# Beautiful Lies

by **Banana_Nut_Slug**

## Summary

This takes place around the time of Retribution, which would be 8 years ago. It starts with the Commander meeting his doctor; soon after, everything just spirals downward. Not much more to say about it ;)

## Notes

I'll be sure to make this burn as slowly as my soul could withstand.

See the end of the work for more notes.
Chapter 1

Chapter Summary

Welcoming.

_Holy God, she's so tall._

This was the very first thought that ran through Gabriel's mind as he tilted his head upward to look his newest recruitment in the eye. Her smile was cold and her gaze freezing as she held her hand out for him to take.

"It's a pleasure finally meeting you, Commander."

"Pleasure meeting you, Doctor," he returned her smile, albeit his was not as mischievous.

"A few people you should get to know: Genji Shimada and Jesse McCree." He gestured to each man as their name was spoken. Gabriel watched as she introduced herself _Doctor Moira O'Deorain_ to the closest things he had to friends. The way the woman looked at each of them was unsettling; her eyes quickly ran up and down metal, articles of clothing, and cowboy hats, seemingly taking in information that Gabriel's own eyes could not see.

Once finished, Moira stood perfectly erect and looked at Gabe expectantly, folding her arms behind her back.

"Show me where I'll be working from," she demanded with a friendly (yet slightly scary) tone in her voice. He gestured to a hallway behind one of the two large staircases that led to the second floor of what could be considered the main lobby of the compound.

"Right this way."

As the two walked away, he glanced over his shoulder and noticed Jesse returning his gaze.

_She's freaky_, he muttered. Gabriel shrugged and looked ahead once more.

He led her through the ever-confusing hallways and rooms that made up the Blackwatch wing of the base. As each new section was passed by, he explained to Moira the purpose of the space or where it led to, or both. She didn't say much, and he decided the reason being was because she was too busy taking in her new surroundings; her new home.

The laboratory was on the basement floor, the doors that accessed it located in a hallway that had no other rooms within save for the storage space at the end of the hallway. Gabriel walked up to a set of thick metal doors and swiped a card across the side of the padlock adjacent to the sealed opening.

"I made sure this place was spotless before you got here," he told her as the doors slid open.

"How thoughtful," her accent poured into her words. Where was she from, England? She didn't sound exactly like Oxton; maybe a different city? Moira practically shoved past him as he pondered on her nationality, snapping him out of his thoughts.
Gabriel followed her inside and watched as the redhead scanned over every desk, chair, cupboard, table, tube, and any other science apparatus the room had to offer. A smile made its way onto her face.

"Oh, this is lovely," she cooed, and he could understand why. The room was massive. On the far end were two doors, one leading to a storage area, the other leading to the second section of the lab. An operating table and a padded chair were shoved back into that area, as well, awaiting use. Long desks and huge cabinets lined the sides, and off in a corner was a sink, a shower, and a station to wash the eyes should something happen.

"The door to the left is a closet, and the right leads to the second part of the lab," Gabriel explained.

"I'll get a few interns to help you move all your science-y stuff in here."

"Thank you," Moira responded, keeping her back to him.

"No problem, Doc."

"You're allowed to call me Moira, by the way." He crossed his arms and walked up to her.

"Alright, and you're allowed to call me anything but Gabe, capiche? This is professional, I don't want any nicknames." She turned around and faced him.

"That would mean 'Gabriel' is fine?"

"'Gabriel's'-" He paused.

"You have different-colored eyes."

*How had he not noticed that before?* The eyes were one of the first features one would pick out when first meeting someone, and he was certain a trait as unique as heterochromia wouldn't go unnoticed. Nevertheless, that was exactly what happened, and it left Moira chuckling.

"You seem taken aback."

"I never saw that before," he explained. One eye was a scarlet-brown color, and the other a bright blue. Such contrasting colors found on the same face was unheard of to him before now.

"Anyways," he sighed, "'Gabriel's' fine."

"Very well then, Gabriel. I look forward to working with you." He laughed at that.

"Oh believe me, I look forward to that, too! Now come on, I have to walk you around and introduce you to the group of asshats this place has to offer."

Gabe jogged over to the door, and Moira followed with calm, slow strides.
"Where's Jesse?" Ana questioned.

"He'll be up here in a moment," Gabriel responded.

"What about Red?" Chimed in Torbjorn.

"Do you really think I'm going to get her up here?" Gabe sighed. "She never shows up to these things."

"She chooses not to be educated on important matters, and yet, you still keep her around," said Jack. He understood the Strike Commander's frustration. One was expected to attend these meetings; the members of Overwatch and its Secret Ops division weren't exactly allowed to pick and choose which to attend. However, Gabriel bailed her out each time, and each time, would stop by the lab and explain the topics discussed afterwards, much to Morrison's dismay. She was a busy woman; she was busy keeping up her end of the deal on their "agreement."

How dare he interrupt?

"What can I say? She's fed up with work."

That wasn't exactly a lie, and it wasn't exactly what Jack wanted to hear. The blonde stood from his seat, muttered a few cusses, and walked over to the coffee maker sitting on a table pressed against the dark wall of the conference room. Gabe scoffed. That man always worried about the insignificant stuff. As long as Moira had the information relayed to her, why did it matter that she were present?

Once everyone had settled down and McCree had arrived, Jack addressed the room.

"We've recently lost sight of Talon's whereabouts in Czechoslovakia, as you all know, but as of this morning, we've pinpointed what seems to be a new hotspot for those fuckers to gather."

He turned on the heel of his foot and gestured to the large, bright-blue screen, which depicted a picture of Italy and a dot located in the country with the description Venice, Italy adjacent to it.

"There have been reports of an abundance of Talon members gathering somewhere in Venice," Jack continued. "According to eye-witness accounts, there's a shitload of them. If these accounts are true, we could be onto something big."
He then turned to Gabriel. "The Overwatch Team and I are going to explore this a bit more. Once we have enough information, I'll decide whether your group should get involved. I'm almost certain you will. As for the rest of us," Morrison turned to his team, "there'll be many days where Captain Amari will fill the role as Strike Commander. I have a feeling whatever's going on over there will bust everything wide open, so I'm going to be busy snuffing out information. In that time, she'll take over. Pretty damn sure she'll be better at it than me, anyways."

The woman laughed and said sweetly, "I probably will be."

"There you have it," Jack smiled. "Any comments or concerns?"

When there were none, he warned, "Might as well start preparing, Blackwatch. I'm almost certain you're not getting out of this one. With that, everyone go back to your business. I'll keep us updated."

The room sprang to life as everyone stood from their seats and walked either to the doors or to each other. As Gabriel rose, he noticed Morrison stride over to him.

"Tell O'Deorain," he advised, "if or when your division is deployed, that it's mandatory she attends the mission."

"Understood," he affirmed.

Once the Commander walked off to speak to Amari, Gabe followed Genji and Jesse down to the Blackwatch wing of the compound.

"So what're we doing, Commander?" Jesse asked.

"We do what Morrison says:" he replied, "start preparing just in case. It's the best course of action so far."

The cowboy shrugged. "So be it."

Gabriel followed the two and spoke with McCree about nonsense (It was the cruddiest damn pub here in America) until him and the cyborg split with their commander, and he took the hallway that led to the bottom floor while his teammates continued towards the recreational area. He traversed long corridors and stairs and was stuck in an elevator for a minute-too-long while making his descent. All the while, a thought in the back of his mind told him that she wouldn't allow him to enter.

Again.

A sigh left his mouth as he approached those infamous metal doors and rang the buzzer. Shortly after, that low, feminine voice called from inside.

"Who is it?" She was muffled and only somewhat audible.

"Gabriel," he called back.

"Come in."

To his surprise, he was granted access, and punched in the amalgamation of random numbers that was the passcode. The doors slid open and shut once he stepped inside.

The room was more cluttered than when he last laid eyes upon it. Piles of papers and Styrofoam coffee cups were littered across the tables, complimented by a small stack of plates with a group of
forks resting on top. There were contraptions Gabriel was uneducated on the function of on the sides of the laboratory. Connected to these were thick wires (or tubes, it was hard to distinguish at this point) that ran up the walls, to the ceiling, and into the secondary chamber, forcing the Doctor to keep the door swung open. Beyond that threshold was a machine that the wiring (or tubing, or both) led to. He didn't want to know its purpose. He studied his surroundings for a bit longer before Moira appeared from the closet, gripping her right hand in her left and stroking the knuckles with a free thumb.

"Hello, Commander," she greeted.

"Glad to see you aren't dead," he joked. "Pretty much everyone believes that."

She looked exhausted. Strands of hair were falling in her eyes, which had dark circles accompanying them. The white pants she wore had purple fingerprints and hand markings decorating the fabric, and the tie around her neck was partially undone, causing the collar of her dark button-up to fall out of place.

"You don't look good," he commented honestly.

"I was busy."

"Too busy to sleep for a few hours? You know you aren't on any time restraints here."

"I'm aware. I had to test my newest altercation's abilities, that's all."

She held her hand up for him to see, and his breath caught in his throat.

Dull magenta veins roped around violet skin and led to long, glowing nails that tapered to an elongated, needle-like point. Holy shit, was all he could think.

"I'm unable to cut these anymore," she waggled her fingers. "I'll have to figure out what to do in regards to that."

Why was she so calm about this?

"The hell'd you do to your hand?"

"I essentially took a sample of my improved nanabiotic serum and injected myself with it. Of course, after altering it a little. Otherwise, I would have died immediately."

She ran her not-fucked-up hand up and down her right arm, lifting her sleeve and exposing the intricate ways her veins wrapped around the muscles of her limb. The look in her dual-colored eyes as she inspected her work nearly frightened him; Moira was so proud of what she had done to herself.

She glanced back to him.

"Once I finalize everything, I'll be sure to inform you as soon as possible so we may get started."

"Right, right," he said hesitantly. "I won't turn purple and veiny, will I?"

"Oh, no, I've already exterminated the factors that changed the appearance of my arm. At the moment I'm changing a few things so it won't react negatively with the Soldier Enhancement serum."

Gabe nodded, still a bit uneasy at the sight.
"So now what could you do with that hand?"

The smile on the Doctor's face sent chills down his spine.

"Allow me to show you."

She walked over to the second part of the lab, Gabriel in tow, and made her way happily down the two steps and over to the six cages on the wall. He inspected the large machine in the middle of the room before hearing her coo softly the words *come here, Lovely.*

Moira held in her left hand a rabbit that she set down on the table underneath the mysterious apparatus.

"I'm unable to touch anything with my hand without harming it, at the moment. You don't have to worry about that, however, I've already taken away all harmful aspects of this project," she informed him, and shortly after, muttered to herself, "I need to do something to get that under control."

She brushed her hair in behind her ears and spoke a single word: "Watch."

Moira picked a scalpel out from the drawer underneath the desk and made a deep incision in the palm of her left hand. The sight caused Gabriel to wince, but the redhead was as unaffected as ever. Shortly after, she place a firm grip on the rabbit's neck and bit her lip as it began to gasp for hair and twist in pain. He has killed dozens, and yet seeing the animal's body contort in agony made his skin rise. The blackness of her nails lit up and became a vibrant purple, and he watched in astonishment as the wound that was gushing blood seconds before miraculously closed and left nothing to prove its existence. She released her grip from the now-lifeless mound of fur and held up her healthy hand for him to see.

Gabe had absolutely no words.

"*This* is the kind of power we can possess if not held back by morality," the Doctor lectured. "Just think of what this kind of technology could do for our soldiers out on the field. *This* is something Doctor Ziegler isn't willing to ponder, and it's inevitably affecting her team in a negative way, regardless of how she may try to dispute it."

Her words buzzed through his head and wouldn't leave. He respected Doctor Ziegler in ways he couldn't convey in words, and yet...

In a twisted, psychotic way, Moira was *right.*

From what he just witnessed, whatever this Nanobiotics 2.0 (that name was fitting, Gabriel decided) was, it surpassed the capabilities of Angela's caduceus and the Captain's bullets. All it took was a little bit of crossing the line, and the world could be blessed with something greater than its greatest.

Gabe glanced over to the lifeless rabbit laying on the stark-white table.

"You're pretty fucking brilliant," he said, and presented her with a small, toothless, lopsided grin. "A little psychotic, but brilliant."

"I'm aware of all your accusations," she smiled back. "They're appreciated anyways."

Moira ran her fingers over her decrepit hand once more.

"Now, why did you stop by?" It was just then that he remembered why he came.
"Shit, that's right! Uh, about the meeting you missed. A lot of important stuff was discussed, and Morrison wanted me to give you a message."

"Is that so?"
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Appearance.

Chapter Notes

Ok, so I know I said weekly, but I have a bunch of ideas that are just going to rot in my brain if I don't do something with them. I'm pretty sure no one is sad that I'm putting up new chapters at a quicker-than-expected pace, though. ;) I think I'm just a bit too passionate about these cinnamon rolls.

He watched as her colorful eyes ran up, down, and across his topless form, searching for any differences or imperfections. It was the way she looked at him, Gabriel concluded, that made him so uneasy. Moira wasn't performing a check-up on her patient; rather, she was analyzing the effects of the tests done to her lab rat. That was the sort of gaze she gazed, cold and unsympathetic. That truth always left a pit in his stomach. He couldn't fathom seeing his teammates as she did: nothing more than walking lumps of meat, perpetually ready at her command, whether they chose it or not. It didn't quite matter if the person were respectable or not; it made no difference to her. All and everyone were rats: scummy, worthless things that were beneath the Doctor.

This was the way she looked at him, and it was frightening.

She wouldn't (or perhaps couldn't) empathize with him. Moira would brush his pain and agony right off her shoulder, just as she did with the rabbit a few weeks ago. That's all he was to her, yeah? A rabbit. He wasn't above that pitiful, insignificant creature she so brutally murdered on that table.

Truly, a frightening thought.

Everything was already in motion, however. Gabriel couldn't back down now. There was already so much progress made. He had passed the point of no return too long ago.

"You're not experiencing any pain?" Moira questioned. Gabe shook his head. "Nope."

"Is there an extremely dull pain in either your temples, molars, hips, calves, or testicles?"

"Uh, excuse me?" She looked up from her clipboard and seared his retinas with her gaze, an unspoken I'm not fucking around in the crossfire. He cleared his throat before answering. "N-no, there's not."

"Thank you," she sounded as she wrote down what he assumed to be his answers on her papers. He wasn't sure why, but an employee asking him how his nuts were doing filled him with this unexplainable awkwardness, and no matter how many times Gabriel told himself that Moira was a doctor doing her job, the sensation didn't seem to want to leave for a while.
Once he relinquished himself from his thoughts, he found that his gaze traveled to her arm. Metal plates took up the locations where her protruding veins once were. Apparently with this, she was able to control the life-draining ability they now both possessed.

The woman messed up her own body so his would stay healthy.

That was...nice of her.

In a strange, screwy way.

He examined the long red, acrylic nails that hid what Gabe deemed her "claws" and compared the length with the short nails on her left hand. There were no fakes there, just the natural ones, painted to match the color of the plastic on her right hand. Such an unusual style would have looked strange on anyone but her. He questioned why she didn't want the left to mirror the right at some point, and she responded with something along the lines of "It would be too difficult to write with such long nails." He understood after that conversation.

"You appear to be stable, Reyes," Moira told him, peering up once more and flashing that infamous smirk. "And I've already started on your newest abilities. Everything is coming along well."

That cool fade ability, he thought. "How bad is that going to hurt?" The commander quirked an eyebrow.

"Well," her head tilted to the side, "because this procedure's never been done before, we'll just have to wait and see."

"Comforting." An exasperated sigh left his lips along with the participle. "Especially after how 'painless' the last procedure was, really comforting."

"It's for science, Commander."

On that note, she spun the chair behind her to face him and planted herself in the seat, crossing her long, thin legs. "Any questions?"

"Not so many questions as concerns," Gabriel said half-heartedly, earning a laugh from Moira.

"If that's all, then I believe we're done here." She reached for the cup of coffee in behind her, gripping it at the strip of cardboard wrapped around its white material and twirling it, resulting in a very unhappy Moira. "Out of coffee?" he smiled, throwing his shirt on over his head. The woman stood and set the cup back on the table. "Coffee is repulsive," she sneered, "I prefer tea."

"How the hell do you stay up for half as long as you do living off tea?"

"Practice." She removed her white coat and folded it over her arm. "And just so you're aware, I'm not an insomniac."

"You're close to one, though," he accused her. Moira shrugged. "We must all make sacrifices, Reyes."

His eyes darted to the side. "I guess," and as she walked over to the trash (located only a few feet away from him) to throw the empty cup away, he added, "I just don't think we should sacrifice our wellbeing to our jobs."

"If I recall correctly, Commander, you were willing to alter your genetic makeup so your body would be better suited for the circumstances your 'job' brought about without knowing the possible
negative consequences. As a matter of fact, I would not be here without you sacrificing your wellbeing to your job."

"God-fucking-damnit."

"She was too fucking right."

Blood rushed to Gabe's ears as he thought of something to say, even though there really wasn't much to be said. "Listen," he started, "the difference between you and me is my sacrifice didn't have me end up looking like a...a-a toothpick." The laugh that had erupted from her moments afterwards, hearty and condescending, yet so calm, danced upon the grooves of his cartilage and down his spinal column, causing the hair at the nape of his neck to stand and prickle at the sensation of that oddly melodic sound. "I am a bit androgynous, aren't I?"

"I never said that."

"Could it not implied from the title Toothpick?"

"I just meant you were skinny, nothing else!" She began laughing again. That seemed to be the only reaction he could get out of Moira: laughter. She was mocking him. She knew what he meant, she just wanted a reaction.

"Oh, whatever," he huffed. "To hell with you."

"Oh, don't be like that, Gabriel, I'm just poking fun." She leaned on the desk and crossed her arms, looking at the patterns the wires and tubes created above their heads. "You must admit, however: the sacrifice was worth it." He watched her content expression for a few seconds, tracing her sharp cheekbones with his gaze, before nonchalantly peering lower and studying the flowers on her formfitting shirt.

Wow, she really did look like a toothpick, didn't she?

Gabriel has been in and out of this lab for around two months, the hours spent with this woman uncountable, and not once has he truly noticed just how, well, toothpick-y she was. Her physical appearance never mattered much to him, and it still didn't really matter, he simply...

Well...

He's never seen a woman look quite like her.

A thin waist connected to (very) narrow hips, and narrow hips connected to her flat rear. Her boney arms led down to large hands and thin, spidery fingers, and he hated to admit, but she boasted just about the tiniest pair of breasts he'd ever laid eyes upon.

Truly, Moira O'Deorain was the weirdest-looking lady Gabe had ever met.

That wasn't a bad thing; it made her even more unique than she already was. An odd appearance suited her so well.

"Well, I'm going to head out," he explained. She glanced over to him, her calm smile lost and
replaced with her ever-present cold stare. "Let me know if anything feels off."

"Got it."

"I'll see you when the time comes, Commander." He nodded and headed out of the lab and up to the banquet hall in search of something to eat.

*I'll see you when the time comes.*

That was bit ominous; but then again, it was Moira, and as he had learned, one may only expect the unexpected from her.
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Incognito.

Chapter Notes

Guys, I have such a problem. I can't stop updating...

Gabriel walked alongside Jesse to the conference room, (somewhat) listening to his nonsense stories as they made their journey. God, as much as he liked to talk, nobody compared to how long the cowboy could go on for. He must love the sound of his own voice, he thought disdainfully, because there was no way in Hell McCree found his tales interesting.

No way in Hell.

The pair met with one of the many doors leading to their destination and stepped inside. As they approached the stop of the stairway, Jesse paused and gave an unusual smirk. "Well, I'll be damned. Look who decided to show up." Gabriel didn't need to "look" to know the identity of the person the man spoke of. Not only that, it wasn't hard to pick her out of the bustling crowd of oddities. She was the only woman with such a saturated scarlet hair color. She was the only woman able to tower over a decent majority of the men present. She was the only woman (the only woman he has ever seen ever) who boasted that pencil-like physique. "Why don't you go say 'howdy'? That's your buddy down there!" Jesse clapped Gabe on the shoulder; however, the man in question was less than pleased at the cowboy's teasing. "Do me a favor and bother someone else," he commanded. McCree laughed off his cold words and went to join Reinhardt near the back of the room.

Once he was alone on the balcony, Gabriel leaned on the guardrail and examined the crowd below him. It seemed as if everyone were present, yet Jack was too busy explaining (albeit rather angrily) something to Moira. The latter appeared to be more annoyed than usual as she snapped her replies at him. He was too far away to make out her facial expressions, but by the way she anxiously tapped a finger against her thigh, he was able to understand that her composure was beginning to crack. Jack seemingly eventually became fed up with whatever the woman was saying and walked away, leaving the Doctor to her lonesome.

Gabe, too focused on the ordeal, did not hear the door open beside him and did not hear the footsteps walking towards him until the last moment. He looked to his left and noticed Angela ready to tap his shoulder, lowering her arm as he acknowledged her presence. "Sorry, I didn't think you knew I was here," she said sheepishly. Gabriel smiled at her. "I really didn't know until about a few seconds ago."

"So I wasn't completely in the wrong, that's good to know," she giggled. "What were you thinking about?"

"No, Jack and Moira were just arguing. I was just kind of watching that transpire."
"Oh," the woman sounded, and mimicked his position on the railing. The two were silent for a moment, Angela's blue eyes scanning over her teammates as well as the personnel that made up the Blackwatch division, before murmuring quietly, "I don't trust her, Gabe." He glanced back to her. "Who, Moira?" The blonde nodded. Her once calm face contorted to something that mirrored concern, and that fact that she used Gabe instead of Gabriel or Reyes supported his speculation. "The way she conducts her research is so... unethical. She boasts about her technology and its improved abilities, and it is impressive, and she is very intelligent, but..." She trailed off and sighed. "It just worries me, how she finds her answers. And how far she's willing to go to get the results she wants." Gabriel understood the woman. He very much did. However, he was essentially glued to this morally grey redhead; she was the only being on planet Earth who knew what to do should something happen to him, and now that this supposed "Fading serum" was underway...

"Just keep an eye on her for me, okay?" Angela's signature smile returned.

"Anything for you, Doctor," Gabe replied. She lingered on the rail for a moment longer before heading down the stairs, himself following close behind.

He peered around the room, searching for Ana or the Strike Commander and failing to find either. "Chances are they're in the backroom," Angela sighed. "I'll drag them out." The blonde shook her head as she traveled to a silver door and disappeared within. "Here I am, and here he's not," he overheard Moira complain, "ironic."

"Usually it's the other way around," Gabriel called to her.

"Hence the irony," she returned. He strode over to her side. "What made you decide to show up?"

"I had to discuss a few things with Commander Morrison regarding my frequent absences from these meetings."

"What'd you say?" His stomach clenched, and he lowered his voice so only Moira would hear. "You didn't say anything about 'our little side project,' right?"

"The agreement was, we finalize"—she created metaphorical quotes with her long fingers—"'our project,' and then notify the others. That way, it won't be shut down by the Strike Commander or the Captain before I'm finished with you. That is what we decided on, no?"

"It is," he confirmed.

"Then if revealing such plans would only harm me, what makes you think I'd do just that?" Gabe sighed, defeated. "I don't know."

"Let's use our heads, Commander," Moira smirked.

"Right, right." He rubbed his eyes and offered the room a sweeping glance. Everything was still pandemonium, Jack and Amari (and now Angela as well) still nowhere to be found. "So what did you tell him, then?" Gabriel returned his gaze to the Doctor, who was now searching her much-too-long nails for imperfections.

"Essentially," she paused and looked to him, "I bullshit everything." He couldn't help but begin to laugh, half in part of her cussing and the other half in part of her blatantly lying to Morrison. "Hey, it got him off your back, right?" he murmured jubilantly to her.

"As was my intention today." She folded her arms behind her, something he saw her do often. It was a quirk of hers, he has since deduced.
Moira studied the room with an oddly fascinated stare. This was rare for her; she typically didn't gaze at other humans the way she did now. "It's incredible how diverse Overwatch is. I've never seen this many nationalities amalgamated in a single place before." Gabriel folded his arms and presented her with an inquisitive stare. "Speaking of which, where are you from? I never remember to ask." She returned her attention to him and arched a perfect brow. "Is it not obvious?" The man shrugged. Her smirk returned as she told him, "Ireland."

"Yeah? I thought that was it, I just wasn't sure."

"If the accent didn't give it away, surely the red hair or ghostly complexion would have."

"Listen, I wasn't sure." Moira snickered yet said no more. He rolled his eyes at her before once again glancing behind him for any sign of that bastard-of-a-man, losing himself in thought halfway through his search.

_She was from Ireland_, he thought, his own mind pronouncing the country's name the way she did. _Uhoirlund_. Damn, it was the most Irish-sounding word she'd ever let cross her thin lips.

"Morrison is here," Moira stated. Truth be told, once Gabriel landed back on Earth, Jack stood at the head of the circular table along with Ana and Angela. The room quieted as everyone noticed the trio's presence. "Nobody needs to be seated," Amari began. "Something urgent has arose. We need Commander Reyes here to discuss this matter. Everyone else, you are free to go, and we will explain the issue once a conclusion has been met." Murmurs of worry broke out among the crowd as everyone filed to the doorways. Gabe felt a small tap on his shoulder and faced Moira as she leaned in to whisper in his ear. "Come to me as soon as possible."

"Got it," he mumbled back, and with that, she joined the exiting crowd.

He jogged over to meet the small group standing near the table. Once the four were completely alone, he questioned, "What's going on?" Jack pulled up a page on the large tablet he held in his hands. "We found a man named Antonio, though we couldn't find a last name." He showed Gabriel a picture of a bulky Italian man with a silver chip located above the eye. "Based on the bits of information we've uncovered, we have reason to believe he plays a major part in whatever's going on in Venice. Now, Overwatch won't take action until we have a better picture of the story. That's where you come in, Gabe." The blonde crossed his arms. "On August 21st, there's this party being hosted at this fancy restaurant. This Antonio guy will be the host. I need Blackwatch to get some data for us. You think you could work with that?" Gabriel laughed a bit too condescendingly. "Jack, I posed as a zoologist once, this shouldn't be too hard. And I don't doubt my team's abilities, either." Morrison nodded. "I'll give you the details once we get it all into one document. In the meantime, I'll let you work everything out with your team."

"When exactly did you have to pretend to be a zoologist?" Angela asked out of the blue.

