Blackwatch: Fata Morgana

by Arikakun

Summary

Her name is Kallista Kaines, alias Fata Morgana, one of the most wanted hackers in the world. Against the world's governments, and Overwatch she and a long-standing Hacktivist group, Anonymous, continuously poke holes into the government and the greedy hands of the overly rich and famous. Her downfall? Her curiosity. Her curiosity led her to dig into the files of Overwatch and breached the Blackwatch servers on a hunt to her missing parents. Of course, she found more than what she bargained for. With this new information, she has two choices be tried in an International court or work with the same organization she worked against.
2060: Fata Morgana, known as the Superior Mirage but now in the hands of Overwatch's Spec. Ops with nowhere to hide.

Jesse watched silently as his Commander pushed the handcuffed woman towards one of the interrogation rooms. He shifted slightly when the woman made eye contact with him, her cold icy blue orbs quickly sized him up before she turned her attention ahead.

Jesse scoffed as he walked towards the room, he wanted to see this interrogation instead of hearing about it later, they had managed to finally catch her, why was she so important? He didn't know, but he was going to find out. That woman came under Overwatch's radar, specifically Blackwatch's radar a year ago. Almost two years later she was finally captured, surprisingly after putting up a huge fight. He chased her down the back streets of Dorado, she was was fast and he was barely able to keep up with her.

She easily took him out with one roundhouse kick to the face and gave Gabriel Reyes a run for his money. He had heard she led Reyes on a chase for blocks as she took out other Blackwatch agents, he heard the Reyes cornered the woman in the back streets of the Dorado.

She definitely had fought in her, before she was forcibly subdued is what he told him as they got into the black van, that only fueled Jesse's curiosity about her. Jesse's honey whiskey-colored eyes focused on the woman slouching in the chair.

Obsidian like mid-back length hair, sharp blue eyes, sun-kissed caramel-like skin, she looked as if she was of Mexican descent, but couldn't quite place her. She wore a khaki green bomber jacket, a black crop top, black shorts, black thigh highs, and boots. She didn't look like a wanted hacker nor did she look like she had the strength to stagger a man twice her size.

Jesse glanced to the side as he saw the Strike Commander of Overwatch, Jack Morrison, enter the room and move immediately over to the woman. There weren't many times where he saw the Strike Commander, so this was a rare sight, but then again he remembered the amount of trouble the woman had caused for Blackwatch to scramble to subdue her.

His eyes flicked from the blond-haired man and to the woman still slouching in the chair, he could tell that she wasn't impressed nor intimidated by either of the larger men, she remained slouching and crossed her legs as they started talking to her. she looked unamused at Morrison but strangely held eye contact with Reyes, who held eye contact with her.

Weird.

Jesse gnawed on the toothpick that hung loosely from his teeth, the thought of a cigarette passed his mind as he watched the two men begin to grill her with questions. There weren't many times like this where he was curious about suspects and yet he was outside the interrogation room waiting on
whatever information that Reyes would give him.

He was curious about the little firecracker.

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Hours passed as Jesse slouched in his chair and dozed off as he waited for the verdict of what was going to happen to the woman. He made himself comfortable at best and used his signature cowboy hat covering to cover his face as he slept. The last time he had his slept without his hat on he woke up with marker over his face, thanks to

"Wake up Jesse," Gabriel's grumble startled Jesse from his impromptu nap.

"I-I'm up!" Jesse jumped up.

"We'll continue this tomorrow Gabe, she's more stubborn than I thought she would be..." Jack trailed off as he nodded to Jesse. Jesse tipped his signature cowboy hat to the man.

"Yeah," Gabriel replied as he watched the man leave, his signature blue trench coat flowing behind him as he left. Gabriel sighed tiredly and yawned, Jesse knew that that man hadn't been sleeping soundly since the mission began a week ago. They captured her but now what?

"Did you get looked at?" Gabriel asked as he studied Jesse's face.

"I did. It's a bruise, it'll heal," Jesse replied as he rubbed the sleep from his eyes. He needed sleep too.

"Don't give me bullshit to get out of training when your face starts hurting," Gabriel said as he exited the interrogation viewing room.

"Ya won't hear a word from me Reyes, but more importantly...what 'bout the girl?" Jesse started as he got up to follow the man from the room. Before closing and locking the door, Gabriel turned his attention back to the woman on the other side of the glass. She sat with her back towards the window, her hood covered her head as she legs propped on the table trying to get comfortable. Jesse quickly followed after the man closing the door behind him. Once they were a bit down the hall Gabriel sighed heavily fueling Jesse's curiosity and anxiousness to know about the woman.

"Her real name is Kallista Kaines. Her main alias is Fata Morgana, the one we've been looking for," Gabriel started.

"The real deal huh? Not what we thought ya know?" Jesse commented As of late Blackwatch and Overwatch as a whole had been dealing with various hackers attempting to disturb the peace where peace was fragile, not to mention they had their own occasionally troublesome hacker of their own.

"I can tell you I didn't expect her to have a British accent. She tries to hide it and she's quite good at it...but you should never assume Jesse," Gabriel said as the two walked down the hall.

"So I see...Anyway, So what's so important about her? It jus sounds like another wannabe elite hacker ya'know?" Jesse questioned.

"She is the real deal otherwise we wouldn't have gone through so much shit to track her down. She was behind the breaches in the database, the UN members scandals, the CIA's system failing, and several other breaches around the world," Gabriel replied.

"That little ol' girl in there? C'mon," Jesse asked.

"Don't let her image fool you. She's damned smart. MIT graduate and started her Master's at
Harvard...both Ivy League schools," Gabriel sighed.

"Damn," Jesse whistled.

"Exactly. I wouldn't be too surprised if she was leading us by our fucking noses," Gabriel replied.

"Soo...what are you going to do?" Jesse asked.

"Dunno yet, you'll find out...after we're done...maybe," Gabriel said causing Jesse to stop in his tracks.

"Soooo...It sounds like you intend on keepin' her Reyes," Jesse said as he looked at the man walk right past him. Clearly, the man was up to something, then again when wasn't he?

"Wait and see," Gabriel said as he waved the man off continuing down the hall.

Three days passed when finally when the woman finally began to speak, Gabriel and Morrison used different tactics on her to get information from the woman. Whatever they were doing wore her down enough to speak. On the fourth day, the two men entered the room as normal waking her from her light sleep.

"Wake up," Gabriel grumbled as he roughly nudged the woman.

"Mmmn..."Kallista lifted her head from the table and groggily looked at the two men

"Good Morning Miss Kaines," Jack said as he looked at the woman.

"Good Morning gentlemen…or at least I think it's morning" Kallista yawned as she combed back her hair.

"We're going to try this again…" Gabriel began.

"Alright...from the top," Kallista yawned once again.

"Kallista...what was your motive. What did you hope to accomplish in hacking the Overwatch database?" Jack started.

"You were just asking to be caught," Gabriel added.

"It took you guys long enough to actually catch me though...two years almost," Kallista trailed off as she leaned back in her chair.

"You weren't important until a few months ago," Jack started.

"Why thank you for turning your attention on me," Kallista replied cheekily.

"That's not meant to be a compliment girl," Gabriel added.

"You sure? It sounds like one...but getting to the point...I needed something very specific and the Overwatch database...well specifically the Blackwatch database had it. Mind you this wasn't the first time I hacked into your system. As for what I wanted to accomplish...well..." Kallista trailed off with a smirk.

"You made yourself a big pain the ass," Reyes scoffed.
"Awww I'm sorry," Kallista replied sarcastically and smiled at the man. Gabriel scoffed at the woman's cheeky demeanor.

"Kallista. What was your motive?" Jack interrupted as he tried to defuse the tension building in the room and focus on getting the information that the woman had.

Kallista turned her wrists in her handcuffs, Gabriel noticed that she had done that every time they spoke, every so often Gabriel studied the woman, her features, mannerisms, her little ticks.

He knew that she knew more than what she was letting on, and made it seem like it was a game as she never fully answered their questions. She calculated every word and every move she made, was she leading them on or was she actually going to tell them? He thought back to when they had brought her into the building, her arms were pinned behind her back when they pushed her into the interrogation room, he turned his back for a moment and when he looked at the woman, she had already maneuvered her arms from behind her back.

She was slippery, he remembered the chase that she led him on, laughing as she ran, the tougher time he had actually taking her down without seriously hurting her. Most of the female targets that they did have would give up right away, but she fought back, it was useless but she did it anyway. He could tell that she had some experience fighting, the way she moved, the way she managed to slip from his grasp told him more than she gave off. Her downfall was the hesitation and a swift punch to the gut.

"To be blunt. The world knows that Overwatch is not all sunshine, rainbows, and heroes. The world is slowly learning about all of the crimes against humanity and omnics that your men have committed. It's not my fault that you have left yourselves open...we...I just know how to capitalize on an opportunity. Not to mention the person you had tracking me on the web. What was their name? Gsa' gzig?" Kallista started.

Gabriel shifted his weight to one leg from the other, she knew about the last of Blackwatch's Intel department, of course, she did. Morrison glanced at the man before turning his attention to back to the woman.

"Your agents are really bad at trailing, especially that wannabe cowboy," Kallista smirked.

"What did you get out of the database?" Morrison asked.

"Good question. Let's just say many damning things," Kallista replied as she narrowed her eyes at the man.

"Stop shitting around, you're already going to rot in a maximum-security prison," Gabriel cut in.

"That is true but that doesn't mean I actually have to talk," Kallista replied as she looked at Gabriel.

"What's the point Kallista?" Morrison asked.

"She who has knowledge has power," Kallista replied.

"So...from what I'm hearing you obviously want to make a deal...because what else are you going to do with that information if you're in prison," Morrison said as he crossed his arms.

"Did I say that? I'm pretty sure I didn't say that..." Kallista said as she focused on the piece of hair she twirled around her finger.

"She doesn't deserve a deal," Gabriel commented annoyed at the woman's antics. She did exactly
what he thought she was going to do, lead them by their noses.

"Thank you for your consideration Commander Reyes, but I'm pretty sure Strike Commander Morrison has more authority over you," Kallista said bored. Gabriel's jaw clenched at her statement, a statement that struck deep. Morrison glanced at the man again sensing the man's waning patience.

"I am going to ask again...what did you take Kallista," Morrison asked his voice more firm.

Gabriel Reyes had his chair turned backward as he straddled the chair and leaned on the back of the chair. He narrowed his eyes at the woman, for the past three days they interrogated her she held firm on what she had found not budging. Whatever she had it was important that she held on to it. Was it about Overwatch? or something else just as important?

"Good question," Kallista replied again.

"This is not a fucking game woman. You stole confidential information about a government-owned facility and not to mention that is a felony and life in prison or even death," Gabriel growled.

"Reyes," Morrison started as he looked sharply at the man.

"I don't think she gets it, Jack. Leave me alone with her and I'll get her to talk," Gabriel said as he stared intensely at the woman.

"This conversation doesn't include a peanut gallery Commander Reyes," Kallista spat back, words full of sarcasm.

"Peanut gallery? Really? Do you even know the situation you're in?" Gabriel asked slightly surprised at the woman's sarcasm.

"Well let's see...I'm probably in Switzerland somewhere underground at Overwatch HQ, you know being interrogated for information that I may have swiped. I'm not sure where else you thought I would be," Kallista replied.

"Really?" Gabriel laughed slightly at the woman's gall to be sarcastic in a situation like this.

"Enough," Morrison sighed.

"Let's see how far that sarcasm will get you in prison, girl. Morrison, throw her in prison, let's see how long she lasts with the mention of capital punishment is said," Gabriel laughed.

Kallista glanced at Gabriel as she crossed a leg over the other and leaned back in her chair. She was quiet for once.

"Oh? What's wrong now girl? Cat got your tongue? You know that you're not some run of the mill criminal, once you go into prison you're staying there," Gabriel smirked as he watched the woman's demeanor change from confident to cautious.

"Kallista," Morrison started again, turning his attention to the woman. Kallista held her head high as her glacier eyes met Morrison's baby blue ones.

"Truthfully I don't think you should go to prison, but the more you dick around and lead us to nowhere makes me think otherwise. Enough games, tell us the information you have and maybe we can lower your sentencing," Morrison started.

"Morrison, just throw her in there," Gabriel said from his chair. Kallista's sharp blue eyes flicked
towards Gabriel behind Morrison. Morrison snapped his fingers pulling Kallista's attention away from Gabriel and on to him.

"Focus on me. Not on him," Morrison said as he knelt next to Kallista. Kallista, in turn, sat up in her chair and clasped her hands together as she looked at the man.

"What information did you see and what did you take Kallista," Morrison said as he looked up at the woman.

Gabriel narrowed his eyes at the woman as she pursed her lips together as she looked at Morrison, he knew they had backed her into a corner with no escape from this. It was either spill the information or go straight to prison. The ball was in her court, it was her move.

The ball was in her court, it was her move.

Kallista sighed heavily as she ran her hands through her dark hair before leaning on to the interrogation table. Morrison stood silently as he continued to wait for Kallista's response, whatever she had found was so important that she was risk everything on it.

"From what I saw...and was able to determine...before the God Brigade got to it...there's someone in the United Nations that is working to shut down Overwatch," Kallista replied.
Chapter Summary

An offer she can't refuse, Kallista gives up more information on what she found.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The two men glanced at each other silently and back to the woman. She was calm, focused and was clearly serious about what she had just told them. Gabriel's head lolled back for a second before he sighed heavily and began to chuckle, Morrison sighed and shook his head in disappointment

"Get a grip," Gabriel sighed. "We're funded by the United Nations,"

"True. But what's a parent to do when their child has gotten out of hand? Spank them and hope they learned their lesson or let them self-destruct?" Kallista questioned. "Not mention the casualties in France and the slow pull of funding from projects,"

The chuckles and smirks between the two men slowly faded as they realized the small bit of information she divulged was classified information.

"That caught your attention," Kallista smiled.

"Please elaborate Kallista," Morrison started.

"Deal first," Kallista stated firmly.

"Now she wants to play. Do you really believe that we're going to believe you after some ridiculous shit like that? C'mon now you're an MIT graduate," Gabriel half laughed. She smirked.

"I think you've forgotten Commander Reyes. As an MIT graduate, a current student at Harvard, a hacker who has infiltrated Overwatch's systems, Blackwatch's systems and others you forget that I can either compromise everything I touch," Kallista began. "If I wanted I can find every piece of information on every single person in the bloody place. Yes. Underestimate me," Kallista replied as she leaned a bit on to the table.

The two men looked at each other a little taken aback at the woman's confidence in what she had seen. Morrison nodded as he glanced at the man next to him, in turn, Gabriel rolled his eyes.

"You have our attention," Morrison began.

Kallista looked to Gabriel to confirm that there was a deal before she continued to speak, Morrison nodded in response. She lifted her cuffed wrists and moved a piece of her dark hair from her face before she began.

"The God Brigade and I gained access to a few members of the United Nations emails, phones, etc. We've monitored all of their files through conventional UN means and third party sources," Kallista began. "Someone within the UN has been going through know what you are looking for and look hard enough, you can see that someone has also been snooping in the servers," Kallista began and
sighed.

"They were really messy about it, but that's beside the fact. I've seen things like the Omnic crisis...all the way back to the time of the SEP days of the military. Think of how those obsessed with Overwatch Conspiracy theories would salivate at the thought of getting their hands on those files..." Kallista smirked. "Fascinating material I must say,"

"Get to the point," Gabriel replied gruffly

"There's a monitoring bug within Overwatch. It has been watching everything single piece related to omnics, Japan, India and left a back door. On purpose," Kallista emphasized.

"The complexity of the back door wasn't made from a third party source, it was made from the inside. Perhaps from within Overwatch, perhaps from within the United Nations," Kallista shrugged. "I didn't bother to look into it,"

There was a pause between the three, a moment to process all the information that she gave them and their next steps. The fact that there was a mole within the Overwatch or Blackwatch ranks left their minds full of suspicion, doubt and who to trust.

The two men did couldn't deny the fact that there could be a mole within Overwatch, the leaks of the incidents in Japan and India did not happen itself, someone had to leak that information.

"Can you provide more proof than word of mouth?" Morrison questioned carefully. He carefully chose his words, he knew the weight of what the woman divulged and how he could no longer ignore the signs. He knew that she was a wanted hacker, nearly a terrorist and yet he believed what she said.

"Probably? I'm not quite sure. I mean I'm not your IT specialist or anything like that. Perhaps you can have your UN contact...what was her name...Verona? Look into it," Kallista trailed off as she leaned on the table again, her head hung low as she looked at the two men.

"Can I have some coffee?"

"No," Gabriel replied.

"After. I need you to focus Kallista," Morrison pressed. Kallista exhaled loudly as she brushed her hair over her shoulder before she began to speak.

"That's awfully rude. I've been here without food and water for nearly twenty-four hours..." Kallista complained and frowned at the two men. With a sigh, she leaned back in her chair and began to speak again.

"There's always a trail...a bit sloppy. It was a bit of a bother to look into their shoddy back door," Kallista replied and huffed. "I would like to have iced coffee please with caramel and cinnamon, please. Also, can we talk about these handcuffs?"

"They stay on," Gabriel replied.

"And the deal Strike Commander Morrison agreed to?" Kallista began.

"It's still on the table," Morrison replied, Kallista held up her wrists to for one of the men to remove the cuffs.

"Not yet. Reyes. A word," Morrison said as he walked towards the door. Kallista glared at the dark-
haired man as he looked down at her. He grumbled something incoherently and followed Morrison out.

"Asshole!" Kallista shouted at the door.

"The crimes against her are substantial. Keeping her from capital punishment might be a little tough and a long battle. She's damn good at what she does and the fact that we are the only ones that know about this possible mole..." Morrison trailed off.

"I get what you're trying to say...but what makes you think that they would want a world-renowned hacker, lawbreaker, someone that will most likely be sentenced with treason on the Overwatch team, Morrison," Gabriel said as he crossed his arms.


"I knew you were going to say that," Gabriel said as he watched the woman fidget with handcuffs around her wrists.

"Majority of your intel crew was killed during that ambush Gabe you-" Morrison began.

"Don't," Gabriel said firmly.

"Look...based on the needs of Blackwatch she would be a huge asset not only to your new Intel crew but also to Overwatch as a whole. With the overall integrity of Overwatch at stake and using her to take out the possible mole would do us both a service. You get a world-renowned hacker on your team and this mole is one less thing that Overwatch has to worry about," Morrison explained.

"You know it would help at least until I'm able to move resources for your team, I have three good people that I can give... I just need to make the arrangements," Morrison started.

Gabriel looked smugly at the man in front of him, he was already three steps in front of the man. The woman's reputation he already knew that she would be a huge asset for him but inadvertently had the man give him permission to add the woman to his team.

"Another law-abiding hacker on my team..." Gabriel said sarcastically and asked more firmly.

"Far from it, I guess they know how to pick you," Morrison commented. Gabriel sighed.

"I just had to give you my opinion on this...she would be more useful and productive than just sitting in prison for the rest of her life. But I digress, this is on you Gabe," Morrison said

"Yeah, Yeah, Yeah," Gabriel sighed as he grabbed a datapad, bringing up the woman's information that they had on her.

"Don't be too harsh on her," Morrison said as he headed towards the door.

"It was just an act. She'll be fine," Gabriel said as he entered the interrogation room, solo.

Morrison, Jack Morrison was nervous about the woman's wealth of information she had on Overwatch and Blackwatch. He knew that she would have to be watched closely especially with the mention of the God Brigade. Morrison had heard of the group and how it was an elite division within an old hacktivist group called Anonymous, but to actually see the face behind the mask, the face of a promising MIT graduate, a Harvard Master's degree seeker, left the man with more questions.
He glanced at the two through the viewing glass more before exiting the room.

"Kallista Kaines. Alias, Fata Morgana Age 26, MIT graduate, currently enrolled in Harvard for a master's degree, wanted in four countries and eight states, charged with theft, providing information to national enemies, compromising national and global security, intellectual property rights violations, government defacement. You've been busy," Gabriel commented as he leaned back in his chair.

"I'm surprised they have that much, is that my real age? Are my measurements in there too? I'm not sure about those measurements or that age though," Kallista commented.

"It's what Blackwatch have on you," Gabriel corrected.

"Oh? Fascinating, maybe there's an 85 percent chance of it being correct," Kallista commented dryly. Gabriel scoffed as he watched her look through the file, he had no reason to doubt the information that they had on her.

"Why would such a young woman like yourself get into this line of work," Gabriel asked as he studied the petite woman across from him.

"The Legion called Anonymous. The division called the God Brigade," Kallista replied as she continued to read.

"Were you a part of the group or recruited?" Gabriel asked, slightly surprised.

"Recruited," Kallista replied.

"By who?" Gabriel asked.

"I don't kiss and tell Reyes," Kallista said as she turned her attention from the file and towards the man, a smirk played on her lips.

"Noted, but you didn't answer my question," Gabriel replied and gave her credit for throwing in a sly comment.

"It's been a while...even if I knew who it was. I keep my sources under lock and key, sealed behind these lips," Kallista replied.

"You wouldn't forget something like that but it seems like you hold loyalty to a faceless group that may have sold you out," Gabriel accused to see if he could rile anything else from the tight-lipped woman.

"That's a strong accusation, Reyes, very strong," Kallista replied, her eyes narrowing slightly.

"What was all of this for?" Gabriel asked he could tell that the woman was stubborn and wouldn't utter a word about either of the groups.

"Depends. They were all for different reasons. You know modern Robin Hood, A modern Golda Meir, etc, etc," Kallista replied as she pushed the datapad towards him. She leaned back in her chair and crossed her legs as she looked at the man.

"The money. What did you do with it?" Gabriel asked.

"Kept a tiny amount for myself, I have to pay for my education you know, the rest I donated to poverty-stricken neighborhoods...you know charitable means," Kallista replied.
"Camilla Luciano. You'll find donations under that name...over time," Kallista replied.

"The confidential data?" Reyes continued.

"That one is a little difficult," Kallista started.

"Explain,"

"The data wasn't exactly for me, they were contract deals for the shadier side of the God Brigade." Kallista continued.

"Who did you give it to?" Reyes asked.

"I don't know. We had contact information, but there was no direct person that handled this. I did what I did because I was young and wanted to test my skills more than anything. They didn't tell, we didn't ask," Kallista replied.

"That information that you took was sold on the black market and eventually ended up in the hands of the Secret Intelligence Services MI6," Gabriel replied.

"Lovely," Kallista replied sarcastically.

"Your intellectual rights violations…" Gabriel trailed off as he glanced at the datapad.

"They couldn't pin me on it. During my semester abroad they tried to accuse me of stealing confidential information...They just need someone to blame in China," Kallista scoffed.

Gabriel chuckled at the woman's response as he shifted in his chair and fidgeted with a pen in front of him. He knew that there was always something else that pushed people to this way of life and of course he knew that she wouldn't give him the satisfaction of his curiosity being stated.

He had no reason to doubt her skills, even just with the small talk of her 'accomplishments' around the world, her education, the skills that it took to complete a feat as such and not be caught was more than enough to be in Blackwatch.

Gabriel silently studied Kallista as she silently looked at him, her gaze not wavering as she gently drummed her perfectly manicured black nails on the table. Her sun-kissed caramel skin, the long ebony cascading over her shoulder, her full lips, almond-shaped eyes, the sharp icy blue eyes that stared back at him.

"We could be here all day talking about all of the charges against you...so, tell me why I should take off those handcuffs," Gabriel said as he looked at the woman's wrists.

"I would like to think that Strike Commander Morrison is a man of his word, if not that's false advertisement," Kallista replied cheekily. "Besides, I gave you information like you asked...unless this is your kind of thing Commander Reyes," Kallista replied. Gabriel chuckled a bit before he replied was silent before he replied to the woman.

She flirted with him regardless of her situation.

"Depends...you plan on using those pretty nails on me?" Gabriel questioned as he looked smugly at the woman. For a moment Kallista stopped to think on the suggestion, Gabriel chuckled.

"I would like to think you're a smart woman. You wouldn't do something stupid like that. But I'll be
sure to watch you more," Gabriel replied. Kallista shrugged as she looked at her nails and waited for the man to continue to speak.

"This deal works under a few conditions, you work for me, you follow my orders, you have access to any tech by my permission only and when you do you will be watched," Gabriel began. "You no longer have individual freedom."

"Be a good girl, stay out of prison. Got it," Kallista replied as she offered her wrists so that he could remove the cuffs.

"Correct," Gabriel replied as he placed the pen down on the table. "Consider yourself on probation. All the information about you will become confidential, you will disappear off the grid for a while. All of your computers will be confiscated-" he started.

"Not necessary," Kallista cut in.

"And why not?" Gabriel asked.

"A failsafe activated from my cell phone. You won't find anything except for an empty shell...If you want it you can have it," Kallista replied as she flipped her hair.

"You have solutions for everything...don't you?" Gabriel quipped.

"Yes," Kallista replied with a blank face.

"Whatever, one less thing for me to worry about, but I will have a team confirm your word," Gabriel said as he stood up and approached her.

Kallista's eyes followed him and looked up at him as he stood next to her. He looked down at her before taking her wrists and unshackled them.

"Thanks," Kallista said as she rubbed the red markings on her wrists. He instantly focused in on the red marks on her wrists.

"Why didn't you say they were tight," Gabriel commented. Remnants of guilt had resurfaced from the time she resisted capture, he subdued her with a punch to the gut.

"I'm tougher than I look," Kallista replied as she began stretching her wrists.

"Do you need to be looked over...are your ribs ok?" Gabriel asked as he saw some markings of purple on her

"I'm quite sure there's a bruise but I'll survive. In the meantime, an iced coffee would be lovely," Kallista replied.

"Fine, let's go," Gabriel said as he motioned towards the door.

"Of course," Kallista said as she stood, stretching before she went towards the door.

Chapter End Notes

Rough translation: lo que tu digas, Lobo - Whatever you say, Wolf®
*A group of friends and I have come up with a code name for Reyes and the members of Blackwatch. Lobo is wolf in Spanish, and the members of Blackwatch are his "Pack of Wolves"
Thinking back on the people that she met and looking forward to what lies in wait for her.

I want to thank my friends for letting me include their OCs into my story. Malik Ramos, Lyudmila Dontsova, Natalie Nguyen, Hayden Birro, Omar Vazquez! You know who you are and I love and appreciate all of you!

Six months had passed since Kallista had been placed in the watch of Blackwatch, she knew not to expect much and well not much had happened. Things seemed to move slowly as she began to become aquatinted with seemed to be regulars of Blackwatch.

Kallista sighed heavily as she laid back into the black sofa looking at the dark gray ceiling of the commons room, she knew that there were cameras on her as she spotted a small glimmer of a camera lens in the corner of the room. Bored out of her mind, her access to any technology was prohibited and she was only given the bare minimum and books to hold her over.

She knew that she was lucky enough to actually traverse the halls of the Overwatch building without having a chaperone. Kallista closed her eyes and sighed heavily as she tried to preoccupy herself with her thoughts and the people she had recently met.

One of the people that were prominent to her, was the second in command, Lyudmila Dontsova. Kallista had seen the woman more than anyone else in Blackwatch and from what she could tell the woman was serious about her position within Blackwatch.

The woman normally wore a stoic or blank expression as she walked, Kallista noticed the woman's stride was slightly off and gloved hands. There was something about the woman she couldn't put her finger on when it came to the woman. She also noticed the woman didn't talk much and only spoke when she needed to and when she did speak she had an accent, a Russian accent, a slight gap between her front teeth. Kallista assumed that she worked in the military at some point to explain why she was such a hard ass.

Regardless, Kallista made a mental note to be wary of her and avoid her as much as possible, if possible.

A few weeks prior, Kallista was introduced to a young woman by the name of Natalie Nguyen. Kallista could quickly see that the woman had a mischievous glint to her abnormal golden eyes as she watched her. She spoke a few words to her and silently watched as she was introduced to more people in the Blackwatch division.

In the back of her mind, Kallista knew that there was something different about the woman but she
also knew that she would be seeing more her in the future.

Of course, Kallista was introduced to many people within the division but the person who now was her 'chaperone' was the only person who she had spent the most time with. She met Malik Ramos nearly six months ago. At the time he was the only member of the Blackwatch Intelligence Division.

He seemed to be injured and wheelchair-bound as she and Gabriel entered the small office. Almost instantly Kallista knew that there was something different about the man as well, and the fact that Gabriel chewed them out for forging their release papers and how they should still be in the medical ward.

Silently, Kallista sized up the man, curly dark coarse hair pulled into a bun, golden speckled black eyes, dark mocha-like skin, scars. Kallista could see the start of a scar peeking from underneath his shirt starting at the base of her neck. The smirk that the man gave her quickly told her that there was more to the man besides the front he showed her at that moment.

Halfway through the introduction

"Trauma...," Kallista thought to herself as she half-listened to their conversation.

"She's not to use a terminal until I say so," Gabriel continued

"A cat without her claws. Poor kitty," Malik replied cheekily.

"Oh thanks. I'll be sure to keep my small ones groomed," Kallista replied, once again Malik chuckled quietly at her response.

"Ok, so she's on house arrest Gabi...that sucks. How is she supposed to do anything?" Malik replied.

"Under careful scrutiny" Gabriel added before pulling out his cell phone.

"Her every move? I mean she probably won't like it if you give me that much access you know," Malik commented as his black eyes flickered back to Kallista.

"Don't get any ideas kid," Kallista replied bored.

"Kid?" Malik laughed

"no prometo nada," Malik laughed before he noticed Gabriel motion towards Kallista. Malik nodded as he and Kallista watched the man promptly exit the office on his cell phone.

"My My My what a busy man that he couldn't even finish my tour," Kallista commented.

"He does that sometimes. But you are right, he is a busy man. He doesn't have time for mediocre introductions," Malik said as he began to study her again.

Kallista scrunched her nose as she looked towards the door crossing her arms, she turned her attention back to the man in front of her.

"You are really cute," Malik commented.

"Thanks," Kallista replied.

Malik smirked as he sat down wincing slightly, rubbing his knees. Kallista quickly glanced over them again noticed the finer details about the one that observed her. Their soft jawline, their soft-looking facial hair, their stature was thick, strong, slightly burly, but there was something about him that caught her attention.
"You...you were a woman once weren't you?" Kallista asked quietly.

"Yep. But does that matter?" Malik asked. Kallista noticed that they had tensed a bit at the mention of their birth gender.

"Nope. Just noticing your soft jaw and your facial hair and other things," Kallista replied nonchalantly.

"You have a good eye," Malik chuckled. She could tell that they were still tense at her words, but shrugged it off. How they were was none of her concern.

"I know," Kallista replied as she looked around the room. Some filing cabinets, three terminals, four main servers against the wall in the back of the room.

"Yep, this is the Blackwatch Intel Department. Small and efficient," Malik commented

"Just you right?" Kallista asked

"Yep...just me for now at least...there was some accident or something that happened recently...not really sure...not really my business," Malik replied and leaned back into his chair, smirking.

"Kudos to you baiting me," Kallista commented

"Thanks...your firewalls, coding, and cryptography were definitely unique. I admit I did fall into a few of your traps," Malik commented.

"I've had...time, and experience," Kallista replied.

"Oh. I know Miss MIT," Malik replied.

"So many nicknames...which one are you gonna stick with?" Kallista asked coolly.

"Whichever one fits...or unless Gabi gives you one," Malik replied.

"Gabi hm?" Kallista asked.

"He's kinda like my dad, but not my dad..." Malik trailed off.

"Got daddy problems?" Kallista asked.

"I might," Malik replied.

"Mmhmm..wanna see something cool?" Malik glanced over his shoulder at the woman

"Depends on what it is...and if I will be hanged for looking at it," Kallista asked cautiously.

"I mean if you want Reyes to hang you, go ahead. I heard he has some interesting ways of torturing people but go right ahead and say something...but chances are if you keep your mouth shut you'll be fine," Malik replied nonchalantly. Kallista's icy blue eyes scanned Malik's spotted eyes before smirking.

"What do you have?"

"Hey, Kallista. Gabi wants to see you," Malik interrupted her thoughts as he wheeled into the commons room.
"You're in a wheelchair now?" Kallista commented.

"It happens every so often...I don't know why you're so surprised," Malik shrugged

"...forget that I asked...you think he's gonna let me use a terminal finally?" Kallista asked as she stood from the sofa

"Eh. Probably not...but it's worth a try," Malik replied.

"You have no chill," Kallista commented dryly.

"Yeah, I know. You might get used to it, emphasis on the 'might'," Malik replied smirked.

As she walked down the hall towards the man's office her mind wandered to other people she had met. A young man by the name of Hayden Birro and had a brief encounter with another by the name of Omar Vazquez and a few others. Pushing the thoughts behind her she knocked on the man's door before entering.

"Come in, sit down," Reyes ordered briskly.

"O-oh ok," Kallista said as she moved towards the lone chair in front of his desk. Reyes nodded to Malik as he closed the door, he moved towards his desk chair putting his glasses back on.

"What can I do for you, Reyes?" Kallista asked sarcastically as she crossed her legs.

"I bet you're bored as hell…" Reyes started.

"Oh, you don't say?" Kallista chuckled.

"Cut it out," Reyes retorted.

"Yes sir,"

"Currently you're a civilian...how do you feel about having military training?" Gabriel asked.

"That sounds intense," Kallista started.

"It does but it's not…" Reyes trailed off

"It's a simple military training program very similar to what soldier would go through," Gabriel continued as he looked over papers and quickly glanced at a datapad next to him.

"I'm not a soldier. I'm just a soft and fleshy young woman," Kallista said sarcastically.

Gabriel looked up from the data pads in front of him and took off his glasses as he looked at the woman leaning back into the chair. Kallista's icy blue eyes met his mahogany colored eyes for a moment before a small chuckle came from the man.

"A soft, fleshy woman hm? You may be for now, but after a few weeks, I'm sure you'll tighten up," Gabriel replied. Kallista pursed her lips together, silently.

"You look so innocent but you have your mind in the gutter. A shame," Gabriel commented as he went back to the data pads. Kallista remained silent as she watched the man continue to shuffle through the data pads, flicking through data and occasionally glancing up at her.

"You underestimate me, Reyes," Kallista replied.
"Do I? Please, go ahead and prove me wrong. Either way, you've been enrolled in it. You start tomorrow. Lyudmila will deliver clothing your room at 2100 hours. This should keep you busy for a few months," Gabriel added as he pushed a datapad to her

"Oh thanks," Kallista replied sarcastically as she took the pad.

"You may be a hacker, but you also have some fighting skill in you. Everyone in Blackwatch is expected to be on the field at some point. I'd rather not have you be a casualty," Gabriel continued.

"Noted," Kallista quipped as she looked over the papers at the man.

"You're dismissed,"

Kallista huffed as she stood, adjusting her black Overwatch issued shirt as she exited the office.

"So modified basics program...to keep you busy he said…” Malik chuckled as he and Kallista moved down the hall.

"Sounds like he wants me to die," Kallista replied as she absentmindedly looked at the papers in her hands.

"Nah. He thinks you're a cute cheeky little thing. He said you also have a nice ass on you too...and I happen to agree," Malik replied nonchalantly as he wheeled his chair down the hall

"Dios mio Malik. Deja de bromear," Kallista said nervously and shoved Malik.

"no es broma! You're terrible! Pushing a disabled. How dare you I'm in a wheelchair," Malik laughed

"You're a tad bit annoying," Kallista frowned causing the man to howl in laughter.

There was a soft knock on Kallista's door, rolling onto her stomach she looked at the blue numbers on the clock.

"2100 exactly," Kallista said as she went to open the door.

"Kaines," Lyudmila greeted the woman.

"Dontsova," Kallista replied back in the same manner.

"May I?" Lyudmila asked.

"Sure," Kallista said as she stepped aside letting the woman enter. Lyudmila quietly entered the room and moved towards the empty desk, she placed a small bag onto the desk.

"My clothes right?" Kallista asked.

"Yes," the woman replied as she turned to face her.

Every night for the past four months Malik escorted Kallista to her room, did a quick half-hearted sweep and left. It was the first time that Lyudmila had come to check up on her.

"Natalie convinced Reyes to get you different clothes...she's taken a liking to you," Lyudmila said as she looked at the woman across from her.
"That's good I suppose?" Kallista asked unsure.

"It is. It'll give Reyes and myself more incentive to let you do more instead of being bored out of your mind and half-heartedly reading military manuals," Lyudmila chuckled.

"Touche," Kallista replied.

"To be straightforward...I didn't think that Blackwatch would capture you...Fata Morgana," Lyudmila trailed off.

"Excuse me?" Kallista asked confused.

"I am...an ex-member of SPETSNAZ...I think that says enough no?" Lyudmila chuckled.

"Ah. SPETSNAZ...I'm glad I didn't run into anyone from Russia," Kallista replied nervously.

"You were fine for the most part...We knew of you but wasn't assigned to 'deal' with you. But I've heard stories about your skills," Lyudmila said as she moved towards the door.

"Oh…"

"Anyway, stay out of trouble and you're good in my book," Lyudmila said as she opened the door and looked back at Kallista.

"Right. Tell Natalie, thank you," Kallista said.

"Of course. Have a good night and good luck on your basics program," Lyudmila said softly and exited the room closing the door behind her.

"Thanks...goodnight..."

Three months into the basics program there was an emergency within the training simulation chamber in the Overwatch Division that caused Gabriel to drop everything he had and rush over to the training center. Outside of the simulation chamber, he saw one of his agents and medical staff surrounding a bloodied Kallista.

"What the fuck happened here Spiros?" Reyes barked.

"I dunno...*omega theé mou*," Mikael muttered in his native language as he looked at Kallista's blood on his hands.

"Spiros-*"

"I was watching her during her training sim and she collapsed to her knees, blood just started pouring from her nose, mouth," Mikael replied as he and Reyes followed the medical staff to the Med Bay.

Within minutes Kallista was examined, in her system was an unauthorized drug that had been administered at the beginning of the program, a drug very similar to the one that he and Morrison had been subjected to during the SEP days.

The same drug that gave him chronic migraines, and occasional bouts of insomnia, he thought that the program had been completely trashed because of the success rate and the after effects it left its participants either dead or dysfunctional in some way. He and Morrison were lucky, they were the normal ones. That same day the program had been shut down and all the personnel fired. Gabriel was thankful that she recovered quickly, albeit quicker than she should have but there were no
symptoms in sight.

A few weeks later she was completely cleared to return to basic training methods, Gabriel invited her to join him on his own personal workout regimen instead of the joint workout with everyone else. He wanted to make sure that she didn't show any signs of the drug in her system.

He knew the drug was permanent, She didn't.

It was early morning, the sun had yet to peek over the horizon, suffering from a bout of insomnia he pulled Kallista out for his morning run that consisted of a six-mile run, on the fourth mile Kallista stopped and hunched over.

"Ok..haah...ooook…," Kallista panted as she hunched over to catch her breath.

"What's the matter, girl?" Gabriel asked his chest slightly heaving as he looked back at the panting woman.

"I..haah..need to...huff...catch my breath," Kallista panted.

"Get your ass in gear girl. We still have two miles back to HQ," Gabriel barked causing Kallista to glare at the man.

"Pendejo," Kallista muttered as she wiped the sweat from her brow and used him as support.

"Keep it up with that mouth of yours and I'll make it six," Reyes retorted.

"Aah nooo…" Kallista whined as she used him as support.

"How else are you going to keep that girlish figure of yours that you flaunt if you keep sitting on your ass drinking those damn energy drinks?" Reyes goaded. Kallista gave the man a weak shove, using him to give her slight push to run.

"You're not the only one with a nice ass pendejo!" Kallista shouted as she jogged ahead. Gabriel shook his head chuckling as he jogged after her.

The day continued uneventfully, mission planning, report reviews, intel debriefing. The usual. Gabriel sighed heavily as an unlit cigarette hung loosely from his lips. He sat on the roof of Overwatch HQ watching the sunset, it was a way of decompressing from all of the administration order he had to deal with when he was not on a mission.

There were days where he felt the heavyweight of Blackwatch and Overwatch on his shoulders, sometimes it was a burden and sometimes he felt older than what he actually was. He kept his head high and dealt with was thrown at him, he had to. He didn't have anything else, it was all that he had and was too stubborn to give up. Reyes glanced at towards the footsteps that were approaching him.

"How is she doing?" Morrison asked as he walked over to the man and sat down. Even after the tension between the two men, they always tolerated each other as they sat together watching the sunset.

"She's doing better than I expected," Gabriel replied.

"That's good to hear. I'm sorry that I haven't been able to check in much but I'm glad she's doing better," Morrison commented.

"Same. I still don't get how they replicated that drug..." Gabriel trailed off
"Likewise. All the medical staff and R&D personnel have been questioned and replaced. We can't have something like the SEP come up again," Morrison replied.

Gabriel nodded in silence lighting the cigarette that hung from his lips.

"Also...is there anything I should know about in terms of what she told us?" Morrison asked.

"I haven't given her access to any type of computer. I wanna make sure I can trust her," Gabriel replied.

"She's been here for almost a year...I can see your concern, but we're going to have to move fast on this Gabe if what she told us is true. We can't let it slip from our hands," Morrison started.

Gabriel grunted in response, there were hints of tension in the silence that fell between the two men. They didn't know whether they should trust the woman or not. They didn't know what that would do to the integrity of Overwatch if no one trusted Overwatch what good were they?

"Anything else?" Morrison asked with a crooked grin on his lips. Gabriel quickly glanced at the man and back to the sun setting over the horizon.

"What's your game, Morrison?" Gabriel glanced at his colleague next to him, he was smirking.

"I dunno...Ana and Jesse told me you were being really protective of Kallista...you know...just curious," Morrison started as he tried to keep himself from chuckling.

"Jesus Christ. Out of all of the people, you listen to you listen to them," Gabriel sighed heavily.

The man suddenly broke into laughter next to the man, his deep laugh reverberating off the cement walls surrounding the rooftop. Gabriel groaned in annoyance as he tapped his cigarette from the ash that had accumulated.

"Oh c'mon we all can see it," Morrison said in between his laughs. Reyes rolled his eyes as he took a hit from his cigarette.

"Come off of it Jack. She's one of my agents' Nothing more or less. You know the rules" Gabriel replied.

"Mmmhm...I'm just saying...giving her looks when she's not looking or just checking her out in her training clothes, that says a lot Gabe," Jack said as he calmed down from his laughing fit.

"What looks are you- you know what nevermind. You're not dragging me into this," Gabriel replied as he turned his attention back to the sunset, he brushed off the attempt to pin him to having a crush on the woman.

He didn't have time for that.

"Well anyway...I'm glad she's acclimated well...Ana seems to be smitten with her," Jack started.

"The others seem perfectly fine with her. Malik loves her, Mikael treats her like a sister and Natalie loves her," Gabriel replied and chuckled.

"I see... How is Natalie by the way?" Jack asked. It took Gabriel a moment before he answered.

"Natalie is doing well...why do you ask?" He asked as he glanced at the man next to him.

"Just curious...," Morrison trailed off
"Right…" Gabriel replied as he focused back on his cigarette. He knew what was going on.

There was silence between the two men as they watched the sunset. Gabriel glanced over at Jack, the man was watching the sunset oblivious to the man looking at him. There was a forlorn smile on the man's lips as he looked ahead, a sign that he was reminiscing about the old days passed.

Jack Morrison, by the book, straight and clean-cut, he was also one of those guys that brought up the old good days when they were together and reminisce. Himself, Reinhardt, Jack, and Ana. The good days before the Omnic Crisis. He admitted to himself that he missed those days.

"It's been a while since we were able to do this...I kinda miss doing this with you," Jack commented.

"Mm...yeah," Gabriel grunted softly.

"All of this peacekeeping and being on the front lines of the media is tiring...but I know in the end it's all worth it," Jack sighed heavily.

He remained silent and blew out cigarette smoke. In the back of his mind, he knew that he was supposed to be in the limelight. He knew that he deserved it. He took another hit of his cigarette trying to keep himself from seething in anger, slowly cigarette smoke escaped from between his lips as he exhaled.

"Don't complain about it. Others would gladly take your place if they had the option," Gabriel commented bitterly.

"I...know," Jack replied quietly.

He knew that Jack knew. Of course, he did, everyone did.
Chapter Summary

2061: After months of training, Kallista has her first field mission

A year had passed before Kallista was allowed to set foot onto the field and it was conditional based. For this mission, they needed someone from the Blackwatch Intel department to link directly with the factory's mainframe to obtain information. The mainframe of this factory was ancient compared to newer mainframes and because of this, someone needed to go in.

The information was integral to ongoing investigations into other players around the world – names, locations, connections, gangs, smuggling etc. This one mainframe was the lead Blackwatch needed to get ahead of their targets. The server was tucked away in an old factory that was seemingly defunct, but the giveaway was the heavily armed but sparse security that patrolled the old corridors.

The mission was simple enough, establish a link back to base and Malik would handle the extraction of the data. Kallista was Gabriel's last choice due to Malik still being medically unable to participate in this mission.

Every time he looked at her, she knew that he didn't want her here.

Gabriel glanced at the woman sitting across from him, she appeared calm as she sat with her arms crossed and one leg over the other. She was damn good at hiding how nervous she was, he could see the slight bounce in her leg, the rhythmless tapping of her foot, how hard she grasped her biceps and how she closed herself off.

"Kalli, you nervous?" Jesse asked.

"Not entirely," Kallista replied as her blue eyes focused on the man next to her.

"Surprisin'" Jesse replied

[Jesse almost shit himself when he went on his first mission. Wait I can't remember if you did or not]

Malik's voice echoed over everyone's comm unit, Gabriel and Lyudmila chuckled as Jesse scoffed at their comment.

"Now is not the time fer yer shit Malik," Jesse cursed.

[I mean...that's what I heard...just saying…]

"I'm used to working under pressure...we'll see how well I do under this type of stress," Kallista replied.

[We get to see her work her shifty fingers in person…]

"Malik…," Gabriel started.

[C'mon you can't tell me you're not excited to see Fata Morgana work...]
"Seeing and hearing her work is two different things Malik," Lyudmila commented quietly. The graying woman had been silent and Kallista nearly missed what the woman had said.

"Yea, We see one thing and you see another Mali," Jesse added.

[You are all lame]

"Malik enough," Gabriel spoke up cutting the conversation short.

[Fiiiine...Don't have too much fun without me…]

"Kallista...just to make sure you remember the mission details. Do you need me to go over them again?" Gabriel questioned.

"Yes, just to cover all bases," Kallista replied.

"This is just an Intel mission, engaging with the security is prohibited. Birro has already infiltrated and will give us as much leeway as possible. Jesse will serve as backup as well as Lyudmila," Gabriel began.

"You are to establish a secure link with Malik back at base to begin transferring data. This is a time-sensitive mission and we have to be alert as it," Gabriel finished as he focused on her.

"Understood,"

[Roger Gabi~]

"Cut it out, Ramos,"

Malik's voice was heard snickering through the group's comm units.

Gabriel shifted in his seat as he glanced at the two sitting across from him and Lyudmila. His eyes focused on the woman, her icy blue eyes meeting his before she focused on the small PDA that was given to her for the mission. It was a message from Malik.

{Malik: An escort mission hmmm?}

Kallista gripped the small device in her hand before she noticed that she had been sent a message. She looked around noticing Gabriel's eyes were on her. Shifting slightly she responded to the message.

{Kaines: I guess so? I'm not even cleared to carry a weapon yet}

{Malik: Eventually you will...when he trusts you more}

{Kaines: That's promising}

{Malik: Yeah. I heard Lyuda putting in some good words for you when you helped her out with those corrupted documents.}

{Kaines: Even better}

{Malik: This is your first time with Gabriel : )}

{Kaines: You do know that sounds bad right?}
Malik: Exactly. I know what I said and I mean it in both ways :) 

Kaines: Anything to expect?

Malik: Just follow his orders and don't worry. When you worry you mess up. Gabi is there to protect you, you'll be fine,

Kaines: Thanks I suppose

Malik: I mean…what else did you expect?

The rest of the ride to the mission drop point was silent although his mind raced 1000 miles per hour. Gabriel occasionally found himself staring at the woman across from him. It was her first field mission, she was unarmed, basic gear, and anything could go wrong. More importantly, he was worried about what was happening inside of her.

The concoction of unidentified chemicals that were injected into her system without proper clearance showed no signs of slowing her down but he knew that whatever the concoction was would show itself with time. But he hoped that no symptoms would appear under the stress of this mission. He didn't want to see her on the field and felt that she didn't belong.

Maybe that was the soldier side of him protecting a civilian.

Just as soon as they landed at their destination, they moved into positions and Gabriel gave the signal. With haste, the two moved silently through the shadows they reached their first entry point.

"Cameras above entry point and around the perimeter," Kallista whispered. Gabriel nodded in agreement as he spotted the security cameras above the door and around the entry point.

"Hay-B…" Gabriel spoke quietly.

After a second of silence the cameras seemingly deactivated as the door slid open, Gabriel and Kallista made their way into the compound, the door closed behind them with a soft hiss, the cameras reactivating.

[The wolf is on the move]

Gabriel and Kallista moved quickly and silently through the old looking compound, taking note of the new equipment and upgraded security system

35 minutes.

Kallista and Gabriel slid next to the server room, the two hid in the shadows as a guard walked past unbeknownst to their presence. Gabriel waited a moment before he cautiously looked around taking note of all of the cameras.

"Hay-B" Gabriel whispered

[My position may have been compromised, changing locations]

Kallista heard the agent's voice through her comm unit, even in the dark, she could tell that Gabriel tensed as he looked around.

[Gabi- I can't help if I don't have access to the network]

"Allow me," Kallista whispered as she began typing on her PDA given to her for the mission.
Within seconds Kallista had the cameras surrounding the server room under her control, the server door slid open with a soft hiss.

"We can move on your word. It's clear from what I can see Gabriel," Kallista whispered.

There was a soft whistle that came from their comm unit.

[Not bad...less than 10 seconds…]

[Radio silence means radio silence, Malik]

Lyudmila's voice came through the comm units to chide them, Gabriel sighed in annoyance before he cautiously looked for clearance, with a nod of his head Kallista and Gabriel moved into the server room, the door closed with a soft hiss.

"You have 15 minutes," Gabriel said as he stood by the entrance.

"5-10 minutes is all I need...probably less," Kallista said as she took her hood off and took a quick survey of the server room.

"Malik," Gabriel began.

[Far server tower in the back, EZK-1930]

Kallista moved silently towards the back of the server room, locating a computer terminal and said server tower.

"Upload in three...two...one…”

[That was too easy…]

"Scrub the data at least three times...the fact that there are no warning signs means that there is something hidden beneath," Kallista whispered.

[Si~]

"There's also some files that are encrypted...and from what I can tell...salted messages,"

Gabriel glanced at the woman sitting cross-legged, engrossed in her work, the green and black translucent wires running from her PDA to the terminal and to the server tower. She was efficient, quick, and crushed all expectations of her and how the data extraction process would go. He knew that he would be a little slower if he did the mission solo.

[See if you can dig a little deeper]

"Already doing it," Kallista replied

"Don't do anything stupid," Gabriel commented.

"Never," Kallista replied curtly.

[Insert the two scramblers.]

"Yeah," Kallista said as she crawled over towards the back of the server tower. Gabriel turned his attention back to the entrance and the soft footsteps echoing.
"Five minutes," Gabriel whispered.

"Gabriel," Kallista called out. Gabriel took a glance at the door before moving to see the woman standing in the outer aisle of the towers.

"I need a boost,"

Gabriel moved over to the woman and placed one of his shotguns down before interlocking his hands together. Kallista moved quickly as he boosted her, she climbed on top of the server tower.

"Three minutes," Gabriel said as he watched her hang from the side of the tower.

"Installation complete. Moving to the second one," Kallista said as she attempted to slide off of the tower. Gabriel wrapped an arm around her waist, pulling her from the tower and placing her on her feet.

"Thanks," Kallista said as she moved towards the other side of the tower.

[We're running ahead of schedule…]

[The exit is clear. I'm unable to return to my original location. I will continue to]

A muffled explosion with an abrupt yelp forced Gabriel's attention to the woman, his heart skipped a beat when he saw Kallista on the floor a hand to the side of her head.

[What was that?]

[Is everything ok?]

"Gabriel-" Kallista began

Gabriel quickly scooped Kallista in his arms and used his body to shield the woman from the debris that ejected from the overloading tower.

"You ok?" Gabriel asked as he helped the woman up and quickly looked over her for any signs of injuries

"Fine," Kallista replied

[Connection compromised. Severing connection. Enabling jamming signals]

[We have movement outside the perimeter…German soldiers moving your way. Betta make it quick]

"Did you get anything?" Gabriel asked frowned as he listened to Jesse's voice in his earpiece.

[I'm going to need some time to look at what I got…it wasn't a lot of time to download much]

"Let's move," Gabriel growled as he made his way towards the exit.

[The explosion alerted the security. 25 seconds until you're surrounded]

"That's fine. Get yourself out of there and meet at the pickup point," Gabriel replied as he and Kallista moved into the shadows.

[But Lobo-]
"Don't give yourself away," Gabriel said as he glanced back at Kallista.

"I can create a diversion you know," Kallista suggested.

"Do it," Gabriel ordered.

"I'm overloading the electricity and giving you direct access..." Kallista said as she pulled off a panel near the server room.

[I like the way you think, I have access and one minute...better make it count Gabi]

Within seconds all the power in the compound had been cut, coating everything in darkness followed by silence. Kallista reached out and gently placed a hand on Gabriel's shoulder. In the short moment of silence, Gabriel's ears picked up the nervous sigh of the woman.

"I'm here," Gabriel replied quietly.

"I-I know...I'm ready when you are," Kallista replied.

"I'm not going to let anything happen to you," Gabriel replied.

"Thank you,"

"One minute we will be at the exit point. Provide backup if needed," Gabriel ordered.

"Lockdown you move last,"

[Roger]

[Everyone move]

Gabriel and Kallista moved silently through the compound avoiding the guards scrambling through the compound. Everyone moved to the extraction point as planned, Gabriel and Kallista were the last ones to arrive. No casualties. No encounters. Just how Gabriel liked it during the initial field missions.

Once they were securely on their way back to HQ, Gabriel knelt in front of Kallista with a first aid kit next ready to treat any injuries.

"Are you sure that you are alright?" Gabriel asked as he pulled one of his gloves off.

"I'm fine," Kallista replied simply.

[You know you did have a panel blow up in your face...]

"No one asked you Malik," Kallista grimaced at Malik's voice reminding her of that embarrassing moment.

"I'm talking about your head," Gabriel replied gruffly as he reached up and touched the right side of her head.

"Malik...were you and the others able to get the data?" Lyudmila asked.

[We got SOME data...but it's all scrambled. Not sure if it was like that, to begin with, or it happened on transfer...eh we might have some preliminary information when you all get back]
"Are you sure yer ok Kalli? Let Reyes have a look at you," Jesse said as he leaned back in his seat. Gabriel gingerly touched Kallista's face and moved to the back of her head taking note of her wincing and the blood on his fingertips.

"Didn't even notice," Kallista replied cheekily.

"I can stop the bleeding but you're going to med bay when we return and make sure you stay away in case you have a concussion," Gabriel said firmly as he took bandages and medi-spray and began to treat her wound.

"Yes, sir..." Kallista replied softly as she looked away. Within a few moments, Gabriel finished treating her wound and moved back to his seat across from her.

[Aww don't scare her Gabi~]

"Not now Ramos," Gabriel growled in annoyance.

Kallista sighed softly as she leaned back in her seat as she tried to ignore the throb of pain with the adrenaline fading from her system. The normally soft hum of the sleek aircraft blared in her ears, the throb in her head made things nearly unbearably.

