed stale from the lack of use. She took out her flash-light and shone it down the bowl. There was an unusual flicker as something caught the light.

'Damn... Why here?' She cursed and went to her briefcase. Her clean rubber gloves and evidence bags were taken out. 'Always in the worst places...' She cursed again as her gloved hand groped into the wet tube. She managed to grab something and she pulled it out. It was a plastic bag that was thin and covered in some dregs of excrement. The contents seemed untouched. She gagged on impulse and moved the evidence into one of her own bags.

The rest of the room, flooring and walls were clear after her further checks. In some small miracle she had found another clue to the mind of Vegeta.

She returned to Viola and the Warden as they gave her praise. Her own mind was spinning again.

"How did you know?"

The security camera... Bulma said. "I just imagined if I had anything to hide there was only one place out of view for a short time that I could use."

Viola watched the TV screen showing the shot of the cell. "Right, the toilet is out of sight for a minute."

"I need to examine this." Bulma said holding up the bag. "Is there a sterile examination room here?"

"Yes, but it hasn't been used in a while."

"Shall I take some photos of the rest of the facility?" Viola asked. "I'll just get in your way."

"Yeah, that would be a great help." Bulma said handing over the camera. After a few days working on archiving with the woman Bulma understood how much she hated the real work of sitting down and writing it all up.

"If you would like to follow me." Warden Popo said kindly. They went back up to above ground floors. The sunlight felt more welcoming as the dark hole of the cells were left behind in the darkness. Bulma could feel her heart beat becoming normal with every step she took back into the light trying to ignore the taunting voice from her memories.

'Goodbye Bulma Briefs, you know we have unfinished business...'
Author's Note: Going back to the past, some loose ends tied up from the first arc. Although for Bulma it's only making her feel like she's going round in 's all working up to the next time they'll meet.

Sorry for the delays my old pirate version of Word stopped working on my new computer so I'm onto a free version and away from the pirate stuff. It takes a little getting used to but it's pretty much the same. I partially wrote this on my phone and edited on PC so if you seen any errors, let me know. Someone asked me quite rightly why Bulma didn't tell Viola about what she found and I'll get onto fixing that from this chapter onwards. I just imagine Bulma has an issue with this younger, stronger woman being her superior so it might take her a while to tell her something so outrageous. So I'm adding more hints to Bulma's relationship and feelings towards her. For adults imagine working with someone younger and annoying and they're your boss; for those still in school imagine having to do some group project with some so called genius who's terrible at their part and ignores everything you say as they're the elected leader.

Thanks for all the positive reviews and I aim to keep going, it may be a while till the pair finally meet but I like building tension.
Analyse the Truth

Chapter Summary

Bulma works on analysing the letter she found while Vegeta has a small grudge to take care of.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: This is a non-profit work of fiction based on characters from Dragonball Z created by Akira Toriyama and owned by Bird Studios.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 42

Analyse the Truth

In a small laboratory in South City Asylum, Bulma looked down at a note she had found. It had to be by Vegeta when he was imprisoned there. The dark dungeon that she had sworn never to return.

She had peeled off the plastic protecting the crumbled piece of paper. She recognised the writing as Universal language. To most it might look like a form of random symbols or a code but it was an actual language.

A small memory was stirring as she looked at it. Not just her rusty understanding of Universal but of the existence of this letter.

She pulled out her small laptop from her bag and a pouch holding her file dongles. It had all her old reports and even video evidence from previous cases. She unlocked the tiny secure pouch and took out the oldest one. It was simply marked with a V.

As she loaded up her equipment she tried her best to translate the note.

Vegeta,

You will die.

Lord Freeza has called for your death.

Time is your enemy,

So am I.

I grow stronger as you lie weak.
This planet will be purged for the glory of Lord Freeza.

You shall be drained dry and feel a death fit for a weak traitor.

All glory to Lord Freeza.

The letter wasn't signed but had a strange mark that looked like a small leg of an alien monster.

This was a warning message from Scalpel Jones, the alien arachnid that had tried to kill her. The thing had been huge but as Vegeta had told her it was growing, becoming a high level threat. It would bypass the shield and satellite scanners that protected the Earth from surprise invaders. The low level monster could slip through and grow more powerful as it ate more humans.

Her laptop was up and she quickly logged her first impression of her translation. She then accessed her old dongle typing in the password and checking for that particular file.

Her report after visiting Vegeta for the last time. She had told him things about her past and he... Mentioned a contact from Jones.

This was it! It wasn't important now but she could imagine how much it had been needed. She took a look at the paper. It was office letter paper, a company address and logo were in the corner. It was from South City Capsule Corporation. Things made sense now but she couldn't see any use for this now.

She took out her headphones and listened to her old voice recording. It was taken just after her last meeting with Vegeta.

This is recording 35 in the Jones case by Cadet Bulma Briefs.

She could hear the slight tremble in her voice.

"I have returned from my unofficial interview with Vegeta so this cannot be used in any prosecution. I must stress my concerns for the treatment of the prisoner. He is kept in a secure location but the guards protecting him have a great disregard for his wellbeing and may ignore basic safety regulations when dealing with the Prince. A report has already been sent about my concerns to Director Piccolo.

I have a confirmation of contact from Jones to Vegeta. Jones is a confirmed Class A danger for Earth. His interest in killing his victims is to drain them and to build power. Once he reaches his final form he has the ability to destroy cities. First his target is Vegeta. An unknown agent of possible higher power has sent this alien to us. The low power of his egg form should have evaded our satellite scanners. He seems to be able to control a human host in his infant stage and during that time he taunted Vegeta with his arrival.

Vegeta has given me some proof of his contact with Jones. A letter was sent to him from his first host who is a confirmed Capsule Corp employee. I saw the return address printed on an official envelope. There was unfortunately no letter inside, perhaps another bargaining chip for Vegeta to use.

We need to focus on previous employees…"

Bulma stopped the recording and opened up the photo files. A grubby looking envelope, the writing style that had a strange wiggle to the penmanship matched the letter perfectly. She would still send it to the experts for their analysis which would only confirm her theory.

There was something else in the letter that disturbed her. The name of leader or head alien, whatever
the system was. Lord Freeza was something to make a clear note of. It sounded alarms in her head, a name she'd heard from other aliens. If she remembered, Vegeta said that he wasn't interested in Earth but what about now? The amount of refugees, this Freeza was not working on a small level. Perhaps the Force 1 agents on the space station were aware but she needed to provide all the details. Even if this was old news to them.

She opened the newest files on her laptop. She had one photo that almost took the whole image of the Dragonballs. She bit her lip as she struggled internally. This was evidence, important evidence. She sighed to herself as she decided to test her idea on a neutral party.

She began to type up her initial report on the prison cell and letter. A slightly out of date evidence that cooperated a closed case but gave a new thing to worry about.

A knock on the door made her look up. Warden Popo was carrying more items as he let himself in.

"I found some more of Oolong's stash. He recorded your conversations with Vegeta too."

"Wonderful." Bulma said in a slightly sarcastic voice. She had no real urge to fully listen to them again. "Thank you for bringing them. The other letters, drawings... I suppose they've been sold."

"Nothing gets past you Agent Briefs." Mr Popo said.

"I do my best." Bulma gloated a little, her ego raising up through her mask.

Mr Popo glanced at the work she was doing. "Going over old ghosts?"

"This whole place is filled with them." Bulma sighed. "I never thought I would ever be back here."

"Some things were never really catalogued as they should have been." Mr Popo said. "It wasn't anybody's job, we expected the FBI to send people to do it for us."

"It's strange that after his escape they kept this place operational."

This prison was built for the sole purpose of keeping the Prince. Without him the prisoners that have been here have been executed or transferred.

"So your job will finish soon?"

"I have an offer for another place, I'll be fine."

"Good to know, you survived being with Vegeta for 5 years Mr Popo; how did you do it?"

"I was polite, that's all." He said shrugging. "I never gave him any hassle or treated him like dirt. Those guards in West City did that and he came after all of them."

"Ever think he'll come after you now?" Bulma asked.

"No Ma'am, I expect him to stay away. How about you?"

"He said hello when he had the chance, gave me a nice warning slice in my belly for getting too close."

"I heard about that. He was only being a snapping dog, if he wanted it, you would have died that day."

"So a snap in my gut instead of my throat?" Bulma shuddered.
"He likes you in some twisted way. Not sure if it's exactly the romance the papers are saying but there's something about you that makes him consider you his property."

"Really? How so?"

"Remember the prisoner next to Vegeta's cell?"

"He threw some sort of mix of shit and cum at me..." Bulma hissed. "I remember him fine."

"He died the next day, swallowed his tail into his mouth and choked on it." Mr Popo said grimly. "Vegeta was spotted whispering to him all night. It was considered assisted suicide."

Bulma's face showed her disgust. "He only did that because he could, it wasn't for me."

"Just be careful, he's a trained killer. The lack of strength doesn't seem to stop him."

"I'm well aware of that, he sliced right into my stomach, I don't think he likes me as much as you're saying."

"I've seen a lot of possessive types coming into the prison over the years, sometimes they feel if something's their property they can do whatever they like to it."

"I'm not an it." Bulma said.

"To him you are..." Mr Popo said. "Be careful."

"I know." Bulma almost growled clutching her stomach. "Actually, on a different note... We're finally collecting all of Vegeta's evidence from his past kills. There's quite a few things missing that should be here." She wanted to change the subject and was pleased at the uncomfortable look she got from Warden Popo.

"I wasn't always in charge."

"But you were the care taker of the equipment in the high offenders section. You had full access to the mask for example that was on sale a few years ago."

"Was it?" He seemed to be sweating as he tried to act ignorant.

"Old records of unauthorized sales show a user name of Mr-P... It's not going to be hard to trace the e-mail address of the seller."

"Fine... I did sell some things but they all went to one person."

"Dr Gero?" Bulma asked and he nodded. She wished it wasn't him, he had harassed her for years after the first incident with Vegeta. "Thanks for the confirmation. He just can't get over his hatred for Vegeta."