"That's a story for another day," he replied, and the woman shook her head. He began to walk towards the double set of staircases, and as he reached the base, Ana called, "Be sure to make it clear that Doctor O'Deorain _must_ attend."

"Yep," he acknowledged as he ascended.

Remembering Moira's orders, Gabriel made haste for the laboratory. What she wanted him for, he wasn't entirely sure. It was _always_ a mystery with this lady.

The doors slid open to reveal Moira sitting on the table in the middle of the room holding a large packet of papers and briefly glancing over each one. She looked up as she heard his approach. "That
was rather fast." The metal doors shut behind him. "How would you," Gabe paused for dramatic effect, "like to become a cocktail waitress for some snazzy restaurant in Venice?" The Doctor raised her eyebrows and took a moment to respond. "What?" He laughed and walked over to the table. "I'll explain in a minute."

"I recommend explaining yourself right now."

"How about you tell me why you needed me ASAP first?" She flashed him her signature smirk. "I finalized our serum. I was wondering whether you would like to apply it now or if you want to schedule a date."

"You finished it? It works and everything?" She nodded and stood, setting her stack of papers down. "It takes time, getting used to and being able to harness such an ability, but it isn't impossible. I've been practicing for about a week now, and I'd say my progress is commendable." Now fully interested in what she had to show him, Gabriel's mind abandoned his initial thoughts about the plans regarding Venice. "Show me how it works."

She stood completely straight and looked to the floor. In an instant, Moira disappeared in a light cloud of dark mist accompanied by a soft woosh. Not a moment later did she reappear a few feet from her initial location with the same factors from before tagging along. Gabe's mouth hung open. He was absolutely awestruck by her performance.

"Wow," he laughed. "Holy shit, that's incredible!" She performed a mock-bow and hid her arms behind her back. "You weigh much more than I do, and most of that weight is muscle mass, so you will not be able to fade as quickly I am able to. Other than that, you should have the ability to perform exactly as I demonstrated."

"I'm completely blown away right now," he smiled. "That's absolutely amazing."

"I know it is." She gestured to the door a little ways behind her. "Shall we?"

"Why not at this point?"

Gabe followed Moira to the back room, his heartbeat picking up. It was alright to be nervous, he decided. This procedure was alien to the world, he wasn't sure what to expect, and he doubted Redhead in front of him would shed any light on his predicament. The last time he asked questions like what's going to happen? and will it hurt?, she came up with a new way to say you'll see each time.

He sighed as he passed the threshold into the second room.

He better buckle the fuck up.
Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Eyes.

Chapter Notes

I appreciate all the positive feedback. Thanks everyone! :)

She wasn't in the lab.

Gabriel sighed, beyond frustrated and beyond nervous, and retraced his steps, running back up the stairs and through the various rooms of the base. Of course she disappears when he needs her the most.

Of course.

Everyone he came across was asked the same question: have you seen Moira? Their response (no, I haven't) was usually accompanied by either odd looks or comments on his eyes, neither of which he had time to offer a reply to.

He turned a corner and was met with Gerard stepping into an elevator. "Wait, wait!" Gabe called, and the French man held his hand against the doorframe, preventing it from closing. Once inside, Gerard commented, "You're in a hurry." The Commander pressed the number that would take him to the Dining Hall, and the doors shut as the elevator began to move upward. "Have you seen Moira anywhere?" he asked desperately, breathless from his lap around the entirety of the base. The fair man shook his head. "I haven't, Gabe."

"Ah, shit," Gabe breathed. The two rode in silence for a moment before Gerard asked, "Eh, were your eyes always green?"

"No, and they're not red, or blue, or grey, or whatever fucking color they decide to switch to. That's why I need to find Moira." Frenchie nodded slowly, and after that, wouldn't seem take his eyes off his hysterical friend. "That seems like a predicament."

"You're telling me."

"At the very least, this may put everyone's suspicions to rest." Gabriel furrowed his brow. "What?"

Gerard laughed. "Let's just say McCree and Cadette Oxton like to poke fun at you."

"What does that mean?" There was a light ding above their heads, and the doors opened. "I'll see you around, Gabe," Frenchie stepped out and waved.

"Hold on a minute!"
"Goodbye!"

"Oh, come on, you ass," he joked, and Gerard laughed as the doors shut once more. Gabe leaned against the back of the small box. **McCree and Oxton like to poke fun at you. What did that mean?** Did they think him and Moira were **friends with benefits**? Did they think the reason he frequented that lab was because they were **together**?

**Whatever,** he sighed. Let them think what they want; he had more pressing matters on his mind, he couldn't worry about **Jesse and his cohort,** of all people.

The door opened upon its arrival to Gabe's desired floor. Cool air engulfed him as he stepped out into the hallway, the large entrance leading to the Dining Hall straight ahead. He trekked over slowly, listening to the distant conversations being held. It was still early in the morning, the drowsy members of Overwatch and Blackwatch, half of which didn't bother to change out of their nightwear, trying to revive themselves with pancakes, waffles, and coffee. The enticing scents that wafted from the compound's cafeteria caused his stomach to clench with hunger. The room itself was noticeably warmer, most likely due to the baking taking place and collective body heat. If he closed his eyes, the setting would become so **calming.** He could almost forget they were practically at war.

Now wasn't the time to get sentimental, however.

Gabriel glanced around and (**thanks to all that is holy**) spotted Moira near the small island in the back corner of the room. **She has to get her tea,** he laughed to himself as he walked over to her. **It can't be coffee, it has to be tea.** Not much to his surprise, as he walked into her general vicinity, he found her lifting a kettle off the small electric stove built in between the island's cabinets and pouring steaming water into a mug. Next to her sat a plate of two pancakes, each adorned with syrup and slices of banana, and a glass a water.

"Hey, I need to ask you something," he sounded as he neared her. The woman didn't lift her head as she popped open a ceramic jar filled to the brim with multiple types of tea bags and fished out the kind she desired the most. "What is it, Gabriel?" She finally looked to him, and her face contorted into something akin to confusion. He laughed nervously. "That's 'it.'" Moira set the contents of her hand down and stepped closer to him. "Blink," she ordered.

He blinked.

"And again."

**And again.**

"When did you notice this?"

"About a half-an-hour ago."

"And are you experiencing vision loss or headaches?"

"Well, not now," he muttered.

"Then you should be fine." Gabe was at a loss. "You're saying this is normal?" She nodded and set the small, mesh container of crushed tea leaves into her mug, letting the string hang over the side as she watched the bag sink to the bottom. "This was an unlikely side effect, but a possible one nonetheless. It should cause no problems."

"Will it go away?"
"Not unless I develop a cure for it. I'm unable to do that as of now, though. I'm focusing on your progress as well as Blackwatch's upcoming trip to Italy."

"So basically, my eyes are going to be crazy for the rest of my life?"

"Unless I intervene, yes." Gabriel sighed, blowing the steam rising from the cup of tea out of existence for a whole second. *At least it was harmless.*

Moira set her mug alongside the cakes on her plate and picked up the latter as well as her cup of water, muttering *excuse me* as she walked past him. He followed her with his gaze. "Where you going?"

"Back downstairs," she replied, not looking back.

"Why don't you stay?" His offer made her pause and turn to face him. "What for?"

He shrugged. "I'm staying. We could talk."

"About what?"

"About anything."

"I have a lot of work that needs to get done, Commander." He paused, thinking over his answer. "You ever hear of a break?"

"Traveling up here and spending time putting together a breakfast was my break." She smirked in response to his confused frown. "I'll see you around. Come to me if you need anything." With that, she hurried her ass out of the cafeteria and presumably into the elevator. Gabriel was almost positive that wasn't healthy, but he didn't feel like arguing with her. The last thing he needed was to get on the-person-whom-he-owed-his-wellbeing-to's bad side.

He quickly put a meal together and walked over to join Jack and Angela. Sitting across from the two, he muttered a joyful *hi* and dipped a piece of toast in the yolk of an egg. "What happened to your eyes?" Jack questioned, and the two blondes adorned their faces with concerned looks.

"Moira," Gabe put simply, chomping down on the food item he held in his hand.

"What does that mean?" Angela chimed in. "Is that why you were always missing?"

"You better start talking," Morrison threatened. The air was no longer tranquil, and the man felt anger stir in the pit of his stomach. "I had a few things going on, as you know, and she took those things and, essentially, improved upon them."

"By screwing with your eyes?" the Strike Commander pondered.

"No, that was a side effect."

"Then what did she do?" asked Angela.

"You'll see."

"Did you consent to this?"

"Yeah, we had an agreement."

"An agreement? You were planning something behind our backs?" Jack questioned angrily.
"Listen," Gabriel snapped in a stern voice, "what I do with my team is my business."

"I'm the Strike Commander, it's my business too. And I'm not allowing any more of this transpire."

"Everything is already complete. We kept this on the down-low because I knew this is how it would be met." Morrison's brow furrowed as he paused. "Can I trust you, Gabe?" The Black Ops Commander glanced at Angela, who had a look of genuine disappoint in her bright blue eyes, and then back at the man ahead of him. "You can trust me." Jack grabbed his dirtied dishes and stood, looking down at his rival-of-the-day. "God, I hope so." He walked away, not once glancing back. A moment later, Angela mimicked his actions. "Please be safe," she murmured to him. "I care for your wellbeing just as much as anyone else's." She left, rendering Gabriel completely alone.
Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

The Plan.

Chapter Notes

I'm trying to make everything as canon and everyone as in-character as I possibly can ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Alright everyone, I've just received news that we'll be heading to Italy in exactly two weeks. That being said, I've also come up with our plan of attack." Gabriel addressed his team. It's been a while since he's seen everyone in one room. Interns and some pilots and secretaries stood, while the rest sat at the grey rectangular table along with the personnel sent into action.

"First of all," he started, "we got ourselves a hotel not too far from the restaurant. We'll be staying there for three days. In those three days, Genji, Gerard, and I will be collecting all the data we could get on Talon's activity. Jesse and Moira," he glanced at each of them, "you guys were given cover jobs. Jesse, you're a waiter, and Moira, you're going to be their new bartender."

"I'm not licensed to sell alcohol," Moira pointed out.

"Yes you are," Gabe countered. Her curt nod told him she understood. "Alright," he continued, looking back to the rest of his audience, "the night of the party: while those two keep watch of the main thing, the rest of us are going to stay in the shadows."

"What we do best," McCree chimed in.

"Hell yeah," he agreed. "Anyway, Gerard will do what he does best: spy on the enemy. He'll set up cameras with the help of Genji and me. Genji, just do what he says. He's pretty damn good at this stuff, if I do say so myself."

"Yes, Commander," the cyborg said along with a quiet snicker from Gerard.

"The feed will go back to the Blackwatch base in Rome. That's where all of our data so far has been going." Gabriel paused to glance at his notes. "Now, the evening the five of us deport, I'm also going to be sending a few interns to Rome to help at the facility. It's pandemonium over there, they could use the extra help. And don't worry if you have family here or something, it won't be permanent, just until the amount of information and contraband we have coming in over there dies down." Quiet mumbling broke out for a few seconds before disappearing as fast as they came. "Right," he muttered to himself. "After we finish in Venice, we're going to be heading to Rome as well, and we'll continue our investigation from there. Unless necessary, Overwatch will no longer be involved. Commander Morrison and I decided that it'd be easier to hand the entire thing over to me." After a few nods and murmurs, Gabe asked the question, "Is there anything anyone would like to add?" There were no responses save for a single thumbs-up presented to him by Gerard. The Commander
returned his gesture with a smile and sounded, "Dismissed."

The room sprang to life as he stood and stretched, tightly shutting his eyes, anticipation for the events to come filling him with energy. He locked his fingers above his head and rested his hands atop his scalp, sighing as he reopened his eyes and subconsciously decided to watch Gerard speak happily with Amelie (who appeared tired and lackadaisical) for no reason other than he needed something to stare at while he thought.

Gabe was glad he got to work alongside his friend once more. The two have been through a lot, and Gerard was a kind and respectable man. He was incredible at what he did and gave it his all when Blackwatch needed assistance. No one could ask for a better buddy.

"Put your arms down, Reyes. Nobody wants to see your hairy armpits." Moira scolded, breaking Gabriel from his thoughts. He looked over at the Doctor and smirked, heeding her command and dropping his arms to his sides. "I'm a guy, that's normal."

"It's disturbing when you stand at the head of a room full of people and decide to put it on display. At least wear a shirt that isn't completely lacking sleeves if you're going to do that." She finished rearranging her stack of papers and left without another word. He followed her with his gaze before she was completely gone from Blackwatch's Conference room.

"Could you imagine what she think's of us?" McCree's voice sounded next to him, and Gabe glanced ahead to find the man in question standing only a few feet away. Processing what Jesse had said, he laughed at the thought. "It isn't anything good." He made hand gestures as he spoke. "Look at these fucking Neanderthals! Trying to run an organization! Ugh." The Southern man threw his head back and laughed. He laughed until he began gasping for air and his vision became obscured by tears. The sight made the Commander chuckle. There were rare times where this guy was tolerable and even fun to be around. Rare, rare times. "That's enough out of you," he laughed as he clapped McCree on the shoulder.

Gabriel waved his goodbyes to the Cowboy and headed for the barracks. He was the one in charge of all Blackwatch interns, and so he was the one responsible for choosing the dudes and dudettes that were heading to Rome and the paperwork that came with sending them off. Such a tedious process, he has discovered in the past, went a whole lot faster when in the calm, quiet solitude of his own dorm.

Whistling a nonsense tune to himself, he headed along a path of blissful silence and cool air, enjoying the moment presented to him.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter is shorter because I just wanted it to focus on giving information that'll set the stage for a good portion of the story, much like how the first chapter did the same for the first few (it was basically them just saying hi, that was literally the entire first chapter). This is also why I wanted to get it out quicker, so I have more time to write chapters that move their story along and "get the ship sailing." :) (I suck -_-)
Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Italy.

Chapter Notes

I will go down with this ship.

Gabriel watched as interns and anyone in between began to haul crates of expensive technology into the large cargo ship near the back of the hangar. The plan was for the five of them to arrive in Italy a few days before the cargo ship as to not raise suspicion; however, the team decided it was best to begin packing now to lessen their chances for error. The way the horde of people worked, he noted, looked like a machine; a single unit that completed a task perfectly without ever stopping or slowing down. A few brought mounds of boxes in on trolleys, to which another group responded to immediately, hauling said boxes into the ship and allowing yet another crowd of people to perform their designated task. It was almost fascinating to watch.

"Excuse me," a mechanical voice said, followed by a tap on Gabriel's shoulder. He flipped around and came face-to-face with Genji. "I haven't seen Moira at all this morning; are you sure she's preparing?" He furrowed his brow at the cyborg's words. Has she forgotten? He assumed because she was Moira, a woman who never slept, never forgot, and never stopped working, he wouldn't have to bang on the door like he did with Jesse or remind her their flight was today like he did with Jesse. "I'll see what's going on," he told him, "thanks for the heads-up."

"Of course, Boss."

Thankfully, the hangar was on the ground floor, along with the lab and workshop. However, despite not having to trek down flights of stairs to reach elevators that led to flights of stairs, the laboratory was the farthest room from the hangar. There was still no escaping the Jog to Moira's Room.

Once Gabe's destination had been reached, he hit his knuckles against the great metal doors a few times over. "Hey Moira?" he called, and when there was no response, he called again, this time at a much higher volume. "Moira, you there?"

Silence.

He punched in the random string of numbers he now knew so well and entered, looking around as the doors closed behind him. She wasn't anywhere to be seen. "Moira?" he sounded for the last time. As the hissing from the doors receded and the room quieted, he overheard an odd sound coming from the additional wing of the lab. Curiously, Gabriel stepped closer to the back of the room, noticing that the door that led to the second half was left open, the opening too narrow for him to see from afar. Another thing he realized as he neared the door (ironically) was that the strange sound he heard was...snoring? Was-
Was that Moira?

No...

No, Moira was too good for snoring.

Lo and behold, as he pushed open the door, lying on the small wrap-around couch in the corner of the room, clad in a tank-top and black leggings, sleeping peacefully on her side, was Doctor Moira O'Deorain. She was, quite frankly, the loudest snorer Gabriel has ever heard in his forty-eight years of existence.

He strode over to her resting place, keeping his eyes off her exposed cleavage out of respect, and gently shook her shoulder. "Moira, you got to get up." Her snoring ceased shortly after, and she swatted his hand away with a displeased whine. "We're leaving for the airport at around 17:00. You need to get your stuff ready."

"I already have," she explained drowsily, keeping her eyes shut. "My luggage is in the trunk of the car."

"Of course it is," he sighed. "Why did I think otherwise?"

"Why did you think otherwise?" She rubbed the corners of her eyes. "I'm not going to be able to fall back to sleep now." She sat up, pulling her long legs close to her chest, and finally opened her eyes, gazing up at him with an annoyed stare. "Sorry," Gabe admitted sheepishly. "I had to make sure." She exhaled through her nose and adjusted her shirt. "I understand." The woman stood and walked past him, yawning into her hand as she did so. "I apologize for the way I look. You shouldn't have to see me like this."

"Oh, I don't care," he told her. "We all wear pajamas, you're not the only one."

"I feel as if my boss shouldn't have to witness me in nightwear."

"Moira, I really don't give a shit. You're fine." She glanced over her shoulder before walking into the main section of the laboratory. "As long as you don't mind," she called.

As Gabriel caught up with her, he noticed her picking up a neatly folded outfit from the edge of the elongated desk. He mustn't have realized it was there. Moira turned to look at him and made a gesture with her finger. "I need to change." He stepped out of the doorway and granted her access, herself pulling the door shut as she crossed the threshold.

"I've gotten a lot better at that fade thing since the last time you saw," he boasted to her in an attempt to start conversation.

"I would hope so," she replied, her voice slightly muffled by the door. "That was horrific."

"Listen, I was just starting out, cut me some slack here."

"I'll think about it." There was that sense of humor. He knew it was in there somewhere, he just had to find it.

"Again, I apologize for the way your body reacted to the serum. I didn't expect it to turn out the way
it did."

"No worries, Doctor, I could do the same things you could, just a bit slower."

"I'm glad you have such a positive outlook on things."

"I try my best."

She eventually stepped out in her new attire, the clothing she wore previously now completely missing. Where she put it, Gabriel wasn't sure, but he didn't care enough to ponder on it.

"How long will we be staying in Rome?" Moira questioned as she walked towards the entrance to the lab, throwing on a pair of sandals located beneath the desk in the process.

"It depends on the way things turn out," he replied as he walked alongside her.

They traversed the ground floor in silence, Gabe abruptly pausing as they neared the hallway that lead to the hangar. Moira's stride also came to halt. "What is it?"

"Where're you heading to?"

"I was going to finish getting ready." He assumed that meant she was walking to her bedroom. "After you're done, come down to the hangar. We could use the extra help."

"Of course, Commander," she smiled, and with that, turned on the heel of her foot and continued down her path.

"Eat something while you're at it," he added as an afterthought, "we're going to be busy for a while." She nodded and yawned. "Alright." He watched the back of her head for a few seconds longer before making his way to the hangar.

Upon his arrival, Gabriel noticed Genji and McCree conversing near the entrance. The two lifted their heads as they recognized his presence. "You find her, Boss?" Jesse questioned. He nodded. "She already has all her stuff in the car."

"Figured that was it. 'Moira' and 'slacking off' don't go hand-in-hand."

"Is she coming to assist us?" Genji looked up at Gabe as he spoke.

"Yeah. I told her to eat before she gets here, though. Lord knows she doesn't need to lose anymore weight." The Asian man nodded at the Commander's explanation.

The next hour or so was spent picking boxes up and putting boxes down. Somewhere in that timespan, he noticed Moira had entered the mix, more often than naught muttering angrily to herself in that second language a small portion of her country spoke. Irish Gaelic, right? Jesse had commented at one point that the way the words were pronounced made it sound as if she were trying to "hack up a loogie." It earned a laugh from Gabriel, (un)ironically.

Soon enough, it came time for the five to hurry to the airport. Gabe adjusted the bag slung over his shoulder and mad haste for the stairs that lead to the lobby. They were on their way to Italy for classified, serious matters; however, he couldn't help but imagine (just for a few seconds) that this was something a bit more normal. Perhaps he was taking a trip to Venice with his friends for no other reason then to enjoy himself. Perhaps there wasn't suspicious activity going on, and perhaps he didn't have to disguise his teammates as a waiter and bartender. Perhaps they were attending that party for fun. Perhaps they didn't run the risk of getting shot and killed there.
He returns to reality, however, and none of those innocent fantasies are true.

_He wouldn't want it any other way, though._

Blackwatch did whatever it took to make sure justice was done. Every member (including himself) would heroically give up their life for the people around them. _Except for Moira, maybe,_ he thought, snickering to himself. Moira may not carry with her the chivalrous tale the rest did.

Gabriel eventually made it to the stairs and examined the four awaiting his arrival in the lobby as he descended. Each person carried some form of luggage around their shoulders. Jesse was the first to notice his boss trekking over to the join the group. "About time you showed up."

"Come on, how long were you waiting?" Gabe asked exasperatedly.

"An entire, treacherous five minutes," Gerard chimed in sarcastically.

"Nah, I'd say it was about an hour," McCree joked. Lacroix playfully backhanded his shoulder. "Oh, quiet."

"I thought we were men, not boys," Moira's low voice sounded above everyone's heads. Gabriel rolled his eyes at the entire situation and began walking towards the turnstiles. "Come on, I'm starving over here."

The car was located at the beginning of the facility's parking lot. There was an unspoken rule (_apparently_) that the Commander was to drive.

"Ladies first." McCree gestured to the passenger seat.

"I go first regardless," Moira smirked.

"Well, there's my daily dose of narcissism," he huffed in response, looking genuinely offended. The Doctor laughed. "I'm joking, Cowboy."

"You better be." The tall woman stepped inside, Jesse and Genji mimicking her actions as Gerard and Gabriel went around to the other side of the vehicle. "Guess I'll drive?" Gabe suggested.

"You're the commander, you have to drive," said Gerard, stepping into the vehicle. More eye-rolling ensued shortly thereafter.

The drive to the airport was a rather quiet one for reasons he was unsure of. Normally, Jesse would be talking up a storm, followed by Genji's pleas for silence and Gerard's quips if he were present. It wasn't as if missions like these were new; why become so apprehensive all of a sudden? He deduced the reasoning was that everyone was utterly exhausted from the amount of work that required completion this morning. Since then, not one member of their small group has had time for a break. The entire Secret Ops Division ran around like headless chickens, checking and double-checking to make sure everything was in perfect order. Gabriel himself was feeling the effects of the pandemonium, and the hunger he was experiencing didn't help his situation. "Could we all agree that the moment we get a chance, we're going to find a place to eat?" he asked the team. The question was met with a collective _yes_ and an _oh, hell yeah_ from Jesse.

_and so, once they passed security, the hunt began._

The airport itself was _so loud_ and _so crowded_. Gabe could barely hear himself _think_. He was a taller man, and thusly, being able to read the various signs and logos didn't prove to be too difficult. The food offered at the various small eateries wasn't extravagant: pizza, burgers, wings, all items akin to
takeout food. Eventually, he spotted a shop that boasted *hoagies and subs* on a white sign. What really caught his attention, however, was that glass walls encased the tables and counters and not the usual black ropes he's seen so far. "You guys up for hoagies?" he yelled over the *thousands* of others speaking.

"It has walls," Moira pointed out. "It's perfect."

"I agree with that," Gerard seconded.

The group scooted, shoved, and *excuse me'd* their way to the small shop. As Genji opened the door, Gabriel was hit with a gust of cool air, and only when he stepped inside did he realize how *hot* the airport was. His arms became covered in gooseflesh as he moved out of the doorway. The sounds from outside weren't completely silenced, but it was the quietest his surroundings were going to get until the next hour passed.

Jesse, Moira, and Gerard relocated themselves to the counter to order, and Genji sat at a booth, setting his duffel bag beside him, awaiting the rest of the bunch. He received a few glances but didn't seem to notice, and if he did, he couldn't care less. Gabe sighed, indifferent to his friend's odd situation, and headed towards the counter.

"Thank you," said Moira as she left with her food, consequently giving up her spot in line to him.

"How may I help you, Sir?" the omnic working the counter had asked. He explained his order (*just ham and cheese, nothing else*) and watched as the sentient machine carefully picked up and placed each deli product, bringing his request to life. Nonchalantly leaning on the counter, Gabriel glanced back and saw the Infamous Trio in one booth and Moira at a table *far away* from said booth. The sight made him smile. *That's Moira for you,* he thought.

He received his food and paid, then decided to share his company with the person who *adored everyone and made everyone's day a whole lot better just by being there.* "Not sitting with the rest of the group?" Gabe interrogated O'Deorain. The woman raised an eyebrow. "Are you wondering why?"

He chuckled. "Yeah, I guess that was a bad question."

"It was a horrible question." Her disgust dripped from her lips as he unwrapped his hoagie from its confines. "Once you get to know him, Jesse isn't so bad."

"You mean to say, once you've learned how to *tolerate* him, he isn't so bad."

"I guess I do mean that, yeah."

The two ate in silence for a while, Moira glancing out the window every now and again. Meanwhile, he racked his brain trying to come up with an interesting topic to discuss with her.

"So, you came straight from Ireland to here?" he finally asked, not entirely sure where he was going with it.

"I have," she answered plainly.

"Did any family come with you? Because that's a long way away if they didn't." She shook her head. "I don't have any family alive." Gabriel felt the blood rush to his ears. "Shit, I'm sorry. I wasn't thinking."

"It's fine, Reyes. I didn't care for any of them." He decided not to ask her what that meant.
"Have you any family?" Moira questioned him, catching him off guard.

"Nah, no one's around anymore. No friends, no girlfriend, just the idiots in behind us."

"How unfortunate."

He laughed. "Yeah. And what about you? Any boyfriend, girlfriend...?" He had a sinking feeling he already knew the answer.

"I've never been in a relationship," she told him. Gabe's eyes widened.

He wasn't expecting that.

"Really? Never?"

"I never have."

"So you've never looked at someone and thought 'wow, I want to kiss that'?" She had a sheepish grin on her face. "Perhaps I can't say that."

"Just never acted upon it?"

"Well," Moira paused, "a long, long time ago, I focused on relationships and dating and things of the sort. I would develop feelings, but the men I developed feelings for never reciprocated. As time went on, I started to focus more on my work and less on such stupid antics. Soon, it became something of the past."