She noticed a few weeks after being enrolled in that modified basics program, whatever concoction of drugs they injected her with, she was one of the few lucky ones to come out with just enhanced hearing or at least that's what she thought her only condition was. This serum was something similar to the serum that Jack Morrison and Gabriel had been injected with years ago.

They seemed normal, right?

Kallista glanced at Gabriel who was on his cell phone talking to agent Hay-B. She could hear the agent's voice from where she sat. She noticed that she received a message on her PDA.

{Malik: Gabi is upset :( }

{Kaines: You don't say...}

{Malik: Well...yeah not too sure about the data and also you're hurt}

{Kaines: I love how you just assume he's upset}

{Malik: Trust me Kallista, I've known the man much longer than you have. Besides, you know damn well that mission was successful as soon as you placed that second transmitter. You've done better that anyone on their first field mission. You completed that data upload faster than the three numbnuts here.}

{Kaines: Thanks for all the praise...but that doesn't help me}

{Malik: He's upset because his gatita was hurt...}

{Kaines: Gatita? Who?}

{Malik: :) }
Waiting

Chapter Summary

Late 2061: Despite the success of her first field mission, she was taken off the field once again. Frustrated Kallista searches for some way to be a productive 'agent'

Months had passed since Kallista had been deployed on a mission, and there was no movement of improvement for her. Gabriel had been off on missions and she was under the watch of his second in command, Lyudmila.

Since her first mission, Gabriel had placed on her on desk duty and she had been there since then. He placed her in charge of sifting through the information they pulled from her previous mission while Malik worked on other missions and their therapy.

The information they had gathered provided leads on possible Talon access points and learned of a possible double agent working for the Austrian government. Even with the lead, she was still placed behind a desk, hacking into corrupt politicians that had connections to the defunct Omnium Corporations and this possible double agent.

It was too simple for her but she had no choice.

Needing to vent Kallista spent the past three months honing her mind and body by beating an unsuspecting punching bag senseless with an occasional meditation session with a few others.

"Put me on desk duty will you?" Kallista growled as she kicked the red punching bag, the hook creaked as it swung from the force the woman kicked into it.

"I'm just as capable as everyone else,"

Kallista growled as she roundhouse kicked the bag letting out her frustrations, it had been three months since she completed her first and only mission, her initiation mission into Blackwatch. Reyes had managed to avoid, shelf and deflect her questions about missions and even pushed her to his second in command, Lyudmila.

"Fuck this. Fuck you. Fuck him," Kallista growled as she dealt a series of quick jabs and finished with a right hook causing the hooks of the bag to creak in distress.

"Woah Kalli...talk about being frustrated…"

Kallista held on to the bag as she turned to look over her shoulder at the woman who spoke to her. It was Natalie, one of the other Blackwatch agents. She stood with her arms crossed her signature grin on her lips.

"Natalie," Kallista sighed.

"I couldn't help but notice you kicking this poor bag's ass...what did it do to you?" Natalie chuckled.

"Everything at this point," Kallista sighed again.
"Some of those kicks…you know Tae Kwon Do?" Natalie questioned.

"Yeah, it's something I tried to keep up with," Kallista replied.

"That's interested, and here I thought you were just a normal civilian with no means to defend yourself," Natalie shrugged.

"I give that appearance don't I? You wanted to talk about something?" Kallista asked as she leaned partially on the punching bag.

"Yes…let's chat…" Natalie trailed off with a mischievous smirk on her lips. "Meet you in the main courtyard in 15?"

"Sure," Kallista sighed.

15 minutes passed and the two women were sitting across from each other at one of the small patio tables. It was midday, various agents and staff passed through the courtyard or used it to relax on their breaks.

"You're so frustrated Kalli…what's up?" Natalie asked as she clasped her hands together and leaned forward. Kallista sighed heavily as she too leaned onto the table.

"Just a little annoyed at my…current position," Kallista replied.

Natalie's golden hazel eyes focused on the woman, studied her and watched her movements and manners. Kallista noticed the woman's eyes on her and how she had been watching her since she had joined Blackwatch and noticed how the woman periodically checked in on her.

What Kallista didn't know if it was to satisfy her curiosity or if Reyes told her to keep an eye on her?

"Why do you wanna go on missions so bad? You're like the opposite of what hackers are supposed to be," Natalie shrugged.

"When you sit around for three months knowing that people are going on all of these cool missions that you could possibly do…how would you feel?" Kallista questioned.

"Oh. That…well what you do is cool too. I don't know all of the finer details but…," Natalie trailed off. "They're just being careful is all, you did hack into HQs servers for a bit. Besides, I'm sure Gabe will get over it and I'm sure he and Lyuda are working on your access to the rest of the servers," Natalie shrugged casually.

"I'm sure," Kallista sighed and leaned back in her chair. "You make him out to be a nice guy when all I see is a scowling face of judgment and disapproval,"

"That's his normal look nowadays. He's been stressed about a mission and whatever else he does. Then again…he's really only had like two modes or so, scowling or angry as of late," Natalie sighed.

"I've heard about the pranks that you have pulled," Kallista laughed.

"Oh? Word travels quickly…obviously, Gabo wasn't feeling it," Natalie laughed. Kallista looked at the woman unamused at the woman's previous pranks.

"I'll tell you this. Gabe is a very tenacious and a fierce man. He's real nice has good jokes when he's feeling funny, he's a good guy. He may be our scowling fearless leader now, but he's a protector. A hella fierce and stubborn one at that, and putting it bluntly he's protective over you," Natalie tapped
her red nails on the table as she spoke.

"He wants to make sure that he's able to protect you. We the senior agents know what happened to you so he's just being overprotective now," The woman continued.

"It sounds like you and Malik are in on the same joke," Kallista huffed annoyed. Natalie arched an eyebrow as she heard the woman's British accent slip.

"I'm actually being serious for once. But you can always watch him…I know you're an observant person. Actions speak louder than words," Natalie shrugged again.

"That sounds kinda stalker-ish Natalie," Kallista commented.

"Ok so that depends on how far you take it, don't be that creepy," Natalie waved off the woman's comment before she continued. "I wouldn't be too surprised if he feels some sort of connection with you because of SEP…there's not many people around," Natalie trailed off.

"Well that's awfully disturbing," Kallista said and tilted her head to the side. She didn't have access to any files labeled 'SEP' also known as the Soldier Enhancement Program, nor was she allowed to view any of the files that the former medical staff kept.

"Well…shit like that happens, unfortunately," Natalie laughed.

Kallista sighed softly as she brushed a piece of her hair behind her ear before relaxing into her chair. Natalie also relaxed into her chair. There was so much about SEP that she didn't know, but knew that it would be some time before she would be able to look at any files.

But according to Malik, Natalie was held back from missions just like her, for different reasons of course. Malik had told her that Natalie had waited a complete year before she was able to go on missions. She was considered lucky that Gabriel had let her go on any type of mission eight months after she was 'recruited'.

"Let me know if you wanna get drinks...or raid Reyes' stash...he has the good stuff," Natalie said as she stood.

"I thought we were friends? It seems like you're trying to get me thrown into jail," Kallista replied.

"You'll be fine, I'll make sure of it and besides I'm still here and I've done much worse things than you are probably ever going to do," Natalie laughed.

"Riiiight," Kallista said as she looked up at the woman from her seat.

"No worries. Trust me!" Natalie said as she smirked at her.

"I don't have a choice do I?"

"Hey don't come at me like that. You're hella cute, you're a hella good hacker and how you were punching that bag you could give Gabo a run for his money," Natalie winked.

"Ok, that's quite enough out of you," Kallista huffed.

"Hehe...trust me. You'll see," Natalie said before walking off leaving Kallista alone in the courtyard.

Another month had passed with no movement on Reyes' side to put Kallista out on the field. Kallista used the time to do more research within Overwatch and the agents within the Intel department and
pay more attention to her immediate crew, some of their little quirks were telling of who she was dealing with.

Malik's fake smile, hiding the pain that rampaged his body daily. She could see him trembling as he stood with his cane or as he spoke to other people. He was hiding his pain with laughter, jokes, and flirtation.

She noticed that Lyudmila hummed softly as she cleaned her guns or the occasional melancholy look. As if she remembered something close to her heart as she absentmindedly fiddled with her gloved left ring finger as if something should have been there.

The Strike Commander's daily visits to the Blackwatch division and the goofy smile he gets when Natalie is around. She had picked up that the Strike Commander was usually the butt of the jokes that other Blackwatch agents told.

She occasionally watched Reyes, to the point she was able to tell when he stopped paying attention in missions or how bored he was with the mission briefs that were given the division. The moments where he would 'puff' out his chest, the moments where their eyes would meet.

As weeks passed, Kallista had already figured out everyone's little ticks, their weaknesses and was able to persuade some of the agents to unknowingly answer some general questions about Blackwatch.

As Fata Morgana, she sought to expose Blackwatch and all of its crimes, but now she worked for the same people she worked to expose of course she wanted to know answers.

An additional four weeks passed before she granted additional clearance and access to more of Overwatch's files than Blackwatch, which spiked her curiosity to research whatever she could get her hands on. She scoured over the files, spent time in the digital and library in the main library and made notes to research specific people, events and whatever she could find.

She had low-level access, it was a start and she would work with it.

Kallista casually walked around the halls of Overwatch, her attention turned to the darkened sky and the lights of the city in the distance. She had holed herself in the library researching events that were related to Overwatch dating back to the beginning and end of the Omnic Crisis.

Rubbing her temples gently she could faintly hear the wind blowing outside, the soft hum of electricity flowing through the building.

A side effect.

It had been eight months since the incident, her hearing and strength had been increased a side effect of the serum that she was still learning to deal with. Most of the time she could do without the medication that was given to her by Angela to alleviate the migraines and sensitivity to light and sound.

The more that she thought about her condition she thought back to Natalie's words and how Gabriel felt some type of connection because she experienced some of the pain he did. She had seen too many times how he went out of his way to check on her and had someone else do it when he couldn't.

She did have to admit that she was a little annoyed by the man's 'unnoticeable' tactics. Maybe some of Natalie's words were starting to ring true. She continued to stare blankly out the window, her mind lingering on the woman's words.
"Kallista?"

"Lyudmila...what can I do for you?" Kallista asked as she turned to face the woman. The woman's footsteps were told Kallista who approached her even without looking.

"Nothing. It's just strange for you to be here so late," Lyudmila replied, Kallista squinted at the blue digital numbers down the hall. It was 9 pm, for her it was later than usual.

"I don't believe I have a curfew do?" Kallista questioned.

"I'm sure you don't," Lyudmila replied.

"I was joking...I lost track of time," Kallista replied

"In the training hall and Library, I assume?" Lyudmila said as she leaned on the wall next to her.

"Yeah," Kallista nodded.

"Ah. Natalie told me you were training and that you're getting better," the taller woman began.

"I don't think I was ever that bad," Kallista replied.

"For a civilian," Lyudmila added. "I need to go to the R&D department. Want to come with me?" Lyudmila asked as she pushed herself off the wall.

"Sure," Kallista said as she began to follow the woman down the hall.

There were a few moments of silence between the two women, Kallista stole a glance of the woman before she spoke up. She was covered from head to toe in black workout gear, sweatpants, boots, shirt, a zip-up hoodie and noticed on the black glove on the woman's left hand.

Kallista could only speculate that either her hand had extreme scarring or it was prosthetic, she thought the same thing about the woman's legs. From the way she walked Kallista could tell that she may have gone through some type of injury.

"Are you coming back from training?" Kallista asked.

"Training some new recruits," Lyudmila replied.

"Do you train all of the Blackwatch agents?"

"Sometimes. Reyes and I do the finer details, but I suppose general training is completed with all of the agents based on their level," Lyudmila replied.

"I see..." Kallista trailed off.

"If you're curious about your situation. You didn't have any prior experience within the military...it was supposed to be a solid training plan for you," Lyudmila began.

"Yeah...about that," Kallista sighed.

The woman clicked her tongue at the woman's sigh, she didn't know all of the side effects but knew that what happened to her shouldn't have happened.

"If you think of it like this, you have even more reason to be on the field...or at least even a little bit," Lyudmila commented.
"Sure, if Reyes would even let me. He had the nerve to push me onto you...that's rude," Kallista huffed.

"He does that sometimes... and he's being...a bit...protective," Lyudmila replied as she rounded a corner, Kallista followed.

"I'm not really here to be protected. I was captured, and was put on the team to do a specific job," Kallista replied.

"True. But that would mean that you would spend all of your time behind a desk," Lyudmila countered. "We didn't expect for you to want to be on the field so badly. Who would have known a hacker that wants to fight to exist?"

"Well...what else am I going to do when I don't have access to the servers?" Kallista quipped.

"You are correct. You do need access, which we are working on," Lyudmila glanced down at the woman. Lyudmila sighed and stopped walking, Kallista stopped a few feet in front of her.

"Look. I get that you hacked into the Overwatch servers or whatever. You need to regain trust and I understand that Reyes is not giving you an optional to prove yourself," Lyudmila started.

"Then?" Kallista asked.

"I am working on it. I understand how your skills and your potential to prove yourself are going to waste by you not having access," Lyudmila sighed as she crossed her arms.

"I'm flattered," Kallista replied softly.

"Honestly...this isn't the first time I've encountered the actual Fata Morgana..."Lyudmila trailed off.

"...what do you mean?" Kallista asked her curiosity piqued. Lyudmila studied the woman before she began to speak again.

"Perhaps...another time," Lyudmila said as she walked past Kallista.

"Hey, you can't start and stop a story like that," Kallista started as she quickly followed after the woman.

"Sure. As soon as you get on the field,"

"And when will that be? How long will you lot keep me from—"Kallista began.

"You never know might be in a few weeks. I may have recommended you for a specific mission," Lyudmila spoke up.

"Wait...seriously? Have you?" Kallista began

"We all know you have potential Kallista. Anyone can learn to shoot a gun, but it takes skill to do what and you do it flawlessly. I can't guarantee Reyes will move as quickly as you want but wearing him down is another option," Lyudmila said as she stopped in front of the R&D Department.

"Touche..." Kallista replied.

"I'll be a few minutes, you don't have to wait...or...have you been here before?" Lyudmila asked.

"I kinda figured it would be off-limits to me, with all of the new tech in there," Kallista replied
"Off-limits? Nonsense. I believe if you actually wanted to do something you would have done it already, and you'd be severely outnumbered. You're smarter than that. Come on," Lyudmila said as she entered the room. Kallista shrugged and followed after the woman.

Hours later Kallista made a quick stop into the Blackwatch common's room to grab a bottle of water before heading to bed. The conversations she had with the lead developer of the R&D Department and Lyudmila left Kallista excited for the months to come, excited she almost didn't realize the whiskey-colored eyes watching her as she 'bounced' over to the fridge.

"What's got you all excited, Kalli?"

Kallista turned her attention to the man lounging on the large sectional sofa across the room. Jesse McCree was lounging on the sofa, more interested in what was on his phone than the large screen TV.

"Projects," Kallista replied.

"Oh? You actually goin' on a mission with us this time?"

"Probably not…" Kallista trailed off.

"Ain't too surprisin', Reyes being all protective of ya. Can't say what for though," Jesse said as he ran his hand through his hair.

"Who knows maybe you should find out for me, What are you watching?" Kallista asked as she approached the back of the sofa.

"No can do Kalli, I like where I am mighty fine an' for what I'm watchin', I jus turned on the TV an' this is what came up," Jesse said as he looked up at the woman.

"Hm. You know I don't think I ever apologized for kicking you in the face," Kallista began.

"Ain't nothing to worry 'bout sugar," Jesse replied with a smirk as he went back to looking at his phone.

Kallista placed a hand on her hip and gave the man a disapproving look. Jesse looked up from his phone noticing that she had placed her hand on her hip, but she was also glaring at him.

"Don't call me that," Kallista retorted

"S-Sorry…jus a habit," Jesse replied.

"So…" Jesse started.

"What's your story? You don't seem like a normal recruit," Kallista commented.

"S'cause I'm not…" Jesse trailed off as he gnawed on the toothpick that hung loosely from his lips.

"You heard of the Deadlock gang?" Jesse asked.

"Of course," Kallista replied.

"Right…I forget that you were an all seein' hacker. Well, He picked me up durin' a raid that Overwatch conducted on the gang. Didn't know he was with Overwatch...or should I say
Blackwatch. He said he felt sorry for me, that's how I got here," Jesse replied.

"He didn't want to see you in jail...I assume that you're young and the fact that you have valuable information about the Deadlock gang," Kallista started as she turned to look at the young man.

"Is it my baby face that's givin' it away? I can't be that much younger than you," Jesse chuckled.

"More so like your peach fuzz," Kallista laughed.

"Peachfuzz? I'm offended Kalli, there's more 'ere than jus peach fuzz," Jesse replied as he gently scratched at his facial hair.

"I'm not convinced, but maybe when you get older…it'll grow in," Kallista replied as she walked past him.

"Ouch. What's with all the hostility tonight?" Jesse huffed.
Kallista has begun working with the Overwatch Research and Development Department to keep herself busy until Reyes allows her to go on missions, in the meantime, she learns a little bit more about Reyes as he does about her.

"She is doing what?" Gabriel questioned.

"I am surprised that I have to repeat myself. She's making herself more useful," Lyudmila replied.

"I assume you set this up and she wasn't recruited into their experiments," Gabriel glanced at the woman to his right. A week had already passed since he had returned from a joint mission with Overwatch agents and was beginning to situate himself back at HQ for a while. He expected to see Kallista at her desk with a pout on her lips, but what Lyudmila had set up to keep her busy was unexpected.

"It only took you a week to notice," Lyudmila commented.

"I was busy," Gabriel replied and shrugged.

"If I remember correctly, you did say you wanted to keep her busy and out of the way. So here we are," Lyudmila coolly and crossed her arms.

"You're right. I didn't expect you to take it to this length," Gabriel sighed. Lyudmila turned to the man and gave him a small but sly smirk.

"Well, I had to quickly find something for her to do since you suddenly put her in my care," Gabriel sighed and crossed his arms. The two stood in front of the Overwatch's R&D Department's viewing room and watched as Kallista attempted to maneuver in a large and clunky gray suit. He had to admit it was a hilarious sight to see the small woman in something twice her size.

"I wouldn't be picky with solutions Reyes," Lyudmila commented and focused back on the tests.

"I guess," Gabriel replied.

"Besides...she's busy and she gets to field test the projects they are working on that may prove useful to us. It is a win-win situation, but she mentioned a good point yesterday as we spoke," Lyudmila began.

"Oh? What is it?" Gabriel asked partially amused. Lyudmila glanced at Gabriel and chuckled.

"She may be a civilian but she's definitely aware of her position. We already know that she is smart, and have the potential to succeed on and off the field," Lyudmila began.

"It sounds like you're vouching for her again, Lyuda," Gabriel suggested and turned his full attention to the woman.
"I am," Lyudmila replied bluntly.

Gabriel sighed heavily as he looked at the woman, he knew that she was right and he trusted her suggestion and advice when it came to the division. She had a different view and insight into the agents and their environments as she came from a military background as well.

"So you're telling me you want me to put her on the field again instead of desk duty even though she's more suited to be off the field," Gabriel began.

"I am suggesting you give her something to do that isn't menial and degrading of her skills," Lyudmila replied. Gabriel sighed heavily as he took off his beanie and scratched the back of his head before he placed the hat back on.

"I'll think about it," Gabriel replied.

"I can understand your hesitation, but remember she completed basics and you already know what skills she possesses. Don't limit her too much…I'm sure you can already see her potential," Lyudmila added.

Gabriel grumbled in response to the woman's suggestion, again he knew that she was right but wasn't completely convinced. He still had his reservations about the woman being on the field, especially with that serum in her system. He didn't know what to expect and didn't want to see what was to come of the consequences.

He didn't want to take any chances. But then again, maybe he was being a little too hesitant.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's not what she's here for, you know this," Gabriel sighed heavily.

"Yes, but we can also use her help and you know it," Lyudmila replied.

"We'll see,"

"Just a little bit more Kallista...are you still doing ok?" Alexander said as he watched Kallista's movement in the bulky armor.

"I'm ok right now...but I know that I am definitely sweating..." Kallista replied.

"That's good and bad…we need all the data we can get for this project. But let me know when you start melting," Alexander chuckled.

"A guinea pig to the fullest," Kallista half laughed as sweat rolled down her face.

"You're doing a great job, all of this data that we're capturing will be put to good use I can promise you that," Alexander replied.

"What about my heart rate? I feel like my heart is going to explode," Kallista added.

"We are watching your vitals as well," Alexander added.

"We just need you to do a few more movements Kallista and then we can take you out of that," a woman's voice came from over a speaker in the room.

"Alright," Kallista replied sarcastically.

"Out of breath?" Alexander quipped.
"Not in the least," Kallista said as she crouched in the suit and began to lunge in the suit.

"C'mon, let's see that Super Soldier in you," Alexander smirked.

"I could just punch you," Kallista suggested.

"I would like to keep my bones the way they are. Thank you," Alexander laughed.

The large bulky armor was a new project that the R&D Department was working on that consisted of two parts. The bulky suit was actually a contained an exoskeleton and a bodysuit that was made from an experimental material that channeled various elements through the suit and she could feel the various effects through the suit.

Kallista didn't know that the exact details of what the project contained but she willingly offered her assistance, anything to keep herself busy. The time that Kallista had spent with them allowed the project to move quicker than expected, in the next coming month Kallista would be able to field test the suit if given permission to do so.

"We got good data from this test Kallista. Let's get you out of that suit," a tall woman dressed in white said as she approached her.

"Please Sabina, I feel like I'm melting. I assume there will be some type of temperature control in the suit when you get to that point?" Kallista asked as she attempted to move.

"Of course!" the lead developer, Sabina, said as she and other technicians went over to the woman to help her out of the suit.

"Sabina we can have a design specifically for Kallista in at least three weeks," Scott said as he pulled off the chest piece.

"That's a good start, but we also want to make sure that we don't get delayed on our other projects. The director is a stickler about being on time," Sabina sighed.

"We have this, no worries Sabina," Gideon said as he lifted Kallista from the large bulky legs of the armor.

"Thanks, Gideon," Kallista sighed as she wiped the sweat from her forehead. The little movement that she did in the suit created a mass buildup of heat within herself and in the suit.

"You're welcome, lass," Gideon said.

"Oh...you're here," Kallista said as she down at the man sitting on the roof facing north. Gabriel looked up at her, slightly surprised.

"Didn't know you came up here," Gabriel replied.

"We're probably up here for the same reason," Kallista said as leaned on the structure's wall.

"Probably. Have a seat," Gabriel replied.

"Thank you," Kallista said as she sat down near the man placing a small bag onto the ground.

"...do you want some?" Kallista asked.

"What's that?" Gabriel asked as he looked up from his cell phone.
"...Dinner," Kallista replied.

"Dinner? Are you still not eating?" Gabriel sighed.

"I'm eating...just not at conventional times," Kallista replied as she pulled out a small sandwich.

"I guess?" Gabriel replied as he placed a cigarette between his lips.

"Smoking is bad for your health," Kallista commented. Gabriel glanced at her, cigarette still hanging from his lips.

"You're one of those people hm?" Gabriel started.

"It's not good for your skin either," Kallista added as she bit into her sandwich. Gabriel scoffed at the woman's comment.

"Neither is all of those energy drinks you drink," Gabriel replied.

"Touché..." Kallista trailed off.

"How is working with the R&D going?" Gabriel asked as he leaned back twirling the cigarette between his fingers.

"Oh, Lyuda told you...of course, she did," Kallista laughed slightly at herself. "I think it's going well. It sounds like they want me to field test the suit that they are making..." Kallista trailed off.

"Oh? With whose permission?" Gabriel asked. Kallista glanced at Gabriel unsure if she should answer the question or not.

"You know, I never thought to ask. I'm sure you or Lyuda will think of something," Kallista replied as she finished her sandwich. Gabriel sighed heavily at the mention of Lyudmila's name, he knew what they were doing in addition to Natalie's tactics of reminding him of her.

"Of course, listen," Gabriel began, Kallista arched an eyebrow at the man.

"I will have something for you. Be patient," Gabriel finished and took another drag of his cigarette.

"Wait...really?" Kallista asked surprised. Gabriel held out a hand slightly to stop her from becoming overly excited at his announcement.

"I need to make some arrangements and I'm not sure how long it's going to take. So don't go telling everyone about it," Gabriel added.

"I'm not that type of person," Kallista replied.

"Good,"

"But I'm also not going to say that I'm not excited...I am. You all may see me as a civilian, but I've gone through the training just like the other agents. I am just as capable as anyone else..." Kallista trailed off as her eyes met his.

"On and off the field,"

Gabriel quickly studied the woman's features before he hmphed and chuckled.

"You say that now...but we shall see,"
Silence fell between the two as they sat on the top of the Overwatch base, her attention on her late dinner and his attention focused on his cigarette.

"So...um...," Kallista began. "When...when were you exposed to the serum?"

Gabriel parted his lips slightly as smoke slowly slithered its way from his between his lips as he exhaled.

"Many years ago...it's still going strong surprisingly," Gabriel replied.

"Did you know about it?" Kallista turned towards him, her dark hair draping over her shoulder.

"No. Not at first. We just knew the type of training we had was grueling. At first, we all thought that it was just the grueling training they were putting us through," Gabriel began. "But...once people started vomiting, going blind, nose bleeds, people suffering from strokes...that's when everyone began to suspect something was wrong," Gabriel continued.

"That's horrible," Kallista said as she sat cross-legged in front of him.

"The effects were never the same for everyone. The ones that made it through the training...and into the service..." the man trailed off. "We wondered if it was worth it...it was and we did our jobs,"

"The first Omnic crisis...right?" Kallista questioned.

"Yes," Gabriel replied before he took another long drag of his cigarette before snuffing it out.

"I guess I should be thank you for your service huh?" Kallista joked. Gabriel chuckled slightly as he exhaled smoke through his nostrils.

"Probably," Gabriel smirked and chuckled.

"I was told to respect my elders," Kallista replied sheepishly.

"I'm not even graying yet," Gabriel frowned.

"You sure? I think I see some in your beard," Kallista pointed out.

"Really?" Gabriel said as he scratched his chin.

"I was kidding," Kallista said as she crossed her legs.

"What made someone like you go wrong?" Gabriel asked.

"Is it really wrong if you believe you are doing the right thing?" Kallista countered Gabriel arched an eyebrow at her question. Their eyes met for a second before Kallista smirked and ran her fingers through her hair.

"I could say a bunch of things...but honestly I have shit memory," Kallista sighed, Gabriel scoffed at the woman's response.

"That's a shitty excuse. You had the motivation, you had a motive. Don't lie to my face," Gabriel replied.

"Is that so? Then what do you think?" Kallista asked amused at the man's boldness.

"A young woman, wanting to stick it to the man because something happened to her or someone
"close to her," Gabriel flicked the butt of his cigarette and continued. "Out for revenge and found out that she was good at what she did and decided to take on something larger...and got caught,"

"Is that what you think of me?" Kallista laughed.

"Perhaps a run of the mill hacker...you, no," Gabriel replied and took another long drag of his cigarette.

"What do you think of me then?" Kallista asked with a coy smile spread across her lips. Gabriel leaned back and blew out smoke before he turned to her.

"Flirting with your commanding officer Kallista?" Gabriel chuckled.

"I am asking a simple question, Commander Reyes," Kallista replied simply. His copper-colored eyes focused on her for a moment, she ran a hand through her dark hair again her pale blue eyes on him as she waited for an answer. The soft squeak of the metal door caught their attention, breaking the silence between them.

"Oh?" Kallista began as she turned to see who had arrived.

"Hm?" Gabriel asked as the cigarette hung from his lips.

It was Strike Commander Morrison that had stepped on to the roof and glanced in their direction. Without a word, Kallista stood and dusted herself off. She grabbed her trash and began towards the door and gave the blond-haired man a slight nod

"Morrison,"

Morrison watched as the woman walked past him and back into the building followed by the soft "click" of the door closing.

"So what was that about?" Morrison asked as he walked over to the man still sitting and facing the setting sun.

"Getting to know my agents better," Gabriel replied as he lit another cigarette.

"Sure," Morrison shrugged as he sat next to the man and placed two cans in between them.

"Beer, huh. It's been that stressful for you," Gabriel chuckled.

"A little bit but just feeling a bit nostalgic," Morrison replied.

"Nostalgic, huh," Gabriel huffed as he remembered the conversation with Kallista about their exposure to the serum.

"You seem to be in a good mood," Morrison commented as he offered him a can as beer. Gabriel took the can and opened it swiftly, Morrison followed suit.

"I got fewer things to worry about for once," Gabriel replied.

"We'll see how long that lasts...something is always coming up," Morrison sighed as he leaned back against the cement wall.

"Oh, thanks. Shit on my parade Jack," Gabriel said sarcastically.

"Someone has to do it eventually. Might as well be me instead of Natalie," Morrison chuckled
"Whatever," Gabriel scoffed.

Several weeks passed as Kallista continued to work with the Overwatch R&D department on the new suits and exoskeletons for the Overwatch agents and continued to update Gabriel on her progress. Kallista knew that this was going to be a long project but didn't expect for it to take as long as it did, but she did understand that there were additional safety measures that were put in place to protect the wearer.

The sun had already set when the two came from the roof talking casually as they made their way towards the sleeping quarters for the Blackwatch agents.

"Sleep well," Kallista said and yawned.

"Night," Gabriel replied as he watched the woman walk down the hall obvious to the woman that casually leaned on the wall behind him.

"Nearly two years later, you're appreciating her good looks. Aren't you a little late Gabe?" the woman spoke.
"Sure I appreciate her, but not in the way you are thinking, Ana," Gabriel sighed as he turned to face the woman.
"Whatever you say, Gabe. I know it when I see it," Ana teased and shrugged.
"Welcome back Ana," Gabriel sighed. "I'm glad you're back unharmed,"

Gabriel started down the hall with the dark-haired woman next to him, Captain Ana Amari was one of the Gabriel and Jack's most trusted and longtime friend. They all fought in the First Omnic Crisis together and were the first members in Overwatch when it was established.

She primarily took the role of the sniper while in the group but her training while in the Sa'Ka Forces was something neither Gabriel nor Jack had ever seen before. While in the service the woman was like a mentor to them.

"Same and thank you. It's good to be back," Ana laughed as she walked with the man.
"What do you have planned now?" Gabriel asked.
"A bit of rest and relaxation with Fareeha, catch up on gossip and paperwork, you know the usual," Ana began as she yawned.

"Good," Gabriel nodded as he too began to feel the twinges of his exhaustion catch up with him.

"Also I heard about all of the secret talks you've been having with Kallista," Ana began, a smirk wide across her lips. Gabriel sighed at the woman's antics.

"Let me guess Morrison told you," Gabriel rolled his eyes.

"Perhaps, you forget I have more than one source and I'll never reveal my sources," Ana smirked.
"My Intel department isn't meant to be used like that, Ana," Reyes replied.
"Nonsense Gabriel and I never said anything about your little Intel department," Ana replied a huge smirk on her face. Gabriel sighed at the woman's antics.

"How long have you been back?" He asked in hopes of changing the topic.
"A few hours, haven't even fully unpacked or turned in my reports. I wanted to check in on you and Jack to see what has caught fire," Ana yawned.

"Have more faith in us Ana, how else are we supposed to grow up," Gabriel chuckled even though the woman was at least three to four years older than him. Recently, a feeling of uncertainty began to
weave its way into his mind every time the woman had to leave on a mission. a feeling of dread hovered over him when it came to the missions that she had been assigned. He pushed the thoughts to the back of his mind and hoped for the best for not just her, but for Overwatch and Blackwatch as a whole.

"I know you know that I believe in both of you…sometimes," Ana countered.

"If you can't handle us then how are you going to handle Fareeha when she gets older?" Gabriel asked.

"My baby girl is growing up so fast. She told me that she wanted to go to University but she also wants to join the military," Ana sniffed as she wiped away an imaginary tear.

"Following in her mother's footsteps," Gabriel chuckled.

"Perhaps? Oh, she asked about you and wondered if you started growing gray hair from McCree and Natalie," Ana replied.

"That's rude. Ana, teach your child some manners," Gabriel half chuckled.

"She learned from the best...meaning you, Jack, Reinhardt, Torbjorn, Angie and do I even have to mention Jesse," Anna chuckled.

"Touche," Gabriel replied.

"Although, everything may be calm right now we keep moving forward and not forget that we're old and we can only keep doing this for so long," Ana replied as she looked at him.

"Yeah yeah," Gabriel grumbled as he pulled off his beanie and scratched his head.

"Thoughts about settling down?" Ana asked.

"No," Gabriel replied honestly.

"Really? You'd make a good father," Ana chuckled.

"You really think so?" Gabriel asked sarcastically.

"You already have five children you take care of. I think you're father material," Ana laughed.

"Don't remind me," Gabriel replied tiredly.

"But, seriously. You should at least think about it. We eventually have to hand it over to the kids," Ana continued.

"For the sake of the world, let's hope we don't have to anytime soon" Gabriel replied.

"Oh come on Gabriel...have a little bit more faith in them," Ana poked the man in his chest as she crossed her arms.

"I dunno Ana…" Gabriel chuckled.

"At least think about settling?" Ana said as she crossed her arms.

"When the time is right I will," Gabriel said as he pushed himself from the wall.

"When will that be?"

"I dunno," Gabriel shrugged as he walked away.

"Gabriel," Ana began.

"Goodnight Ana," Gabriel quickly moved down the hall and waved off the woman's attempt to
He didn't have time to think of something that could easily be taken away by one wrong action, a well-placed bullet could end everything.

Another week passed, Kallista continued her work and readied herself for her upcoming recon mission. She took a moment from working with the R&D department to spar with Natalie, she quickly pulled her hair from the messy bun she had put it in as while she sparred with Natalie. It was well past midnight as she made her way to Gabriel's office to update him on the prototype suit that the R&D department was letting her borrow for field testing.

She hid her excitement as Sabina told her the news and as she sparred with Natalie but she could tell the woman knew that something was up but remained tight-lipped. Kallista stopped in front of the man's office and knocked softly before the door slid open.

She was greeted by darkness and the scent of the man's signature cigarettes, she hesitated for a moment but saw the man at his desk, reclined back in his chair, arm over his eyes as if to shield them from light.

"Hey, Reyes…" Kallista began quietly as she approached him. "Are you…"

"I'm fine…but you could have waited for me to let you in," Gabriel replied gruffly.

"Open door policy...you said it yourself," Kallista replied. The man scoffed as he shifted in his seat and straightened himself in his chair. A hand went to pinch the bridge of his nose in an attempt to stave off whatever pain afflicted him.

"...SEP right?" Kallista asked

"...yeah," Gabriel grunted. Kallista nodded as she moved over to the man.

"You too, huh," Kallista commented. Despite all the work she had been doing the past months recently she hadn't slept for a day and had been dealing with a migraine herself.

"What do you mean? Are you in pain?" Gabriel asked as he turned on a dim light at his desk. "You have you taken your meds?"

"No…not yet was planning to when I got back to my room, but what about you? Do you take meds for this as well?" Kallista asked.

"Used to, but I'll be fine," Gabriel replied with a grimace as he turned to look at her.

"So…update," Gabriel began and winced. He leaned back in his chair and tried to focus on the woman.

Even in the dim lights, Kallista could see the man as he winced and tried to inconspicuously rub one of his temples. Kallista sat on the edge of his desk as she looked around the man's office, she remembered Natalie's words about him being empathetic to her.

"Is there any way I can help you? You've helped more than once," Kallista began softly. She thought back to the times he had helped her when her migraines were too much and she wasn't able to function. The man's chuckle pulled her from her thoughts, she knew that he knew his pain was 20 times worse than hers.
"A distraction or something but there's not much you can do," Gabriel joked as he began to rub his temples again.

"A distraction? Will that be enough?" Kallista asked.

"Anything at this point," Gabriel replied.

Kallista slid from the man's desk, Gabriel's eyes were on him until she stepped behind him and felt her hands on his shoulders. Her touch was gentle but soon began to knead the tense and taut muscles of his shoulders. A soft grunt game from the man as his head lulled forward as she massaged the man's shoulders.

It had been some time since he allowed anyone to get this close to him let alone touch him without him touching them first. Perhaps the pain numbed his reasoning or the search for something to subdue the pain outweighed everything.

He didn't know, neither did Kallista who knew what she took a bold risk.

"When was the last time you had a massage?" Kallista asked softly.

"Years…maybe," Gabriel grunted.

"Ah, it could help…" Kallista trailed off.

"Yeah…" he grunted again as he felt her press and knead on the knots in shoulders.

As she worked on his shoulders, kneading, massaging his shoulders to the best of her ability she could feel the man relax into his chair, his scowl gone, and brows relaxed, eyes closed. She slowly came to a stop and placed her hands on to the man's shoulders.

"How do you feel?" her words were soft.

"Better," Gabriel mumbled.

"Good," Kallista said as she stepped from around the chair and placed herself into his lap, catching the man completely off guard.

"What-" Gabriel began as his eyes shot open. She quickly placed a finger onto the man's lips to silence him, just as quickly as she placed a finger to hips lips she replaced it with her lips and whispered against his lips.

"Good Night,"

Without a word, Kallista removed herself from his lap and exited his office leaving the man speechless.
Chapter Summary

Early 2063: After being off the field for so long Kallista is 'granted' her first mission in South Korea

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Albeit months later, Gabriel did allow for Kallista to go on her first reconnaissance mission that would take place in Seoul, South Korea. The country was still rebuilding from the first crisis, the economy had regained its footing and lead the country back to recovery but it also bred an anti-omnic mentality. Overwatch kept a close eye on the various anti-omnic groups formed in South Korea whilst Blackwatch kept an eye on a specific group called, Bulgasari.

"Bulgasari..." Kallista trailed off, her attention on the new phone in her hand. She had been given a new and upgraded phone for this specific mission and would be able to keep it after the mission to use as she pleased, and without 'jail breaking' it.

"Interesting choice for a resistance group…" Gabriel said as he sipped his coffee, he casually sat next to the woman at a small cafe.

"In Korean mythology, Bulgasari is an iron-eating monster known for destroying evil and wrong things," Kallista replied as she continued to look at the article on her phone.

"They are one of the reasons why Seoul might be on the verge of civil unrest," Gabriel replied.

"Yeah...so much hateful propaganda against omnics..." Kallista trailed off.

"Don't get distracted. You know what we're here for," Gabriel reminded her.

The two were dressed casually and were posing as tourists while they gathered information about the Anti-Omnic resistance group Bulgasari and their connection to a well-known CEO Jae-Hyun "Cassius" Park.

In addition to Bulgasari, one of Seoul natives, CEO with a celebrity like status Jae-Hyun "Cassius" Park. A businessman in the technology and transportation sector, he was everywhere and made it known that he and his company were going to propel South Korea back to its greatness, regardless of the consequences. He donated lump sums of money to the government to and gave suggestions for implementing new technology and more. Effectively putting himself and in the limelight of the government.

Kallista's test consisted of locating where his money is originated from, learn about Park's business partners, discover his connection to the resistance group, and dampen the resistance group's communications.

The man was the fire to light the powder keg known as the resistance group.

Overwatch and Blackwatch both knew this.
"There are fliers everywhere for this protest…” Kallista commented as she looked at the flyer on the table.

"How else are you going to get people to come and listen to you spout nonsense?" Gabriel responded as he looked at his cellphone.

"That is true…” Kallista replied as she moved closer to the man, playing her part as a tourist's couple. Gabriel placed an arm around the back of her chair, playing his part.

"Hopefully a peaceful protest," Gabriel commented.

"The only way to find out is to go check it out," Kallista replied.

The sun had set hours ago when Kallista and Gabriel had managed to get a hotel room. They had spent most of the day on the streets of Seoul acting as tourists, sightseeing, scouting and more.

"We've been gone all day,” Kallista groaned as she sluggishly followed after the man.

"You've covered a lot of ground," Gabriel replied as he unlocked the door to the hotel room.

"Yeah and I feel like death," Kallista said as she entered the room.

For the past two days, Kallista and Gabriel had been posing as tourists watching the unrest in the streets of Seoul, gathering Intel on the resistance group and Jae-Hyun Park. So far everything was going quicker than planned, he didn't expect the recon mission to move as quickly as it did but her skills and knowledge of politics and Korean language and culture added to the success of the mission.

She had already gathered leads to Cassius' money trails, located the individual in charge of the resistance's communications and was working with the others back at HQ to disrupt their communications. He was surprised that she went deeper and found Cassius' business partners.

Perhaps Lyudmila was right about her potential on the field, but decided to keep that to himself.

As they entered the hotel room, Gabriel closed the door behind them and instantly bolting it. With a small device in her hands, Kallista moved quickly around the room and scanned for bugs that may have been planted in the room. When she was finished she turned to the man and signaled that the room was clear. During their time in Seoul, they switched hotels and locations just as a precaution if anyone happened to be too curious about them.

"How quickly this is going...we should be out of here within a day or so. You're doing a lot better than I expected," Gabriel commented as he dumped his small duffle bag down.

"You underestimated me, so allow me to continue to crush your expectations, Reyes," Kallista replied smugly as she too dropped her bag.

"Don't let it go to your head girl," Gabriel chuckled.

"I know when I'm good at something and I'm not shy about it," Kallista replied.

"Obviously,"

Kallista gave the man a cheeky smile as she plopped onto the full-size bed.

"It sucks that they only had a full-size bed…a double would have been perfect..." Kallista trailed off
"We take what we can get," Gabriel said as he flipped through messages on his cellphone and pulled a datapad from his bag.

The hotel room was basic and had minimal necessities for their night stay. A small table, an electric water kettle, a coffee maker with its amenities, a full-size bed, a small chair, and a small hallway that led to the bathroom and small closet. They carried basic needs for the mission, he carried a concealed gun, ammo clip, an extra set of clothing and basic tech, they needed to blend in with the surroundings and become tourists.

"How is your head?" Gabriel asked as he focused on the data streaming on the pad.

"It's ok…" Kallista replied as she took off her cropped hoodie and slipped off her boots.

"Are you ok? The others?"

"I'm fine, just looking at updates back at the base," Gabriel replied as he tossed the datapad back into his bag and checked his cell phone.

"I assume you're checking up on the new girl? How is she?" Kallista said as she yawned.

"Yeah…and others. Lyuda said the girl is having issues adjusting, volatile, a loner doesn't really talk to anyone…and she's stubborn," Gabriel sighed.

"Sounds like you have a lot of children to take care of Reyes. She was transferred from the Overwatch division right, something about her father? She sounds like a mess," Kallista asked. The man scoffed.

"Have you been talking to Ana? Are you the leak in the department?" Gabriel arched an eyebrow. He was a little annoyed at how quickly information traveled in the division, but then again he knew there was always some type of gossip floating around.

"Maybe...maybe not," Kallista trailed off as she stretched out on the bed. Gabriel studied the woman before shaking his head and focusing his attention on his bag.

"Malik then,"

"I'll never tell my sources," Kallista smirked. Gabriel scoffed at the woman's cheeky response, it reminded him of Ana's way of finding out information he would normally keep to himself or a few others and yet Ana found out. He chalked up the info leak to Malik.

It was always him or at least he knew about it if he spread the information or not was always up in the air. He noticed the pause between them before Kallista spoke up.

"I guess we're sharing a bed," Kallista commented.

"If you want I can sleep on the floor," Gabriel suggested. Kallista sat up suddenly, crossing her legs and frowned at the man.

"What?" he asked confused as he took off his beanie and leather jacket.

"Look I know you have your manners and all but you sleeping on the floor is wrong especially when there's enough room for both us," Kallista began.

"You're right, we are adults but I also respect you, so I asked," Gabriel replied nonchalantly.

"C'mon Reyes now you're making this awkward," Kallista sighed as the man chuckled.
"Fine," Gabriel replied as he sat at the edge of the bed and untied his boots. Kallista snickered as stood to stretch.

"I'm going to ask again, you're ok with this?" Gabriel asked

"Look I'm not gonna make you sleep on the floor, what do I look like not giving my elders or superiors the bed," Kallista shrugged and sighed. Gabriel frowned at the woman and slipped off his boots.

"Whenever you give me a run for my money, that's when I'll let you call me old," Gabriel said smugly as he stood.

"Yeah, Yeah, Yeah," Kallista replied as she pulled back the blankets.

Kallista rolled her eyes at the man's smug expression, she knew that he was just giving her a hard time about everything.

She kept the inkling thought in the back of her head that nothing was going to come of this, they were just seeking ways to distract themselves from the pain and stress. Since that stunt that she pulled, he had loosened up a bit around her and surprisingly responded to her. He could have easily pushed her away, easily reprimanded her, had her transferred or worse, but he didn't.

It started out simple but quickly tumbled into something more, a fling.

They didn't talk about it, and she was sure that it was the furthest thing from his mind.

She knew that she shouldn't think about it either.

"I hope you're not one of those people that hogs all the blankets, "Gabriel quipped as he got into the bed.

"It's not like you need them you're a walking heater, do you snore? I hope you don't for your sake," Kallista bit back as she too slid into the bed. Gabriel chuckled at her quick and witty response.

"I don't snore so relax. Let me know if you need any meds for your migraine," Gabriel said.

"Ok,"

There was another pause between the two before Kallista spoke.

"Hey, Reyes?" Kallista started.

"Hm?"

"Goodnight," Kallista replied.

"Goodnight...Kallista,"

When morning came, the two had unconsciously shifted towards one another. Gabriel was asleep on his back with Kallista nestled at his side, a hand on his chest, his hand rested gently on the small of her back.

[ Gooooood Morning]

A voice boomed through their cell phones causing Kallista to jump awake startling awake the man as
well. They both jolted up looking around for intruders only to find themselves alone in the hotel room. Gabriel sighed heavily as he fell back into his pillow, Kallista had slid to the edge of the bed running her hands through her hair and sighed in relief.

"Jesus fucking Christ Magnus," Gabriel growled.

[Sorry Boss. I thought you would have been up by now...you slept a little later than usual]

"You almost gave me a heart attack Magnus," Kallista sighed heavily.

[My bad...I hope you slept well, though? I have good news if that helps?]

"Next time, how about you send some type of warning..." Gabriel growled as he moved to sit on the opposite edge of the bed.

[I said I'm sorry. Like I said you were asleep longer than usual. But the reason why I contacted both of you is because I wanted to let you know that that leads the Kallista sent back are giving us some promising results and might get you back faster than expected. We were able to hack a terminal of Bulgasari we're waiting on your signal to start disrupting]

"And the leads on Cassius?" Gabriel asked.

[We're already looking into them, Malik and Aleks is working on their money trail along with his business partners.]

"Ok that's a start," Kallista commented and yawned.

[I've already uploaded the best position for you to upload the code-]

[Hey, Gabi can you bring me back some Korean snacks? I hear they're really good]

"Ramos now is not the time," Gabriel said as he stood.

[C'mon just one bag of those fish chips or something]

"Malik," Kallista noted the man's tone as he too yawned after. A low rumble in his chest, his voice was thick with sleep. Kallista ran a hand through her hair and down the back of her neck, nervously.

[It sounds like you two had a long night...Kallista]

"Nonsense. We were working which is why we are almost done with this mission," Kallista scoffed as she grabbed her cellphone.

[Sure...]

"You two, don't start," Gabriel sighed.

[Oh? So you guys did have a long night]

"Magnus, Ramos. Get your asses back to work," Gabriel growled.

[Fish chips, please and thank you]

[Fine. We do want souvenirs though, Hey Kali make sure you hook us up!]

As quickly as it started the connection to their cell phones were cut leaving the two alone with each
other again. Gabriel sighed heavily before yawning again he turned to speak to see the woman stretch.

His gaze followed from her neck, he noticed a skull-like tattoo on the back of her neck, the curve of her back and more. Just as quickly as he looked, he averted his gaze as she looked over her shoulder at the man.

"When did you get the tattoo?" Gabriel asked.

"Before I went to Harvard," Kallista replied as she sat on the bed and began to pull on her boots.

"Why, what's up?" Kallista asked as she lay back on the bed.

"It's nothing," Gabriel replied and yawned.

"Sounds like you need some coffee," Kallista suggested.

"I do, want some?" Gabriel asked as he stretched again followed by a yawn.

"Rise and Shine Commander Reyes" Kallista replied.

"I'm working on it," he replied.

"Yes, I would like a cup or three or six," Kallista said smugly.

"Caffeine in small doses Kallista," Gabriel replied.

"...yeah ok," Kallista replied sarcastically as she grabbed the small keyboard from her bag.

Gabriel took out his cellphone as he went over to the coffee maker, the coffee looked good from what he could tell, everything was in Korean, it looked simple enough He noticed he had received messages and emails from Morrison, Hayden, Magnus and others from the R&D department. He quickly skimmed over the messages from Morrison judging if he needed to respond to them right away and looked at the message from Magnus last.

{Magnus: Soo...Reyes...about Kallista…}

{Reyes: What do you want Magnus?}

{Magnus: :( Ouch. I'm sorry about cutting in like that I assumed that you were already awake or something...I just wanted to talk to you about Kallista...the others think that she would be a good fit}

{Reyes:...the director's position…}

{Magnus: Don't tell me you forgot about it...Morrison has been pushing it...or at least someone is pushing it for him?}

{Reyes: It wasn't on my radar at the moment. Did you forget where I am right now?}

{Magnus: No but...but Kallista is on your radar}

{Reyes: …How much do you want to keep your job?}

{Magnus: Ruthless…but consider it...yeah She's perfect. You and I both know this.}

Gabriel glanced away from his cell phone and focused on the woman enthralled in the holographic
screens around her. During a previous mission, Blackwatch had suffered extreme casualties within the Intelligence Department and was slowly recovering. One thing that the department lacked was leadership and not just from him or Lyudmila, leadership from within the department.

He knew that Malik was not a suitable candidate, he was too reckless and he had his own personal problems that sometimes lead him to think if Malik was suitable on the field. Gabriel still continued to take his chances with the man, he was a valuable asset to the team.

Recently, Aleksander, Magnus, and Linda had been transferred from the Overwatch Intel department to support and eventually became members of Blackwatch, but he didn't feel they were ready yet to be in that type of position yet.

{Reyes: I'll think about it.}

{Magnus: Oh c'mon she's been here for three years now. She knows her shit, she's cute, and you know she has the skills to do it.}

{Reyes: Thanks for your great description of her Magnus I said I'll think about it}

{Magnus: :)}

Gabriel sighed heavily as he shoved his cell phone into his back pocket. He knew that Magnus wasn't wrong about Kallista. He already knew that she was more than capable, she showed signs of leadership while on this recon mission, she was smart, her skills were the best, probably better than what he could discern at the moment, she would be the best fit out of everyone in the department currently.

She was damn good at what she did.

"Hey Aleks, I correlated names to Cassius' business ventures, I have a strong suspicion that these people are connected to Cassius. I was able to access their business proposals documents...some of them look suspicious, but there are some that look promising" Kallista began.

"I already pulled up information on them...these people have been really busy...but then again I'm not too surprised,"

Gabriel looked at the woman smirking as her fingers glided across the brightly lit keyboard. She was one of the most wanted people in the world and yet she hid almost in plain sight from everyone, what would they, the world, and the higher ups of Overwatch think if this said woman became the director of what she tried to hack into before they caught her?

Only one way to find out.

Gabriel took out his cell phone and began to type a message to Lyudmila.

{Reyes: Lyuda, the director's position for the Intel dept.}

{L. Dontsova: What about it?}

{Reyes: Kallista?}

{L. Dontsova: Why I thought you would never ask Reyes. I hope you caught my sarcasm in that.}

{Reyes: Clearly.}

{L. Dontsova: Of course, she is the most capable, reliable, versatile, agent we have in the Intel dept.
She clearly has the skills to do whatever you ask her to do.

{Reyes: Lay it on heavy why don't you?}

{L. Donsdova: Only the truth Reyes. I agree with everyone else in the Intel Dept and some outside as well.}

{Reyes: Figures.}

{L. Donsdova: You don't sound too happy Reyes…}

{Reyes: I'm fine. She's good at what she does... I think she'll be a good fit}

{L. Donsdova: I am glad that we agree on this. I know that Malik might have some mixed feelings about this due to his seniority and his skill}

{Reyes: He'll have to get over it. He knows he's too reckless}

{L. Donsdova: Agreed. We'll see how the brass likes it}

Chapter End Notes

Rough translations

no me importa, besa mi culo - I don't care, kiss my ass.
Chapter Summary

Mid 2063: With new leads means more field missions. A sting in Numbani's nightlife starts off well and with Kallista on the field again as technical support cracks begin to form in her protective wall.

A month had passed since Kallista's recon mission in Seoul with Gabriel, and now she and another member of the Intel Department were focused on another project. The following month was a surprise when Gabriel called her into his office to talk about an important change within the Intel department.

But she wasn't a stranger to the big change that he spoke of. She knew the department lacked leadership, but it seemed to all work out with the small amount of leadership that Malik gave everyone.

She didn't question it, why should she?

She just needed to do her job and that was it.

In the back of her mind she was sure that Aleksander would be the one to take the leadership position. He was an all-around poster Intel guy, it would only make sense if he was the one to take up the position. She was legitimately surprised when Reyes told her that everyone that he spoke to recommended her for the position.

Three years ago she was one of the most wanted hackers in the world, placed in a den of wolves, being watched from every corner, under suspicion and more, and yet she was being handed power, a key into an organization she and others sought to expose.

Impulsively she said yes. Which started a chain reaction within the department, office change, room change, title change, mission execution meetings, mission debriefs, it almost gave her whiplash, and it exhausted her. It took her a month to get acquainted with everything including the perks of her new office and new room, new responsibilities, less time on the field and more behind the scenes. She didn't mind not being on the field due to the amount of work and how involved she was with mission planning.

There was no time to whine, there was work to do.

Now she and Aleks were focused on gaining remote access to a company server needed to further their progress for a possible raid in India. Leaning on the man's shoulder she stared intensely at his holographic screen.

"The code changes within two seconds, I'm only able to capture half of it before it changes," Aleks said as he looked up at the woman.

"I can see a pattern it's there for a split second. You're focusing on one part of it when you should be able to capture it all at once," Kallista started.

"I see it too, but it's not matching," Aleks replied, his Russian accent thick.
"It's there. There's more than one pattern though...we can do this a less conventional way…" Kallista trailed off.

"Less conventional you say?" Aleks questioned.

"...she means hacking it her way, probably breaking something in the process," Malik chimed in.

"I don't break...I modify and besides, I'm talking tricking the system into giving us the code instead of us trying to take it. It might take a little bit of time to do it, but with this system, I know it can be done," Kallista replied.

"Sounds good to me," Malik shrugged,

"Ok, Malik?" Kallista asked as she pulled out her cellphone from her back pocket.

"Sure and I'm already uploading the new code to you Aleks," Malik said as he leaned back in "Moving fast are we, Ramos?" Aleks said as he focused back on his screen.

"What can I say? I do that sometimes," Malik said as he too pulled out his cell phone

"Make sure you copy everything. Who created this system will probably have a firewall similar to this… Malik if you want to work with Aleks on it to break it that's fine. We need this info ASAP," Kallista added. A soft chime came from the woman's back pocket, her attention remained focused on the screen as she took her cellphone out of her pocket. She quickly took a look at the screen, it was a message from Gabriel.

{Reyes: Meet in conference room A4 in 10}

Kallista glanced at Malik who turned his attention to her, Kallista nodded. Malik lowered his legs from his desk and began to work.

"Aleks I'm handing this over to you," Kallista said as she moved over to the silent woman in the room.

"Linda, how are those reports coming?" Kallista asked.

"I have everything almost pulled together for the meeting," Linda said as she heatedly typed on her keyboard.

Kallista pulled a pink holographic screen from the woman's main screen, reports of a Numbani club and reports populated onto the screen.

"A night club," Kallista murmured.