"Did you know what he did to the Doctor?" Popo asked "The details are pretty gruesome."

"I don't know the full details, reports to just say he was the lone survivor."

"During the purge a small army in the North called Red Ribbon joined the fight against the invaders and their forces were destroyed. Dr Gero got it the worst, his machines had taken out the weakest Saiyan and as revenge Vegeta burned him alive tearing his skin off. He gave him enough life force to survive and come back to fight him again, build better...he was told."
"So one of the Saiyan invaders was killed by Gero?" Bulma said shocked.

"The total invaders were only three and what happened to the other one is all conjecture as the only ones that do know is Vegeta and whoever defeated him. Be it an early form of the FBI force 1 agents or something else."

"Off the record Warden, but was there anyone you would recommend to ask?"

"Your Chief, Piccolo would be the best to ask." Said the Warden in a soft voice. "If we're talking off the record Agent, then I would advise to keep your distance from Gero. He's been driven mad by his injuries and need for revenge. He knows about the third Saiyan's fate but I wouldn't ask, he would want something in exchange."

"Sounds familiar..." Bulma sighed. "Say, hypothetically speaking, if there was something you found supernatural, like reference to a myth. Would you take it seriously and tell anyone?"

"We live in a world where people can fly and fire beams of energy. I'd say anything is possible."

"Even if it would cost your reputation? Hypothetically speaking of course." Bulma tried to say as smoothly as possible.

"Stand by the truth." Warden Popo said clearly in a crisp over emphasized tone. "Believe what you see, not what you're told."

"I'll consider your advice, thanks."

The warden made a small bow and left Bulma to finish her report and for her to finally have a clear view of what she needed to do. She felt that her conversation with Mr Popo had been what she'd needed. Her old demons had unfortunately been re-awoken and swirling in the back of her mind.

'Tell me about your father...' The voice taunted her. Why did she have to recall that? If she could have one wish she did know exactly what it would be.

"Father..."

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In Central City Refugee camp, the darkness of night was broken by the roving spot lights from the guard towers. The place could play at being a safe little village to temporary home people from all of the universe but at night it showed how much it resembled a prison.

Vegeta crept along the edge of a wall confident in his previous scouting. Finding blind spots were easy when you didn't need to worry about the ki scanner. The Section 2 area was more like regular houses, built by the residents over the years. It held mostly non humanoids, the insects and reptiles that couldn't pass as an Earthling. If you weren't a type of mammalian species then you had zero chance to acquire Earth visa. The passport card ID that all the weaklings came here to obtain.

The largest building in the centre of Section 2 was the FBI training and re-education area. Next to that, the second largest was the Mayor's house. A day of easy search and listening to others had been all it took to find the giant cockroach. His security was low during the night since the Camp had a curfew it applied to his guards as well. They would be inside but not as many as during the day. His mental scan of the building gave him an idea where each guard was. Two large power signals on the ground floor and one in the top floor. Batta's annoying low energy was dormant in the back room. They were cuffed like any other high level fighter. The two he'd seen beside Batta had bracelets and collars. That showed how strong they really were, he couldn't go directly up against two of them.
He slid in by the side of the building. It had a narrow alley separating it from the other closely packed simple houses. There was mud and discarded rubbish that rustled a little as moved in amongst it. He pushed against the opposite wall and wedging himself between the gap and he began to climb upwards.

A light flickered on above as a drone scanned above on patrol. Vegeta could only stay still to avoid detection. The high pitch drone buzzed away unable to see directly into the gap but its ki scan sensing nothing had been satisfied. Vegeta continued to climb up till he reached the top and pulled himself onto the roof. A small skylight was open to let in the warm Summer air. He peered inside to see it was a richly decorated bathroom. The strong energy signal wasn't so near so Vegeta forced open the window further and easily made his way in. It was one of those rare times he was grateful he had a smaller frame than most Saiyans.

The toilet area had two separate types, one for humanoids and another for insectoids. The self proclaimed mayor had been making sure his home was suitable for his position. He didn't care how much it cost the rest of his people living in far more basic residences.

Vegeta clutched his thin knife and chipped off a jewel from the mirror frame. It seemed real. He pocketed a few more for himself and slowly opened the door.

A large green muscle man was asleep on the chair outside what must be Batta's room. He couldn't kill the guard, his lost energy signal would alert the other guards and the main security monitoring the high level restraining cuffs. He took out a tool from his belt. He was expecting him to be awake but this worked even better. He injected the sleeping drug into the already unconscious guard. He grunted and tried to swat the mosquito he was imagining away. Vegeta ducked back into the bathroom as he waited for the drug to fully work. He came out slowly and placed his hand on the alien's bare skin. He could sense the power coursing through his veins. He took just enough energy to rip the doorknob off and tensed for any reaction. He stopped touching him and the power dissipated instantly.

A few days of encounters with weaker aliens in the slum area of the camp had been good training for him to adjust how much he could siphon off without raising himself to a threat level. The first time with Garlik had been too close for comfort. The spike in ki brought 2 guards to investigate the power surge, if it happened in the more guarded area he knew that he would be outnumbered.

A few ropes around the bodyguard’s feet and hands secured him as a barrier with a small present for anyone who tried to break him free. With the blockage finally in place, Vegeta made his way inside Batta's room. The low vibration from the insect and mild murmurs told him that he was asleep.

He clutched his knife close and pulled a long rope wrapping Batta onto his bed. Another shorter rope with a cloth gagged him from screaming about what was to come. His sleeping drug didn't work well on this species. He would need to be silenced the old fashioned way.

Vegeta smiled as he took out a set of long 6 to 8 inch pins. He knew exactly where to place into the nervous system to render him paralysed.

The first pin slid down in between the abdomen joint, a second soon followed at the end of the abdomen leaving it stretched out and still. A few slices on the back broke his exoskeleton leaving a small gap for two more pins to be pushed in. A slight gasp from his subject told him that he was now fully awake. His strong back legs were quickly pierced and were left useless, splayed out. Vegeta came to the front and saw his eyes wide pleading at him. The antennas twitching were sliced off with a small chuckle before the last pin was thrust into his head.

Vegeta sat at eye level to Batta. The insectoid looked back blankly, his mind now just a primal rush.
of survival unable to focus on the face of his attacker. His back wings almost broke free but Vegeta's pressed his hand onto his face pushing him down and ripped the offending wings off. A surge of ki lit up the room but soon disappeared as the thin knife sliced into the side of his upper back. The hard exoskeleton was slowly peeled away revealing the pulsing veins and muscles. Some of the muscles were attached to the exoskeleton including the heart. Vegeta stopped himself from pulling any further. He sliced down into his guts checking his subject was still blinking. The gag was getting dirty from the insect bile and vomit but it could still breath. He cut some more on the exoskeleton loosening it from the muscle but still slightly help by a thin muscle and tendons around the heart.

He bent down to speak in a low voice making sure he spoke in the Universal language.

"This is for the humiliation insect..." He whispered, "You are scum only worth dissection for science."

He took some long elastic around the flap of loose exoskeleton and attached it to the door making it taut.

It took 5 minutes to raid the room of all valuables he needed and erase his presence. The high alien tech batteries and other illegal items were hidden in his room rather than the stock room. It had been a small risk that they would be here but Vegeta knew it was worth it. The Mayor, like any good sneak had an escape hole. A secret exit that hadn't been that secret to the community. It led to the back ally behind the building. The tunnel was slightly narrower than he expected and he struggled to get his goody bags out but managed to fit himself through. It was a shame he wouldn't see the moment the door opened but the cuts he'd given Batta guaranteed his death. The outside of the building led him back to the small ally he could squeeze through and he was soon safely out of Section 2. It was buzzing with drones and guards flying over checking for high ki signals and movement but none of them really had heat sensors.

He took it slowly and soon he was back to the unguarded slum area that had curfew as well but only a few drones and guards came to check the area. He had a lot still to do before he could be ready to say goodbye to this stain on the Earth. The night wasn't over, he had to get ready to leave before dawn. As he was sure he'd made a whole lot more mess he had other plans and promises to keep.

'Have they placed you in a little cage, Bulma? Maybe it's time to be broken out.' He thought as he stared at the moon in the night sky.

Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: This is not a mistake, I really did update so soon! I had a bit of a backlog of stuff written so the next one might not be as quick. I actually really got into the dissection of a locust so that may have pushed me to write it from a more evil type of view. I don't think I could do it in real life though, I'll leave that to the Biology classroom. Well, I made Batta as dislikable as possible so we won't feel too bad for him when we see his final scene. Yeah, he's still alive, barely.

Next chapter the storm in Bulma's head is pulling her down and Vegeta's going to move onto a new place.
Time to Run

Chapter Summary

Bulma has some terrible nightmares while Vegeta escapes from his current situation.

Chapter Notes

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See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 43

Time to run

It was hard for Bulma to sleep after her visit to Vegeta's old cell. The night brought the shadows and with it her memory of the past. She slept half awake, half dreaming as every thought came to she tried to avoid as she knew the nightmares it would bring.

Any reflections of Vegeta, she veered from but it ended up taking her to another bad memory, the night she ran away from her uncle's. The animals in cages had been shaking their containers and screaming as she passed through the laboratory. Wires and machine parts hung above some of them while others still alive and in agony had part of their skin flayed with electrodes on the exposed parts analysing their life readings. She knew just from looking what each scientific equipment did, they were more used for cars than animals.

One monkey had been silent in its cage, curled up in the corner trembling with shaved fur and chemical burns. She remembered taking him out, but the frightened monkey ended up biting her till she wrapped it into a blanket and she took him with her as she'd escaped.

She didn't want to be reminded of that night and she shook herself to think of something else. She could only run as scene after scene of meeting Vegeta flashed before her. She sped past her silent shadow standing before the cage with Vegeta talking to her. She broke through the wall and was back again in the asylum, this time she got too close and he pulled out a hair. As she stared into his cold black eyes, she broke away, 'got to run faster!' She ran away from the memory and she caught something.