"Yeah?"

She presented him with smirk. "You seemed surprised at first, Gabriel."

"Well, I don't know, I never heard that before."

"I suppose there is great difficulty in finding a virgin these days. I guess I shouldn't fault you for reacting the way you did." He rolled his eyes. "Whatever, hurry up and eat."

"I could say the same to you, Commander."

"Yeah, yeah," he joked.

Gabriel saw her raise her eyebrows out of his peripheral as he watched the hoards of people through the glass. Some of them were heading to Venice, he thought.

Some of them were heading to Venice.
Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

The Hotel.

Chapter Notes

Don't worry, everyone, just a couple more chapters and our buddy Gabe is gonna start thinking "wow, look at this pale twizzler here." I just need a few things to happen before we get to that point. ;)

"There are two beds, correct? I would hate to have to force my boss to sleep on the couch," said Moira as she walked into their new room.

"Why am I the one that would have to sleep on the couch?" Gabriel paused at the doorway.

"Because the taller one always gets the bed."

"Oh right, right, yeah, almost forgot about that nonexistent rule." Moira cast a smirk from over her shoulder and opened the door that separated the bedroom and bathroom from the kitchen and what could loosely be called a living room. "You're in luck, there are two beds."

"Glad they didn't mess that up."

The plan was that three stay in one room and two in another. The Blackwatch team decided to go with the seating arrangements they had chosen in the hoagie shop earlier that day, sticking him with Moira once more. Gabe didn't mind, however. He found himself to have grown the smallest bit fond of her company in the previous months. She certainly wasn't his friend, or even an acquaintance for that matter, but she was calm, and her dry sense of humor was enjoyable; all in all, she was very tolerable, and Gabriel needed to associate with someone tolerable every now and then less he lose his mind completely.

He gave his surroundings a onceover before trekking to the bedroom. It was simple: two beds, a nightstand, upon which stood a small lamp, and to the left, a bathroom. Moira had claimed the twin closest to the bathroom and had removed its pillows and stretched a blanket over its expanse. She glanced in his direction before returning to her task of renovating the bed, pulling pillows from her multiple bags of luggage and meticulously placing them upon the mattress. "I find the beds in hotels to be uncomfortable," she explained lamely. He nodded and stepped over to his portion of the room, placing himself on the end of the thin bed and crossing his legs. "You're something, you know that, right?" Gabe watched her fold another blanket atop the first. "I'm aware," she confirmed.

He studied her as she worked, smoothing the wrinkles in the covers with a large hand and making sure every pillow was where she wanted it to be. How she worked so assiduously reminded him of the way she went about her tasks in the lab; off in her own little world, she became focused and precise, performing each task carefully yet quickly, making sure everything was absolutely perfect.
before allowing herself to relax. He often wondered what went on in that strange mind of hers, what gave her the ability to process such perplexing information at such an accelerated rate. She was so much more than just smart, that couldn't have been the answer. Perhaps the answer was that she's brilliant, or even better yet, possessed some form of hyper-intelligence.

Or maybe hyper-intelligence and insanity balanced on a pencil's edge. Perhaps that was his answer.

Whatever it was, Gabriel knew one thing: Moira O'Deorain was an enigma wrapped in a riddle; a puzzle that couldn't be solved; a code that couldn't be cracked. She wasn't something that was meant to be understood, and so everyone and everything around her was forced to live in ignorance, clueless to the odd inner-workings of that incredible brain.

She finished redesigning her mattress and looked to him expectantly. "Do you need to use the restroom for anything? I'm in need of a shower."

He shook his head. "Nah, go on. I'm going to head downstairs and what kind of food they have, anyways."

"We ate hardly an hour ago."

"I'm just going to look. Maybe I could bring something up for later." She had a look on her face that screamed really? He got up off his ass and cracked his knuckles. "Do you want anything specific? If they have it, I'll get it for you."

"I'm fine, thank you," she responded, and headed into the bathroom, a small pile of clothes draped across her forearm.

After her departure into the shower, he made his way from Room 314 down to the hotel's cafeteria. It wasn't packed, but a substantial amount of residents filled up the tables and buffet line. As he walked closer, he noticed that among these residents (of course) was none other then Jesse McCree, sitting at a table and stuffing his face with as much food as he could fit, a few containers residing near his plate.

Gabe had a feeling he knew what happened.

He traveled over to his Southern friend and asked the question, "They sent you down to get food?" Jesse swallowed, looked up at him, and replied with, "Said I was talking too much, and they needed a little peace and quiet."

"I figured that was it."

"What about Moira? What happened to her?"

"Showering. How's the food?"

"Mighty fine, Boss. Go get some, we'll sit and have a chat then."

Gabriel followed the man's orders, stepping in line and fixing himself something to eat, internally commenting on how amazing everything smelled. Truthfully, he wasn't starving like Jesse seemed to be, but the scent alone was delectable enough to help him work up a small appetite.

Along his way, with each portion he put on his plate, he made an effort to pick out types of food he thought Moira would enjoy and placed some into a container. She couldn't not eat for the rest of the night, he thought. He was going to make sure she did, regardless of how annoyed she might become. That toothpick isn't losing anymore weight.
The silverware was located at the very end of the line. He picked up a couple of forks and knives, keeping O'Deorain in mind.

"Wow," sung a female voice, and he flipped around to notice a short woman looking up at him.

She looked hammered. She smelled hammered.

"I've got to say, Guy, you've got some muscular thighs. And, wow, like, a really tight..." she trailed off and began laughing. Gabe didn't need her to finish to understand what she was trying to get across. "You're high," was all he said. The brunette nodded as her laugh died down. "I'm sorry, I just had to. You're super good-looking."

"Thanks..."

There wasn't a fiber of his being that didn't want to run away and hide.

"Did you come here with anyone?"

"Uh, yeah, my..." Think, God damnit. "my, uh, boyfriend. He's waiting for me over there."

"Well, tell him I said he's a very lucky man."

"I will."

The woman strode over to a hallway, waving her goodbyes as she left, and disappeared into a newly-opened elevator.

Gabriel practically sprinted back to Jesse, looking over his shoulder once or twice to make sure that woman wasn't following. Only when he sat down did he realize McCree was casting him strange looks. "You alright there? We're gone for a while."

"Jesus Christ," he sighed. "There was this lady who was baked out of her mind complimenting my ass, and the only way I got her to leave was by telling her you were my boyfriend."

The laughing fit Jesse broke into was unlike anything Gabe has ever witnessed.

Smirking, he added, "She also told me to tell you that you're 'a very lucky man.'"

"Stop!" the Cowboy inhaled, trying desperately to catch his breath in between laughs.

Eventually, his laughter subsided, becoming nothing more than a few giggles.

"Speaking of relationships, Boss," McCree said, clearing his throat, "I got a genuine question: where do you and Moira stand?"

"We aren't together," he responded. "We're not even friends, really."

"You know, sitting with her at that place in the airport and being stoked about her being your roommate tells me otherwise."

"The only reason I did any of that was because I wouldn't have to sit there and listen to the three of you act like assholes to each other."

"We're just horsing around."

"Still," and as an afterthought, Gabriel added, "and why do you care who I'm dating?"
"Because then I'd win the bet."

"What bet?"

"Gabriel!" Gerard's voice rang in his ears, and he glanced to his right to see the French man jogging towards him.

"What happened?" he questioned. The man held his head low as to not be forced to speak as loudly. "We've just received news from Commander Morrison: the facility in Oslo has been attacked. The entire building is in shambles with a total of thirteen casualties in counting; five are dead, the rest are wounded." Lacroix's voice, although quiet, was filled with haste and worry. Gabe, on the other hand, could hardly swallow. *The building was destroyed.*

*The building was destroyed, and people have died.*

*The building was destroyed, and people have died for no reason.*
Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Flesh.

Chapter Notes

I decided against having Chapter 9 take place on the night of the party, mainly because I couldn't really think of any way writing about it would progress the plot forward.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

They just got out of the car. They just finished laughing about how Jesse was let go. They were just talking about the information on Antonio that was discovered. He just finished telling him how exciting it was to be working together again.

And now Lacroix was being rushed away on a gurney, Angela yelling German to the nurses accompanying her.

He didn't move. Gabriel couldn't make himself move. His body had decided to enter a state of catatonia, forcing him to watch as one of the only friends in his life was rushed to a medical bay within one of the aircrafts before him.

The heat from the destroyed facility, the searing pain from the burn covering the expanse of his forearm, the smell of fiery flesh: all became nonexistent. He was hardly capable of registering the screams from the people around him. The image of that man's skin dripping from his chin and sliding off his hands in sheets was stuck on perpetual repeat in his mind.

Over and over again, it played. Over and over and over again.

"Reyes!" McCree's voice seemed to hit Gabe's ears and bounce off the cartilage, the man's voice becoming lost on him. A pair of hands gripped his shoulders, and he was shook violently; only then did he return to Earth. "Reyes, he'll be fine! Mercy's got him! Come on, we have to get to the ship so they could put this damn fire out!" Blinking a few times, he nodded and followed Jesse as he ran towards the aircrafts.

The Southern man stopped and pointed ahead of him. "Anyone that's seriously injured goes to that one." He gently shoved Gabriel forward. "Go get your arm patched up."

"My arm isn't-" He glanced down and realized that his arm was, indeed, that bad. It resembled Gerard's face and hands: charred skin was hanging off muscle while blood congealed in the orifices. His pause seemed to hint to McCree that his commander had realized how serious the situation was. "I'll see you, Boss."

"If this is where the seriously injured go, why wasn't Gerard taken here?" Gabriel questioned.
"Because there's serious cases, then there's Gerard's case:" Jesse called over his shoulder, making his way towards another ship, "a new level of bad. Now get in the ship!"

He watched his teammate disappear into the aircraft adjacent to the ship he was assigned to, the residents of the base swarming around him as he stood completely still. A young man brushed past his boiled arm with a sorry, Commander, and that was the moment the pain resurfaced. A sting so intense it made his stomach churn shot through his arm and made it to the base of his neck, reminding him of where he needed to be. Cursing at himself for staring into space yet again, Gabe gripped his bicep to alleviate some of the pain and jogged towards the ship's opening.

The scent of burning flesh hit him upon entry. In the relatively small confines of the ship, the smell was more potent than it was outside, making it impossible for him to block it out as he did before entering the aircraft. He mimicked the actions of those around him and hid his nose within his hoodie, although it didn't help his predicament very much. He gagged as he traveled to a bench stationed away from the crowd. Breath through your mouth, Gabriel told himself. Breath through your mouth and don't think about it.

He watched as nurses went from patient to patient, sticking arms with needles and muttering she'll be here soon. She's very busy. He assumed they were speaking of either Moira or Mercy; both shes were equally as popular.

The way the medical staff went about their job, completely unperturbed by the horrific scent of their comrades' burning flesh, amazed him. It filled him with as sense of pride, as a matter of fact, seeing as how each and every individual, young or old, was willing to put the welfare of their teammates before their own discomfort.

Only the best.

"I hand you the tools necessary to keep yourself from injury, and yet..." Moira came into view. She knelt beside his arm and muttered a few words in her second tongue as he studied her. The woman was fully suited up, Gabriel noted, right down to her dark beret. A clean white mask covered her nose and mouth, preventing her breath from hitting his wrist as she examined the wound. "How did you sustain this?" she interrogated.

"I had to save Gerard," he responded quietly, some of the initial shock and disbelief from witnessing that burning man returning. She glanced up at his eyes, holding his gaze for a few moments before returning her attention to his forearm. "I see," was all she said. Her lack of a pretentious response and the stare he received told him she heard something in his voice, saw something in his stare. This Irishwoman was so fucking far from stupid; his emotions were, almost without a doubt, not lost on her.

Moira gently gripped his elbow with fingers tainted violet and hovered her remaining hand over the burn. As the golden liquid came into contact with his body, a familiar dark mist rose from his skin with a dull hiss. "Don't worry," the Doctor said quickly, "this is expected."

He cleared his throat before responding with, "If you say so."

Gabe watched as her palm repaired his damaged arm, taking note of how the skin on her fingers dipped inward between her joints.

Even through the glove, her thinness was too noticeable. Way too noticeable.

That very thought brought his attention to her torso.
The elastic material of her suit accentuated the form of her body in a way the slim shirts she wore never have. She seemed to become slimmer, the shiny material stretching over her snakelike torso and drawing attention to the outline of her ribcage.

_The outline of her ribcage._

"You know it isn't healthy for your ribs to be poking out like that?" Gabriel explained, removing his nose from his shirt. The smells from the group of patients had already seeped in; his best bet was to try to ignore it from then on. "I'm the one that should be worrying about you, not the other way around," Moira didn't remove her gaze from his healing skin as she voiced her retort.

"You're a part of Blackwatch, I have to worry about you. It's kind of my job."

"I suppose that's fair enough." She gave is now-fully-healthy forearm a speedy inspection before rising to her feet. In the positions they resided in, she _towered_ above his head, something that did not go unnoticed by Gabe.

"You needn't worry about my health, Gabriel," the woman told him. "Keep those worries and give them to someone more deserving than me." She sped away after that, disappearing into the horde of nurses and injured residents of the now-destroyed compound. The main opening to the aircraft began to shut, and as he leaned over to look through the glass, he noticed a new fleet of planes and helicopters flying overhead, all bearing the iconic symbol of Overwatch. "Good luck with the fire, guys," he muttered as the ship he was seated inside of began to take off.

Gabriel ran his hand over the healed flesh of his forearm and the burnt, crispy ends of his destroyed sleeve. _That was going to have to be fixed again_, he thought, a bit annoyed at the situation. He had to be thankful he didn't end up as Gerard did, however, with the skin of his face _quite literally_ peeling off his cheeks and forming thin rivulets that ran down his neck.

At least he didn't end up like Gerard.

At least.

Chapter End Notes

"My arm isn't-
Gabe was meaning to say "My arm isn't that bad." I'm clarifying just in case it sounded odd in the chapter.
Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Moira.

Chapter Notes

This takes place right after the events of retribution.

Gabriel shut the door behind him as he entered his bedroom. The very last thing he needed at the moment was more of Jack's scolding, or more of McCree's offended screaming. He was so tired of the media; Just for an hour, one hour, that's all he wanted tranquility.

The man disrobed and fit himself into something more comfortable than his gear, setting the latter on his bed and deciding to tend to it later. He stepped out of the bedroom and began walking, though he wasn't entirely sure where to. Truthfully, Gabe didn't have a destination in mind; his focus was too centered on the silence that engulfed him to care about nonsense topics like where he was headed.

As he walked, he ran his fingers over the stubble coating his cheeks. When was the last time I shaved? he asked himself. Before he could turn back and tend to his facial hair, Gabriel found himself striding into the Dining Hall, realizing for the first time that night just how hungry he was.

The room was completely barren, though he expected as such, considering how late in the night it was. The smell of food lingered no more in the cafeteria and was instead replaced with the harsh scent of cleaning products. Only a single row of beams was to illuminate the massive area, causing most of the space within to be shrouded in darkness. He made his way to the refrigerator located behind the counter on the left side (also the best lit side) of the room, opening its chrome door upon arrival. The contents mostly consisted of containers of leftover food, each adorning a sticker with a date written in a different penmanship for each plastic box. Gabe pulled out a container of pasta and placed it on the countertop behind him, shutting the fridge door in the process. "Hello, C-"

"Jesus Christ." he breathed.

He jumped.

He jumped like a little fucking kid at the sound of her voice.

Gabriel turned around and was met with a very confused, very startled Moira O'Deorain standing in the doorway that led to the dimly-lit kitchen. "My apologies," she told him, "I didn't mean to frighten you." The Commander gave a breathy chuckle, his heart continuing to beat a mile a minute. "You're quieter than Genji."

The woman had a blanket—the same blanket she pulled over the mattress in Venice, he noted—draped over her shoulders, and she held in her hands a small bowl of grapes and cheese slices, spearing a piece of each with her fork and popping it into her mouth.
"It's fine," he sighed after a pause, "you didn't mean to do it." He turned to the cupboards and opened a few, searching for a plate as her eyes followed his movements. "I'm glad I'm not the only one who changed into their nightwear and went in search of food," Moira sounded, a lilt present in her voice. Gabe laughed as he found his desired item and began shoveling noodles onto his plate with a fork. "Well, you know what they say: 'great minds think alike.'" It was her turn to laugh. "I suppose you are correct, Gabriel."

He placed his food in the microwave a few cabinets down, and putting in his desired time, asked her, "Are you doing anything?"

"I was watching a documentary, nothing spectacular. I suppose not to you, anyways."

"Yeah? What were you watching?" She raised her eyebrows and her eyes darted to the side as her face switched to a shade of red.

_She blushed._

_Gabriel has never, ever seen her blush._

Her pale complexion caused what would have been pink to become a relatively dark red that traveled across her cheeks, around her eyes, and along her forehead.

"It sounds childish when put into words," the Doctor smiled sheepishly. He folded his arms against his chest and chuckled. "What, is it porn? That's pretty normal, if you ask me."

"No, it's..." she paused and looked to him. "It's a documentary about the dinosaurs." _Another pause._ "They're such fascinating creatures, but what truly amazes me is how far paleontology has advanced. With each decade passed, we've come a step closer to completely understanding these long-extinct animals. Imagine, Commander: we're only a meter's length away from resurrecting some of these creatures; how incredible is that?"

Passion _poured_ off her tongue as she spoke, so much so that Gabe was almost able to _feel_ her enthusiasm.

The microwave began its signature _beep, beep_, and as he removed his food from the machine, he explained to Moira. "That is amazing. I'm not sure I want a horde of giant chickens running around getting shot by bastion units, though."

"That wouldn't be a pleasant experience."

he speared a noodle and brought it to his mouth. "Are you alright after what happened in Rialto?"

"Oh, please," she retorted, "I'm fine. You should be asking the Cowboy that question."

"I don't think he's speaking to me at the moment."

"Then let's take that as a blessing." He chuckled at her ever-present, ever-blatant disgust towards McCree. "The wrong one died."

Moira raised her eyebrows. "I never expected something so grim from you, Commander."

_Did he really just say that?_

Gabriel shook his head, shutting his eyes a bit too tightly. "Fuck, I..." he sighed. "I didn't mean to say that. I'm sorry. I think I'm just tired."
"It's alright, I understand." She cocked her head to the side and raised an eyebrow. "Now that you mention it, you do look exhausted." Moira smirked. "Go and get some sleep, Gabriel."

Oh.

He sighed. "You're right, you're right."

Oh, God.

She began walking towards the exit. "Have a good night, Commander."

The way she said his name.

"Good night."

It made his heart skip a beat.
Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

Deal.

Chapter Notes

Moireyes better crawl out of Rarepair Hell real fuckin’ fast.

"Ever since the events in Rialto, Talon activity has seemed to slow," said Morrison to the residents of the Conference Room. "However, as of yesterday, well, this doesn't seem to be the case anymore." He turned to the large screen behind him, glancing up at the Omnic (Gabriel was almost certain his name was Maximilian) being projected. "We're all aware of Max and his casino. Yesterday, we uncovered that people like Doomfist and Vialli have vanished off the face of the Earth. 'Ironically,' another piece of information brought forth to us was that Talon has seemed to have picked up where they left off at this casino. In other words, most of their transactions have been traced back to Monaco. We're going to need further insight if we are to act upon this."

He paused and shut his eyes for a moment. "Now, I'm aware of what happened in Italy, I don't think anyone needs reminding, but I'm going to send Blackwatch to collect the information we need. When it comes to this stuff, there's no one better than these guys, and you all know that." There were murmurs circulating around the table. Gabe heard comments like as long as they stay out of sight and Commander Morrison really trusts him. "It seems as though you're getting another chance, Commander," Moira's voice sounded in his ear. He twisted his head around to face her, admiring the way her defined cheekbones perfectly complimented the toothless grin she gave to him. "Don't you mean we're getting another chance? You're not getting out of this one." That lovely smile left as fast as it came. "How disappointing."

He laughed at her crestfallenness. "You'll be alright." Gabriel patted her shoulder a few times over, focusing on the way the blade so prominently jutted out from under her skin.

"Like I've said," Morrison silenced the crowd, "this information was received only yesterday, so once we have a bit more, I'll start giving you the details, Blackwatch." His tone became sinister. "Don't let me down this time. I'm giving you one shot."

"You can count on us, Commander," Jesse spoke, an underlying message in his tone that was not lost on Gabe.

We're not fucking this up again, Reyes, those were the words conveyed in his voice, and everyone knew it.

"Yeah? Well, here's hoping," says Jack. "Alright, dismissed." Once more, the group stood in unison and moved seemingly as one unit to the doorways.

Gabriel walked alongside Moira, unsure of her destination but not truly having one himself.
"It just felt right to follow her.

"He seems to be taking the incident in Venice quite personally," the woman commented. He shook his head, memories of Jesse's passive aggressive comments and disgusted remarks flowing through his mind. "I'm almost positive it was his idea to shoot Antonio, and I was the one who talked him out of it. Or maybe Gerard was, I don't know." The scene of the three of them speaking to one another replayed in his mind in an attempt to offer Gabe a better picture.

As he racked his brain for greater insight, Moira spoke up with the statement, "Commander Morrison and the Cowboy are blaming me for your actions, I'm not sure if you're aware." He glanced up at her and scoffed, sounding a simple, "What?" She paused at the entrance to an elevator. "I was told ever since my arrival, you've become distant and secretive."

"They're blaming-? Oh, my God."

She laughed, clearly finding her situation way more humorous than he. "I'm working alongside people of quality intelligence, I see." Gabriel leaned against the wall and folded his arms.

"You aren't excluded from this 'group of geniuses,' either, Reyes," Red told him before he could voice anything.

"What? What did I do?"

"It isn't so much what you did as what you did not do."

When he raised a brow, she explained, "I gave you the ability to become fluid, an incredibly powerful gene. It allows you to move completely undetected and grants you access to otherwise inaccessible areas. During our time in Rialto, I didn't feel as if you utilized this to its greatest potential. It was horribly disappointing."

Horribly disappointing.

"That isn't to mention you were, evidently, inexperienced. You had noticeable difficulty becoming solid once more, and at times, you didn't even completely change back. It was pitiful at best."

Gabe sighed.

Well then.

"Why don't you give me some pointers, if that's the case?" he offered, concentrating on her uniquely-colored eyes and the pronounced collarbone her dark shirt exposed, refusing to let embarrassment get the better of him. She folded her hands behind her and cocked a hip to the side. "To begin, I suppose, you should focus more on the less sensitive places of your body when willing yourself to shift into your second form. You should also practice in a more hectic environment. That way, it will become increasingly difficult to focus." Her eyes darted to the side of her head in thought, another quirk of hers that did not go unnoticed by him. "What sort of...pointers would you like?" He shrugged. "I'll just go with what you just said to do." Moira raised an eyebrow skeptically. In response, he smiled sheepishly and raised his hands in defense. "I promise, the next time you see me, I'll ace it. Deal?" That devious smirk returned to her perfect face. "If you lose, what do I get?"

"Oh, that's how it's going to be?"
"Is that not how deals work, Gabriel?" The lilt in her suave voice twisted the contents of his ribcage in an indescribable fashion. The sensation was foreign, yet lovely, and deny it all he wish, there was a small voice in the back of his mind that pleaded and cried for her to say his name again. It wanted her to say it that way, with that condescending, intelligent tone coupled with her infamous smirk and a perfect brow raised above the other.

Oh, how it begged, yet its cries slammed against the backs of his molars and dissipated under his silent scolding.

"Alright, how about this:" Gabriel offered after the fight he had with himself had ended, "if I end up kissing your ass,"-his words earned him a low chuckle from Moira-"what would you want from me?"

"Hm." She tilted her head to one side. "I would love for you to clean and organize my closet in the laboratory."

"Yeah? Alright."

"I would have to be there, of course, so I'm able to watch you while I sit on the couch."

"Alri-" he wasn't able to finish because of the laughter that her statement had induced. "Alright, alright, deal."

"And if I'm the loser?" she questioned him. Gabe shook his head. "I'll think of something, don't worry."

"If you insist." She held out her left hand for him to take. "Good luck, Commander." He engulfed her pale palm in his much darker one. "The Luck of the Irish, it can't fail me." Finally, her grinned revealed those perfect teeth. "We'll see about that."
Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

A Lesson.

Chapter Notes

Thank y'all for loving my shitty writing skills! :)

"That was pathetic, Gabriel," Moira commented as she sunk her teeth into a bagel. Gabriel wiped the sweat from his temples with a forearm, the sun's heat mocking him as he created waterfalls of perspiration. It wasn't sweltering necessarily, but if one was standing in direct heat for nearly fifteen minutes on cream-colored concrete near a beautifully cold pool...

Well, it can get pretty hot.

Moira had herself situated on a lawn chair not too far away from where he stood, sitting in the comforting shade the umbrella above her brought about. Even then, she still had a layer of lotion spread across her skin. I'm Irish, Reyes. I don't tan, I fry, was her response to his remarks about her redundancy.

The woman had offered to help him hone his "wraith" skills, explaining to him that it would be "more beneficial to practice in an environment [he is] less comfortable in."

And so, here they sat.

"It seems to me that you're continuously having trouble materializing your body," she noted.

"Yeah, the heat is screwing me up," he told her, removing his dampened shirt. "I can't concentrate."

"If I am able to fade while experiencing mind-numbing menstrual cramps, then surely, the weather shouldn't be a problematic factor for you." He stepped over to the small table next to her and set his shirt down on its circular surface. "Was bringing that up really necessary?" he questioned.

"I'm using it as an example to prove a point." Moira set her plate on the armrest of the chair and adjusted her sleeveless shirt. "Now that we've located the problem, we can work on eliminating it. Now, fade again, this time focusing on your issues." Gabe huffed, determined to hear this attractive woman say something positive about him that afternoon.

He strode a few steps back and channeled his focus into the task at hand, becoming a cloud of mist almost instantaneously.

Gabriel couldn't see Moira, but he could hear her breathing, feel the vibrations her body gave off, and he was able to paint a decent picture in his mind of his surroundings and the doctor a few feet away. Doing his best to ignore the heat and knowing she was expecting to see improvement, he once again began to reform his body, focusing on a single part at one given time yet working quickly (or
at least trying to) in order to complete his objective, all the while hoping to see an impressed Moira O'Deorain upon his return.