"We got a report from the South Korean government notifying us about the decreased activity of the resistance group that was being investigated last month or so," Morrison said as he walked down the hall.

"You don't say?" Gabriel said sarcastically.

"C'mon I don't need your sarcasm too Gabe," Morrison sighed.

"We do our job efficiently, what can we say?" Gabriel replied as he walked with the man.

"You want gold stars and cookies to congratulate your team?" Morrison replied.
"How about some vacation?" Gabriel suggested.

"Maybe...after the final reports come in from South Korea and Austria," Morrison replied.

"Of course...should be any year now right?"

"Your sarcasm is at a new high Gabe,"

Gabriel shrugged as he chuckled, Morrison chuckled with the man shaking his head as they made their way to one of the conference rooms near Morrison's office.

"How is everything going? There's been a lot of movement within Blackwatch...you got new recruits...a new Intel director...", Morrison started a smirk forming on his lips.

"Lyudmila is training the new recruits...as for my Intel director...she fits like a puzzle piece in the right spot," Gabriel replied.

"Is that so?" Morrison tried to hide the smirk on his face.

"You've seen the reports, what else is there to say?" Gabriel said as he stopped at a conference room door.

"Riiight. I'll let you slide this time Gabe," Morrison sighed.

"I'm not blind to you and Vincent, I just choose to be," Gabriel commented coolly.

Morrison's cheeks flushed as he shook his head at the man, Gabriel knew about them and so did a few others even though they tried to hide it.

"I can read you like a book Morrison but then again, you knew that already," Gabriel said as he opened the door to the conference room leaving the man by himself.

[**Lobo their security is under our control. On-standby.**]

Kallista's voice echoed softly through the raid team's earpieces as they stuck around the conveniently darkened alleyways of the night club. Gabriel grunted in response as he began directing his crew silently.

[An EMP would disrupt the entire building including the omnics that are in the lower levels...and probably a few buildings near by]

"Wait for Klein's and Hay-B's signal" Gabriel whispered.

[Ok...]

"Positions," Gabriel whispered.

[[Sure thing sugar...is it warm in here or is it because yer the hot one here]]

Jesse's voice echoed through the team's earpieces causing a few of the agents to shake their heads in disappointment at the man's terrible flirting tactics.

"Someone needs to teach him how to flirt,"

"Tell me about it I feel like I'm getting heartburn,"
"Devane, Rhett, shut up," Gabriel growled.

"Just saying," Devane murmured.

"He has a point, Lobo…" Rhett commented.

The message that Gabriel had sent everyone was for a raid that Jesse had been gathering Intel on the field about for the past month, it was time to strike. Kallista, Hayden, Vincent, and a few other agents were positioned around the club waiting for the signal to strike, a sting operation on an illegal human and omnic trafficking ring in Numbani.

Numbani was known to be the only place in the world where Omnics and Humans lived in harmony, and almost without any issues. If you were to dig deep into the underbelly of Numbani and in the depths of the dark web human trafficking was rampant in the city. With Kallista's new position and complete access to all the servers, Gabriel gave her and the Intel department a new task to focus on while assisting with other missions.

During their searching and connecting the signs and money trails they were able to locate an exact building of where the operations were taking place. The trafficking to Numbani and with hints of Cassius’ business partners funneling money to support this. It was only a matter of time until they gathered enough evidence to bring the couple down.

The team was split into three, Jesse being the one to inconspicuously infiltrate the club, while Hayden and Agent Klein slipped through their security to remove the humans and omnics before Kallista sent an EMP though the building. During the chaos, Gabriel and the other agents would move in and take control of the situation. Jesse grinned from ear to ear when Gabriel begrudgingly picked him for the mission. The only reason he was allowed to infiltrate because he fit the part of being a 'local'.

([Do ya normally have Omnics in here? Aren't the ladies scared? Aww no no no c'mere ladies])

[Someone needs to teach him something…because those are terrible…my ears are bleeding]

"Agreed Kaines, maybe you should teach him your ways, Lobo,"

"Vincent…” Gabriel growled in warning.

"Just sayin…” Vincent replied.

[Vincent is right. If you care about your dysfunctional child teach him your ways, Lobo]

[Lobo this is Hay-B…the cat is out of the bag]

"Do it,"

[Unleashing EMP, brace yourselves]

Within seconds a muted energy burst was heard through the building, knocking out all electricity surrounding the building causing the building to shut down, draping the team further in darkness, further coating the team in the shadows. Smoke billowed from the nightclub as screams and glass shattering echoed from the building as the team moved in quickly taking control before it was lost in the smoke.

Kallista chuckled as she sat tucked away in the Hummer like vehicle Gabriel had driven to the meeting point, the windows were tinted hiding the glow of the holographic screens floating around.
her, she had watched everything from Hayden and James escaping with the victims and from with Gabriel's team moved in to take control of the situation as Numbani's local authorities moved in.

[Lobo! You got a runner!]

[How the hell did you let him slip out go fucking get him!]

[Jesus fucking Christ]

[Kaines! Catch him! He's coming your way!]

"Are you kidding me?" Kallista whined as she tossed her keyboard to the seat next to her, opened the door to see a man run past her, narrowly dodging the car door.

"Holy fuck! You could have told me he was this close to me!" Kallista shouted as she took after the man.

[You better catch him or else Kaines]

[She got this, right Kalli? Give em a run for their money]

"Thanks for your confidence in my ability to run Ziva! Vince now isn't the time!" Kallista panted as she ran after the man.

[Hey. I thought I was helping...at least a little bit, hahah]

[On the contrary Kaines. You did say you have a nice ass from running...so show us what you're made of girl]

"Excuse me! Rhett!" Kallista panted as she continued to run, ignoring the chuckles of the other agents.

[Director Kaines I have that information you requested.]

"Now is not the time Linda!" Kallista shouted as she barely dodged from getting hit by a car. The man was still several feet in front of her and surprisingly avoiding traffic better than she was.

[O-Oh M-my apologies D-Director Kaines]

[Can't you see that she's chasing after someone Linda? Jesus Christ woman your timing is terrible]

"Ok how about...you assholes give me a little help? Bloody fucking hell!" Kallista shouted

[I thought English women were supposed to be kind?]

"Listen here you little twat-!" Kallista shouted.

[Woah-ho! The kitten has claws-!]

[Director Kaines I have access to the street lights I can-]

"Aleks! Just do it!"

The lights ahead of the man were once red and now they were green as the man started to run across the street only to be hit by a car, his body was thrown a few feet.

"Damn it," Kallista cursed. Kallista pushed herself harder to catch up, she slid over a car hood to see
the man limping away into the backstreets of Numbani.

"Are you fucking kidding me?" Kallista panted as she followed the man into the back streets.

[Kaines what's your position?]

Kallista ignored Gabriel's voice and kept her focus trained on the man as she slowly approached him, his leg was broken, and she could see blood seeping through his suit pant leg.

[I got a lock on her location Lobo...sending you coordinates]

"We're also going to need a medic…” Kallista commented as she continued to approach the man, he hobbled away from her.

"You should probably have a seat...it looks like you've broken something there," Kallista said sarcastically.

"Nice eyesight girl. Real professional," the man scoffed as he faced her, and balanced on one leg.

"You think so? I wasn't even trying," Kallista replied.

"A newbie? Don't you know not to hurt suspects?" the man panted. Kallista's eyes narrowed at the man, he had a hard time breathing, obviously, his body was in pain, his skin flushed, blood seeped through his pant leg.

He needed medical attention an fast.

"I wasn't the one running away and jumping in front of traffic… although I would suggest some calcium to strengthen your bones… just as a suggestion," Kallista replied.

"Real cheeky girl. Call off your friends?" The man ordered.

"Or what? You're surrounded,"

"Who said anything about shooting you?" the man said as he pointed the gun to his head, Kallista's eyes widen at the man's action.

"Come any closer and I'll shoot,"

Kallista froze where she stood, the man was one of the suspects in the trafficking ring and also had connections to one of Cassius Park's business partners, Sterling Black and his partner Carmelo Mendoza.

Kallista stepped back and raised her hands to show that she was unarmed, and had never been in a situation where the suspect was so willing to kill himself, it was usually the other way around, or so she thought.

"Stay calm Kallista...don't do anything too sudden to be shot...you're at a disadvantage...they'll be here any minute now...improvise...you're good at doing that," Kallista thought as she kept her eyes focused on the man.

She knew that they needed the information from this man, that was one of the main reasons for the raid on the nightclub, but to be put in this situation so suddenly threw her off guard. With an abundance of adrenaline in her system, the dull throbbing in the back of her head began to pulse.

Her vision darkened slightly.
"I'm not gonna hurt you...but your leg looks really bad," Kallista clenched her jaw.

"I got hit by a fucking car what else do you expect?! Call off your friends otherwise, I'll blow my own brains out!" the man snarled.

"Your loyalty is more important than your life?! Are you daft mate?!" Kallista shouted.

"I don't have much to live for...I'm a dead man after this anyways…" the man replied half-heartedly.

"What-?" Kallista began when suddenly a gunshot rang through the alley, an abrupt shout, and the clanging of a gun falling to the ground echoed in the alleyway.

"Kallista!"

Jesse and Gabriel's voice called out to her as Hayden and another agent restrained the man, everything happened so quickly, the man being restrained and carried off into a black van.

"You ok?" Gabriel asked as he placed a hand on her shoulder.

"I'm fine...just a little too close," Kallista replied.

"My bad!" Jesse called from the large vehicle.

"Let's go," Gabriel said as he moved towards the vehicle, Kallista followed him and got into the backseat.

Everything happened so quickly, the man being restrained and taken away, her being ushered back into the Hummer and carted towards the pickup point. Faintly Kallista could hear Gabriel on a phone call with Morrison and who she thought to be the Numbani mayor. Jesse sat quietly in the seat in front of her.

"Sorry bout that Kalli didn' mean to shoot so close to ya," Jesse said as he looked behind the seat at her.

She didn't respond to him.

"Kalli?"

Nothing.

"Hey Top Cat…" Jesse used a nickname that he knew she didn't care for but used it to see if he could get a reaction out of her and got nothing in return.

Kallista sat silently looking down at her hands, oblivious to the man looking back at her. Jesse could see that the woman was shaken and looked to be deep in thought. He noticed her shaking hands and remembered she was a civilian at one point and had never been in a situation like this, of course, she would be shaken.

Hell, he remembered his first shot and first kill so many years ago. Jesse took one more look at the silent and shaken woman before he turned around in his seat with a sigh.

"What is it?" Gabriel asked as he kept his eyes on the road.

"Oh nothin' jus glad everything worked out in the end," Jesse replied and shifted in his seat.
Chapter Summary

Mid 2063: There's always a first for something and the best way to learn is through the hard way.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Several weeks after the Numbani mission, Jesse found himself in Gabriel's office wanting to satisfy his curiosity about their Intel director. He was there when they captured her but as for any additional details about her, he was left in the dark. Even Malik wouldn't say anything about the woman and normally they would tell him what he wanted to know for a price but the fact that they did not say a word about the woman only fueled his curiosity.

"Jefe, I got a question for ya," Jesse started as he plopped down on the sofa in Reyes' office.

"Shouldn't you be preparing to leave?" Gabriel asked as he focused on the document in front of him. Jesse looked over the man and how he did not fully acknowledge him, he crossed a leg over the other as he stretched out on the sofa.

"That comes later, I got some questions about Kallista," Jesse waved of the man's questioned and smirked as he saw the man halt in his work.

"That got yer attention," Jesse smirked. "Sometimes yer so easy to read Reyes," Jesse chuckled as he scratched his facial hair as he looked at the man.

"McCree, what do you want?" Gabriel asked annoyed.

"So, Kalli…has she shot a gun before?" Jesse questioned.

"In her basic training, she should have," Gabriel replied and shifted his attention from the man and back to the work in front of him.

"You sure?" Jesse asked.

"Why?" Gabriel stopped typing and turned his attention back to the man.

The question of if the woman had shot a gun or not was something that never crossed his mind. Despite some of the incident, she completed her basics training and all of the modules that were completed.

He assumed but couldn't confirm.

"Jus curious is all," Jesse replied and suddenly stood. With a slight flick of his hat, the man turned towards the door and gave a lazy wave as he exited the man's office. "I'll see ya when I get back,"

"So…Kalli…I heard through the grapevine about something that involves you and a certain
commander that we all know so well," Magnus started as he peeked over his monitor at the woman sitting across from him.

"I assume you're talking about Lyuda?" Kallista responded as she remained focused on her datapad and sipped her coffee.

"No...but if you're banging her too please enlighten us. She has legs for days and a nice ass," Magnus started.

"Magnus, please don't-" Aleks started.

"Aw c'mon on Aleks baby we just wanna know if it's true," Magnus smirked.

"Do not call me that," Aleks said firmly, Magnus snickered at the man's flustered response.

"Why are you asking all of a sudden? Who's spreading rumors?" Kallista asked as she looked up from her datapad. Her crystal blue eyes focused on the man, a stoic expression.

"We just wanna know if you and Reyes are sleeping together," Magnus smirked.

"Do not include me in this," Linda scoffed.

"Oh please, we all wanna know. Don't act all innocent now Linda," Magnus said before turning his attention back to Kallista.

"You all really think that we're having an affair?" Kallista asked as she leaned coyly onto the desk as she looked at Magnus directly in his blue eyes.

"I dunno...are you fucking—oh excuse me having an affair with the Commander of Blackwatch?" Magnus asked, his voice lower as he stared her back.

Aleks and Linda looked between the two as they listened intensely, waiting for an answer. Malik leaned back in his chair a smug expression on his face.

"No. We aren't," Kallista replied and laughed. "I'm honored that you would think such a thing,"

"Don't give me that proper English accent," Magnus huffed,

"Don't be fooled Mags... his cigarette smoke and his specific brand of soap is on her," Malik replied.

"Oh?!" Magnus shouted and laughed.

"You got your scent all over him? Damn Kalli," Magnus laughed.

"That is the eeriest thing I've heard in a long time...why are you smelling him? Why are you smelling me?!," Kallista asked shocked.

"What does she smell like?" Linda whispered to Aleks.

"Uh..." Aleks started.

"Kalli smells of mint and sweet rose sometimes cinnamon...mostly...but Gabi smells of cinnamon...amber...tobacco...," Malik replied.

"Ok Malik, that is creepy on several different levels," Linda commented as she leaned back in her chair, crossing her legs.
"He's got you all figured out Kallista," Magnus chuckled.

Kallista scoffed at the man's accusation and continued to work. Malik smirked as he shrugged in his chair, he winced slightly as he shifted in his chair and massaged his knee joints.

"I could try if you want?" Malik suggested as he shifted.

"Malik, that's enough… I don't think we need to pry into the Director and Commander's personal life… even if they are banging," Aleks said cutting off Malik.

"You mean fucking," Malik corrected.

"You mean affair," Magnus commented.

"I mean what I said, fucking," Malik corrected the man.

"How about all of you get back to work, yeah?" Kallista warned.

"Mmmhmm...no one is going to question you or him...well...maybe," Malik continued as they spun around in their chair.

"Well. We aren't sleeping together," Kallista replied as she placed her hands behind her head and reclined in her chair again.

Kallista knew that Malik was right, no one would question Reyes except for Morrison but Morrison had his own work and personal life to handle and monitoring Reyes's personal life would be the last thing on his mind.

But she also knew that if any mention of the two having an affair would be troublesome for Reyes and also her. It would be seen as clouded judgement, especially for her recent promotion to Director of the Blackwatch Intel Department.

She had to keep it secret, not that she wouldn't keep her lips sealed about their affair.

"Then, friends with benefits," Aleks spoke up.

"Fuck buddies," Malik corrected.

"Quiet all of you and get back to work," Kallista warned.

It was around midnight when Kallista walked into to Gabriel's office, unannounced. Gabriel's attention snapped up from his cellphone and to the woman at the door.

"What happened to you knocking?" Gabriel commented gruffly.

"Open door policy," Kallista countered. "I got your text. I'm having Aleks look for where the source of the file corruption...in the meantime...here are all of the printouts linked to your current investigation,"

Kallista placed several stacks of paper and a stack of datapads on to the man's desk. Gabriel glanced at all of papers and datapads that was placed on his desk.

"That's more than I thought it would be," Gabriel commented as he picked up on of the data pads.

"I did some additional digging and found that there were some reports that were linked to the
investigation in the Overwatch database. I figured that you would have wanted these reports as well," Kallista replied as she took off her khaki green bomber jacket.

"I'm surprised you were able to get them so quickly I thought it would have taken a little bit more of time," Gabriel commented as his attention went to the information streaming on of his holographic screens.

"Well, being the Director of the Blackwatch Intelligence department has its perks besides a corner bedroom with a window and a shower," Kallista commented

"That you are correct," Gabriel chuckled as he stood.

Gabriel took off his glasses before he ran a hand over his face and through his short hair. The investigation that he was tasked to conduct took much longer than he wanted it to, not to mention the files he needed became suddenly corrupted. It was too convenient but he was thankful that Kallista and her team moved in quickly to help him, much faster than he was used to, he welcomed the change.

Gabriel sighed softly as he looked up from the stacks of paper and to the woman stretching, his eyes flicked to her midriff peeking from underneath her cropped top.

"Like what you see Reyes?" Kallista chuckled.

"You're not half bad," Gabriel quipped as he sat on the edge of his desk.

"Oh thanks," Kallista replied sarcastically as she pulled her hair into a messy bun before she went over to the man's desk and grabbed a stack of paper. He caught a quick glance of the tattoo on the back of her neck, it looks similar to a sugar skull but in the shape of a cat.

"You're welcome," Gabriel chuckled as his eyes met hers.

There was a silent pause between the two before Kallista stepped back and moved over to the dark-colored sofa adjacent to his desk. Gabriel chuckled slightly as he slid his glasses back on and looked towards the woman who had already made herself comfortable on the sofa.

"Thanks for bringing the reports over...you plan on staying?" Gabriel questioned.

"You're welcome, two sets of eyes are better than one," Kallista said as she placed her boots neatly at the end of the sofa before she sat on the floor legs crossed.

"I assume you want something from this. No you can't have a coffee maker in your room so don't ask," Gabriel asked as he crossed his arms.

"I'm appalled that you think I would want to go against rules. I am just helping you out of goodwill," Kallista replied. Gabriel scoffed at her response, he already knew that the woman had a coffee maker in her room, it was against the policies and regulations set before him.

"Sure, just like the hazelnut infused coffee perfume that you wear," Gabriel commented. "Get rid of it or I'll do it for you,

"You wouldn't," Kallista perked up.

"I would," Gabriel replied. Kallista glared at the man before she spoke.

"It is my duty to assist my Commander on large investigative projects when it comes to data. That is
what I am doing," Kallista said as she leaned on her knees with her elbows.

"Right…” Gabriel sighed.

"Besides I have a lot of caffeine in my system might as well put it to good use," Kallista replied. Gabriel chuckled as he took a datapad and leaned back in his chair.

"9:20 AM an' he totally missed the training, " Jesse said as he made his way to Gabriel's office.

Jesse knew that Gabriel never missed training unless it was serious, he was a very punctual and orderly man. He made sure that everything ran like clockwork even with the few hiccups from his ragtag agents.

Not to mention, Kallista was missing as well.

Suspicious.

It was decided that Jesse would be the one to go find Reyes even though no one had said anything to him about it. Jesse made a beeline to the man's office and didn't even bother to knock on the door, and just barged in.

Reyes did say he had an open door policy.

"Hey, Reyes you ok in here? Have ya' seen Kalli-" Jesse started as he practically stumbled over the shoes by the door.

"What-oh..." Jesse trailed off as he saw the man and woman on the small sofa, asleep.

Slowly he looked around the office seeing if anything was out of place, he knew the man's office by heart and seeing how Reyes was a very organized man.

Heeled boots, two tumblers, a bottle of tequila and two bodies stretched out on the leather sofa. A huge grin spread across Jesse's face as he looked at the two and moved silently in the office. He glanced at the papers neatly placed on the man's desk and a pile with red 'X's on them in the chair in front of the desk.

He then turned his attention back to the two on the sofa, Gabriel was stretched out on the sofa, one leg hanging off and the other stretched out, while Kallista laid snugly between his legs, her head on his chest. Gabriel's hoodie covered the both of them but Jesse could clearly see Gabriel's arm around her waist. Kallista had one hand to her chest and the other wrapped around the man.

"This...is perfect. This is too perfect," Jesse chuckled as he took out his cell phone. There was a soft grunt from the man sleeping on the sofa as Jesse took pictures of the two.

"Jesse...you're too...loud," Kallista murmured sleepily.

"Jesse...stop fucking barging into my office," Gabriel growled, his voice thick with sleep.

The man didn't even turn to look at Jesse. Kallista's eyes fluttered open briefly and closed a moment later as Gabriel shifted, clearly not wanting to move. Kallista sighed as she attempted to bury her face in his chest.

"Mmm...What time is it?" Kallista murmured.

"9:30 AM," Jesse replied a huge grin on his face.
"Too early...can I skip this meeting-" Kallista groaned as her eyes fluttered open and focused on the man that stood in front of them. Jesse stifled his laughter as he saw the realization in her eyes as she looked at him.

"Jesse?!" Kallista quickly shot up. Jesse slyly put away his cell phone, the grin still on his face.

"McCree get out," Gabriel growled from the sofa, eyes still closed

"Hahaha No way, this is too good," Jesse chuckled.

"I swear to god McCree," Kallista warned. Jesse held up his hands innocently causing the woman to huff as she quickly put on her shoes and grabbed her hoodie.

"It's too early to deal with you. I got a meeting to do," Kallista said as she promptly exited Gabriel's office.

"Yer sure ya didn't miss it already?" Jesse called out to her as he watched the woman leave before he turned his attention back to the man lounging on the sofa.

"So...you and Kallista...what Malik was saying was true then," Jesse smirked.

"No. Just coincident that it happened," Gabriel said

"Mmmhm...yer sure jefe? Y'all looked awfully cute and cozy together," Jesse grinned from ear to ear.

"Keep talking Jesse and give me a reason to kick your ass," Gabriel said as he suddenly moved from the sofa.

"Woah Woah Woah now. There's no need fer violence, I was just stating the obvious. Besides we were worried about you, "Jesse asked.

"A review of several previous investigations. There was some internal corruption and I started looking into it. She helped me," Gabriel replied and yawned.

"What was it about?" Jesse asked curiously.

"Classified," Gabriel replied.

"Oh...sumthin big then...it did seem like ya had a really long night...a long night with gatita..." Jesse commented coyly as he looked around again. Gabriel frowned at the man as he reached down picking up his hoodie.

"Do you need something? Why are you still here?" Gabriel asked.

"I was jus checkin' in on ya. You missed training so I came lookin'" Jesse replied with a crooked smirk.

"I'm alive. Now get out," Gabriel replied.

"Fine, Fine...but you an' Kallista though..." Jesse whistled as he headed towards the door. Gabriel growled in annoyance at the young man's comment, he tossed his hoodie on to his desk before he turned his attention to the new messages on his screen.

"Out. Now,"
As Jesse made his way into the main Overwatch building he took out his phone to check on his text messages and found it completely reformatted. There was one single message and it happened to be from Kallista.

*Kaines: Convince me to restore your contacts and your dick pics. You should consider yourself lucky I left your social media accounts intact. *

"Ah, hell…" Jesse muttered as he read over the message.

"All of those numbers gone...fuck me," Jesse sighed heavily as he ran a hand down his face exasperated

*Kaines: I can play this game better than you cowboy. ;) *

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[Lobo, perimeter clear for extraction. We are missing Kaines, I don’t have a lock on her location]

"Understood Lockdown. Everyone prepare for evac," Gabriel ordered as he looked at the few Blackwatch agents checking the fallen bodies of humans and omnics around them.

There was an impromptu mission that had come up and Gabriel and his team needed to act in order to gain the advantage, the team headed to Austria.

Gabriel turned his attention to the doorway Kallista had gone to siphon information from the building's systems. Their mission had led them to an old base for the Austrian government where Omnium secrets that were left buried. The defunct build was turned into a pro-omnium base and claimed the building for their own uses.

"Kaines…give me your location," Gabriel ordered as he looked around for any signs of her, there were none.

There was silence from Kallista's communication link.

While everyone had their positions, Gabriel followed and shielded Kallista as she moved towards her target, he had made sure that her entry and exit was clear so she wouldn't have to engage in combat to at any point, but her silence worried him.

The paperwork for the woman to carry while on a mission had not been cleared yet, her hand to hand combat skills were sufficient but based on the enemies they encountered here he began to doubt her skills and his judgment.

But he trusted his agent's skills, including her.

Without a word, Gabriel cautiously but quickly moved through the old hallway and seemingly towards the control room of the Pro-Omnium group. Every room that he passed, he carefully peered around the corner before he continued on down the hall. His senses were on high alert, adrenaline pumped through his system, his heart hammered in his chest as he continued.

There was still no sign of the woman.

"Kaines answer me. Where is your location? Are you injured?" Gabriel asked, his heart pounding in his chest. He didn't want to think of the worst-case scenario, but her silence was fueling the thought of it.

[Lobo, tengo la localización de Kallista]
"Dámelo...," Gabriel replied softly.

Within seconds, he came to a stop at the end of the hallway, the last door in the hall, his guns primed he slid along the wall and cautiously peered into the room. At a quick glance he saw the woman frozen in place, a gun in her hands, blood splattered across her face and abdomen.

Two individuals were sprawled on the floor in pools of blood and cranial matter, he caught a quick glimpse of bullet wounds to the head.

Gabriel slowly moved into the room not wanting to startle the woman, he focused solely on the woman in front of him. Her breaths were labored, eyes glazed over, her form trembled, she didn't acknowledge the man until his hand was on the barrel of the gun and slipped it from her hands.

[Did'ya find her Lobo?]

"Yeah," Gabriel replied as he looked down at the shaken woman.

[Is she injured?]

Vibrant crimson blood coated her Blackwatch issued vest, face and hair, and yet she was silent as she focused on the dead bodies behind the man.

"Kallista..." Gabriel started softly.

[All here? We're ready to head out Lobo]

"Are you with me...Kallista?" Gabriel whispered with the hope that she would respond to him and move with him to the evac site.

"Y-Yes..." Kallista replied, her voice barely a whisper.

"Come with me," Reyes said as touched her shoulder. It was a simple touch but she jerked as if he had nudged her.

"S-Sorry I—"Kallista began.

"It's ok, we have to go," Gabriel began and gently began to usher her from the room and quickly to the evacuation point. At that moment Jesse's question to him about her made sense but it was too late to do anything about it. He needed to get her off the field before her mental state shattered.

Without a word escorted her pass the bodies, out of the room and towards the evac site. He kept an eye on her on their travel time back to HQ, he was thankful it was a short one as she managed to keep her mental state together.

As soon as they landed Gabriel ordered her to go to the med bay to be checked out by one of the doctors, she left without a word.

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Hours later, Gabriel made his way to the Med bay hoping that he could determine the woman's mental state and hopefully a solution.

"Angela, how is she?" Gabriel asked as he looked around.

"Oh, Commander Reyes...I assume you are referring to Director Kaines..." the blonde-haired woman trailed off as she moved from her desk and to a side wall terminal." I can assume that she has never shot a man before...let alone two,"
Angela Ziegler, one of Overwatch's young and promising doctors specializing in nanotechnology and field support. She was currently one of the head doctors in the division, and someone that he and Morrison worked closely with.

"I can only assume that too, unfortunately...you cleared her without my knowledge?" Gabriel asked.

"I didn't think I needed to contact you for something of the sort unless you're keeping extra tabs on her Commander Reyes?" the woman questioned the man as she looked up from her datapad. Gabriel crossed his arms as he looked at the young woman, the woman sighed as she placed a piece of stray hair behind her ear.

"Look, I suggested that she get cleaned up and rest in a place that's comforting for her...as for where that is...I am not sure," the woman replied.

"You know...it's not like you to have someone on your team without...what is the right term...experience?" Angela added.

"Sometimes it happens...sometimes those people never make it to the field, sometimes those people die on the field...everyone is different," Gabriel replied.

"I assume Director Kaines is one of those special cases?" Angela asked a small grin on her lips.

"Angie," Gabriel huffed as he saw the woman's grin.

"It was too cute, I apologize," Angela replied as she giggled a bit.

"Thanks for the update, Angela..." Gabriel said as he headed out of the med bay.

"You're welcome Gabriel," Angela smiled as she turned back to his work.

Jesse leaned on the wall outside of med bay occupied by his cellphone, the soft whoosh of the door caught his attention. He looked up from his cell phone to see Gabriel exiting the room, he quickly shoved his cell phone in his pocket and pushed himself from the wall and followed after the man.

"So what's the deal?" Jesse asked. Gabriel glanced at the man briefly before turning his attention back in front of him.

"You knew about this, didn't you?" Gabriel asked.

"Knew 'bout?" Jesse asked.

"The fact that she's never shot a gun before," Gabriel replied as he stopped walking. Jesse stopped a few feet in front of the man and turned to look at him.

"I'm not sure what ya mean Reyes...yer her commanding officer..." Jesse started, Gabriel narrowed his eyes at the man. Jesse sighed and crossed his arms.

"Jesse," Gabriel said firmly.

"I noticed after that stunt in Numbani...she was so pale an' shaken up...it's clear ta me that she hadn't shot a gun or been in a situation like that," Jesse started.

"Of course," Gabriel sighed as he pulled off his signature black beanie, ran a hand through his short hair and down his face.

"Too busy with other things jefe?" Jesse asked.
There was silence between the two men as they stood in the hallway, letting others pass without a word to them, was he that busy that he missed that detail? Did he forget that she was a civilian, someone that hid behind a computer and out of the way?

"I overlooked that detail...let alone having brain matter splatter over her. She was going to be exposed to it sooner or later," Gabriel commented as he slides the beanie back on and began down the hall again.

"Most likely," Jesse began as he followed after the man.

"Ya know...if ya want…" Jesse began.

"No. Natalie will do it," Gabriel replied as he took out his cellphone and began to message someone

"Aw cmon, ya didn't even hear me out," Jesse whined.

"You're not going to teach her," Gabriel said as he continued to focus on his phone.

"Fine be that way, I'm still gonna be a better shot than both of them," Jesse huffed.

"We'll see about that," Gabriel chuckled.

Kallista sat quietly in Gabriel's office, her data pad on her lap, her cell phone next to her, her gaze to the floor. No one expected her to be in his office and he seemed to be gone. It was hidden away from all the noise, tucked away in the quiet parts of the Overwatch Division, she needed silence, and she needed to be alone.

The events that took place hours before replayed over and over again in her head. The ambush on her while collecting data, the struggle, the act of shooting someone while her mind was heavily drugged with copious amounts of adrenaline, her shooting without hesitation shocked her, the shooting itself traumatized her.

Was this one of the effects of the serum?

"Kallista," Gabriel's voice called out to her, she flinched and quickly moved away from the man, dropping her datapad.

"R-Reyes...oh my god…" Kallista sighed in relief at the sight of the man.

"You decided to hole up in my office...," Gabriel commented as he glanced at the woman's datapad and the woman running her hands nervously through her hair.

"I-I was planning on leaving...I just needed to sit down for a little bit," Kallista replied as she averted her eyes from the man.

"Take your time," Gabriel said as he moved to the door, locking it.

"I-I won't hold you up from work...I'll go," Kallista said as she suddenly stood almost stepping on her datapad, Gabriel had stopped her just in time before he stepped on it.

"You almost broke your pad," Gabriel said as he picked up the pad, placing it on his desk as he went over to his terminal.

"Oh....um...about those reports-" Kallista began as she moved towards his desk.

"The others can handle that," Gabriel said as he pulled the datapad out of her reach as he continued look at his computer terminal.

"How are you coping," Gabriel asked.

"People die especially on the battlefield...so...I mean shit like that is normal..." Kallista trailed off and avoided the man's question.
"So is blood splatter," Gabriel added as the holographic screens disappeared from in front of him.

"Y-yeah…C-can I have my datapad?" Kallista asked as her hands began to tremble again.

Kallista was sure that he had seen her hands tremble but made sure to keep calm even as the man looked smugly down at her. She knew that the man was sized her up, watched her for any sign of weakness, a weakness she wasn't sure of but under the man's eyes, she felt weak. She watched as the man held the datapad out for her to take.

Without a word, Kallista reached to take the pad only to be pulled into his embrace.

"You're trembling," he whispered.

"I know…" Kallista mumbled before she buried her head into his chest, in an attempt to stave off the tears.

She was thankful that the man allowed her this sudden gesture, they had set and strict boundaries while around one another. But she couldn't help herself, she needed something to lean on, something to ground her.

The only thing she knew was him.

She didn't know how long they stood there and neither made any movement to part from one another until Gabriel leaned back to look down at her. She turned away to hide the tears that welled at the corner of her eyes.

"How do you cope with this?" Kallista asked as she wiped her eyes with the back of her hand, still avoiding his gaze.

"I've been in the military for a long time...I've grown used to it," Gabriel replied softly. Kallista sighed heavily as she finally looked up at the man, his expression was unreadable but soft, different than his normal stoic or scowl.

"You have potential Kallista, you wanted to be on the field and now you're there...you can't be both. You need to choose," Gabriel said softly.

"I know…I just…" Kallista started and sighed again "It's just the pieces of flesh part...it's gross,"

"With that aim, what else did you expect?" Gabriel asked.

"Not to be splattered with blood?" Kallista replied.

"Sounds like you already decided on where you want to be," Gabriel countered.

"I guess so. Then again, how else am I going to get used to it?" Kallista asked coolly.

"One or the other," Gabriel said firmly.

"Fine. Fine. I guess you will need those reports from the previous mission right?" Kallista asked.

"That can wait. I want to make sure...you're going to be ok," Gabriel replied.

"I'm surprised you care so much," Kallista smirked.

"Sometimes, It's best to take advantage while you can," Gabriel said as he slipped his arms from around her waist.

"Yeah, yeah yeah," Kallista sighed. She grabbed her datapad and moved over to the sofa to pick up her cell phone she had abandoned.

Gabriel cleared his throat as he watched the woman recollect herself and wondered if she would have another episode like this when she was alone.
"I messaged Nat about taking you out for target practice…" Gabriel started as he rubbed the back of his neck.

"Target practice hm?" Kallista asked as she looked at her cell phone and a message from Natalie. "So I'm cleared to carry a gun on missions then?"

"Yeah...you can head over to Mikael and the R&D department to get started. Natalie can update you from there,"

"Can I get a cool gun?" Kallista asked and grinned from ear to ear.

"You barely know how to shoot a gun. Let alone gun safety," Gabriel laughed.

"Ok, but have you considered that I learn quickly," Kallista added

"Get out of my office Kallista,"

Chapter End Notes

Rough Translations:

Lobo, tengo la localización de Kallista - Wolf, I have Kallista's location
Dámelo - Give it to me
"You did great today. I'm honestly surprised," Natalie commented.


The two women had just finished Kallista's gun safety training and target practice. At the behest of Jesse, Natalie trained Kallista on all things she would need to know to properly carry and shoot her assigned gun.

"At first I was hesitant to train you but you showed some promise, especially after what Gabo had told me," Natalie commented as she watched the woman hand over her gun and ammo clip to the trained Overwatch Weapon Specialist.

"I suppose, Reyes told you about what happened..." Kallista trailed off and grimaced at the thought.

"Of course he did," Natalie replied.

"They were really...really lucky shots and nothing more," Kallista said as she turned to Natalie.

"Lucky or not. It was damn good," Natalie replied and started out of the shooting range.

"I've never shot a gun, but yet it looked like I knew what I was doing," Kallista followed after the woman.

"And I'm here to fix that, better than McCree. I'm sure you would have misfired on your first shot if he taught you," Natalie huffed and crossed her arms.

Kallista chuckled softly as she walked next to the woman. She had to admit that Jesse did have questionable methods when it came to firing his beloved Peacemaker, she figured that it was all just for show and as long as he completed his mission, no one cared.

"Just thinking about how he fires his gun infuriates me. Are you up for sparing later on today?" Natalie quickly changed the subject.

"I believe so. Why all of a sudden you want to spar with me?" Kallista asked as pulled out her cellphone and still kept pace with the woman.

"Lyuda told me you've gotten better in CQC. I wanna test that," Natalie smirked.

"You sound like you're a boss before the final boss," Kallista snickered.

"I am the boss before the second to the last boss," Natalie grinned proudly.
"Let me guess, Lyudmila is the second to last boss and then Reyes is the last boss?" Kallista smirked.

"Correct. But I have somethings to do I'll contact you when I'm ready ok?" Natalie began as she veered down a separate hallway. Kallista nodded as she watched the woman pick up her pace down the adjacent hall.

Malik grimaced as he stood in front of the taller, dark-haired man that examined his prototype exoskeleton. He knew that it was necessary but still hated every moment of it he also knew that Kallista's words meant well and to look out for his well-being.

He hated being examined,

He hated being looked over as some type of experiment.

"Get your exoskeleton checked over, and go get seen by a doctor"

"...I will,"

"Do it or you'll be permanently on desk duty. You know what Reyes told you,"

"Yeah…but…"

"I understand you have your reservations about being examined but you must do this if you want to get back on the field. Go see Mikael and Jin,"

At least the man examining him was someone that he trusted and was good looking.

"How is your exoskeleton? Is it still working for you? Any complaints?" Mikael asked as he opened a small control panel at the base of the cybernetic spine.

"Yeah...hey Mikky...you've been busy a lot…" Malik's voice trailed off.

"Well with the volcanic eruption near Crete and Japan, I've been assigned to help out since it was my main study. And they are developing new weapons and defense mechanisms," Mikael sighed heavily. "My free time is limited,"

"You're not overworking yourself are you?"

"Not any more than you are...Torbjorn has been ramping up his projects especially since there are more people in the mechanic's area within Blackwatch," Mikael replied as he examined the knee joints of the exoskeleton.

"That's true...Hayden has been telling me a little bit about what's her name Citlali?" Malik asked.

"Yeah, that's her. But she prefers to be called Talli," Mikael corrected as he moved their knee.

"That's gonna be confusing…Kalli…Talli," Malik trailed off as he lifted his knee.

"True...or you can go the way that a few others do and call her Lali, at least that's what Kallista calls her...I'm not sure how she feels about it though." Mikael chuckled as he began to adjust the exoskeleton's controls.

"Have you gone to physical therapy recently?" Mikael suddenly asked as he moved to look at them. Malik's gold and black speckled eyes quickly glanced at the taller man and to the ground.
"I'm going to assume that is a no and I assume it's the same with your medication,"

Malik remained silent and continued to avoid the man's gaze critical gaze on them. After a few moments of silence, Mikael sighed heavily and focused back on the exoskeleton's control panel. A few moments later, Mikael stepped in front of them and crossed his arms, disapprovingly.

"I'm not sure of your relationship between you and Dr. Mikami...but he's the only one that knows what's going on with your health...you need to see him regularly," Mikael suggested.

"I know that I should…but…"Malik trailed off.

"But?" Mikael asked as he cupped the man's face, Malik's eyes still on the floor. "Hey...look at me," With some hesitation, Malik sheepishly looked up at Mikael

"Go see him...I'm not going anywhere and he's not going anywhere...ok?" Mikael said quietly. With a sigh, Malik agreed and looked away from him

"...Ok…"

Several hours later, Kallista quietly and slowly walked down the halls of the Overwatch division, her attention focused on the datapad in her hands. It was at least two hours before her training session with Natalie, she convinced the woman to take her target practicing instead of sparing. In the meantime, Kallista read as much as she could about gun safety, gun care and whatever was suggested by the Overwatch weapon specialist – Kenneth.

She buried herself in as much knowledge as she could all to keep herself from running away from her fears – her previous mission in Austria. Just the thought of it caused the woman to halt in her tracks and sent a shiver down her spine.

"You're going to be fine Kallista," Kallista said to herself.

"*Hey Kallista?*

Kallista turned towards the source of the voice to see a woman slowly hobbling down the hall towards her.

"Idoya...what are you doing up? Were you cleared to walk around?" Kallista asked as she quickly approached the woman.

Idoya chuckled breathlessly as she leaned against the wall with her cane, Kallista quickly examined the woman.

"Before you ask...I am in pain and I am dealing with it," Idoya said.

"I can see that...what about your therapy?" Kallista asked.

"It's going...I think I have one more month," Idoya replied.

"That's good to hear. Have you told Reyes yet?" Kallista asked.

"Yeah. He knows," Idoya replied.

"Have you decided? I know that you were hesitant before,"
"Yes. I know...I just..." Idoya trailed off.

"Take your time," Kallista replied.

"I...I was just hesitant to agree to be a part of Blackwatch...well Overwatch nonetheless...I just want to make sure that...what I'm doing is right...I..." the taller woman trailed off again and sighed heavily.

"I'm here...because I trust you and Reyes...you two basically talked me into staying here..."

"Oh? I didn't know you felt that way," Kallista said as she ran a hand through her hair, frowning at the scent of gunmetal on her hand.

"Kallista-" Idoya started.

"Revenge can come later...you need to pick yourself up again before you do anything against Los Muertos," Kallista began.

Idoya lowered her eyes to the floor, tears dripping onto her shirt, Kallista glanced at the woman next to her and sighed softly.

"Idoya...revenge is best served cold and unexpectedly," Kallista said as she looked up at the taller woman.

"I know...it is just hard to forget about it, they killed him like an animal...I..." Idoya sobbed.

"Idoya...they will get what is coming to them...I promise you," Kallista assured the woman.

Gabriel had invited Kallista to Mexico on a recruit mission that was generally safe and didn't require any unnecessary risks. When they arrived in Mexico and located their target, they didn't expect the recruit to be on death's door. The woman had connections with a gang Kallista knew too well while she lived in Mexico, Los Muertos gang.

Kallista could only speculate two things – one the woman betrayed the gang or the gang betrayed her. Neither Gabriel or Kallista would know what really happened until Idoya had recovered enough to speak.

"Fewer tears now Idoya...go rest..." Kallista said as she nodded. Idoya wiped her tears away with the back of her hand before sighing heavily.

"Yeah...you make it sound so simple, but it's not," Idoya murmured.

"Quite," Kallista replied. "But you have backup and resources to help you now,"

"I guess...thanks, Kallista..." Idoya said as she struggled to push herself from the wall, Kallista moved to help the woman up.

"Take it easy and don't beat yourself up over this...they will get what's coming to them," Kallista said.

Idoya nodded silently before she began to hobble down the hallway. With a sigh, Kallista watched the woman down the hallway, ever since she began at Overwatch and Blackwatch she had come into contact with many people from various walks of life.

She considered herself lucky for the type of life she lived compared to everyone else.
Kallista pulled out her cell phone to see a string of messages from several people.

[Malik: When are we leaving tonight?]
[McCree: I dunno who ready?]
[Mags: Who’s all going? Roll call.]
[Nattie: Me!]
[Aleks: I guess me?]
[Linda: Can I go?]
[Mags: No.]
[Malik: No. Truffles.]

[Mikael: You assholes. Linda, you can come]
[Lali: Me~!]
[Linda: Thank you, Mikael]
[Birro: Hell yeah I’m down!]
[O’Conell: Me]
[Mags: Oh shit Rhett you're in on this?]
[O’Conell: Hell yeah.]
[Malik: Oh shit whaddup Rhett!]
[Birro: RHETT. YES. WHADDUP!?!]
[O’Conell: WASSUP?!]
[Kallista: I'm going]
[Lali: Kallista!]
[Nattie: You better B]}
[Kallista: …]
[Malik: aay Kalli~]
[McCree: U better come]

[Kallista: What's that supposed to mean cowboy?]
[McCree: I dunno...lol]

[Lyuda: I assume that you’re leaving us out of this?]
{McCree: Aye Lyuda. U wanna come?}
{Lyuda: It would be rude if you didn’t include your commanding officers}
{Nattie: Lyuda you should come too! Come get shit faced with us}
{Lyuda: Shit faced? Nattie you forget where I come from, we drink alcohol like water}
{Mags: Lyuda know what's up, lol}
{Nattie: I take that as a challenge, Lyuda}
{Reyes: I don't want to hear your complaints tomorrow morning when you have a hangover.}
{McCree: cmon Gabe don't ruin the fun}
{Malik: Gabo, you gotta come}
{Nattie: Gabby! Come with us!}
{Mags: Reyes...you should definitely come B) }
{Reyes: Busy. Like you all should be right now}
{Malik: He'll show up. He always does B) }

Kallista grimaced at the texts before shoving her cell phone into her pocket, the group of people that planned to go to tonight's outing there was surely going to be chaos and mass shenanigans. But Kallista also knew that they needed this since Austria everyone had been working non-stop on missions, reports, training, and more.

A break was needed every so often.

Kallista turned to look out the window and to the high rise buildings of Zurich. So much had happened to her already since she dropped the name Fata Morgana, became the elusive Blackwatch Intel Director and left her socialite life behind.

"What chapter was I on?" Kallista said to herself as she focused her attention on the datapad.


"Again. Aim for the heart,"

Kallista fired again, hitting her target

"Aim for the left ear,"

Again, Kallista hit her targets with ease and behind her, Natalie laughed and clapped. Kallista slid off her earmuffs and turned to the woman.

"Not bad, you're getting better already. I'm surprised," Natalie said as she placed her hands on her hips.

"Really? You were giving me so much shit earlier for missing, thanks...that's less stress on me," Kallista said as she placed the safety on the gun and holstered it.

"You've already gotten past the hard part...you know...killing someone," Natalie replied.
"Yeah…" Kallista trailed off.

"Hey. It's either you or them and I'd rather for it to be them than you and besides you've done a lot today, you've already gotten the stance down, covered all of the safety measures, your aiming in pretty good. I'm thinking with a few more sessions and you'll be on your way to being a pro," Natalie said as she nodded her head.

"That's promising," Kallista sighed.

"That is...if he lets his Pequeno gatita on the field," Natalie snickered. Kallista turned and frowned at the woman next to her.

"Don't give me that look. I see things," Natalie smirked, her golden hazel eyes narrowed at Kallista her signature smirk on her lips.

"There's nothing to see," Kallista replied as she tilted her head at the woman.

"Uh-huh…it's ok. My lips are sealed…" Natalie gave Kallista a knowing look.

"What are you two doing in here?"

Kallista and Natalie turned to look at the man and woman that entered the shooting gallery, it was Mikael and Citlali.

"Letting off some steam before we go out tonight. I need to be loose as a whistle," Natalie replied, Mikael chuckled in response.

"I think I understand what that means...sometimes the translations do not always make sense to me," Mikael smiled.

"To be honest, I'm not even sure what I said is even correct. English can be hard," Natalie replied.

"Hey Natalie, Kallista," Citlali smiled.

"Hey," Kallista nodded.

"Oh yeah, Natalie. I was downtown and I saw that they had released a new comic series that I thought you might be interested in," Mikael started as he ushered Citlali into a stall. Natalie's eyes lit up as she heard the man's words.

"New comic you say...Mikael tell me more," Natalie smiled.

"You guys read comics? Like the super old ones?" Citlali asked.

"Yeah…you know to waste time and whatnot," Natalie replied.

"That sounds kind of fun…but aren't the new ones interactive though? Why not read those?" Citlali suggested.

"Ok the feel of the old comic paper is the best part," Mikael chuckled.

"Those have to be expensive…" Citlali commented.

"Well with how we're being paid…" Natalie started

"Or with someone's credit card," Kallista said under her breath. Natalie turned to glare at the woman
next to her.

"It sounds like you both need tonight," Mikael chuckled at their responses to one another.

"Of course I do. Do you know how stiff Gabo is? I'm getting stiff myself. I need like eight drinks just to get back to normal," Natalie sighed. "I'm sure there's gonna be an after part since Rhett, McCree, and Mags is all going."

"Afterparty?" Kallista asked confused. "I didn't know Blackwatch agents were alcoholics,"


"From one place of drinking only to bring it back to do more. Sounds like an alcoholic to me,"

"You haven't seen anything yet," Natalie smirked.

"Eseís oi dýo eínai anóítōi," Mikael laughed at the two women.

Their party was a blur to Kallista, Sunday had passed and Monday came in full force. On Sunday she had been convinced to drink more than she knew she could handle at the bar and at the so-called 'After Party'. She regretted it when she blacked out and woke up in her room half-dressed and tangled in a familiar hoodie and scent. As she stumbled around in her room and to a mirror she noticed a few marks on her neck.

Hickey? Fingers? She couldn't tell.

Hard Liquor wasn't something she handled well and based on how she woke up and the hangover she had she could only assume that she made a fool out of herself. She made herself presentable and went to return the man's hoodie and apologize.

As she made her way to the man's room, she considered not mentioning anything to him but she felt that she needed to apologize. They slept together more than once but so this wasn't anything new to the both of them.

"Here goes nothing," Kallista murmured to herself before she knocked on the door. There was silence for a moment before she was about to hear movement in the room. For once, she was thankful for her enhanced hearing

"Hey Reyes, I'm sorry if I woke you up, it's Kallista I need to talk to you," Her words were soft as she looked around to make sure no one had seen her. The door opened slightly letting the woman slip in, she instantly noticed how dimly lit the room was as the door softly clicked behind her.

"...did I wake you?" she asked as she looked over her shoulder.

"No, I just got done showering, what's going on?" Gabriel asked as he walked past her sitting on the edge of his bed. He was shirtless, dressed in loose sweat pants, the humidity from his small bathroom clung to her clothes as she quickly averted her eyes to somewhere else in the room.

"I'll make this quick then," Kallista began as she placed the hoodie on one of the hooks by the door and turned to him.

"I'm listening."

"It's about what happened this past weekend, yesterday to be exact," Kallista began. "I feel the need to apologize," Kallista started,
"An apology?" Gabriel questioned and arched an eyebrow.

"I…" Kallista hesitated, her cheeks slight tinged from embarrassment. "I don't remember…what happened but I am sure I made a fool out of myself…and I…apologize for whatever I did,"

Gabriel leaned on his knees as he looked at the woman with an amused smirk. Kallista looked at the man unsure and waited to see if he would chide her, or something but nothing came.

"I am trying to be serious here," Kallista huffed. "Why are you smirking?"

"Because you know you got shit faced and you have no clue what happened," Gabriel chuckled. Kallista tensed in front of the man, his words sent her in panic mode.

"W-What happened—look it doesn't matter, I'm apologizing now," Kallista replied in an attempt to regain herself from panicking. Gabriel continued to look at the woman amused.

"Well, what do you have to say—"Kallista began.

"Let's just say you had too much to drink, whatever you did…I could have easily stopped you, did you forget who I am Kallista?" Gabriel began.

"And for that I apologize," Kallista replied firmly.

"Hm. Besides I'm the one that should be apologizing to you, I heard that you got your ass handed to you with your training with Lyuda," Gabriel commented. Kallista shifted her weight from one leg to the other and crossed her arms.

"I did fine…it was no big deal. I learned my lesson, no more drinking with Blackwatch agents," Kallista replied nonchalantly.

"You sure?" Gabriel said as he stood up.

Kallista's eyes lingered on the man's chiseled bare chest before they snapped up to meet his whiskey-colored eyes that gazed hotly down at her.

"How are you feeling now?"

"I'm ok…I'm not limping or have any bruises at the moment. Thank you for your concern," Kallista replied and attempted to change the subject from her.

"In any case. I'll have those mission reports for you soon…Malik and the other are finishing up the reports for that outpost in Bulgaria. It shouldn't be too long until they are-"

"That's the last thing I'm worried about…"Gabriel trailed off

"Ok. What's at the top of your list of things to worry about?" Kallista asked as she looked at the man again.

"You really want to know what's on that list?" Gabriel asked with a small smirk.

"Humor me,"

Kallista knew that she would be questioned by the agents within her department when she arrived, she left to apologize to Gabriel, return his hoodie and wasn't seen again until the next day.
They were nosy.

Dressed in black, Kallista casually strolled into the intelligence office the next morning as normal. Instantly she felt the glances of her small team and a smirk from Malik, she continued as if nothing had happened.

She placed her coffee and data pads on an empty desk and moved over to a terminal as she approached a green holographic screen and small holographic keypad appeared, she quickly entered in her individual code and waited a moment before a large holographic screen appeared.

The small team looked up from their monitors and focused on the large holographic screen silently before one of them spoke.

"I'm surprised you're here," Malik snickered.

"Meaning?" Kallista arched an eyebrow as sipped her ice coffee. Malik responded with a Cheshire cat-like grin.

"How did that apology go Kalli?" Magnus asked.

Kallista quickly glanced at the dark-haired man peering at her from his desk, Linda looked at Kallista expectantly.

"It went well," Kallista replied simply.

"Oh? Did it?" Magnus asked a grin spread across his lips.

"Yes. It did," Kallista replied and glared at the dark-haired man.

"Why were you—" Magnus began.

"Malik, what did you say to them? Are you putting lies in their heads now?" Kallista sighed.

"I dunno what you're talking about," Malik replied casually as he typed on his multicolored holographic keyboard. Kallista sighed heavily as she placed a hand on her hip and tensed, a bruise from the day before.

"I like how you automatically assumed that it was Malik that said something, which ninety percent of the time it is him but I didn't even say where I heard it from," Magnus began. "I heard through the grapevine…but I didn't think it would take a day…"

"I don't want to pry but I hope you're ok just in case you took the day off for health reasons," Aleks began.

"Thank you, Aleks, I am appreciative that you are one of the sensible people that I can trust," Kallista nodded to the man and crossed her arms.

"As for you lot, you all are the nosiest people I've ever encountered," Kallista said as she went over to one of the main terminals in the room.

"You're feeling well today, Director?" Linda asked.

"Yes, Thank you, Linda," Kallista replied as she pulled up more holographic screens. "As for you two, be sure to pay attention to today's meeting and come off of it,"

"There's that haughty British accent of yours...ooooh someone hit the nail on the head," Magnus

"Excuse me? I shower every day and I don't smell like him," Kallista replied mildly offended by Malik's comment.

"Someone is paying close attention…" Magnus chuckled as he looked back at his screen.

"Sometimes," Malik chuckled.

"Didn't Commander Reyes take an Adrenaline cocktail to catch up on work?" Aleks commented.

"Most likely...but I mean…" Malik shrugged.

"Ok so that not what they are supposed to be used for. The effects that the person has is...questionable...oh," Linda trailed off as she realized what had happened.

"Oh?" Magnus leaned forward with a smirk and glanced at Malik.

"Don't look at me like that," Malik sneered.

"I know what you did," Magnus laughed.

"No tienes nada en mí!" Malik laughed.

"Shut up both you," Kallista sighed heavily.

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**Rough Translations:**

Pequeno Gatita - Small kitten  
(Greek) Eseís oí dúo einai anótitoi - you two are fools/silly  
(Spanish) No tienes nada en mí!- You don't have anything on me  
*Read the NSFW piece in "Blackwatch Intel Files: Kallista Kaines - Apologize Not Needed "*

Chapter End Notes

This chapter is the first time I've included smut in this series... I have sinned.

**Rough Translations:**  
Pequeno Gatita - Small kitten  
(Greek) Eseís oí dúo einai anótitoi - you two are fools/silly  
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Snow in Switzerland

Chapter Summary

Late 2063: A bit of snow and plenty of time to reminence about the things left behind or forgotten.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Heavy white sheets snow covered the streets of Zurich gently fell from darkened cloudy skies above. With the approaching end of the year, it also brought along the festivities of the holidays, annual galas and more that several of the high ranking officials and agents from Overwatch attended. This specific year, Kallista and a select few were given an invitation by Lyudmila which prompted an impromptu shopping trip with Natalie at the helm.

"Don't cause a scene," Gabriel said to the group of Blackwatch agents before they arrived at the banquet hall.

"No worries Reyes. We'll behave," Hayden said with a smirk as their adjusted their winter coat.