The monkey was back in her arms screaming and trying to bite her. Bulma backed away and continued to run on leaving the pitiful screams echoing behind her. She changed into a nurse's uniform running into the temporary prison. The faceless guards were bloody and skinless and Vegeta stood in the centre of the massacre looking at her. She paused for a moment wondering where this was from, a memory of a still photograph?

"Don't give up on your dreams." Vegeta taunted. She fell back the small lab monkey leapt into her arms as she collapsed in the woods outside her Uncle's house. A glitter of green caught her eye.
'My radar...' The Dragonball radar she had invented was falling slowly out of hand. The monkey wriggled and lashed out again. Her hand tried to bat him away but he nimbly avoided her but he hit the radar smashing it into a tree. The glass shattered and her last ounce of patience with it. She punched the monkey hard screaming out. It lay limp on the forest floor her flashlight shone down onto the pieces of broken radar and unconscious animal.

"This was the moment..." Bulma said.

"To be honest, you could have kept hitting the little ingrate." Vegeta spat standing next to her.

Bulma turned her eyes filled with tears. "Why are you here?"

"I'm only an extension of your fears." He answered and Bulma could only nod as she recalled her moment of final resignation.

"I left it there in pieces, let the stupid monkey too and I kept running. No more science, or mystical balls, just vengeance." She explained a uncertain feeling told her Vegeta really shouldn't be in the forest with her teenage self covered in mud and her runaway backpack; but something made her accept it as part of this nightmare she was having. She had forgotten how angry she had been with the feral animal. She couldn't save it but it ruined her plans.

She couldn't find the Dragonballs to grant her new wish without a radar. She wasn't going to fix it neither. Bulma knew this was where she decided to give up on the Dragonballs search and science by joining the training for the newly formed FBI. She knew in the backpack was the letter sent by Piccolo as an invitation for her to enter the training program. It was her ticket to escape her uncle's.

The radar lay under the tree in a shallow grave a symbol of her conviction to bury her past. Bulma could only watch as she saw her younger self scar the tree, RIP. As a teenage Bulma knew how overly dramatic she could be. Her teen self that had separated from her consciousness disappearing into the darkness.

She stared at the shadow that was now a vague memory of Vegeta and as she wondered why he was so clear her eyes became blinded by the light from the moon.

She was back in her bedroom upside down and on the floor. The curtains wide open as the large moon shone down. She twisted herself out of her entanglement and opened the window to breath in the cool air. She could sense herself urging on to run away from here. It was the same feeling had back at her Uncle's.

'I'm an adult now, I need to do this properly.' She switched on her laptop and made sure she had written up all her reports. All that remained was the evidence in West City and whatever else was held by Dr Gero. She boxed up the files and recordings of Vegeta and addressed it to headquarters.

Her shuffling around was heard by Viola who knocked and walked in.

"What's all this?" She asked pointing at the parcels and half packed bag.

"We're leaving. If you're not then I am."

"What brought this on?" Viola continued to question her. "We have to investigate the leftover evidence."

"I've done it, all that's left is to finish collecting whatever's at Head quarters."

"Does Piccolo know?"
"He will by the time he's received my message." Bulma said plainly.

"Agent Briefs, you can't just ignore orders and decide when to move to the next assignment!"

"Agent Viola, I respect your opinion but I'm the main investigator. I need your support to go to West City as you're still my bodyguard. However, you must understand we're only able to do so much."

"Director Piccolo didn't say it like that." Viola said unsure. "Can't we wait for the green light from our Chief."

"We have till dawn." Bulma said firmly. "I have a pilot's license, I can leave whenever."

"You don't want it to go the hard way." Viola said just as firmly and stormed out of the room.

Bulma breathed out and felt some relief. She hadn't meant to confront or agitate her. However she had to get her point across. She was slightly proud of herself for not exploding with her temper. She wanted some form of control and she felt it was within her grasp.

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In the slums of Central City Vegeta peered over his ill-gotten gains. There was enough things to pawn for money once he was outside and he had the high voltage battery he needed. He picked it up and slotted it into his tazer. It was one he had stolen from another alien who had no use for it. Especially when he was dead.

All these items couldn't be taken the way he had come in by the river. They needed to stay dry. He had sought out a weak spot in the fence but it would be a total gamble. He had to even the odds. He snapped the tazer battery into position and gave it a quick buzz.

His hand tingled slightly from the energy. 'Interesting, the electrical current gives me a boost.' It wasn't the same as a live high powered foe but it gave enough to let him feel the strength in his muscles return.

'An added bonus, it seems.'

He went down to the guard tower that he had chosen as his escape route. The main guard was weaker than the others. His main role appeared to be as a watchman over the low level slums. Section 9 of Central City was on the edge but the refugees held here were the least able to break out. The refugees of any high class or value were near the core and it layered out all round till it finally came to the final one, 9. Vegeta had been able to stay undetected for almost a week in this area but his recent kill would be noticed and a full on search would ensue.

The stolen items he'd obtained would be easily found or traced to him and his fake ID card would also be revealed. It was time to leave. He secured his backpack and slid his hidden weapon under his sleeve.

As he approached the tower he moved to the security's camera blind spot and into a hollowed out hiding hole he'd prepared. There was a regular patrol and after 30 minutes of patient waiting, his target came near.

Guard X was walking his routine path. The blind spot was where his usual smoking break occurred. Vegeta tensed and lay in wait ready to strike. He wore the body armour and helmet with built in power scanner. A basic uniform that mostly gave protection from a direct attack. He stood looking around for any other person that would see him. The Guard's low power signal got nearer and Vegeta peered out from his hiding spot. The guard as expected had his back to him and a trail of
tobacco smoke. It was time.

He pounced like a tiger the tazer going into the neck a direct skin contact point. He also placed his hand on his arm draining the spiking energy and instantly dissipating it. He was dead within a minute. The alien technology tazer was a deadly voltage to most humans. Vegeta dragged the body into the hiding hole he had prepared for the attack. The junk in the slums made it easy to hide small burrows and stashes. He stripped the guard of his uniform and changed quickly. It was a little tight around the chest but the height was perfect. The shrimp, guard... Dango... Interesting name. He adjusted the name tag for the next half an hour he would be Dango.

He took the backpack and stood in the camera view as if inspecting it. He tapped in a code in the belt he had watched the guards do before. The contraband was reported and he took it back to the tower for confiscation.

The radio beeped into alert and he replied while coughing. "Koff...koff, just found contraband, no... Koff, sign of citizens. Over."

"Roger, confirmation received. Take care of that cold Dango or how about quitting smoking, over."

"Roger, very funny, out."

The radio fell silent, he had maybe an hour before a team would come to pick up the contraband. They were like any army, full of regulation and routine. A full week of observation had been all Vegeta needed to understand how they operated.

It was plenty of time to make his way out. He walked up to the tower and used the key card to enter. Going up to the top of the observation area he could finally fully survey the dump they called Central City. The contained aliens were called citizens but they were refugees and prisoners.

He slotted the card into the reader and sat down at the desk. The cameras were all over section 9. A smaller monitor on the back wall showed the front entrance of the city and a few other key points. It all seemed quiet but Mayor Batta would be found soon and they would definitely lock all the 'citizens' up till they found the killer.

He moved some of the security cameras around the outside of the tower. It was as he expected a less secure area. It had rough terrain but nothing his training in the North City mountains hadn't prepared him for. He memorized the path he wanted to take outside the barrier and motioned the cameras to be stationary in a different place.

He dumped a fake bag full of junk that he had reconsidered as worthless items he had taken from Batta's house. It would do as another diversion. He knew that it wouldn't be long now till the body was discovered. A flashing light on section 2 let him know that time was now.

Vegeta threw a sheet over himself to act as a cloak and ran out of the balcony. He leapt over the fence digging the wall with his knife, it slowed his descent so he could jump clear of the fence and he crouched down to slowly walk through the hologram barrier.

His sensitive ears could pick up the radio screaming.

"Code 1! All men report in!"

'Looks like my work of art has been found.' He thought slipping unseen through the barrier.

In District 2 there was chaos as the guards had burst into their employer's room but unaware of what it would cause. The elastic rope snapped and a spray of blood, exoskeleton and organs splattered the
The sleeping guard was kicked to wake him up but it set off the trap explosive and the whole second floor was instantly on fire and missing walls. The people close by screamed out in shock and began running away in panic.

"Code 1, now upgraded to lockdown." A Chief guard barked into the comm. He swore under his breath as a part of the Mayor's house collapsed and sirens began to blare all around. The citizens that were uninjured hid in their homes while the bleeding were rounded up into the square. The explosion hadn't been that big but because it was on the second floor the falling shrapnel and debris had caused a lot of damage.

The Captain Commander arrived on his air bike and ran to his Section 2 Chief who was still staring at the destruction.

"Chief Karage, give me an update!" Captain Bora panted. He glanced to the house and listened as his subordinate gave him the basic facts about their initial investigation.

"Who alerted you to there being an intruder in the Mayor's house?" He asked.

"It was a bodyguard, the skylight was wide open and some items were missing." The section Chief explained. "He found Mayor Batta dead in the bedroom and he was reporting about it when the explosion occurred. I think he's dead as well as the another bodyguard and a few citizens that were near the area of the explosion. I have no idea how it all blew up!"

"Order the clean up crew on the double and keep the citizens on lockdown till an FBI investigation team can arrive. We need to find whoever did this!" Captain Bora ordered. "This is the worst incident since the Garlik and that was last week, what the heck is going on?"

"I've no idea Sir." Karage answered. "Other sectors have reported citizens missing and unaccounted for."

"We could have a saboteur or some kind of resistance." Bora said calmly. "Gather any witnesses and prepare for the FBI to be asking a lot of annoying questions."

"Sir!" the Chief saluted and went back to the surveillance facility to follow out his orders and summon all the other section Chiefs. The sirens continued to blare and random screams could be heard in the distance.

The chaos seemed endless but outside the city limits in the barren charred wasteland a small figure quietly disappeared into the deep forests.