He regained vision, and the first thing he did was stare into her pretty eyes and hope to find some form of impressment. Against his wishes, however, her expression remained as void of emotion as before he became a blob of dark smoke.

"That was an improvement," she explained, finishing off her slice of bagel. "It still needs work, however."

"Hey, I'll take an improvement." He scratched the top of his head. "I might actually win, who'd of guessed?"

"I said it was an improvement, not perfect. Let's not get ahead of ourselves."

"Yeah, yeah, shut up and let me have this."

"You know I can't allow that," Moira laughed.

Gabe relished in the moment of joking around with this woman. He liked to imagine such a time was exclusive to him and him only. Nobody else was tolerable enough for their company to actually be enjoyed.

Nobody but him. Nobody's but his.

"You think w-" Gabriel was cut off by a cheerful, "Hey, you two!" from Oxton. He glanced over to witness the petite woman walking towards him and the Doctor, a pen and notepad held within her fair hands. "What are you up to?"

"Practicing," he replied.

"Yeah? It looks like you've really been working hard. And you too, Doc! It looks like you've been practicing harder than Commander Reyes!" The Brit giggled at her own joke, and it seemed as if Moira couldn't help but smile. "Coaching this man around is harder than any amount of physical work he has done this afternoon."

Tracer rolled her eyes. "Cut him some slack!"

"I'll think about it."

The way Oxton spoke to O'Deorain nearly dumbfounded him. Everyone resented her, for one reason or another. She was untrustworthy, suspicious, sociopathic, sadistic, cruel, unsettling, any word and every word that held any negative meaning at all.

And here Lena was speaking to her as if they were friends.

She had such a kind soul, Gabe thought. If this kid hated anyone, they sure as all Hell had to be a step beyond genuinely horrible.

And that wasn't Moira, right?

"We're getting pizza for dinner, and I have to go around and get everyone's orders," Oxton
"They chose the right person," he commented. She smiled. "Of course they did! Now, what kind of pies do you guys like?"

"I'd like Sicilian," Moira told her.

"And what about you, Commander?"

"It doesn't matter. Sicilian, too, I guess." She wrote a few things down on the small booklet in her hand, nodding as she did so. "Alright-y, thank you."

With that, Oxton flipped around and blinked back into the doors of the Overwatch base.

"Were you going to say something, Commander?" asked Moira after a moment of silence.

"Yeah, why don't we head inside for a bit?" he offered. "It's hot as balls out here."

Instead of replying, or standing up, or nodding, she began laughing.

It wasn't similar to her usual calm chuckle; it was loud, uncontrolled, and more snorting than laughter took place, provoking a smile from Gabe. This just about made his day.

The woman sat up and covered her mouth with a hand, keeping herself in that position until her fit died down into nothing more then a few giggles here and there. Her dual-colored eyes shot to him, and the skin on her face became a dark red. "I apologize," Moira chuckled, "that wasn't very dignified of me."

"It's okay," he grinned, his own laughter threatening to pour over his bottom lip. The Doctor shook her head, a smile still present on her face. "That was disgusting, not 'okay.'"

"Oh, it wasn't disgusting!"

No, it wasn't. It was adorable, way too adorable, and as much as he didn't want to admit it, it was music to his ears.

"What the hell were you laughing at, anyways?"

"Your comment," she explained. "'It's hot-" she snickered, "hot as balls out here.'"

"That was really that funny?"

"Exactly how hot are testicles, Reyes? Care to explain that?" The giggles woven between her words made his heart expand to fit the entirety of his chest.

"It's an expression," he said to her, fighting off the emotions mixing behind his ribs, "you never heard it?"

"Clearly not."

Gabriel scoffed and held out his hand. "Come on, let's go inside."

She grabbed her plate, then his hand, and he helped her hoist herself onto her feet.
"Remember your shirt," Moira reminded. He nodded and picked up the heap of black cloth resting on the table. It was still damp with his sweat, and he cringed as he held it. "This is going in the wash."

"That isn't the only thing that needs to go in the wash," hinted the redhead.

"Oh, I'm aware, believe me," he laughed.

Suddenly, she took a few steps closer to him, and in a low voice, said, "Keep that between us, yes?" He nodded, her close proximity bothering him in the loveliest way.

"You know you don't have to be embarrassed by the way you laugh," Gabe reassured.

"Sometimes, you can't help the way you feel, Gabriel," Moira countered.

"Well, just throwing it out there."

"I know, and I appreciate it. Now, give yourself a shower. You smell like perspiration."
"Did Morrison ever say anything about when we were heading to Monaco?" Jesse questioned. Gabriel, who was seated across from the Cowboy, shrugged. "He never got back to me."

"The hell's he doing? Sitting with his thumb up his ass?"

"I doubt Ana would allow that."

"McCree has a point," Genji spoke up. "We have been waiting quite a while for an order."

"With little-to-no insight on the holdup," Moira added.

"Well, believe me," said Gabe, "if I knew anything about it, I'd tell you guys."

"Hey, Commander Reyes!" a young voice sounded, and the man turned his head to witness Brigitte darting through the Dining Hall to stand in front of him. She greeted Jesse and Genji upon her arrival with a cheerful hey guys! and peered in behind Gabriel to smile at the Doctor. "Hi, Miss!" The teenager paused and giggled. "Sorry, I'm a little excited to be here. I'm Brigitte Lindholm!"

"Doctor O'Deorain," Moira gestured to herself. "Are you related to Torbjorn, by any chance?"

"Oh, you made Commander Reyes's eyes turn crazy colors! I heard about you! And, um, yeah, he's my papa. I know that sounds kind of weird because I'm, like, a million feet taller than him, but it's true!"

Moira chuckled. "I was forced to look down at my father when I was around that age, you aren't the only one."

"Well, we can relate at least!"

Brigitte glanced back to Gabe and pushed her palms down on the table. "So, how's Blackwatch going?"

He laughed. "I think a better question would be 'what are you doing here?' I thought your dad was keeping you home."

"Yeah, but we decided a couple days back wouldn't hurt. Plus Reinhardt sort of really missed me. And I kind of missed everyone." The last sentence was said in a sheepish tone. "Well, it's good to see you again," Jesse greeted, touching the pads of his fingers to his hat.

"It is a pleasure," Genji chimed in.

"You guys should come downstairs," Brigitte suggested. "Ma will be happy to see all of you. And she never met you, so she has to!"

"It would be more productive than whatever was going on here," Moira pointed out.
Genji was the first to stand up, followed by Redhead, McCree, and himself. Brigitte's face lit up as she gestured for the group to follow her. "Everyone's hanging out in the family room."

"Do we still have all that pizza from yesterday?" Jesse pondered. Gabriel chuckled. "We should have some." It was in that moment McCree stopped abruptly and glanced in the direction of the refrigerator. "Might be a moment, Brigitte."

"Just don't take forever getting cold pizza," the teen called over her shoulder. Gabe himself slowed his step to a stop, becoming slightly interested in whatever was in that fridge.

As the trio disappeared into an elevator, Jesse commented, "I love that kid. Feisty."

"All of his kids are nice," Gabriel replied. "He's got a nice family."

"Wife's pretty, too."

"Mhm."

There was a moment of silence, the only sound that can be heard being the unwrapping of aluminum foil on McCree's part. Gabriel listened to the obnoxious crinkling sound for a few moments before the Cowboy began laughing to himself.

"What if Moira had kids?" Jesse said, peering over his shoulder. His question earned a nervous chuckle from the Commander. "I don't think that'd pan out too well."

"We'd wake up and one'd be green. The other has three eyes or something."

"'It's for science, Jesse,'" he joked, leaning on the countertop. Jesse himself laughed as he took a slice of pizza from the plate he placed on the counter.

"Between me and you, Reyes, the Doctor's a bit funny-looking, isn't she?" There was a small, unwarranted twang of anger in his stomach at McCree's words. Fighting against it, Gabe asked the man, "What do you mean?"

"I mean when I first met her, I thought she was a man," he chuckled, keeping his voice low. "Couldn't get a gander at her tits; I thought she didn't have any. Then she started talking, and that's when I realized." He laughed, but Gabriel didn't.

"With all due respect," McCree continued, "that has to be the ugliest woman I ever seen."

"Oh, fuck you," he snapped back. "That isn't true."

"Matter of opinion, Boss."

"Is being an asshole really necessary, though?"

"It's the Cowboy, of course it is."

*His breath caught in his throat.*

Gabe has never seen Jesse tip his hat goodbye as fast as he did in that moment. Not once glancing at the woman, the Southern man nearly jogged out of the cafeteria, Moira's dugusted eyes following him as he left.
Gabe sighed. "How much of that did you catch?"

"Oh, only all of it," she replied flatly.

"I'm sorry about him."

"Don't be, it doesn't faze me any longer." She stepped closer to him. "That wasn't the first time I've heard it."

_That wasn't-what? How many times has she heard that before?_

He thought back to when they ate together at the airport, and how she had explained to him that no one had ever returned her feelings.

_Was that what she meant?_

"That's terrible," Gabriel said pitifully, "you shouldn't have to hear that." Moira shrugged. "It's what I've heard all my life. I was ugly, too tall, my body didn't have enough form, I didn't look like a woman." Her eyes shot to the side as if she were trying to remember the insults she'd received in the past. "Come on, you're not any of those things," he explained, "don't believe any of that bullshit." She presented him with her signature brow raise. "You seem awfully worried about my self esteem, Commander."

"Well, it's nonsense said by a bunch of assholes. And, uh...just call me Gabe."

"I thought you didn't like nicknames."

"Listen, there's a select group of people who are allowed to call me that."

"What made you consider adding me to this group?"

_Dear Lord, this woman..._

Gabe shrugged. "Might as well."

"Alright then, Gabe," Moira smirked, "don't worry as much. It doesn't bother me." To hear his nickname spill from her lips wrapped in that accent made him grin with a unique happiness that he hasn't experienced in a while. "If it doesn't bother you, then it doesn't bother me, I guess."

_He hoped it didn't bother her._

_He hoped._

_But chances were that it genuinely didn't faze her. This was Moira O'Deorain, after all._

_This was Moira O'Deorain._
Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

Childish.

They've done this about a hundred times, and yet, as Moira poked and prodded and inspected him for muscle atrophy, all Gabriel could do was scold himself for the emotions he allowed to arise when she requested he removed his shirt and for the thoughts that raced through his mind as her eyes danced across his torso.

None were good, of course, but the worst was did she like what she saw?

That isn't right, he thought. He shouldn't think about those kinds of things when it came to her, and he shouldn't experience these feelings whenever she was around. Gabe has always attempted to keep every relationship of his as professional as possible, for the sake of making his life (and the other party's life) easier; why was he letting himself slip? It certainly isn't the first time he's felt...like this-whatever this may be-towards a colleague. He would ignore his emotions, and they would fade into nothingness.

But this, he's nursing this.

Every offer to eat breakfast together, every hotel room shared, every practice spent near the pool, every casual conversation in the hallway, every hour-long trip spent next to one another on a drop ship, every appointment; he was allowing this to become something it shouldn't.

"You appear to be stable, Gabe."

And then she says his name, and everything about avoiding friendly occurrences is thrown into the wind.

God, of all things, it was his name on her tongue that made his heart beat a mile a minute and rendered him incapable of frowning.

It was her voice, Gabriel deduced. That low, suave voice amalgamated with her unique accent is what made her speaking his title so...attractive.

A flick at his temple brought him back to reality, and the first thing he saw upon his arrival was an expectant set of colorful eyes and the pale, beautifully contoured face they were attached to. "What?" Gabe said rather stupidly.

Great job, he mocked himself. Moira rolled her eyes, seemingly only slightly irked, and (he assumed) restated, "I asked how your improvement was coming along. It doesn't seem as if you're interested in conversation this morning, however."

No, he was very much interested in conversation. He would sit on that cold table the entire day if it meant the time passed would be spent with her.

Gabriel should have told her he was busy. He should have left that lab and went about his day. There was no need to allow this to grow.
Instead of doing the right thing, however, his lack of self-control prompted him to say, "No, I'm fine, really. And uh, I think I've gotten better, but then again, compared to you I have the intelligence of a caveman, so..." His words earned him a laugh from the woman in front of him "I don't believe that's entirely true."

"No? Only somewhat true?"

Moira nodded enthusiastically.

"You're such an asshole," he laughed.

"I strive to be."

After a moment's pause, Redhead asked, "Have you thought about what you're going to get from me?"

"Not yet. I'll think of something, though, don't worry. It's most likely going to have to do with food. I'm just saying."

"Something I would expect from the likes of you."

"Yeah, pretty chunky, aren't I?"

Moira's grin disappeared. "I hadn't meant that."

"Could it not be implied?" he mimicked her words as well as her accent.

"You're mocking me," she retorted, "and your accent is disgusting."

"Is it disgusting?"

"I'm quite amazing at making it seem like involuntary manslaughter."

Gabe chuckled. "It's funny how you talk, I don't know, properly, and then you say things like amazin' and makin' and disgustin.'"

She quirked an eyebrow. "It's the way I speak."

"There isn't anything wrong with it, it's just unorthodox."

Folding her arms behind her back, she informed him, "In my family, pronouncing the 'G' is considered out of the ordinary."

"Really? I never knew that."

He didn't like the way he was speaking. Words flew from his lips quickly and carelessly, and Gabriel had no power over it. That part of him (that stupid, childish part) perpetually battled with the more logical, mature side of himself and won.

Over and over and over again.

"Well, if you don't have anymore comments, you're free to leave," Moira told him. He nodded and stood, slinging his shirt over his forearm in the process. "I'll see you, Moira," he called.

"Bye," she replied, walking towards the back of the room. "Perhaps you should run a few laps around the pool, you seem awfully full of energy today." He scoffed nervously as blood rushed to
his ears. Of course she noticed that. She's Moira. "That isn't a bad suggestion."

"It would be in your best interest," she said.

Gabe sighed, quite embarrassed, and trekked out of the main doors once they slid open.

"What were you guys doing in there?" Lena's voice, although slightly drowned out by the hissing of pistons, made his heart skip a beat. Hers eyes widened, and she covered her mouth with the stack of papers she held in her hand. "Sorry, Commander!"

"Don't worry about it," he sighed once the entrance to the laboratory was sealed shut. "What do you think we were doing in there?"

"Well," she began sheepishly, "you guys were laughing, and your shirt's gone, and your ears are really red, so I thought you were..." her eyes went to the floor, then her papers, then back at him, "making out?"

"You know, in between that laughing, there was talking," Gabriel pointed out.

"I couldn't hear that!"

"Why immediately assume we were making out is my question."

"Well, McCree tells me things."

"I thought you were smart enough not listen to him."

The Brit shrugged and giggled nervously. "Sorry, it's fun to poke fun at everyone sometimes. I really couldn't care less about what you do, Sir." He pulled a Moira and raised a brow. "You're lucky I like you. Now, what are you doing down here?"

"I need to give the Doc her paperwork." Oxton gestured to her papers. Gabe, being the good samaritan that he was, stepped to his right and punched in the necessary code. As the doors parted once more, Lena walked past him with a small thank you and headed inside.

As he walked away, he heard Moira's voice as she called out Gabe? and the second, shorter woman's voice as she responded with Cadette Oxton, actually.

He cringed. Lena knew he didn't like that nickname being tossed around.

What if she asked about it? What would be Moira's response?

Gabriel hoped it went over her head, because if it didn't, her supposed theory on the Doctor's and his relationship would seem all the more plausible.

And the last thing he needed was more of McCree's jokes.
"I got kind of an odd question, Boss," Jesse said as he helped the Commander carry a few items to their ship. "If you ever had a few kids, would they be born with your, uh, powers?" Gabriel wanted to answer with no, that was a dumb question, but he couldn't bring himself to. Truthfully, he wasn't sure, because it sounded so stupid yet so plausible. "That's a good question," he laughed nervously. "Nothing Moira can't answer."

"Think you should ask her that. Seems like she hates you the least. I can already hear the earful I'd get just by wondering about that in front of her."

Gabe was able to picture exactly how that conversation would play out. Moira would offer a set of raised eyebrows and something along the lines of why exactly do you care, Cowboy? Jesse would shrug, and she'd roll her pretty eyes and ignore him for the next hour or so."

"Speak of the devil," said McCree, and the Commander snapped out of his thoughts to see the Doctor on her silver tablet as he entered the aircraft. She hadn't glanced up as they passed, and as he stepped closer, he noticed the headphones in her ears and the small flower pinning her hair out of her face.

Gabriel has never seen her with a barrette in her hair.

"You checking her out or something?" Jesse called over his shoulder. That got Moira to look up. That got everyone to look up. His face was so hot that his skin might as well have been melting off the bone, and holding the redhead's gaze as she gave him a perplexed look was so incredibly fucking difficult he could very well have vomited right then and there.

"What's going on?" she asked, removing a bud from her ear. He shook his head and stomped over to where the Cowboy stood grinning, seemingly oblivious to the angry manner his boss approached in. "The fuck were you doing?" Gabe snapped. McCree's smile faltered. "You're back there staring at her!" He jerked a thumb over his shoulder before tucking his hand under the cardboard box he
"Listen, I was just spacing out. You didn't have to shout that!"

"Then I apologize. Was the first thing that came to mind."

"Of all things, Jesse!"

Gabriel placed his container atop the pile of many others at the back of the ship and voiced, "Now I got to explain myself. Great."

He had to shove his way through a horde of bodies to reach where his doctor was seated.

_He wasn't "checking her out," right? Admiring the small addition to her appearance wasn't "suggestive" in any way; that was true, wasn't it?_

_Course it was true_, he assured himself. It wasn't as if he were staring any place..._inappropriate_. The miniature flower in her bangs was adorable, that was all. That tiny flower was ado_He was spacing out._

_Right, he was spacing out._

"Hey," Gabe said as he approached her. Moira raised her head once more. "Hello, Gabe."

"Hi, uh, I want to explain what happened there."

"It isn't necessary, don't fret. I've worked with Jesse long enough to know he doesn't always act his age."

"Okay, great," he exhaled. "Yeah, he pisses me off sometimes."

"So I see."

As her focus returned to her screen, he decided to place himself in the seat adjacent to hers. There was room for a five-minute break in his busy schedule, right?

"So, what's all that?" Gabriel asked.

"Your current status. I'm checking it over to be certain that there aren't any mistakes."

"Sounds interesting."

"Is that sarcasm?"

"Yep," he chuckled. Moira rolled her eyes, a slight grin present on her face. "Believe it or not, Gabriel, some of us enjoy our work."

"I know, I'm just busting you."

They didn't speak for a small amount of time. He watched as people began flooding out of the aircraft as the pilots prepared to take off before becoming disinterested and studying the small flower attached to Moira's temple. The center was a magenta that faded into baby-pink-tipped petals, a color that matched the stripes on her shirt. _Of course it had to match._
"Giddy up, we got to get going!" McCree's voice rang over the drum of the engine. A thought suddenly popped into Gabe's mind at the sound of his colleague's accent.

"I've got a question," he told Moira.

"Yes, Gabe?" she responded, her eyes focused on the words she typed out.

"Alright, if I had kids, would they be able to do what I could do? I mean, enhancement-wise?" The Doctor looked up from her text and offered him a concerned stare, throwing him off guard. "No, your abilities aren't able to be passed down. Would you want that? I apologize, I wasn't aware you were planning on having children."

"Oh, no," he laughed as he shook his head, "I'm not planning on it. I was just curious."

"Well, alright, then."

"Yeah," Gabriel said, "I think I'm getting too old for kids, anyways."

"Biologically, that's impossible. If you're able to keep an erection, you aren't 'too old' to bear children."

He laughed at her statement. "You talk about getting hard like it's something you can casually throw into any conversation."

"I'm a geneticist, Gabe. Reproduction is a large aspect of my field of work. It doesn't faze me."

"It's kind of funny how blunt you are about it, though."

"I'm glad you find the functions of the male anatomy so amusing, then."

The doors to the dropship sealed shut, and Genji and Jesse found their way to the seats beside Moira and their commander.

Onward to Monaco they went.
"That isn't working," Doomfist acknowledged in a low, threatening voice. "Overwatch is still capable of discovering us!" The man huffed and placed his hands on the table he stood at, lowering his head for a moment only to pick it back up and glare at the smaller individual across its dark surface. "We have increased-no, maximized our productivity here. This is not a matter of if they will find us, but when. What part of that did I not make clear, Vialli?" He raised his voice at the last sentence of his statement. "That's why I said to space out our transactions over multiple locations," Vialli rebutted.

"And put every location of ours at risk," Maximilien countered. "Until we find an efficient method of keeping our inflow under Overwatch's radar, this is the reality we must deal with. We explained this to you."

"Maybe you should go over it one more time in case he didn't understand," said a young Mexican woman Gabriel has never seen before. Her snarky comment earned her a few undesirable looks and a scowl from Vialli.

"Look, I'm just trying to make sure Talon has a future. Financially." The man turned his attention back to Doomfist.

"So are we," was Ogundimu's reply. "We're simply doing a better job at it."

"You don't know how to handle this like I do."

"Pssh, okay," added the obnoxious young woman.

"That's enough with your comments!" snapped Vialli. She shrugged. "You're digging your own grave here, Amigo."

"Don't call me that."

"Vialli," Akande's voice boomed, "figure out a plan and relay it us."

Without another word, the Nigerian man stomped out of the conference room, followed by Max and Vialli, the only woman staying behind. Gabe heard a large door shut over the camera's microphone, and, beside him, Moira muttered how uneventful under her breath. Intrigued, however, he watched the girl over the video feed. Why was she staying behind?

The unidentifiable lady glanced to her right, then her left, then straight at the camera and stared the Doctor and Commander right in the face, a devious smirk forming on her features.

"That's pretty much how things have been going ever since you killed Antonio," she informed them. "Doomfist is going to take charge, I know it. Everybody here is too scared to stand up to him. Well, except for Vialli, but when it comes to tense situations, he doesn't think right. Clearly."
The way she spoke-so casually, as if she and him were friends-sends chills down his spine, and the only thought that ran through his mind was *they were so fucked.*

*She knew the cameras were there the entire time? Why didn't she say anything?*

"I know Sparrow and McCree aren't with you two," she went on. "They're still running around doing who-knows-what here. That means I can say things I wouldn't normally be able to. So here goes." The woman paused.

"I won't rat you guys out. Honestly, I couldn't care less what happens between Blackwatch and Talon. I'm really just here because they pay me to do what I love. Wow, that sounded really cheesy. Anyways, because I'm not ratting you out, I expect that you won't rat me out, got it? I know you got it, you're Reyes and...fuck, what was your last name? It reminded me of deodorant." As the darker woman racked her brain, Gabriel glanced to his left and studied the expression of the more ghostly Irishwoman beside him. She seemed to be slightly irritated as she mumbled to him, "*Deodorant.*" He almost began laughing, but it wasn't because he found her annoyance comical, or the skewed reiteration of her last name entertaining, or the intense situation they were in and the information being thrown at him nerve-wracking.

*It was a combination of all three that caused him his odd internal laughter.*

"Whatever, you get it." The pixelated lady's thick accent brought him back to the drop ship he currently resided in.

"Look, I trust you guys more than I trust anyone in that group. You're pretty damn good at keeping secrets, but hey, if anyone finds out about this, it's your asses." She took a moment to scratch the shaven section of her head.

"Alright, so, why am I talking to you? Well, I have an offer for you. So I know you're like 'I have to catch the bad guys,' but what if you...'became' a bad guy? Hear me out."

*Gabe most certainly did not want to hear her out.*

"What's your life like in Blackwatch right now? Trying to stay under the radar, Overwatch getting shit, Jack not trusting you probably, everyone doubting their commander, probably, again; did I get that right? Maybe. My point is, you're most likely being treated like an outcast. And Deodorant, too, I'd imagine. You don't exactly have the cleanest reputation ever. So, why stay and fight with Overwatch when you're being treated like the villain? Why continue to lie to yourself that you're the hero? You two aren't appreciated! They use you! You're the backbone of that organization and they don't acknowledge that!" She began to point at the camera. "To Overwatch and to the rest of the world, you're a group of delinquents, and that's what you'll always be. They don't see a hero, they see a member of the Deadlock Gang, and they don't see a hero, they see a member of the Shimada Clan. The world sees a no-good doctor, and a nameless asshole who decides to work with all of them. You don't deserve praise and accolades and all that bullshit, because you're villains, and that's what you'll always be." The woman inhaled and let out a long sigh. "Damn, that was a lot. But seriously, have you ever thought about that? Even for a second?" She itched her head once more. "Just think about it, amigos. Talk to us if you ever want to work something out, alright? I'm out."

She left the large room, and once Gabriel heard that familiar *bang* of the out-of-view door, the air was enveloped in an eerie silence.

Neither of them spoke. There were too many thoughts racing through his mind to be able to formulate words.
Too many thoughts. Too many emotions.

A light tapping sensation on his shoulder caused him to instinctively look to Moira. "Do you know who that was?" Her voice was soft, as if she could see the inner turmoil he now faced and decided to become more gentle than usual. Gabe had to blink a few times to focus, and he shook his head once he processed the question. "I don't know," He sighed. "She scares me, though."

"That's very understandable."

He wanted to sit there in that silence for hours with no one but Moira at his side. He wanted to contemplate what he was just told. He wanted to work out the emotions racing through his body.

He couldn't, however.

He had to call Jesse and Genji back and assess the information that was uncovered.

"Would you like to notify the others of that woman?" Moira questioned. He glanced up at her. Even while they were seated, she continued to be taller than him. "Do you think that'd be a good idea?" he responded. She smiled at him, an act that made his internal predicament the slightest bit better. "You're the Commander, why ask me that question?"

"I don't know, just humor me."

"Alright then, I feel as if we should keep this to ourselves. It would be safer."

He nodded. "I agree."

A secret shared only between the two of them; that was nothing new.
Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

Contemplation.

*Why stay and fight with Overwatch when you're being treated like the villain?*

Gabriel layed in the partially-comfortable bed of the hotel room, that mysterious woman's words replaying in his mind perpetually. He didn't want to agree with her; Blackwatch being portrayed as a group of delinquents (*villains*), their hard work going unnoticed, being *used*; none of that was true, right? He wasn't a villain.

*Right?*

He shook his head. She was *getting* to him. Gabe was stressed and exhausted, and in a weakened state of mind, of *course* he would think up some funny thoughts. *He needed sleep.* Between Talon, Overwatch no longer having complete trust in him, and sleep deprivation, his psychological health was beginning to dwindle.