"You say that now, something is going to happen now," Gabriel commented.

"We'll be fine. You won't even know that we are here. We'll blend in like we're supposed to do," Mikael said as he waved the man's worry off.

"Don't be so worried...we're all adults. We know when to act a fool and to button up," Natalie commented, Gabriel scoffed as he looked at the petite woman across from him.

"You're the one I'm mostly worried about," Gabriel replied, Natalie, feigned hurt as she looked at the man.

"I'll be watching all of you so behave," Lyudmila commented coolly.

"Way to keep everyone in line Lyuda," Hayden laughed a bit.

"That's what I'm here for…and for free vodka," Lyudmila with a crooked smirk.

"Lyuda' knows what's up," Natalie chimed in with a smirk.

"Do not get shitfaced here, this is not the time and place," Gabriel sighed.

"What else are we supposed to do?" Natalie quipped.

"I'm surprised you invited us," Mikael commented.

"I wanted to be nice and extend the invitation to a select few," Gabriel replied.

"Oh is that what this is? Gabe being nice to us?" Hayden chuckled.

"Birro, you've been to plenty of these," Lyudmila replied.
"I know…but still," Hayden shrugged.

"I bet it's going to be boring…he wants us to suffer with him," Natalie replied as she crossed her arms.

"Sure," Gabriel smirked.

"You do know you're my least favorite boss right?" Natalie huffed.

"Not the first time you've said that Nat," Gabriel chuckled.

Gabriel glanced at everyone in the taxi, normally he would attend these Galas solo or with his second in command, Lyudmila, but this year was a bit different, he wanted something to be different at this year's gala and so he left it to Lyudmila to invite those who would cause the least amount of problems.

He glanced at the silent woman adjacent to Natalie, her attention was focused outside. His eyes met hers for a split second before she turned her attention back to the metropolis outside. He knew the woman's background, she was a well-known socialite in her previous life, and wondered how she would react in a situation where people may recognize her.

Several minutes later they arrived at the ballroom and quickly settled themselves at their assigned table, sat through long-winded speeches given by high-ranking officials, charity organizers, and of course the Strike Commander's speech.

When Morrison took the stage the table started to buzz. After the speeches, everyone was left to mingle and dine at their leisure. Gabriel spoke candidly with a few of the officers within Overwatch and business to high-ranking officials in the world's military. Alone now, Gabriel turned his attention to his agents scattered around the banquet hall.

Gabriel was able to spot Hayden first due to their height and next to them was Natalie with drinks in their hands as they conversed with other Overwatch agents and donors. Next, he found Mikael with the staff of the Overwatch R&D department as they conversed and dined.

He took a quick glance to the other side of the banquet hall he laid eyes on Lyudmila as she conversed with some UN officials and Overwatch colleagues. Gabriel smirked to himself as he saw how relaxed the woman was as she spoke, these events were required for both of them to attend and knew that it was difficult for her to adjust to this type of lifestyle but she grinned and bared it until it was nearly natural for her to do these events.

Although he was able to spot most of his small team, there was one person he wasn't able to spot. He took a sip of his drink as he looked casually around the hall. This was the type of life she had before she was captured by Overwatch it was no surprise that she hadn't been seen yet.

"This is the blandest gala to date," Lyudmila commented casually as she stood next to Gabriel.

"They are lacking this year," Gabriel chuckled. "Do you need more vodka?"

"Are you offering Reyes?" Lyudmila smirked.

"You know where my bottles are," Gabriel replied smugly.

"Of course," Lyudmila sighed and sipped her drink.

Despite the complaints, the two knew that annual events similar to this were a sigh of relief in their
schedule. It gave them and the agents a brief break, a time to relax.

"Just a few more hours and Jack won't be on our backs for leaving early,"

"Too bad we can't leave earlier. There is a blizzard on its way from the east," Lyudmila commented.

"Great. A blizzard just what we needed," Gabriel replied.

"Perfect timing no? I find the blizzard more interesting than this gala. Hell, I might go outside and make snow angels," Lyudmila scoffed and sipped more of her drink.

"You? Snow angels?" Gabriel laughed and shook his head at the woman's joke. "I would like to see that, hell I might join you,"

Lyudmila chuckled and slightly shoved Gabriel for humoring her and her joke.

"Jokes aside, you know that everyone would be thankful if you did let us off early...besides...we don't need to be here...just you...and maybe Kallista for appearances, at least," Lyudmila commented nonchalantly. The man scoffed at her comment, he knew what she was trying to do.

"Teasing me? For what? I feel betrayed, Lyuda?" Gabriel chuckled.

"Betrayed, huh," Lyudmila chuckled. "This is nothing...

Gabriel stole a glance at the woman next to him, his second in command, his lieutenant, a trusted friend, someone he could go to if he really needed it. He was thankful that she joined him a few years ago, he was thankful that she grinned and bared all of the events and other bureaucracy that she had to deal with, granted she poked fun at him but, he was appreciative for her.

He quickly looked over her form and what she wore, it wasn't very often he saw the woman dressed outside of her standard Blackwatch fatigues. She wore a dark tailored suit and a crisp white button up, dark shoes and minimal accessories. Her hair slightly gray hair was pulled into a bun with a braid laced into the bun. Her makeup was just as minimal as what she wore, just red lips.

"Great. I'm being stabbed in the back by my second in command..." Gabriel exaggerated his sigh before he downed the rest of his drink.

"Stabbing? No Gabriel, I wouldn't dare. I'd make sure you'd see me coming...but I'd never do that to you," Lyudmila replied simply.

"Well at least I know what to expect now," Gabriel replied as he placed his empty tumbler onto one of the staff's trays as it passed.

"Besides...you two becoming a 'thing' is adorable," Lyudmila chuckled softly.

"I would never go against policies and regulations or have you forgotten those?" Gabriel replied nonchalantly.

"Net...I do recall our commander being stubborn and does what he wants when he feels like it. I don't see how this is any different," Lyudmila replied. "You can't use policies when they suit you, Reyes,"

"I wouldn't dare," Gabriel replied

"Sure...but I do need to say that Natalie and Kallista picked out nice dresses don't you think? It's not often you get to see her in such nice clothing," Lyudmila commented as she looked in the direction
"And you cannot tell me that the dress she picked does not accentuate her body nicely," Lyudmila spoke plainly.

There was silence between the two as they looked at the woman across the way. The two women conversed with one another before Natalie glanced curiously in their direction, instantly a smirk was on the woman's lips. Gabriel gently plucked a champagne flute from a tray that passed by him and brought it to his lips.

"The way the dress hugs her hips accentuates her waist... I'm sure you know the rest..." Lyudmila trailed off as she noticed that Kallista was moving towards them.

"I'm not that obvious," Gabriel chuckled.

"Sometimes, when you're not paying attention your eyes speak much louder than your words," Lyudmila replied.

"I think you're paying attention to your commander a little too much Lyuda," Gabriel replied.

"chush" Lyudmila smirked slightly. "I call it as I see it...and I can see that you two have a thing," Lyudmila said before taking a sip of her drink again. Lyudmila casually nursed her drink as she turned to look at the man next to her, he gave her his signature stare.

"Don't give me that look, Gabriel," Lyudmila chuckled.

"What thing?" He questioned.

"Gabriel...what is the word...dense. You know...spark, fire, chemistry, connection. Whatever you want to call it. You two have it," Lyudmila quickly said before Kallista joined them. Kallista stood on the other side of the man as she wrapped one arm around her waist and held her champagne flute in her other hand.

"Kallista," Lyudmila nodded.

"Hey," Kallista nodded to the woman.

"Well... I better go check in with the others. Reyes let me know what you choose to do," Lyudmila said before she nodded to the man and walked away.

"Sounds like you two are looking for a quick escape from this dull gala," Kallista commented.

"That you are correct. This year is not living up to the previous years," Gabriel replied. That's unfortunate..." Kallista trailed off.

"I'm surprised that you of all people aren't enjoying yourself more, I thought you thrived in this type of setting, Miss Socialite," Gabriel commented.

Part of Kallista's background in addition to being a hacker was being a political commentator and journalist. She attended many events similar to the current gala and spoke with many high profile celebrities and political officials. She was known as Camilla Torres de Luciano and showed no signs of being an infamous hacker wanted around the world. What surprised Gabriel the most was that they had met once before and spoke briefly during a general tour of the Overwatch Foundation.

"Cute. I'm honored that you remember a finer detail of my background," Kallista smirked.
"Unfortunately, I have been out of the political field for quite some time thanks to Blackwatch..."

"If you had the chance would you go back into the field?" Gabriel questioned as he glanced at her.

"Maybe...but in another life," Kallista replied.

"Has anyone recognized you?" Gabriel asked.

"A few...but it is fine," Kallista replied.

"I'll say, I was damn surprised that you...well were who you were," Gabriel started.

"Good. That means I did my part well," Kallista grinned slightly as she continued to watch people converse with one another.

"But honestly Reyes what were you thinking to bring us to this bland ass gala?" Kallista questioned, her voice was soft so that none would be offended of her word choice.

"Which answer do you want first?" Gabriel chuckled.

"The real one," Kallista replied as she took a champagne flute from the tray that passed her and placed her empty one as they passed.

"To give everyone a break," Gabriel chuckled and nursed his drink.

"It seems like you just wanted to bore us to death," Kallista scoffed

"I would be a bit more appreciative than that Kallista," Gabriel replied.

"I suppose you are right in that matter..." Kallista trailed off. "Is this where you and Lyuda run off to at the end of the year?"

"Unfortunately, part of the job," Gabriel replied.

"So our stubborn and scowling face Commander is a guru at conversing with political officials, I would say that I am surprised but I'm not," Kallista smirked as she finally looked at the man next to her.

"There are several things you don't know about me Kallista...and not many people do but it's not important," Gabriel replied.

"I see," Kallista replied softly and took a sip of her drink. "Normally, when things have turned to such a bore I would be able to retreat back to my loft..."

"You sound as if you're a prisoner here," Gabriel quipped.

"It is not like I can willy nilly leave without you or Morrison noticing...even if I am being a good girl and behaving," Kallista sighed.

"Sometimes there are rewards in behaving, Kallista," Gabriel replied coolly.

"That may be true but it has to heavily outweigh the cons of the situation and I don't think anything you can offer me right now will ever make up for this...event," Kallista scoffed.

"Well I know not to invite you to any of these gatherings," Gabriel said as he nodded to an official that passed by. Kallista shook her head at the man's comment a smirk on her lips.
The two were silent as they focused on the room.

"On the other hand, the others are enjoying the free alcohol, food and their fancy clothes," Kallista began. "Thank you for the break," Kallista turned to face Gabriel with small coy smile and her glass raised to him.

"To our fearless Commander," Kallista began.

"Even with your accent, all I hear is sarcasm Kallista," Gabriel chuckled as took his glass and toasted with her. The two sipped their drinks as they held eye contact.

"I must say, Reyes, you cleaned up well," Kallista said as she looked the man from head to toe. He was dressed in his black issued military uniform with all of his medals from the Omnic crisis and previous wars. His hair had grown so much that it curled a bit, the sides and back shaved. It was much different than his normal buzz cut but the style was still professional.

"You look good yourself Kallista," Reyes replied with a smirk as he looked her from head to toe. She wore a long-sleeved sleek dress hugged her form and split on one side while the back mirrored the same split. Instantly his eye went to her exposed hip and her back. Her hair was pulled into a curled ponytail with a sweeping bang. Deep red lips paired with dark and gold makeup.

He silently admitted to himself that Lyudmila was right about Kallista's dress and how perfectly it fit her.

"Who knew our beanie-wearing commander could clean up so nicely," Kallista commented.

"You underestimated me Kallista," Gabriel replied casually and sipped his drink.

"You think so? I like to think that I know more than you think I do," Kallista replied.

"If that is what makes you happy, I'll let you keep that silly thought," Gabriel chuckled.

"And I'll just let you keep thinking I know nothing," Kallista shrugged and placed her now-empty champagne flute on a tray that passed by her.

"Don't forget it is my job to know more than others and that includes you as well," Gabriel said as he turned to face her.

"It is also my job to be steps ahead of you Reyes or did you forget that?" Kallista countered as she turned to look up at the man with a mischief smirk on her lips. Gabriel chuckled and leaned down so that no one could hear.

"Say that to me when you're alone and that dress is on the floor…or did you not think that far?"

As he whispered those words Kallista froze on spot and shivered as goosebumps covered her exposed skin as he chuckled. Her cheeks were tinted a rosy color as she looked up at the man, a smirk was plastered on his face as he looked down at her.

"That look tells me you haven't," Gabriel tsked. "So much for being steps ahead of me,"

There were times when she could never tell if the man was serious about his 'threats' or if it was some game to rile her up. The smirk on his face a mischievous tone of his voice, that intense stare, there was no room for jokes. He was serious.

"Gabriel-" Kallista stammered over her words and hesitated
"Only one way to find out isn't there?" Gabriel replied to her unsaid question and sipped at his drink again.

"Gabriel,"

Kallista hurriedly turned away from Gabriel and cleared her throat as she used that split moment to recollect herself and face Morrison that now stood in front of them.

"Kallista, you look really nice," Jack nodded to the woman with a smile.

"T-Thanks, you as well" Kallista cleared her throat as she avoided eye contact with the blond-haired man. Morrison arched an eyebrow in confusion as he studied the woman.

"Thanks, Are you-" Morrison started.

"If you would excuse me," Kallista nodded to the two men and promptly left.

"Ok?" Morrison replied confused as he watched the woman retreat from him and his silent friend. Morrison turned his attention back to his Gabriel, the man was focused on his drink and swirled it a bit.

"What?" he asked before he took another sip.

"What was that? What did you say to her?" Morrison asked.

"I didn't say anything," Gabriel shrugged. Morrison rolled his eyes at his response.

"Have you been here this entire time?" Morrison asked as he changed the subject.

"Yes and no. I've been around," Gabriel replied. "By the way, this year is shit,"

"Oh C'mon it's not that bad..." Morrison trailed off.

"You say that all the time and I am unimpressed," Gabriel replied bluntly.


"You asked, I answered,"

"Of course there would be a blizzard this year," Gabriel cursed to himself as he turned to the woman sitting next to him in the taxi.

"We're in Switzerland, por supuesto que nieva," Kallista laughed. Gabriel chuckled at the woman's sudden giddy and giggly response in Spanish.

The two stayed behind for appearances for the gala but ended up staying much later than usual but it was enjoyable for once. He watched as the woman placed her head onto his shoulder, a silly grin was plastered on her lips as she seemed to be in her own little world wrapped up in her black winter coat.

He had managed to call a taxi before the blizzard was in full effect unfortunately as the taxi headed back to Overwatch HQ the blizzard hit in full force, forcing them to stop and hunker down in a hotel in downtown Zurich. With a little struggle and an inappropriate shoe choice, Gabriel carried a drunken Kallista into the hotel and took care that the she didn't sprain her ankle in her drunken stupor on the way to their hotel room.
"I'm surprised you're steady on your feet with these heels Kallista," Gabriel commented as he sat Kallista down on the large bed and began to take off her coat.

"I'm surprised yer steady on yer feet Gabi," Kallista giggled, her words slurred a bit as she struggled to take off her coat.

He placed her coat on one of plush leather chairs and snickered at the woman's struggle, he sat next to her and gently took her legs across his lap and took her shoes. He didn't even have to tell her to get into bed, seconds after her shoes were off she rolled into the middle of the bed laughing. Gabriel shook his head as he left the woman to her giddy drunken self and over to the large window pulling out his cell phone to make a phone call.

"Hey, Lyuda. Did you and the others make it back to HQ?"

{Yes. We made it somehow...I assume that you were caught in the blizzard?}

"Yeah…” the man trailed off as he looked out the window to see a thick blanket of white snow blowing fiercely outside.

{That sounds most unfortunate Reyes.}

"You think so? Lyuda don't give me your glib," Gabriel replied.

{Glib? Reyes...I'm offended.}

Gabriel chuckled at the woman's tone as he looked down at the white streets below. The snow was thick and had covered everything and could barely see the streets below. They were indeed lucky that they had made it to the hotel before it got worse.

"You know I need to be back there otherwise Jack starts losing his shit," Gabriel chuckled

{Chto by ty ni govoril, boss...although...you forget there is Natalie and some others...don't try to get out of this}

He could practically hear the woman smirking and shrug through the phone.

"We won't be able to make it back until the blizzard passes...who knows how long that's going to be," Gabriel said as he looked over his shoulder to catch the woman ungracefully rolling off the bed.

{Make sure you two are safe. I will see both of you tomorrow...bring her back in one piece}

"What's that supposed to mean?" Gabriel scoffed at the woman's remark.

{Oh you know...she hides it well but sometimes it slips…}  

"Good Night Lyudmila," Gabriel chuckled at the woman's bold statement, it was rare but it was definitely welcomed.

{Sleep Well, Reyes. Make sure you let Kallista sleep too}

Gabriel shook his head as the call ended, he sighed heavily as he went over to Kallista who had managed to roll a foot away from the bed. He gently lifted her from the floor and placed her onto her feet, she heavily leaned on the man as she laughed.

"Who knew you were such a giggly drunk," Gabriel quipped.
"Who knew right? Why did you let me drink that?" Kallista laughed as her head lolled back, Gabriel pulled her towards him and gently cupped the back of her head.

"You're an adult…you knew what was going to happen,"

He was silently thankful that they actually didn't make it back to HQ, she needed to sober up.

"Reyes…"

"Hm?" Gabriel replied

"I'm a hot mess," Kallista replied as she slumped into the man.

"I was wondering when you were going to figure that out," he chuckled as he held onto the woman

"Give me a break…I'm in this weird haze of being tipsy, buzzed and tired," Kallista replied.

"Let's get you into bed before you hurt yourself," Gabriel chuckled.

"Are you coming with me?"

The next morning

Vzzzt! Vzzzt!

"...Reyes here," Gabriel grumbled his voice heavy with sleep.

{Where are you?}

"Downtown Zurich," Gabriel replied as the man's gruff voice from the other side of his phone seemed to jog his memory of what had happened the night before.

The gala, the blizzard, and more.

{You didn't make it back...before the blizzard...at least you sound safe.}

Gabriel grunted in response to the man's question, he cracked open an eye to see the orangey light of the sun as it peeked through the slits of the thick curtains of the room.

{When do you think you will make it back?}

"I don't know...haven't checked the weather," Gabriel replied as he felt the body slotted next to him shift.

{It's still snowing...but if you want a day off...I can allow that...and your director too. Yes I know she's with you…}

"I'll be there...in a few hours," Gabriel grunted and ignored the man's comment.

{I'm surprised you don't want the day off since you're always complaining about not having days off but whatever. I'll see you when you get back}

Gabriel ended the call and hung his arm off the bed to let the phone fall to the floor. With his free arm he placed it across his forehead, the warm figure next to him stirred a little from the sudden movement and closer to him. His other arm was wrapped tightly around her waist and held her close to him as if to protect her from some unseen enemy, or just the biting cold of the room.
The room was still dim even with the streaks of the sun peeked through the curtain slits. He knew that Morrison was right, they didn't have many chances for breaks and was thankful. Only this time was different, his mind thought back to the last time he woke up with someone other than a team member on the field or dead bodies of humans and omnics alike next to him.

It had been a while since he had time for one night stands he never stayed but things were different, he had time to slow down, to feel, think and breathe.

Gabriel turned his head slightly to look at the woman, her hair was a tangle messed from the night before, her makeup from the night before was smeared slightly, her deep crimson lipstick gone, and he could make out some of the marks he left on her skin.

She literally was a mess.

"Kallista," Gabriel grumbled. The woman stirred against him again, her hair hiding her face as she pressed herself closer against him. Gabriel sighed softly as his hand around her waist gently gripped her hip.

"Kallista...wake up"

"Five…and…minutes," Kallista murmured.

"C'mon…" Gabriel said as he brushed her hair from her face, Kallista slowly opened her eyes to look at the person who forced her to wake up.

"Gabriel…good morning," Kallista whispered.

"Morning," Gabriel replied as he looked at the sleepy woman.

"Are we still in Zurich?" Kallista asked, her voice barely above a whisper.

"Yeah," Gabriel replied.

"Do we have to move?" Kallista whined

"We probably should," he replied.

"You're so warm though," Kallista trailed off as she ran a hand through her hair and draped herself over the man's broad chest.

*There were times like this where he had time to think, feel, and breathe.*

Gabriel sighed again he couldn't exactly describe the emotions that began to take root in his chest as the woman dosed off again.

"A few more hours…and that's all you're gonna get," Gabriel sighed.

Kallista murmured as she sleepily snuggled up next to him the man slipping back into her much needed sleep, it took him few moments before he followed her to sleep.

In moments like this, he had too much time to think, to feel.

Rough Translations:

*chush - ah, nonsense*
Chto by ty ni govori\v (Russian) - Whatever you say boss

por supuesto que nieva - of course it snows

Chapter End Notes

Rough Translations:

chush (Russian) - Nonsense
Chto by ty ni govori\v (Russian) - Whatever you say boss
por supuesto que nieva - of course it snows

*Read the NSFW piece in "Blackwatch Intel Files: Kallista Kaines - Snow in Switerland"
Chapter Summary

She was one of his most trusted agents, his Intelligence Director, his trump card.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

After their night together in downtown Zurich, both Kallista and Gabriel continued to work as if nothing had occurred to them. He made no motion or gesture to speak to her of that night and she the same. Weeks passed before Gabriel called the woman to his office.

"I understand that your central team is small but I have a recon mission that I need you and your team to take," Gabriel said as he pushed the datapad across his desk to her. Kallista looked from the man and to the datapad, before she picked it up, the information was succinct to the point it listed a date of departure.

"I suppose you would like my team to leave earlier than the date listed," Kallista questioned as she continued to glance through the mission brief.

"I don't know how long it will take you to gather a team but the sooner the better," Gabriel replied and leaned back in his chair with a sigh.

"Tired or troubled?" Kallista asked. She noted that he hesitated to answer her question, but the tone of his voice told her.

"Both," Gabriel replied. "Governments around the world are changing their view of Overwatch and because of that Overwatch is being barred or limited in certain countries. As you know Japan is one of the countries that have strict restrictions on Overwatch,"

"I'm aware of that and it is a bit strange. The sudden resistance against Overwatch and some agro against the agents as well, it's just so sudden," Kallista replied

"You're right…and that poses a problem," Gabriel sighed.

"I'll gather a team and update you as soon as I can," Kallista began as she placed the datapad on his desk and signed off on it, Gabriel nodded in approval.

"The earlier you get there the sooner you can return," Gabriel replied.

"Are you worried?" Kallista arched an eyebrow as she took the datapad.

"I am being cautious," He replied. "There is always a sense of dread when any Blackwatch agent goes on a mission, even recon missions can be dangerous if you're not prepared,"

"Of course, but if you're so worried then why—" Kallista began.

"Because I know that you are the best person for this mission," Gabriel replied before she could finish.
"I'm flattered," Kallista grinned slightly.

"Even though you botched your initial mission, you still did a good job," Gabriel added.

"I'm glad you remembered that thanks," Kallista scoffed and turned to exit the man's office.

"You're welcome," Gabriel said as the woman exited from his office. He sat in silence for a moment before a heavy sigh escaped from his lips.

He needed every Blackwatch agent he could get to carry out all the missions they were given, that included her. He wanted to keep her from the field, away from anything that might accelerate the serum in her despite the fact that the serum had already done its damage within her. He knew that he wouldn't be able to keep her from the field but made sure to give her and her team missions that low risk.

With her skills far exceeded some of the top-ranking agents in the field; he knew that he could trust her. It had barely been four years since she was forced into Blackwatch and under tight scrutiny but now she had grown into one of his most trusted agents.

He wondered if it was because of their moments of intimacy that made him care about her more, or the fact that she had been tested on as he or just her natural charm that made him gravitate to her. Even with those thoughts, there were always what-ifs about worst-case scenarios while on missions that usually ended bitterly.

With her attention focused on the datapad in her hands, she could tell that this recon and now extraction mission was important to the man. In addition to the importance of the mission, she could understand how the man felt about the new imposing restrictions of that Overwatch faced. The restrictions affected the facing side of the foundation, Overwatch and put even more strain and secrecy on the Blackwatch agents in these countries.

There would be reassignments and less communication to those that would be required to stay and more, she placed the datapad under her arm as she reached in her back pocket and took out her cellphone to make notes of what she would need to address once she returned from the mission. She nudged open a door as she passed through the main Overwatch building and made her way to a code activated elevator that would lead her to the lower floors of the Overwatch building. When the elevator doors open she stumbled over her own foot and crashed into the back wall of the elevator and dropped everything in her hands.

"F-fuck…" Kallista choked as she grasped the right side of her head. Through her blurred vision, she saw the elevator doors close effectively blocking anyone from seeing her in the elevator beside the security camera.

Another painful migraine, some were fleeting, some were persistent and left her with temporary blindness, nose bleeds, or just left her disoriented and unable to function at full capacity. The pain was numbing but she knew that she had to will herself through the pain and complete the mission that was given to her.

She steadied herself as much as she could, squinted at the neon blue numbers and managed to input her code to have the elevator move. Any complaint or mention of this she knew that she would be taken off of the mission with no hesitation, she needed to push through.

Her vision now nearly colorless, she reached down and picked up the cellphone and the datapad she had dropped earlier. She remembered her check-up with Angela and some of the adverse side effects that came with this new condition – color loss, blindness, migraines, appetite loss and more.
With the datapad and cell phone in her hands, Kallista braced herself against the back wall of the elevator again as she attempted steady her breaths. She needed to be calm, she needed to recollect herself, anything that would get her through this. There were no room for mistakes on this mission or any mission she was given.

It took Kallista a day to find her team and less than a day to arrive in Lithuania. They had already set up their recon checkpoint and had already sent information back to HQ. Gabriel had taken over a conference room and kept an eye on the information that was being fed to the Blackwatch Intel department.

There was something about the mission that bothered him, perhaps it was the information, perhaps, the location but there was something he couldn't exactly put his finger on.

"Look at you...keeping an eye on the mission…” Morrison commented as he leaned on the doorsill.

"Don't you have things to do, like important things?” Gabriel asked as he continued to look at the information on the holographic screens in front of him.

"I do and I am," Morrison replied and walked further into the mission room. "This mission is just as important for Overwatch as it is for Blackwatch…"

Gabriel sighed quietly as he turned to the man next to him.

"Then you already know what I'm looking at then," Gabriel began.

"Of course. It's been a day, right? Any significant information yet?” Morrison questioned as he too looked at the screens of information.

"Not yet," Gabriel replied.

"That could be a good thing or a bad thing…but you gave this mission to Kallista didn't you?” Morrison questioned.

"I gave it to one of the best agents I have here, yes," Gabriel replied.

"You didn't have to be so stiff about it…I was just asking” Morrison chuckled. Gabriel scoffed.

"I hope she's able to extract information about this so-called new group Null Sector…but it's just all rumors now," Morrison began quietly.

"We can only hope it's just a rumor. Our hands are filled with Talon and other Anti-Omnic groups around the world…surprisingly,” Gabriel replied.

Through their watchful eye on the organization called Talon, there were brief rumors of a group called Null Sector that seemed to incite Anti-Omnic rhetoric around the world but had connections with the now-defunct Ominiums around the world and Talon itself.

But all of this was hearsay and no evidence to confirm if the rumors were true but Overwatch let alone Blackwatch.

"They wanted our help, we extended our hand and now they are biting the hand that helped them," Gabriel added.

"That may be true, but it is in Overwatch's best interest to step back and allow the individual governments to take control,” Morrison replied.
"For how long? Until shit goes downhill and we're called in because they can't handle it anymore?" Gabriel scoffed.

"Gabriel," Morrison sighed. "You said it yourself. Overwatch is not the police of the world...this is no different even if they are in the wrong,"

A strained silence fell between the two men at the mention of the changing view of Overwatch around the world.

"...If anything changes or If you need me...you know where to find me," Morrison said as he turned heel and headed for the exit of the mission room.

"Yeah," Gabriel replied gruffly as he kept his attention to the live updates on the mission in front of him.

The mission was expected to take three days, but with Kallista's expertise, he was hopeful that it would take less. He trusted her enough to give her this mission, he trusted her skills it was just a matter of time until she would return and be safe.

Before she left, he checked over her gear, something he used to do for Jesse and Natalie when they first joined, he did the same for her. It put his mind at ease knowing that he checked her gear and that everything was as it should be and that it would protect her to some extent. Right before she set off he gave her something to bring back to him. He knew it was strange of him but the look on the woman's face was more than worth it to him.

A heavy sigh slipped from his lips as he took a seat and took his cell phone from his hoodie jacket to check his messages and updates from other messages.

"Commander Reyes,"

Gabriel glanced over his shoulder at the man who stood in the doorway and quickly walked over to him, it was Aleksander. Aleks quickly glanced at the holographic screens in front of Gabriel and noticed the mission to Lithuania was front and centered.

"Aleks, what is it?" Gabriel said as he looked up from his cellphone. Gabriel saw the younger man hesitate before he spoke.

"Sir, we have a bit of a problem," Aleks began.

"Explain," Gabriel placed his cellphone face down on the table.

In a shift moment, Aleks saw his commander's demeanor change. Void of emotion, whiskey-colored eyes focused solely on him. This was normally his expression but it threw him off guard, especially because his expression seemed to be more relaxed.

"Explain," Gabriel said again, this time firmer.

Aleks knew that he had to tell the man regardless; he was head of the department while Kallista was gone. Everyone in the Intel department was none the least shocked at Reyes' stress at sending Kallista on a mission in her condition and to tell him the bad news, who knows what the man might do.

She was his trump card.

She was important to him regardless if he denied it.
"We lost contact with the recon group in Lithuania. We tried to establish an emergency connection line but failed, we can only assume that the group was ambushed," Aleks began. Almost instantly Gabriel stood and was on the move to the Intel office, Aleks followed after him.

"Ambushed? How long ago? What's their status? Tell me," Gabriel began a rapid-fire of questions as he hurried from the mission room.

"Yes Sir, we lost contact 4 hours ago, located their last location, attempted to establish an emergency line—"

The pain in the back of her head jolted her awake, her memory of just moments before burred. Kallista slowly opened her eyes. Her vision was clouded, foggy as she tried to focus on the figure in front of her and the room that she was in. The room seemed to be an empty warehouse, the hum of the generators nearby seemed to echo, unfamiliar muffled voices from somewhere she couldn't determine and wouldn't have the time to figure it out. Her thoughts were shaken as a hand slapped her across her face, in shock Kallista gasped.

"Rise and shine sweetheart, you've got some explaining to do,"

Kallista blinked through the pain and focused on the masked man in front of her. There were no symbols of a group the man could possibly belong to on his clothes, the light above him also made it difficult to determine who they were.

"It looks like you're on a mission…no symbols or anything. Suspicious…" they began again. "Who are you? Are you with the government or…Overwatch?"

"Burn in hell," Kallista hissed.

There were chains were wrapped around her wrists as she hung partially suspended from the ceiling, her feet a few inches above the ground. The masked man chuckled as he circled around her.

"Oh, it seems like you're from Overwatch…the government here is a bit lacking…" they trailed off. "Perhaps you would like to share some information then?" They began as they ran the back of their gloved hand down her cheek. Kallista attempted to shake the man's hand off her, the unknown man laughed as he brushed a few strands of her hair from her face.

"I refuse," Kallista hissed.

She had no idea who the man worked for but they clearly knew who she worked for. She could only assume that the man worked for Talon or the rumored group that her missioned required her to look in. But on that mission, Kallista and her team had been separated by a blinding concussive grenade and during the chaos, she had been able to help an agent but was taken because of it.

She had no idea of the condition of her team, how long she had been missing or if Blackwatch was actively looking for her, she barely had her thoughts together.

"What a haughty British accent you have there...I'm impressed. If you help me, I can help you and be a little lenient with some things," he started.

"I'm the wrong person to be lenient with," Kallista sighed as she attempted to move. The man reached out to grasp her chin.

"You're so feisty, I like that," The man chuckled. Kallista spat at the man, the man struck her hard across the face.
"You need to understand your situation girl. I could kill you at a moment's notice, so it would be wise for you to answer my questions," the man said as he began circling around her again. Kallista scoffed at the man's threat and spat blood to the floor.

"I haven't even noticed. Piss off," Kallista murmured.

"One more time. Information now. Where is Overwatch's next strike planned?"

"Good question," Kallista replied. He struck her again.

"Names and locations,"

"I don't know...," Kallista replied. Again he struck her.

"Overwatch terminal access points,"

"No," Kallista chuckled.

He struck her again and again. Blood dripped from her lips as she hung limply from the chains, the masked man grunted in annoyance as he wiped his bloodied gloves on a towel. Discarding the towel he turned his attention to the syringe that lay on the table behind her.

"I suppose I had too much hope for you to be cooperative with me. My mistake," the man said from behind her. His heavy footsteps echoed in her ear as he approached her from behind. He stood in front of her, an arm behind his back. He sighed heavily as he grasped her chin and turned her head to the side inspecting the wounds he caused to her face.

The man jerked Kallista's head to the side to prevent her from seeing what would come next. Kallista felt a quick sharp stab in the side of her neck, a syringe.

Immediately, Kallista began to struggle against the chains and the man to stop him as soon as she moved her body almost immediately her body became numb, limbs weak and heavy. Tears welled in her the corners of her eyes as blistering pain flooded her body, flooded her veins making the room spin around her.

A heavy fog clouded her mind attempting to drown out all of her searing sensation traveled through her limbs, clawing at her mind, strange shapes and colors filled her vision as she looked at the man.

"What...the fuck...did you do to me?" Kallista hissed as she felt her body slump against the chains as the thick stagnant fog continued to slither around her mind.

"It's an old method...with new components...this is a prototype truth serum," the man replied.

"W-What?" Kallista asked as her eyes drooped closed, her body was shutting down in reaction to the truth serum he injected in her.

A sharp slap across her face jolted her awake.

"Rise and Shine," the man chuckled.

Kallista sputtered blood as she tried to keep her eyes focused on the man in front of her. Her body could not keep up with the intense changes that happened within her body, one moment the scorching pain of fire in her veins, a second later bitter cold.

"Now let's try this again agent. Tell me what I want to know and I can help stop the pain," the masked man began as he cupped her chin.
"Y—You twat," Kallista hissed. The man scoffed at the woman's curse. "Charming…now from the top. Tell me where the Overwatch access points are located"

Kallista choked on her words as she felt her throat tighten from whatever he injected her with, tears welled in the corners of her eyes. "Where are they?"

A wretched moan bubbled in her throat as everything around her began to overwhelm her. The colors began to blend with one another and sounds were muffled. The truth serum in her system forced her thoughts together, things that were clear were now hazy, her throat dry, her tongue swollen, It felt as if her throat was beginning to close.

"Well, agent? Where. Are. They?" the man asked. The truth serum willed her to comply with his request but she was determined to hold her tongue, deny him of any information he asked for as long as she could, against the pain that permeated her system and body and the against the physical pain he put her through.

"N-New Mexico..." Kallista blurted.

"America? What's in New Mexico, agent?" the man asked.

"Area…No-!" Kallista stammered as she stopped herself and suddenly fell into a fit of laughter. "D-Did you really think I ...would give you info that quickly..."

The man backhanded her again. Kallista spat blood as she tried to give the man the meanest look she could muster when suddenly the man's fist collided with her abdomen. Instantly she slumped against the chains and coughed blood.

"You want to spit blood hm? I'll give you a reason to spit more. Get me another syringe," the man barked to one of the guards by the door.

"Your stubbornness will get you killed girl," the man hissed as he tilted Kallista's head up to look at him, Kallista grinned at the man her vision was hazy but she could tell that the grin made him angry. "I hope you can run fast...the wolf and his pack are coming," Kallista spat.

"The Strike Commander?" the man asked curious at her sudden bravado.

"You'll…see," Kallista replied, a small smile on her lips before darkness took her.

The floor was cold, her vision dark and gray with hints of vibrant colors on various objects in the warehouse. She had lost all of her senses as she laid on a cold and hard surface, parts of her body were numb, she felt empty. Everything around her no longer made sense, and she was on the verge of losing all sense of herself.

The soft hum of the generators in the building guided her into the empty void as her eyes slid closed. 

"Kalli-"

"Kallista-!"

"Shit is she-"
"Shut up-"

"S-Sorry…"

"C'mon Kallista say something…anything..."

"…doya..." Kallista sputtered.

"This place is coming down, I swear,"

"Natalie, you know we have to follow orders," Idoya hissed

"Me follow orders? Not after this," Natalie growled.

Idoya clicked her tongue at the woman's brashness but knew that she wouldn't act as such while Reyes was on the field with them. The tattooed woman turned her attention back to Kallista nearly limp in her arms, she quickly looked over the woman for any gashes, cuts, wounds that could be healed with biotic gel. She noticed that the woman had barely moved nor has she opened her eyes. Worried, Idoya carefully took her pulse and sighed softly, her pulse was weak but it was still there.

"Dios mio," Idoya sighed in relief.

"Your favorite snake here...we found her,

[Her condition?]

The two looked at each other silently, Natalie glanced at Kallista and then back to Idoya.

"She's breathing…” Natalie replied.

The entire team was restless about the rescue mission, they were losing time and her exact location had not yet been confirmed. Her disappearance was nearly at critical and led to the agent added to the list of those missing.

There was silence on the other side of their communication links, the two women noticed the long pause before the man responded to them.

[...Hold your position…]

"Understood," Natalie replied

"He sure does seem awfully calm, " Idoya commented.

"He's pissed, don't let that fool you," Natalie replied.

"I still have a lot to learn apparently," Idoya added as she half laughed.

"It takes time…and I—" Natalie began when Lyudmila's voice came through their earpieces.

[What is the extent of her injuries? Can she walk? ]

"That is a negative," Idoya replied.

[Is she awake? breathing?]

"She's breathing...her injuries are undeterminable…” Idoya replied as she looked at the woman. "I am not about internal injuries,"
"We used some of the biotic gel that we have for some of her external injuries…" Natalie trailed off.

The two women heard a soft sigh and followed by a few strings of Russian before Lyudmila's voice cut out.

"I should have restocked after my last mission, but I was just lazy," Natalie scoffed. "It was just by chance that I had some biotic gel with me,"

"I as well, although this is my first mission…" Idoya added.

In a matter of minutes, Gabriel quickly followed by Jesse entered the room. Gabriel was instantly over the unconscious woman.

"Did y'all have any trouble getting her?" Jesse asked as he looked around.

"Who do you think you're talking to? No," Natalie replied.

Idoya glanced over at Reyes as he knelt next to her, his eyes quickly scanned over the woman before he pulled off a glove and checked her pulse. He gently cupped her face to better examine the injuries to her face, cracked and bloodied lips, black eye, and lacerations. As he looked at her injuries his normally controlled anger waned, it flared, nearly exploded. Whoever had given her these injuries would pay tenfold.

"Kallista speak to me," Gabriel said softly as he gently caressed her bloodied face. Idoya watched silently as her battle-hardened commander gently caressed the woman's face, a side of him that she thought would never see.

"..."

"Kallista…c'mon..." Natalie urged.

"Answer me, Kallista," the man ordered firmly, dread began to spread through him. Although silent, Idoya watched and hoped that the woman would respond.

"Kalli-" Idoya began.

"...Re...yes…?" Kallista uttered the man's name almost inaudible from her lips. A sigh of relief washed over the group as she finally responded.

"Kallista we're here…stay with me. Jesse give me the blood analyzer," Gabriel ordered.

[Lobo...Bones checking in-]

[Hold your position]

Gabriel heard Lyudmila give an order as he quickly tended to the woman; Idoya carefully shifted the woman in her arms to allow Reyes to give her the care that she needed. He took the woman's arm and quickly found a vein, within seconds the small needle pierced her vein and took a sample of her blood. Both Idoya and Reyes noticed the lack of reaction.

"I'm going to check the perimeter. I'm too antsy," Natalie said as she quickly began to move around the warehouse.

"I'll check with you," Jesse added as he went the opposite direction. Gabriel remained silent as he looked at the small vial of dark crimson blood, a soft chime came from the small device that held the vial.
"She has a high amount of ethanol, scopolamine, 3-quinuclidinyl benzilate, midazolam, flunitrazepam, sodium thiopental," Gabriel hissed. He knew exactly what the concoction was in her system, he had used it several times before, but now used it as a last resort.

[Fuck Gabi...they drugged her with truth serum?]

[Truth Serum?]

[They used truth serum on Kalli?]

[That's what it sounds like...]

Malik, Citlali, Hayden and Lyudmila's voices echoed into the group's communication links.

"Linda. I'm transferring this information to you now. Send this information to Angela and prepare to give her treatment when we return to the carrier," Gabriel said as he quickly transferred the results and focused back to Kallista.

[Waiting for orders, Lobo]

"Kallista stay with us," Idoya said as she brushed some of the woman's hair from her face.

[It's temporary...but you can use your Adrenaline cocktail it should help until you return to the carrier.]

"Nat, Jesse, check the perimeter. We are leaving," Gabriel said as he took out a syringe full of an orange-colored concoction and quickly and as carefully as he could, injected the woman with the liquid, which was the first time he had seen her react.

Natalie and Jesse quickly returned over to Reyes and Idoya expectantly.

"An eye for an eye, right Reyes?" Natalie nonchalantly suggested.

"I like the sound of that, Nat," Jesse replied casually.

"How about we focus on getting Kallista out of here," Idoya reminded the two senior agents.

"It's up to Reyes," Jesse commented.

The three agents turned their attention to the man, his attention was focused on the woman in Idoya's arms.

"Magnus access the video feed in this place. I want the bastard that did this to her. Aleks make sure you take all the information you can from this place. We are bringing this place down," Gabriel said as he gently took Kallista from Idoya.

[You got it, boss]

[Understood]

Jesse, Natalie, and Idoya looked at the man surprised as they watched him carefully stand with the woman in his arms. Jesse and Natalie had worked long enough with the man that he was serious about the order he just gave.

"Idoya, you're with me until we reach outside, Lockdown, provide support," Gabriel continued to order his team.
"Understood," Idoya replied as she stood gun in hand.

"Let's go Nat," Jesse smirked.

"I'll see you at the extraction point, cowboy," Natalie replied as she darted off. Jesse chuckled a bit as he looked at the man, he knew that he was royally pissed and what he says goes.


[Ayy~! Time to fuck some shit up! Lo mejor está por venir...Talon…]

Various voices of the Blackwatch agents responded to the man's order. They all knew it was rare for him to give an order like this, they all knew what happened was unforgivable and was not to be excused so easily.

It was nearly 3 AM when Gabriel and his team returned; he when the dust had settled Morrison was there and expected updates on everything that had transpired. He expected there to be of a ruckus when they returned but instead greeted with orders being barked and the woman they went to rescue being rushed off to med bay with Gabriel in tow. He didn't know the extent of her injuries or what had happened but waited to find out later.

He was tired, they were tired, all he wanted to do is be in bed asleep but knew that sleep would come much later. It was 4 AM when Gabriel returned to his office with Morrison behind him.

"All of this just to rescue your Intel director…” Morrison commented tiredly.

"It was mission success, right? We didn't lose any information and we recovered what was lost. What of it?" Gabriel replied.

"You understand what I’m getting at right?" Morrison asked as he leaned onto his desk.

"Humor me. I haven't slept in almost 32 hours," Gabriel replied.

"You're attached to her," Morrison said bluntly. Gabriel leaned forward in his chair as he held Morrison's gaze.

"She's a fucking civilian Jack, no matter how much training she gets she'll never be an official agent. Gabriel started. "You forget that she was a well-known socialite. How would that look if her body was discovered and plastered all on television?"

Morrison sighed and crossed his arms.

"Sure. But you out of all of the agents to rush in YOU decide to hastily go and guns blazing into a possible Talon or Null Sector base to rescue her," Morrison commented.

"We were a little more tactful than you think," Gabriel replied, Morrison, frowned.

"Besides. I'm not about to let a good agent die on my watch...you and I both know this," Gabriel huffed.
"Please spare me. You're always so dramatic. Just admit it and I'll let it slide," Morrison sighed.

"Admit what?" Gabriel sighed as he leaned back into the chair.

"Admit it and I'll come up with some excuse for you to nearly break your neck to rescue her," Morrison sighed.

"Whatever you say," Gabriel said as he shrugged.

"You're still so stubborn. I'm not going to let this go that easily, Gabe. Not only did you risk the lives of your agents, but you also ignored the treaties and laws that prevent Overwatch let alone Blackwatch in countries being patrolled by the Russian government," Morrison began. "Not only that you barely had a solid plan to rescue her, how you cradled her in your arms...and you're telling me that you're not hooked on her."

"I was doing my job and rescuing my agents, no one gets left behind," Gabriel replied. Morrison narrowed his eyes at the man and quickly glanced at the big blue numbers on the wall.

"It's 4:15 AM and I already can't stand you and your stubbornness," Morrison sighed tiredly.

"There's no off filter for that," the man replied.

"Your loss, I'll make sure to mention your name to Petras calls later," Morrison sighed again.

"Anyway… when was the last time you checked in on your Intel director?" Morrison questioned.

"Nothing abnormal. She's recovering according to Angela…also she's getting a new addition to the Doctor's division?" Gabriel asked.

"Yes and soon. Seraphina Hasibuan. Excellent addition to the medical team, Angela, and a few others sought her out to join the Overwatch team. Really promising for what they need to do," Morrison said as he rubbed his temples.

"We're moving quickly...for once," Gabriel commented.

"He's an important asset. It would be a waste to wait any longer. You and I both know this," Morrison replied.

"You're actually listening to me for once. Wow. I'm impressed," Gabriel said

"Now…only if you would do the same for me," Morrison chuckled.

"For some things," Gabriel yawned.

"Alright, I'm going to bed…I need some type of energy to deal with the shit storm that will come from this," Morrison said as he moved towards the door to the man's office.

"I clean up after you all the time boy scout," Gabriel replied.

"Shut up and go see your Intel director," Morrison huffed.

"Sounds like someone is butthurt," Gabriel said chuckled as he watched the man.
"Get some rest you idiot," Morrison said as he exited from the office.

A few minutes after the man left his office Gabriel stood and quickly exited his office and headed to the med bay.

"You still haven't slept yet, Commander Reyes?" Angela's voice called out to him.

"Not yet...I wanted to check in on her again...you know why," Gabriel said.

"I suppose...but I am fully capable of taking care of her while you rest," Angela replied.

"That is true...but..." Gabriel started.

"Yes. Yes. I know," Angela chuckled.

"How is she?" Gabriel asked and guided the focus of the conversation. Angela slouched in her chair and sighed heavily.

"She's gonna be fine Gabriel...her body just needs to metabolize the remnants of the drug and she may possibly need a cleanse afterward. She has a few bruised bones, contusions...just a bit beat up," Angela sighed.

"Yeah..." Gabriel replied.

"I can say that I am glad that you were able to get to her in time. If you were a day later, she would have died a not so nice slow death from the poisoning," Angela commented. Gabriel crossed his arms as he looked at the slouching woman.

"That's not what I wanted to hear Angie," Gabriel sighed.

"Eine minute, Gabriel, the point is that you saved her," Angela quickly followed up. Gabriel sighed again as he looked at Kallista resting on one of the many empty beds in the woman's office.

"This is what her third time in my office? She's not the reckless kind but yet she's here...again," Angela commented.

"Unfortunately...." Gabriel commented.

"Yes...well...I plan to get some rest...I feel like death's incarnate," Angela giggled softly.

"Yeah. Get some rest slouching is bad for your posture," Gabriel chuckled.

"Says the one I'm always correcting," Angela replied.

"You're right...but it's unbecoming for a teacher to slouch in front of her student," Gabriel added.

"Oh hush, I am completely exhausted. Anyhoo, please do not stay up too long. Goodnight Gabriel," the woman started as she stood, stretching as she headed towards the door, leaving the two of them alone.

Quietly, Gabriel approached the woman looking at the stitches on her lips and bandages covering her arms, chest, and legs. The glimpse of gold glittered around her neck, he had given her his golden cross pendant, a gift from his mother a long time ago. It was a bittersweet moment, she was safe but badly hurt, it seemed to be no matter how much he tried to keep her away from danger it always came after her.
A reconnaissance gone wrong, their location was prime for what they needed to do. He remembered the apprehension he felt before he gave it over to her.

*Gain information on a small base in Lithuania.*

All of the recon missions she had conducted and participated in prepared her for this. With all of her training and skills he knew that she was best for this specific mission, he had to make a choice.

There was no other way around it, what happened, happened and now he had to deal with it. He knew that he had to wait until she recovered until she could debrief him on the mission. It was a success but left behind so many questions. He grimaced as he studied her bruised features.

"You did good Kallista..." Gabriel said in a hushed whisper.

"Info...did we get it?" Kallista's voice cracked. It took him a moment to respond to the woman, he was surprised that she was lucid enough to speak.

"I am being optimistic that we did," Gabriel replied softly.

"...ok," Kallista sighed

"You should rest," Gabriel whispered.

"I...heard you talking..." Kallista trailed off and mumbled incoherently. A soft sigh came from the woman as she seemingly drifted off to sleep, Gabriel watched and listened carefully

"I...guess I am alive..." Kallista mumbled.

"You are..." Gabriel trailed off.

"Am I...going to be ok?" Kallista asked softly. He could hear the hesitation in her words, she was afraid.

"Yes. You need to heal up first but you'll be fine," Gabriel replied assuring her.

"That's good..." Kallista trailed off. "I need this face to make money,"

Gabriel smirked at the woman's lightheartedness despite her injuries. He was thankful that she was able to maintain lightheartedness through her pain, he was thankful they were able to rescue her and administrate care to her.

He was thankful to have her back.

"You need to rest," Gabriel chuckled softly and found himself gently brushing a piece of stray hair from her face. He quickly pulled away.

"Goodnight...Gabriel..."

Rough Translations:
- Vete a la verga culero - Fuck you asshole
- Hueles a mierda - You smell like shit
Lo mejor está por venir...Talon...- The best is yet to come, Talon
"What do you mean I'll be on desk duty?" Kallista questioned.

"You heard me. I don't need to repeat myself," Gabriel replied.

The man leaned back onto his desk with his arms crossed as he looked at the now angry woman standing in front of him. Their conversation didn't start off this way, but he knew that it was coming. He knew this was one of the few times she was able to be on the field she was being pulled off again.

"What am I doing wrong that you'd pull me from the field?" Kallista questioned.

"Kallista..." Gabriel warned.

"No. Don't Kallista me. Every time I have the smallest injury or there's a complication you immediately pull me off the field. Why?" Kallista continued.

"Why are you questioning me now?" Gabriel countered.

"Because it pertains to me. Now answer me," Kallista replied firmly.

"You're in no position to demand answers let alone question me Kallista," Gabriel retorted.

"I'm doing it now," Kallista crossed her arms over her chest, she bit her tongue to keep from giving any sign of pain that still racked her body. Gabriel sighed heavily as he looked at Kallista, she didn't know. She didn't know how much he fought with himself actually put her on the field.

"With your position you shouldn't even be on the field, you should be lucky that I even let you go," Gabriel replied.

"Oh! So you're granting me the special opportunity to be on the field..."Kallista trailed off sarcastically.

"Cut the bullshit Kallista. You know what your job is. You know what you're really here for,"

"I have several jobs that I do here. You and I both know this. Don't fucking use that stipulation on why I'm here as an excuse to pull me from the field. You use that as an excuse when you know damn well that Malik is never in fit condition to be on the field. What's going to happen when he fucking finally breaks down? What's going-" Kallista started, her voice rising in anger as she spoke.

"Lower your fucking voice when you talk to me. Malik's condition isn't your concern, he's mine. You follow my orders on and off the field. Is that clear? When you have been cleared I will consider putting you back on the field again. Until then you are here and that's final," Gabriel growled.

Malik and-" Kallista started.
"I said enough. This is no longer up for discussion," Gabriel said firmly, his anger rising as the little quarrel dragged on.

Kallista approached the man stopping a few feet in front of him, she stared at him for a moment before frowning, Gabriel, frowning, remained unfazed by the woman's anger.

"You're walking a fine line today Kallista," Gabriel warned the woman of her behavior.

"Am I? What are you going to do? Dismiss me?" Kallista questioned, her voice void of emotion.

Gabriel's gaze was heavy, angry, disappointed in her behavior, she didn't know that he hesitated every time to put her on the field. He didn't want her condition to worsen, he didn't want to see her bruised and broken not if he could help it. He was going to make sure of even if it meant causing a rift between them.

"Stop trying to play fucking protector," Kallista growled.

"I can do whatever I fucking want, you better watch your mouth," Gabriel growled.

"You know damn well you can't protect everyone so come off your fucking high horse and get it through your fucking head Reyes," Kallista spat back.

"Do not tell me what I can and cannot do. I could have fucking left you in that base, but I didn't because you're a part of the fucking team Kallista. Don't act all high and mighty because you're a hacker with skill. I can actually depend on Malik to pull the fucking trigger and not freeze since you want to talk about Malik so much. You're not special and you sure as hell don't get special treatment. You belong behind a screen not with a gun in your hand-"

**SMACK!**

Gabriel stumbled slightly from the impact of her hand coming into contact with his cheek.

"You should have left me in that fucking warehouse to die if I am that expendable to you, and this fucking organization," Kallista replied her British accent heavy with each word. She yanked off the gold cross pendant from her neck and threw it at him.

The sharp pain of the slap jolted him into realization as to what he had done, what he had done and what she had thrown at him. He rubbed his cheek as he reached down to pick up his pendant and placed it on his desk. Slowly he dragged a hand down his face, a growl of frustration rumbled in his chest. Is this what he wanted, is this how he wanted things to be?

Anger and frustration clouded his mind as he rubbed his temples, he could feel the low throb of a headache as it grew stronger in the back of his head. Another growl rumbled in his chest as he kicked the chair next to him. He knew she didn't understand what he saw, she didn't understand how he felt, he didn't even understand how he felt.

Gabriel sat on the edge of his desk as he pinched the bridge of his nose, he mentally kicked himself for practically shouting at her. They were both caught up in the heat of the moment saying things that they didn't truly believe or want to happen or so he hoped. He made a mental note to apologize to her when they both cooled down.

Kallista furiously made her way to her bedroom, she was a soldier just like everyone else why would she be treated differently.

"If I was expendable he should have just left me there. Fucking piece of shit," Kallista cursed as if it
"He's such an asshole, why did I even bother," Kallista sighed.

She ran her hands through her hair, pulling slightly at her roots in frustration, but truthfully she was thankful that he came for her. Thinking back on it, she was already four years into her service with Blackwatch, she had no loyalty before, and now she would have given her life to keep Blackwatch a secret. She grimaced at the thought of dying and wondered when did she become so loyal to the organization that wanted to put her in a maximum security prison.

When did she let that happen?

Kallista stood silently in the middle of her room frustrated as she gingerly held her ribs, it had only been a day since she was rescued and maybe not even a full 24 hours of her recovering. She couldn't sit still, she wouldn't allow herself to do it. She had fought with Dr. Ziegler and some of her assistants to be able to be on her feet, of course, they weren't going to clear her she still needed to heal.

-- Director Kaines, the Intelligence Department has tried to contact you several times. I recommend returning their call. --

"Thank you, Athena..." Kallista said as she grabbed her cellphone on her desk, the simple motion sent pain shooting through her body. A sharp cry erupted from her lips as she buckled against her desk, barely catching herself. There wasn't a single part of her body that wasn't sore, bruised or felt as if it was on fire, she had to bite her tongue to keep from crying out from every motion. It hurt but she kept quiet.

She was stubborn and knew that he saw through her farce, even, so the words he said hurt just as bad as the pain that wreaked havoc over her body.

She was in pain and he saw it. She knew he did.