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Assistant Chief Director Piccolo wasn't expecting the wake up he got. At first it was his usual full inbox to work through but he noticed one from Agent Briefs that woke him up. Before he could even process it he received a call from Agent Viola about Bulma's sudden change in attitude. He tried calming her down and said he would speak to her soon. It wasn't long after that he got another call but from the home security force in Central City.

"Sorry to disturb you so early Director but we have a code 1 in Section 2 of Central City. A high ranking citizen has been killed along with 2 of his bodyguards. There were also some casualties caused by the explosion."

"What... So not just a murder but an act of terrorism?"

"It's the first time anything like this has happened, Captain Commander Bora requests an
investigation asap."
"Understood, I will contact you again when I have sent them over."

There was no time to really think about what Bulma had requested, if Viola went with her then there was no reason to not go to West City. He re-read her message again and added a warning that she was not allowed to contact Dr Gero. He was a person of interest but he wasn't letting her get into any more trouble.

'I need to uphold my promise to your father after all.' He thought.

He was in his office within 30 minutes and organising the incident team.

"Force 2 squad, I need you Special Agent Yamcha and Special Agent Beri to form a 4 member team and head to Central City." He told them over video phone. "North City clean up will be left to the rest of your squad."

A sleepy looking Beri simply nodded while Yamcha answered with a "Yes, Sir."

Beri gave him a sideways glance and whispered something under her breath.

"All citizens of Central City are Alien refugees and may be immune to any psychic scans. You must ensure you have a Force 3 Investigator as well in your team."

"What about Agent Briefs?" Yamcha asked his cheeks a little red at the mention of her name.

Beri stifled her snigger but stayed quiet.

"Agent Briefs is still on probation and only on non urgent information gathering mission with Agent Viola." Piccolo explained without pushing why he specifically asked for her. "I'll send a few recommendations of Force 3 members and chose from that. Give me your team members names within 1 hour and be ready to move out to the refugee camp in Central City."

"Why haven't you blown up that disgusting place yet?" Beri tutted in a badly attempt at a mutter.

"No comment Agent, be back to me by 9am."

The monitor blinked to the hang up screen and Piccolo made his preparations. There was one last thing to do, he had to inform his father who was currently on the Space Station.

He knew it was urgent but he decided breakfast would be first and a certain phone call.

"Agent Viola?"

"Sir, you need to do something... The plan!"

"It's fine. You can keep to the plan just don't let her anywhere near Dr Gero and contact me on all developments."

"Understood Sir, I need to report that she still doesn't sleep well. What did that psychic do to her?" Viola asked.

"It's only a side effect of this type of intrusive mental scan. Plus the additional factor of being in the same place as some previous trauma. She should be fine, but you need to watch her. Letting her change the environment might be for the best."
"If you say so, Sir." Viola said in weak compliance. "Should I continue as I were?"

"Agent Briefs is in charge of the investigation but you're in charge of her well being. Nothing has changed. Your original briefing remains, instead of the Asylum you need to keep her in the Headquarters now."

"Understood."

Piccolo sighed, he really needed his breakfast water and meditation. The stress of following the procedure was becoming a chore. Plus he couldn't stop a terrible nagging feeling about Central City. They had taken every precaution to make sure all dangerous aliens weren't on Earth or if they have any power to be contained and observed in the Refugee Camp. He had to chose a good investigator for the task, another thing he could add to his meditation.

It was going to be a long day ahead.

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Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: I kind of liked the parallel in this chapter, Bulma escaping from the asylum in a nice orderly way and Vegeta just causing pure chaos. I hope the dream sequence with Bulma wasn't too disorientating but she was moving from one bad memory to another. We got to see the moment she described quite a few chapters back about her running away from her uncle's and that's what triggered her own will to just pack up and go to her next goal. She's got more Dragonball clues to find and the best place she knows will be the FBI HQ.

Next chapter we might see more details of Yamacha's mission with Beri just to fill in the gaps left and we'll find out where Vegeta plans to go next.
Back to Headquarters

Chapter Summary

Bulma packs up and heads back to Headquarters while another team lead by Yamcha investigate the mess left by Vegeta.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't make any profit from this work of fiction.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 44

Back to Headquarters

It was 2 hours after Bulma had decided to leave South City Asylum. The reluctant Agent Viola had packed as slowly as possible but it had been approved by Assistant Director Piccolo. Her only real order was not to go to Dr Gero. Which she could accept but she knew that he had more evidence that she might need for archiving.

If anything she might be able to get a small Force 3 team to go in her stead. The buzzing in the back of her mind from her dreams continued. She needed out of the nightmare place as soon as possible. She double checked her air-van gauges and fuel. It kept her busy as her superior agent slid her bags in the back.

"I may need to see your license, Agent Bulma." Viola said. "Are you sure you can fly the hundreds of miles."

Bulma effortlessly pulled out her card behind her FBI ID.

"I usually let the pilot force do it since they have combat experience too but for a simple shuttle across to the main land is easy enough." Bulma beamed.

She let Viola look at her flight license. "15 years experience! but that means you would have been flying when you were 14!" Viola gasped.

"One of the good things I have about being an ex-heiress and child prodigy." Bulma continued to beam. She hadn't smiled in a while and it felt good. Doing any sort of piloting reminded her about her past life but she was desperate enough to ignore those painful memories. She had darker shadows she needed to get away from.

"I cleared it with HQ to allow us to sleep in the trainee dormitory. We can't go outside the HQ building."

"Fair enough." Bulma sighed. She was a little curious about the state of her house but it really was only a place she used to sleep and store her stuff. She never considered it a home. She was slightly
contented with her mini rebellion. She would continue to play this game of erroneous tasks while they watched her every move. She thought solving the murder of the detective would have helped her but she couldn't see any positives. She had found out that Vegeta had killed and butchered Detective Tien and confirmed his sighting.

If she had caught Vegeta at the time she had met him maybe things would have been different. She couldn't regret her actions after all he had purposefully stabbed her to get her out of his way. She must have been close, it gave her a small satisfaction.

She noticed Warden Popo waving to her from the side of the take-off area.

"Sad to see you go so soon." He said with a slight warmth. "It was good to see you, we may not get another chance to meet Agent."

"The Asylum really is closing?" She asked shaking his large hand.

"A new facility in the space station has been prepared." He explained. "I can't tell you the details but I think I will be there for a long time."

"Good luck with it. You'll have the Force 1 agents to deal with." Bulma said. She considered Force 2 to be mostly meat heads, but Force 1 were all high level fighters. They were also a bit too heavy handed. Any investigation with them turned into full fights with property damage and witness compensation. Another reason they were kept to the boundary of Earth and the space station rather than being on Earth.

Warden Popo's forced smile seemed to show he knew what she meant with 'deal with.'

"I know them all very well. I did help with some of their training, but that is something off the record you understand." He winked and smiled as Viola came into sight making it hard for Bulma to ask for more details.

"I bought some South City food, reminds me of home." Viola said putting a large box on board.

"I see, you're from around here?" Mr Popo asked.

"A small village not far from here, to be honest." Viola said. "It's just a ghost town now though."

"Much like a lot of places now." Popo sighed.

"Which only reminds us why we do this job." Bulma added. She didn't want to delay any further. "We may need a report on your sold items but it's not within anyone's interest to bring any charges forward."

"Always business to the end." Popo said with a mask like smile.

Bulma felt she had much to learn about being passive aggressive from the warden.

"Please keep in touch." She said.

Popo waved as Bulma closed the door of the vehicle and started the engine.

"Strap in Agent!" Bulma cried out from the pilot seat. "I want to see how this girl goes!"

"Oh... Please... No..." A weak voice called back but Bulma ignored her and launched vertically up into the air and did a small loop.
Warden Popo continued smiling. He did wish Bulma luck on her mission. He knew deeply how much Vegeta was after her.

'Just keep running Bulma, don't let him get you.'

In North City, Special Agent Yamcha started the briefing with his new smaller team. Agent Bramble, Agent Framboise and the new recruit from Force 3, Agent Puar. She was a short girl with quite small eyes and dark blue hair. It was obvious that she was nervous. Special Agent Beri wasn't helping by staring at her almost eye to eye.

Beri was still shorter but she was sure that something was wrong about her.

"This isn't your true form is it?" She accused her.

"No Ma'am." Puar answered. " But I'm under orders to stay human, it's part of the FBI investigation policies."

"Then let that be the end of it." Yamcha warned her. "Agent Puar is a new graduate, no need to scare her with your psychic scans!"

"Huh! She can scan my mind?" Puar seemed to panic.

"I can't scan anyone without permission. I have a low level empathy, it's purely subconscious I swear." Beri assured her. "Though, I will find out what species you are."

"I, I am a true Earthling!" Puar stuttered.

"Yeah, I'm pure Alien and I'm not afraid to show it. I just know you're hiding something..."

"That's enough Star!" Yamcha said, "Save your intimidation techniques for the refugees."

Yamcha sighed and muttered under his breath but moved his team into the air-van.

"Framboise you have to take us to Central City. Do you know the flying regulations?" Yamcha asked the tall man as he strapped into the pilot seat.

"Do not worry, I have flown there before." He said smoothly. "Our diva special agent will be in good hands."

Special Agent Beri sat at the back and refused to comment. Agent Framboise was immune to her allure and wasn't intimidated.

"There are other pilots you could have chosen." She whispered to Yamcha as he sat in front of her.

"I don't want to crash because our pilot was distracted by you. Besides Framboise is the best technical expert. I heard that there was a bomb."

"Madam Beri all I need is a few scraps of shrapnel and I will know exactly what kind of explosive and where it came from." He said in a sweet voice as if speaking to a baby.

"Aye, guess I'm on the duty to track them doon fer ye." Agent Bramble added. He was still bandaged up and had a cast on his arm.

"Not that you'll be fighting in that state." Agent Beri said looking across to him.
"Ah, but I would love to, just for your Bonnie self." He laughed blushing.

Special Agent Beri smiled back like a queen her mood slowly rising.

Yamcha sighed again, she was too much work. Agent Puar glanced over to him and looked back to her feet.

"Ok, just a quick reminder for everyone and especially Agent Puar, who's going to Central City for the first time, this place is a containment area for unlawful entrants to Earth, real refugees and some unknown aliens that are under observation."