"For your sake, go to sleep, Gabe," Moira's voice brought him back to Earth. "You're muttering to yourself." He glanced over to the bed beside his and up to the woman sitting cross-legged and reading God-knows-what on her infamous silver tablet. "Sorry," he mumbled. "And who the hell are you to tell me to go to sleep?" Thankfully, she picked up on his sarcastic tone and smirked as she said, "As long as I can say I tried."

Absentmindedly, he ran his eyes over her dampened hair and watched as a single lock dripped water onto her sleeved shoulder. Judging by the redhead's facial expression, she was not pleased by this; *but who would be?* Moira picked up an unused washcloth she had placed by her bedside and began to give her head a thorough rub with its dry texture. Her raised arms showed off the holes her slightly-oversized nightshirt bore. They caused him to question (*only for a moment*) just how long she's owned that article of clothing.

The Doctor finished angrily drying her hair and set now-dampened cloth back in its place, mumbling something along the lines of *I don't even care what I look like.* "You look amazing," he told her ironically.

"If you were not my *boss* I would flip you off."

"I'd flip me off, too," he laughed. Moira rolled her eyes before asking, "What were thinking of before I told you to shut your mouth?"

"Uh," he sounded lamely while sitting himself up, "it was about that girl we talked to on Monday."

She looked over at him. "Is that bothering you?"

"It doesn't *bother* me, it just got me thinking."

"About what, exactly?"
"About..." Gabriel trailed off, choosing the correct words wisely. "I'm not saying I want to head over to Talon, I'm just saying that...maybe, deep down, I agree with a lot of the things she pointed out." O'Deorain nodded slowly as she flattened a few stray pieces of fiery hair. "You aren't the only one who agreed." Her eyes swept to the side and did not return to his face as she told him, "I feel as if you're the only one who truly appreciates what I do for this organization."

*Don't smile like an idiot. Don't smile like an idiot. Don't smile like a fucking idiot.*

"Really?" he said, smiling like an idiot.

"Well, I shouldn't say 'I feel as if': I *know*. I'm not quite sure of the reasoning behind it, but I seem to be singled out from the rest of Blackwatch and despised. I have a few theories as to why, but as I've said, I can't say for certain." He thought about the few times he's spoken about Moira with another colleague. Everytime her name was brought up, it was accompanied by something negative, which was understandable by itself, in his own eyes.

*He understood, he was afraid of her when they first met, too.*

However, he supposed that was just it: nobody *ever* had *anything* positive to say about this hardworking woman.

Never.

"Well, I know this has already been established, but I see the arm and leg you give," Gabe said, and as an afterthought, he added, "And the pounds."

"Must you *always* mention my weight?"

"Yep."

"Why?"

"Because you look like a pencil."

"Oh, I'm a pencil now? I was under the impression that I was a toothpick."

"You're anything that's long and skinny."

"And you're an arse," she smirked, then shook her head. "Stop making me do this."

"What?"

"Act like a child."

"So you joking around with someone is childish?"

"It's unprofessional." She turned herself away from him and picked up her device once more, sighing as she did so. "I did agree with much of what that woman said, but I feel as if we should discuss further when the both of us aren't as exhausted as we are." Gabe didn't want to admit it to himself, but seeing as how she didn't want to speak with him any further was somewhat discouraging, despite knowing that attempting to relax and eventually fall asleep was in their best interest. "You're right," was all he said.

Moira shut off her device, then the lamp beside both of them, and he heard the blankets on her end shuffle as she situated herself. "I'll say it again: for your sake, get some sleep, Gabe."
"Alright," he chuckled, "night, Moira."

"Sleep well."

He rested his head on his pillow with the knowledge that he wouldn't hear another word come forth from that doctor's mouth.

*No, no, that wasn't right.* She wasn't just *that doctor.* She was *Moira: his doctor, his newfound companion, his-

*Well...*

*That was just about it.*

*Right?*
"And if you say goodbye. Too many times. The sentinels will find me and switch me off this time. Because all my fears invaded. All the crazies put on buses and sent up here to find you. Living on the limits."

Gabriel listened as Moira muttered an unfamiliar song while packing her neatly-folded clothes into a suitcase. It was interesting to hear such odd lyrics come forth in her unique accent, and he wasn't quite sure why. Perhaps it was that he could never truly picture the peculiar individual listening to any type of music that wasn't...well, classical, if he's being brutally honest. That sounded so ridiculous, he thought, and yet, it was the utmost truth.

"What're you singing?" Gabe asked, leaning against the wall with his arms folded neatly against his chest. Moira didn't care to look up from her pile of miscellaneous personal items she had precariously placed on the edge of her bed as she explained, "It's from an old band. They were popular around the beginning of the twenty-first century, if I'm not mistaken."

"That's not that old."

"It isn't. When I was young, I would listen to alternative songs from around that time. Many of them stuck with me since then."

"Yeah. I'm more of uh...I don't know, I'll listen to whatever's on' kind of guy."

"You've never found yourself favoring one genre over the other?"

He shrugged. "I might have, I just never acknowledged it."

He thought back to when he was younger and the aspects of his life he enjoyed the most.

"I mostly focused on soccer. Did that for a long time."

"How long?" she questioned.

"Oh, God, well, I started when I was around five and did it until I was like...early twenties, maybe. It was a pretty decent amount of time."
She glanced at him for a moment before returning her attention to her current task. "I-That is quite the substantial timespan."

"Yeah, and what about you? Any sports?"

A small grin appeared on the Doctor's face. "Does the Mock Trial Team count?"

"No, sorry, it doesn't," he chuckled.

"Then no, I haven't participated in any sports." Once finished packing up her things, Moira zipped her luggage closed and collected the remaining bags.

"I suppose after we return, Blackwatch will have no further involvement in this case," the woman said as she headed out of the room. Gabriel hoisted a few bags of his own over the shoulder and tailed her lovely form after closing the door behind him.

He admired the way her outfit hugged her thin figure and brought out her (lack of) hips. The tight clothing was painstakingly eye-catching to him, and he nonchalantly gawked at the subtle sway of her backside for a second-too-long.

Right before he realized what he was doing.

Gabe jogged a few steps forward to walk alongside his...acquaintance and asked, "What makes you say that?" Moira looked down at him, and he ignored the way his heart twisted and constricted and squeezed as the woman replied, "Dr. Ziegler informed me."

"And not me?"

"Commander Morrison is going to explain this to Blackwatch upon our return. This is what I was told."

He scoffed in utter annoyance. Jack really didn't trust them anymore, did he?

"This grants Blackwatch some days off," she continued with a smirk. "You'll have plenty of time to start on my closet." Gabriel's bitterness subsided as fast as it came. He liked hearing her joke; it was with him and no one else. It was exclusive, and therefore precious.

"I think I should win by default," he retorted playfully.

"And why's that, Gabe?" The both of them stopped near the elevator. Moira hit a button that would bring them downwards, all the while plucking at his heartstrings with those incredibly long fingernails.

Or perhaps she'd use her left hand instead. She's left-handed, isn't she?

"Well, because I'm your boss, Moira," he said, adding her name at the end partially to lightheartedly mock her and partially because speaking it was like a cigarette to a smoker: he yearned for it.

"The last time I checked, you hadn't even worked anything out."

"Well, that's going to change right now." He cleared his throat. "If I win, which I will, because of 'by default,' you...I don't know...Why don't we just both take a day off and go do something?" Moira raised a brow, and the small ding of the elevator was nearly completely drowned out by every fiber of his being screaming and wondering why the fuck did you just say that?

"What would we be doing?" she inquired as they entered the small box. He shrugged and clicked
one of the many buttons on the side of the metal doors. "I'll think of something."

She rolled her eyes. "Out of all things, this is what you choose."

"Hey, hear me out: it's a break from everyone's bullshit,"

*That isn't the reason he suggested it.*

"-no running around setting cameras up everywhere;"

*No, that wasn't the reason, either.*

"-and I think the both of us need to have a talk about what that chick said. In private."

*Nothing he was saying came close to the truth.*

Moira nodded slowly. "You've made decent points."

*Come on, Gabe.*

"Alright then, Gabriel, we will work out a time and date once Commander Morrison decides what Blackwatch will do next. I don't believe Doctor Ziegler would lie to me, but you can never be too certain."

*Where's your self-control?*

"Yeah, I agree with that."

The doors opened and revealed Genji and Jesse waiting patiently in the lobby.

"That outing of ours stays between us," Gabe muttered to the tall woman beside him. Moira gave only a simple, curt nod, but it was all that was needed. He wasn't sure if she understood why it needed to be kept secret, but he was sure he could conjure up some excuse.

*An excuse to hide...what? What was the reason behind their secrecy this time?*

"Do not worry, Commander," Genji said in a calm voice, "we were not waiting long."

*It just felt right to lie and act as if their plans didn't exist.*

"Alright," Gabriel responded. "You guys are good?"

*It felt right, but...why? Why did it feel right?*

"All's good in the hood, Boss," McCree answered.

"Great."

"I've missed sleeping on a comfortable bed," Red chimed in. He chuckled at her statement. "You're telling me."

*Why?*
Gorillaz - Fire Flies ;)

Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

Confessions.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the wait, life kinda got in the way :P

Gabriel trekked down the path he knew too well: take the elevator to the bottom floor, use specifically the third staircase, make a left, make a right, make another right, then make a left once more. He knew this path forwards and backwards, inside and out, and the only one who likely knew it better was Moira.

"I would have gotten myself so lost down here," Angela said as she walked beside him, "thank you for this. I appreciate it."

"Anytime," he responded. "I didn't have anything better to do."

Yes you did, Asshole, he scolded himself, but pushed that thought from him his mind as quickly as it came. He was simply helping a friend sort a few things out, a quick and simple task that he couldn't deny.

He wasn't making excuses to see her. He wasn't.

Try as he might to have himself believe otherwise, however, the delight that struck him as he heard that low, feminine voice call come in was too unbearable to ignore.

Upon entry, he noticed Moira sitting at one of two incredibly long desks with pen in hand, furiously scribbling away at an innocent piece of paper. "What's the matter, Gabe?" she called.

"Nothing serious, don't worry."

"Have you finally decided on a location and telling me couldn't bare to wait?" His heart leapt into his throat for reasons he was unsure of. "No, that's not it. I've got Angela here. I think your guys' paperwork is messed up." The Redhead looked up at the duo, then began rummaging through various drawers located near her long legs. "I hadn't noticed that," Moira commented as she pulled out a tan folder and flipped through its contents. "You're right." The woman made her way over to Angela, and the two doctors exchanged papers. As he watched the trade take place, Gabe couldn't help but notice the lack of speech on Ziegler's part. She was normally so humble and kind, and now she didn't care to offer even a smile. Her demeanor brought everyone's opinions on O'Deorain back to his attention, and an amalgamation of conflicting feelings formed in the pit of his stomach. A mix of annoyance and anger and, to an extent, resentment, clashing with the truth that these were not emotions he wanted to be experiencing towards Angela, left him frowning and unsure of the way he truly should be feeling.
"Thank you," the blonde said flatly, followed by a walk to the exit. She paused once she reached her destination, looked over her shoulder and asked, "You aren't coming, Gabe?" He hesitated.

*He fucking hesitated.*

Instead of following Ziegler, Gabriel glanced to Moira. "You need me for anything? While I'm here?"

The woman raised a brow. "If you truly wish to stay."

"Yeah, why not, right?"

"I suppose."

He turned his attention to Angela. "Do you remember the way back?" She nodded, and shut the doors without another word, leaving him and his cohort alone.

*She's acting weird,* Gabriel concluded, and he could think of a plethora of reasons as to why, all involving Moira.

Perhaps the reason being was she knew as well as he did that his act of kindness was to grant him the opportunity to spend a few minutes or longer with redheaded doctor.

*No, wait, no, that wasn't true. That wasn't the case.*

"Not very busy today, are you, Gabe?"

*Fucking hell...*

*That was exactly the case.*

"Yeah, she didn't know where to find you, so I offered to stop in and say hi," he told her with an awkward chuckle, "figured it'd help her out."

*But...so what, right? Right?*

"It appears as if she's acting very distant today," Moira commented. Gabe nodded while taking a glance at the doors. "I saw that. She's usually not like that."

"No, normally she feels the need to run her mouth to me. Never has she been so quiet."

He internally winced at her passive aggressiveness towards his long-time friend. "What can I tell you? She gets passionate about certain things."

"Evidently so."

With that, she made her way back to her spot at the desk and continued to scribble what he assumed were notes onto her paper, leaving him to stand in awkward silence.

"Anyways, what did you need me here for?" Gabriel asked.

"I didn't need you for anything," Moira explained. "I thought you would like to relax, and if you're
with me, it will be easier to pretend as if you're busy, should anyone ask." His heart fluttered at the thought: just the two of them relaxing together, free of all distractions.

"What happened to being professional?" he smirked, heading over to the seat beside her.

"I've decided that since you've been so kind to me, the least I can do is return the favor."

"What do you mean, 'been so kind'?" He found himself to be highly interested in her response, and deep down, he knew why, but fuck, he'd rather die than admit his reasoning to himself.

"I mean exactly what I say," she explained. "Don't assume your camaraderie goes unnoticed. It is truly appreciated."

Oh.

She noticed all that.

Of course she did.

"I've never experienced anything like it."

She's never-What?

"No?" He was unsure of how to word his sentence. How was one supposed to react when faced with a statement like that?

The Doctor shook her head. "In case you haven't noticed, no one particularly is a fan of my existence. Save for you, I suppose."

"Oh, come on, don't say that."

"It doesn't upset me. I don't need your condolences. As a matter of fact, I could understand why the world feels the way it does. If I were of the likes of McCree or Doctor Ziegler, I would feel the same way." Gabe sighed quietly and shook his head in disbelief. "That, in all seriousness, doesn't bother you?"

"Not in the slightest."

His raised his eyebrows, still slightly taken aback by her declaration. "As long as you're alright with it, I guess."

Her eyes returned to her paper, but her focus seemed to be elsewhere. The laboratory was dead silent, the only sound being the small clack of her pen as she set it down near her notes.

"I'm not ignorant to the state of my health."

She wouldn't look at him.

"There's something seriously wrong with me, Gabe."

Gabriel licked his lips, and the sound of someone knocking on the metal doors resonated within the room.

Moira glanced over his head and called, "What is it?" Angela's voice could be heard, and although she was extremely muffled, he was able to pick out the words sorry and thought and ended up. "I think I need to help her out again," the man told the redhead. She nodded in response.
"I'll be right back." He stood and jogged his way over to the exit, Angela appearing in his vision as the doors slid open once more. "I'm sorry, I thought I remembered," the blonde said sheepishly.

"Not a problem," was his reply, irritation and eagerness to continue that conversation threatening to spill into his tone. It wasn't her fault she became lost; this section of the facility wasn't a place Angela frequented.

But he couldn't help the way he felt.

"I'll get you to the elevators, alright?"

"Thank you so much!"

Deciding to leave the doors open,-he wasn't going to be gone for very long-Gabe backtracked to that specific stairway with Doctor Ziegler at his side.

The trip was silent, allowing the last words Moira had said to play in his mind.

Her statement sounded so genuine, like there was emotion tied to it, something that was unheard of when it came to her.

Perhaps she, in fact, was upset, but not because she cared.

Perhaps it was because she didn't care.

Maybe the horrifying fact that the whole planet could turn their back on her and she wouldn't bat an eye frightened her. She knew it wasn't healthy to think that way.

Perhaps there were other aspects of herself that concerned her as well, or traits she didn't particularly like. It was impossible that she was as heartless and void of emotion as she appeared to be.

At the end of the day, Moira was human, too, and she had layers just like everyone else.

And she was willing to open up to him, he realized with delight. It was only a small bit of information, but based on the way she acted as she confessed to him that part of her, it wasn't something she broadcasted to everyone. Moira trusted him enough to express that thought, and God dammit was that a wonderful reality.

Gabriel eventually reached the top of the staircase and said his goodbyes to Angela, then near-sprinted his way back to the Irishwoman's lab.

He wouldn't miss the opportunity to spend time with this woman for anyone.

Upon his return, he noticed Moira had moved from her chair and was now fiddling with the coffee machine she had placed on a separate table near the entrance to her lab, right beside him.

"I've become obsessed with this watermelon tea I've found," she said, "and why were you running?" He gave a breathy chuckle, and once his panting ceased, replied, "Exercise."

She offered him a look that said really? "Clearly you need more of that."

"You could never be too healthy."

"That isn't true, but alright."

He couldn't help but laugh at her stubbornness. That was Moira for you.
"Hey, uh, did you want to tell me something earlier?"

The woman shook her head and picked her now-filled mug up from its place on the machine. "Don't listen to me when I get like that."

"You sure?"

"I'm sure."

That's alright, he thought. If she wasn't comfortable, then she wasn't comfortable. He wasn't going to pry anything out of her.

"Would you like some tea?" Moira offered. Gabe shrugged. "Eh, why not?" She walked over to a small cabinet in the corner of the room and pulled out a mug and a box of tea bags. "You're going to love this watermelon tea." The redhead glanced over her shoulder. "You've forgot to shut the door."

"Shit, right, right." He turned around and did what he was asked of.

Now they can relax.
"If it so happens that you end up dragging me somewhere for lunch, I would prefer that no one knew," Moira told him, placing herself on the couch she had stuffed in the corner of the back room. "I don't need to hear anymore accusations." Gabriel, being very conscious of not sitting too close to her and very conscious of not spilling his tea, seated himself on the green sofa. "What kind of accusations?" he asked.

"Nothing you haven't heard before, I'm sure. I'm 'manipulating' you, and you're being forced against your will into these agreements. Not to mention Commander Morrison's trust in Blackwatch has become questionable. If he happens to learn of a private arrangement between us, it's safe to assume he'll conclude the worst."

"That we're conspiring against him or some shit?"

"Unfortunately, that is in the realm of possibilities." She took a small sip of her tea before setting it on the ground. "I'm tired of hearing him bitch."

God, that was adorable.

He loved to hear her cuss; it was so damn special.

"Yeah, well, you're not the only one," he chuckled. "And, uh, just to be clear, this isn't like a..."

"I know," the Doctor stated before Gabe could get his last word out. "This wouldn't be the first time I've gone to lunch with a coworker, no need to worry."

"Right. Nice, nice."

Christ, he wanted this to happen so bad.

But he didn't want it to be professional.

No, he didn't want it to be professional; he wanted to see her laugh and smile and enjoy herself, and they could speak about nonsense and joke and take time to get to know one another better.

Like a date.

He wanted to take her out on a fucking date, and that was the truth. That's why he suggested this in the first place, right? Of course, it was never blatantly stated that the two of them would find someplace to eat, but it could have easily been implied. That was the reason Moira spoke of his suggestion the way she did now: he was implying that they would head out for lunch.

This is why he scolded himself as that question crossed his lips. Deep down, he knew the reason behind his actions, he simply lacked the balls to admit anything to himself.
But why was he coming to terms with all of this now?

Gabriel has denied emotions and the true motives for months, and now, suddenly, he's had a much easier time coming to terms with himself; why was that? What could have possibly changed the way he handled certain feelings and thoughts so abruptly?

He absentmindedly took a swig of his tea, blinked, and nonchalantly locked eyes with a very attractive, very curious-looking Moira O’Deorain.

"I haven't seen your eyes become grey before now," she commented.

"They went a dark blue once," was his reply. She nodded slowly, seemingly continuing to contemplate something.

"What were you thinking of?"

You.

Deciding against answering truthfully,-he was not doing that-Gabe responded with, "Just some nice places to eat around here."

The woman picked up her mug. "Do you like Japanese?"

"Yeah."

"There is a Japanese restaurant a little ways from here. I couldn't tell you the name if it were to save my life, but it suffices."

"I might know what you're talking about."

She brought her cup to her pink lips. "That settles that, then. You're welcome."

After yet another sip of watermelon tea and a playful scoff from himself, she continued with, "I would still love to tell you what terrible progress you're making. That way, my closet wouldn't be an issue of mine."

"Is it really that bad?"

"See for yourself on your way out. I'll let you be the judge of that."

Another sip.

"I'm not one to put off tasks, but the thought of organizing and cleaning that closet is horrific."

"So you make me do it?"

"Yes, of course," she smirked.

"It'd get done a lot faster if we both worked on it."

"That would nullify the deal we made, and that isn't too fun."

She laughed as he rolled his eyes.

"How about I help you clean out that fucking closet, then we head to this place you're talking about?" Gabriel suggested. "It's a win-win."
"I don't attest to that."

"So deal null and void?"

"Only for this one instance. I do agree that four hands are better than two."

*So she wanted to go.*

"Alright, just this once," he concluded.

*If she was suggesting places to eat, that meant she wanted to go, right? He wasn't "dragging" her anywhere; she said that just to be an asshole.*

*But then again, she considers this to be nothing more than lunch with a coworker.*

That meant she expected a professional environment, and her main reason for agreeing to this would be that they could have the opportunity to speak of private matters free of any possible distractions.

*She said something about four arms being better than two, too, he thought. Moira wasn't particularly excited about their arrangement; hell, she didn't even say that she wanted to go, only that her chores would be completed quicker if she had him to help. In a sense, he was dragging her, if Gabe was going by that logic.*

*And that wasn't right. He didn't want to force her to do anything.*

If Gabriel were forcing her, that meant she didn't view the situation as he did, that she didn't...that she didn't *feel* the same way.

*Wouldn't she be rooting for this to happen as much as he was if she shared emotions similar to his?*  
*Oh my God, stop. Stop,* he told himself. *Thinking too hard about this.*

It's true, he was overthinking things. He had to *relax* and look forward to their outing, not contemplate it as much as he was.

"Do you want more?" Moira's voice snapped him back to planet Earth, and her question caused him to glance into his mug, which was now empty. Only then did the faint memories of him taking swig after swig come flooding back. "No, I'm alright," he told her. "I'll get sick if I drink too much." The redhead nodded.

"Would you like to see the closet?"

"I would love to see your closet," he laughed. Moira hauled herself to her feet. "Try not to get scared. It's quite terrifying."
Chapter 21

Chapter Summary

Contact.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the wait, this was a long one. ^^

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"I have somewhere to be, Jesse," Gabriel scolded, "Let me shower for God's sakes."

"Why ain't you telling me where you're headed? Being real secretive here, Reyes."

"I don't have to tell you shit."

"What the hell're you two up to this time?"

He removed his shirt. "Get out of my face."

"And you wonder why Jack don't trust you."

"I don't 'wonder' anything. Now come on, get out of here." McCree eyed him with an unsettling look and marched away without another word, shoving the door open with an unnecessary amount of force.

Prick, he thought, now irked beyond comprehension. He wasn't entitled to know everything that went on in Gabe's personal life. Even if he did know, it wouldn't have changed the way their conversation played out.

He'd just start bitching about Moira.

Yet another reason why he hated the communal showers: too much company. Perhaps if he hadn't taken that unexpected nap in his office, overslept, then had an argument with a certain cowboy, he could have been able to make his way to the barracks and shower in peace, but that wasn't the case. There wasn't enough time to make that journey, and so, he was consequently subjected to McCree's wrath.

He turned the handle and disrobed as the water heated up, noting how oddly cool the room was. The Commander threw his clothes into his bag and wrapped a towel around his hips as he waited.

Nobody needed to see his ass.

Well, except for one person, but she wasn't allowed in the men's room.
What the fuck, he thought as he shook his head. What was going on with him? It was true, this wouldn't be the first time he's...well, felt a certain way towards a teammate, but it's never gone this far. He never made excuses to see them, or admired their body (specifically the sections he most certainly should not be admiring) from behind, or now did...this. Why was Moira, of all people, different? What about the Doctor made interactions with her so crucial to his happiness? She wasn't a particularly kind or pleasant person.

Well, except for those rare moments.

The moments in which she'd let her guard down and laugh and playfully mock him; those times seemed to be unwarranted by her, if the way she stopped herself in the hotel was anything to go by.

God, how he wanted her to know that she didn't have to stop herself, that it was okay to not be so uptight and professional all the time.

And fuck, he wanted to hear that laugh again.

The one she hated so much, Gabriel thought as he entered the shower. It was "disgusting," apparently. It was true, it wasn't so much of a laugh as a string of snorts, and it was true, the only time he's ever heard anything like it was in the videos Jesse had shown him, wherein the person laughing was being mocked (as much as he hated to admit it, he made a few unpleasant comments at the time), but this was Moira, and each imperfection of hers was so fucking perfect that he didn't know what to do with himself.

"Boss?"

And then Genji's voice pulled him out of his thoughts.

"What is it?" Gabe called over the white noise resonating within the room. When had the door opened? "May I inquire when you will be back? We need to discuss schedules for the next few weeks."

At least he doesn't stick his nose in my fucking business.

"I'll be out for a few hours. Just tell Jesse we'll deal with that in the morning. Seven sharp."

"Only McCree? Would you not like Moira to know as well?"

Shit, that's right, he didn't know.

Well, now Gabriel wasn't too sure about that anymore.

Genji wasn't a stupid kid by any means. There was no way he was climbing out of the hole he dug with that response.

The man turned off the water as to not have to shout every sentence of his.

"Hey, Genji," he said.

"Yes?"
“Want to keep a secret for me?”

“I’m surprisingly quite good at that.”

“Great, now listen:” he paused, wording his next statement carefully, “me and Moira are heading out. We want to discuss some things regarding...me, I guess, and we wanted to do it somewhere private. I need to keep this on the down-low because if this shit gets to Jack, he’ll think we’re plotting against him or something, and my ass will be out of here. You got it?”

“I understand, Commander. Confidentiality is something Angela and I seem to have a difficult time with.”

That’s right, Genji was sort of in the same boat he was. They could relate to each other in a way, yeah?

“If anyone asks for me, just tell them I’m busy and don’t want to be bothered,” he continued, and turned a handle so the water ran once more.

“You have my word.” With that, he heard the door open, and the almost-completely-drowned-out metallic pat pat of the Cyborg’s footsteps ceased with the click of the entrance being sealed once more.

He trusted Genji. Besides, it would be better if at least one person knew of their whereabouts, that way panic wouldn’t ensue.

He finished his duties in the shower and pulled himself together as quickly as humanly possible.

We could meet in the hangar, she said, there’s a door that leads to an area behind my lab. I’ll be waiting for you near the entrance. There isn’t a doubt in my mind you won’t be able to find this place without my assistance.