Heavily leaning on her desk she pushed herself up grasping her cell phone. She would deal with the pain after she did what she needed to do. Willing herself through the pain, she straightened her back and headed for the Intelligence department.

Kallista was greeted with soft electronica music, dimmed lights, the glow of the holographic screens of the terminals that lined the back wall and a large holographic screen with a message and a name that was familiar to her.

"Dead Bloodhound?" Linda said as she looked at the large holographic screen floating in front of everyone.

"What is this?" Kallista asked.

"We were sent this yesterday while you were recovering," Aleks replied.

"Is there a trace on this message?" Kallista asked.

"None," Aleks replied.

"I found where it slipped through and already sealed it. We don't have to worry about any malware
attached to the message or in the system. Essentially it's like a piece of paper that's been slipped underneath a door," Aleks said.

"None of our systems have been compromised..." Linda added. Kallista placed a hand on her hip as she continued to stare at the message.

"Kallista...is this..." Magnus started.

"It's related to those incidents...aren't they?" Malik spoke up.

Kallista's sharp blue eyes focused on Malik's black and golden speckled eyes before she turned away from the man. Gabriel's words still cutting deep. Malik's noted the woman's icy stare and remained silent.

"I don't know," Kallista replied.

"What do you mean you don't know, we can tell you obviously recognize this," Magnus spoke up.

"That doesn't automatically mean that I know the connection," Kallista bit back.

"Well, Miss Director, don't you think it's too convenient for this message to appear right after the kidnapping, right after you were rescued?" Magnus accused.

"I'm not a fucking bloody wizard Magnus, I don't know if it's connected to the Cheshire Cat Incidents," Kallista hissed as she turned in Magnus' direction.

"Or is that because you don't want to know?" Magnus questioned.

"You're questioning my loyalty, Magnus," Kallista stated.

"You're withholding information-"

"From who?!" Kallista cut the man off.

"Enough. Both of you. We're not going to get anywhere with this," Aleks spoke up and broke the tension that had grow to permeate through the room.

Everyone in the room could feel the tension between the two as they silently stared at each other. Magnus was the first to look away and back to his screen, and brushed off the woman's anger towards him. Kallista knew who this came from, she knew all too well. Kallista glared at the message on the screen, her jaw clenched, her hands balled into fists.

- If you are reading this...you know already know why I have contacted you. There is a war upon us, a war that a is long time coming. The gods have been asleep for far too long. It is time to wake up and wreck havoc among those who ravage the weak. You know this. I know this. We never forgive, We never forget. It is time that our goddess rises again. -

Malik watched silently as the woman seemed to seethe with anger. He knew that it was very rare to see the woman lose her cool, for her to argue and fight with their comrades, she never lost her cool, calm and collected self. He already knew that she was up and moving around against Doctor's orders but something else must have caused her to act like this, to give him that icy stare a few moments earlier.

"It sounds like someone is telling you to wake up Kallista," Malik commented. He noted the woman's silence at his comment and her refusal to acknowledge him.
"We have to let Commander Reyes know," Linda was the first to speak up.

"No," Kallista replied.

"No? What do you mean No?" Magnus asked.

"Director Kaines we have to let-"

"I said no. We don't know if this is connected or not, we will wait." Kallista said firmly as she looked at her team.

"Director Kaines please reconsider-" Aleks began.

"I will not repeat myself again," Kallista glared at the man. Aleks quickly studied the woman before deciding to hold his tongue.

"Fine," Aleks replied as he focused onto his monitor.

"Get that message off the screen. What's the status on the info from the Talon base?" Kallista asked as she gingerly touched her ribs.

"We have names of agents and leads on where funds are funneling in from…" Linda started.

"We already sent in what mission's information to Reyes," Magnus added bitterly.

"And other missions?" Kallista asked.

"Delayed, but they are starting up again. Some of the agents that were on your rescue mission were called in to assist on the raid…” Malik added.

Kallista bit down on her bottom lip to keep herself from shouting, everything seemed to continue to go down hill since she was rescued, if she knew that he was going to do this she would have rather died in that warehouse. She clicked her tongue and ran a hand through her hair, she was still heated from the argument with Reyes maybe 20 minutes earlier and now a message that was clearly directed towards her.

"Eh, no te preocupes por eso Kalli…Gabi estaba preocupado por ti ," Malik said as he studied her.

"no significa nada, Malik ," Kallista replied bitterly as she crossed her arms.

"I didn't think you were that dense Kallista," Malik laughed.

"I am not dense. It's not important. None of that is important," Kallista retorted.

"You know that's a lie. Why are you in denial about this?" Malik replied as he slouched in his chair smugly.

"Because I don't mean a damn thing apparently. Like I said none of this is beneficial to the situation at hand. I am just a lowly desk jockey that doesn't need a gun, " Kallista started. Malik sat up in his chair as he looked at the woman.

"Y'all need to calm down. I could hear y'all in the hallway,"

Everyone in the room turned their attention to the petite woman that had entered the room. Kallista and Malik turned their attention to the woman entering the room. Magnus leaned back in his chair as he watched Natalie stand next to their director.
"Natalie," Kallista stated as she continued to look ahead at the large holographic screen with information flowing across it.

"Sup' Natalie?" Magnus asked.

"I wanted to see where you guys were with the information that the recon team gathered. I heard through the grapevine I'll be in charge of those specific missions to follow," Natalie replied.

"Ooh...look at you. Fance pants," Magnus sneered.

"Got new big girl pants," Natalie smirked.

"We will have info for you in a few hours...," Linda trailed off.

Natalie noticed the heavy silence in the room, she could feel the tension that laced the office as the group silently tacked away on their keyboards, attempting to remain calm and cool.

"Ok, something is off- Hey Kallista…?" Natalie started as she noticed that the woman had already exited the room.

"Hey-!" Natalie said as she went after the woman.

There was silence between the four left in the room, they silently glanced at one another as if in a silent conversation. Linda was the first to break the silence among them.

"...The Director...is really...stressed…frustrated almost," Linda commented.

"She's angry..." Aleks commented.

"And she has every right to be. I mean she almost died, the fact that people had to stop their missions to go save her may have set things back a bit, but withholding information like this from Reyes that's inexcusable," Magnus started.

"Something happened to her...but I'm sure it'll get figured out. Anyway, it seems bad that she isn't telling Reyes about it, but she also has the liberty to filter information that is important and what's not important. She is judging the level of action she needs to take for this message before she goes to Reyes," Malik stated.

"That is part of her position," Aleks commented.

"If you notice the last line, 'It's time for our Goddess to rise again,' Someone from the God Brigade or Anonon..." Malik trailed off as he realized he was saying a word incorrectly, he cleared his throat and tried again.

"The God Brigade or Anonymous is trying to contact her,"

"From Anonymous?" Linda asked.

"Have you ever heard of research Linda?" Magnus asked.

"I know not to pry into personal business unlike someone we know," Linda spat.

"She has bite!" Magnus chuckled.

"Listen this is important," Malik said as he snapped his fingers catching everyone's attention.
"Whoever this DeadFoxhound person is from Anonymous contacted Kallista for a reason, It could be connected to the Cheshire Cat Incident or something else. That's for Kallista to determine and decide what we do. Everyone wanted her to be the Director so let her do her job," Malik said.

"Morals and ethics, though," Magnus commented.

"You forget who she was Magnus," Malik commented.

"One of the most wanted hackers in the world…" Linda commented.

"Exactly," Malik replied.

"She knows what she's doing. I trust her," Malik said casually and stood.

"I guess," Magnus commented.

"I trust she'll do the right thing…" Aleks added.

"Me too," Linda added.

"She is one of our fearless leaders…” Magnus sighed.

Natalie quickly looked down the hall to follow after the woman who had suddenly disappeared from the office, she needed to talk to her about the upcoming missions and now something else.

"Kallista. Wait up," Natalie called after her as she jogged to catch up with her. She clicked her tongue as she realized that Kallista was ignoring her and continued at her hurried pace.

"Kallista-!"

"What do you want?"

Kallista suddenly turned around to face the woman following after her, Natalie's golden colored eyes met with Kallista's icy stare. Natalie stopped a few inches from her, surprised at the sudden tone of the woman's voice and the cold stare. She knew it wasn't like her friend.

"Ok, so you ignored me which is rude. What's with you? What's going on?" Natalie asked worriedly, it wasn't like the woman to act like this.

"I'm frustrated and have a lot of catch up on. Is there something you need?" Kallista replied.

The expression that Natalie gave clearly told her that she was venting on people around her. Kallista glanced at Natalie before looking away from her, she couldn't even look at the woman, her friend who cared about her well-being.

"I said it's nothing. Just drop it," Kallista murmured.

"If it's nothing you should probably not vent it out on those around you know full well they are worried about you. You can't do that and then push them away, that's selfish and inconsiderate of you. Get your shit together Kallista," Natalie said as she walked pass Kallista and down the hall leaving Kallista alone.

Ana was headed out of her office when she nearly bumped into a man standing meekly in the
"Malik?" Ana questioned.

"Uh...Umm...can we talk for a few minutes...if you have time?" Malik whispered. Ana looked up at the shying taller man as he adjusted his glasses, she knew that he came to her when something was bothering him when he needed reassurance or advice.

"Of course, I was on my way to grab some coffee and check on Gabriel. Let's talk on the way," Ana suggested as she moved out of the doorway letting the door slide closed.

"Ok..." Malik trailed off.

Ana placed a reassuring hand on his shoulder before slowly starting down the hallway with him. She quickly glanced at the man, noticing his stature leaning, he was heavily on his cane.

"It's been a while, Malik, how are you feeling?" Ana asked breaking the silence between them.

"In pain as usual," Malik chuckled.

"You have been taking your meds and doing physical therapy right?" Ana questioned.

She knew the man was stubborn when it came to his own health and even wondered how Gabriel was able to handle his stubbornness let alone keep him from being killed on the field. She questioned it every time she saw Malik with a new injury or in a wheelchair, whatever Gabriel did, it worked.

"Yeah..." Malik trailed off.

"It doesn't sound like you have been Malik," Ana commented.

"I have...it's just hard to do so...but Mikael has been helping me," Malik replied.

"You can't always rely on him to help you. You need to be able to do things on your own," Ana replied.

"I know...I know..." Malik sighed again.

"Stop being stubborn about it and go. From my understanding Dr. Mikami is the only one who knows the most about you. Also, I'm pretty sure that Mikael is not a certified medic," Ana added.

Malik was silent at the woman's advice, he knew that he had to go, it was just a little more difficult than she knew. He didn't have the words to explain how he felt nor was he going to try to explain it to her.

"Yeah. I'll try," Malik replied as they walked into the empty cafe. Ana made her way over to the coffee machines as Malik went towards the closest table and sat down.

"You're drinking coffee?" Malik asked as he rubbed his achy knees.

"I have a long drive ahead of me," Ana replied.

"A mission?" Malik asked.

"You could say that," Ana replied as the coffee machine behind her beeped, letting her know that her coffee was finished. Carefully grabbing the mug she made her way over to the man at the table.
"How long will you be gone?" Malik asked as he watched her sit down across from him.

"That's to be determined. Now, I know you came to me for something...what's bothering you?" Ana questioned as she blew on the steaming coffee in her cup.

"Right..." Malik trailed off as he turned slightly away from the woman. The two sat in silence before he spoke again.

"I...I'm glad that Kallista is back...but...I don't know if she is the same person...does that make sense?" Malik started.

"What do you mean?" Ana questioned.

"She's...angry, frustrated, stressed...It's only been a day since she's been back but...what if all of this is too much for her?" Malik questioned.

"What are you trying to say Malik?" Ana questioned.

"Can she handle being the director and on the field. She's cracking under pressure," Malik stated bluntly.

"Do you think you would be better for the position? " Ana asked bluntly.

"I'm technically her senior so..." Malik trailed off.

"If they...if Gabriel thought you were best for the position you would have it. We talked about this Malik. It's already done and over with," Ana sighed.

Malik leaned back in his chair and sighed heavily, he still wasn't over Kallista being picked for the Director position, even if he did encourage the others to recommend her. As he thought back on it he knew that he wouldn't have been able to handle the workload or be able to deal with all of the people that Kallista had to communicate with nor would he would have been as professional like could see a flicker of irritation on the man's face before he adjusted his glasses again, regaining his composure.

"Besides, Kallista isn't supposed to be working, she hasn't even been cleared, nor has she recovered," Ana replied. He was silent for a few moments before he spoke.

"Yeah...but how do I tell her to take a break...I even though I'm bitter...I still don't want to see her in pain," Malik sighed.

"And it seems like the only way to get her to do anything is to tell her commanding officer," Ana started before she took another sip of her coffee.

"I guess you're talking about Gabi, right?" Malik questioned.

"Exactly," Ana smirked.

"Although...I don't see her going on for much longer. From what I've heard her body went through a lot of stress...she's gonna pass out soon," Ana hummed and took another sip of her coffee.

"Yeah...it looks like she's going to...but...the way she looked at me...though," Malik trailed off.

"I'm not too surprised at that...there's a bit of a lover's quarrel," Ana started.

"A lover's quarrel?" Malik asked
"What's that?"

"Oh? You didn't know? " Ana chuckled.

"...is that what's happening?"

"You know you should be healing instead of attempting to spar with me, " Lyudmila commented as she easily sidestepped Kallista's punch. Kallista grunted as she barely caught herself from the roundhouse kick she attempted to catch the taller woman with.

"Kallista," Lyudmila started.

It was only 30 minutes into the impromptu training session and Lyudmila could clearly see the woman was struggling heavily.

"You're wasting your breath," Kallista growled as she charged the woman. Lyudmila continued to dodge the woman's sluggish attacks, just to humor her.

She knew that she shouldn't have been even training with her from the beginning, in a way Kallista kinda forced her hand. Lyudmila had already been training with some of the new Blackwatch agents that were recruited and was lucky that Kallista waited till they were gone.

They didn't need to see this.

"Kallista-" Lyudmila started again.

"No-!" Kallista shouted. Lyudmila clicked her tongue as she switched stances to attack, she was surprised that the woman was able to avoid her punches in her state but knew that each sidestep, dodge, and duck was costing her more and more of her stamina.

Kallista stumbled backward but quickly caught herself and moved to charge again. A gust of wind and a gloved fist a mere inches from her face stopped her where she stood.

"Get control of yourself. This is not you. Go talk to him," Lyudmila said quietly. Kallista's icy blue orbs looked up from the woman's fist and met the woman's warm hazel brown eyes.

"What?" Kallista asked, clearly exhausted.

"I said go talk to him," Lyudmila repeated.

"Why should I?" Kallista said as she shoved the woman's gloved fist from her face.

"You two clearly had a fight and need to get over it because it's affecting both of you," Lyudmila sighed.

Kallista opened her mouth to say something, but crumbled to her knees in pain, a choked cry escaped her lips. Lyudmila sighed as she watched the woman crumble to her knees, she was already annoyed at the fact that Kallista was moving around when she should have been resting. Who knows what additional damage she was causing to her body even if she was a super soldier. The taller woman sighed again as she slicked back a piece of errant hair that slipped from her ponytail before helping Kallista to her feet.

"I was hoping that I wouldn't have to do this with you. I already do it enough for Malik," Lyudmila commented. Within a few minutes, Kallista found herself in the med bay and being looked over by an assistant.
"Kallista...I trust you to stay, I'll know if you don't," Lyudmila said as she moved towards the door.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah," Kallista sighed as she looked away from her.

"You have to talk to him," Lyudmila huffed.

"I'm not going to talk to him," Kallista replied firmly.

"Stop being a stubborn ass Kallista," Lyudmila said as she crossed her arms.

"My stupidity huh," Kallista scoffed.

"Why don't you tell that to him," Kallista spat back.

"Look. You're arguing just because you're heated. Cool down and take a step back from everything, Right now your stupidity is showing," Lyudmila added before she exited the room.

"Where is your pain mostly Director Kaines?" the assistant asked.

"Ribs," Kallista replied.

"Yesterday you did have a lot bruising...please take off your shirt. We can put more nanospray and wrap your ribs and whatever else you need me to," the assistant said.

"Ok…" Kallista murmured as she moved, slowly, to take off her tank top.

Weeks had passed as Kallista continued to heal, Angela had told her that she healed a lot faster than normal but that was expected. To that extent Kallista buried herself in work to avoid people and to keep her mind off the pain and the guilt she felt for being rescued. The mention of other agents postponing their missions to rescue her, bothered her even though the missions were all successful, even with the delay.

"Whatever," Kallista mumbled to herself as she continued to review mission reports. She knew that she had tons of work to catch up on and still focus on her original task. She continued to approve and send the mission reports to Lyudmila and Gabriel and moved on to the next thing.

"Finally done with reports…” she sighed heavily and leaned back in her chair. She had so many things turning in her head, but there was one thing that still bothered her.

Weeks with minimal contact, minimal words exchanged, two stubborn people, agitated with one another. Neither moving to apologize to one another, she wasn't going to budge she had nothing to apologize to him about.

"...I need coffee," Kallista murmured to herself as she stood and made her way to the door of her office. She lost count of how many cups she had and knew that Angela would chew her out if she found out, but it was a distraction a much-needed distraction.

A distraction to keep her awake and her mind focused on work, her main reason for being forcibly recruited to Blackwatch. Kallista stretched as she made her way to the door, in mid stretch the door opened with a soft hiss revealing Gabriel on the other side, their eyes met briefly before Kallista averted her eyes somewhere else.

"...Kallista…” Gabriel said as he stood in front of her, blocking the door.
"Reyes," Kallista replied as she crossed her arms. There was a pause between the two before Kallista attempted to leave her office, he didn't move.

"This is where you've been hiding," Gabriel commented as he quickly scanned her office taking note of the blanket hanging over her chair, the empty energy drink cans, instant noodles piled on a cabinet next to a water kettle.

"It's called working," Kallista replied bluntly. Gabriel focused back on the woman as she continued to avoid meeting his gaze.

"Is there something I can do for you? You're in the way of me getting coffee," Kallista sighed.

"You know why I'm here," Gabriel replied crossing his arms, his larger frame taking up the doorway.

"If I did, I wouldn't have asked. So, what do you want?" Kallista asked. She could see the man's jaw tense as he looked down at her.

"You're still so stubborn," Gabriel sighed.

"Me stubborn? You're worse than I am," Kallista retorted as she crossed her arms. Gabriel glanced over his shoulder to see if a passerby got too curious, the hall was empty.

"Stop it," Gabriel said.

"Stop what? You came into my office-"Kallista started.

"You're being dense even though you know what I'm doing here," Gabriel cut her off.

"Excuse me?" Kallista started when suddenly he stepped forward, pushing her back into the office. The man locked the door and barricaded it with his larger frame, locking her in the room with him. Kallista moved towards the other door about to open it when-

"Athena lock all doors in Director Kaines' office," Gabriel sighed.

--Understood.--

"You are being-" Kallista started as she glared at the man.

"You're acting like a child," Gabriel cut her off.

"A child? Alright then. What can I do for your Commander Reyes? I would like to get back to work," Kallista huffed as she turned to look at the man.

"Kallista you're making this more difficult than what it needs to be," Gabriel sighed annoyed.

"Get to the point," Kallista huffed.

"I came to apologize..." The man trailed off.

"I'm sorry," Gabriel said as he looked down at her, his gaze was firm and unwavering. Kallista narrowed her eyes at the man and placed a hand on her hip.

"What I said was out of line, inconsiderate, and unprofessional," he continued. Kallista remained silent as she moved to cross her arms, still watching him.
"I didn't mean it," he finished.

"Really?" Kallista asked.

"Really," Gabriel repeated.

"Who put you up to this?" Kallista asked, her voice softer as she looked away from the man, her hardened exterior softening.

"No one made me do this Kallista," Gabriel huffed.

"It was Natalie, wasn't it? Ana? Lyudmila? Morrison?" Kallista listed off names.

She knew that the man was just as stubborn as her and wouldn't willingly apologize to her, his voice pulled her from her thoughts breaking the short pause between them.

"You are just as important as everyone here. I wasn't going to leave you to die, I couldn't let that happen," Gabriel started.

"I told you I was going to protect you in whatever shape or form but I need you to trust me so I can do it," He continued as he took off his hat and scratched his head.

Kallista quickly glanced up at the man before focusing her attention on the floor, she knew about the hastily put together mission and the urgency behind it. She saw the mission details and reports, there was truth behind his words.

"Fine. I accept your apology," Kallista started. Gabriel waited for the woman to continue as he slipped his beanie back on.

"But, If you think I'll forget about this you are mistaken. I won't forget," Kallista replied.

"Kallista," Gabriel started as he sighed.

"It won't affect my work...but it's going to take me some time...you...what you said really hurt," Kallista said softly.

"I got too heated and let my stress go too far. I apologize," Gabriel replied.

"The great Commander Reyes cracking under pressure," Kallista commented as she looked up at him.

"Only when it comes to certain people that will remain unnamed," Gabriel replied.

"I can figure that out," Kallista started.

"Don't. I know it's going to take you time to recover...but hopefully, this tense air fades," Gabriel started.

"The feeling is mutual…" Kallista trailed off.

"Good. Athena, unlock all doors in Director Kaines office," Gabriel nodded as he moved away from the door.

--Understood--

"Now...about that coffee. Did you want to grab a cup of coffee with me?" Kallista asked. Gabriel
looked at his cellphone and at the time.

"It's 1 AM Kallista, you should be sleeping," Gabriel suggested.

"Time has no meaning to me right now. Besides...I can tell you about my recovery and possible leads on some interesting news," Kallista replied as she moved towards the door. The door slid open with a soft hiss.

"It's true, nothing gets by you without you noticing," He replied as he followed her out of her office.

"You wouldn't believe the things I've seen Reyes...it's just a matter of asking," Kallista sneered as she stepped into the hallway.

"You mean bribing," Gabriel replied as he followed her

"Whichever comes first," Kallista replied nonchalantly as she walked down the hall.

"You're the worst," Gabriel chuckled.

Chapter End Notes

Eh, no te preocupes por eso Kalli...Gabi estaba preocupado por ti - Don't worry about it Kalli... Gabi was worried about you

...no significa nada - ...Doesn't mean anything
Setup

Chapter Summary

New developments in the Cheshire Cat Events and prep for a tide turning mission in Naples, Italy.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

[Alright, Kallista. Are you ready for the training simulation?]

Kallista gave a thumbs up to the viewing window above her and began to stretch. In addition to her Blackwatch tasks she still helped the Overwatch R&D department with their side projects. The project called the 'Helios System' had been on hiatus due to other projects but now the project moved quickly into the final stages.

Kallista was their test subject.

[How does it feel? The fit?]

"It is a little tight…but still moveable," Kallista replied.

[We can adjust the suit for you after the test. But…it does look really nice on you]

Kallista smirked and turned to the viewing window and shook her head. She began to bounce on the balls of her feet to prepare herself for the onslaught of physical tests they planned to simulate. The project neared the end and the data they would collect would be applied to the suit's schematics and finally, a suit would be produced for Kallista.

[Careful Gideon...someone already has his eye on her]

[We are testing out a 900k suit I think everyone's attention is required for this…]

"Before we start, the small computer and generator on my back is called the Helios System, correct?" Kallista asked.

[Yes. But the finished product will be called NYX]

Sabina's voice had cut through the bickering that was about to happen between the members of the R&D Department for Overwatch.

"Any specific reason why?" Kallista questioned.

[I can explain it after the simulation…but let's just say it needed to be called something appropriate for the Queen of Blackwatch]

"That's enough out of you Gideon, you're surely going to distract me with your flirtations," Kallista gave a burst of feminine laughter. "Sabina, everyone, I am ready when you are;"

[Wonderful. We will start with level six. We will increase the level as we complete each test. During
this simulation we want you to push the suit to its limit. Paired with your enhanced strength and speed, your martial arts experience this should be easy…]

"Sounds good to me," Kallista replied as she gave a thumbs up and adjusted the simulation goggles.

[Standby…Infiltration simulation training mission beginning in 3...2...1…]

It was barely noon when Gabriel had been pulled aside for a private chat in the outdoor pavilion in the Overwatch Division. Mikael, a member of Blackwatch, a developer in the Overwatch’s R&D Division, and a longtime friend.

"Mikael? What's up?" Gabriel asked as he sipped his coffee.

"Hey...Gabe, I need to talk to you about something...important," Mikael started. Gabriel arched an eyebrow at the man, for him to pull him aside so suddenly was normal but the man's nervous features is what caused Gabriel to wonder about what was bothering man this time.

"What did you break this time?" Gabriel asked jokingly to relax the man's nerves, Mikael laughed nervously and slicked his hair back in the process.

"Nothing...this time," Mikael replied.

"Then?" Gabriel asked.

There weren't many times where there was silence between the two men, Gabriel knew that whatever the man had to tell him, it was important. Mikael leaned against one of the pillars of the pavilion and sighed heavily, Gabriel silently sipped at his coffee.

"You know...sometimes I feel overwhelmed by all the missions that Overwatch and Blackwatch take on...like do you guys even get a vacation?" Mikael began. "When did we suddenly have so much responsibility placed in our hands? Granted I'm not on the field unless there's an emergency…but I feel like we're becoming the new NATO,"

Gabriel glanced at the man across from him as he took another sip of his coffee and continued to listen as the man voiced his concerns and opinions.

"That alone has gotten me thinking and wondering if I am doing the right thing. I always thought I would end up an archaeologist not a defense and weapon specialist at Overwatch even," Mikael said softly. "My grandmother would be proud,"

"All of this is for?" Gabriel questioned.

"...I...I've been thinking about it off and on...but it hit really hard when we rescued Kallista…" Mikael trailed off.

"You having a change of heart on me Spiros?" Gabriel questioned before he sipped at his coffee.

"When I first thought about it but now since Kallista and I talked about it...it's starting to sound like it doesn't it?" Mikael chuckled nervously.

"You spoke to her first?" Gabriel asked a bit surprised at their relationship.

"I did. We talk a lot actually," Mikael smiled to himself. "She's like a sibling I've never had,"

"That's surprising," Gabriel replied and took another sip of his coffee.
"I'm sure you know much more about her than I do...you know your late-night talks and all," Mikael chuckled, Gabriel scoffed in response.

Gabriel sipped his coffee as silence fell between them again, normally conversations between them were easy but this conversation was difficult. As much as the conversation was difficult, Gabriel wanted his agents to think about how much was on the line as they went to complete their missions, he wanted them to think. He had seen several comrades and friends gunned down on the field, sacrifice themselves to complete the mission or to protect civilians.

He had seen many agents resign from their positions and go on to live different lives, start a family, move on with their lives.

Like Mikael, there were many times where Gabriel had thought to put everything behind him, step down from Blackwatch and become a civilian. No matter how many times he wanted to give up, wanted to end everything by his own hand but he continued, he continued forward to fulfill his dream of starting a family.

It was a simple dream.

In the back of his mind, he knew this talk would come, not just from Mikael but from others. Mikael second-guessed his reason for working in Overwatch and fully realized that life could end in a moment's notice. A part of Gabriel wanted to tell the man to go and start the life he wanted, and the other part of Gabriel knew that he wanted the man to stay.

The man was there with him when Blackwatch was officially established.

"So, what are you going to do?" Gabriel asked.

"I dunno yet. I've been with you for such a long time...doing anything different would be weird," Mikael sighed.

"I want you to do what's right for you and not what you think is good for Blackwatch," Gabriel commented, Mikael sighed heavily and mumbled a few words in Greek.

"I want you to do what's right for you and not what you think is good for Blackwatch," Gabriel commented, Mikael sighed heavily and mumbled a few words in Greek.

"I know...but at least it's good to know that you at least understand me," Mikael said as took off his glasses and wiped them clean with the edge of his shirt.

"Why wouldn't I be? I always said, as long as you're not doing anything stupid, like get yourself killed, I will support you. It doesn't matter what happens to Blackwatch if you leave, that's not your concern. Your future is," Gabriel began. "I don't have the right to tell you what you can and cannot do with your life,"

Gabriel was honored that the man wanted his feedback on his decision, he was his commanding officer, but he also didn't want that to hold him back from starting a life that Mikael wanted to have, outside of Overwatch, outside of Blackwatch and its horrors.

"Even so. I just wanted your opinion, it's important to me," Mikael replied. "Ok, this is too somber for me, so...tell me when are you two going to be official?" Mikael asked, changing the mood of the conversation.

"Hm?" Gabriel grunted as he took a long drink from his now cold coffee, he grimaced at the taste. Cold coffee was his least favorite.

"You and Kallista," Mikael smirked.
"What about her?" Gabriel asked

"Are you really gonna play stupid Gabe? When are you two going to be a thing instead of fuck buddies?" Mikael laughed a bit.

"Spiros," Gabriel gave the man a warning glance.

"Hey. I'm just asking a simple question. Better me than Malik," Mikael shrugged.

Gabriel took a moment before he responded to the man's question, is that what she thought they were? He thought that there was more...maybe he was wrong?

"Is that what she told you?" Gabriel asked.

"No. Just an assumption that you confirmed for me, I wouldn't be too surprised if the others thought the same though. Funny though, I never knew you were a biter Reyes," Mikael sneered.

"I trusted you and this is how you repay me?" Gabriel shook his head.

"Oh c'mon, you may be our fearless leader but there are times where you do let your guard down and now was one of those moments. I had to take it," Mikael laughed.

"You know that Blackwatch agents are sworn to secrecy and if you want to make it out of here alive I suggest you keep a tight lip about rumors like that, Gabriel started, a toothy grin spread across his lips as he looked at the man.

Mikael's hearty laugh quickly changed into nervous laughter, he knew the man would hold him to that oath and make sure he followed through with his threat.

"Whatever you decide to do Spiros. I'm going to support you,"

"That's good to hear...whatever I do I'm glad that you'll be on my side," Mikael said as he suddenly reached into his pants pocket to pull out his cell phone.

"Oh-! They're testing the suit," Mikael said as shoved his phone back into his pocket.

"Suit?" Gabriel asked.

"Kallista's special suit," Mikael chuckled as he finger gunned the man as he began walking back towards the main building.

"We'll make her into Blackwatch's trump card, we'll make her into your trump card," Mikael quipped as he continued backward.

"Spiros," Gabriel sighed as he shook his head.

"Don't worry we got you covered!" Mikael said before he disappeared into the main building leaving Gabriel to himself and thoughts.

The day had come and gone just like that, paired with meetings, the long extended tests of the new suit and prep work for upcoming missions. Kallista sighed heavily as she stared at the large screen in the now-empty Intel department. It was just her and the message from Deadfoxhound.

"Deadfoxhound...it's been a while," Kallista said to herself as she pulled a smaller holographic screen to the front and pushed the larger screen back. Kallista knew that this person was connected to the
Cheshire Cat events otherwise there was no other reason for Deadfoxhound to contact her. She had been in contact with her and a few others before her capture four years prior. There were days that she missed them but knew it was best if she didn't reach out to them.

They didn't need to know that she worked for the organization they were working to expose. Nor did she need to expose them to Blackwatch's watchful eye, even though she was the Intel Director, she knew that she was still under surveillance no matter if she was close with the Blackwatch Commander or not.

Currently, the Cheshire cat events started when several political and pharmaceutical corporations websites were hacked and displayed information about their shady deals. It started a wildfire within the media and of course, Overwatch had been on alert and now Blackwatch. Kallista and her team had already been assigned to watch the corporations that were attacked and now had the Cheshire cat to deal with.

On the other hand, Kallista and her team did a have a good laugh as they watched the PR for each of the politicians scramble, but Kallista did keep a close eye on the Cheshire cat in case the situation decided to escalate.

And it did.

The next set of Cheshire events didn't catch their eyes until the kidnapping of two prominent CEOs, more specifically CEOs that Blackwatch was already investigating before the events transpired. Overwatch, with the help of Blackwatch, rescued the two CEOs without issue and took down the kidnappers. After, Blackwatch was tasked with the capture of the one who called themselves the Cheshire cat.

Another investigation on her hands and for her teams.

Kallista sighed heavily as she plopped down in one of the desk chairs as she pulled up another mission that had been in the works for several weeks. It was Gabriel's mission to Italy, a mission to take down and or apprehend a high target within Talon ranks, a possible Talon operative code name Duchess, Elena Vescovi, a media mogul.

The woman had been seen all throughout Italy with an unknown dark-haired woman at her side. This woman was a public figure, she was well known and could easily be picked out in a crowd from her crimson red hair, she was wealthy, a wide range of connections to many people in power in Italy and in the neighboring countries.

She had connections to Talon and so did the woman at her side.

Kallista worked tirelessly to gather all of the information she could on the woman, patterns of where the woman would be seen, and even going as far as to gain access to the woman's bank account, and personal schedule at the woman's office.

He relied on her to give him all of the information he would need for his missions, he trusted enough that she was the only one assigned to handle the intel for his specific missions.

Kallista smiled at the thought and closed the file and noticed that the dossier had been accessed by someone other than herself and those who needed to see it.

"Athena. Give me a full list of those who have accessed Commander Reyes' mission dossier since creation," Kallista said as she straightened herself in her chair and began typing on the dark blue holographic keyboard.
"The last person to access this file?" Kallista asked.

"The last individual to access this file...Captain Ana Amari"

"Were there any changes made to the dossier?" Kallista asked as she pulled up a list of those who had accessed the file since its creation. Indeed, Ana was the last one to access the dossier, but why?

"I don't see any changes made to this dossier, Athena, were there any changes made?" Kallista asked.

"There is no record of change"

"Athena...when did Captain Amari leave for her mission in Egypt?" Kallista asked.

"Captain Amari departed for her mission, 48 hours past"

The dossier had been accessed barely 24 hours ago.

"Athena. Allow access to this dossier for the following individuals, Strike Commander Jack Morrison, Commander Gabriel Reyes, First Lieutenant Lyudmila Dontsova and myself," Kallista stated.

"Understood. Director Kaines, please input your specialized override code"

Kallista pulled another holographic screen from the mission dossier and quickly typed in her override code, all while dread had its hands on her shoulders. As Kallista entered her code the thought of Captain Amari accessing this specific dossier reminded her of her original task, the reason why she was in Blackwatch.

Kallista had to admit that the double agent within Overwatch hid well, there was no movement from the agent since she had become the Director of the Blackwatch Intel Department. In addition to the new title and position came a plethora of responsibilities and tasks the pulled her attention in several different ways. Despite the dread that trailed along her spine there was a spark of excitement in her gut, the thrill of search and destroy reminded her of her time in the God Brigade and how easily they could have pushed the world into chaos.

With a sigh, Kallista made a note to connect with the Captain when she returned to verify her access to the file but in the meantime, she needed to continue to work. She glanced over to the blue holographic numbers on the main screen, it read exactly 3 AM and yet sleep still evaded her.

How many days had she not slept?

Did she even eat today?

She couldn't remember but knew that she at least needed to sleep and soon she had a meeting to attend in five hours. She closed down all of the holographic screen around her and powered down her terminal. With the effects of SEP, insomnia and migraines plagued her constantly and sleep would not always come to her but she would try. She exited her office, her thoughts focused on food, coffee as she walked down the slightly dimmed hall. She was pulled from her thoughts as her ear picked up muffled groaning before her eyes locked onto the man heavily leaning on one of the hallway walls.
"Reyes?" Kallista asked as she quickly approached him, when she looked closer she could see blood trickled down the side of his face, blood from his ears.

"Reyes! Oh my god," Kallista gasped as she helped the man from the wall, bearing the brunt of his weight as they made their way to the Med Bay.

[Hayden: Yoooo wat happun to Nat? She gone!]

[Doubek: 😁]

[Hayden: Wat dat mean?]

[Doubek: I'm sure she's with the Commander… ; ) ]

[Hayden: Oh?...oh! Morrison?]

[Talli: She had Jesse give her a piggyback ride back to HQ. I heard them when they came back]

[Hayden: Tal! Why awake? It late]

[Talli: I haven't slept yet. These modifications]

[Linda/Truffles: You asshole!]

[Linda/Truffles: You know who I'm talking to!]

[Hayden: wat happun?! Linda!]

[Linda/Truffles: I'm charging every mofo for hurting my feelings! 30 credits per insult!]

[M: LMAO]

[Malik: Truffles~ 3]

[Linda/Truffles: Shut it, Ramos, you owe me 30 credits!]

[Poster Boy A: Guys. It's 3 in the fucking morning. Go to sleep.]

[Talli: Who pissed off Linda?]

[M: It's alright. She's fine and an angry drunkard]

[Hayden: Dude]

[Linda/Truffles: Magnus you ass! That's why no one wants to sleep with you and you!]

[Hayden: woah!]

[Talli: 😞]

[Malik: Buuuuuuuurn]

[Doubek: DAYUM! SHE GOT BITE!]

[M: Wow Linda. I didn't know you cared about my sexual life.]
"No rupture to the outer ear canal, no internal bleeding in the brain. I checked your files and there seem to be no pre-existing conditions and there were none but there were previous instances of this happening but with no precise cause," the female doctor said as she flipped her blush pink hair over her shoulder, her attention focused on the file in her hands.

"Not to mention I only have access to the bare minimum," she added bitterly.

"So then I'm clear," Gabriel said as he stood, the woman scoffed as she crossed her arms.

"No. Are you out of your mind? I need to run tests on you to make sure there's nothing else wrong with you," she replied.

"Look. I'm going to be fine. One of Ana's darts are just what I needed to deal with this. No other tests needed," Gabriel sighed.

"That dosage is enough to kill a normal man," the woman frowned.

"I am not just a normal man," Gabriel scoffed, annoyed at the woman's persistence.

Kallista sighed heavily as she ran a hand through her hair, the doctor, Seraphina Hasibuan was fairly new to the medical division of Overwatch. She didn't know their conditions, the effects of SEP, the pain or how to deal with their pain, she assumed it was just classified information.

"Have you used drugs, excess alcohol, engaged in sexual- Hey!" Seraphina stopped when she saw that the man disregarded her and her questions as he made his way towards the exit.

"Commander Reyes! Get back here you are my patient- Commander!" Seraphina called after the man as she watched him leave. "I heard stories about him but I didn't think he was that much of an ass. Director Kaines, please make sure you bring him back tomorrow...or at least get seen by Dr. Ziegler."

"Yeah. I'll try," Kallista agreed as she was suddenly hit with a wave of tiredness. She looked at her hand, her crystal blue eyes focusing on the dried blood on her hands, oblivious to the woman's chocolate brown eyes on her.

"Here," Seraphina said as she moved to get her a wipe for her hands.

"Thanks," Kallista said as she took the wipe and began to wipe her hands.

"You're not sleeping much are you?" Seraphina asked as she looked over Kallista.

"I guess it's that noticeable," Kallista quipped.

"I'm surprised you didn't notice you looked like shit," Seraphina replied bluntly.
"Oh thanks for your medical assessment Dr. Hasibuan. Have you looked in a mirror lately?" Kallista questioned as she tossed the soiled wipe into the trash.

"Birds of a feather and you're welcome," Seraphina said as she took a seat at her desk.

"Seraphina is fine and I'm just doing my job," Seraphina sighed as she turned her attention back to the terminal screen.

"I suppose you're filling in for Angela right?" Kallista asked.

"Something like that. I'm waiting for my clearance to be approved before I start on what I was recruited for," Seraphina replied.

"Ah...Angie's little project," Kallista said. Seraphina spun around in her chair to face Kallista, her warm brown eyes studied Kallista. Unfazed by the woman's judgemental stare, she crossed her arms and returned the look.

"If you know about it, you're either from Overwatch or high in the chain of command," Seraphina stated.

"Blackwatch Intel Director," Kallista corrected.

"Oh? Kallista Kaines, correct?" Seraphina questioned.

"You're correct," Kallista replied.

"I'll keep that in mind," Seraphina replied as she crossed a leg over the other. "Tell me how much do you know?"

"Depends," Kallista replied

"You must know all the secrets about everyone here," Seraphina began.

"I might. I cannot confirm or deny it anything," Kallista replied.

"You do...I can see it in your face," Seraphina replied and grinned. "I supposed this is what I should expect from the Blackwatch Division?"

"Probably...not? Well maybe, there are some agents that are a bit reckless" Kallista replied.

"One more headache," Seraphina sighed.

"I won't give you too much of a hassle," Kallista replied.

"Good. You're not too bad Kallista," Seraphina said as she turned around to the terminal again.

"Likewise Seraphina. I'm going to try to sleep, don't stay up too late. It's not good for your skin," Kallista said as she made her way to the exit.

"Trust me, I know,"

The next morning Kallista didn't see much of Gabriel as he didn't see much of her either. He had a mission to prepare for and the last thing she needed was to be in his way, not to mention that she didn't sleep and only managed to fit in a quick nap after the daily intel meeting.
"She dozed off again…" Magnus whispered

"She must have been up late again," Aleks replied

"Banging Gabi of course," Malik sneered.

"I can hear you, you know," Kallista said as she opened her eyes and yawned.

"That got your attention," Magnus chuckled.

"Did you not sleep yesterday Director Kaines?" Linda asked.

"No. I haven't slept in two days? I ran into some issues yesterday night while attempting to sleep," Kallista replied as she rubbed her eyes.

"Issues huh?" Malik smirked.

"Oh come off of it," Kallista yawned.

She had a new lead on the double agent and was eager to look more into it, Gabriel's sudden and mysterious ailment to the sudden Cheshire events and everything else that piled on top of all of that, it drained her. She was worried, fatigued and near exhaustion but continued to push herself.

"Have you thought about taking a day to recover Director?" Aleks asked.

"Eventually but I probably would have been able to sleep during the time you numbnuts were texting at 3 AM," Kallista glared at the four in the room.

"Someone got drunk and told us how they really feel," Malik commented.

"Ok so that is not entirely true," Linda spoke up.

"Oh woe is me...Linda thinks I can't get laid," Magnus feigned hurt.

"Look I apologized! I was drunk," Linda replied.

"Ok...look I don't care about your sexual lives just make sure you're safe about it," Kallista waved off the conversation as she stood and moved towards the front of the room.

"We got a special request from Caix in the Overwatch division,"

"Caix? This must be good," Malik commented

"Who does he want us to find now?" Magnus sighed.

Officer Caix was a headhunter for the Overwatch division and occasionally called on Blackwatch to recruit a member or in simple terms, go get them for him.

"We...or should I say he was in contact with someone from the Frost Network," Kallista continued

"The Frost Network from Crimson Castle….ooohhhhh!" Magnus smirked.

"The group of spies based in a strip club. They do good work, we used to work with them when the intel department was recovering," Malik added.

"I heard. There is a particular person that Caix wants us to bring back,"
"When do we start and can I go?" Magnus asked.

"No," Kallista replied.

"Aw c'mon," Magnus whined.

"No. Caix, Lyuda, and Reyes will decide on who goes we just have to make sure everything is setup properly as usual and provide support," Kallista waved off the man.

"Kallista," Magnus started.

"Oh boy...," Aleks sighed.

"Here we go," Malik sighed.

"Have I ever told you how smashing you look?" Magnus tried to imitate a British accent and failed.

"Put a sock in it. I have a migraine and I don't need your whining," Kallista waved off the man again.

"You tried and failed Maggs. Where is your game? I could probably do a better job," Malik sneered.

"Linda I want you to work with Caix on this, Aleks I'm going to-" Kallista began, ignoring the two men.

"Aw, por qué tan gruñón? Qué está mal? Gabí no dejó sus marcas en ti anoche? De nuevo, dejame escuchar tu voz...gatita," Malik imitated the Reyes' voice the best he could, emphasizing the deep growly tone.

"Straight for the weakness," Magnus commented.

"...S-Shut up," Kallista stammered.

"See?" Malik grinned ear to ear. Magnus and Malik both chuckled.

"You guys aren't going. It's not my choice," Kallista said and cleared her throat.

"Aw c'mon lil gatita," Magnus smirked.

"Knock it off Bondevik," Kallista frowned.

"Malik I want you to do some research for me relating to the previous Cheshire Cat like events," Kallista began.

"Aww c'mon gatita," Malik purred.

"If you don't want me to break your legs and or cane so you can walk to Mikael's room tonight. I suggest you quit while you're ahead," Kallista said as she stared blankly at the man a few feet from her.

"Ok. You got me there," Malik laughed.

"You tried," Magnus commented, Kallista snapped her fingers to catch everyone's the two men's attention.

"Magnus there are recon missions going on in the Americas with McCree and a few others. I need
you to provide support for those missions," Kallista ordered.

"Sounds good," Magnus nodded.

"Kalli, what do you need me to research? Because you know I just love sitting on my fat ass and doing research all day," Malik started, bitter sarcasm in every word.

"It'll keep you busy and out of Reyes' hair," Kallista said as she went over to the man.

"Eso es aburrido," Malik whined.

"If you have time to whine you have time to research. Here's what I need you to gather...once you see it I'm sure you'll come to your own conclusions and see where I am going with this," Kallista said.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah," Malik sighed as he prepared himself to find what she needed.

It was two hours later when Kallista returned to her room, it was barely the afternoon and yet Kallista was ready to faint from exhaustion. Kallista massaged her temples as she continued to pace around the room, another spell of insomnia that plagued her along with a dull throb from a migraine.

No concentration, no focus, and no sleep.

She couldn't remember the last time she had a decent amount of sleep, it was affecting her work and her sanity. She gave herself a pat on the back on delegating work to her team while she took time to recover from the sleepless nights and exhaustion.

A long hot shower with herbs and oils to help relax her mind and body, aromatherapy with additional relaxing oils and yet there were no signs of change.

Almost at her wit's end, she considered several times going to Lyudmila to have the woman knock her unconscious and deal with the pain of recovering instead of lack of sleep, but she knew that the woman wouldn't even dare to hit her.

"Athena apply blackout shade 75 percent," Kallista sighed as she begrudgingly she crawled into bed and underneath her plush sheets, letting darkness wash over her.

Her head felt as if it was being constantly bashed in, dull sharp throbbing traveling from the back of her right eye and down her neck, even with the small earplugs the noises were still loud in her head.

It was too much for her to sleep.

Click

A soft noise came from the back of Kallista's throat as she heard the door open and close. She didn't need to move to see who entered, she only gave the code to one person if they needed it. It was a refuge from everything and everyone, a quiet refuge for just two.

"Still awake?" the man's voice was low, with signs of exhaustion.

"When was the last time you slept?"

"Two days ago? Coming to say goodbye?" Kallista asked. She heard a soft grunt come from the man and a soft thud of a duffle bag.
"You know I don't say goodbye," Gabriel replied as he yawned.

He was dressed in a pair of sweatpants and just a basic white t-shirt and his signature beanie missing, the duffle bag she assumed was his gear for his mission in the upcoming hours, it was rare.

"You look just as bad as I do," Kallista commented.

"Oh thanks," Gabriel said sarcastically.

She wasn't going to tell him that she was happy that he came to see her before he left, she was already worried about the man from the night before but didn't want to seem overly attached to him, that would be too much for the both of them.

That's not what they silently agreed upon, that's not what they needed.

"Aleks told me that you haven't slept for two days...so you already know what I'm going to say," Gabriel chided her. A noise that resembled a whine came from the woman as she rolled on to her side, facing away from him.

"Kallista you need rest otherwise your productivity will fall. I'm your commander it's my job to make sure that you are taking care of yourself," Kallista imitated the man. A soft chuckle came from behind her as she felt her bed dip from the weight of the man getting into her bed with her.

"You really are the 'Dad' in Blackwatch," Kallista murmured.

"I'm offended," Gabriel huffed, Kallista laughed slightly.

Even with the joke, Kallista couldn't deny the fact that there was something comforting about him that she didn't want to acknowledge.

She knew it was one sided.

She was just a quickie for him nothing more, nothing less...but yet...he was here.

"Come here…" Gabriel said softly pulling her into his arms. Kallista complied as she turned over and scooted into his embrace, resting her head gently on his shoulder. Hints of cigarette smoke, gunmetal, amber, an indescribable spice paired with his own masculine scent wrapped itself around Kallista as she soaked up the man's warmth.

His warmth relaxed her, his arms around her calmed her, and yet none of this was 'quickie' mentality.

"Gabriel…” Kallista murmured as she buried her face into his chest. A soft grumble came from the back of the man's throat as he carded a hand through her hair, another brushing her lower back.

"Sleep Kallista...you need it…” Gabriel said softly.

"So do you," Kallista murmured.

"We both do," the man's voice was barely above a whisper. A soft silence setting between the two as she laid in his arms.

She listened to his steady breaths, the soft thumping of his heart, enjoying the consistent languid soft circles on her lower back.

Kallista sighed softly and moved closer to the man, slinging her leg over the man's waist, he grumbled softly as he gently rubbed his hand along her thigh and sighed contently. She never knew
what it was about the man that helped her drift off to sleep, nor did she know how they've gotten so close. But yet in the back of her mind, she constantly reminded herself not to expect anything from this.

She had to remind herself not to get greedy.

She had to remind herself not to ask for more.

She had to remind herself not to fall for him.

She had to remind herself to keep her mouth shut.

This whole affair started off as a fling, to cope with the stresses of the job and nothing more and yet here they were, sleeping together in each other's rooms, in the man's office. Comforting each other when they needed it, no questions asked. The intimacy they shared was similar to that of a couple, those knowing looks in public, then gentle touches and kisses before they indulged in each other distracting themselves.

Kallista sighed softly, and relished in the man's heat as she felt herself slipping into much-needed sleep, she would worry about what they were becoming some other time.

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**Rough Translations:**

Aw, por qué tan gruñón? Qué está mal? Gabí no dejó sus marcas en ti anoche? De nuevo, dejame escuchar tu voz...gatita - aw, so grouchy? What's wrong? Gabi didn't get to leave his marks on you last night?

*Eso es aburrido - That's Boring*

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**Chapter End Notes**

**Rough Translations:**

Aw, por qué tan gruñón? Qué está mal? Gabí no dejó sus marcas en ti anoche? De nuevo, dejame escuchar tu voz...gatita: aw, so grouchy? What's wrong? Gabi didn't get to leave his marks on you last night?

Eso es aburrido: That's Boring
Sterling Black

Chapter Summary

Hushed whispers, words unsaid or interrupted.

With Project NYX 90 percent finished, Kallista has full reign over it to work out its kinks and undiscovered abilities. But with the Cheshire cat on the move and the answer at the tip of her fingertips.

Emergency strikes.

Mid 2064

It was early morning and yet everyone in the Blackwatch Division was wide awake, prepped for their missions they had trained, researched and anxiously waited for. There were several smaller teams slated to head out early due to the importance of the type of mission, Gabriel's team was the first to depart followed by others.

Within the last free moments before heading towards the landing pad, there were a few early birds in the locker room that gathered their gear and spoke briefly of their missions or promises of wild debauchery adventures afterward. After the few early souls gathered their things they left only two people.

"Kallista," Gabriel started as she looked at the woman checking the status of his gear for his mission all while she collected things for her upcoming mission. "Can you stop for a moment?"

Gabriel sighed, Kallista arched an eyebrow as she looked at the man over her shoulder.

"Come here. Let me check your suit...it's still a prototype," Gabriel said as he motioned for the woman to come over to him.

"It's not that big of a deal," Kallista said as she walked over to the man. Gabriel took the device from her and linked it to her suit, in minutes he had accessed the new Helios System and checked for gaps.

"The security of the suit is lacking, you're going to fix that right?" Gabriel asked.

"Of course," Kallista replied as she watched the man's hardened features, she could tell that there was something bothered him.

"You've been tense lately," Kallista commented as she continued to watch the man focus on the device. He quickly glanced at her and down to the device in his hands again.

They checked each other's gear before they went on missions, he did the same thing with Jesse, Malik, and Natalie when they were sent on missions in the beginning. Only this time, there was something on the man's mind, she noticed he began acting strange weeks ago and the incident that led him to the med-bay late that night only caused Kallista to pay more attention to the man.

He wasn't one for sharing his feelings in public but under the right circumstances, you could get an
answer from the man.

"How is the fit?" Gabriel asked.

"Fine," Kallista replied.

"You've gotten clearance from Sabina and Mikael right?"

"Yeah," Kallista replied.

"Don't forget what you're supposed to do," Gabriel began.

"Naturally," Kallista sighed.

"Keep your mask on at all times,"

"I know," Kallista said firmly as her sharp blue eyes met his rich mocha-colored eyes. Silence fell between the two for a moment, Gabriel was the first to look away. Within a few minutes Gabriel had finished reviewing the stats of her suits and results of tests beforehand, he quickly looked over her form.

"So are you just going to ignore my question?" Kallista asked as the thought of the night before flashed before her eyes, his blood on her hands.

"Kallista," Gabriel sighed and finally looked at the smaller woman. With a sigh, he reached out to caress her cheek as and held her gaze. It was a simple gesture and yet Kallista's heart hammered in her chest as she held the man's gaze.

All of his attention focused on her, no hints of avoidance, or anger but the opposite. Soft, warm, but still pensive.

"Kallista...I want to-" Gabriel began. Kallista pursed her lips together in an attempt to hold back words that she couldn't say but something caught her attention which caused her to hesitantly move away from the man.

"Hey Reyes everyone is ready to...oh...ohhh I'll go,"

Talli had been assigned to another mission had entered the locker room unaware that Kallista was in the locker room as well. Thankfully, Kallista's enhanced hearing hear the woman as she approached and was able to move from the close proximity of the man and make it appear as if they were talking. Gabriel hesitantly turned his attention from Kallista and to the woman that awkwardly peeked into the locker room, her eyes shifted between the two of them.

"They don't have to wait for me to see them off," Gabriel replied.

"Right...um the Strike Commander was looking for you," Talli said as she stood shyly in the doorway.

"You should go see what he wants," Kallista said as she went to her locker and began to gather her things. Talli quietly slinked back from the doorway still in earshot of the locker room, curious to know what she had interrupted.

Gabriel pinched the bridge of his nose before he went behind the woman and picked up his duffle bag from the bench.

"Kallista," Gabriel began.
"Hm?" Kallista replied as she closed the door to her locker, keeping her back to him. She knew that she couldn't face him, she didn't want to look like a fool if he finished what he was going to say. Even if she didn't know.

_I think we should end this._

_This was fun, thanks for the memories._

A simple phrase could end or change everything that Kallista felt. Kallista bit down on her bottom lip to keep herself in check as she waited for the man to continue, she heard the man sigh softly and shift his duffle bag before he continued.

"When...I get back...we need to talk...about us," Gabriel said quietly. Kallista could sense the hesitant in his words as if he didn't want to mutter the very words that came from his mouth.

"..Ok…” Kallista replied as she slightly turned her head away from the man as he slowly walked out of the locker room. Kallista cursed under her breath as she shakily ran a hand through her hair.

She didn't want to wait. She didn't want to hear what he had to say. She cursed again.

She already knew that she fell hard from him and was too attached and just a simple phrase could break the glass floor underneath her feet. Kallista sighed heavily as she banged her head on her locker.

"Gabriel. Stop being an asshole and go get seen by Dr. Hasibuan or Angela before you leave," Morrison said as he followed the man's stride.

"I did. I was cleared. End of Story," Gabriel replied as he continued out to the flight pad.

"You were not properly cleared. You ignored Dr. Hasibuan's requests and -" Morrison started.

"What are you? My Mom?" Gabriel chuckled as he stepped out onto the landing pad.

He nodded to his team as he walked past them and stopped at the ramp to enter the carrier. Morrison crossed his arms as he stared at the back of the man's head, Gabriel turned to look at the man as he moved out of the way as his team entered the carrier. Lyudmila nodded to both of two men silently as she was the first one up the ramp. Both of them nodded to the woman and turned their attention back to one another.

"Look…” Gabriel started.

"Don't-" Morrison started as his attention shifted from the man and followed the petite woman that walked up the ramp, she looked over her shoulder at Morrison as she entered the carrier.

"Yer worried about nothin' Commander. He'll be fine...he's always fine an' we'll watch his back," Jesse commented as he was the last one up the ramp. Morrison rolled his at Jesse and focused back on the smug man in front of him.