"I almost got sent there." Agent Beri said. "They figured out my power wasn't linked to my ki so they couldn't control me."

"Lucky for us, eh?" Agent Bramble chuckled. He was a real fan of her was part if the Beri fan club. Beri smiled back giving her best performance. She loved the feeling of admiration and she seemed to cheer up and forget about the mystery of the shy girl sitting near them.

"We need to check a large area but we must start in section 2." Yamcha told his team. "An explosion and murder happened in a high ranking individual's home, a Mushinin by the name of Mayor Batta. We have the report printed up in your files for you all to check as we begin the investigation. This has only recently happened."

The team looked at the files in front and only Agent Puar gave it a thorough read.

It was a mostly silent flight after the briefing. Agent Beri began meditating while Agent Bramble tried to stay quiet while watching her. Agent Puar went from reading her notes to asking Agent Yamcha a question. He was only too happy to help and tried his best to support her. He had been in her position before when he was too nervous around women.

After 1 hour Framboise gave a signal to Yamcha.

"Contact with Central City flight control." Framboise announced finally and he began the security clearance codes and received orders for landing.

"We're landing in 5 minutes, I want full teamwork and support. We have to find the person or persons who did this to a high security area." Yamcha said.

"Aye, Captain." Bramble said.

There was a mild mumble from the other three.

The air-van entered the hologram shield and the smouldering mess that was now Central City was revealed.

"Riot confirmed!" Framboise shouted. "We need to land in Section 1 and be ready for battle."

"I'm not good at fighting!" Agent Puar said weakly.

"Don't worry, we will protect you." Yamcha said smoothly unbuckling his seatbelt. "I got this."

He jumped out of the vehicle. It caused Bramble to curse and follow him out the door, Beri wrapped around his neck.

"Let's get you down on the ground little lady." Framboise said to the Force 3 agent.
"I can fly..." Puar said. "Just not in this form."

"Almost there." He tried to assure her but the back of the van was empty. He cursed and continued with the landing.

Yamcha landed on a shouting alien, pushing him into the ground. Bramble was right beside him swinging with his good arm and took out another alien that was trying to tackle him.

A small blue animal joined flying next to Yamcha. "I want to help." She said.

"I knew it!" Beri exclaimed.

"Huh? Agent Puar?" Yamcha seemed confused till the small cat carrying a gun turned back into a girl with a cloud of smoke and shot at some incoming aliens.

"FBI! Surrender immediately!" She cried her gun shot being just a warning shot.

"They're going to need more than that. Level 2 psycho wave permission needed!" Agent Beri growled her gem in the centre of her head started to glow.

"Understood, Level 2 granted." Yamcha said as he tossed the alien under him into the raging crowd.

Special Agent Beri laughed as she stood up to her full 4 feet and let a rain of light fly from her hands.

Yamcha touched Agent Puar on the hand to drag her into the safe circle near Beri.

All the aliens around paused mid battle frozen by the blast of psychic power. Guards from behind barriers could be heard cheering and a few space bikes landed and quickly cuff all the incapacitated rioters.

"Keep the pressure up till they're all arrested." Yamcha said.

Agent Beri could only nod as she kept her concentration.

"Force 2 is amazing!" Puar gasped.

"Didn't expect a shape shifter!" Bramble said. "Are you a graduate of the Shapeshifting Academy?"

"Yeah, I've been there since kindergarten." Puar said shyly.

"You didn't need to hide it wee one." He told her kindly.

"I had my orders." Puar explained.

"It's fine, we got everything under control." Yamcha said. "At ease Special Agent Beri."

The small pink alien lowered her arms and brought her full attention back to Agent Puar.

"Interesting, there are Earthlings capable of changing their shape."

"We need a special license and must register with the FBI."

"So, by being an Agent you can avoid registration? Very interesting."

"Level 2 is revoked Special Agent, stop reading her mind. We have to report back to Section 1." Yamcha ordered. He had previously been speaking with the guards who now had all uprisers in cuffs and lying flat on the ground. "Good work everyone. Especially since we're down our usual
numbers."

"Still got to smack a few buggers, bet our other team mates will be kicking themselves they didn't come!" Bramble laughed.

"I thought this was supposed to be an investigation not a conflict." Puar gasped. Her hands were still shaking.

"That was the original idea." Yamcha said as they began to walk to where the guards were waiting to escort them. "It seems that the lockdown was unsuccessful and a few more rowdy refugees escaped their houses and took to protesting."

"Is it under control now?" Special Agent Beri asked.

"We'll find out." Yamcha said grimly. "If it is we may need to call for a back up enforcement team."

"Goodie! Force 1 Agents!" Beri giggled.

"Nothing to be happy about, let's hope we don't have to resort to calling this in." Yamcha said firmly. Beri grumbled under her breath. "This place needs blown up...call them in."

Agent Puar looked at her wide eyed and shocked at her statement but as she walked through the slums of the city she began to understand.

"Agent Bramble, has this place always been in this state?" She asked.

"Oh no, we used to have only a few families living here. But there's too many coming and not enough going. It was fine at first, nice little safe place for these aliens. Now, it's a cess pitt."

"I agree." Beri huffed as she tried to step around a giant mud puddle. "Lift me up Yamcha."

He ignored her and Bramble scooped up her small frame and placed her on his good shoulder.

"There you are Hen." He said pleased with himself.

"Acceptable." Beri said as they met up with the waiting pilot, Agent Framboise and they went into the security office.

"Seems like this is more trouble than we thought Captain, huh?" Framboise said greeting them. "Madam Beri is untroubled I see."

"I am always untroubled." She sniffed and slid off Bramble's shoulder. "Especially when I have a gentleman escorting me."

He smiled and raised an eyebrow while slapping Bramble's bad shoulder. "Good for you, mon aime!"

The other agent swore and motioned to punch Framboise back but Yamcha held up his hand. The Chief Guard Captain was coming.

"Later ye C###!" Bramble hissed.

"Anytime..." Framboise whispered back.

"You're the team the FBI sent?" Chief Bora asked. "Please come in to my office."
Yamcha motioned to his team mates and they all filed in and lined up against the wall. Except for Beri who took the seat in front of the desk. Yamcha just gave her a side look but left it. He had to admit if she hadn't been there earlier there might have been a full blown battle. This was his second mission as team leader he didn't want it to be his last.

Chief Bora was a tall man with dark skin. He seemed to be quite muscular and fitted his guard uniform well.

"Thanks to your efforts we now have the rioters under control." He said. "They had only been in lockdown for 5 hours when the stronger ones broke out."

"What about the ki collars?" Beri asked.

"They had somehow found a way to break them." Bora answered. "Special Agent Yamcha, I'd like you to add this to your investigation."

Yamcha nodded and felt the investigation was more trouble than they originally thought.

"Might as well call in the rest of the team." He sighed.

The FBI headquarters was a tall group of buildings just outside West City. The landing area for Air vehicles was heavily secure and Bulma and Viola were greeted by a couple of Guards who needed to check their IDs, baggage and vessel. It was the first time Bulma had flown for years and her heart was still beating. The rush of adrenaline was addictive but she wondered when she would have the chance again.

"Thanks for landing normally." Viola gasped. She was out of breath for a different reason.

"Can't do any tricks with this much security." Bulma explained. "I did originally want to land with a forward flip." She was joking but it gave her pleasure to see Viola flatly believe her and look so horrified.

"All clear Agents." The Guard said as the scan of the vehicle was completed. "You're free to go."

Bulma and Viola stepped down from the landing pad and piled up all their boxes on a small trolley.

"Do we have a research room set up?" Bulma asked.

"Only the Dorms where we're staying." Viola answered. "Shouldn't be too hard to book an investigation room."

"Hmm..." Bulma wasn't too sure. They had full run of the mansion. In the Headquarters' dormitories there were a mass of usually competitive people. "Do we have a dormitory ward to ourselves?"

"I didn't ask." Viola said blushing as she realised her mistake.

As they came to the roof entrance a familiar person was waiting for them.

"Launch!" Bulma cried and hugged her friend. "So you're back in the agency!"

"Still need to pass the medical, psych exam and get my new leg fitted." The blonde said. "I decided to come back because of Tien. I don't have anything left but my revenge."

Bulma didn't reply. She understood completely and patted her shoulders.
"Revenge isn't a good motive to use." Viola said as she walked past them carrying her bags. She gave Bulma a quick look as she went into the building. "Meet you in the Dorm reception area."

Bulma waited till the door closed and gave Launch another hug. "I know what you meant..." She said in a soft voice.

"Seems a bit tense between you two..." Launch said.

"We've both been royal pains in the butts to each other." Bulma sighed. "She's okay... But sometimes I feel she's a total space cadet or a control maniac. She jumps between the two."

"Ha! Maybe she's got a similar condition as me." Launch laughed.

"I doubt it... Think she just liked it when we were in the hot South City area..."

"Well, vent it all to me. I'm staying in Dorm E so we'll have plenty of time to chat."

"Despite your plastic leg, you're looking good Launch." Bulma said. "Nice to see you smiling again."

"I'm secretly a walking wreck, don't tell anyone." Launch whispered in a joking voice.

"I totally understand." Bulma whispered back. "Me too."

Bulma knew they were both trying to make a light joke of it but the truth was very close to the darker reality.

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Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: No Vegeta, feels bad but he's off in hiding and he'll appear eventually. I wanted Yamcha to get a bit of a turn and investigate the trouble in Central City, no romance between him and Puar I wanted to build up her admiration for him. I went with Puar being female but really we this character is so gender neutral that they could be both but to keep it simple I'm sticking with Puar being a she.

Bulma is back with Launch and we'll see how she does in her re-entrance into the FBI. It'll give Bulma someone to talk to other than Viola who she's sadly been tolerating for a while.