She made it sound like we were making plans for the next operation, was what went through his mind as he made his way to the hangar.

How does 19:00 sound, Gabe?

Perfect. That was his response.

Of course it was.

Gabe unlocked the doors to his desired destination, and as they slid open, the familiar musty scent of the ships, tools, slabs of metal and wood, and other miscellaneous Lindholm items filled his nose.

Everything seemed to be in place, save for Moira.

She said the hangar, r-?

“Hello, Gabriel!”

And yet again, the nearly-three-hundred-pound Black Ops Division Commander jumped out of his skin.

Gabriel whipped around to notice the cackling woman (adorned with most adorable glasses) leaning against the wall, arms folded just below her breasts, causing the smallest bit of cleavage that dared him to steal glances.
"All things considered, you're awfully skittish," Moira commented.

"You know, in my defense, I wasn't expecting you to scream in my ear."

"I didn't scream."

"Well, yelled. Whatever."

The woman pushed herself from her spot on the wall and took a few steps towards him. "I'm glad we both decided on a more simplistic look. I feel less underdressed now. And you'll have to excuse the glasses. Until my contacts arrive, I'm stuck with these abominations." He studied her eyes for a few moments, admiring just how well she was able to pull off such perfectly circular lenses. "You look"-adorable, stunning, beautiful, perhaps?-"fine. Don't worry about it." She raised her eyebrows, yet said no more.

"Besides that, follow me."

She led him past various ships and workbenches, out of the designated doorway, and across a field with boxes of varying sizes littered throughout its expanse. Now, Gabe has spent the better half of his life at this facility, and he's never, not once seen this place. However, the only time he actually began frequenting the bottom floor was when Moira showed up.

Speaking of whom, the Doctor pulled a set of keys out of her back pocket and dangled the bundle between her spidery fingers.

"This one's mine." She approached and unlocked a small silver vehicle as they reached the car lot, and all he could think was holy shit. "You have a nice fucking car."

"I'm aware, now get your arse in it before someone catches us."

The inside was completely spotless, he noticed, and smelled of cinnamon. Of course it smelled nice.

"I haven't had dinner outside of a facility or laboratory in a long while," she said as she turned the ignition. "This will be unusual for me."

"I thought you told me you went here before?" he pondered as he examined the small jar of scented beads she so carefully placed in a cupholder.

"I ordered from here before, is what I meant."

He laughed, partially at her and partially at himself. "Right, why did I think otherwise?"

"You mustn't be the brightest one here, that's my hypothesis."

The drive to the restaurant was a rather quiet one, both parties deciding to simply enjoy the tranquility of the moment. It was rather calming to know that, even if only for the evening, he had escaped the chaos of his life, with Moira, nonetheless.

A whole evening would he be given the privilege to have this amazing woman all to himself. Could it get anymore perfect?

Amidst his delight, an unwanted thought managed to wiggle its way into his attention: he saw this as a privilege, yet no one else could say the same.
An evening, an hour, a moment spent in this woman's company seemed to be a curse to anyone but him. She was despised and singled out, but why? What made her past far worse than Genji's or Jesse's? If anything, it wasn't particularly that bad, all things considered. Her personality could be very off-putting, he wasn't and couldn't deny that, but he got along with her perfectly well. He enjoyed her dry sense of humor, and if one dug deep enough, they could find a kind bone in her body, much like he has.

Yet, no one bothered to take the time to meet this highly-introverted individual, and so, it left her feeling as if her efforts went unnoticed.

Perhaps that was the reason Gabriel got along with her so well: she appreciated that she was appreciated.

She told him herself that she acknowledges his friendliness. Perhaps her snarky comments and jokes were her trying to reciprocate? Then why had she stopped herself that night? Just the other day she told him "not to listen to her" when she spoke of her feelings. Did she truly want to distance herself from the world like that?

Or is she just unsure of how to act around people who intend to befriend her?

God, then that begs the question: when was the last time she's had someone meaningful in her life?

"I have a feeling you will enjoy the food here," Moira's low voice spoke.

"Yeah?" He looked over at her, and it was the moment he realized they were sitting in a parking lot.

The woman opened her door and muttered to him, "Come on." He sighed and mimicked her actions, following her into a black building and taking the time to read the large letters that made up its name in an attempt to distract himself from the somber thoughts that plagued his mind.

He just worried for her, that's all. He worried for her health and happiness. And there wasn't anything wrong with that.

The interior was rather fancy, he noticed, and the smells wafting from the food that surrounded them made him hungrier than ever.

"Two," he overheard Moira tell the man behind the pedestal.

Just two. Just the two of them.

They were led to a small table pushed against a wall, and once seated, taken care of, and the conversation of this is how you pronounce this, Gabe had ended, he decided to bring up what has been bothering him for a good ten minutes.

He wasn't quite sure what the response would be, but God damnit, it was nagging him.

"So, I've got something to ask you," Gabe began," but...don't feel like you have to answer."

"Yes?" She twirled the straw in her glass and caused the ice to dance in a perfect circle.

"When we were talking the other day, you were saying something, then told me to uh, 'just ignore you when you get like that.'"

She was frowning now.
"Why-what made you say that?"

The doctor eyed the water in her glass. "I wouldn't have said anything meaningful, had I continued."

"You know, I wouldn't of minded."

Moira seemed to contemplate something before subtly shaking her head. "My boss certainly doesn't need to hear of my nonsense."

"Can't we just forget I'm your boss for five minutes?"

*Oh, that sounded weird.*

The woman in front of him apparently felt the same, if the perplexed look she gave him was anything to go by, *which it was.*

"I don't understand; what do you mean?" was her question.

"I'm saying...God, uh..." He paused until he found the right words, and even then, he spoke slowly as he voiced, "I don't have to just be your boss. It doesn't have to strictly be business and graphs and strategies, it can be... W-we can talk like...you know, friends."

His ears were on fire, his face was on fire, fuck, his skull was on fire, and he prayed that she understood him, because he wasn't sure he could bring himself to say that again without vomiting.

Bless her soul, Moira's expression remained thoughtful and free of judgement. She sipped her water before asking, "You consider me as a friend, Gabriel?" His stomach fluttered at the sound of his name on her tongue, and all he could seem to do was chuckle rather nervously. "Am I not supposed to?"

"You can, but"-She took another swig of water-"I must say, you have a horrible taste in friends."

"Now, I don't think that's true."

"I'm not talking about myself."

He shrugged, knowing all-too-well who she spoke of. "He really isn't all that bad. Some days are more tolerable than others, though."

"So I've noticed."

Gabriel breathed a laugh. "Well, he isn't here to bitch at either of us, but, um, back to what I was saying."

"I understand, I suppose." She paused.

"Perhaps I knew and yet-" The Irishwoman went silent, preferring to stare at the table rather than him. After a few moments of doing just that, she opened her mouth as if to say something, closed it, waited a few seconds, repeated the process, began an unfinished sentence with, "I-," then seemed to simply give up and shook her head violently for a longer-than-normal period of time, all the while only sparing him short, quick glances here and there.

"That's not...That's not very easy for me to explain," Moira said simply, quietly.

"What isn't?" When she didn't respond, Gabe decided to say, "Let's just drop it. I didn't come here to make you uncomfortable."
"I apologize," she told him.

"What the hell are you apologizing for?"

"I wasn't able to respond."

"Don't be sorry for that."

"It isn't normal."

"Moira, calm down. It's fine."

She rubbed her thumb alongside a strip of metal plating on her decrepit right hand, eventually causing the area to become an unorthodox maroon color.

He's never seen her like this, so bothered and unsure. This wasn't the woman Overwatch and Blackwatch alike have come to know.

Yet it was.

This was simply a different side of her, one he wasn't able to understand.

"Hey, sorry for making you uncomfortable."

"It wasn't your intention."

After a minute of awkward silence, Moira (ironically) was the one to speak up first.

"Have you been feeling well lately?"

"Yeah, completely fine, as a matter of fact."

"I stopped your appointments because you haven't had any complaints."

"No, I've been doing great, thanks to you."

She smiled again; finally. "It's what I do best."

"Did you ever think of doing something else?"

"Oh, ever since I was small, I've been obsessed with biology and genetics."

"You were the kid who knew where babies came from?"

Redhead laughed as she nodded her agreement. "You'd better believe that was me. This reminds me, as well: when I was nineteen, a company was going to have me model for commercials and magazines."

"Get out. God, she looked like a model."

"It was exciting to say the very least."

"You ever do it?"

She shook her head. "When I met the woman in charge, she told me they would make alterations to my appearance, primarily because I 'looked too much like a man.' I said it was ridiculous, and I was never called back."
Gabriel remembered when she had talked to him a while back about "not looking like a woman." Was this what she had in mind as she said that?

"You don't think you look like a guy, right?"

"If that's the truth, so be it. I always have something more important to worry about than others' opinions."

"Well, for the record, you don't."

*You're beautiful, as a matter of fact.*

"I'm flattered," she smirked, then questioned, "Have you always wanted to be a soldier, Gabe?"

"Well, my shitty grades told me I wanted to be a soldier."

Before their conversation could continue, a plate was placed in front of him and—*Wow, did that look and smell amazing.*

The rest of their time was filled with lighthearted talk of certain events in their past. It was enjoyable, Gabe had to say, to see Moira smile when she spoke and listen to his nonsense, *and it was a step in the right direction.* She wasn't holding herself back or cutting herself off; they were talking as friends, and that made him the happiest damn guy in all of fucking Switzerland.

The ride back was nothing like the drive to the restaurant; he was more content than before, and despite neither of them speaking, his mind didn't wander towards negative thoughts so much as it did replay the events of the last two hours.

*Everything went so fucking well. So fucking well.*

They snuck (like two teenagers) back through the hangar and made their way to the laboratory.

Upon arrival, Moira paused in front of the doors and took her glasses from her face, proceeding to wipe the lenses with the hem of her shirt.

"I can't stand these," she said. "They're horribly uncomfortable."

"Wouldn't know," he replied, crossing his arms. "You're not heading up to the barracks?"

"I stay here for the night more often than naught." She placed her glasses over her eyes. "Besides, most of my wardrobe is down here."

"I think it was a good thing I dragged you out," he laughed.

"It was pleasant, I must say. I hadn't minded it at all."

She glanced at the time on the padlock on the wall. "You should go upstairs and show yourself. The Cowboy may begin to think I took your life."

"Wouldn't doubt it." He paused. "Alright, uh..."

A thought crossed his mind. A very *tempting* thought.

Screw it.
Giving into himself and his heart racing a mile a minute, Gabriel placed his chin on her shoulder and wrapped his arms around her tiny form in a hug.

Her back was so bony, and her shoulder was so bony, and she was so thin and so, so stiff.

*But he loved the contact.*

With a few small pats on her shoulder blade, he released her and looked up to her dual-colored eyes, which sported a look that he considered to be a mix of bewilderment and confusion.

"I'll see you," Gabe told her, "good night."

"Good night, Gabe," Moira responded quietly, and with that, he began his journey to his bedroom.

Why was she so stiff? Did she hate it? She hadn't pushed him away...

*But she hadn't hugged him back, either.*

Chapter End Notes

Everyone has layers, even narcissistic Irish noodles.
"Hey, where were you last night?" Brigitte questioned Gabriel as she sat down with him, her plate of breakfast in hand. "We were looking for you."

"Why'd you need me?" was his reply.

"Because we all were having a big cookout and we wanted everyone to be there! Genji wasn't there because Angela said that he didn't like eating in front of people, because he has a hard time with it, I guess. But nobody could get in touch with you!"

He should really start bringing his phone when he went places.

"Sorry, I was swamped last night."

"I know, but, just so you know you weren't forgotten."

Now, that was sw-Wait a second.

"Moira wasn't there, was she?"

"Well, I wanted to ask her if she could come up and hang out for a little, but Jack said that he didn't want her there. He said she was..." she paused, lowered her voice, and with a nervous chuckle, finished, "a bitch."

"Yeah? And he's a dick."

The Swedish girl sighed. "I just wish everybody could-"

She paused, and when she did, Gabe heard the sound of an annoyed voice approaching the cafeteria. ...Moira?

Not a moment later did the person in his thoughts appear, folder in her hands and Jack at her side.

She was in the middle of saying something.

"...dead, I would have done it by now. You're never around, yet you have the audacity to dare lecture me on what's best for him and how to do my job."

They paused at the entrance.

"You're practices are sketchy," Morrison rebutted. "I think I have the right to be skeptical."
"This is past the point of simple skepticism; this is ignorance. You're seeing problems where there are none because of an unjustified bias."

God, she sounded smart even when telling people off, he thought to himself, grinning ever-so-slightly.

"'Unjustified?' You messing with me?" the blonde continued.

"Oh, come on, you can't be this stupid." The redhead looked over in Gabriel's direction and motioned with her finger for him to join them.

"Oh no," Brigitte muttered. "Good luck."

"I think I might need it," he told the brunette, and stood up and marched over to Moira's side.

"I need you to complete this," she said as he arrived, handing him the folder.

Her face was a deep red.

"What are you guys bitching about?"

"Oh, screw it," Jack said, and began walking away from the Dining Hall. "I don't feel like hearing it from the both of you."

He left, and Gabriel was...so confused.

So confused.

Moira spat something in her second tongue before voicing, "It's hard to believe he is Overwatch's Strike Commander. He has the mind of an adolescent."

"What, you're untrustworthy again?"

"He's incredibly opinionated, yet ignorant to facts and details, and decides to form a bias that's grounded in propaganda and sensationalized information. People like him breed stupidity."

Wow.

"Right."

She's so angry.

"You get used to his bullshit after a while."

"Unfortunately, I'm a bit more petulant than you."

She pulled a pen from behind her ear-wait, that was there the entire time?-and handed it to him. "Get working on that. I'm busy at the moment, so if you have any questions, I'll be downstairs. You're brighter than most, however. I genuinely don't believe you'll have any problems."

Her statement made him smile. "Glad I don't look like a Neanderthal to you."

"You are of the rare sort," she grinned, and waved her goodbyes as she traveled to the lab. He waved back (definitely not wishing she would stay and definitely not wishing she would continue to compliment him) before glancing behind him.
Brigitte had already finished both plates of food; there was no point in going back to his original seat.

Deciding on sitting in a secluded section of the room, he opened the folder and glanced through the thick packet of papers within. It wasn't anything interesting (honestly, it didn't even look as if Moira would have fun going through it); questions regarding his general information, if this or that felt sore or numb or normal, illnesses he was vaccinated for; information she was obligated to document. He sighed as he began to print his name on the front page.

"That looks fun."

Gabe whipped his head around, frantically searching for the woman he begged and prayed he didn't just hear.

"Enough, you're making yourself look dumb."

*Am I going crazy?* he thought for a hot moment, completely horrified.

"Hey," her disembodied, heavily-accented voice started, "I have a suit that lets me go invisible and shit. I'll get you one if you want, but right now you got to stop acting suspicious. I'm trusting you, Gabe. Here, look." He felt a few light pats on his shoulder, and he wasn't sure if it calmed him down or made him worry even more. "See? You're not entirely out of you mind. Now, act like you're reading that."

"How'd you get in here? Is more of Talon here?" he questioned as calmly and non-suspiciously as possible, looking back at his papers.

"No, just me," the Mexican woman replied. "It wasn't easy breaking in here, if it makes you feel better."

*It most certainly did not make him feel better.*

"But yeah, we're in the area. Don't tell Jack, though. They could figure it out for themselves. See how much I'm trusting you right now?"

He didn't look in her presumed direction as he spoke. "What do you want?"

"I want to talk to you and Ms. Long-Legs. I was going to yesterday, but you guys snuck out somewhere, and I didn't feel like following you."

"You were here for that long?"

"Hey, sleeping in a car isn't as bad as it sounds."

Gabriel heard a soft *pat* beside him, and the woman's voice now came from his right. "You think you could talk her into sparing a couple minutes?"

He internally laughed-Moira O'Deorain sparing anyone a couple minutes of her precious time? Really?-as he explained to her, "When she's busy, she's busy."

*He was even shunned at times, and she has voiced over and over again, directly and indirectly, that his company (at the very least) wasn't despised.*

"Tell her it's important."

"And why can't you?"
"Because I don't know where she is!" she silently shouted. "I saw her walking out of here, but I looked back and she was gone."

He hadn't the slightest clue of what that meant.

"Then I saw you and I was like, 'cool, he's even sitting away from everyone.'"

He pondered for a moment. This was technically urgent, right? He was sitting next to a member of Talon (as if that wasn't bad enough) who was deciding to trust them both, apparently.

*Still, in the case that this woman is lying, he doesn't want to put the Doctor in harms way.*

"Are we the only ones you're talking to?" Gabe continued.

"Well, I tried talking to Genji, but he wasn't having any of it. He never ratted me out, though. Probably because of the dirt I have on him." She snickered at her own statement. Himself, on the other hand, was left confused. "You were talking to Genji?"

"Yep."

"Really."

*Want to keep a secret for me?*

*I'm surprisingly quite good at that.*

*That little fuck.*

"Don't call him out on it," the woman went on. "You're doing the same thing."

He looked up to make sure no one was looking his way, then responded with, "I know."

Genji was a good kid. He was troubled and resentful, but a good kid nonetheless.

*He was like Gabriel in that way.*

"Are we going to see Doctor Whatever-Her-Name-Is or what?"

"O'Deorain, and yeah, come on."

*He loved saying her name. Loved it.*

Picking up his folder, they traversed Switzerland's Overwatch facility, and as he guided her, she placed small taps (*still here*) on his back to notify him she was close behind.

He made an effort to glance out the windows and into the open, and as he did so, noticed rioters and picketers surrounded the barrier Athena had so graciously set around the compound.

Each time he viewed such a sight, he felt as if he could punch a hole through the reinforced metal wall.

*Ungrateful bastards, have no idea what we've done for you.*
A pat on his back stripped him from his thoughts, and that was the moment he realized they stood before an elevator.

Gabe had no fears of stepping into an enclosed space with this person. He was able to change his state of being on the snap of a finger.

He also knew she was the only one present. Her presence he could sense, and her perfume he could smell.

He had to admit it: she smelled quite nice.

"Now people are going to think I put perfume on," Gabriel voiced as they reached the bottom floor. There were no cameras here, and evidently she knew this, because she revealed her being the moment the doors shut. "I didn't put that much on," she said, and waved her hand dismissively. "By the way, I'm Sombra."

She wasn't armed, he noticed, but then again, he could never be entirely sure.

"The hacker?" Gabe interrogated. In recent times, reports of a mysterious individual known only by the alias "Sombra" has appeared, though a face could never be put to the name. The issue has never been brought up due to the hacking having no impact on Overwatch or Talon.

"That's me," she confirmed, "no pictures, though. I don't want to be found out again."

Again?

"And I have something to ask you: I'm thinking of coloring the tips of my hair to match my suit: do you think that would look stupid?" He gave her a look that made her laugh. "I guess I could tell you're not much of a hair guy."

They turned that infamous corner and were met something he thought he never would see: the doors to Moira's lab were left open. Beside them sat a pile of boxes upon boxes.

Was she cleaning out her closet? Wasn't he supposed to help?

"Wait here," Gabriel told Sombra, and he made his way to the near-end of the hall and into the large room, careful of not tipping anything over.

Moira was standing in front of her closet, seemingly scrutinizing its contents. He would have called out to her, alerted her of his being present, but the relatively loud mumbling in her beautiful voice stopped him.

Of course he had to tiptoe closer.

"Perhaps those should go to the back? No, throw everything into the hallway first, Genius. Right, right, of course. That will make sorting much easier. And Gabe could help, as well. Are you certain of that? Yes, because I'll force him to." She laughed to herself, then shook her head gently. "You're stalling, Moira. Yes, because I hate this. At least you've started, that's an achievement, is it not? I suppose." The woman nonchalantly glanced over her shoulder and jumped as she noticed his presence.

Now she was the one being startled. How the tables have turned.

"Having fun talking to yourself?" he said smugly. Her ears, cheeks, and the bridge of her nose shined pink. "What do you want, Arsehole?"
"We've got a guest."

"And why is that important to me?"

"Because," he set the folder on one of her desks, "remember that chick who preached to us in Monaco?"

Moira never looked so surprised in her life, he thought.

Chapter End Notes

This was supposed to be longer, but my wifi decided to be an asshole and I lost an hour's worth of writing. After that, I just got mad and gave up. :p Don't worry tho, I'm really excited to write Chapter 23. Y'all are gonna get more of an insight into Moira's character I think.
Chapter 23

Chapter Summary

Unable at the Moment.

Chapter Notes

Okay so in Moira's summer games highlight intro she holds the racket with her left hand, so does that confirm my suspicion that she's a lefty?????? Like, if she were a righty, she'd just create a healing orb to hit right??????? Instead of a damage orb???????

See the end of the chapter for more notes

You guys could be some valuable assets, you know?

That's what Sombra had said.

You've got a smart cookie on your side here, Commander. The stuff she comes up with: pretty snazzy.

That's what Sombra had said.

I'll be around. And I'll keep in touch with you. Now, show me how to get out. I'm not going back the way I came in, you know what I'm saying?

"God only knows what way you came in," Gabriel mumbled to himself.

"What's that, Gabe?" Moira called over to him.

"No worries, just thinking."

"About?"

He walked over to where she stood near her desk, a box of glass science apparatuses within his arms.

He promised he'd help.

It most certainly wasn't an excuse to spend time with her.

But it was.

"Nothing specific," he replied. The woman only hummed her response as she looked away and opened a drawer, fishing out a small plastic bag of what looked like chocolates.
"We could stop if you'd like," Moira offered, and she sat in the seat beside her and popped a candy into her mouth. Gabe set his item on the flat surface to his right. "I think that's what you'd like."

She looked to the side. "What gave it away?"

"Maybe all the complaining? That's my guess."

The Doctor went silent for a moment. "It smells like dust in here."

He couldn't help but laugh at her disgust. "You're not having too much fun right now."

"I'll be honest with you:" she scratched her forehead, "I'm dealing with the most painful cramps at the moment."

He decided to pull out a stool from underneath the table a little ways away and sat himself in front of her. "Can't say I know what you're going through." She shook her head gently.

"Can't you, I don't know, exercise that off? Not sure how much I remember from Health class," he chuckled awkwardly.

At least he was attempting to be helpful, right?

"You can," she smiled, "that's why I decided to begin organizing without you. I can't say it assisted me very much, however."

She crossed her legs and slumped in her chair.

The poor thing looked so tired, and her focus seemed to be elsewhere.

"We'll stop for now," Gabriel said, "if you're in pain." Moira simply nodded, placing another chocolate on her tongue.

"Go and enjoy the rest of your day," she commanded. "I'm not very entertaining."

"More entertaining than the other two shitheads we work with." He meant that wholeheartedly.

She grinned once more, but it faded as fast as it appeared, and after a brief moment of thought, the Doctor told him, "You still say that even after the way I acted yesterday night."

He furrowed his brow. Was she talking about not answering his question?

"Didn't I tell you not to worry about it?"

She shook her head for a second time. "It was embarrassing and...wrong."

"What the hell do you mean, 'wrong'?"

"I wanted to respond, yet couldn't."

What did that mean?

He decided against asking that question. Truthfully, he was afraid she would freeze again. Gabe hadn't the slightest clue why it happened or what triggered such a strange reaction, but fuck, he'd rather castrate himself with a butter knife than give this pitiful toothpick another reason to beat herself up.
"Well, if you couldn't, you couldn't, right?" he continued hopefully. "Some people aren't comfortable with certain things."

"And what I'm not comfortable with is ludicrous, and it gnaws at me," she said, a hint of irritation present in her voice. He had a feeling it wasn't directed at himself, however.

Moira wiped a bead of sweat from her temple, something Gabriel wasn't aware of until her actions brought his attention to it.

Why was she sweating? Was she anxious? Was she nervous, perhaps?

*It could be a "that time of the month" thing, too, couldn't it? I don't know how this shit goes,* he thought.

"You alright?"

There was a nod; a small one.

"Uh, right, well, why don't we just screw the subject?"

She nodded once again. "I apologize."

"Dear God-Moira," he smiled nervously, "quit with the apologies. You didn't do anything wrong."

When the woman in question said nothing, he continued with, "What do I need to do to get you to believe that?"

He hated seeing her like this, he truly did, but he couldn't help the thought of him being the only one allowed to witness this part of Moira O'Deorain. This strange second side of her that he couldn't figure out was something only he saw, and that notion alone was enough to make him feel *so fucking special.*

"I wish I were able to tell you, Gabe," the redhead replied, and it raised more questions than it answered, if it answered any at all. It seemed as if she'd become angry at herself in uncomfortable situations. Of course, that made absolutely no sense to him, but at the moment, she wasn't making anything easier, and it was the most logical conclusion he could come to.

Moira held out the small baggy previously placed in her lap. "Would you want these?"

"You sure?"

"I am." With that, he took her offering from her hand, fingers delightfully brushing against fingers.

"I may shower." She ran the heel of her palm across her forehead. "I feel disgusting."

*You don't look disgusting.* "I get it, sort of," he said, putting in his best effort not to sound crestfallen.

"Bathing helps numb the pain."

"That sounds depressing."

"I'll tell you what's depressing: you're required to complete that paperwork for me and you haven't."

"That's agonizing, let alone depressing," he laughed as he dumped the entirety of the small bag's contents into his hand (there weren't many left) and threw them into his mouth.
"I left everything on your desk in your office. There will be an extra page, I forgot to staple it to the rest when I gave them to you."

She stood and pushed in her chair, and, attempting to combat the overload of mint he was experiencing, holy Hell, that was not just chocolate-he brought his stool back to its original location. By this point, Moira was already heading to the back room. "Bye," she sounded pleasantly.

"You going to be around later on?"

That didn't sound weird, right?

"I might be." She paused near the back door and turned ninety degrees to face him. "Why?"

Gabe shrugged, his face heating up in an uncomfortable way.

She smiled at him. "You'd better be careful, Gabriel. I'm beginning to think it was genuine when you called me your friend."

He rolled his eyes and told her, "No, I was lying just to get a reaction," then tossed his empty bag in the bin under her desk.

"It's happened before," the woman said, and God, how he just wanted to hug her and make every terrible memory from her seemingly shitty past and every aspect of herself she hated just fade away. Even though he wasn't quite sure if she were insecure about anything or if she even liked physical contact, that's what he wanted to do.

"Well," Gabriel explained to her, "I'm not like that."

"I believe you," she smirked, and with that, the two recited their goodbyes and went about their day.