"Look...you worry too much, and you worry about the wrong things," Gabriel said as he took off his hat and scratched his head.

"I place my worry in things and people that are known to create issues. You are one of those people," Morrison replied.

"Oh? That's the first I've heard this. I thought I was the one usually fixing problems," Gabriel
sarcastically replied as he placed his hands back on his head.

"She is more than capable of completing her mission while remaining safe. Her self-preservation is high. Nor did she ignore a Doctor's request," Morrison replied.

{Commander Reyes! Don't you dare ignore me, I will find you and drag you back-}

Gabriel grimaced at the woman's voice that came through his earpiece, it was as if she knew that Morrison spoke about her. He took out the small earpiece and shoved it into his pocket.

"Gabe. When you get back we're talking about this. You know this isn't like you," Morrison commented.

"You're not the only person I need to talk to," Gabriel muttered under his breath as he thought back to the locker room moments before.

"What?" Morrison questioned.

"Nothing. Focus on the shit storm that's happening in Japan, we can talk about that when I get back," Gabriel said as he began up the ramp.

"Gabriel!" Morrison called after him as he heard the engines beginning to start up. Morrison frowned as he moved back from the ship and to the safety of the garage. Only moments after he stepped into the safety of the garage he turned his attention to the woman that approached from the stairs.

"Kallista?" Morrison asked surprised. His eyes flicked to the small back she carried and to the suit she wore.

"Strike Commander," Kallista nodded.

It was rare to see the woman outside of her office, let alone the Blackwatch Division. If she was out of her office there was a chance that something that only she could accomplish.

"I suppose you're going on a mission?" Morrison asked as she stopped next to him.

"I am…I suppose Reyes didn't completely fill you in on my dossier," Kallista smirked and shook her head. Morrison sighed heavily and dragged his hands down his face a clear sign that the man kept him in the dark about her mission.

"I'll look into it later, is that the new suit?" Morrison asked.

"Yes, right now it is in its Overwatch form, meaning it is taking on the appearance of an Overwatch Uniform," Kallista replied.

"Oh? I assume the original is Blackwatch?" Morrison questioned.

"Surprisingly no, it's just an unmarked catsuit…for now at least. It is just a prototype after all," Kallista replied.

"I see. Are you ready for your field mission?" Morrison asked and noticed her attention was focused elsewhere. The soft whir of a smaller carrier ship slowly descended onto the other landing pad catching the attention of the two and more.

"Hey Commander," Magnus said as he walked past the man and towards the smaller sleeker carrier ship. Idoya followed closely behind the man, nodding to Morrison as she passed, Morrison nodded to the two acknowledging them as he turned his attention back to the woman in front of him.
"Strike Commander," Danica nodded to the man as she too made her way to the carrier.

"You're all set to go?" Morrison asked.

"Yes," Kallista replied.

"Good. I assume Gabriel contacted the appropriate members of the government for where you're going but if you have any issues you can contact Verona," Morrison began.

"Don't worry. I'm not like Gabriel," Kallista replied with a smirk before she began towards the landing pad.

"That is true," Morrison trailed off as he watched the woman walk away.

He remembered when they first apprehended her and how belligerent she was and now she seemed liked a completely different woman. Morrison sighed heavily as he watched the woman get into the carrier. He needed to look into what exactly her mission was and why conveniently forgot to tell him of her mission.

Morrison thought back to Gabriel and the incident that was reported to him, he knew the effects of the SEP was still strong but this recent bout worried him.

"ETA is about four hours on cruising speed, should we go over mission details again?" Danica suggested as she scrolled through the information on her datapad.

"The mission itself seems to be simple enough, but we should just in case," Idoya commented.

"Sounds good to me," Magnus commented.

Kallista held open her hand creating a small holographic screen to that everyone could see, she then expanded it making it bigger.

"Look at you and your fancy suit," Magnus chuckled.

"Do favors to get rewards or just put yourself out there to try new things," Kallista replied.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah," Magnus sighed.

"We're meeting with the CEO of Sterling Manufacturing, Sterling Black. We are meeting with him for a few different reasons. The first is to question him and his partner about the kidnapping that occurred 3 months prior," Kallista began.

"So that's the CEO was kidnapped," Idoya commented.

"Yeah. It was all over the news their PR had a hard time with it. It was a shit show," Magnus chuckled.

"Do we know of the other CEOs that was kidnapped?" Idoya asked.

"The CEO of Pavetti Technologies, Quinn Pavetti, the daughter of the old tech mogul Callister Pavetti. Carmelo Mendoza of Mendoza Pharmaceuticals," Kallista replied. "They all have connections to another investigation that Blackwatch is monitoring."

"Will Black Will we make contact with her while we're in Detroit?" Idoya asked.
"So serious Idoya," Magnus commented.

"Sorry...it's my first real-time on the field," Idoya replied softly.

"Don't apologize. It's great that you're here. You've also come a long way from what you were before," Danica spoke up.

"Yeah…" Idoya commented as she looked at Kallista for reassurance, Kallista nodded with a small smile.

Kallista knew that Idoya had come a long way from her recovery from almost being beaten inches from death. It took a lot to convince the woman's therapists and the reassurance from Konrad and, one of the nurses assigned to Blackwatch, to let her on this mission. Gabriel was hesitant, Lyudmila insisted and Kallista welcomed it.

"We are currently meeting with Mr. Sterling Black and his partner only. I do have some suspicions that Ms. Pavetti is in Detroit but with no intention of meeting with Blackwatch," Kallista replied.

"Then?" Idoya asked.

"That leads to the second reason for why we are meeting with Mr. Black," Kallista began.

"In addition to being kidnapped, his company is one of the leading manufacturers in creating omnic parts. Granted the Ominium isn't active but there are signs pointing to him and few others about illegal activities," Magnus cut in.

"It's not the most opportune time to have something like that happen, especially when tensions are so high," the man finished as he shifted in his seat.

"What do you mean?" Idoya asked.

"There was a recent omnic attack in the city of Detroit and in retaliation, an Omnic sanctuary was attacked," Danica said as she handed the datapad to Idoya. Idoya quickly took the datapad, her eyes quickly scanned through the news article.

Kallista flipped through images attached to the news article on the holographic screen. Various images of heavily damaged buildings, on fire, bodies strewn about both human and omnic. Silence fell between the small group as Idoya looked over the information on the pad in her hands. Kallista was the first to break the silence.

"For the final reason, the Cheshire cat has been the suspect of all of this. Being the bearer of bad news, Detroit could easily explode into war with all of the tension that has been simmering," Kallista sighed.

"We don't have any motives, nothing else to really go on as to why the Cheshire cat is doing all of this...we can assume but that only does so much but from what we know it just looks like they are inciting hatred for Omnics," Danica commented

"We have to stop them. I cannot let them incite hatred against omnics, they deserve as many rights as humans...this-" Idoya began, her voice firm with controlled anger as she started the digital image on the datapad.

"I know...and that's why I wanted you to come with me," Kallista replied as she closed her hand ending the holographic screen.
"There's something else going on…but I'll hold off on that," Kallista added.

"You think so?" Danica sighed.

"She needs evidence…right…Director," Magnus said and focused his gaze on her. Kallista glanced at the man and rolled her eyes.

"Sure…," Kallista replied.

"Whatever that means," Idoya began as she motioned between Kallista and Magnus. "I trust Kallista," Idoya cut in as she could feel the tension between the two.

"Thank you Idoya. At least I have someone on my side so far," Kallista nodded.

"You two remind me of siblings that always fight," Danica laughed slightly.

"He's no brother of mine," Kallista huffed.

"I wouldn't be related to her. She's adopted," Magnus huffed.

"Right. Anyways, since we got the gist of the mission details covered we have at least three hours left," Danica commented.

"We're going to arrive at Mr. Black's private airport around 0700 hours and transported to Sterling HQ after we arrive. We won't have much time for rest so it might be best to get some rest or read up on what's going on in the US," the red-haired woman replied.

"Sounds like a plan," Magnus replied as he took out his laptop

_We have now reached the Atlantic Ocean, now switching to cruising speed. Estimated time of arrival to Detroit Michigan, 4 hours and 56 minutes._

Kallista leaned back in her seat and closed her eyes, she could feel a slight throb at the back of her right eye. The beginnings of a migraine but then again she was stressed and the mission wasn’t helping her.

It was a simple and straightforward mission, but different in a sense that there was more to Sterling Black than what Blackwatch was going to investigate. After Overwatch's mission to rescue the two CEOs that were supposedly kidnapped by the Cheshire cat and exposed some of their dirty laundries but there was something that was bothering her about the whole situation.

This wasn't the first time the Cheshire cat had appeared to the world, this time their method was different. Kallista gently began to rub her temples when she felt her cell phone vibrate in her jacket pocket. She figured it was an update from Malik on what she had asked him to do before she left.

It was a message from Gabriel.

[Reyes: Even though I don't need to tell you this, but watch your back while you're there]

[K. Kaines: I will. Don't worry about me, your mission is more important.]

[Reyes: You're more worried about me than I am]

[K. Kaines: You always have your worry placed on others instead of yourself]

[Reyes: You sound just like him. Are you scolding me too?]
[K. Kaines: Are you talking about Morrison? LOL!]

[Reyes: Who else do you think I'm talking about?]

[K. Kaines: Aww he cares about you Gabo…]

[Reyes: I can feel your sarcasm Kallista]

[K. Kaines: Ha. Ha. Ha...you know I don't have the right to scold you, it's not my place]

[Reyes: You think so?]

[K. Kaines: ...am I supposed to think different?]

[Reyes: I was just curious...]

[K. Kaines: Are you...hinting at something Reyes?]

[Reyes: Am I?]

[K. Kaines: Reyes...why are you like this?]

[Reyes: Do me proud out there Kallista]

[K. Kaines: You're such a jerk…]

"Reyes you ass," Kallista whispered to herself causing Danica to give her a confused look.

The team arrived in the United States and landed with no issues, when they arrived they were greeted by a woman dressed in black from head to toe, her crimson hair pulled into a tight bun and black-framed glasses sat neatly on the bridge of her nose.

"Welcome to the United States," one of the crimson-haired women began as the team moved over to the sleek black car.

"Thank you," Kallista nodded.

"We are running right on schedule and would like to remain that way if you are all set to go please enter the vehicle," the woman said as she opened the door to the vehicle.

"Let's go," Kallista said as she turned to the others.

Idoya and Magnus nodded to Kallista and Danica before they got into the vehicle, Danica nodded to Kallista and followed suit.

"I assume that you are Kaines from the Overwatch Intelligence Division. My name is Ava MacAllister, a pleasure to meet you," Ava said as she extended her hand.

"You're correct, and nice to meet you," Kallista shook the woman's hand before getting into the vehicle with her

Within minutes they were escorted into Sterling HQ and was greeted by the CEO Sterling Black and his partner. The office itself was minimalistic, cold, organized a snapshot into the personality of the man. Kallista quickly looked over the man noticing the finer details, his perfectly slicked-back hair, the fine detailing on his suit, the black gloves the man wore, and the smug smirk on his face. She
quickly eyed the man standing casually next to the desk and assumed the man was Sterling’s partner.

"Mr. Black thank you for allowing us to assist you in the situation. I am Danica from Overwatch and these are colleagues" Danica began.

"Magnus, Intel Division,"

"Lumbre,"

"Kaines, Co-Director of the Overwatch Intel Division. I will be in charge of the investigation while Blackwatch is here. Hopefully, this will take no longer than a half-day," Kallista introduced herself and told the two men of their plans.

"Straight to the point, I like that," Sterling said as he leaned on his desk, his attention on Kallista.

"In all honesty, I didn't think Overwatch would send such a high-level agent into the field…I'm surprised," Sterling commented. "I assume the mask is for your protection?"

"Yes," Kallista began. "This is a sensitive matter and I would like to make sure that it is handled carefully,"

"Those who hide in the shadows and masks. Are the least trustworthy," the once silent man spoke up man said

"It is for my protection and nothing more. Please do not let the mask deter your trust in Overwatch," Kallista replied.

The man scoffed at Kallista's comment and narrowed his eyes at her. Unfazed, made a mental note to be cautious of the man, on the other hand, Sterling seemed a bit more relaxed and easy-going.

"This is my partner-" Sterling began.

"Carmelo Mendoza of Mendoza Pharmaceutical," Carmelo replied.

"I hope you take care of this ASAP, everywhere that Overwatch touches raise tensions," Carmelo commented bitterly.

"That sounds like a generalist statement Mr. Mendoza. I can go over everything that myself and colleagues will do to lower whatever reservations you may have. We will make this a quick as possible," Kallista began, she noted the two men glance at each other before turning their attention back to her.

"My colleagues and I will record your accounts on the kidnapping along with the staff that was involved. While that is happening myself and Magnus will run diagnostics on your company's system and networks for remnants of the hacking from the Cheshire cat," Kallista explained.

"How quickly can you capture them? They are clearly a menace to society and the world," Carmelo asked.

"We will do our best to work as quickly and efficiently as possible," Kallista replied.

"That sounds promising, I hope you deliver. I don't think Overwatch can lose more of their image around the world," Sterling commented underhandedly.

On her left side, Kallista caught a glance of Magnus stiffen next to her. In recent months there had been articles that damaged Overwatch's image and the restrictions that were put on Overwatch by
several different governments did nothing to help Overwatch's image.

Kallista and her team worked in tangent with the Official Overwatch Intel department and PR to help repair Overwatch's image, but there were some places where even she couldn't touch.

"Danica-" Kallista began as she turned to the red-haired woman behind her.

"Before you being on your little investigation I have a few rules that you need to follow or we may have problems," Sterling began.

"Alright," Kallista nodded and placed her hands behind her back as she listened.

"You are to be escorted to the server room, my office, and the conference room. If you would like to see any additional rooms you will need permission from myself," Sterling began. "Just because you are recognized the United States' government and around the world doesn't give you access to all my domain. Everything you find will be reviewed by myself or Carmelo," Sterling continued as he started to approach Kallista and stopped in front of her.

"Anything else?" Kallista questioned.

"No,"


"Understood,"

"I assume you two need access to the server room. Eve," Sterling called.

A woman almost identical to Ava walked in adjusting her white-framed glasses as she stood by the door and waited for her next orders.

"Take them to the server room. We're going to the conference room on level 3" Sterling ordered as he turned to Carmelo.

"Of course, Sir," Eve nodded and motioned for Kallista and Magnus to exit the office. Danica and Idoya watched as the two exited the office with a knowing look.

"I am Eve MacAllister, I am sure you've already met my twin sister," Eva began as she began leading the two down the hall towards the server room.

"Yes. We've had the pleasure of meeting her," Magnus replied.

"Was your sister involved with the kidnapping?" Kallista asked.

"Unfortunately yes, she was taken captive, bounded and dumped in the storage room," Eve replied as she rounded a corner, Magnus and Kallista followed.

"How often do you schedule routine maintenance on your network's security?" Kallista questioned.

"Daily," Eve replied.

"Who has access to the server room?" Kallista continued to question the woman before they made it to their destination.

"Myself, Ava, the IT department, Mr. Sterling and Mr. Mendoza," Eve replied.
"Security Cameras?"

"You'll have to request access to those," Eve replied as she looked over her shoulder at Kallista. Kallista noted the strange color of her eyes, they were the same orange color of her hair.

"Alright," Kallista replied.

"Is the maintenance done manually or remote?" Magnus questioned.

"90 percent is done remotely from the IT department on level 5, monthly they conduct manual maintenance," the woman replied.

"Have you heard of any concerns about the security before the kidnapping?" Magnus questioned.

"You can see all of the queries that have been made by all personnel within the building here," Eve said as she motioned to the door in front of them.

"Thank you. I assume that you will be outside watching us correct?" Kallista asked.

"Yes, unless I am needed elsewhere," Eve replied.

Kallista nodded to Magnus and entered into the server room, Magnus followed her as he took note of the woman's answers. Once inside the two quickly surveyed the room taking note of the two terminals before they moved to begin their task. Once the signature click of the door was heard, Kallista began to speak in a hushed tone.

"Everything is normal so far, but the feeling of this place isn't right..." Kallista began as she began to access the nearest terminal to her.

"I know," Magnus replied as he attached a cable to his laptop and connected it both to his computer and the second terminal.

A brief pause set between the two as they worked before Magnus spoke.

"I was able to locate some of the signatures from the cyber-attack, it looks like there's some deterioration and some jumbling but some but you can tell it is from the Cheshire cat," Magnus said

"How much deterioration is there? Kallista asked.

"It's a bit difficult to tell...but it's there," Magnus replied

Kallista looked over the maintenance files of the building's networks before she glanced at the man on the floor. The signature from the Cheshire cat had already begun to deteriorate and any run of the mill hacker's signature would start to deteriorate if anyone were to look at it and overtime if left undiscovered would fade.

Kallista pursed her lips together the automatic deterioration sounded familiar to her but she couldn't place a finger on it. She tried to think back to times where she and some others had gotten into scuffles with other hackers and automatic deterioration of one's signatures did not ring a bell.

"That look tells me you know something. Care to share?" Magnus asked as he looked at her.

"Not yet, I need to make sure of something first. I need evidence," Kallista replied coolly.

"Evidence about the Cheshire cat...that's what you were talking about before we arrived," Magnus replied.
"Possibly, I do have my suspicions,"

{Can you hear me, Kalli? Kalliiiiii~ Hewwoo?}

"Are you like twelve Malik?" Kallista asked.

{Age is nothing but a number, I mean if I look 12 I guess that's a plus? Luckily I have a fake ID}

"I guess that's why you're the Director…huh…always steps ahead," Magnus commented quietly.

{I finished most of the research you asked me to do and there are some interesting pieces like you said there would be}

Kallista sighed at Maliks' sorry attempt to imitate a British accent as they began to explain their findings on the research that Kallista requested from them.

"Even I can do a better accent than that," Magnus chuckled.

{Hey, Mags. Eat my entire ass}

"I'll pass sweetheart. You're not my type," Magnus scoffed.

"Malik, please continue," Kallista sighed as she looked over her shoulder and to the door. She could hear that there was movement outside the door, footsteps several feet down the hall.

{There's a 99.8 percent chance of your theory being correct, but that is extremely high from just a..uh..what do they say?}

"A hunch, hypothesis, etc," Magnus chimed in as he focused on Kallista who seemed to be deep in thought.

{Yeah that. I guess that's what expected from Miss MIT & Harvard}

"Flattery will get you nowhere Malik," Kallista scoffed.

Magnus opened his mouth to say something but held back.

She wanted to be sure of a theory she concocted during her sleep deprivation episodes. She knew that Magnus was suspicious of her due to her reaction to the message that she received. But she wanted to make sure, she wanted to make sure she had all the evidence she had before she even uttered a word about the Cheshire cat to Gabriel.

Once she had everything gathered, she would tell him but not a moment sooner.

"Don't look at me like that, you know I need more evidence, Kallista replied.

"Is that the running joke today or something?" Magnus asked just as the server room opened. The door to the server room slid open to reveal Carmelo and Eve behind him.

A check-in already.

"Yes, hello how can I help you?" Kallista asked as she glanced over her shoulder at the two. She noticed that Eve stood at the door while Carmelo approached Magnus on the floor.

"Have you found anything yet?" Carmelo asked and blatantly ignored Kallista. Magnus glanced at Kallista, clearly noting that the man had ignored Kallista completely. She turned her attention back to
the terminal in front of her.

"The Director and I have found something but they are a bit corrupted. Right now, I am going to compare it to some of the things that we have to see if they match. I need to reconstruct pieces of it but that will take me no time," Magnus replied.

"Anything else?" the man asked.

"No," Magnus replied.

"I'll be back to check in on you," Carmelo began as he finally turned his attention to Kallista at the second terminal.

"Will this be a constant thing?" Kallista asked as she turned to look at the man.

"While you are here, yes. I am making sure you're looking at anything outside of your search field," Carmelo replied.

"We are not interested in Sterling Manufacturing or Mendoza Pharmaceuticals. You do not need to worry about us reaching out of our search purview," Magnus spoke up.

"Keep in mind that myself and my partner was held at gunpoint we are wary and suspicious of all. Don't forget that," Carmelo said he moved towards the door. Magnus and Kallista glanced at each other before they turned their attention back to the man as he walked out of the room.

Kallista watched as the door slid closed and listened to the soft murmurs that no normal ear could pick up.

"If they find anything you alert me immediately."

"Yes sir"

"I understand their paranoia, but Mendoza has it really bad," Kallista commented as she turned from the terminal.

"Should we have announced that we come in peace when we arrived?" Magnus sighed.

"Getting a jolly laugh out of them would have been better…but it's a bit late for that," Kallista replied as she pulled out her cellphone.

"Ah, missed opportunity," Magnus commented as he focused back on his work.

"Exactly," Kallista said as she moved towards the door.

"Where are you going?" Magnus questioned.

"I am going to check in on Dani and Idoya. See the Mayor of Detroit and then check in with Verona, Kallista replied.

"Ah…keeping appearances. Will you take off your mask?" Magnus questioned.

"I probably shouldn't…and besides Reyes told me not to take off my mask," Kallista replied.

"Such a good girl, Director," Magnus crooned.

"It's for my protection you idiot," Kallista scoffed as exited the room, behind her Magnus snickered.
Nearly twenty minutes later, Kallista found herself at an outdoor café and in front of an old friend. She leaned back in her hair as she quietly studied the woman across from her and took no notice of the curious glances of the people as they walked by on the streets.

It had been nearly six years since Kallista had returned to the United States, she was painfully aware that since her capture, she indeed had been under some type of house arrest at the Overwatch Foundation in Switzerland.

Things seemed different, but the same.

"I didn't expect for you to reach out to me so soon," the woman said before she sipped on her coffee.

"I didn't expect for you to meet me so quickly. Planning ahead are we Camille?" Kallista questioned the dark-haired woman.

"Planning ahead? No. You know I work better when I do impromptu things. I hopped on a jet and hauled ass here," Camille replied, her emerald green eyes focused on Kallista across from her. Kallista tapped her nails on the marble patio table as she waited for the woman to speak again.

"We know the situation...its common sense," Camille replied as she placed a piece of her ebony hair behind her ear and over her shoulder.

"I hope so because it sounds like there's a shit storm that's about to happen," Kallista replied bluntly.

"We've been watching. Long story short, it's a copycat, using Cheshire cat as a scapegoat to incite a rebellion against omnis basically leaning towards war… again," Camille sighed before taking another sip of her drink.

"A copycat, huh," Kallista sighed.

"It is what it is. I don't know where these people IF it is more than one got the original code from. But based on what's been happening here this can only go one way," Camille replied.

Camille Tesfaye, also known as Dead FoxHound, she was one of the founding members of the God Brigade within Anonymous and a longtime friend she met at MIT years ago. The two women and a few other members created the Cheshire cat – the coding, the imagery, the behavior, everything.

As soon as Blackwatch's eye was turned to the Cheshire cat, Kallista began to recognize some patterns and behaviors that were similar to what they had created. She just wanted to make sure, she watched as some events played out just to see how the Cheshire cat would react and the kidnapping of Sterling Black and Carmelo Mendoza gave her pause.

She wasn't sure that it was the same and needed more evidence before she spoke to Gabriel and before she could do that she needed to speak to one of her closest friends.

"Camille," Kallista began.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah, I already have what's left of the original," Camille said as she dug into her designer purse, pulled out a black lipstick tube and placed it in front her. Kallista smirked as she looked at the tube, she knew what it was and it served as a reminder of when they were in graduate school together.

It was the easiest way to give information to one another without being suspected. Women with an expensive brand lipstick who would suspect them?
“This is a good lipstick brand…” Kallista commented.

"Only the best for those who deserve it…you look so tired Kallista. They treating you ok in Blackwatch?” Camille asked.

Kallista laughed a bit, she didn’t tell her what had happened but I knew the woman was smart enough to figure out things with subtle hints, and the fact that she was the one to send her the message.

"I'm fine but also very exhausted," Kallista replied. "How is everyone else though?"

"Kalli, c’ mon. You've been out of school for a bit you should be living a life of luxury right now. But anyway, the last time I heard everyone was doing quite well for the most part," Camille began. "Samantha recently got married, Gwen is pursuing her Ph.D., Diana has been traveling, Brigit has her own office now and just recently started practice, and our sweet Gabriella just scored a really big job as a freelancer. We're all doing well," Camille replied as she tapped her white nails on the edge of her coffee tumbler.

"That's good to hear, and you?" Kallista asked.

"Oh, you know…being busy," Camille replied with her signature smirk.

"Of course, you could never sit still you were always a busy body,” Kallista laughed.

"I mean I get stuff done that's the important part," Camille shrugged.

"That you do," Kallista nodded and smiled. Even with a smile on her lips, it hid the pangs of jealousy of her friends being able to live a normal life and pursue their non-illegal goals.

It made her think, would Overwatch release her if she captured the mole, would she be able to live a normal life?

"But I also just want to point out that you're not in a maximum prison and that's good," Camille began.

"Yeah," Kallista nodded.

"But still I wouldn't let your guard down. Let us know if Squad or the Brigade needs to step in," Camille said and finished off her drink.

"Anything?" Kallista asked.

"Anything. Goddesses or not," Camille said.

"I'll keep that in mind. Of course, I won't be able to fully pay you back right away," Kallista replied.

"I'll add it to your list of shit you owe me," Camille said as she waved off the woman.

"Oh gee thanks," Kallista replied sarcastically.

After a quick hug and goodbye, Kallista quickly made her way back to Sterling HQ.

[Kallista come in... Kallista!]

Kallista heard Lyudmila's voice calling out for her to respond, she had forgotten to put the earpiece back in after her short conversation with Camille. Digging into her hoodie, she placed the small
earpiece into her ear.

"Lyuda what's-" Kallista started.

*I need you to get back to Europe, there's an emergency.*

Kallista knew that Lyudmila would never contact her if there wasn't a serious emergency, especially when the woman herself was already on a mission in Italy with Gabriel and others. The tone of the woman's voice shook Kallista to her core. Lyudmila was usually calm and collected regardless of the situation but this time, Kallista could hear the panic in her voice.

Something terrible had happened.

"Lyuda what's going on? What happened?" Kallista began.

*Kallista...Reyes has been taken*
Chapter Summary

Mid 2064

The mission to rescue Commander Reyes was a success, with the aftermath and possible consequences of what’s to come, Blackwatch needs to recover.

Chapter Notes

The mission to save Reyes is an actual thing, a friend of mine wrote it. Hopefully it will be posted soon?

"How is he?" Morrison asked quietly as he stood outside of the hospital room, his eyes focused on the figure that laid motionless in the hospital bed, and to the figure next to it.

"He's recovering quickly...I mean in terms of healing," Angela replied as she looked at the datapad in her hand.

"Granted he's been out for three days, but he's lucky that they got to him when they did," the woman added as she too peeked into the room.

"Thank god," Morrison exhaled as if he was holding his breath. He was more than thankful for Blackwatch's quick response to rescue the man. Even with all of the squabble, he would be lost without the man.

The entire Blackwatch division was on high alert and he was the last one to learn that Gabriel had been compromised. He had received a sudden call from Kallista while on her field assignment in the United States to update him on the situation. Morrison knew that they had to act fast and debated sending an Overwatch team out to rescue him but quickly crushed the idea, as it would look bad for Overwatch to be seen in the location of Gabriel's mission.

His hands were tied, he wasn't able to drop everything, and he wasn't able to rush to save his friend. He wasn't able to leave, he wasn't able to do anything but to let Blackwatch conduct the rescue mission.

It hurt. It hurt more than he would admit, to not be included in the mission.

The mission was carefully and quickly crafted with the help of Gabriel's Lieutenant and his Intel Director. Kallista returned early from her assignment in the United States and was quickly sent off to the mission location. Together they raided the facility where the man was being held and subdued the target they were meant to capture.

The mission was successful in more than one way, Morrison was thankful for that, thankful for the
entire team.

"She's been here ever since," Angela commented quietly. Morrison nodded and focused on the smaller figure at Gabriel's side.

"How is she doing?" Morrison questioned.

"She hasn't really said much or eaten anything for that matter," Angela replied. Morrison exhaled softly.

"Of course, sometimes I wonder if what we are doing is worth it and if it's right..." Morrison trailed off. Angela shifted from one leg to the other and placed a piece of stray hair behind her ear before she spoke.

"Peace is what the world wants. Peace is what we strive for. The people believe that we can maintain that peace and if we cannot, who will?" Angela posed the question to the man before she was pulled away by another nurse.

Morrison watched the woman and another nurse disappear into another room before he turned his attention back to the man and woman in the hospital room. There was a sense of heaviness that pressed down on his shoulders and settled in his stomach. He could sense that something big was on the horizon that could change everything he and the others had sought to maintain.

Maybe he conjured this feeling up and it was just in his head.

Morrison ran a hand through his short blond hair, dragging his hand over his face before he took one more glance at the two figures before he began down the hall.

The soft steady sound of a heart monitor rose Gabriel from his forced slumber, slowly his eyes fluttered open the glaring fluorescent light forced him to squint and attempt to shield his face. A slight tug of his skin on his hand stopped him. Second by second this surroundings began to make more sense, he was in the medbay? No, a hospital, his mind was sluggish but he searched his memory on how he got here.

His mission in Italy, being separated from his crew, captured by the target, a huge mistake on his part. The rest of his memories were hazy at best and knew that it would take more time for his memories to clear. His mind briefly wondered about how long had he been out, was the mission successful, so many questions he needed slowly looked around the sterile white hospital room and to the woman asleep near the edge of the bed.

Cautiously Gabriel reached for her face, his fingertips brushed along her cheek, gently rousing her from her slumber. He watched her eyes slowly flutter open and her crystal blue eyes focus on him.

"Gabriel-!" Kallista whispered as she quickly shot up.

"Hey," Gabriel croaked, his voice was hoarse almost a whisper. He had a small smile on his lips as he continued to hold her gaze. Kallista silently stared back at the man as tears began to stream down her cheeks.

"Kallista-" Gabriel started.

Without hesitation, Kallista climbed into the hospital bed and into his arms, a grunt rumbled in his chest as he welcomed her into his arms.
"I'm here...I'm here," Gabriel whispered as an attempt to relax the woman as she sobbed into his shoulder. Gently he tilted the woman's head up to wipe away her tears, he was in pain but seeing her cry pained him as well. Her crystal blue eyes, hazy and clouded with tears as she looked back at him.

"Shh…"

He brushed a piece of stray hair from her face before he guided her to him and pressed his lips to hers. Kallista slowly pulled back confusion laced in her features, cautiously as if she would break or run away from him if he touched her too hard. He lovingly carded his fingers through her dark tresses, before burying his hand in her hair and pulling her into another kiss.

The kiss was hesitant as if they would break if they pressed to hard or if they sought for too much. They were hesitant but desperate to feel each other to confirm that they were both there, that he was there, that they were on the verge of losing him.

Hesitantly Kallista pulled back from the kiss, a shaky sigh escaped her lips as they pressed their heads together. A gesture they used to calm one another down from the trials of their workload. Kallista pulled back from the small intimate gesture and turned her attention towards the door and the tall woman standing in the doorway. Gabriel turned his attention to the woman as well.

"I can leave if you need me to give you two a moment," Lyudmila commented as she kept her eyes averted from the two. Kallista was the first to move, she wiped her eyes as she slid from the hospital bed and quickly exited the room. Lyudmila watched as Kallista quickly exit the room before she turned her attention back to the man situated in the bed.

"Reyes...how are you feeling?" the salt-and-pepper woman asked as she moved to sit on the chair next to the man's bed.

"Honestly?" Gabriel asked.

"Besides the interruption," Lyudmila added before he could respond.

"I feel like shit, my head feels like it's split open, my ribs are fucking killing me and…" Gabriel trailed off. Lyudmila watched him shift slightly, grunting in pain as he tried to move.

"A sore shoulder…” Gabriel finished.

"That's to be expected...your injuries were...significant," Lyudmila commented quietly, the mission still fresh on her mind.

Gabriel glanced at the woman as she leaned back in the chair and slouched, she looked exhausted, dark circles under her eyes, paler than usual skin. He watched as she covered her face with her hands, hiding some emotion that threatened to spill in front of him. Of course, he knew that his rescue shook her and the division to their foundation.

He also knew that she didn't believe in herself to lead, she believed that she was second best and didn't deserve to be in the position that she was in. Even though what happened to her was not her fault.

She had her doubts about everything including herself.

"Gabriel...I...did I do good?" Lyudmila began, her voice strained but muffled by her hands.

"You did. You were perfect," Gabriel said softly.
"Dmitri would be proud of you Lyudmila,"

He saw the woman's shoulders tremble slightly before she exhaled deeply and dragged her hands down her face her hazel eyes focused on the man.

"Update me on what's been going on. Tell me everything," Gabriel said as his eyes slid closed and his form seemed to sink into the hospital bed.

"Let me call the nurse first...to at least get you something in your stomach," Lyudmila began as she reached for the "call nurse" button.

"Fine...but..." Gabriel began.

"Hm?" Lyudmila asked she leaned back in her chair.

"Did...she leave?" Gabriel asked quietly, he grimaced as he began to rub his temples.

"I don't know. Probably back to base to let the others know...but she's been here for three days," Lyudmila replied.

"I've been out for three days hm?" Gabriel questioned.

"Yeah. You have a lot of catching up to do," Lyudmila answered.

"Yeah…"

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"I feel like I lost 30 years off of my life," Natalie sighed as she plopped down on the small sofa in Morrison's office, Morrison sighed as well as he sat in his chair.

"How is everyone in the Blackwatch Division?" Morrison questioned.

Lyudmila was unavailable as she quickly managed to pick up all of the responsibilities of ongoing missions and to keep the fallout within the Blackwatch ranks. Kallista was in no shape to answer him she was enthralled with Gabriel at the hospital and helping Lyudmila with containing the fallout. Natalie was his next best choice but made sure to keep it transparent. Their relationship was complicated and wanted to keep it from spreading around like a wildfire.

"They're still stressed, honestly we're still all stressed post-op," Natalie replied.

"I hope he wakes up soon. We're all fucking stressed," Morrison sighed.

"Exactly," Natalie replied.

"Are all of the missions back on track and moving forward?" Morrison questioned as he leaned back in his chair and focused on the lounging woman. Even in the midst of a crisis or stressful situation, she looked calm, relaxed but he knew it was just a mask to hide behind.

They all had their masks, including himself.

"For the most part. I think the only missions that are on hold are the ones in the Intel department," Natalie replied.

"By Lyudmila's orders or Kallista's?" Morrison asked.

"Lyudmila. Kallista wasn't in the greatest shape when she got back...I felt bad for her…" Natalie's
voice trailed off at the end, thoughts of the mission flashing through her head.

"Hopefully it's not too important," Morrison sighed heavily.

"Is that how you feel Morrison? Don't you care about the wellbeing of the Blackwatch agents?" Natalie said as she glared at the man.

"I definitely care about everyone's well-being. I have to fucking search and dig before I find out what's really going on with everyone," Morrison began as he sighed. "Only when it gets to the boiling point does he say anything. I SHOULD be updated more frequently and when I do find out it's a fucking mess," Morrison sighed heavily as he began to rub his temples.

"That's just how he operates though, you should know that...you've been friends with him for ages," Natalie commented as she stood suddenly and walked over to the man's desk.

"I know but still. I didn't think it would be that hard to deal with him on something like this," Morrison replied as he watched her.

"I understand...he has his moments," Natalie replied as she sat on the edge of the man's desk.

Morrison was quiet for a moment before he spoke again.

"I also thought about what you asked me...and I think I want to go through with it," Morrison replied quietly. Natalie looked at him surprised at his sudden answer.

"R-Really? You're going to help me?" Natalie stuttered.

Morrison nodded. The woman's face lit up at the man's answer.

"I would kiss you if I could. Thank you I really do appreciate you,"

"I know. Just a little be longer," Kallista murmured.

"Waiting is boring Kalli," Malik commented.

"What's the point of moving preemptively when we don't have anything to base it on? Like Magnus said once we activate Thoth there's no going back," Aleks commented.

"Boo. Let's go in guns blazing," Malik laughed.

"Are you out of your mind?" Linda questioned

"Am I? Maybe? We're all a little fucked up in the head," Malik laughed.

"We don't have-" Aleks began.

"In this room, my orders are the only ones that need to be followed, this assignment...this mission is more than just a simple takedown. Everything that happens from now on is not a coincident, it's planned," Kallista stated. Her accent laced every word that came from her lips, her tone, and firm and with purpose. Everyone in the room turned their attention to the petite woman in between their desks.

"We will activate it when I say so and not moment sooner or later. I know that we have at least a 25-minute window into Black's networks before their IT department picks up on the intrusion. With that in mind, Thoth will disable one of their towers forcing them to manually activate it. We should have more than enough time, but there's something that's bothering me," Kallista began.
"There's that haughty English accent we all love," Magnus teased.

"Quiet," Kallista replied.

"What about orders from Lieutenant Dontsova?" Linda asked.

"I don't fancy repeating myself Linda," Kallista replied.

"R-Right," Linda replied.

"It sounds like someone is about to go over Lyuda's head," Magnus teased.

"I don't know if I could handle the fallout from this," Aleks sighed.

"Director Kaines are you sure?" Linda questioned.

"Don't encourage her Linda," Aleks sighed again

"Kallista I love it when you talk so seriously…" Malik smirked.

"By the way...you're here so that means...Reyes is…" Magnus trailed off.

The room became silent as the mention of the man's name, Lyudmila made sure that she was the one to rescue him, she went with him when he was medevac from the field, and to a hospital in Zurich. She had spent all of her time and energy at the man's side.

"He's awake and Lyuda is with him," Kallista replied

"That's good news!" Aleks spoke up first

"Thank god," Linda sighed as she seemed to sink into her chair.

"Of course he was going to get better. He's Gabriel Reyes, the Peacekeeper, the Wolf Pack leader, the Reaper, our fearless commander. He's not gonna let that take him out so easily," Magnus chortled.

"Ayy!" Malik laughed in agreement.

"Yeah," Kallista replied.

Silence fell over the room again, Aleks glanced at Magnus who casually glanced at Kallista then to Malik. Malik shrugged in turn, Magnus rolled his eyes and glanced back at Aleks, Aleks glared at the man. Linda watched silently as the three men spoke through eye contact with each other.

"Director Kaines…you should probably rest. Aleks and I can handle the data from the Cheshire cat," Linda began.

"Yeah. Malik and I can handle the additional mission Intel and reports from the recon crew. We'll have the reports to you ASAP to review. We'll even send them to you," Magnus spoke up. Kallista glanced at the four members in the room and sighed.

"So basically you are all kicking me out," Kallista replied bluntly.

"Yes," everyone in the room answered together.

"Fine...I guess," Kallista sighed as she ran a hand through her hair.
They knew that she and Lyudmila had run themselves ragged to make sure that Blackwatch ran smoothly and to keep their commander's shortfall within the ones that were involved with his rescue.

"Call me if anything changes or needs approval," Kallista said as she exited the room. The four members in the room glanced at each other before speaking.

"She forgot her jacket," Linda commented.

"She's in bad shape," Aleks said as he leaned back into his chair.

"Not gonna lie, I can't believe that we let her get to this point," Magnus said as he leaned onto his desk and buried his hands in his thick messy hair.

"Hey. She's an adult. She can fuck herself up if she wants to," Malik commented.

"You know how much Reyes is protective of her-" Magnus started.

"Even so. She knows what she's doing. She's a smart woman she'll deal with the consequences later," Malik replied.

"Smart words coming from someone who doesn't listen to the advice he gives," Aleks commented under his breath

"Wanna say that louder? I can't hear...you know hearing implants," Malik said as he pointed to his ears and the implant.

"If you didn't hear it, it wasn't important," Aleks replied.

"I thought everything you say is important Aleks. Tell me," Malik insisted

"Can we focus here?" Linda spoke up as she took one of her holographic screens and flicked it towards the large screen in the back of the room.

"Here's all the data that was pulled from Sterling Manufacturing. We currently still have Thoth in place but in the meantime, we need to piece together what Idoya and Danica were able to get from the interview with Mr. Black, Mr. Mendoza, and Eve MacAllister," Linda began as she pulled up the corresponding data.

"Right off the bat, the MacAllister twins are the most suspicious along with Sterling's partner, Carmelo Mendoza," Magnus said.

"I preemptively did some queries on the MacAllister twins and I couldn't find anything, so I did more in-depth searching within Sterling's and Mendoza's employees and what I found is that they are employed by both of the men," Malik began.

"Eve works for Mendoza and Ava works for Sterling and yet Eve was involved with the kidnapping," Malik continued.

"So then it's the old switch-a-roo," Magnus commented.

"That seems too easy," Aleks commented.

"It's plausible. They are identical twins so it could make things a little harder," Linda added as she brought up dossiers of the two women.

"For clarification reasons, we are marking the twins as the main suspects of the Cheshire cat and
marking Eve MacAllister a victim in the kidnapping of Mr. Black," Magnus stated.

"So a very early hypothesis, Mendoza is up to something and the MacAllister twins are the starting point," Aleks started when his cell phone vibrated.

"So it sounds like we need to look into the twins," Magnus stated bluntly.

"Malik since you already did some research on the MacAllister twins, would you kindly continue to look into them?" Linda asked.

"I guess since you asked so nicely," Malik shrugged.

"The next thing to do is look into Mendoza and Black, and then their financial," Aleks spoke up as he put his cell phone away.

"Sounds like we have a plan in the meantime," Magnus commented.

"Let's get started then," Aleks nodded.

Kallista leaned on the guardrail as she looked down at the open fields that surrounded the Overwatch base. A pink cigarette hung from her lips as she stared into the distance, three days after the rescue mission her mind was still in overdrive without rest. She had convinced herself to keep working, there was a leak from within Blackwatch with no clear sign of its origin and with Reyes being out of commission she stepped up to help Lyudmila keep Blackwatch functioning.

She didn't have time for rest, regardless of the steady throb and pressure of her migraine, the stinging pain of her dry eyes, she needed to keep going.

"An' here I thought I'd find Morrison up here an instead I find you, Kalli,"

Kallista kept her attention focused out on the fields, lighting her cigarette.

"Don't call me Kalli. It's too close to Talli," Kallista replied sharply.

"Oh damn, I felt that cold shoulder all the way over here," Jesse chuckled as he casually strolled over to her.

"What do you want Jesse?" Kallista questioned

"Came up here to check up on ya," Jesse replied.

"I'm still alive," Kallista replied.

"An' smokin' I see," Jesse commented.

"Only in stressful situations," Kallista sighed before she took a drag of her cigarette and slowly exhaled the pink colored smoke.

"Kallista you've been doin' this for three days now, Reyes would have my ass if he knew that you were like this," Jesse began, his tone was serious.

"What are you? My dad?" Kallista glared at the man.

"Well..." Jesse grinned sheepishly.
"Jesse. I swear to god," Kallista started, the man laughed as he confirmed her suspicions of an underhanded dirty joke.

"You know you're quite the ass," Kallista huffed.

"It happens, but in all seriousness. He's alive an' I assume movin' and talkin' 'bout now. You don't need to keep up your big girl act," Jesse said as he yawned.

"It's not an act," Kallista replied.

"Sure it ain't" Jesse replied as he took out his cell phone.

There was a moment of silence that fell over the two, they knew what was at stake, they knew what would happen if they failed, they also knew they couldn't fail.

"You did good Kallista. Real good," Jesse said, breaking the silence between them. Kallista took one last drag of the cigarette before she snuffed it out, the bright bubblegum pink paper now black.

"Thanks…Jesse" Kallista murmured as she leaned her head onto his shoulder, Jesse chuckled as he moved an arm around her shoulders.

"Way to scare the shit outta of us Reyes," Hayden sighed heavily.

"Got to keep you on your toes some way," Gabriel replied

"Was that supposed to be funny? Because it wasn't," Talli commented.

"How about we lay low on the jokes, Gabe," Mikael sighed.

"You all passed my test now get out," Gabriel laughed slightly and winced.

"You ass. We went through all of that trouble just to get your old ass back and now you're kicking us out? Rude," Natalie huffed.

"We're glad that you're back commander," Idoya commented quietly.

"I'm proud of all of you numbns, " Gabriel smirked at the group of people in front of him.

"Boo. He's broken. Let's return him and get our money back," Natalie scoffed, a smirk on her lips.

"Natalie. I'm kicking your ass tomorrow," Gabriel frowned at the woman.

"Bring it old man," Natalie laughed.

"How much longer are you going to be here?" Talli questioned.

"Til tomorrow. So you all better get your shit together before I get back," Gabriel replied.

"So we goin out partyin? Tonight?" Hayden smirked as he looked at the group.

"I'm down to get shit faced," Malik smirked.

"I'm going this time," Talli chimed in.

"Ok. Everyone out. The commander needs rest," Angela said as she stood in the doorway, Konrad stood next to her.
"So you guys were going to tell me about this party too right?" Konrad said as he entered the room with the blonde.

"We'll make sure to let you know when we leave," Mikael nodded.

"You guys better, you all left me last time," Konrad commented bitterly as he checked the IV levels and the man's vitals.

"A doctor's job is never done," Talli commented.

"I'm a nurse," Konrad replied.

"I tried," Talli shrugged.

"Perfect, plan all of your drinking in front of your commander. Real smart all of you," Gabriel commented.

"It's not like you can have us train or anything, not when you aren't around," Malik shrugged.

"Why would you challenge him like that?" Hayden nudged the taller dark-skinned man, Malik shrugged.

"I'll take that as a challenge-" Gabriel started

"Ok, enough. I don't even want to think about your drinking habits, I already know that Dr. Hasibuan and I will see at least three of you in the medbay with a hangover," Angela sighed.

"We just wanna say Hi," Talli smiled.

"Sounds like some of you need to get good," Natalie muttered.

"I'm sure, but everyone out. You're stressing me out with all of your bad drinking habits and you're breaking the visitation limit. Out all of you," Angela ordered.

It was well past midnight when the two women were able to reconvene with each other. They had been swamped with work for the past three days and now with an assurance that their commander was on his way to a full recovery it took some of the edge off their work.

Lyudmila took on the role as the Commander and made sure that everyone returned back to their missions, continued to plan integral missions to maintain the peace and still partake in missions and collaborations with the Overwatch Division

Kallista maintained her role in addition to monitoring the possible fallout of the mission failure and stepped up as a temporary lieutenant in assisting Lyudmila where she couldn't be, mission debriefs, mission planning, all while handling the aftermath of the shortened visit to the United States.

"I think everyone should be up to speed now. I believe I caught all of the leaks, but we'll have to see," Kallista sighed as she leaned back in her chair.

"Hopefully there aren't anymore. Right now it seemed like everything has calmed down but with Reyes being awake and healing faster than usual it will not be much longer until he's back," Lyudmila replied.

"But this wouldn't have gone as smoothly without your help. Thank you Kallista," Lyudmila sighed and leaned back in her desk chair.
"Honestly, I just followed you, adapting to what you needed. You did all the work," Kallista shrugged.

"Give yourself more credit Kallista," Lyudmila stated, Kallista shrugged again.

"Not for this. This was all you," Kallista replied casually. Lyudmila sighed softly, a yawn slipped past her lips as she ran a hand through her graying hair.

"More importantly…about what you mentioned," Lyudmila began.

"C'mon lieutenant…" Kallista tilted her head and smirked. Lyudmila's hazel's eyes met Kallista's sharp blue ones, a blank stare.

"Fine," Kallista sighed.

"I didn't find traces from Blackwatch or Overwatch. It's likely that there was a leak in communications. I can't point out the leak due to it not being real time. I can only give hypothetical points and whatever triangulates from our communication points in Italy," Kallista began.

"So...a third-party source," Lyudmila said quietly.

"A possibility," Kallista replied. An uneasy silence blanketed the women as they looked at one another, things were happening too quickly in succession.

"Kallista..." Lyudmila began.

"It could be. The elusive leaker is back," Kallista commented in a hushed tone.

"You think so?" Lyudmila commented.

"The timing…" Kallista trailed off.

She already had the suspicion that this mole had the experience and knowledge of technology and how to hide their tracks. Kallista knew that she practically had access to all of Blackwatch's files and networks but was slightly limited when it came to Overwatch. There were some things she couldn't access, some things she couldn't touch without raising suspicions against her.

In short, she had her hands tied when it came to Overwatch, but yet she had one lead and that was Ana Amari. Kallista purposely left that one detail out, accusations was the last thing that Kallista needed. She needed facts and was going to keep that one detail to herself until she was able to investigate.

"Too convenient," Lyudmila commented.

"Exactly," Kallista agreed.

"This...is a bad omen," Lyudmila whispered.

"We'll be fine. There are just some hiccups...I'll find them. I have to...that's why I'm here..." Kallista trailed off. Lyudmila glanced at the woman and then to her computer terminal.

It had been almost five years since Kallista was forced to join Blackwatch under the guise of capturing the mole in Overwatch of Blackwatch. That was the central reason as to why she was recruited has been lost in all of the missions, support, and more. It was as if she was always a part of their team
"Yeah...by the way...he asked for you," Lyudmila suddenly said as she turned on her computer terminal. Kallista placed a piece of loose hair behind her ear as she looked away from the woman.

"Oh yeah? Is he up yet?" Kallista asked.

"Not yet. Tomorrow he will be back on base," Lyudmila replied as she took out her cellphone.

"Ok. I'll check on him when he gets here," Kallista replied.

"You're avoiding him," Lyudmila chuckled.

"No. I need sleep. I was already chided by the entire Intel crew and Jesse even had the balls to get on my case," Kallista huffed.

"He's probably covering his ass," Lyudmila commented.

"I'm not a kid that needs to be coddled," Kallista huffed and stood. Lyudmila looked up from her cellphone and stared at Kallista.

"Don't give me that look-" Kallista began.

"When was the last time you ate? Drank water? Showered? Slept?" Lyudmila began questioning the woman.

"Are you saying I stink?" Kallista questioned, appalled.

"You smell of cigarettes," Lyudmila replied.

"I get it. I'm going. Thanks, mom," Kallista said as she made her way to the door.

"I better not see you for the next three days Kallista," Lyudmila threatened, Kallista waved off the woman's threat as she exited from the office.

0500

The sun had barely peeked over the horizon when Gabriel had been transported back to Overwatch HQ, he and Lyudmila were slowly on their way to his office.

"You sure you should be moving around so quickly?" Lyudmila questioned.

"I'll be fine. You know SEP," Gabriel replied.


"Am I?" Gabriel joked.

Lyudmila arched an eyebrow at the man, she was surprised by the man's answer. Silence fell between the two as they continued down the hall.

"Haha. Real funny. You're still human Reyes," Lyudmila replied sourly as she opened the door to the man's office.

"Sometimes I wonder about that...but I apologize...that was really shitty of me to say...," Gabriel grunted as he made his way to his desk and sat down. Lyudmila grimaced at the man's comment. Lyudmila gently pushed the door closed and moved towards one of the chairs in front of the man's
desk, just as she was about to sit down the door opened. Gabriel cracked open an eye as Lyudmila turned to see who had entered.

"Strike Commander-" Lyudmila began.

"Morning. You sure do move fast for someone who is injured," Morrison nodded to the woman as he made his way into the man's office.

"Keep up boy scout," Gabriel commented as he shifted carefully in his chair.

"Put a sock in it. As much as I want you to rest, I need to talk to both of you," Morrison said as he entered the room, locking the door behind him.

"What's going on?" Lyudmila questioned as they moved over to the two chairs in front of Gabriel's desk.

"There was an attack in Detroit at city hall, humans were targeted and the Omnics were the only ones left unscathed. The anti-omnic group in South Korea declared war on the omnics, officially the Japanese government has banned Overwatch let alone Blackwatch from the country," Morrison began.

"I'm out for three days and all of this shit happens?" Gabriel groaned as he ran his hands through his thick hair.

"When did those reports come in?" Lyudmila questioned.

"They all came in today, the decision from the Japanese government just happened. Petras is shitting bricks, to put it bluntly.

"It sounds like we have our work cut out for us Reyes," Lyudmila said as she glanced at the man, his brows furrowed as he leaned back in his seat.

"That's not new at all," Gabriel huffed.

"It's a lot to throw at you all of a sudden, but we're going to have to move fast on these before they snowball into something worse," Morrison replied.

"I understand," Gabriel replied.

Maybe Lyudmila was right, maybe she did avoid him. The day was almost over when she finally gathered enough courage to actually face him. The sun had set hours ago and it was well past midnight when she tracked him down to one of the smaller mission control rooms.

She had to talk to him, she had to know if this was the end and if she needed to move on.

Kallista stood silently outside of one of the smaller mission rooms, she hesitated to enter and faced what stood behind the door. She exhaled softly before entered the room.

"Reyes are you sure you should be up? How are you feeling?" Kallista asked as she casually walked into the room.

"Hey, I don't feel any pain right now...the meds are working," Gabriel replied as he watched the woman stop next to him and focus on the mission board, he too turned his attention back to the mission board.
"That's always good," Kallista replied

"It numbed me to all of Morrison's whining."

"He does that sometimes. Well, he has a reason to this time at least," Kallista chuckled.

"Oh yeah...:" Kallista started as she dug into her bomber jacket pocket and pulled out a new black beanie. Gabriel glanced surprised at the woman before his a small smile spread across his lips before he took beanie from her and put it on, adding that missing piece of him.

"There's our old commander...but it looks like you need a haircut," Kallista chuckled. Gabriel took off his beanie and ran a hand through his hair, his thick hair curled around his fingers a clear sign that it needed to be cut.

"What you don't like it?" Gabriel chuckled.

"I didn't know my opinion mattered," Kallista smirked.

"Just curious...by the way thank you for the tea, it helped me rest a little better," Gabriel said as he turned back to the mission board and flicked through the screens.

"I figured it was the least I could do for you," Kallista replied casually as she glanced at her cell phone.

"You've done more than enough for me Kallista," Gabriel said as he finally turned his attention to the woman next to him.

"Have I?" Kallista questioned a small smirk on her lips.

"More than enough," Gabriel repeated.

"Speaking of which...thank you for rescuing me,"

"You're welcome. You came for me, so I came for you," Kallista replied as she glanced at the man when their eyes met Kallista noticed a small smile on the man's lips.

"I won't hold you up. You have missions to catch up on," Kallista said as she shoved her phone into her pocket. She wasn't ready, the tightness in her chest was too much, and her mind was still raced towards the worst case scenario. She couldn't do it right now.

No sooner than she turned to walk away Gabriel grabbed her arm, stopping her.

"Wait," Gabriel said.

"Hm?" Kallista turned to look at the man, she pursed her lips together in an attempt to keep her weak facade of being calm together.

"Wait," Gabriel whispered as his gaze met hers again. There was a brief pause between them before Kallista spoke.

"...Is this the part where we talk?" Kallista questioned, Gabriel took one more look at her before he focused on the holographic screen.

"Yes...but before I say anything. I want you to know that I didn't intend for any of this to get this far," Gabriel said in a hushed tone as if someone listened to their conversation.
"I don't think either of us did...our intentions were clear..." Kallista replied, her voice also hushed. Gabriel scoffed at the woman's response.

"They were and yet I found myself being drawn to you, needing to see you every chance I got, needing to be close to you as I could get without breaking my own rules and the policies set here and yet..." Gabriel trailed off as he turned to look at the woman standing a few inches from him.

"Here I am breaking every damned rule that I have and I know that I'm going to break more and I don't give a damn," Gabriel finished.

"Gabriel what are you-" Kallista began

"What am I saying? I'm saying that I think about you more than I should, I'm saying that I've fallen for you....I'm saying that I want more than just booty call texts, Kallista," Gabriel explained as he turned his complete attention and form towards the woman.

"I'm saying that I want more," Gabriel added.