Next time we'll probably follow Yamcha and his team while trailing behind Bulma and her archiving of Vegeta's evidence.
Residual Shadows

Chapter Summary

Bulma returns to HQ while Yamcha leads his team into finding out what went on in Central City.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't make any money from the work of fiction.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 45

Residual shadows

The dormitories were in the same state as Bulma remembered them. It was sterile hallways with motivational posters and old party notices. The reception area was a circle desk and behind the dorms from A to F branched off. There was always someone at the front desk. Either a bitter old man or woman who wanted everyone to just behave and let their lives be easier.

This time it was only Viola at the desk speaking with someone on the phone.

Launch gave her one last hug and hobbles into her side of the dorm. "Lets be thankful for graduation." She said as she left. "Bit of peace and quiet!"

"So much for reliving our youth." Bulma said but she was slightly grateful.

"It's quite lucky really." Viola said. "The Summer break has started and most trainees have graduated."

"So we have a choice of dorm wards?" Bulma asked.

"Not really." Viola shrugged. " We have been assigned Ward A. Currently the staff are on holiday and a clean up crew are busy in the other wards. Ward E is also available but it's for medical assistant for current Agents."

"Okay, got it. Lead the way Agent." Bulma said pushing the trolley of boxes.

When Bulma had been a trainee herself, she had roomed with Launch in Ward C. It was a female segregated area and had its share of cat fights between recruits. The competition for top placement was quite harsh and quarrelling about unfair abilities or tactics were usually brought back into the dorms. Bulma didn't wish to return to the those days but having a sleepover chat with Launch was pretty tempting.

"So we get a room each then?" Bulma asked. She didn't want a sleepover with Viola.
"Yeah, of course." Viola said who must have been thinking about the same thing. "Next to each other. We still need to work as a team."

"Right." She knew it was because the babysitter mission of Viola's would continue. "After we unpack, let's find a free research room for my archiving."

"Do you need computer access?"

"It would be a big help." Bulma said. "I need to upload any files I've scanned and written."

"Right, I'll find out where we can go later." She said as she went into her room with some of her boxes.

Bulma left her packages outside and only took her small suitcase and laptop bag. It was all she needed. The cardboard boxes were filled to the brim with facts collected about Vegeta. She'd rather not have that next to her bed.

The room was exactly the same as her original dorm room. The two beds, two desks were bare of any items and a fresh bag of bedding was wrapped in plastic on top of one bed. It was a far cry from the luxurious room back in the asylum mansion but this felt safer for Bulma. She looked out the small window to see Viola in her room sorting through her own bags. She pulled down the blind and started to get her belongings arranged as she liked. She was finally free of the prison and could for a moment feel herself also free from Vegeta's shadow.

In Central City, Special Agent Yamcha had finished his meeting with Chief Bora. There was so much to investigate.

"Okay, let's see... So what is the priority?"

"The bomb that started this mess and the remains of Mayor Batta." Chief Bora answered. "We haven't started the clean up yet, we need to let your team investigate it first, FBI orders."

"Right, we'll be as fast as we can. We need containers for any evidence to take to an investigation room that we need set up. Somewhere out of the public view."

"Then that needs to be in Section 1. We need to release lockdown soon or there are going to be more riots."

"Understood, Team, let's go!"

"Oh so commanding Captain." Beri teased. "I hope you are not expecting me to be digging in the rubble too?"

"I need you to scan for residue emotions. We need to find out what happened and any hints of the culprit or culprits."

"How long ago did this happen?" Beri asked. "Residue psychic energy doesn't last that long."

"It's been 9 hours since the explosion." Puar added.

"Thanks Agent Puar, I'm glad someone read the mission report." Yamcha said cheerfully.

"Ugh, it was 3 pages... Who's got time for that?" Beri moaned but no one answered her. They had all learnt to leave her to cry her complaints out loud.
The Section 2 area was the cleanest part of the refugee camp. It had reclaimed the concrete roads from the original city and most of the buildings were more permanent looking.

The Guards were circled around the crumbling building. In a square nearby neatly lined up bodies were covered in vinyl sheets.

"Is the Mayor over there?" Puar asked.

Yamcha shook his head, "Second floor, along with the bodyguard. They're all spread out, no solid body. Prepare yourselves for the worst."

The team spread themselves out. Agent Bramble searched the ground for shrapnel and began collecting what they found. Special Agent Beri, following orders from Yamcha, became quiet as she focused on the residual psychic presences. Yamcha and Puar made their way into the main source of the explosion on the second floor. It was as Yamcha had said, not a pretty sight.

Parts of alien were smeared across the wall and floor. What had been the ceiling was a giant hole.

"It's highly unstable. I would be careful and be ready to fly at any minute." Yamcha advised.

"I'll be careful." Agent Puar said as she began to photograph the room.

Yamcha noticed the ropes and high sprung elastic. It reminded him of a very recent case. "Batta was tied down to his bed." He said.

"The victim died by being ripped apart, the blood and flesh on the wall isn't consistent with an explosion." Agent Puar agreed. "The burnt parts are outside caused by the fire, under the bed there's signs of a struggle and cutting; including blood loss pooling around the rope marks."

"Very good observations Agent Puar." Yamcha praised the new graduate. He was sure he'd made the right choice with recruiting her for the investigation. "Be sure to photograph the rope knots, there's something familiar about them."

"It does seem unique. We're lucky that the fire didn't burn them."

Outside Special Agent Beri was filtering through the mental threads of current thoughts to anything residual. The fear from Batta was the loudest signal coming from the house. He had died awake and aware of his situation but helpless to avoid it. He was trapped? She needed to get closer. She climbed up the ladder into the room. The two agents in the room collecting evidence was pushed back from her mind. The screaming of the dying alien was her only focus.

Her hand came in contact with the bed and it became clearer. He was trapped, waiting for death...

The dark blur was by the door and left on the opposite side.

"There's an escape route?" Beri said. The dark figure had no ki to sense, no presence but darkness. Yamcha knew to step aside and let her walk through the room following the psychic residue. He tapped Puar on the shoulder and let her stand behind him as they watched Beri, their own investigation temporarily put on hold. She followed the footsteps, vague and unclear but they disappeared in a corner.

"Is there a door, window?" Beri asked, in her current state she was blind to a lot of things. Yamcha stepped forward and checked for her.

"A trapdoor, well I'll be..." He said signalling to Puar to take more photos.
Beri's eyes focused again returning to the physical realm. "I couldn't see clearly but there was a psychic trail, it was a solitary male... No idea on his features or even his race. I just know he killed Batta, let him remain alive and paralysed till something pulled him apart."

"That would be the ropes." Yamcha said.

"Some of them are a type of strong elastic." Puar added taking notes.

"Okay, we'll need to check this trapdoor and where it leads." Yamcha said. "Are you able to follow the killer's trail?"

Beri focused and nodded. "It's slightly familiar but there isn't a powerful ki attached. Almost like it's drawing in the energy." Beri said. "I can't tell who it is, just the raw emotion."

"Though, you know that it's a male."

"That's the only thing I'm sure of."

Yamcha nodded and motioned to Puar, "Go down and ask Bramble to examine the area. You can start photographing the lower floor."

"Got it!" She saluted and quickly went to the ladder to descend.

"She's eager to please." Beri said loud enough for Yamcha to hear.

"Unlike some, she respects whoever's in charge." Yamcha said. "We need to work together to go into the trapdoor tunnel. I may need to keep you safe as you fumble around blind."

"I'm not blind, my third eye sees more than you can imagine." Beri pouted. "But I won't say no to a handsome escort."

Yamcha couldn't reply to that and only opened the hidden door. Beri grabbed his arm to guide her where she needed to go. The dark swirling trail was easy to pick up. The man was pleased, killing and torture seemed to give him a thrill. It enhanced the emotional trail making it easier to follow. A huge sense of pride and pleasure was overflowing. The plan was successful...

"He planned this attack..." Beri commented as they went into the tunnel.

"Structure looks unstable..." Yamcha added. "I can tell it goes to the outside. Pick up what you can then we'll take it outside."

He held Beri back as she tried to walk forward. The psychic aura had something familiar, she was sure if she'd scanned a mind like this she would remember.

"I've not met him but I have?" She said confused. "Who is he?"

She tried searching for clues but was lifted out of the tunnel, pulled out before she walked into the collapsed wall. Yamcha flew up and outside while Beri remained in her trance.

"We're outside now, find where he came out."

"I'll try..." Beri said. The ground floor was a mess of flashing mental cries as it was a mixture of passer-bys and guards that was fresher in the area.

"Find the exit...I can't filter anything in this mess." She mumbled. The powerful emotions of people getting injured and dying were overpowering.
Yamcha signalled to Bramble. "There's a secret exit at the back of the building, find it for us."

He nodded and began to circle round the building.

"Agent Puar, stay close and continue to photograph what we find." Yamcha ordered the new recruit who stopped her current job of cataloguing the damage and ran to Yamcha's side.

After a few minutes, Agent Bramble returned and guided them to behind the building. A small open hatch was hidden in the rubble. It was a tight fit next to the security wall and the house.

Beri found it free of other energies and she could finally see the dark aura.

"I can see him!" She shouted. The figure was solid as his escape plan worked and his emotions was spiking into a mix of pride, elation and excitement.

"He's glad of his kill, or inevitable killing. He... He wants more though... Much more..."

Yamcha made sure that Puar was writing it all down.

"Do you have a name?" Yamcha asked.

Beri shook her head and slowly opened her eyes. "He ran away, his energy is so low level. It's almost negative. I may need to meditate on this to arrange my thoughts. I need to return to the Investigation room..."

"Fine by me," Yamcha said. "You've been a big help. We will need your skills later for our suspect interviews."

"If I met him again I wouldn't even need to scan him, the killing intent was so strong... Like a... Hmmm... Yes, he thinks like a Saiyan... But the power was wrong..."

Yamcha looked shocked, "Gather your thoughts Special Agent Beri... I hope you're certain." He could guess what she was insinuating and it was impossible. "Don't say or confirm anything till you're sure."

"I always do." Beri huffed. "That's why my record is 100%."

"Captain?" Puar asked. "Do you know who she is thinking of?"

"There's only one Saiyan we know of that had no ki energy." Yamcha explained, "But if it's true, we cause more issues than solve them... It's best to stay quiet."