He decided to journey to his office and complete the task Moira had assigned to him.

Of all people, he didn't want her to believe he slacked off.

The path he usually took was now more unfamiliar than the path to the Laboratory, and he wasn't sure how to feel about that. Now that Blackwatch wasn't as active as it used to be, he found himself traveling here less and less. Overwatch was apparently now receiving a lot of slack, and this was the true reason the division is dying, from what Genji explains Angela tells him.

Did he feel the same way that Gabe felt about Moira with Angela? It sounded so plausible, considering-

No, because Genji's not a dumbass like I am.

The Shimada was apparently also absorbed in self-loathing and hate; this is what the Doctor explained to him one evening in a meeting.

He didn't have the greatest reputation amongst women, either, now that the Commander thought about it.

He eventually reached his destination, ending the odd internal predicament he had about his employee, and the object that stood out the most was the infamous folder sitting on his desk, a single paper placed squarely on top.

Normally, he didn't allow anyone access to his office, but with Moira, there was an exception, for
more reasons than just one.

He shut the door behind him and trekked over to the desk at the front of the room. Deciding to hold up the lonely sheet out of curiosity, he glanced over the front and spun it around to-

What?

"...I want to apologize-"

"...argued with myself-"

"...didn't want you to believe-"

It was a note.

"Before anything, I want to apologize for not having the ability to tell you this in person. Truthfully, Gabe, there are topics I have difficulty expressing outwardly, as you’ve witnessed. I’m not quite sure why, when the rest of the world speaks their mind so freely, that I pause and stutter. I have an inkling that the cause is multiple aspects of my mind arguing with one another, deciding whether or not I should say, but this is only speculation. Regardless, I would like to complete what I was attempting to get across to you: I recognize"-something was scribbled out-"your respect and the companionship you offer, and I"-another scribble-"wanted to explain to you how appreciative I am that you find enjoyment in my company. The words would just not come forth. That night, I argued with myself; I couldn’t and still do not understand why something so simple as an acknowledgement is"-scribble-"difficult for me to put into words. I was afraid; I didn’t want you to believe you did nothing but render me uncomfortable. You didn’t. That was simply me acting like my undesirable self and becoming angry over it. Forgive me for when I placed the blame on you. Something else I would like to bring up: I also apologize for the way I acted later that night. Contrary to what I’m certain you believe, I genuinely didn’t mind your hug. The truth of the matter is, that was the first time in nearly 20 years I’ve received one, and the sensation was so foreign to me and I was so caught up in conjuring up something to say (which I never ended up speaking) that I essentially froze. If you haven’t figured it out yet, I was never a very loved individual. Please, don’t believe I find physical contact repulsive, it’s simply new to me. And as a note, if you try to bring to my attention"-yet another scribble-"anything I’ve written in this letter to me in person, I may very well curl in on myself and die, so unless you would want to witness that, I would refrain from doing so.

Thank you for being as patient with me as you are,

Moira."

Gabriel reread it.
And reread it.
And reread it.
Over and over.

And over.

As his heart pounded in his chest.

Chapter End Notes

Fun fact: everytime I deleted a word (or words), I wrote it as her scribbling something out xD
Chapter 24

Chapter Summary

Thoughts.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Again and again and again.

Over and over and over.

Even when Gabriel had long since taken his eyes and mind off her words, they still played verbatim in his head. He wasn't sure of the answers he wrote or if they were correct, but he couldn't find it in himself to care.

Should he say something? Moira asked not to, though, hadn't she? Should he write back, then? Would that make the situation uncomfortable for her? She clearly wanted him to understand, well, everything; would it be fair to leave a note simply explaining that the contents of her letter were not lost on him?

Or would that make her uncomfortable?

He returned to reality for a moment to realize his pen had stopped moving, yet he didn't bother to have it continue its current task.

Wouldn't she want to know that Gabe received the words she poured her soul into? He believed so, yet he continued to hesitate. In all honesty, he was unsure of how she would react, though whether his fears were irrational was something he debated.

And then something about multiple things in her mind arguing?

His first thought was when he walked in on her speaking to herself yesterday morning. Sometimes she referred to herself as I and me, then other times she was not her, she was Moira, as if a second party was present and took part in the argument, explaining to the Doctor you're doing this and you're doing that.

Was that what was happening as she went silent that night?

Was she herself arguing with the other half that didn't seem to recognize they were one and the same? Did said other half win? Did she win? Which one wants to keep the individual hushed so terribly?

Is it healthy for her to have that thought process? he pondered afterwards, though he was sure he already knew the answer.

It didn't look like a good one.

This would then beg the question: did he ever believe her mental state was fine?
It was impossible for someone that intelligent.

Gabriel remembered being eighteen or nineteen and jokingly complaining about "wanting to be the smartest," then Dad telling him that he didn't want to be too smart, because "people like that don't function properly." He brushed it off as the burly man simply acting like an asshole, but...

Was...was Moira proof of that being true?

The way she saw the world, the way she saw people, placing her work over her own health and needs, living in extreme solitude and enjoying it, the obsession she had with finding answers and simply proving yes, she can, and she will; it wasn't...healthy.

Don't friend around with people like that, Gabe. Some of them are so screwed up.

Dear God, calm down.

Gabe silently chuckled to himself. He was nearly positive that was how the conversation ended, but holy Hell, if the young, rebellious version of himself could glance into the future; perhaps he would have never hired Moira.

Perhaps the young him wouldn't even become a soldier after witnessing the results of the SEP and the effect they had on him (disregarding the spectacular body and thighs; he was indeed attractive; at least, he hoped).

What would have happened to O'Deorain then is a mystery to him. She would most likely stay in Dublin, having no other reason to leave. That meant there would be no logic-defying genes, no peaceful dinners, no awkward hugs, and no letters stating sorry, I'm just really shy.

What a terrible fucking world to live in.

Gabriel fished out that certain paper from underneath his packet and gave her mostly-average penmanship (not very neat, not very sloppy) a quick glance.

What would he even write if he decided to respond? So, hey, if we're being honest with each other, I think you're gorgeous, and I make excuses to spend time with you because truthfully, I can't not enjoy myself when we do shit together and oh my God, I'm going off the deep end...

Gabe sighed. "What in the fuck are you doing to me, Moira?"

The door then swung open, Jack marched in, and the Blackwatch Commander's first instinct was to gently slam Moira's note down on the stack of papers before him.

Jack eyed him with a confused look. "I come at a bad time?"

"It's just a bunch of nonsense. You need something?"

There was tension in the air and in their voices.

"I need to talk to you about an upcoming operation," the blonde told him.

"Why?"

"Because we may need your assistance."

"What's going on?"
"Null Sector's up to something in the U.K."

_Null Sector? That Omnic Rights group?_

"Ana's got more details. You're going to have to head up with me to E-1."

Gabriel peered down at the papers on his desk. He had practically completed everything there was to complete, yet...

"Could you give me ten minutes? I'm in the middle of something."

"Just don't be too late, Gabe," said Morrison.

"Yeah, yeah," he responded, and with that, the Strike Commander exited the office, shutting the door behind him as he left.

Alone once more, he pulled a blank sheet from a drawer to his left and moved the rest of his paperwork to the side.

He didn't quite think of what he would write, the words just seemed to come as he went along.

"Sorry if this sounds rushed or half assed Jack wants me for something and I told him to piss off for a bit, so a bit is really all I get. I felt like i had to let you know I got your note and I want to say its (don't take this the wrong way) sweet that you went out of your way to clear some of that up. I understand alot better now. I think I was kind of nervous when you froze when i hugged you, I didn't really know what was going on and I thought maybe I did something wrong. Glad to know you weren't thoroughly disgusted by me. Also I get not wanting to talk about it in person. I know it can be difficult some times. Im not sitting here saying I know you but you get it." He pondered his next sentence carefully for a moment. "And hey if you ever want to talk about anything, you can. I'm all ears. No need for apologies or anything.

_Anyways, from the shitstain you're forced to deal with,

Gabe."

Giving his note what could barely even be called a proofread and writing on his folder _paperwork from Gabe_, he finished the remaining few pages of the packet and took a stroll (and sometimes a jog) down to Moira's lab.

He was doing the right thing by responding, it was clear now. At least she knew he read and comprehended her letter.

The doors were still open when he arrived, and as he entered the large room, he heard a faint, relatively high-pitched rumbling noise emanating from the back room.

_She was probably blow drying her hair__, he thought, and for a moment, imagined the tall woman standing in front of a mirror doing just that, though he wasn't entirely sure why.

Gabe placed his note inside the folder and set the cardboard container on a desk, then proceeded to jog to the Overwatch wing of the facility.

_God-only-knows what could be happening now._
Chapter End Notes

Gabe’s incorrect grammar hurts my soul, too.
Commander Morrison called for a meeting; you remember as such, do you not?

I'm aware of it.

Then act upon that.

I am. I am.

Moira stood perfectly still at the entrance to her laboratory and ran through-

Worry about it another time. You have more time on your hands than you can ever ask for. You're simply stalling.

You're stalling. You're stalling. You're stalling.

I'm stalling.

Enough standing in one place.

Of course.

With that, she opened the doors and made her way to the Conference Room.

It's awfully quiet.

The bottom floor never bustled with life, especially not her little section of the building. It was rather lovely; Blackwatch and Overwatch gifted to her the solitude she desired, perhaps without even realizing it.

It was unlike her to attend these meetings; however, Gabe had stressed th-

Gabe.

Gabe was going to be there.
Had you thought otherwise?

It slipped my mind.

He would most likely want to speak with her, as well, and it wasn't as if anyone else at the facility were particularly fond of her.

Calm yourself. He explained nothing had to be spoken of. You're becoming anxious over nothing.

Is that truly where this anxiety stems from?

She mentally paused to assess her predicament.

Perhaps I want for everything to be brought up in conversation.

The more she pondered such an idea, the more likely it became.

Why would you want that?

To prove to myself that I can, I suppose.

That you can what, exactly, Moira?

The words appear normal and handle these types of situations came to mind, but she knew neither answer were correct. It didn't seem as if that were a question she could respond to adequately without a bit of prior contemplation.

Moira continued her journey rather reluctantly, partially due to not wanting to attend in the first place and partially due to...

Anxiety. Am I truly anxious? Do I not want to face him?

That's exactly the case.

"How childish," she mumbled to herself.

Pitiful and sad. Childish, pitiful, and unutterably sad.

You scolded Jack for unjustified emotions, and yet, here you are.

She grimaced at that thought.

All we can do is recognize our mistakes and work to rectify them.

She continued the rest of her adventure void of any thought. Arguing with herself won't bring about any pleasant emotions, she decided, and the very last thing needed was to desire peace and silence in a room bustling with life and interactions.

Not that anyone besides Gabriel would even remotely wish to interact with her.

Does that upset you?

It's better to keep it this way. There are less distractions and annoyances.

Do you think that's healthy?
She chose not to answer.

Upon her arrival, Moira found the large room to be strikingly void of Overwatch's members. Lieutenant Willhelm and Captain Amari seemed to be conversing happily, judging by the large man’s body language, as well as Winston and Genji, who resided in a corner, and Gabe was reclining in a chair—his arms folded, a stance she noticed he took up often—with Jesse at his side, though her eyesight was too poor to make out how lighthearted the interaction was.

_I’d sooner believe the sky was falling than my being early_, she thought to herself with a smirk despite her strange nervousness, and hopped down the curved staircase before her toes.

_He will speak to you at some point._

_He’s aware. I’m aware._

The words could have been choked out, had she not shouted her question.

”What’s going on?” Moira paused at the edge of the table as the Commander turned his head around to face her. His only response was a shrug of those massive shoulders.

”Had Captain Amari explained anything?” She pressed.

_Relax._

”Yeah. Guess she doesn’t know either. Jack’s MIA.”

_If I’m forced deal with that man’s games again..._

”It’s a bunch of horseshit most of the time,” Jesse said, standing from his chair, ”won’t lie. But Morrison’s always got something keeping him busy. Angela, too.” She watched as the man walked over to the coffee brewers and heard Gabe stand from his seat, as well, though she didn’t truly register it until he stood next to her.

”There was also a time where he completely forgot to announce the meeting to everyone,” he explained. ”They were all busting his balls for about a week.”

_How unprofessional of all parties involved._

”How unprofessional,” she commented.

”I know. But sometimes you get so swamped stuff slips your mind. Maybe not for you, but, you know.”

_This isn’t as terrible as you originally thought._

Moira even found herself smirking at his comment. ”I suppose it may be difficult for me to empathize.”

”Oh, shut it, Einstein.”

”Is that jealousy I hear?”

The American laughed and recrossed his arms. ”I could kill you sometimes.”
"That wasn't a 'no.'"

"Wasn't a 'yes.'"

_It's so easy to speak with him._

_A sense of familiarity perhaps._

_And he was always smiling._

It was almost odd how perpetually joyed this man was to socialize with her. Never in her existence has she experienced anything like it; not from acquaintances, nor coworkers, nor her father. She appreciated it, she truly did, more than anything, but the gesture more often than naught left her unsure.

Moira wanted to discover what it was like to trust and be a part of a friendship, but it was hard. She wasn't the greatest at relationships of any kind.

_Far, far from it._

"Sorry," Gabriel smiled, "I'm just so fucking bored."

"No need to apologize, you hadn't done any wrong."

"Look who's talking."

His voice became quieter as he finished his sentence, and the grin he bore turned awkward and nervous.

"Sorry. I shouldn't of said that."

_You hadn't offended me._

"It's alright. It isn't very easy to offend me."

_I know how it may sound._

"I know."

_I simply cannot stand the way I act._

The bulky man turned and examined the crowd. "We got a few more."

"Any sign of Commander Morrison?"

_It gnaws at me._

Chapter End Notes
I thought I'd test out writing from this noodle's perspective. It's just kinda about how she views her world, so to speak, so I thought ey, why not? I tried to go for the "super introverted, lonely, kinda crazy genius." :p

P.S- She isn't schizophrenic, nor does she have multiple identities, that's just how she talks with herself. :) 

21th-27th of August I'll be on vacation and won't be able to update. Like I said when I left before, though, updates will resume ASAP. ;)

I felt like the way I write my chapters when they're told from Gabe's perspective couldn't be completely identical to how Moira's would be written, simply cause of how different the characters' personalities are from each other. :p

I know this one is short, but I'm going away and didn't want y'all to think I died...

~BNS
Chapter 26

Chapter Summary

Zhou.

Chapter Notes

Really sorry about the wait, school just started and I've been dealing with that and work. Updates won't be this slow (I promise), but they may be slower since now I have school to deal with as well. Sorry about the length too, but I promise next chapter's going to make up for it. ;) Moira and Gabe are gonna have a talk. xD

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"I told him, I'm not going to do it if I'm going to have to deal with his shit." Gabriel dipped a slice of toast into the yolk of his egg and bit off the desired section.

"Ironic," Moira said. "I'm forced to put up with everyone's nonsense, and I don't complain."

"Listen, it's different when it's Jack. He's infuriating on a whole n'other level."

"I suppose I could agree with you." The woman gracefully-yes, everything she did was graceful-sipped her tea as she turned her head to the side, seemingly glancing out of the windows of the cafeteria.

"It's warm today."

"Perfect swimming weather," he commented. "You like swimming?"

"Not with others."

That response was so Moira he didn't know what to do with himself.

"I prefer to relax when I swim, something that can't be done when others are around." She skewered a piece of pancake with her fork and muttered, "Perhaps later tonight," before popping it into her mouth.

"Does that include me?" It was an odd question, but he wasn't taking it back.

He wanted to hear her response.

"It depends on how I'm feeling that day," Moira smirked.

"Well, you must be feeling good today. You aren't the easiest person to coerce out of their cave."

"I wouldn't necessarily call 'I'm not leaving this room without you' coercion so much as manipulation."
Gabe recalled journeying to that infamous laboratory with a few ordered boxes and the full intention of enjoying breakfast with her.

_He recalled saying that. He recalled how hot his face became._

Even now, as he recollected on the event, he could feel the blood rush to his ears.

"Hey, sometimes you got to do what you got to do," he chuckled.

"Unbelievable." She shook her head lightly. "It mystifies me how I'm able to tolerate you."

He threw a chunk of egg white into his mouth. "I must be more tolerable than Jesse."

"While that's true, you're nowhere near as tolerable as Genji."

"Can't argue with that." Gabriel swallowed. "I don't think I'm that bad, though."

"No, I can't say you are." The Doctor looked away from him and to her small stack of pancakes. "Your grammar is, however."

_Oh._

_The note. His note._

_Didn't she not want to talk about that?_ he thought. However, judging by the _I wish I weren't here right now_ demeanor she boasted, it seemed as if that wasn't something she'd meant to be heard.

_He couldn't just sit there awkwardly, though._

Gabe decided to tread lightly.

"I told you I didn't have a lot of time."

"I don't believe time would have made a difference," Moira said through flushed cheeks and an averted gaze.

"Love how nice you are to me."

Her smile grew a bit wider as she looked to him once more. "I-"

"...because the Commander's too busy flirting!" Jesse's voice suddenly called out, and both Gabriel and Moira turned their heads to the source of his voice.

A large chunk of Overwatch and the remaining few of Blackwatch encircled a table and were looking to him expectantly, save for Genji.

Determined to fight off the embarrassment threatening to rush to his ears and cheeks, he huffed as he stood and marched over to the bunch, food left where it sat.

"Is this important?" was the Commander's first question, and _it had better be important, because Moira was just starting to get comfortable and it was fucking adorable._

"You remember Mei, right, Boss?" said McCree. An image flashed in his head of the short Chinese woman they spoke to over a video feed a few times before. They spoke of recruiting her to Overwatch, but she was never sure.
"What about her?"

"We got her paperwork all set. She's heading over here as we speak."

Gabriel paused and thought over the man's statement. "What does that have to do with Blackwatch?"

"Oh, come on," Ana spoke up, "you've been here how long, Gabriel? You know we throw together something nice when someone like her joins."

*Oh, yeah, right.*

Blackwatch members weren't offered the same treatment as Overwatch members, so it was easy to forget sometimes, despite how many parties (*excuses to drink alcohol*) he has seen in his day.

"You better come Friday," Brigitte looked up at him from her father's side. "I don't want to have to hunt you down again." The teen offered Moira (who was standing to his right, something he was vaguely aware of until then) an odd glance before turning back to Ana.

The woman smiled. "I'll get you up to speed on when this is taking place soon enough, okay, Gabriel?" The motherly tone in her voice was impossible to ignore.

"Got it," he grinned back.

The crowd slowly broke up after that, with most returning to their meals. Gabe decided he was no longer hungry and trekked over to a trash bin while Moira finished her breakfast.

*She is coming to that party,* he thought as he returned. *I'll carry her to it if I have to.*

Which he wouldn't mind doing at all.

"You're going to that thing, right?" he questioned the Doctor as he sat down.

She pierced a slice of strawberry before answering. "I'm not sure."

"Why not?"

"Well, in the case that you're a bit slow and haven't noticed, social events are not my forté."

"Aw, come on, it won't be that bad." When she didn't answer, he decided to tell her, "I want you to come."

"Why's that?"

*If only I could grow a pair and tell you.*

"The hell do you mean, 'why'? It can't be just because..." He trailed off, mainly due not having the ability to speak the words that sprung into his head.

Perhaps this made him like Moira, in a way: awkward and closed-off emotionally. Despite how outward he may be, there was still that second side of him.

And perhaps it was a side he'd like to bury.

*He simply wasn't sure.*
What are y'all's thoughts on a Gency fic in the future? I really like those cinnamon rolls, too.
Chapter 27

Chapter Summary

Explanations as to Why.

"Come on, what's the big deal?" Gabriel testified, not allowing any negative emotions to get the better of him.

"I've explained this to you, Gabriel," Moira said while organizing the stacks of papers she laid out on the desk before her, "I'm not a fan of social events. Go and enjoy yourself, I need to work on a few things."

*I'd enjoy myself a lot more if you were there,* was something he didn't say. Instead, he opted for, "Those few things can wait. I'm not asking you to become this 'outward' person, just to go up and have a few drinks or something."

"For someone whose coworkers scold him for associating with me, you're extremely adamant at flaunting said association around."

"Well, screw them, then."

The woman paused, curling her arms behind her back. "I don't know, Gabe."

"I know for a fact you'd enjoy yourself. And if you don't like it, just head back down."

When she glanced to the side, he decided to add, "Come on, you're my buddy. I like hanging out with you," before crossing his arms both nervously and awkwardly and leaning his hip into the desktop beside him, the cartilage of his ears threatening to melt off at the intense heat accumulating there.

Moira smiled, her gaze still focused elsewhere. "That's sweet," she said softly, and his heart fluttered at her words.

Her tone wasn't mocking or condescending, she was genuinely touched, and just...wow.

Before Gabe was able to respond, the woman blurted, "Fine, I'm feeling generous now."

"All of a sudden?" he questioned, still a tad embarrassed at the corny nature of his previous statement.

"You have a point, I may enjoy myself. And I'm not heartless; it's hard to decline when you tell me that."

He laughed before stating, "I knew you had it in you."

She shook her head lightheartedly. "Give me a moment to change."

"Want me to wait for you?"

"If you'd like," she said as she began to walk towards the back room, "I won't be long."
The small smile that Gabriel physically could not remove from his features...God, it was infuriating, but it wasn't a liar.

He was ecstatic, and it showed.

Even as a bit of time passed and Moira had since walked over to his location within the lab, he continued to smile.

"What?" she questioned.

"Huh? Oh, I'm thinking of something."

"Of what?"

*Got to tell her something.*

Gabe shook his head. "Nothing."

"What do you mean, 'nothing'?"

"I mean I really don't want to say," he laughed nervously, and prayed he didn't come off as rude.

The Doctor herself looked more confused than ever, yet (thankfully) she chose not to interrogate him further.

"Are we going, then?"

He nodded and spun around, the lanky woman at his side as they made their way to the common room.

There were so many answers he could have spoken that would have seemed plausible, and yet, he chose the *I won't tell you* route.

It simply felt right to offer such a statement at the moment, thought he couldn't place his finger on why.

*Because I suck ass,* was what popped into Gabriel's head, and the thought made him quietly scoff to himself.

Nonchalantly, he glanced up at Moira only to find her perplexed once more, although this time, a smirk was placed upon her beautifully contoured face.

"What? Don't look at me like that," he smiled.

"You're odd, Gabriel."

*I'm odd. Right, sure."

"I'd say as much."

"Alright, Moira, whatever."

She chuckled in response, oblivious to just how much he adored saying her name. "I'm glad you enjoy entertaining yourself."

"I mean, I think everyone enjoys entertaining themselves." The look he was hit with meant his quip
did not go over her head.

"You're insufferable."

"I had to."

"No, you did not..." Her sentence trailed off into a laugh that was punctuated with a small snort at its end. "Damn you," Moira smiled as she covered her mouth.

"See? Who doesn't like shitty jokes about masturbating?"

"I could very easily turn around, and that would be the end of this."

Gabe couldn't help but chuckle. "Alright, alright. I'm sorry, Your Highness."

"Hmm, I suppose you're forgiven. For now, that is."

God, she was so beautiful.

Everything about this woman was so fucking amazing. From her personality to her unique quirks to her lovely body; she was beautiful in his eyes, and fuck everyone who tried to tell him otherwise.

I'm losing it, he thought. Oh well.

Gabriel looked over to his tall friend (who was a much happier camper now) and simply watched her walk alongside him for a few a moments for no other reason than the fact that his eyes happened to land on her.

She-

Oh, fuck, no. He immediately looked away. Come on, Gabe, really?

It was true, this was the first time he has ever felt so strongly about another person, but he never imagined allowing himself to entertain anything...sexual.

Deny it all he'd wish, however, the split moment thought of she definitely plays with herself down here and the image that came with it made his lower belly stir and burn.

"Any reason you don't like parties? Or people in general, I guess?" he asked her. There was no way in Hell he was letting himself venture down the hole he was standing at.

No way in fucking Hell.

Moira seemed to ponder his question for a moment. "I was never a fan, particularly."

She paused. "My father never allowed me to enjoy such things, either. That could be a factor."

That was enough to peak his interest. "He didn't?"

The Doctor stopped at the elevator and shook her head. Although she stood next to them, it didn't seem as if she had any intention of pressing any buttons.

Gabe didn't mind, however.
"My father was not a kind man," she started, her voice lowered by emotion and her gaze averted. "He was controlling and...twisted."

"What would happen?"

He wanted her to open up and feel comfortable around him, but when that time would come wasn't for him to decide.

That didn't mean he couldn't help her along, though.

"He wouldn't allow me to spend time with groups of friends;" she continued, "he explained that it wasn't safe. And I was not allowed to have anyone male in my life, besides him." The redhead paused once more. "I remember he told me that I couldn't date or marry, and if I ever became pregnant, he would throw me down the stairs or poison my food."

Oh, fuck.

"He used to hit me, and it would leave bruises and scratches, and if I ever explained to anyone the true cause of those injuries, that I would be so sorry, I'd wish I weren't born." She shook her head. "And the reasons I'd be punished were ridiculous. Dressing a certain way, or if my scores weren't up to his standards, or if I gained this...small amount of weight." Moira sighed, and it was quick and troubled. "And he'd mock me if I told him how I felt. I was psychotic if I were angry, and a pussy if I were depressed." Her expression contorted into something more lost. "I apologize, I didn't mean to be so heavy."

"No, y-you're fine. You can talk to me."

There was a moment's wait before she spoke up once more.

"I blame him for the way I am. This..." Moira shook her head and ended it there, and Gabriel decided it was great that she didn't activate the elevator just yet.

"Really sorry to hear that," he told her. The woman closed her eyes and pinched the bridge of her nose.

"We don't have to go up right now." She nodded at his statement.

As an afterthought, he decided to ask, "Do you need a hug?" Moira scoffed and nodded for a second time, her eyes never meeting his.

Tentatively, Gabe took a step closer to her and enveloped her in his arms, and a second later, she returned the gesture.

There were multiple things he could have focused on: the pressure of her chin resting on his shoulder, the feeling of her long fingers against his back, how close she was; instead, his mind went to the single, curt, shaky breath she exhaled.

Wow, he thought, just...wow.
Chapter 28

Chapter Summary

One and the Other.