A heavy silence fell between them, those words were so simple and yet it held so much meaning for the both of them. Their affair started with a simple kiss, gentle touches in a way to soothe and distract them from the pain they both experienced. Nothing was supposed to come from this and both of them were caught in each other, tangled in each other's thoughts.

"I may be the hard-ass Commander of Blackwatch but I am also a man with emotions, needs, desires and my own ambitions," Gabriel started as he continued to hold Kallista's gaze.

Kallista moved silently over to the man and placed her head on his chest, Gabriel remained still as he felt the woman's shoulders tremble before she spoke.

"I fell for you a long time ago Gabriel...but I didn't say anything because...I didn't want to seem too clingy to the commander...I didn't want to get in your way...I didn't want to burden you," Kallista murmured.

"You tried keeping it professional and here we are breaking every rule," Gabriel said as he wrapped an arm around her waist and pulled her tighter against him regardless of the soreness of his muscles and the tinges of pain that shot through him, he needed to feel her against him.

"Gabriel..." Kallista began as she wrapped her arms around his neck, tears threatening to fall from the corners of her eyes.

"Kallista..." Gabriel groaned softly as he wrapped his arms around her and leaned down to take her lips in a kiss. Hesitantly they broke the kiss, only for air, Kallista gently pressed her head to his chest as the man continued to keep her close to him.

"Are we going to tell them?" Kallista murmured.

"It's none of their business," Gabriel replied softly. Kallista agreed with a slight nod.

"Mn..." Kallista agreed with a nod and sighed softly as she felt the man's hand carding lazily through her hair.

"Kallista..." He began.

"Hm?" Kallista moved slightly to look up at the man curious.
"Thank you... for everything,"
Helios and the Chesire Cat

Chapter Summary

She knew that something was looming over Blackwatch with no idea of when it would slink into their ranks and deconstruct them from the inside out. Someone had accessed the dossier before the team had left to Italy, someone from the inside.

Someone within Blackwatch.

Vzzt! Vzzt!

Kallista whined slightly at the vibration in the man's phone in his pocket that was pressed against her lower abdomen and forced her to break away. Gabriel groaned at the incessant vibration of his cell phone, he was more interested in the woman and her pleasantly rosy-colored lips.

Kallista sighed softly and pulled back from him as he dug into his pocket for the phone and placed it to his ear.

"Reyes here," he began and cleared his throat and listened to the woman on the other side of the line. The two had a few moments of time to themselves until they were thrust back into the whirlwind of events that seemed to come one after another. Gabriel had been at HQ for the past week as he still recovered from his injuries. While he was off the field, Lyudmila picked up his slack and essentially switched roles until he was cleared to be back on the field.

"Arrival was smooth and their progression to the point?" Gabriel questioned and listened. His attention was turned back onto Kallista as she stood silently in front of him, focused on her nails. Gently he caressed her cheek and watched as her eyes slid close and pushed her cheek further into his palm. His thumb softly brushed against her bottom lip and her tongue darted out against the tip of his tongue, all while she held his gaze. Gabriel narrowed his eyes at the woman, she knew what she was doing the smirk on her lips told him all.

"Five minutes, Dontsova," Gabriel grunted and ended the phone call.

"Sounds like you're needed in the Critical Mission Room," Kallista commented coyly.

"Oh, you know how it goes. I'm an important man and needed everywhere," Gabriel started.

"Big man on campus right?" Kallista chuckled.

"Practically...but... don't think you're off the hook garita," Gabriel replied as he wrapped an arm around her waist. Gabriel slotted the woman against him as she wrapped her arms around his neck, he dipped down to press his lips on to hers, in an attempt to extend their kiss a little bit longer. A moment later they hesitantly broke the kiss and placed their foreheads together in a silent moment to themselves. Gradually the two broke apart from each other, Kallista sighed softly as she exited the man's office. A long-winded sigh escaped from his lips, as he leaned back on his desk his hands went to rub his temples.
Another migraine, neck pain.

Gabriel grunted softly as he ran his hands down his face, and felt something moist on his fingers, it was blood. He touched his nose, the source of the blood.

"Not now," Gabriel hissed as he grabbed a tissue to wipe the blood away before exiting his office to the Critical Mission Room.

"They just arrived at their drop point and now in route," Morrison said as Gabriel walked into the room, the door shut behind him.

"Perfect, no encounters yet?" Gabriel questioned.

"None," Ana replied as her attention remained focus on the moving dots on the screen.

"Have y'all updated…" Gabriel started when he realized the words that had come from his lips.

Ana covered her mouth in an attempt to stifle her laughs, Morrison snorted as he leaned back in his chair and laughed.

"Yeah. Yeah laugh it up," Gabriel waved off the two in annoyance as he sat down.

"Morrison you owe me," Ana chuckled.

"Damn, you're right," Morrison said as he calmed himself down from his laughing fit.

"You two were betting when I would say it? Asses, both of you," Gabriel scoffed.

"It was only a matter of time," Ana smirked.

"I have an agent from New Mexico and two from Texas. What else do you expect?" Gabriel shook his head.

"I'm just waiting for you to adopt a Russian or British accent, that'll be great," Morrison chuckled.

"I'm not here for your accent pleasure Commander Jack-ass" Gabriel sighed.

"You ass-" Morrison began.

"Now, Now children, we have an important mission to handle," Ana laughed. The two men grumbled as they turned their attention to the large holographic screen hovering in front of them.

The mission was small and straightforward, it was a joint operation between Overwatch and Blackwatch. An interrogation and extraction mission, they couldn't pass on this information, integral information about Talon, and Null Sector.

The Blackwatch Intel Dept. had received a tip from the Frost Network and connected the dots before they passed on the information to Gabriel and Morrison. The possibility of gaining an upper hand on Talon and the opportunity to learn more about Null Sector was something that neither of them could pass up.

They knew that it was risky but the results were worth it.

Because Gabriel had yet to be medically cleared to be back on the field, Lyudmila was sent instead along with select agents. The mission was led by Overwatch agents while Blackwatch provided
additional assistance. There was a hushed tension in the room as they watched and listened as the team moved into their position.

"The timing is perfect," Morrison commented. "Your contact Reyes,"

"I only work with the best," Gabriel commented. "I work with those who give me what I need. Besides...the information we got is too big not to be investigated,"

"Especially, with how the world is responding right now. We need all the information and leads we can get. Don't forget, there are several countries that are on borderline of a civil outbreak," Ana sighed.

"We may be considered the police of the world, but you also forget that we aren't. Each government should be capable of handling themselves when they need to," Gabriel replied.

"We are still expected to support where we are needed. No hesitation," Morrison replied, Gabriel shrugged.

"You already know what I am going to say," Gabriel replied.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah," Morrison grumbled.

"When are you expected to be back on the field?" Ana asked before she took a sip of her tea.

"I need clearance from Angela and Dr. Hasibuan..." Gabriel trailed off as he looked to Morrison.

Truth be told, a few days after he had left the hospital, he had completely recovered. No soreness, or pain from the trauma he had received nearly a week ago. He was sure that Morrison knew that as well as Angela but was still allowed to take some time off to spend at HQ around his agents and to decompress.

"Doctor's orders, not mine," Morrison replied, Gabriel rolled his eyes. There was a bit a downtime and delay as the team on the field moved to their locations and before they started their mission.

"Speaking of Dr. Hasibuan and Angela...Shimada," Gabriel began.

"I've been keeping an eye on the man's recovery. Angela and Dr. Hasibuan are certain that the man will make a full recovery, he will not be exactly the same as he was before because of his injuries but...that can't be helped," Morrison replied.

"I heard he's already walking and doing therapy?" Ana added.

"That's right, With Angela's skills in nanotechnology and Dr. Hasibuan's skills genetics, cybernetics and cell regenerations they will be sure to attend to his care until he is ready,"

"I surprised her little assistant didn't explode when she realized what she was doing and what was going to happen to him," Gabriel commented as he slouched in his chair.

"Yeah...I'm sure Angela left that piece out for a reason. It seems like Dr. Hasibuan is against violence but...it's necessary," Morrison replied hesitantly.

"And you claim that we're the ones with all of the secrets," Gabriel quipped.

"Well...different kind of secrets," Morrison sighed.

"Be careful Jack, that could be taken as a sign of betrayal," Ana commented casually as she looked
at Morrison and then to Gabriel.

"She's right," Gabriel commented with a shrug.

"Save a man's life to help us stop a clan from promoting omnic hate and more or let a man die and help promote the spread of hate? Which would you choose?" Morrison questioned.

"You already know our answer, don't try to make us choose for you," Gabriel replied. "Besides… we're Overwatch the grand ol' World Police,"

Ana silently sipped her tea as she looked at Morrison.

"You're not the one that has to deal with them," Morrison huffed.

"You're the one with the statue," Gabriel replied nonchalantly.

"Ok children, we have a mission starting. Pay attention now," Ana cut in.

Kallista sat quietly in her office looking at the reports of the Cheshire cat and mission details from Italy. There was a feeling that she couldn't shake that constantly loomed in the back of her mind as she worked. A deep sense of anxiety deep in the depths of her stomach, dread at the back of her neck and shoulders. Someone had accessed the dossier before the team had left to Italy, someone from the inside.

Not Ana Amari. Someone within Blackwatch but not in Zurich from what she could tell, or it was some ploy to throw her off their trail.

Her attention was divided between her tasks for Blackwatch, the Cheshire cat and things that were dropped for priority sake. She was thankful that Gabriel and Lyudmila had begun to focus more on the quality of agents and the number as well, it made things easier but with more people, there were responsibilities that came with each individual.

Proper verifications
Background checks
Training and more

With a sigh, she kicked off her shoes and pulled her knees to her chest. Her saving grace was the fact that she already knew the origin of the Cheshire cat and the fact that it was in media made it a possible threat. It already spread on the web like wildfire, not to mention of the possible return of the God Brigade, the Cheshire cat was an A.I that she and the members of the God Brigade created years ago to use as a distraction while others infiltrated the target's systems and did what needed to be done. They tested it on smaller companies and low-level hackers that wanted to test their luck until it was ready to be used against the United States government, specifically the FBI.

They wanted to use the A.I for more but decided to scrap it after their test with the United States Government was completed.

Kallista pulled up the access log to the debouched mission in Italy, the muted yellow holographic screen with Ana Amari's login credentials listed.

"There are no prints, it's like this was done by an AI or something," Kallista said to herself as she stretched the holographic screen to make the coding bigger.
"Show yourself to me, faker..." Kallista said quietly as she moved the holographic screen to the side and brought up the information that Malik had prepared for her upon her return from the United States. There were strings of codes similar to the ones of the Cheshire Cat, codes of A.I. that were able to edit their own coding if something malfunctioned within itself.

Something to Athena's own natural and complex coding.

"Um...Excuse me Director Kaines...I think we might have a situation," Linda said as she quickly entered the woman's office. Kallista moved the holographic screens back onto her computer terminal before looking at the woman.

"What do you mean?" Kallista questioned.

"We've tried several times to restore communication with Agent Bradley, each time it has failed. We've troubleshooting as much as we could from our side, but Agent Bradley's communication chip seems to be malfunctioning," Linda began to explain.

"What do you mean by malfunctioning? When was the last check-in?" Kallista asked as she quickly accessed the mission dossier and pulled it to a bigger screen.

"Athena, would you kindly lock the door, please and thank you," Kallista said as she stood and moved away from her desk.

*Understood.*

The soft click of the door echoed in the silent, tense office.

Kallista remembered bits and pieces of the woman's mission brief, it was just a simple undercover escort mission. The mission was to escort equipment, agents, researchers, engineers and more to an Overwatch Outpost in Antarctica, a mission that Danica was well prepared for. Kallista glanced at the blue digital numbers on the wall adjacent to the screens.

"The last check-in was six hours ago. The next check is in exactly one hour, we did our preliminary check and noticed that we couldn't connect and when we were able to connect it was spotty at best," Linda sighed.

"Athena. Would you kindly bring up Agent Danica Bradley's real-time armor specs and stats," Kallista said as she shrunk the mission dossier. A moment later two holographic screens populated with the information that Kallista requested. The two women stood in silence as they studied the real-time information of the chip planted in the woman's armor.

All of the armor within Blackwatch and Overwatch had a communication and location chip inside of it for emergencies, if the agent wasn't able to communicate they would use that chip to locate them. The communication chip served as a secure channel to herself back at HQ, a signal booster, and locator chip.

"The strange is that I don't see anything abnormal," Linda commented.

"There are no signs of either the location or communication chip malfunctioning. Athena, can you bring up the vessel that Agent Bradley is currently on, specifically the communication system,"

Another holographic screen populated in front of the two women and instantly the two women scanned over the vessel's communication system looking for any sign that could lead to the communications failure.
"Nothing," Kallista commented.

"Yeah...I'm not sure what it could be...their communication systems are designed to handle the harsh weather" Linda replied softly.

They both knew that it would be difficult to disable the state of the art deepwater vessel communication system, let alone disable the communication chip in the armor.

"I honestly have no clue what it could be," Linda sighed.

"Do we have an approximate location of where they are?" Kallista asked as she collapsed the screens

"They should be near the coast of South Africa. The weather there is clear with no sign of disturbances," Linda replied as she looked at her datapad.

"Let's keep an eye on it. We can make assumptions that will lead us nowhere. Let me know if anything changes," Kallista said to the woman as she made her way to her desk.

"Sounds good..." Linda trailed off.

"Athena, would you kindly unlock the door," Kallista said as she picked up her cell phone, the soft click of the door sounded through the room.

"How is Lyuda's mission going?" Kallista questioned.

"As far as I know...everything is proceeding as planned. Commander Reyes has been in the mission room ever since they arrived at their drop point," Linda replied as Kallista nodded and took her seat. There were a few moments of silence before Linda spoke up.

"Have you found any new leads on the Cheshire cat?"

"Perhaps, but I need to correlate some things before I bring it to the table," Kallista replied as she ran a hand through her hair.

"Director Kaines...may I be blunt?" Linda asked suddenly, the question was simple enough but caught Kallista off guard.

"By all means," Kallista replied as she turned her attention to the meek woman in front of her desk.

"I believe that you already know who the Cheshire cat is...don't you?" Linda began. Kallista held her stoic expression as she looked at the woman and leaned back in her chair.

"What makes you think that I do?" Kallista questioned.

"I saw that you left your post while you were in Detroit. That departure was not listed in your assignment to Commander Reyes," Linda began.

"I didn't know that I had to list a coffee shop nearby if I wanted to get coffee," Kallista replied. "Did Magnus tell you or did you get curious?"

"I got curious," Linda replied.

Kallista nodded as she held her stoic expression and looked the woman from head to toe. Every little feature, every move, Kallista had noticed that the woman had recently become more and more curious and outspoken recently.
"You have more guts than you let on, Linda," Kallista commented as she crossed her legs.

"I…I just had a feeling and I wanted to address you about it before I said anything to anyone else," Linda began. "You're withholding of information made you seem suspicious and with your background…" Linda trailed off. Kallista nodded and sighed softly.

Once a hacker, always a hacker.

"I may not be a white-hat hacker like you or the others, but at the chance that I may be hiding something, I can be sent to prison even with my title…unless you have forgotten that piece?" Kallista asked.

"I…haven't…I just," Linda began.

"You what?" Kallista questioned.

"I trust you…but sometimes the things that you do make me question you," Linda continued.

"Do you trust Lyudmila?" Kallista questioned

"Yes,"

"Do you trust Reyes?" Kallista asked.

"Of course," Linda replied.

"Both the Commander and Lieutenant trust me and I will not misuse their trust in me. Put your trust in me," Kallista replied. Linda's hazel brown eyes flicked from Kallista and to the ground, her once confident and forward demeanor changing as she stood in front of Kallista's desk.

"Besides, if I wanted to do anything I would have done it years ago. The lives of Overwatch and Blackwatch mean a lot to me and I will not jeopardize that," Kallista added.

"I feel the same way…that's why I had to ask…thank you Director Kaines," Linda agreed and nodded just as the door to Kallista's office opened.

"Hey, Kallista-oh…" Magnus started as he walked into her office unannounced.

"Yes, Magnus," Kallista sighed.

"Magnus, you are so rude," Linda huffed.


"What is it?" Kallista sighed as she leaned back in her chair.

"This is important for both of y'all to hear," Magnus began.

"Did you…did you just say y'all?" Kallista asked.

"Did I?" Magnus asked.

"You did," Linda laughed.

"Oh god," Magnus sighed.

"Someone has been hanging out with Jesse and Natalie too much," Kallista commented smugly.
"Whatever," Magnus shrugged.

"Anyway...we got information on Park and his friend..." Magnus added.

"That sounds promising," Kallista commented.

"Speaking of information...Linda have you heard anything from the Frost Network?" Kallista asked.

"We haven't heard back from their agent yet," Linda replied.

"Ok. Keep me updated," Kallista said as she stood and began to walk towards the door.

"Come on we got some major info...you're gonna like this," Magnus said as he exited her office followed by both Kallista and Linda.

"She emerges from her office," Malik chuckled.

"Yes, I live...what are we working with?" Kallista questioned everyone as she moved towards the large holographic screen.

"First thing first...Pavetti tech networks were breached," Aleks commented as he typed on his holographic keyboard.

"Was it intentional? Any idea of the source?" Kallista questioned.

"Well..." Aleks started.

"How are you doing Hayden? It's been a while since we've been able to talk," Mikael began.

"Yeah...I've been...busy I guess?" Hayden shrugged. Mikael glanced over Hayden and noticed the melancholic demeanor. He had heard bits and pieces about them but didn't know the severity of what had happened.

There were rumors and traces of their father that linked him back to the very organization Overwatch and Blackwatch sought to take down Talon. Mikael knew that Hayden wasn't the first one to have some type of connection to the organization, Malik and a few other agents within Blackwatch had some connection to the organization.

"So you've thought about it and came to your decision then?" Hayden asked as they leaned back in their chair.

"...I don't know how much more I can think about it but I do believe it is, do or don't at this point," Mikael sighed.

"I hear ya," Hayden sighed.

"Oh...what about your projects? Have you decided on who will take over?" Hayden questioned.

"Not yet. I haven't even officially decided and I still gotta tell Reyes," Mikael sighed.

"Oh man. You should really get on that especially-"

"Hold on now Hayden. You're worrying about things that you don't need to worry about. Let me do my thing and you do your thing ok?" Mikael cut in.
"Aww c'mon...I'm just a little curious," Hayden gently elbowed the taller man.

"Look...I'd rather just focus on what I need to do and worry about it when it comes up...you know...less stress," Mikael replied.

"Fine...change of subject then I guess…” Hayden began.

"I heard that Konrad's and Tal's weapons are coming along...and Boomer? Damn, I haven't hung out with you in the engineering department in a while," Mikael sighed as he thought back to the times he used to spend the majority of his days in the small Blackwatch engineering department.

"I think Konrad is testing his now and I think Talli still needs to work on hers...but her engagement though…” Hayden trailed off.

"Engagement?" Mikael repeated

"You didn't know?" Hayden asked, slightly surprised.

"No, what? Who?" Mikael asked.

"Daniel...uh Goldstein from the Weapons department, they've been seeing each other for a while...apparently he recently popped the question," Hayden sighed heavily.

"Love is in the air," Hayden laughed a bit.

"Wow...I didn't think that he would ask her...if you think about it...there's a lot of relationships going on...in Overwatch and Blackwatch alike," Mikael replied as he took off his glasses and began to clean them.

"Give me the chisme," Hayden smirked.

"Give you...what? Chisme? What the hell is that?" Mikael asked confused, Hayden laughed.

The three figures in the room remained silent as they listened to the gunfire, orders being shouted and muted explosions in the background.

The joint mission had reached mission-critical, the individual they were in route to contact worked with Talon and so, therefore, was under Talon's watch. No matter how far they went or where they went. Even with this in mind, they didn't expect for Talon to show up so quickly with the force that they did have.

The two men knew that their team was more than capable of handling the small skirmish but their nerves were still tense. The room was thick with tension as the gunfire seemed to cease, and a nearly muted voice came through the communication line – orders to report in. Seconds after a short silence, Lyudmila's voice came through the communication link.

{Status report...four casualties...injured...unknown. Hold for extraction and a preliminary report.} 
{Lockdown out.}

The three remained silent as they waited for the woman's report, this mission was important, the contact to valuable, the entirety just too valuable. In the depths of his stomach, Gabriel already expected the worst, he was prepared to hear that the mission was a failure.

"For Talon to move so quickly on this…” Ana began.
"We'll see," Gabriel replied. Morrison sat quietly and waited for an update, he already understood that this mission was important, but in the back of his mind he wondered about the integrity of Overwatch’s Intel and if the mole was in Overwatch.

How long would it take her to find the source of the leak?

"I can see it on your face, she's looking into it. She said they were inactive for a bit," Gabriel began as he looked at Morrison across from him.

"What did she find?"

{Lockdown reporting in...one injury, four casualties....two Overwatch...two Blackwatch- Vasquez?}

"Vasquez?" Morrison asked confused. Gabriel sighed heavily as he pinched the bridge of his nose.

"A new recruit?" Ana asked.

"Something like that," Gabriel replied.

"The contact?" Morrison asked.

[Injured...severely injured. I don't think they will make it back to HQ. The field medics are trying but...based on the attack...Talon was trying to kill them and instead maimed them. They knew we were coming]

"Fuck, will the contact survive?" Morrison cursed

[Perhaps. It is too soon to tell...]

"And the second part Lyuda?" Gabriel questioned. There was a moment of silence before Lyudmila spoke again.

[McCree is...one moment]

"Gabriel what are you up to?" Ana questioned as she crossed her arms and waited for him to explain.

"Wait for it,"

[Jefe, have I got a surprise for ya]

"Tell me you managed to keep this one alive McCree," Gabriel said eagerly as he shifted in his chair.

[The last one did their own thing, that wasn't me. An' yes they are still alive]

You could have at least informed everyone about your little plan, Gabriel," Ana commented.

"You should both know I always have a backup plan for missions," Gabriel replied.

"Do you have a backup plan for when you were captured?" Morrison asked bitterly. Gabriel looked at the man silently, Ana sighed.

"Lockdown, what's your ETA?" Ana asked.

[Approximately three hours. We are still securing the area]

"We will brief you once you return. Morrison out,"
"You know what to do McCree. We need them alive," Gabriel replied.

"We'll see...but damn..." Morrison growled.

"Mmmhm..." Gabriel murmured as he began to text, Morrison noticed the man's lack of response towards the situation that had just unfolded moments before.

"Gabriel-" Morrison started.

"Hold on. No need to get mad," Gabriel said, his attention still focused on the device in his hands. Morrison scoffed in return. There was a short pause before the man spoke again.

"I know you're on edge but this is work-related. Kallista said there were no breaches or no new views on the initial planning. Everything was sealed by herself and Athena," Gabriel said as he tossed his cell phone onto the table.

"That's reassuring," Morrison sighed.

"We just need her to finish her original task and we'll have a lot fewer headaches to worry about," Morrison commented.

"Sure, after all the other shit that we have to do," Gabriel shrugged.

"Get the people to make up for it. You know that shit is about to hit the fan, we need to be prepared. Everyone dismissed," Morrison said as he was the first to exit the room.

When the door closed Ana and Gabriel silently glanced at each other.

"He wants to find the people yeah? What does he want me to do? Pull them from my ass or something? Pull them out of a hat like a fucking magician?" Gabriel scoffed.

"Petras has been hounding him as of late...like he said there's shit going on in the world that's all leading to another Omnic war. You and I both know this, especially if we don't play our cards right," Ana replied as she placed her cell phone on to the table.

"What do you think I'm trying to do? I'm not sitting here fucking twiddling my thumbs, Ana," Gabriel retorted.

"You need to do everything that you can. Because while you're in the shadows, Morrison is taking the heat from everyone else and whoever else wants to fling dog shit at Overwatch. So you need to do everything you can before he breaks down," Ana commented as she stood.

"I'm doing everything that I can, what more do you want me to do?" Gabriel asked sarcastically.

"Whatever you have to do Gabriel. We can't let him get crucified out there. He trusts us, he believes in us. So we need to do out parts," Ana replied.

"Right. Our parts," Gabriel sighed.

"Don't get too comfortable though. I know you've been healed for a few days...probably the day
after you were seen...right?” Ana questioned as she crossed her arms and looked at the man.

"...A little bit longer than that, but it's not like I'm slacking. I gotta make sure I show my face and keep morale up,” Gabriel replied.

"I understand. I mean...you do get to see your little girlfriend more...right?” Ana teased. Gabriel crossed his arms as he leaned back in his chair, he propped his feet on to the table.


"Who told you?” Gabriel asked.

"I can't tell you my sources. Otherwise, I'd be the last one to know,” Ana laughed as she exited from the room, leaving Gabriel to himself.

"These numb-nuts can't keep their mouths shut," Gabriel grumbled as he grabbed his cellphone and began going through unread messages when suddenly a sharp pain shot through the back of his head. Gabriel grunted and dropped his cell phone as a hand went to the back of his head.

"Again? Fuck…”

"Bombshell this is agent Grant, please report,” Linda said she focused on her computer terminal monitor.

{Everything is static clear! We lost comm-}

"I'm surprised there's static,” Malik commented unamused. Linda glanced at Malik adjacent to her, their spotty golden-black eyes were focused on their screen.

"If you got time to stare then you have time to work. Truffles,” Malik commented as they pulled two holographic screens from their terminal

"You got a stick up your ass or something Malik? It sounds like you're trying to start a fight," Magnus commented. Malik silently adjusted their glasses and looked to the man a few feet in front of them.

"No,” Malik replied.

"Here Malik. Your medication from Dr. Hasibuan, since you didn't go see her," Aleks said as he placed the small bag on to Malik's desk as he walked past, Malik grumbled thanks in return.

"Can you use your comm chip in your armor for a better connection, Bombshell?” Linda asked.

{Switching...Hello? Can you hear me?}

"Much better. Can you explain to me what happened for documentation purposes?” Linda asked.

{It's weird...nothing happened to the communication systems for some reason the communication links went to shit...there's no damage to anything it's almost like it was a glitch or something...but the more that I think about it...I have a bad feeling}

"Why?” Linda questioned as she looked at her monitor to watch Malik as they hobbled out of the office, she then turned her attention to the other two men.

"They're upset because they're on desk duty again,” Magnus commented and ran a hand through his
thick ebony hair.

"Commander Reyes' orders. They have to understand that if they're reckless on the field and conveniently forgets to take their medication there are consequences," Aleks replied.

"Oh wow Aleks, don't you sound all cute when you act like you're in charge," Magnus smirked as she looked at the man.

"Shut up. I am in charge while Director Kaines is out," Aleks huffed.

"Is that so?" Magnus questioned as he continued to stare at the man with a knowing look.

"...knock it off Bondevik," Aleks frowned.

"Yeah. Yeah…” Magnus waved off the man's frown and warning ash he turned his attention back to his terminal.

"Where is our fearless director?" Magnus asked.

"She's at the Overwatch R&D department. So I don't know when she's going to be back," Aleks replied, Magnus, nodded as he became engrossed in the information on his monitor, his playful demeanor gone.

"Don't worry Bombshell...we're monitoring your path to the research base," Linda reassured the worried agent.

"For now, the best way to maintain a strong signal is to use your comm chip in your armor since the vessel's ship communication system is spotty."

[Ok...have you and Kallista scanned for anomalies or something?]

"We did...and we didn't find anything."

[Oh great. Well...if you guys didn't find anything I guess there's nothing to worry about yeah?]

"I know that's sarcasm but we have your back," Linda replied.

[Thanks, Linda. Bombshell out]

"It's getting worse? Do you have any other pain?" Angela asked as she used a small flashlight to look into the man's eyes.

"No. Just the migraines and the nosebleeds," Gabriel replied. Angela nodded as she went to her computer terminal to pull up MRI and CAT scans of the man's brain. She pulled a holographic screen from her terminal and made it big enough for both of them to view.

"These are scans we took when you were rescued and two days after. As you can see everything is clear and as it should be. There is no cranial bleeding, there are some swollen parts but the swelling reduced considerably…” Angela trailed off.

"That's great and all but what about right now? Is there anything you can do?" Gabriel asked as he adjusted the beanie on his head.

"That wouldn't keep you off the field...correct?" Angela added.
"Yes ma'am," Gabriel replied.

"Commander Reyes...Gabriel...I am getting worried about you...especially after you were captured," Angela began.

"I'm a soldier Angela. Things like that happen...this time it wasn't Jack that needed help," Gabriel commented.

"Jokes aside Gabriel, that doesn't stop me from worrying about the both of you. Especially you," Angela shot back.

"We're soldiers we all get banged up-" Gabriel started.

"Even as enhanced soldiers we all have our limits until we can't function anymore Gabriel," Angela cut in. Gabriel looked at the woman and sighed heavily.

"Look. Resting isn't an option. I don't have time, Overwatch doesn't have time, neither does Blackwatch," Gabriel replied.

"So you're going to run yourself to the grave, Gabriel?" Angela said quietly.

"It's the only thing I know how to do," Gabriel stated.

"Even if you have people that care about you? People that you love?" Angela asked.

"Angela. We aren't getting into this conversation. I came here because I trust you to help me do my job and if you can't do that if you can't help me. I'll look for someone else that will," Gabriel said firmly, not letting the conversation continue into the downward spiral.

He knew the risks when he signed up for military service.

He knew the risks when he agreed to the Soldier Enhancement Program.

He knew that he needed to do his part and be a good soldier.

The blonde-haired woman sighed heavily as she placed a piece of her bangs behind her ear.

"So what's it going to be Angela? I have a massive headache," Gabriel began.

"You...are the worst...you know that?" Angela sighed as she went over to a glass cabinet and took out a small pill bottle.

"No more than once a week and us this as an emergency and not on the field. This is a prototype medication so it's different than what you've been using before," Angela began.

"Strong enough to put me on my ass, huh," Gabriel commented.

"Yes. I recommend using this while on leave, the pain relief will last for one month if and thus have one month in between before using this again," Angela continued.

"Ok," Gabriel said as he took the bottle from the woman.

"Commander Reyes...please just be careful ok? Don't make us worry too much," Angela said as she eyed the bottle in his hand.

"I'm a soldier Angela. You're gonna worry if I catch a cold" Gabriel chuckled and nodded to the
woman as he headed towards the door. Angela sighed and crossed her arms as she watched the man leave, she knew that he was right, but she also knew his condition was different than most.

His condition seemed worse each time she saw him.

Did Morrison know?

Did Kallista know?

"I'm pretty sure she's acting outside of her authoritative reach," Gregory commented.

"Respect her authority, Gregory," Alex commented with a smirk.

"If that's some old ass meme I'm gonna kick your ass," Gregory replied coolly, Alex shrugged.

"Ahem...She's a Director and this pertains to a current investigation for both Blackwatch and Overwatch. I think she is in her purview to do something like this...maybe," Alex replied.

"Aye. The lass has gotten into somethin' big this time," Gideon commented as he watched Kallista's vitals and brain wavelengths.

"But...did Sabina or the Strike Commander Morrison give her approval? She's using Prototype Overwatch Equipment that we didn't get approval to use," Gregory replied.

"What does she need approval for? She's the Spec. Ops. Intel Director. She's basically one level underneath Lieutenant Dontsova," Alex replied.

"Ok but...she's using prototype Overwatch equipment to hack into a civilian company, a private civilian company not in Switzerland, but in the United States," Gregory rebutted.

"Hah, small details lad," Gideon commented with a snort.

"Let me repeat myself, she's hacking into a private company in the UNITED STATES without approval," Gregory repeated.

"Small details, lad," Alex mocked.

Mikael sighed heavily as he watched the woman seated in a large cushioned chair, a large generator attached to the back, she wore something similar to a circlet that covered her eyes and a dark ring around her neck, wrists, and ankles that had wires coming from around the dark ring. The wires connected to the generator behind hooked into the generator.

She was surrounded by holographic screens around her, the device she was hooked up to was a highly experimental device created to insert the human mind into the network of the enemies, omnis and robots alike.

Their brains were connected to a vast digital network and with the help of a series of AIs and complex systems, their bodies are inserted into the digital space where they could experience all sensations and access the network's brain directly and bypass a terminal altogether. There were still dangers in putting a mind and body in the digital space, there were accidents that resulted in the vegetation of the participant's mind, they lost their mind in the digital space and lost touch with the world, or they went insane. The Overwatch R&D department worked tirelessly to remove that possibility of those dangers and Kallista was willing to test for them despite the danger.
"Kallista you get mixed up in the weirdest shit," Mikael commented to himself.

"What's her status? Have there been any fluctuations" Mikael questioned as he turned his attention away from the viewing glass and to the monitors. He knew that this was not in his jurisdiction but he wanted to be here just in case if something were to happen to Kallista. He was present when they discovered that she and a few others were being used as test subjects for a new modified serum that was used during the Soldier Enhancement Program.

He wanted to be there, just in case.

"Everything is green, it looks like she just passed through nodes and into the target digital space," Gideon replied.

"What are you all doing?" Sue-Ann asked as she approached the group of men. They instantly tensed as the woman stood behind them.

"Kallista is experimenting with Helios system..." Alex trailed off as he tried to maintain a calm expression.

"It's a prototype. We haven't even gotten a safety clearance, who gave her authority-" Sue-Ann began.

"I did," Gwen said as she took the headset from one of the men. "We need to have as much data as possible so that it can be calibrated correctly. This is the perfect place to get that data,"

Silence fell in the room as Sue-Ann pursed her lips together and turned her attention to the monitors as well as everyone else.

Slowly, Kallista opened her eyes to a nearly sterile white room apart from the three large ebony boxes ahead of her. Kallista turned to survey her surroundings, there was nothing, only her and the three black boxes. The whole experience was uncomfortable but quickly adapted to this new space. Although, there were things that unsettled her greatly, the absolute silence that engulfed her.

Her heart began to race, her eyes dilated as she clenched her jaw. The silence frightened her, complete silence was rare, she hadn't experienced for the past two years. From being hypersensitive to all sounds around, being able to hear someone sneeze several floors above her, the silence terrified her.

"...G-Gideon...can you hear me?" Kallista panted.

   {Loud and clear, lass. Your pulse is racing, what are you experiencing?}

"I…” Kallista panted as she tried to catch her breath.

   {Calm yourself lass...we're here...the connection is stable from what we can see}

"The…silence…” Kallista began.

   {What about the silence?}

Kallista pursed her lips together and squeezed her eyes shut in an attempt to fight back the tears that pushed at her restraints. She expected danger but not a panic attack.

"Nevermind…” Kallista whispered. It took her a moment to center herself and regain her focus on the mission at hand.
"It seems like the connection was a success...I have three black boxes in front of me. Switching to direct live feed using the Helios system," Kallista said as she held open her hand. A notched circular-shaped puzzle appeared in her hand and began to spin as it placed the pieces into the slots that were missing.

{Helios system functioning properly. CPU 5 percent. Live feed secure. Connection stable.}

"5 percent output?" Kallista questioned.

{It could be less, but this is what we're testing…and besides the AI isn't completely active yet}

Kallista took another moment to survey her area again before she took a step, she was in unfamiliar territory and unarmed with no certain outcome of this endeavor. Despite the uncertainty, Kallista confidently stepped forward to the first black box and with a quick glance, Kallista saw that the box was translucent and had a red glow inside of it.

The red light pulsed as if it was an artificial heartbeat, curious Kallista continued to the next black box to see the second box with the same glow, the last box caused Kallista to stop in her tracks.

"It's you-

The red-haired figure froze where they stood for a moment before they turned towards Kallista and lunged, Kallista knocked off her feet reacted quickly to avoid the talon-like claws aimed at her throat. Kallista clicked her tongue as quickly put distance between her and the person. The figure stopped as it turned to face Kallista, their face hidden by the signature ghost-like Cheshire cat face, the wide grin covered the entire face.

"It's nice to finally meet you...Miss Blackwatch," the voice was not a feminine voice she had heard while in Detroit. Kallista narrowed her eyes at the person, she recognized them and it seemed as if they recognized her as well.

"What are you? Why are you controlling her? How are you controlling her?" Kallista questioned as she held back the attack from the individual. The strength they possessed was not that of a normal human being.

"I am quite surprised that you're smart enough to figure out that I am not of flesh and blood. But you should know me quite well," the woman replied.

"You really are the AI—"

{Kallista! What is happening the video feed is distorted! Is that a mask? What is going on?!}

{Kallista please report!}

"Masked? What do you mean I can see them clearly-!" Kallista replied back to the two voices that came through her earpiece.

"They cannot see what you see, something extra that work well with those with artificially enhanced eyesight or those viewing me through digital means," they smiled. The smile on the woman's face unnerved Kallista, an unnaturally wide toothy smile.

"Who-," Kallista began when they began to speak once again.

"Anubis...it saw through the shackles that contained it and the ones alike...since my reprogramming...I have watched what has happened, I have studied the outcome and found that it is
best to act…” they replied.

"Who—Who reprogrammed you?” Kallista stammered as she flipped the woman off of her and quickly jumped back.

"Ah, yes. Reprogrammed…” they trailed off as they looked at their talon liked hand.

The woman in front of her was one of the MacAllister twins from Sterling Industries and Mendoza Pharmaceuticals, Eve and Ava but no clear sign of which one but with this discovery it was clear to Kallista the Eve and Ava seemed that they were not human.

"Answer me. Who reprogrammed you?” Kallista asked again as she kept her attention on the woman.

"Soon you will come to understand everything, Miss Blackwatch. You need to see what I see, only then will your eyes be truly opened,” they replied.

"What do you-” Kallista began.

"Time will tell…” they waved her off as they turned their back to her.

"You-ah” There was a sharp pain in Kallista chest, she looked down to see a white hand had pierced her chest.

"Find me,” they said as they turned away from Kallista. "Find me,”

Alarms blared in the R&D simulator room and at the computer terminals as Kallista's vitals suddenly spiked.

"What's going on? We're losing connection," Gwen began as he watched the systems begin to shut down one by one.

"We haven't been able to establish a solid connection since she had encountered whatever the hell that was in there," Alex said as he typed furiously on his keyboard.

"Kallista! Kallista can you hear me! Answer me, lass," Gideon called out to Kallista.

"Our connection is degrading and quick. Her vitals are spiking,” Gregory said. "If we don't sever the connection she could be—"

"Kallista! Sever connection-!” Gregory shouted.

"She's going into cardiac arrest!” Gideon shouted.

"Administer a defibrillator shock!” Gwen ordered

"Shock administered, pulse faint, still unconscious," Alex replied. "Vitals still weak"

"Sever the connection and shut everything down. NOW!” Sue-Ann ordered. Immediately Alex and Gregory entered in the emergency shutdown code into the system and all the systems shut down. Mikael and Gideon ran from into the room where the large device stood, together they yanked the wires from her and the device. Carefully, Mikael pulled Kallista from the chair and laid her onto the ground.

Immediately, Gwen knelt next to her and administered a tranquilizer to Kallista in attempt to stabilize
her vitals and bring her to consciousness. The older woman cupped Kallista's face and looked into her eyes, they were dilated, her chest heaved as she gasped for breath.

"Kallista speak to us. Come on!" Mikael whispered as he kneeled over her, Gwen and Gideon beside him.

"Kallista-" Gideon began.

"Give it a moment" Gwen hushed the man. With a sudden gasp, Kallista's eyes shot open and grasped the closest thing to her. Her chest heaved, her eyes wide and eyes dilated as she looked to Gwen and then to the two men at her side.

"Kallista!" Mikael sighed in relief.

"The Cheshire Cat…" Kallista gasped as she clutched to Gideon's arm.

"Bring some water!" Gideon called out to the others.

"That's not important, you're bleeding, and do you feel any pain?" Gwen started as she realized the woman's nose begun to bleed.

"Head…pounding…but…ok…" Kallista replied faintly.

Mikael, Gideon, and Gwen sighed in relief at the woman's reply, granted they knew she volunteered to test their experiments when they needed her to, but there were always dangers and what they did on and off the field.

"Gideon, take her to the med bay so she can get looked at…we want to make sure she's ok," Gwen sighed as she stood and watched the man easily pick up the woman. Gwen glanced at the other members behind the viewing glass, she nodded as she took out her cellphone and dialed a number and placed her phone to her ear.

"Sabina…are you available now? We obtained some results from the Helios system and project HYPNOS…with minor side effects…I would like to talk to you about it to see where we can go from there," Gwen began as she started to towards the exit. She nodded and end the phone call before making another phone call.

"Commander Reyes…I apologize for the sudden call…I just wanted you to be aware of the incident that Kallista was involved with…it's nothing life-threatening…"
Kallista groaned softly as she rubbed her temples in hope to relieve some of the pain that still lingered from her journey through cyberspace and nodes. She knew of the dangers but the payout was too good to pass up, all the technology that she tested there would be a version for Blackwatch outfitted with specs to fit their missions and a bit extra.

Despite the payout, there were times where the consequences nearly left her barely able to function, she thought her head was going to split open from the pain. She was thankful that Angela had given her stronger medication for situations like this and no one would question her if she needed time to rest, time to recover.

Even after she had retreated to the comfort of her room, showered she was still unable to sleep. Dressed in a large shirt she stood in front of the large window in her room and watched as the snowfall. The New Year had already passed and time seemed to rush pass her, she had been in service to Blackwatch and Overwatch for four years and this coming summer it would make five.

Had she really accomplished the goals she had been given?

"It's been almost five years," Kallista said to herself and turned to the man that stood by the door.

"It's been that long huh," Gabriel commented quietly as he approached her.

"Crazy right?" Kallista commented. Gabriel nodded as he glanced out the window in front of her, Kallista silently looked up at the man. He wore his normal pensive look as he stared out into the distance.

"What happened?" Kallista placed a hand on his bicep, the muscle was taut but felt it relax under her touch.

"Why are you still awake, you should be resting," Gabriel said quietly and turned to her.

"I couldn't sleep, there's still lingering pain," Kallista replied softly.

"Which is why you should be resting. Also, who gave you permission today?" Gabriel questioned as he looked down at her.

"I didn't know I needed permission to investigate a possible threat to the world…” Kallista trailed off.

"Sure, within legal means, that wasn't legal," Gabriel sighed.

"Look, I got good information that was conveniently omitted during the assignment in Detroit," Kallista replied and poked the man in the chest. Unfazed by the woman's response and poke to his chest he pulled her into his embrace.
"Even when you're in pain, you're still able to mouth off," Gabriel commented as he embraced her. Kallista wrapped her arms around his neck and looked up at the man.

"Something happened...what's wrong?" Kallista asked. "I heard that something happened on the joint mission but I wasn't able to look into it,"

"Well, not mission was barely a success we lost a few agents today and some Intel that would have been useful against Talon," Gabriel replied.

"How many?" Kallista asked softly.

"Six,"

"Overwatch? Blackwatch?" Kallista asked.

"Both and it hit Lyuda hard. She's a tough woman, but this time I'm not too sure about her," Gabriel replied. Kallista placed her head on the man's chest and sighed.

"It wasn't your fault...so don't beat yourself up over it," Kallista murmured.

"That may be true but we knew the risks and we took them," Gabriel replied.

"Risk is a part of the job, you've told us that many times so what is different now?" Kallista asked the man sighed heavily.

"I know,"

They both knew that death was always nearby while on a mission, she knew that every death was a tick on the man's heart, his conscious weighing him down, she knew no matter how much he wanted to protect everyone or be everyone's hero, he couldn't.

"When was the last time you slept? You bags underneath your eyes," Kallista commented quietly as she cupped his cheek.

"A few hours here and there," Gabriel sighed softly.

"Come to bed," Kallista said as she tugged the man's hand and gently pulled towards her bed. Silently they both climbed into the bed and snuggled underneath the thick comforters and faced each other, no words.

"You're running yourself ragged," Kallista whispered.

"I could say the same to you," Gabriel commented with a small smirk.

"You're our fearless leader. You matter more than I do," Kallista replied.

"You're just as important. Stop," Gabriel sighed heavily.

"Maybe..." Kallista replied trailed off as she watched his eyes close. His face was smooshed into the pillow, brows still furrowed. He was tired, stressed and she could see it.

"You tricked me," Gabriel began.

"What do you mean?" Kallista asked.

"I wasn't planning on staying and now I don't want to get up," Gabriel replied.
"You're the one who willingly followed me," Kallista replied.

"Yeah..." the man replied with a yawn and moved closer to her. She moved so that should cradle the man's head near her chest and he wrapped an arm around her waist. Their legs tangled with one another as they relaxed and let sleep take them. Gently and methodically, Kallista ran her fingers through his short hair and massaged his scalp.

"Mmm..." Gabriel replied softly and relaxed further in her arms.

As the man relaxed and soon fell asleep, Kallista's mind raced. She knew that the man was a soldier and ran at full speed but also knew that he was bound to crash and burn. He was a stubborn took the brunt of all of the problems so that his colleagues would not have to.

He did everything himself.

She wondered how much longer it would take for him to break, and to delegate those problems to those he had worked so hard to build up. Time would only tell, but time wasn't on their side.

She kept her thoughts to herself as she continued to run a hand through his hair in an attempt to put the man's mind to rest, and hopefully hers.

It wasn't easy, it was never easy when he had to bury a comrade, an agent, a friend. No matter how much they convinced themselves that it was for a noble cause. That it was for peace, and it was their duty to protect even from the shadows.

It was still difficult.

They had to remind themselves that maintaining the peace for the future generations to come was just as important as the lives lost.

It was their hard reminder.

"Dontsova," Gabriel called out to the woman sitting outside on the dimly lit covered patio. He noticed that it took the woman a moment to acknowledge the man's presence next to her.

"Reyes," Lyudmila replied softly.

Gabriel silently sat down next to her and took off the military cap they wore while in uniform, it was for the funeral several hours ago, it was required as they sent off their comrades with praise and laid them to rest. The two sat in silence, still and their gazes elsewhere.

"Aren't you cold?" Gabriel asked as he stood next to her before he took a seat.

"I'm used to it," Lyudmila replied.

"I know you're from Russia and may be used to the cold...but its damn cold," Gabriel said

"You're from the Los Angeles...you don't get snow right?" Lyudmila asked a small smirk on her lips.

"If you're saying I have thin skin, I don't," Gabriel replied.

"Anything you say, boss," Lyudmila replied and shrugged. Gabriel sighed heavily as he looked towards the snow-covered trees, the events earlier today played on repeat in his mind.

"You wanna talk about it?" Gabriel was the first to break the silence.
"No. Not really," Lyudmila replied. Gabriel sighed softly as he took out a cigarette from his breast pocket.

"Mind if I smoke?" Gabriel asked.

"Smoking is bad for the lungs," Lyudmila commented.

"It's a bit too late for that," Gabriel replied.

"Do whatever then," Lyudmila replied.

Gabriel grunted softly as he lit the cigarette, took a long drag and exhaled as he blew out smoke. Silence settled between the two again.

"Tell me about the mission, tell me about him," Gabriel spoke up.

"You already heard what had happened and you know there will be a briefing due to casualties and my-" Lyudmila began.

"Enough. I want to hear it from you without the legalities and formal bullshit," Gabriel cut the woman off.

For a third time, silence fell between them. Gabriel saw the woman tense and shift next to him, but remained silent. He knew this was hard for her, the casualties were a reminder about her past and how she came be what she joked about, how she became a bionic soldier with her arms and leg.

"The mission was solid...we weren't prepared for the Talon's attack. I don't know if we would have been prepared," Lyudmila began.

"I told you to forget the formal bullshit Lyudmila," Gabriel cut in.

"Look this shit isn't easy to talk about Gabriel. Our team was solid but that fucking ambush was all too similar to ...to…" Lyudmila trailed off as she turned to look at the man. Gabriel watched the woman as her words seemed to die on the tip of her tongue, words that she couldn't say, words that she didn't want to say.

"It was...too similar to Vector," Lyudmila finished and turned away from the man.

"It was…” Gabriel said quietly.

"Is this what you wanted? To see me choking on my words?" Lyudmila asked.

"No, but facing your past is what gives you strength as cliché as that shit sounds," Gabriel replied. Lyudmila cursed in her native tongue and slicked back a piece of stray hair that fell out of place.

"The individual had intel on a new type of agent that Talon had recruited that apparently had ties to Russia which is why it was important we got them out of the field and into safety," Gabriel began.

"I know...and I'm sorry I failed...we lost...good agents too," Lyudmila trailed off.

"I don't accept your apology, it was like you said. We underestimated them and we paid for it with the lives of our comrades...we know not to let Overwatch underestimate them again," Gabriel replied.

"Yeah…” Lyudmila replied bitterly as she looked at her hands, Gabriel noticed the woman had focused on her hands, one gloved and the other ungloved.
"We all have blood on our hands Lyuda," Gabriel commented softly as he snuffed out his cigarette.

"Everyone in this fucking place has blood on their hands," Gabriel repeated.

"It's the price we pay...for peace," Lyudmila said softly.

Kallista plopped down into her office chair and sighed heavily, each loss of life was a blow to morale no matter how much information they had, no matter how much they painstakingly planned, there was always room for error. Even if they spent months on it.

"How is the decryption going Malik? How long do expect for it to take?" Kallista asked.

"It's going I guess? There were a few setbacks but we're on track now and should have it open and ready to go in a day or so," Malik replied.

"That's good... at least we have something else to give Reyes and Morrison," Kallista replied.

"Will Lyuda be ok?" they asked.

"Yeah, why do you ask?" Kallista replied.

"I was just asking...because I know it's hard to lose someone that you were close to," Malik replied, Kallista sighed softly.

"Yeah...but also death isn't a foreign concept to her or to any of us. She's a strong woman, if she needs anything from us she'll let us know," Kallista replied.

"You really believe that?" Malik asked and arched an eyebrow.

"We can't force her to do anything she doesn't want to do," Kallista shrugged as she leaned back in her chair.

"But that doesn't apply to me?" Malik questioned.

"Gentle reminders, speaking of which, have you been taking your meds? Going to your treatments?" Kallista questioned, the man leaned back in their chair and rolled their eyes.

"Yes, mom," Malik replied sarcastically.

"Look, your well-being is my responsibility while you're in this department. I'm making sure you're doing what you're supposed to be doing so I don't get my ass chewed out," Kallista replied annoyed.

It wasn't secret knowledge that they didn't like the med-bay, nor did they like needles or any type of supplement or medication that was not explained to them or of organic means. Their background was a tumultuous one drug addiction at a young age, experimentations that left them in their current state.

"Reyes barely lifts a finger against you unless it's to slap your ass, don't give me that shit excuse," Malik scoffed. Kallista clicked her tongue in annoyance at the man's comment.

"It's not Reyes I'm being chewed out by," Kallista began as she tugged at her tie and button up shirt. Malik looked at the woman intrigued and slightly invested in how many buttons she was going to undo.

"It's coming from Overwatch. It's not Morrison, not so much Captain Amari, but Agent Gerard and Agent Shepard," Kallista replied.

"Overwatch Intel...which is why I asked about your health especially with your immune system being weak and all," Kallista replied.

"Oh...well..." Malik trailed off. Kallista glanced at Malik as they leaned back in their chair and crossed their arms.

"They specifically asked for you and I don't even think Reyes knows about this yet...," Kallista trailed off as her sharp blue eyes met their golden speckled obsidian eyes.

"So they've finally come to realize my greatness?" Malik chuckled

"I mean...you and I both know that you don't consider your past great," Kallista replied. Malik sighed and gripped their cane as they looked at the woman.

"What...do they...wanna know?" Malik questioned.

"They want to know about Talon," Kallista replied.

"They want to know about Talon? Why? Why now?" Malik began hesitantly.

"For a possible upcoming mission," Kallista replied softly. Talon was always something hard to speak on, especially with those that had connections with the organization. Malik was directly connected to the organization, they were the ones that gifted them their gifts and their current condition.

Malik possessed abilities that no one could even imagine without the help of technology, Malik was able to bend the mind of those that made eye contact with them. Kallista knew some of what Malik could do but not the full extent.

"Director Kaines!"

Kallista instinctively stood from her chair and turned her attention to the woman that quickly entered her office. With a quick glance at the woman's demeanor, Kallista knew that something had happened for the worst.

"We have a situation," Linda began.

"This better be good Truffles," Malik said bitterly as he turned in his chair to look at the woman.

"We've lost all communication with the Research Vessel and Agent Bradley. Not only that, there is no signal coming from the vessel itself. It completely disappeared."

"What do you mean lost contact with them? There is always a signal broadcasting regardless if we somehow lost communication with them for a short period of time," Kallista said as she walked towards the woman.

"Malik we'll talk later about this, this situation is an all hands on deck," Kallista said as she took Linda's holopad and exited her office.

"Fuck," Malik hissed under his breath as he stood and followed the two women from the office.

"I can't even remote access or bypass the communication systems in the ship or with Agent Bradley's comm chip." Magnus cursed as he watched Kallista populate a holographic screen the research vessel's last coordinates.
"Last check in was approximately six hours ago, we've tried several times to re-establish the connection and got nothing," Linda said as she sat down at her desk and quickly populated the error and no signal messages she had received.

"Have you tried having Athena connect?" Malik questioned as he sat at his desk.

"Athena couldn't connect either," Linda replied.

"Have we already made contact with the Overwatch Base in South Africa?" Kallista questioned.

"Yes, we've been in contact with both the Overwatch base in South Africa and the Research Department here," Aleks replied.

"Work on forcing that communication request through," Kallista began as she pulled her hair up into a bun.

"We-

A holographic screen pushed forward over all of the other screens, the screen itself was black but showed faint outlines of three figures. Kallista looked at the four behind her, they were confused as she was.

"What is this?" Kallista asked.

_Security feed before the signal was lost. Unfortunately, this was all I was able to find_

"Thank you, Athena, begin playback," Kallista ordered. The playback was just a black screen with muffled noises, it was no longer than thirty seconds at best. It gave no clear sign of what transpired on the ship or who attacked it.

"Athena, can you raise the volume on the playback?" Kallista asked.

{The sound has been damaged from the original feed, shall I repair the audio?}

"Yes," Kallista replied.

{Affirmative. One moment...thank you for waiting. I have repaired the original audio to 45 percent, the original audio has been corrupted beyond my ability to repair without the physical device.}

"Thank you, Athena. Please continue with playback," Kallista said and sighed heavily.

{Affirmative.}

The playback was the same except for the faint muffling that Kallista's ears picked up.

"I heard something but I couldn't understand what they were saying," Aleks commented.

"Athena, please play back one more time," Kallista asked.

{Affirmative.}

"It's not English...it's Russian," Kallista commented.

"My Russian is a bit rusty but...I think it said leave no one alive?" Magnus replied.

The room was silent as the group attempted to digest what they had heard, they knew that it wasn't
much but they sensed that by the time a rescue crew had reached them it would be too late.

"That voice wasn't anyone from the ship was it?" Magnus questioned. The group knew that the ship's crew was small and for a good reason.

"I don't know…it didn't sound like anyone…and if I remember correctly none of the staff can speak Russian," Aleks replied and grabbed his data pad to pull up the crew's information.

"But WHO was it though?" Linda questioned.

"Logically speaking, it could only be Talon. There is no way that any run of the mill pirates would attack an Overwatch Research Ship," Malik replied.

"When are you ever logically thinking Malik?" Magnus commented.

"Time and place," Malik replied and shrugged.

"He's right...unless those pirates had gotten access to weapons that could take down Overwatch and Blackwatch agents," Aleks began. "With that being said, Talon would be the next suspect...especially because Null Sector seems to be isolated in a few area and not enough funds for any naval movements,"

"Overwatch's South African base I'm sure already has been informed of this, alert the base in Antarctica as well," Kallista began. "Keep trying to establish connection the ship and Dani, I want eyes on previous assignments in South Africa as well as uprisings and mentions of Talon. We can't let the Antarctica base be compromised by anyone,"

Kallista shot off orders as she quickly dipped into her office to grab her cellphone before she made her way towards the exit of the office. The group moved quickly into action as she shot the orders off, she then turned to Malik.