Yamcha could feel the uncertainty and confusion overtake his mind. He wasn't able to deal with the it, Agent Puar as good as she was, didn't have the experience. He could think of only one person who would know exactly what to make of the information.

"I'll take Beri back to the Investigation room and check up on Framboise." He said. "Keep collecting the evidence, I also need to make a call."

"Understood." Puar said and went back to the front of the house.

Yamaha picked up Beri and took off in the air. "We need the expert on the guy you're thinking of." He told her

"You have zero psychic skill, you don't know what I'm thinking!"
"The death of the detective in North City was very similar, your hint at a no ki but ability for killing... Not to mention the Saiyan..."

"I said it was possible Saiyan... What Saiyan has no ki to speak of?"

"Only one..." Yamcha growled under his voice.

"Him... You're going to get her involved, I can see."

"Stop reading people's minds, rest up and clarify what your senses told you. I need to make that phone call stat."

"Tell your pretty Force 3 crush she has a rival." Beri said slyly.

"Assistant Director Piccolo comes first." He said blushing and setting Beri down in front of the newly set up Investigation room.

Agent Framboise came out and was pushed aside by a distracted Agent Beri.

"Back already?" He asked Yamcha.

"We just found more questions than answers." Yamcha sighed.

"And here we thought that this would be another clean up job." Framboise smiled.

"Oh, this is nothing to be happy about Agent." Yamcha said and went to the video phone.

He saw Beri settle down to a darker corner of the room to meditate. She had obviously been shaken by the experience but was trying to hide it. He had worked with her so many times but it was rare to see her so quiet. She would usually be bugging him to make the call together to get some shared praise.

Even Agent Framboise noticed and went outside to smoke rather than trying to make any jokes.

"Captain, heading out..." He said holding up his box of cigarettes.

"Check up on Bramble and Puar after you're done, we got a lot of shrapnel for you to analyse."

The tall man casually saluted and left the room glad for the excuse to be elsewhere.

"This is some mess we've found." Yamcha muttered and quick dialled to the Assistant Director.

"Piccolo here, update on the situation already?"

"Sir... We found traces of who was responsible..."

"I take it Special Agent Beri found some residual energy to examine."

"That's just it... The attacker had no energy... She said there was no ki energy from him."

"But definitely a him?"

"The emotions were readable... She thinks that he was a Saiyan..."

There was a pause as Piccolo came to the same conclusion.

"Vegeta? How sure is she?" He said.
"She's pretty sure, but she said she wanted to meditate on it before any confirmation. I thought you would want to know asap."

"You would be correct, but how is it possible that Vegeta broke into a high security refugee camp and managed to go unnoticed?"

"The camp is in lockdown while they try to find any suspects."

"Keep it all on lockdown! I am sending Force 1 agents immediately to your location!"

Yamcha shuddered at the raised voice, being the bringer of bad news was not what he signed up for.

"I'd like to forward our findings to Agent Briefs." He said.

"Agent Bulma Briefs is remaining in the HQ..."

"I understand that Sir. I only wanted her to go over all the evidence."

"I see... Yes, we could arrange that. She is after all our expert on Vegeta."

"Thank you Sir. Agent Puar is doing an excellent job but she can only collect data at this point without any knowledge of Vegeta's history or current medical condition we can't have much analysis done on this side."

"Send everything you have. I will inform Agent Briefs on the additional work."

"Thank you Sir, could I request a personal visit by yourself with the Force 1 agents. You're the only one who can control them."

"I'll think about it..." Piccolo said and cut the call.

Yamcha sighed even deeper, things just kept getting worse.

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In the Gero mansion, Mr Black was receiving an update from one of his spies.

"So the bird has come home to roost?" He asked happily.

"She's staying in the Headquarters, so there won't be any opportunities outside of there."

"Such a tight hold on someone who's not really that important." Black pondered.

"She's a weakling, not even worth to be Force 3, she should go back to her roots and fuck off."

"I'd hold your temper if I were you, we don't want anyone to suspect anything. Keep a watch on her and find an opening. We will have our rabbit."

"Bird, rabbit, you and your code names. She's a struck up cow that only needs to realise her place."

"This is only a precaution for yourself, some lines are tapped without warning." Black warned. "We need you to stay low for now."

"Understood, then the reformation of Red Ribbon will begin."

"Goodbye Agent..." Black hung up the phone.
'The idiot!' He thought.

He had only warned the agent about the line tapping, anything from the FBI phones were randomly selected for listening by the agency. The Chief Director was paranoid to the point that he never trusted anyone. Not even his son as the rumours went.

It ultimately didn't matter, they were so close to the realisation of their goals for years. All the spies, workers, scientists, androids and of course the man pushing them all. The cultivation of anger and revenge were driving them to the goal; to finally kill Vegeta and destroy everything that he touched.

There was no room for any mistakes, the weapons to destroy Vegeta were completed. Now all they needed was to find and capture him. The hunter would soon become the prey.

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Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: I know, still no Vegeta but there was plenty of shadows of him. I made up a lot of the psychic residue thing based on an actual tele-ability from Sci-Fi. It's got a fancy name, empathic retrocognition, but I never used that here as it's quite clunky and I think Beri prefers the word residue. I've never seen it in DBZ but that doesn't mean it doesn't exist since there's plenty of other crazy powers. The time frame is only half a day so Beri is limited with her use of it. She's pretty annoying but very useful with the investigation.

Next chapter, Bulma will get more into all the crap Vegeta left at Central City and Gero may be making his move soon. Though they still need Vegeta, we might find out where he's heading to.
Chapter Summary

Bulma starts a new investigation and gets closer to finding Vegeta.

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Dragonball Z or Hannibal. I make no profit from this work of fiction.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 46

Closer than you think

Bulma looked around the dark basement room. "Is this it?" She asked as she switched on a side light. It didn't illuminate much but it was better than the bar glaring lights above. It was a small room compared to other main investigation rooms and in the lower floor of the FBI Headquarters. It was definitely somewhere out of the way and a place Bulma knew she had been placed to stay out of the main investigation rooms.

"It's the only one free that's not too far down into the lower levels." Viola added wheeling in the boxes. "We need to contact Assistant Director Piccolo asap, got a message while we were moving everything."

"He better not be retracting my request to work here." Bulma said sitting in the old office chair and switching on the monitor.

"They didn't say." Viola shrugged. She left the boxes and stood next to Bulma as she made the video call to Piccolo.

"Agent Bulma Briefs and Agent Viola here, Sir."

"Agents, I take it you've set up a good investigation room?"

"Yes, Sir." Bulma said.

"We have new data on Vegeta, I want this turned to focus on all the data we have and try to figure out how Vegeta did it."

"How he did what Sir?" Bulma felt her heart racing, her instincts were telling her she wasn't going to like what Piccolo was going to say.

"I want to know how Vegeta broke into a high security refugee camp in Central City, killed a high ranking alien individual and disappear without a trace?"
"What?" Bulma knew of the camp well. She had done a lot of her investigations and arrests there. "There isn't any way you can just walk in and walk out again. It's run like a minimum security prison."

"We are searching for him now, believe me. There's still a chance he's hiding somewhere. Nobody has actually seen him, but the evidence points to only one conclusion."

"With no ki and no way to scan for him." Bulma said. "The only way to find him would be to search every sector in the camp."

"You're astute as always, we're doing that. What I require of you is to scan over the incoming data. Find any clues to help us." Piccolo explained. "Stay in the HQ and be our analyst. We have a Force 3 agent in the city collecting the data along with Special Agent Yamcha and Beri. Her psychic abilities were able to detect a Saiyan attacker but she said he was powerless."

"Couldn't she have mistaken the energy for another warrior type alien?" Viola asked.

"Her psychic ability is not the only hint, you'll see for yourself when you look over the files and read Special Agent Yamcha's report on the murder of the alien."

"We understand Sir, I expect that the files have already been sent to me." Bulma said writing down a small memo.

"As ever, I am amazed at how quickly you understand Agent. Report daily to myself and Special Agent Yamcha. His team is working on the main investigation in Central City and he requested that you would look at all the gathered information and give your feedback. We are hoping that you can confirm or deny if it's Vegeta or not. Don't concern yourself if you find that it is, we will handle it on our side."

"Sir." They both said in unison.

"Goodbye agents, I will be very busy for the next few days so update by mail would be best."

"Understood." Bulma said as the call cut off.

"Vegeta in Central City? Is that Saiyan mad?" Viola screamed. Now that Piccolo was not watching the women could express their surprise clearer.

"Yes, he has to be." Bulma snarled. "Though I think we have given him a perfect way to hide right in front of us."

"What do you mean?"

"His ki! That treatment he received years ago genetically modified him to be unable to retain ki... I was researching that in South City... It was Warden Oolong's bright idea. Now without any ki we have no way to search for him by scanner! He can slip into supposed secure areas as they rely on these ki scanners!"

"You already worked out how he got in?" Viola asked.

"I think so, the base is dependent on ki scanners and guards with fighting abilities. Everything Vegeta can avoid by blending into the crowd and not setting off the high level ki detectors. I bet, however he should have been caught by some cameras. They're hidden all over the camp."

"So we can get a clear image of him?" Viola questioned.
"With any luck!" Bulma beamed. "Finally we have something that's not just cataloguing and filing data! We need to contact Special Agent Yamcha as soon as possible."

"I'm sure he'll be glad to speak with you." Viola teased.

"A message should be fine, I have things to check here rather than take more time talking about things I already know." She said opening her laptop and switching it on.

"Ice Queen till the end." Viola snidely said and returned to the boxes to place them on the shelves.

Bulma heard her and kept quiet. She didn't have time for any gossip or relationship troubles. Yamcha was a nice guy as far as she was concerned and she couldn't conceive any other things to do with him. She had a clear investigation in front of her and a mysterious one to boot. Her mind was buzzing with leads she could request to be followed and sources to check.

As the Assistant Director said an email was waiting for her full of attachments, juicy photos of the crime scene and most importantly the ones highlighted by Special Agent Yamcha. She opened these first and knew exactly how he came to the conclusion that he did.