Chapter Notes

Work and school rip my life away from me like there's no tomorrow.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Gabriel walked alongside Moira to the common room, the air filled with silence and her quiet whispers here and there, too low for him to make out anything coherent. She seemed to spend a lot of time speaking to herself, he absentmindedly noticed, and, perhaps against his better judgement, decided to comment on that fleeting thought.

"You really like talking to yourself."

Moira went silent for a moment-too-long. "My apologies. I didn't realize you were able to hear that."

"Hey, it isn't bothering me. Continue."

However, she didn't continue. As a matter of fact, the poor doctor's cheeks bore a heavily-saturated pink, and he suddenly felt like a jackass for making her feel so self-conscious.

A pit grew in his stomach as he thought of something to say; and as his mind drew blanks. Gabe's thoughts ran back to her note to him, and the way she spoke about herself.

She used the term undesirable to describe herself.

Undesirable.

What was so undesirable to her? Was talking to herself on that metaphorical list of undesirable aspects? What was so wrong with that?

"You know," he sounded more quietly now, "you seem to really enjoy doing a number on yourself."

"What do you mean?" she responded.

They entered a main hallway, a place perpetually buzzing with life, and it was no different then. He decided to step closer to her, voice level approaching a whisper.

Holy fuck, he loved the proximity.

"You're always beating yourself up. For one reason or another."

She glanced in his direction for a singular second before returning her gaze to the path ahead. "I have
my reasons."
"I can guarantee you, they're not good ones."
"Well," she huffed, "sometimes I feel as if I deserve it."
"What the hell makes you think you deserve it?"

To his utmost surprise, the Irishwoman smiled, though it seemed slightly pained.
"There's a lot of things that cause me to believe that I deserve to be scolded, Gabe."
"Like what?"

The duo stopped in front of the doors to the common room, laughter and discourse emanating from behind the wall.
"I suppose..." She paused. "I suppose it's a more of a particular instance than a series of anecdotes."

That confession both confused and intrigued Gabriel, and a part of him did not want to attend the gathering and instead sit and chat with the woman that stood before him.

*In private, specifically.*

"What instance?" he questioned, and she shook her head and opened the door she faced, the noises from inside now escaping the room and dancing into the hallway.
"I'll talk to you about it at a later point," Moira explained, her voice raised.
She looked to him. "It isn't a story I'd like anyone to overhear."

*Shit,* that nearly made him smile.
"I got you," he told her, then decided to add, "Glad I'm special."

He couldn't *not* comment on the fact that it was a story she was entrusting to *him and him only.*

The Doctor raised her eyebrows, a miniature smirk forming on her features. *"You're something, that's for certain."* The Commander scoffed at her remark and looked into the now-breached entrance to the common room.

Before Moira could venture inside, he questioned, "You're sure you're all good?"

*It was completely fine if she needed a few more minutes to relax.*

The redhead's smile faded. "We're already here. I'll be alright."

"I don't mind, you know that."

"I do know that, and I appreciate the sentiment, however..." She trailed off and shook her head, breaking their eye contact. "No, don't say that," Moira seemed to say to herself, then proceeded to glance back to him. "I'm going to be fine, I'll get over myself eventually." All he could do was roll his eyes and follow her inside at that point.

*I'll get over myself,* she says. *I'm upset and kind of emotional for some pretty damn valid reasons, but I'll just need to get over myself.*
Gabe could hardly believe his ears at that moment.

Un-fucking-believable.

He was beginning to worry about this woman, now, more than he did previously and for extremely different reasons.

Does she think that lowly of herself? Does she believe becoming upset is wrong?

Or not "normal"?

Fuck, when Gerard died, he was a mess...

Didn't want anyone seeing that, though.

Perhaps that was it: a sense of pride and dignity.

Even if that were the case, however, he never believed "getting over himself" was ever a notion he should rightfully believe.

God in Heaven, the closer he became with this strange individual, the more depressing her story seemed to be.

All Gabriel could do is be there for her when she needed him, he decided for the night.

No one else was going to be.

"Looks like Gabriel and his cohort finally decided to show up," Ana's voice sounded, and he realized he stood at the bottom of a stairwell and in front of a group of sundry individuals.

"Yeah, sorry, got distracted fishing my cohort out of the depths of Hell," he smiled in return.

"This place is akin to Hell, isn't it?" chimed Moira's melodic voice.

In the meantime, Gabe glanced around the room, admiring the large assortment of food resting on the tables placed haphazardly along the walls as well as the empty alcohol bottles strewn about the television stand. At the moment, there were too many to count-go figure.

The thing that caught his eye, however, was the barely-familiar face that pushed her way through the wall that was Reinhardt Willhelm and stood before the Blackwatch Commander, a jubilant smile accompanying her features.

"It's nice to finally see you in person, Commander!" Mei expressed, and took his hand in her much smaller one and shook it firmly.

"Good to see you," he replied.

The brunette then turned to Moira and repeated her gesture, her hand once again being much smaller than the one she grabbed.

"Hi! I'm Mei-Ling Zhou, but just call me Mei."
"Doctor Moira O'Deorain. And I've heard of your research, Mei. I'm impressed."

Mei giggled, visibly delighted by the redhead's comment. "Thanks! I'll have to, um...tell you about it sometime!"

"I look forward to that."

"Good! And can I just say, you're really pretty!"

"Oh?" Moira seemed to be genuinely taken aback by the smaller woman's compliment, and her ears seemed to flush in the slightest bit.

_You are pretty_, was what he thought at this point.

"Mhm. Even your voice is pretty," Mei nodded.

The tall geneticist scoffed rather awkwardly. "Thank you, that's kind of you to say."

"Just saying what I'm thinking! But now I have to go, I think my food is getting cold."

"No problem," Gabriel assured her. "Go and enjoy yourself."

"Thanks, you too!" The Chinese woman spun around and waved her goodbyes, then proceeded to jog over to the couch and disappear behind its headrest.

"I talked with her for a bit," Lena spoke up, "she's awfully nice."

"A wonderful addition to the team!" Lieutenant Willhelm boomed before turning to Ana. "You and Jack have a good eye for new comrades!"

"Only the best for my organization," was the Captain's response.

While Gabe listened to the two soldiers absentmindedly, Moira decided to lean closer and mutter to him, "I wasn't expecting that."

He couldn't help but chuckle at her admittance. "You're funny."

"I'm not joking."

"I know, that's why it's funny."

The woman gave him a look that screamed _what the hell is wrong with you?_, yet she smirked as she did so. "You're such a child sometimes."

"Hey, I'm a guy, it's in my genes. I'd think you of all people would know that."

She rolled her eyes wholeheartedly. "I'll be back shortly, I'm going to use the restroom."

"I'll be here."

Moira nodded and headed towards a doorway, and all the while, he, _trying to make it as unnoticeable as possible_, watched her go.

After the geneticist disappeared, Gabriel opted for examining the various types of alcohol and treats that were scattered about the room; however, his scrutiny was cut short when he discovered Cadette Oxton simply _staring_ at him with an almost childlike curiosity within her gaze.
She stepped closer to him, possibly so her voice wouldn't be drowned out by the white noise bouncing off the walls of the large room. "You know, Boss, I don't want to be nosy, but do you actually have a thing for her?"

The group had since dissipated; it left only her and him.

*And he was somewhat relieved by that.*

"Didn't I already answer this a while ago?" Gabe nearly spat out rather defensively, and he *hated* how he could hear the defiance in his voice, because that meant *she could hear it, too.*

The Brit shrugged. "It really seems like it, from the way you act around her."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Well, I'm just saying, it seems to be turning into a 'you can't find one without the other' situation. And you just told us that you went out of your way to bring her with you. Not to mention that it's hard to ignore that you get kind of flirty around her." Lena shrugged as his skull *burned* with embarrassment. "I'm a girl," she giggled nervously, "we tend to notice these things."

*Oh my God. It's that noticeable.*

He put his hand over his eyes and shook his head, unable to form words at that moment.

If she picked up on shit like that as easily as she did, *who else picked up on it?*

*Who else is laughing to themselves right now?*

"You know..." he started, yet those two words were all that came forth.

He *needed* to dig himself out of this hole he caused.

"It's alright, Commander!" Oxton patted his shoulders reassuringly. "I get it. You're forced to be stuck with someone for a while; that could lead to some weird feelings."

He sighed, defeated.

*There was no getting out of this one, either, was there?*

"Is it that noticeable?" He could barely look her in the eye.

*Why am I like this?*

"Well, to me and maybe a few others, sort of. To her?" She seemed to look back on some things before answering. "It's hard to say, honestly. She's really good at not showing how she feels. Like, crazy good."

"You're telling me," he scoffed.

Lena giggled once more. "Well, I'm rooting for you! And this will stay between us, don't worry!"

"Thanks."

"No problem, Commander!" She offered him a quirky salute and blinked over to where Winston stood placing food onto a plate.
She definitely knew, he thought. She's smart as all hell, nothing got past her.

If she were aware, that meant she wasn't acting upon it because she didn't feel the same, then, right?

Oh...

Oh, that was so fucking depressing.

Chapter End Notes

The song 'Jenny' by Studio Killers really reminds me of this story. xD
"I have some pretty major stuff to discuss with you guys," Sombra told them. "We might be sitting here for a while." She adjusted herself in her spot on the couch. "Who knows? This could even be our last time talking." Gabriel wrinkled his brow and looked over his shoulder at Moira, who appeared to either be only mildly concerned or in deep thought, or both. There was a twang of...something behind his chest as she glanced to him, and he reactively turned away and focused on the much smaller, much curvier woman in front of him.

"It felt as if he experienced a loss of hope, or perhaps even sorrow, and if he didn't make a conscious effort to ignore that feeling, it would distract him to an infuriating extent.

"Whether it is or not is up to you, you know," the brunette said.

"Let's get on with this, please," the Doctor chimed behind him, not too rudely, not too pleasantly.

Sombra rolled her eyes. "My boss still doesn't know I'm keeping in touch with you two, and that's because I want to be sure you're one-hundred percent in on this before I tell him."

"You've barely explained anything, and you want us to be on board already?" he hissed in response.

"Was she crazy?"

"That's why we're here today, amigo. I have a few words that I need to get across."

He listened intently, ignoring the dull, psychological ache behind his ribs to the best of his ability.

"Stop acting like a kid, for Christ's sake."

"Basically," said the Talon woman, "remember a while ago when I chatted with you over the camera? Remember what I said?"

Truthfully, Gabe found it difficult to recollect on that particular instance, and apparently it presented itself to Sombra, because she decided to begin her proposal with, "Well, I offered you a little...spot among our ranks, so to speak. And before you say anything, let me explain."

A pit formed in his stomach, and as he flipped through the memories of fighting alongside Overwatch, it became a sinking feeling that was near-impossible to ignore.
Was he truly considering working for Talon? A terrorist group that has slaughtered the innocent just to have their way?

_Was he going mad?

"I'm not saying you should just ditch Blackwatch and come help us. That would be great, but I didn't think you were going to do that. So, I opted for the next best thing."

_God, he nearly felt sick as he listened.

"But first, I have to ask you: do you _really_ love working underneath Overwatch, Commander Reyes?" He blinked and thought for a moment, then decided to answer as truthfully as ever. "I don't know."

Sombra seemed to ponder on this before continuing her interrogation. "So, would you be attest to, say, handing over everyone's dossiers and the information you're going to collect on Null Sector eventually? And throwing in the info you already have?"

_Why?

"What for?" Gabriel pushed.

_What would Talon want with that random information?

"Future reference," the Hispanic woman said ambiguously, and it _pissed him off._

"Look, I'm not saying ditch Blackwatch and come work for us. You could stay loyal to your organization, and you'll just offer us a hand every now and again; deal?"

Conflicting thoughts and feelings raced through his mind at unfathomable speeds. The ache between his lungs had since disappeared and was replaced with a dreadful sense of confusion.

_He didn't know what to do.

_He didn't fucking know what to do._

Gabe was aware that this conversation would happen at some point, and yet, like a _dipshit_, he decided to push anything and everything related to Sombra and Talon to the back of his mind. Truthfully, the weight and gravity of this bound-to-happen exchange hadn't dawned on him before then, and now that he sat in front of what he turned a blind eye to and couldn't ignore it any longer, it left him lost and unsure.

"You need more time to think about this," the Hacker's voice brought him back down to Earth, "clearly, and being the nice person I am, I'll give you a few more days. But I'm not going to give you forever, here, amigo."

The brunette stood from the couch, keeping her violet eyes (he still couldn't understand _why_ her irises were that shade) locked with his multicolored ones. "Just keep in mind that we're not going to be the only ones benefiting from this, Commander."

With an odd wave of her hand, Sombra vanished into a vortex of purple flashes and glittering hexagons, leaving only him and Moira to inhabit the laboratory.
Gabriel sighed and rubbed his face. Out of everything he's been through in his life, all of the wars and attacks and deaths and wounds and scientific experiments, the conversation that just transpired left him mentally and emotionally drained more than ever.

*He just wanted to sleep.*

There was a small poke on his shoulder, followed by Moira's melodic voice. "Would you like any tea, Gabe? It aids in doing away with stress. Certain types, that is."

He looked over his shoulder as he voiced, "Yeah, I'll sleep-uh, have some."

*Oh, boy.*

He scoffed at himself as the woman behind him raised a brow. "I need a nap," he told the Doctor, and repositioned himself so that he faced her.

"If you would rather sleep, I won't keep you," Moira explained to him.

*And miss the opportunity you're giving me here? Hell no.*

Of course, he wouldn't mind sleeping with her. Not in a sexual way (*not...*in a sexual way), but in a sweet, comfortable kind of way. A vision popped into his head for a brief moment of him watching her side rise and fall as she slept beside him, her back turned to face the Commander and her fiery hair thrown in disarray. She bore the black tank top Gabe saw her wearing all that time ago, and the sheets were pulled up to her waist. *Truly,* a beautiful scene.

Gabriel decided to force said beautiful scene out of his mind before he either stayed silent for too long or let it consume him, or both, and continued on with responding to her statement.

"Nah, I'm fine, I could stay for a bit."

"Are you certain?"

"Yeah. Don't worry."

Moira raised her eyebrows and looked off to the side. "As long as you're sure of yourself."

The redhead stood and began walking over towards the entrance to the first room of her lab, and he followed her closely behind as she did so.

"I recommend," the Irishwoman said as she pushed the door before her open, "that you rest before making any decisions for her."

"Right," he replied. "I don't think I could make a decision right now even if I wanted to. My brain is fried."

"From that small exchange alone?"

"Well...Yeah," Gabe admitted to her sheepishly. "That's going to have a major impact on me and Overwatch, and possibly Blackwatch." The two of them paused at the coffee machine. "I think it's going to effect me more mentally than anything."

"Why is that?"

He paused and racked his brain until the right words presented themselves.
"Guess I'm not ready to betray everyone yet."

"And yet, neither are you prepared to reject Sombra's offer."

_Bingo._

"Shit, you're sharp," he smiled, and Moira smiled back.

"I hear that often."

"Of course you do. Regardless, I'll look into all this at a later time."

"I have a question, Gabe."

"Shoot."

"What is it that tempts you to continue to consider the offer?"

A million scenes and images from the past shot through his mind at the question, the most frequent being comments of distrust towards him and his current strained relationship with the Strike Commander.

_Fucking Jack._

He didn't describe any of these thoughts to the person in front of him, however.

_He couldn't._

Gabriel didn't fair well when talking about emotional subjects, the atmosphere always became too awkward for him to bear, and he absolutely refused to allow Moira to witness him become..._whatever_ he would become should the situation become emotionally charged.

So instead, he opted for, "Honestly, couldn't give you an answer. Not right this very second, anyways."

"I see. Perhaps we should drop it for right now."

"I agree. And weren't we making tea or something?"

The Doctor's ears flushed red as she explained, "I didn't want you to believe I wasn't listening, so I...I decided..." She scoffed and looked away as her cheeks became red, clearly becoming annoyed with herself. He held up his hands in an _it's okay, really_ gesture. "Hey, relax, I'm messing with you." The woman seemed to sigh at his statement and proceeded to cover her eyes with a hand and shake her head slowly.

"Why am I like this?" Moira voiced softly, and he responded by stepping over to her and placing his hand on her shoulder.

"Hey, I don't need you having a mental breakdown, too," he told her.

"My life is a mental breakdown."

"Welcome to the club, we have jackets." He patted her shoulder and removed his hand.

"Why do you worry so much about small things like that?" Gabe inquired. Moira studied him for a few moments before abruptly squinting her eyes shut and violently shaking her head.
The same thing she did on their night out.

He raised his eyebrows in shock. "Nevermind, forget I asked."

"I'm fine," she consoled as she spazzed out for a second more, then seemed to calm down afterwards. "My apologies, I'm fine."

She wouldn't look at him anymore.

He stood still for a moment or so, unsure of what to do or say, but eventually opted for, "How about we agree to forget the past hour for right now?" She only nodded and said no more.

Is she embarrassed or something? he thought.

Gabriel supposed that he would be as well, if he were in her current situation.

Why she did, well...that, he didn't have a clue, but there was no way in hell he was going to inquire about it. She may become too stressed or upset, and that would absolutely kill him.

In an attempt to distract both of them from the currently strained and awkward situation, he decided to try and direct Moira's attention somewhere else.

"Hey, you hungry? I could get something."

She (thank the Lord) glanced over to him. "Do you have anything in mind?"

There we go.

Now, the both of them could relax.

Thank God.

Chapter End Notes

I think Chapter 30 is gonna just filled with gabe being a lovestruck shit and cuteness overload, we'll see xD
Chapter 30

Chapter Summary

Bones.

Gabriel awoke to find himself engulfed in the warmth that was the blankets atop his bed. As he roused and sat up, the first thought to come to mind was *why am I still naked?*

He hadn't any memories of the night before, nor did he feel a chill, nor did he examine his body: he simply *knew.*

"I don't think you have a day off today, you know," Moira's voice chimed to his left. He glanced over to witness the woman sitting up and shirtless, adorned in nothing but her bra, and the covers were pulled over her lap.

*Huh, never thought this day would come,* he thought.

"Hurry up," the Doctor urged, "go."

Gabe dragged his attention over to the door positioned ahead of him, except there was no door. The only thing staring back at him was a rectangular hole in the wall where his slab of metal and electronics once stood.

He wasn't entirely sure of the time, but *something* told him it was late into the morning, and a sense of dread washed over his being, for more reasons than just one.

"Let me get some clothes on first," he told Moira.

"Nobody's going to be looking at your ass," she countered, "only the fact that you're there on time. Just go."

*She's talking differently,* he observed. *Maybe she's exhausted.*

*And she had a point, too.*

It would be better to show himself on time completely stripped rather than be clothed and consequently late.

"Right. I'm going then," Gabriel announced, and began to try and remove the blanket that covered his legs, only to realize he was unable to do so. His arms and the area around him made it feel as if they were engulfed by jelly, and his vision blurred as he glanced from his lap to Moira, who was staring thoughtfully at his person.

"Hmm," was all she sounded.

And then he opened his eyes.
And this time, he was clothed.

Firstly, Gabe reached for the phone located at his bedside and glanced at the time (*three in the morning; he never wakes up so early*) before placing it down on the table once more. Secondly, he pondered on *what the actual fuck* his brain conjured up for him while he slept.

He was *dreaming* about her now? Was that *healthy*?

*And she was practically nude*...

He sat up (*for a second time, he absentmindedly thought*) and stretched his arms and legs, yawning as he did so.

This was unbelievable. He was acting so immature, so *unprofessional*. He never let emotions overcome him like this.

*Never.*

Gabriel was stoic and cold, putting the operation and goal above anything else, and *apparently*, he has now also gone soft for an apathetic, probably-sadistic, narcissistic doctor who *clearly* suffers from some sort of social and emotional dissociation and is five sizes too tall and five sizes too...well...*flat*.

*And holy God, how he thought she was so damn cute.*

If they hadn't been forced to associate as much with each other in the beginning, perhaps he wouldn't be stuck in his current predicament.

*Or maybe I wouldn't be stuck in this predicament now if I just...* He paused.

*There were so many ways he could end that thought.*

*Maybe if I hadn't taken her on that date. Maybe if I hadn't hugged her. Maybe if I hadn't spent those mornings and afternoons sitting alone with her drinking tea. Maybe if I hadn't shared a hotel room with her all those months ago.*

The list simply continued on.

Why did he allow himself to do this? Why did he torture himself by falling so deeply in...in...

*In love with this woman?*

*God,* that sounded so fucking sappy, but that was the truth, wasn't it? He didn't just simply have feelings for Moira O'Deorain.

He loved her.

He *loved* her.

He fucking *loved her.*

From her flat chest (that he secretly wanted to *physically* admire) to her small, toothless smiles, he
loved everything about that strange woman.

*Even if she didn't love him back.*

Suddenly, Gabe's smile (which he was unaware of until then) disappeared from his features.

*She didn't love him back, did she?*

*Holy shit, I got to stop,* he scolded himself.

Sighing, he decided to step out of bed and out into the hallway.

Sitting in bed and in complete silence by his *lonesome* would *not* help his predicament, he decided.

The hallways were pleasantly quiet and cool, and the cold floor against his feet was an ironic distraction from the emotions that dared to ruin his night.

Gabriel didn't have any particular destination at first, but the longer he traversed the facility void of any thought, it became clear to him that he was headed towards the Dining Hall.

There was no particular reason as to why that was, it simply felt right at the time.

He decided on taking the longer, more scenic route to the base's cafeteria: using the stairs rather than the elevator, turning right instead of left, and eventually, the Blackwatch Commander found himself standing at the glass doors that led to the pool area.

He absentmindedly contemplated how long it had been since he'd stepped foot on that beige concrete as he ventured into his new location.

*A month or so ago, maybe.*

The air was surprisingly warm for a Switzerland night. Of course, *warm* in this country never meant anything above perhaps seventy-five, and that was even a stretch to make. Nevertheless, Gabe welcomed the temperature and how the warmed ground felt beneath his feet as he strolled along.

"You're up early."

*That voice.*

*No, no, he was hallucinating.*

*And he stopped and turned his head, and there was Moira staring back at him from her vantage point at the pool, arms resting on the siding, those eyes ever watchful.*

A brief thought passed through his head: she was the one and only reason he was taking his walk in the first place.

Perhaps it would ease his nerves to speak with her.

"Says the one swimming," Gabe retorted, and decided to make his way over to the Doctor's location. "It really isn't even that warm out."

"I've swam in weather colder than this," Moira explained as the Commander stopped and stood directly in front of her. He sat himself near the pool's edge, not so close that he would make his Irish friend uncomfortable, yet not so far away, either. "Well, that's not concerning at all," he replied.
"I don't believe so."

"Clearly."

The woman looked away thoughtfully as she rung out her drenched hair with large hands and wrinkled fingers. As she raised her arms, the ribs below her strapless white top and above the edge of the pool and water presented themselves to him.

They were so defined.

*Way too pronounced.*

Gabriel knew she was underweight, everyone did, a single glance and one could come to that conclusion, but without clothing to cover her skin, her condition appeared to be worse than it seemingly was.

The two locked eyes once more, and he prayed he wouldn't offend her as he spoke.

"You need about an extra forty pounds, Doc."

*He came off as almost disappointed or defeated.*

*That was not how he wanted to sound.*

Almost immediately, Moira seemed to shrink into the water, although her towering height didn't allow for much submersion.

There was no emotion in her eyes as she looked to Gabe, and *that* would have bothered him if it were anyone else.

*But he knew better. He knew Moira.*

"I was always a little too thin, there's no need for concern."

He exhaled through his nose. "Whatever you say, I guess."

"Does it seem to you that I lost weight?" She walked over to the steps leading into the pool and ascended out of the water as she spoke.

*Look at your hips,* Gabriel thought as he stood, and as Moira walked over to her towel resting on the back of a chair.

The way her bones jutted from the skin was so unnerving.

"Not particularly," was how he answered her question.

A moment passed, and arbitrarily, the Doctor shook her head violently and briefly, not once directing her attention elsewhere.

*What?*

*That was out of nowhere.*

He furrowed his brow and (rather cautiously) approached the woman.

"You alright?"
"I am," she told him, though as she grabbed the towel and wrapped it around her body, her hands twitched and a finger tapped against the fabric quite harshly.

Moira spun around to face him, and when their gazes met, she pondered, "What brought you out here?" Gabe's eyes went to her active pointer finger as she spoke, and he noticed that her tapping ceased the moment her lips parted.

He looked up to meet her *disgustingly beautiful* face boasting an arched brow.

"You know I get worried when you do that."

Her expression softened, and her cheeks and ears flushed red at his words. "Don't worry so much about me, Gabe."

"I'm sorry, I just..." He paused to find the right phrasing, and lightly scoffed at himself as he told her, "I've never seen anything like it. A-and I have no clue what it is or...or why you do it, you know?"

*And I'm sort of hoping you'll shed some light on everything right now.*

Moira glanced away and resumed idly tapping on the fabric wrapped around her lanky self, though the action was much more tame this time around.

"Sometimes I think of unwanted thoughts, and that's the only way I know how to clear my mind of them. That's the best answer I could give you."

*That...somewhat made sense.*

"You don't have to tell me, I don't want to make you uncomfortable-"

"I do want to tell you." She wasn't looking at him. "I simply cannot think of a better method of describing to you...why..."

*And that was it.*

Gabriel decided to ask a different question.

"When did it start? Seems like it was recently."

The woman shook her head. "This has been something I've dealt with all my life. However, it becomes more prevalent in certain situations."

He thought about what she said, and his heart sunk into his stomach.

"You would let me know if I was the problem, right?"

Her face flushed dark red, and she glanced frantically to the ground and back at him.

"No, that's not...I hadn't meant-"

*More strange and violent head shaking ensued for a few moments.*

"I hadn't meant to imply that. My apologies."

In a selfish way, seeing her so frazzled by the thought relieved him.

It let him know *just* how genuine she was.
"You're fine, no worries," he consoled, "I just want to make sure. Wouldn't want to do that to you, I give too much of a shit about you, yeah?" He laughed nervously at the end of his statement as his face caught fire like a goddamn kid.

Moira smiled, and it wasn't one of her calm smirks, it was wide and presented her perfectly aligned front teeth.

"I understand, I feel the same way."

She turned her attention from the concrete below to the massive building behind her, and yet, all Gabe could do was stand there and ponder on one of the most heartfelt and caring things he'd ever heard fall forth from her mouth.

End Notes

There may be spelling and grammar mistakes. Sorry, I'm not perfect. Constructive criticism always welcome! ;)

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!