"The murder victim was tied up..." Bulma gasped.

"Like Tien?"

"He wasn't hung... But the knots, Agent Yamcha noticed it too... They're the same. The material is different but... The torture... The way the body was pulled apart... Yes... It's the same way as Vegeta did to Tien."

"Damn! That Son of a Bitch!"

"We may have a long day ahead of us..." Bulma said. "First let's unpack our boxes and file them under the Asylum years. Then we can clear out the leftover stuff that's just been left here."

"Who put you in charge?" Viola snapped.

"I meant together, we're a team." Bulma sighed. "Or would you like to do the paperwork?"

She let Agent Viola realise her situation, this wasn't anything she could object to, and she quickly shook her head.

"I appreciate it." Bulma said dryly picking up the first box. The research room they had been given had enough bare shelf space for all the boxes. They had more coming from the internal mail carrier but for now the most important ones were here.

Bulma placed a sticker on one box still sealed with the words, 'drawings' on it.

The rest of the room had storage that needed moved but she spotted one thing that would be useful. A large whiteboard covered with an old investigation.

She wheeled it to the front near her desk, cleaned it and began to write. At the top she wrote timeline of Vegeta and drew a straight line under the title.

"What's this for?" Viola asked.

"We need to log all the data we have and figure out the flow of events." Bulma said. "3 years ago Vegeta escaped his captivity and went on the run. From here to now all we know is this last month. Here he was in North City and killed a police detective that got too close. Before that he had no other
suspicions raised. So we can place him living in North City at this time. After the murder of Tien he appeared at the police department and a few days later he stabbed me and disappeared again; till now he reappears in Central."

Bulma drew marks on the line to show the time stamps they were aware of. A large question mark was used between the unknown times between the escape to North City and the smaller time gap between North City and Central City.

"What has this got to do with the killing in Central?" Viola asked.

"Because..." Bulma paused as she gathered her thoughts. "He must have been to the refugee camp before."

"Huh?"

"He blended in, disappeared easily from North City to here. He's probably done it before. It was too quick, he had contact or familiarity with the place. He must have worked out a blind spot in the security where he could slip in and maybe even out. The scanners that they use to cover those blind spots wouldn't be able to detect him and once he's in no one would question another weak alien."

"How sure are you about that?" Viola said. "Haven't you see how tight they run that place. Every alien has ID and is carefully placed into sections."

"The system is flawed. Do you remember the case that got me suspended? Biscotti was a high risk alien but she had her papers faked and she got out and became a risk to our society."

"I remember, it was her baby you shot."

"Yeah..." Bulma didn't want to be reminded of that. "Anyway, she got fake ID and medical papers, there's a black market for that inside the camp. A refugee ID for a weak level alien wouldn't be an issue."

"This is all conjecture..."

"But it's the only thing that makes any sense to me. I know what I need to request they look for. It's the same with North City, it's connected. He didn't just teleport! He doesn't have those powers. He used the one thing he does have, his brain."

"But Saiyans are known to not be that bright."

"He's the prince of all Saiyans, he's smarter than most and since he's no longer stronger, his focus has intensified on his intelligence. So many people underestimate him but he's such a dangerous killer, even with no ki."

"Vegeta could really slip into an FBI supported facility and use it to hide from us?"

"He would love the irony." Bulma said wishing inwardly that she didn't understand him as well as she did. "At least I know enough... I can give Yamcha's team some things I want searched for."

"Do you think he'll still be in the camp?"

"No, Vegeta's long gone... Maybe, his next hiding place he's acquired over the years on the run."

Viola ran out of questions to ask and returned to placing boxes on shelves leaving Bulma to stare at her white board and write down all her possible ideas. Vegeta would know, same as killing Tien that
he didn't have much time. He stayed in North City for too long last time, he would move to leave the same day. Maybe at night or during the chaos of the body being discovered. She wrote everything up on the board she'd concluded already.

They had a lead to his whereabouts and it was making her mind abuzz with the way she wanted to investigate. She hated that she couldn't be there in person but she was being included.

'Thanks Yamcha. You've really given me back my drive.'

She swung back into her office chair and started writing her replies. She knew by the facts Vegeta was taunting them. It was so similar to how he killed Tien. There was something personal about this kill. She typed up everything she wanted more facts on.

'Find the CCTV camera footage of the victim. Vegeta will have talked to him. Send me every video file for the last few days before the murder.

There is a good chance he had a fake ID, check any refugees that may have travelled from different sectors to come to sector 2. Vegeta would be living in the slum areas. Look for anyone missing or has an incorrect house or zone number.

The chance he is currently in the camp is very low. He would have learnt from his mistakes in North City. I feel he would leave at least one hour after the killing. Possibly during the discovery of the body. Look for any strange activity around the perimeter on the night of the murder.

Remember Vegeta has no ki, he will have used the gaps in security. The blind spots covered by only ki detectors. Find any CCTV that might have caught someone out of curfew moving around near those areas.'

Bulma sighed, he would be travelling away, either west or south. She pulled out a map and pinned it on the bottom of the whiteboard with magnets. She used a red pen to circle West City, Central City and North City, the only three cities Vegeta had been that they knew about. It had been about 12 hours since the killing. 'If he had left the refugee city immediately he would only be able to get 60 kilometres away. Assuming he was walking at 5 miles per hour...' She highlighted the roads within reach by himself for hitchhiking, making a circle in a highlighter pen, the escape distance.

She went back to the laptop and sent her calculations to Piccolo along with what she requested from Special Agent Yamcha. If she could help in any way to capture him she felt like this would be her chance to clear her name. No more suspicion on her motives or questioning her investigation ability. She was a genius and could put her great mind to anything.

'Sooner or later, you'll show yourself again. You're getting careless Vegeta.'

It had been almost a day of walking Vegeta could finally set up a small camp. He was in the outskirts of a small town called Gingertown. It was slightly north of West City his actual goal. The journey had been peaceful and uneventful. He noticed a small increases of patrols going to and from Central City but with their higher ki level shining like a beacon he was able to hide down in the ditches or move into the wooded areas by the road.

He sighed as he sat under the tree next to his camp. He wouldn't need a fire, the temperature was finally something comfortable. The cold of the North was good for conditioning his body. He could finally rest without any real worry. The mess he left in the refugee camp meant he would need to keep his head down.
The time was getting close, his long wait was almost over. He could afford to make a few outbursts.
It relieved his frustration and let him experiment with this new power that he could weld.

He rested his eyes and focused on his inner world. His fortress needed to be strong. There were psychics in the FBI, ones that could sense him without the need to sense ki. He created a cloak, a fake personality to fool anyone doing a light scan. It was his first defence and one that could be broken easily. He knew his true character had come out when he went to kill Batta. Did they have a psychic that could read the past?

He went into his fortress, one person would know. He stepped carefully through the entrance avoiding the traps. The bone spiral staircase led up to the room part of her soul was trapped. She would tell him what he wanted to know. Her door was blue and locked, keeping her contained within the room.

The blood she had shed for him let him have the last piece to finally complete her room.

"Are you awake?" He opened the door. She had to be conscious, the world was sparkling as her thoughts seemed to be moved back and forth. If she was sleeping it would be easier for him to reach into her memories, into her mind. For now he could just watch.

The pink invader's influence had receding and he was finally able to enter the room. The knife wound had given him the connection, her blood had allowed him to take a part of her. Saiyans had a form of psychic ability but it always included blood. He needed more time to strengthen the bond, perhaps let her bleed for him again.

The cool ice walls in the room were his window into her mind. It was mostly a barrier since the link was hardly there. Her mind was behind an ice wall, crystal like and sparkling. He had placed his own memories of her here as well in front of the barrier. He could touch those parts without her noticing. A large bookshelf in the corner was his. It was blood red with black veins that seemed to cling to the pure white walls making them look broken.

Small glowing books of his stored memory lined the dark shelves. His latest one of her was sparkling white with splashes of blood staining it. It was quite beautiful to look at, but it wasn't what he had come for.

One dark thin blue book contained something he had found a few years ago, her address.

'West City? Looks like a good neighbourhood too...'

The lights flashed in the room, Bulma's brain was very active. He glanced across into the clear walls, images from what she was looking at came through... His leftover dissection appeared briefly. He could faintly see what she was currently thinking about.

'So, they're on to my handiwork already?' He mused. The glass barrier was like a window, he could see the chaos and swirls of images, her mind while awake was not somewhere he could easily slip in unnoticed. She would no doubt get some sort of headache or he would stop her flow of thoughts.... she was looking for him. She knew of the murder of Batta already.

It didn't matter he was far enough away from the trouble. The world was a large place for him to get lost and never be found. He stepped out of his inner fortress and copied down the street he needed to go to. He doubted the little sparrow was in her nest but he could find more things for him to take while she chased after his shadow.

It was a risky place to go, West City. It had many FBI agents. He checked the pocket mirror his hair
now white for his alien disguise was going to be easy to dye. Gingertown would be a safe stop over before he left again. A new look was needed, his current hobo style would stand out in the city and especially in the suburbs.

'Something smarter, perhaps? A suit or nice jacket would be great.' He leaned on the tree thinking about it. He almost had her where he wanted, his plans for her would take a little bit more time but the harvest would be all the sweeter. He had a fragile link to her and once he found a way to break through those walls, her mind would be easy to take.

Chapter End Notes

Author's Note: Getting just that little bit close for comfort with Vegeta arriving on the outskirts of West City. The old trope the Saiyan bond has made it's appearance and we fans love it really, no proof in canon but hey it's fun and this version is really twisted as it's mixed in with the Hannibal inner world/palace thing. Bulma has no idea what is coming for her.

End Notes

The universe is a strange mix between DBZ world and the normal Earth, but I’m leaving out countries like America the same way Dragonball does and just leaving it vague. (Akira Toriyama style!) So even though there’s FBI just like the Army in DBZ it has no obvious link to any country. There are however very large cities with simple names like West City and South City. Vegeta and his Saiyan army came much earlier than expected and this is a whole "what if" centred around it.

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