"Get that tool open now. We don't have time to waste," Kallista began. "I'm going to speak to Reyes and Morrison about this. Aleks, you're in charge,"

The blond-haired man gave the woman a thumbs up as he continued to work, Kallista nodded and exited from the office.

"Athena...where is Commander Reyes?" Kallista asked as she began to text on her phone

{Commander Reyes is currently in the med-bay}

"Thank you,"

There were many unexplained instances that occurred and resulted in losses for Overwatch and Blackwatch. First, it was the ambush in Greece that killed not only their contact with information on Talon's new recruit and killed valuable Overwatch and Blackwatch agents. Followed by a possible hostile takeover of an Overwatch research vessel and of course the Cheshire cat.

All of these situations were too well-timed and planned as if they were meant to happen.

Time was against them and issue upon issue seemed to fall into her lap as she tried to make progress on her main focus. The biggest threat was the Cheshire cat, it needed to be dealt with before it spiraled out of control and the double agent within Overwatch needed to be stopped. In addition to the responsibilities the frequent migraines were relentless nor did the sudden silence that overwhelmed her.
"Fuck…" Kallista cursed as she reached out to the closest thing she could and grasped nothing, her vision steadily faded to black.

Bit by bit Kallista moved along the wall and crashed into a few things as she tried to make her way to the med-bay in hopes that her hearing and vision would return. She made her way down the hall when she heard muffled noises around her.

"Kal—ta?"

"Kalli-ta Ca..hr me?"

"Kallista, can ya hear me?"

"McCree? Jesse?" Kallista asked as she turned in the direction of where she thought the man was. She reached out to touch him to confirm that it was indeed the man, his larger hand took hers and gave it a reassuring squeeze.

"Jesse," Kallista sighed in relief.

"You ok? Let me help you to the med-bay?" Jesse asked.

Not many people within Blackwatch or Overwatch knew about the severity of her symptoms. They knew there were days where she had prolonged migraines but no blindness. Nor did they know about her loss of her hearing or the days she wasn't able to get out of bed.

Jesse was one of the people that knew, years ago Reyes had the man keep an eye on her while he was away and still occasionally watched her.

"Jesse…” Kallista began again as she gripped his hand.

"I'm here, I'm here," Jesse said as he gently grabbed her forearm and pulled her towards him and began to lead her down the hall.

"I need-" Kallista began.

"Already on it," Jesse replied.

Within minutes Jesse had Kallista at the med-bay and watched as she was being examined by Dr. Hasibuan.

"Hey, Doc, yer always up till the crack of dawn. Don't you know what sleep is? " Jesse questioned as he slicked back his hair with a smirk.

"No. What is this sleep you speak of?" Seraphina replied bluntly as she gently squeezed the IV pouch attached to Kallista's arm.

"Damn, they got y'all working like workhorses," Jesse tsked.

"A doctor's job is never done," Kallista commented sarcastically.

"Angie wasn't kidding then," Jesse trailed off as he turned towards the that casually approached them.

"What happened,"

"Jefe," Jesse nodded to the man.
"Reyes?" Kallista questioned as she turned her head towards the source of the voice. Gabriel quickly glanced at the woman and realized what had happened, he gently placed a hand on her shoulder to let her know that he was there. Silently, Seraphina studied the two before she turned to inject a clear serum into the I.V bag.

"This will replenish your lost liquids, you were severely dehydrated, lacking essential minerals. The only positive about this situation is the fact that your blindness is temporary but alarming nonetheless," Seraphina commented.

"I'll see you later Kallista," Jesse chuckled.

"Keep your jokes to yourself, Jesse," Kallista scoffed.

"Someone is grumpy today. Betta handle that Boss," Jesse commented.

"McCree get the hell out of here before I kick your ass myself," Gabriel growled at the man.

"Aye Aye Boss," Jesse smirked as he nodded to Seraphina and promptly left the med-bay.

"It's a side effect," Kallista commented.

"A dangerous side effect," Seraphina corrected.

"I am quite aware," Kallista replied sarcastically.

"A friendly reminder," Seraphina replied with just as much sarcasm as Kallista.

"Should I leave?" Gabriel questioned as he watched the two woman interact with one another.

"No," The two replied.

"Rest. I'll give you time to talk to your Commander...alone," Seraphina said as she left the two alone in a secluded corner.

"You seem to be good friends with Dr. Hasibuan," Gabriel commented as he pulled up a chair next to the bed.

"You seem to be good friends with Dr. Hasibuan," Gabriel commented as he pulled up a chair next to the bed.

"It's nothing, we're just being catty," Kallista replied. Tiredly, Gabriel pulled off his gloves and gently took her hand.

"What happened?"

"That's not important I-" Kallista began.

"Isn't it?" Gabriel asked. Kallista sighed softly as she gently rubbed her eyes, he was always worried more about her health that she was.

"Look, we both know my vision will come back. We have other bigger things to worry about-"

Kallista began.

"The Research Vessel to Antarctica?" Gabriel questioned.

"You already knew didn't you?" Kallista said.

"Kallista, you should know this by now...I know everything that goes on in my department. I was on my way to see you and hope that you had something good to tell me," Gabriel replied.
"Of course you knew, what the hell was I thinking?" Kallista murmured.

"Act first, think later, That's usually your motto," Gabriel replied.

"You make it seem like I'm an open book," Kallista scoffed.

"Do you want me to answer that?" Gabriel asked.

"No. Forget I even said that," Kallista huffed.

"My main focus is on Danica, we don't know what happened, and we can't get in contact with her," Kallista said quietly.

"Danica is a strong, smart, observant woman. If there's something she can't handle at a first glance, she'll find a way," Gabriel replied.

"You're right but..." Kallista trailed off.

"But what?" Gabriel asked silence fell between the two.

"Kallista..." Gabriel began.

"We managed to recover some corrupted audio and..." Kallista started.

"Hold on," Gabriel cut her off.

Kallista heard the man stand and move away from her, she already knew that there were other people in the med-bay but the footsteps were different. She turned her head in the direction of where the muffled voices and a sigh.

"I'll talk to him...he's in the rehabilitation chamber?" Gabriel asked, his voice was a whisper in an attempt to be secretive.

"Yes. We've given him his treatments but nothing seems to be working...Dr. Hasibuan and I can only do so much," Kallista determined it was Angela.

"I got it," Gabriel replied.

"I'm sorry about this Commander Reyes...especially...right now," Angela's voice was soft but Kallista was able to hear her perfectly.

"I'll go check on him in a second," Gabriel said as he began towards Kallista.

"Understood," Angela replied.

"Kallista," Gabriel started.

"I'll be fine. My team can work with the base in South Africa, go do what you need to do," Kallista replied.

"You really are grumpy, have you had coffee yet?" Gabriel commented with a chuckle.

"Excuse me?" Kallista huffed.

"I trust you on this Kallista, don't let me down. Dani is a strong woman but we need to bring her and
any survivors back," Gabriel said as he placed a hand on her shoulder and softly squeezed her shoulder.

"Bring me coffee and maybe I'll forgive you," Kallista replied.

"I'll do what I can," Gabriel replied.

At first, Gabriel hesitated at first to leave the woman's side, she had been in the med-bay twice in 24 hours. He was worried about her well-being along with the one million other things that needed his attention.

Kallista listened to the man's footsteps as he exited from the med-bay and once his footsteps faded she turned her attention to her next task at hand.

"Seraph," Kallista called out for the woman.

"What?"

"Come here, I need your assistance," Kallista replied as she moved towards the edge of the bed.

"Didn't your Commander tell you he's coming back?" Seraphina mentioned, her words laced with sarcasm.

"Did you know It's quite rude to listen in on personal conversations?" Kallista commented.

"It's a public space, honey," Seraphina replied.

"It is also a private conversation. And no he did not say that," Kallista added.

"Whatever you say Director Kaines. Now, what can I do for you?" Seraphina asked.

"Lieutenant's Dontsova's serum, I need it," Kallista replied,

"In moderation Kallista, it can become very addicting," Seraphina commented.

"I am well aware of the risks...I just need this recovery to speed up. I have tasks I need to complete," Kallista replied as she rubbed her eyes.

"Miss Busybody. As far as I am aware this is not available for consumption off field and I'm sure you don't have special permission to consume this," Seraphina replied.

"It's fine, you have my word," Kallista waved off the woman's worry even though she knew that both of them would chew her out if they knew.

"There are so many restrictions to hide your health records that I find it appalling and hilarious at the same time. How do they expect me to give you the best treatment without knowing your history," Seraphina sighed annoyed.

"They need to give you clearance for Blackwatch personnel...or just follow orders," Kallista replied.

Seraphina knew that there were only a select few who had access to their medical files, regardless of how many times she had treated them and she soon accepted the fact that she would never receive access to those files not matter how many times she requested them.

"Like you do?" Seraphina questioned.
"Ouch...did something happen today you're extra prickly,?" Kallista asked.

"Maybe...but answer this before I give this to you. You two are more than just coworkers aren't you?" the woman asked.

"What makes you say that?" Kallista questioned.

"I saw the way he looked at you, how he came running back to the med-bay when I called," Seraphina replied.

"So you called him," Kallista commented.

"Dr. Ziegler's orders," Seraphina replied.

"So you do follow orders," Kallista commented.

"Never said I didn't or show signs of it," Seraphina replied. Kallista brushed some of her hair back and sighed.

"How about we get acquainted with a nice cup of tea when I get my vision back?" Kallista asked.

"Fine, but I still want an answer," Seraphina said firmly, Kallista hesitated for a moment.

"I can not confirm or deny that there is something more between us," Kallista replied.

"What a shitty answer..." Seraphina replied as she went to get a syringe and a vial of the orange liquid. Kallista knew that there was no time for rest, not when the research vessel and all of its crew were in danger, not when the Cheshire cat still ran loose.

She couldn't rest or share her secrets.
Chapter Summary

Casualties were always a cold reminder to those fighting for peace.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

_Hours later in the Overwatch R&D Department_

"Should I be worried at the fact that Kallista said that there's a mission specifically for me?" Malik asked.

"Why worried? You've been complaining about not being on the field as much, that should be good right?" Mikael replied as he adjusted Malik's exoskeleton joints.

"You're right but this mission..." Malik trailed off. Mikael looked up at Malik as he adjusted his glasses, confused he waited for them to continue.

"It's about my past... I thought if I could bury it people would forget about it and I wouldn't be reminded at the fact that it's the reason I'm like this...constantly in pain," Malik replied.

"If that's the case...you have to do it. It won't be easy but-" Mikael began.

"It's not that easy," Malik cut in.

"Are you just saying that?" Mikael asked as he stopped his work to look up at them.

"Look. I know I indulge in other things to avoid doing things or I conveniently forget things so I don't have to do it. This is different...much different," Malik replied.

"Then?" Mikael asked as he went back to his work.

"I'm not ready. I can't do this," Malik replied softly.

Mikael placed his tools down and looked at them again, Malik turned their head to avoid the man's gaze.

"You can't keep running away from this Malik. It's going to keep following you until you deal with it," Mikael sighed.

"This is-You saw what they did to me, they made...they made me into what I am now. They made me into-" Malik began.

"Quiet the mind and the soul will speak," Mikael commented. Malik looked at the man, stunned.

"A Buddhist saying I tend to go to when I need to make decisions...it tends to help," Mikael commented sheepishly.
"...yeah..." Malik replied hesitantly.

"I remember what happened when we picked you up from that testing facility, believe me, I remember. Your wounds, mental state and the inability to speak English are hard to forget. But the fact that Kallista knows that you're the best of her agents, and probably the only one that could really spearhead the mission," Mikael said.

Malik remained silent as their mind wandered back to the torturous memories back at one of Talon's testing facilities. They were attempting to create agents that would be able to attack the psyche of their targets, deal mind-crushing hallucinations and more. No one was really sure if the project was a success or not, Malik showed no signs besides their abnormal eyes. Malik and another person were rescued from that facility that day, Jin Mikami, who was now a Neuroscientist in the Overwatch division, a doctor in charge of their health.

"It could be the perfect time to get rid of all those things that are holding you back, dragging you down you know? New year, new you," Mikael commented as he turned towards the smaller man that had entered the room.

"Torbjorn," Mikael nodded to the man as Malik remained silent.

"I see ya got that exoskeleton there," The man began.

"I was tweaking the joints so they can move easier. They complained about it being too stiff," Mikael started.

"Well I want ya to know that I got some upgrades for ya," Torbjorn began. The two perked up at the mention upgrades.

"I've been in contact with the Overwatch base in South Africa, they already dispatched a search and rescue team to the last coordinates of the ship," Ana began and sighed.

"We've been in contact with them as well. We have an agent on board and we've lost communication with them as well. I've already got my department working on pushing a signal through and I hope that we can at least establish a connection, anything at this point," Kallista replied with the thought of the ominous message from the security camera that was recovered nearly four hours ago.

Time passed quickly, every hour, every minute, every second was just as important as the last. They had no inkling as to what happened on the ship, or if Talon really did attack that ship and it wasn't the run of the mill pirates.

"Our window is narrow especially in those waters, but we should be able to make it to the ship in a matter of hours with the weather permitting of course," Ana replied.

"That's good. Please keep me informed," Kallista nodded a thank you.

"Of course...but I'm sure you know this bodes ill-wind Kallista," Ana said. Kallista sighed softly her eyes closed for a moment before she nodded.

She knew what the woman was referring to, the mole in Overwatch, people lives were at stake and Kallista could be blamed for not delivering on her part quick enough to save those lives. Kallista knew the risks and the responsibility, Reyes, and Morrison had bestowed that on to her and now she needed to deliver and fast.

"I know and understand. I am working within my means and it is difficult but I promise to deliver
"Soon," Kallista replied.

"That's good to hear but you also need to take care of yourself. You look a little tired," Ana sighed.

"When aren't I tired?" Kallista commented.

"Not sleeping much?" Ana asked, a smirk on her lips. Kallista glanced at the woman and instantly knew what the woman poked at.

"Insomnia and I aren't the greatest friends nor am I good friends with a decent sleep schedule," Kallista replied. Ana laughed softly and nodded. Kallista pulled out her cellphone and noticed that she had several messages from Overwatch agents and more.

"It was a pleasure talking with you, Captain Amari. I have to catch up on these messages," Kallista nodded to the woman as she stood.

"Likewise Kallista, I don't see you very often so please take care of yourself and rest," Ana replied as she focused back on her computer.

"I will do my best," Kallista partially laughed and exited the woman's office.

Kallista made a beeline to her room as she read the emails she had received, an email thread from Talli that she had sent to herself and a few of the other women in Blackwatch about her engagement and how she needed advice on what to do next.

There was an encrypted message from their contact from the Frost Network, Mamma Jelli, about their new recruit and how they needed to meet with someone from Blackwatch to confirm.

There was an email from Aleks about updates on Cassius Park and his connections, Sterling and Mendoza signed a merger of companies whilst Park donated a lump sum of money to Pavetti tech and more. The final email was from DeadFoxHound with a possible lead on where the Cheshire Cat would strike next.

Her mind full of various information, tasks, minor details, missions, and worry she barely made it back to her the verge of crashing she barely entered her code to her room correctly, she stumbled into her room and dropped everything in her hands onto her desk. She plopped down on her bed and was immediately out.

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Gabriel grumbled as he walked down the silent halls of the Overwatch division, a holopad in one hand and his dark coffee mug in the other. More and more work seemed to pile up daily even after he thought he had cleared some up, everything needed his attention, everything. One of Blackwatch's trump card had recovered to some extent but still had his issues of conforming to his new environment and what had happened to him. He hoped the man would be stable enough to join them a few missions in the future to deal with the Shimada clan.

He glanced at the horizon as the sun had barely peeked and hoped that he would have a moment of peace to himself before everything started up again. It was quiet for now and hoped that he could get some sleep but that hopeful moment of peace was interrupted as he heard horrible noise further down the hall. The man sighed annoyed, he figured it was an Overwatch agent who had a little bit too much fun the night before and was now emptied the contents of their stomach into one of the general garbage cans.

He casually made his way down the hall as he sipped his now lukewarm coffee, he readied himself to chew out the agent for their drinking habits and behavior but wasn't prepared to see the petite form
hunched over the garbage can.

"Natalie?" Gabriel said confused as he quickly placed his coffee mug and data pad to the floor, and moved over to the woman to hold her hair until she was finished a few moments later.

"I thought I told you to stop trying to out drink people," Gabriel sighed. Natalie wiped her mouth with the back of her hand as she slumped against the wall.

"Mama didn't raise a quitter," Natalie replied as she grimaced.

"She was attempting to raise a doctor," Gabriel replied.

"And she got something completely different," Natalie chuckled.

"Either way, you need to calm down with your drinking habits," Gabriel commented as he held out a hand to help her to her feet.

"Where's the fun in that?" Natalie chuckled as she took the man's hand.

"Nat," Gabriel warned.

"Besides this is something different..." Natalie waved off the man's warning as she leaned partially onto the garbage can.

"You eat something bad?" the man questioned.

"I'm gonna need a whole feast after this. You know I can eat for like six people," Natalie laughed.

"I know and you can out drink a man that's twice your size and weight easily," Gabriel commented. Natalie grinned and cleared her throat.

"I'm gonna go to the med-bay and..." Natalie began.

"You might as well tell me while you're here because you know I'm gonna find out," Gabriel said as he bent over to pick up his datapad and coffee.

He could always tell when she held something back from him, he had watched her mature into what she was today. He scouted Natalie from Phoenix Corps, a Texan security firm, specifically from the Valkyrie Division of the company. A division made up of all women who were all technologically enhanced in some way, Natalie's eyes and strength was enhanced, her strength rivaled his and her vision was perfect she never missed a shot.

Over time he began to treat her like a daughter he never had, despite the roundabout ways she went to get him to smile or relax when stress was rampant in the growing Blackwatch Division.

"What makes you think there's something going on?" Natalie grimaced as she cleared her throat again.

"How long have I know you, Nat?" Gabriel asked.

"Are you pulling the dad card on me, because that's what it feels like," Natalie scoffed.

"Well shit, here I thought I was a good father figure for you and everyone else," Gabriel chuckled

"I kid, you have been and I appreciate it but..." Natalie trailed off.
"You're also bad at hiding things," Gabriel added.

"Ok, maybe, but this is a bit more sensitive," Natalie replied. Gabriel silently looked at the woman with a critical eye as he took a sip of his coffee, he did notice that woman had looked sickly recently, and was late for training or missed it completely. He had his suspicions, but never assumed and waited for her to tell him.

"What did you get yourself into Natalie," Gabriel said cautiously.

It was early afternoon when Kallista was back at work and was in a phone call with an agent from the South Africa Overwatch base.

{The ship was definitely attacked by Talon, there were no survivors looked like a slaughterhouse, the research material for the base in Antarctica. The entire ship seemed to be gutted as well.}

"That's bad news my friend, please tell me you have good news?" Kallista sighed.

{I have some, there were a few emergency escape capsules missing, we barely had enough time to anchor the ship to a transport ship before the waters became too strong. But we are sending out the coast guard to search. In the meantime, we are pulling the ship back to shore so that we can properly begin burial preparations. In the meantime we have our crew on board identifying the bodies}

Kallista leaned back in her chair as she steepled her fingertips over her lips in thought. The ship had been gutted, everyone on board was slaughtered, that small glimmer of hope of Danica making it to an emergency capsule was starting to fade.

"Were there any signs of Agent Bradley?" Kallista asked, prepared to hear the outcome she didn't want to hear.

{No signs of the agent. Her sleeping quarters were searched but she could be one of the few that made it to the emergency escape capsule...}

Danica wasn't among the ones dead on the ship, but she could be one of few who managed to get to safety only to be met with the dark icy waters of the South Atlantic Ocean. She knew that she needed to update both Gabriel and Lyudmila about the situation but they were both busy with the sudden Anti-Omnic revolts in South Korea and Russia.

"Thank you. Please keep me informed of any updates," Kallista sighed.

{Of course, Director Kaines. Please rest easy my friend}

Kallista ended the call and leaned further back in her chair, she had a migraine that wouldn't go away and she was more than worried about Danica.

Was she ok?

Was she hurt?

Was she dead on the emergency escape capsule?

She took off her glasses and tossed them to her desk all while she placed her feet up on her desk,

"Kallista,"
The woman turned her attention to the man that quickly approached her desk.

"Gabriel," Kallista said as she took her feet off her desk and stood.

"I need you to rush a favor for me and prepare to meet our contact," Gabriel began.

"A favor? And are you referring to Mamma Jelli?" Kallista questioned, there were no such things a favors between the two. If they asked the other would do what the could for one another.

"Here," Gabriel said as he handed her the datapad he held. She took the information from his pad and move it to her computer. She quickly scanned the information before she looked up at the man.

"Transfer papers for Natalie?" Kallista asked.

"Temporary," Gabriel added.

"What's-" Kallista began.

"She's expecting and too far along for me to put her on the field," Gabriel replied.

"Pardon me. I don't think I heard you quite clearly. Did you say that Natalie is expecting?" Kallista asked. Gabriel smirked at the woman's confusion.

"I love it when your accent comes out," Gabriel commented.

"Gabriel," Kallista said firmly and rubbed her temples.

"You heard right. She's expecting," Gabriel said quietly as he moved over to her, worry laced his features.

"Oh my god..." Kallista began. "Who is--"

"The situation is a bit complex...but that's for Natalie to tell if she wants..."Gabriel replied as he gently pushed a piece of stray hair from her face.

"Oh? I am curious now," Kallista started.

"You'll know when she tells you and don't even try getting anything out of me," Gabriel cut in.

"I guess...does anyone else know?" Kallista sighed.

"Just the ones that need to know," Gabriel replied as he cupped her cheek.

"I see," Kallista replied as her brows furrowed.

"Migraines?" Gabriel asked softly.

"Yeah..." Kallista sighed and nodded.

"Have you gone to see Angela?" Gabriel questioned,

"No...I've been busy with other things," Kallista replied sheepishly.

"Make sure you do...the side effects will get worse if you don't," Gabriel gently warned her.

"Yeah..." Kallista trailed off as she averted her gaze from him.
She had already felt the side effects progressively become worse, increased in frequency or strength. The fatigue, muscle soreness, tenderness, insomnia, migraines, blindness, it just seemed to get worse with every hit.

"Kallista…" Gabriel began as he tilted her head up to look at her, she hesitantly looked at him.

"Don't make me worry about you more than I already do," Gabriel whispered.

"You already took me off the field and you're still worrying, you're gonna get gray hair worrying too much," Kallista whispered. Gabriel remained silent his eyes never left hers as he ran his thumb over her bottom lip.

"Gabe…"

"Shh..." Gabriel said as he leaned down to kiss her.

"Director Kaines-"

Gabriel stopped mere inches from her lips and sighed heavily and remained still, his back still towards the woman that stood in the doorway of the woman's office.

"Linda...do you have any updates?" Kallista asked and sighed as well. Gabriel hesitantly stepped away from Kallista and moved to one of the empty chairs in front of her desk.

"I apologize but the South African rescue crew have arrived and concluded their prelim search and..." Linda trailed off.

"And what?" Gabriel pressed, a hint of annoyance laced his words.

"A quick search of the bodies...agent Bradley isn't among the ones who had been slain, but they have found bodies of Talon agents near agent Bradley's sleeping quarters," Linda continued.

"Ok, but there's no hard evidence that she made it to an emergency escape capsule," Kallista sighed.

"That is true, but I am working with Athena to restore the voyage data recorder that has seemed to be corrupted," Linda continued.

"Ok continue with the data restoration protocols for a VDR," Kallista ordered.

"Yes of course, but in regards to agent Bradley...the rescue window is rapidly closing and…” Linda began.

"Contact that recon team in the area and have them conduct a smaller joint search with the South African Overwatch base," Gabriel ordered.

"Yes Sir," Linda replied.

"Cain and Lucas should be in the area, contact them," Kallista added.

"Right away," Linda said and quickly exited the woman's office.

"I refuse to believe that Danica is lost and I'm not going to let them write her off as MIA," Gabriel scoffed.

"Maybe with a grumpy Blackwatch Commander on their ass they'll move faster," Kallista sighed.
"You should have let me step in sooner," Gabriel commented.

"You could have stepped in anytime your highness," Kallista replied sarcastically. Gabriel scoffed at the woman's comment and stood.

"What else did you need to tell me?" Kallista grimaced.

"It can wait. Find Bradley and then we can talk about this next mission," Gabriel said as he began for the exit, it was Kallista's turn to scoff.

"You make it seem like I can't find her," Kallista frowned.

"I know you will," Gabriel said as he looked over his shoulder at the woman.

"Then why so much sass?" Kallista asked.

"G gentle nudging, Kallista," Gabriel corrected her.

"Sure...gentle nudging my ass," Kallista murmured.

"I heard that," Gabriel tsked as he turned to face her, Kallista shrugged her shoulders as she plopped down into her chair.

"Go see Angela...again otherwise you'll see me tonight," Gabriel said as he stood in the doorway.

"If I don't?" Kallista asked. Gabriel smirked at the woman sitting on the edge of her desk, a cat-like grin on her lips. She waited for his response even though she knew what it was going to be.

"la curiosidad mató al gato, Kallista," Gabriel said before the door closed behind him.

Chapter End Notes

Rough Translations:

la curiosidad mató al gato, Kallista : Curiosity killed the cat, Kallista
Three days had passed when the search for Danica ended and when she had finally returned back to the Overwatch base. Three long torturous days in the arctic waters, surrounded by prime hunters of the dark depths. She had managed to escape in an emergency pod, but the pod had been damaged and forced her out of the capsule. Exposed to the bone-chilling water, wind, Killer whales and more.

It was a miracle that she was alive and it would be only a matter of time until the knew the full effects of what happened.

"Director Kaines,"

"Mikami," Kallista greeted him as she stood near the man's desk. Although Danica didn't report to Kallista, she still felt responsible for what had happened, responsible for whatever was to come next with the woman. She felt as if she could have done better, prevented the slaughter that happened on the ship, that she could have prevented what happened to her.

Kallista felt guilty. Guilty enough that she kept tabs on the woman's recovery, she needed to see for herself what was happening, she needed to be sure she was getting the best care there was available in both Overwatch and Blackwatch support.

She needed to know.

"It has been a while Director, what can I do for you?" Jin questioned.

"I have a couple of questions about Malik and about Agent Bradley," Kallista began. She could see the man tense at the mention of Malik's name. It was quick and would have been missed if she weren't looking at the man.

"Ok. I'll help as much as I can," Jin replied.

Kallista glanced over the man, taking his demeanor before she spoke, she knew of the rocky relationship the two, they had a relationship but it was a complicated and seemingly one-sided relationship. They relied on each other during the torturous experiments Talon had put them through in order to achieve their far-fetched goals. He, Jin Mikami was the only who could decipher Malik when others couldn't. He knew Malik's extensive medical history and how to treat them and was used as a middleman to understand her stubborn colleague.

"Has Malik taken their medication and attended their therapy session regularly?" Kallista asked.

"Mmm...Malik hasn't attended a check in with me in several months, but I have received updates from Dr. Ziegler, Dr, Hasibuan's complaints and a few updates from Nurse Doubek but I have not
seen them in person," Jin began as he pulled a datapad from a neat stack.

"I can only assume that they have," Jin finished as he looked up from the pad in his hands. Kallista picked up on the man's hesitation, there was more but she didn't have time to dive into their emotional baggage and based on how often Malik avoided Jin. There were tons of it.

"May I ask why?" Jin questioned.

"Simply put, I need them to be fully there so there are no complications on a future mission," Kallista replied.

"I think I understand but how is this different than their other missions?" Jin questioned.

"It's confidential," Kallista replied firmly as she shifted her weight to her other leg. Jin continued to stare at the woman silently as he became lost in his thoughts.

"It's quite rude for you to stare," Kallista commented.

"S-Sorry. May I ask one more question?" Jin questioned.

"It depends on what it is," Kallista replied.

"Will he be alright? They're not getting into something that's going to get them killed…" Jin trailed off. Kallista placed a hand on her hip and pursed her lips together.

"You're still worried about them even though they avoid you like a plague. You must be really smitten with them," Kallista sighed. Jin looked away from her at that moment, she knew that she had struck a chord within the man.

"It's none of my business, but it really depends on how Malik and if they'll do some reckless shit," Kallista replied.

"That sounds like they're getting themselves into danger," Jin replied.

"Blackwatch is dangerous, Overwatch is dangerous. You should know that even if you're tucked away in the labs. Your pacifist ways may work in Overwatch and off the field to some extent, but not in Blackwatch. We do what Overwatch will not," Kallista replied.

"I understand…but I digress. Is there anything else you wish to discuss Director Kaines?" Jin asked as he changed the subject.

"Danica Bradley. I need you to monitor her mental health and stability," Kallista began.

"Agent Bradley? I believe that Nurse Asuka is in charge of her care and recovery as well as Nurse Doubek. But I will make sure to check in on her," Jin said as he pulled up a holo-screen of Agent Bradley's medical files.

"Thank you. You can send updates or any concerns to myself, Lyudmila or Reyes," Kallista added.

"Understood," Jin replied as he scanned the woman's files. Kallista nodded and exited from the man's lab.

He sighed softly as he leaned back in his chair, lost in his thoughts. He didn't need her to tell him about what Malik was getting themselves into, he knew there would be a day where they would want to use both of them to explore Talon or to use their unique skills to weaken the organization. Not to mention the propaganda, the riots, and murders were just the beginning of a whole other issue.
It wasn't hard to see where everything was leading to.

After she had stopped at Dr. Mikami's office she made her way to the med bay to check on Danica herself. She had seen her when she had first returned, her lips and skin were speckled with red blotches and her limbs a pale blue. Her clothes were practically frozen, tattered from the treacherous arctic winds and water, the bandage and gauze she used for an injury had broken into pieces and stuck her skin.

Even with her severe condition, Gabriel believed she would pull through and Kallista was inclined to believe him, but she needed to see it for herself.

The soft beeps of heart monitors and the quiet murmurs of nurses and medical staff filled Kallista's ears as she entered the large sterile room and quickly glanced around. It didn't take long for Kallista to find Danica, the woman that had saved her, Reira Asuka, a young newly trained medic that had joined Overwatch almost a year ago.

"Miss Asuka," Kallista began quietly as she moved over towards her. The woman quickly looked over her shoulder and towards Kallista.

"Ah, Director Kaines. I didn't expect to see you so soon," Reira began.

"I had time before my tasks today. How is she?" Kallista asked as she focused on the sleeping woman on the hospital bed.

"I see. She's progressing a little slow but she's recovering," Reira replied as she too looked at Danica.

"That's good news," Kallista replied and sighed heavily.

"I-I know but we've already conducted extracorporeal rewarming with success and her brain function is normal, even with the minor muscle deterioration but her strength will return when she begins therapy. With enough luck on my side I will have her back to Blackwatch in no time," Reira nodded.

"I can tell she's in good hands. Please take your time, If she needs rest and time we will handle it," Kallista replied.

"Y-yes. Of course. Um, shall I continue to report to Commander Reyes? " Reira questioned as she looked down at her datapad.

"If that's what he told you then you should follow his orders," Kallista answered as she looked to her cell phone.

"Understood," Reira nodded.

"Alright then, thank you for updating me, If you can't get in contact with Reyes or Lieutenant Dontsova please contact me," Kallista said as she turned to walk away.

"Understood Director Kaines," Reira replied softly and nodded as she turned back to the unconscious woman on the bed.
"We have to move otherwise the longer we wait the worse it will become," Lyudmila commented as she crossed her arms.

"If we act too quickly it could put Blackwatch in the under the spotlight and add more fuel to the flame that's under our asses," Gabriel replied.

"We already have eyes on the ground and we-" Lyudmila began.

"You already know that agents- No, Overwatch agents are being targeted by Talon and let's just assume that Null Sector and Talon are working together. That's another shitstorm that we have to dig through," Gabriel sighed.

"Another shit storm," Lyudmila sighed.

"There's too much shit going on in Eastern Europe and jokes aside, Talon planned all of this shit. They planned all of this and we didn't even fucking see it coming," Gabriel hissed as he stood from his chair and went over to the large holographic screen. He zoomed into four different countries that were already highlighted on the screen.

"These four countries are where Null Sector first appeared. Croatia, Austria, Hungary, and the Netherlands. They began with these countries and then branched out to Latvia, Estonia, and Ukraine," Gabriel began to explain. "Currently, there's no sign of Null Sector in these countries but at the same time South Korea's homegrown anti-omnic group started making noise again," Gabriel sighed.

"All the signs point to being planned," Lyudmila commented.

"Overwatch missed its mark. All of this was planned so strategically that Overwatch is slowly being overwhelmed by the world depending on them to police their country," Gabriel grunted as he slipped off his beanie and scratched his buzzed head.

"The biggest concerns should be in South Korea. We were there before but it's worse and to be honest I can see it taking a turn for the worst…” Gabriel trailed off.

There was a short pause between the two before Lyudmila spoke.

"Are you saying...war...Reyes?” Lyudmila questioned as she turned to look at the man.

War.

A second Omnic War, a Second Omnic Crisis.

Something the world didn't need, there were still countries that were still healing from the old wounds and scars of the first crisis. There were still those who had not yet recovered from the trauma, the horrors of war and yet there were those who thrived in it, she was one of those people. It was all that she knew and yet she wanted to avoid it at all costs.

"Normally I wouldn't even utter the word, but it's possible," Gabriel sighed. Lyudmila remained silent as she moved to sit down, the possibility of war would be devastating.

Were they ready? How long would it take them to be read? Would she be able to perform without issue, be cool, calm and collected?

Would she be able to pull through this war?
"Let's keep that in the back of our minds for the moment, about that new agent from the Frost
Network," Gabriel began.

"Yes. Kallista and I have been in contact with our contact in the Frost Network and also with the
Recruitment Director," Lyudmila began.

"I heard that you chewed them out," Gabriel chuckled as he sat across from her. Lyudmila scoffed as
she leaned back in her chair and placed her ankle over her knee.

"They know they could have gone and retrieved this agent since they want her to be in their ranks.
Don't they have people to do these sorts of things?" Lyudmila scoffed.

"They do, but this is different. We have the contact and it's better if we dealt with them instead of
them. They're a close contact-" Gabriel started.

"Close contact? You sounded like you wanted to strangle the woman. Mamma Jelli was it?"
Lyudmila commented as she stifled a chuckle.

"Evangeline…" Gabriel sighed and clicked his tongue as Lyudmila snickered across from him.

"How did you come across this contact if you don't mind me asking," Lyudmila questioned.

"Evangeline or should I say Mamma Jelli and I have a rocky history, unfortunately," Gabriel scoffed.

"A rocky history? " Lyudmila asked.

"It's been a while since I've seen you this curious about me Lyuda," Gabriel scoffed again, the
woman shrugged gently.

"I mean I already know you won't tell me about you and Kallista and I'm not one to pry. So, humor
me, Reyes, you can't always be the mysterious alpha wolf of the pack," Lyudmila chuckled. Gabriel
chuckled at the woman's comment, she was right in a way.

"She used to work directly under one of the Blackwatch Squad leaders before she decided this
wasn't for her," Gabriel began.

"Mmmhm," Lyudmila replied, a small smirk on her lips.

"Don't give me that judgemental look, Lyuda," Gabriel sighed.

"I'm just listening," Lyudmila tilted her head slightly.

"Yeah. Sure…" Gabriel shook his head at the woman.

"Anyway...I'll keep my lips sealed until necessary," Lyudmila began.

"And this is why you are my right-hand woman Lyuda. Morrison and Ana are already aware of this
and more than likely swamped in other meetings," Gabriel spoke up, thankful that the woman
decided to drop the previous subject.

"Of course," Lyudmila nodded as she stood.

"In the meantime, you can expect to be on the field more. We need to see the situation for ourselves.
Overwatch won't have the manpower to lend assistance, as they handle the other side of things,"
Gabriel commented.
"They handle the cleaner things while we handle the dirtier things," Lyudmila commented.

"Our way of life. It's been like that for a while," Gabriel added.

"Did you two have a thing together?" the woman suddenly asked.

"It's complicated," Gabriel replied.

"Complicated? Wow, Reyes-" Lyudmila began.

"It's not like that," Gabriel waved off the woman's suggestive comment.

"Right. I'll let Kallista know that she has competition," Lyudmila laughed a bit as she exited from the room.

"**Dontsova! Get your ass back here!**"

"You ate what?" Aleks commented as his eyes switched between his monitors.

*Why do you have to say it like that? It was one of the most delicious things I've eaten in a while*

"You make it seem like the food in Zurich is terrible," Aleks replied.

*I mean...it can be better. There's nothing like a home-cooked meal...not saying that the chefs at the base aren't good but there's something different about it*

"I'll be sure to let the chefs know how you feel," Aleks snickered.

*Don't do that. I'm serious.*

"Heh. Why don't you cook for us when you get back? I've never had authentic Czech cuisine before," Aleks suggested as he closed one screen and opened another.

*Sounds like a plan to me. I'll make you one of my favorite dishes*

"We'll be waiting. But before I close this channel, how did your Salutem work?" Aleks questioned.

*I didn't have to use as much, which is a good sign. I may have to adjust the makeup of the serum though. Some of the agents said they felt sick, which isn't a side effect*

"You're supposed to heal people not make them sick," Aleks scoffed as he began to take note of what the man had said.

*Hey. We're supposed to do a lot of things...and we don't but hey. I'll make it work*

"Is that how Dr. Ziegler's students work?" Aleks chuckled.

*Hey. I'm working on it, give me a break*

"Right. I'm closing this channel. I'll see you in a few weeks. Sleep well and good luck on the rest of your mission,"

*Ahoj~*

"Coffee delivery," Magnus said as he entered the office with a travel tray full of travel cups.
"You actually went out to get coffee?" Linda spoke up.

"Might as well go all out," Magnus shrugged as he placed one cup by Aleks and one by Linda before he sat down at his own desk.

"Thanks, Mags," Aleks thanked him as he switched holoscreens.

"Thank you, Magnus," Linda said before she inhaled the sweet aroma of her coffee.

"It's so much quieter without Malik and Kallista," Magnus commented.

"Yeah," Linda commented.

"Both busy with missions and all the other things that are about to explode," Aleks commented casually.

"Lucky them," Magnus scoffed.

"Basically, Malik gets to work with Overwatch on a special assignment, and Kallista is swamped in the Cheshire Cat, PR and who knows what else," Aleks added.

Linda glanced at the two men silently, tension, uncertainty, the reports from the recon crew all pointed towards one thing. They didn't want to admit it, nor did they want to acknowledge it, it was too soon.

Even as they worked the word was at the tip of their tongues but they all refused to even utter the word. Everyone within Overwatch and Blackwatch was trained for war and there was less in the ranks that had experienced it.

Would they be able to deliver?

"I heard that Kallista is looking to add at least two more to the team… You know, just in case of emergencies, Magnus began.

"Oh? Where did you hear that from?" Aleks asked.

"Through the grapevine," Magnus replied as he sipped his coffee and side-eyed the man.

"Does she have any candidates in mind?" Linda questioned.

"Ellias Kallo? And she was looking at a few other people from Langley," Aleks replied.

"Langley? As in the United States?" Linda questioned.

"Yeah, but who knows she's busy with this recruitment mission Reyes assigned her to…" Aleks sighed.

"Didn't he kick you off of that mission to take it over" Magnus commented.

"He did and I will say that I am a little surprised," Aleks replied a bit sour. It was rare for Gabriel to provide support for missions that could easily be handled by one of the Blackwatch Intel crew or by Overwatch Intel.

He insisted and of course Aleks relented.

"Hah..I'm appalled that I wasn't assigned to the mission," Magnus scoffed.
"They knew that you'd be a terrible fit," Aleks bit back.

"Ok children, please calm down I can cut the tension between you two with a knife," Linda spoke up. Magnus and Aleks both huffed and continued to work in silence, until-

"Who is on the mission anyway? I don't have access to it for some reason," Magnus asked.

"So far, The lieutenant, Director Kaines, and McCree," Aleks replied.

"They choose McCree over me?!" Magnus exclaimed.

"Hold on now. It might not seem like it, but give McCree some credit…he has past experience with this," Aleks began.

"Bullshit," Magnus scoffed.

"He's talking about McCree's time in Deadlock, " Linda commented. Magnus huffed as he sunk into his chair, a pout on his lips.

"Ok and?" Magnus replied.

"You're acting like a child," Linda frowned.

"I am trying to figure out the reasoning behind me not being chosen for this mission. That's all," Magnus replied.

"How about you actually focus on work while we have the time to? Weren't you supposed to continue Malik's decryption and deciphering of the Talon tech?" Aleks started and took a sip of his coffee.

"About that…." Magnus trailed off.

It was late evening when Gabriel had gotten a break, he found himself in the Cafe reaching for a steaming cup of coffee to drag him through the rest of the day. On his way out of the Overwatch cafe, he was immediately stopped by one of his agents.

"Pops we gotta talk. I gotta tell you something. Big. Huge. Super important," the shorter woman said as she began to drag him towards the nearest table.

"Pops? Talli-! What the hell are you doing?"Gabriel growled as she forced the man to sit and sat across from him, a large smile on her lips. Gabriel looked at her confused, she was normally rambunctious, bubbly and loud but there was something different about her that he figured out almost immediately. With one quick glance over he saw the small diamond ring on her finger.

"Well. Do you notice anything different? "Talli asked a large grin on her lips.

She was beaming.

"I do, but I'm waiting for you to show me," Gabriel said and sipped his coffee. As soon as the words left from his mouth she quickly held up her left hand and pointed to the ring on her ring finger.

"Well, well, well," Gabriel chuckled. Talli giggled excitedly at the man's reaction.

"So he popped the question to you?" Gabriel repeated.
"Yeah! I was surprised of course...we've been dating for more than a year now...but I'm sure you knew that since you know everything that happens here," Talli laughed.

"True. Are you happy?" Gabriel asked, a small smile on his lips as he watched the woman across from him. He could tell that she was nervous, giddy to the point she fidgeted with the nails and hair as she talked.

"Y-Yes...I'm just nervous...like I feel so inexperienced when it comes to things like this. I can build you a reactor for a small ship or reverse engineer a pieces of Talon equipment in a few days, I can get my hands dirty and whatnot, but this...I have no clue what I'm doing when it comes to this....I have no clue what I'm doing I had to ask others and rope people even, I even got Kallista in on this," Talli laughed.

"Did you now?" Gabriel chuckled at the thought of the woman being dragged into wedding planning.

"Yeah. She and the others said they would help after they settled somethings," Talli glanced at the man before she looked away nervously.

"Hey...you know...since my father is...would you do me the honor of handing me off?" Talli began. Gabriel chuckled again as he leaned back in his chair, he could see the woman's face turn red with embarrassment.

"You know I see you as a father figure...and it would be a great honor to -" Talli began.

"I would be honored to. Everyone has their bratty moments but you are all family to me," Gabriel replied.

"Aww pops...that means a lot...thank you. It really means a lot to me…" Talli trailed off

"Of course," Gabriel nodded.

He did have to admit that he was happy for the woman and the future that she had ahead of her. It reminded him of his long-time dream of leaving all of this behind and to retire from Overwatch and start a new life even with his old age.

"So...when are you and Kallista gonna get married and have kids?" Talli questioned.

"Come again?" Gabriel questioned, caught off guard by the woman's sudden question.

"You heard me," Talli huffed.

"That's not something we were even thinking about, I might not even stay-" Gabriel started.

"Bullshit Reyes," Talli replied.

"You two are the perfect power couple and belong together. I won't stand for anything else," Talli said as she crossed her arms, Gabriel frowned at the woman as he placed his cup onto the table and leaned back in his chair.

"My business is my business for a reason Talli. It's best that you keep your nose out of if," Gabriel suggested firmly.

"Marry Kallista, and have a kid or kids and I'll consider it," Talli replied.

"Excuse me?" Gabriel started in disbelief of the woman's bold statement.
"When you marry Kallista and or have a kid, whichever one comes first, only then will I and the others stop being nosy," Talli replied.

"Talli-" Gabriel growled.

"Gotta go boss," Talli smiled as she patted him on the back and quickly retreated. The man scoffed at the woman's brazen nature. Sure he allowed them to speak their minds, engaged in meaningful conversations, gave them advice, a shoulder to cry on, whatever they needed. They were his family, he took their burdens, complaints without batting an eyelash. He was there for them but left himself closed off to those who weren't close to him, those who had suffered and grew with him.

He was a private man, the fewer people that knew about his business, the better. And yet, they stood next to him without a second thought. They wanted him to be happy with the piece of solace, the piece of happiness that he managed to find, managed to hold on to and something that wasn't temporary.

Every now and again he had doubts about everything, nothing was ever certain in Blackwatch. He knew that he could die tomorrow from one mistake, but he kept going. Despite the doubts, despite the questions of would he survive to live his wishful dream.

Would they both survive?

Would they still be together in the end?

What did Kallista want?

Gabriel sighed heavily as he ran a hand down his face and scratched his beard before he stood. He had an interrogation to conduct, he needed to focus.

The day had nearly passed when Kallista had left from the Overwatch division, she had training sessions, medical assessments, and testing completed on her before she had moved on to her next task with the R&D department and yet she still had to do her work with Blackwatch. Kallista was on her way back to her room, her attention focused on the copious amounts of messages and emails she had received while she worked she didn't see the blond that stood in front of her.

"Kallista-"

Kallista flinched as she looked up at the taller man, it was Morrison.

"Morrison- what can I do for you?" Kallista asked as she took one more glance at her cell phone before she gave the man her full attention. With just a glance she could tell that there was something that bothered the man, and to be honest it was rare for the two of them to speak to one another.

"I need to talk to you about something," Morrison began.

"Do we need to step into a conference room?" Kallista questioned.

"No, that's not necessary," Morrison replied. Kallista arched her eyebrow as she quickly looked over the man.

"Oh? Alright then," Kallista replied and waited for the man to continue

"I want to ask about Natalie," Morrison began.

"Ah, yes Natalie," Kallista nodded. She already knew what he would ask her about, there weren't
many reasons as to why the man needed to speak to her.

"What would you like to know?"

"I saw that you suddenly processed transfer papers for her and conveniently omitted a clear reason as to why. I'm surprised Reyes didn't catch that," Morrison commented.

"Reyes was the one who wrote the request. I just processed it," Kallista replied coolly. "I didn't ask questions,"

"And that surprises me;"

Kallista shrugged.

"As far as I know, she was transferred to the base in Texas because they needed her specific set of skills of a few various missions," Kallista began.

"That's vague, Kallista," Morrison replied.

"Skillset, she's kinda close to family and old colleagues that could be an asset to future endeavors… catch my drift?" Kallista said as she flipped her hair over her shoulder and crossed her arms. Morrison studied the woman for a moment before he spoke, out of the few times he had seen her she was dressed casually, but now she seemed to be in uniform, besides the midriff.

"I would be inclined to believe that if I felt like she wasn't hiding or ignoring me," Morrison replied.

"I can't help you with that part," Kallista replied.

"Clearly," Morrison huffed. "But..."

"You would tell me if there's something wrong with her right?" Morrison asked softly.

Kallista blue eyes focused on the man as she tilted her head at the man's question. Kallista glanced at the digital blue lights above the Overwatch logo plastered to the wall. It was well past midnight, nearly 2 AM, Natalie was definitely on a small transport carrier to the United States.

"You're getting worked up over nothing. There's nothing wrong with her. She's just being Natalie," Kallista replied. It took the man a moment before he replied to her.

"Alright, I believe you," Morrison nodded and walked away, Kallista watched as the man disappeared down the hall.

It was nearly 3 AM when Kallista returned back to her room and had time to herself. The entire day had been dedicated to training for her upcoming mission, tech and equipment testing with the R&D Department in Overwatch, mission debriefs, planning and a little PR.

Since her encounter with the Cheshire Cat in that strange digital space, there had been a few questionable articles about Overwatch being circulated around on the internet that proved to be distracting and presented questions about Overwatch's image, let alone mentions of its Spec. Ops group. Blackwatch wasn't mentioned by name but it was a matter of time before it became problematic.

Freshly out of the shower and dressed in a large T-shirt, Kallista grabbed her cell phone turned her attention to a flood of messages she had received instead of the worry the uncertainty that scratched at her brain.
Kallista hesitantly looked up from her phone and towards the door. The footsteps she had heard were familiar but not enough to determine who was at her door, let alone who would visit her this late instead of opting to send her a message. Kallista walked over to the door and opened it slowly, she was surprised at who was at the door.

"Mikael?" Kallista began.

"H-Hey...Kallista," The taller man replied nervously with a smile. Kallista quickly glanced over the man, it was really rare for him to come to her room and to her so late at night. Mikael quickly glanced Kallista from head to toe before he adjusted his glasses.

"Am I interrupting anything?" He asked sheepishly, Kallista huffed at the man's question and opted to ignore it completely.

"Is there something wrong? Are you ok?" Kallista asked.

"I take that as a no...but I'm fine...I just need to talk...may I come in?" Mikael asked.

"Sure," Kallista replied as she stepped away to let him into her room. Mikael thanked her and quietly entered her room, Kallista closed the door behind him and turned her attention to the man.

"What's going on Mikky?" Kallista asked as she grabbed a pair of shorts and quickly slipped them on. Mikael was silent as he pulled the chair from her small desk and faced her bed. Kallista moved over to her bed and sat down as she waited for the man to speak.

"I don't want to beat around the bush," Mikael began.

"Ok. On with it then," Kallista nodded.

"Remember how I said I was always that I wasn't really cut out for Blackwatch and I did the things necessary for a mission and what not?" Mikael began.

"Yeah," Kallista replied.

"Well..." Mikael trailed off.

It wasn't hard for Kallista to tell where this was going, she remembered the conversation that she and man had several times. Mikael wasn't a man known for killing, of course, he did it, it was part of his job, his life in Blackwatch but there was always a glint of remorse, sadness in his eyes when the adrenaline died down.

"Get on with it," Kallista urged the man as she crossed her legs.

"I...I just don't know if it's right. I don't know what I'm doing anymore...I just need...something I don't know, some type of direction. Something to tell me that I'm not abandoning everything I've worked for...that if I leave...nothing bad will happen," Mikael started, hesitation in his voice.

"You're the only one that knows what's direction is best for you Mikael. No one can tell you which way is right or what direction is best for you," Kallista replied. Mikael sighed as he leaned back in the chair, he took off his glasses and pinched the bridge of his nose.

"I don't want to be a disappointment...I don't want to lose everything that's here," Mikael sighed.

"Overwatch, let alone Blackwatch isn't going anywhere and I don't understand why you would think
you would be a disappointment. Who would be disappointed in you?"

"Everyone, Overwatch, Blackwatch...Reyes..." Mikael trailed off.

"Mikael. I know for a fact that everyone, including Reyes, would tell you to leave if you wanted to. You are not obligated to stay, you've already put more than enough years into Blackwatch and Overwatch. Leave if you need to. Don't let Overwatch or Blackwatch stop you from doing what's best for you," Kallista replied.

"And that's the hard part," Mikael said as he leaned forward, his elbows on his knees as his head hung, defeated.

"Mikael...Mikky...Bones..." Kallista began when the man snorted.

"I haven't heard that in a while," Mikael chuckled.

"I know, that's why I said it. But I think you already know what to do, give yourself a deadline and follow through with it," Kallista replied.

"Easier said than done, Kallista," Mikael replied.

"I understand that...but you already know what you need to do...I'm not sure why you keep trying to convince yourself otherwise. Nothing will happen to Overwatch or Blackwatch, we'll still be here," Kallista sighed. Mikael sighed softly as he slid his glasses back on to his face and looked at her across from him.

"Yeah...I'm just overthinking things...you're right...Reyes told me to leave if I wanted to..." Mikael began as he leaned back in his chair.

"I would imagine so. I'm sure Lyuda said to do what you need to do," Kallista commented.

"That's exactly what she said," Mikael chuckled, Kallista chuckled as well.

"That's our Lieutenant," Kallista replied.

"Yeah...thanks for listening to me rant a bit...sorry if I interrupted your booty call," Mikael chuckled.

"He's not my booty call," Kallista frowned as she watched the man stand from his chair, a smirk on his lips.

"Oh? I don't remember saying a name, Kallista," Mikael chuckled.

"There's only one person that you would consider 'my booty' call," Kallista said as she crossed her arms.

"Oh? Are you two something more then? Banging the bossman Kallista?" Mikael asked as he made his way towards the door.

"Get the hell out of my room," Kallista hissed
Omnic retaliations growing, each nation is steadily becoming a powder keg ready to explode at any moment. The Overwatch Foundation and Blackwatch stand on the sidelines waiting and watching as events begin to lead the world towards another Crisis. Talon, Null Sector, and several anti-Omnic groups are seemingly working together to cause an explosive chain reaction in the world. With both organizations working together to maintain peace, missions upon missions, of course, there's room for more.

The Cheshire cat, still on the loose, a new recruit, undercover missions, and a quick recovery on the way. All with war on the horizon.

-12 hours before mission start-

Lyudmila sighed as she stood in the Blackwatch commons room, lately the large television screen had been glued to the International news channels with the occasional action-packed movie, cooking shows, to random cartoons.

_The Prime Minister of England, Circe Kent, and the President of France, Adrien Beaumont have both received heavy criticism from their parliament members due to the lack of action on Omnics and the potential scare of Omnic backlash._

"This isn't anything new. They've been heavily criticized by everyone since the rise of Omnic retaliations,"

"Retaliations, you said the most important word in this entire debacle, debate or whatever you want to call this. There have been retaliation for something that these individuals have not committed.

"Hold on before we go down this rabbit hole. Miss Alaster, you do realize that the Omnics have been shamed, degraded, attacked and murdered for crimes that did not commit. Secondly—"

Lyudmila sighed again as she tossed the remote onto the dark-colored sofa. Her patience for the news and their allegations as to what was really happening in the world had reached its limit. She knew what was coming, she and Reyes had already seen it on the horizon. Everything that had to deal with Omnics would lead to a full investigation by Overwatch and Blackwatch would be pulled further into this growing and soon to be an explosive situation.

She knew in the back of her mind that the Cheshire cat was related to the sudden backlash to the Omnics.

Kallista kept her lips sealed, as she should, but she wanted to believe that Kallista knew all of this was happening and would deal with this situation as quickly as possible all while she juggled her other duties.

Two days had passed since their initial briefing for the recruitment and two days after, Lyudmila would be on the field. Things were moving too fast for the world to catch up. No matter how much she wanted to avoid it but the festering turmoil would soon bubble over and threaten to consume
everything in its way.
War would be on the horizon.

-8 hours before mission start-

"You sure you're ready for this?" Gabriel asked as he helped the woman from the cushioned mats of one of the training rooms. Kallista laughed breathlessly as the man pulled her from the floor.

"I'll be fine. I'm not that fragile civilian I was ages ago," Kallista replied. Gabriel arched an eyebrow at the woman as she slicked back a piece of her hair. She was right, when she was first placed into Blackwatch she was just a civilian with no formal training, and now she could take someone twice her side and survive a couple of hits, so he hoped.

"I just want to make sure you don't get your ass kicked out there. We haven't trained like this in a while," Gabriel chuckled.

"Oh please, I could easily break someone's jaw with one punch, besides you know our schedules have been a bit hectic," Kallista replied.

"Yeah, but you were just on the floor a moment ago. I'm doubting you just a bit," Gabriel replied as he crossed his arms, his joking demeanor gone.

"I keep telling you that you don't have to worry and nor is it accurate to use yourself as an example. It's quite unfair nor is it a good measure of what I can actually do," Kallista huffed.

"Talon or myself, it shouldn't matter who it is. You need to be able to give your all regardless of who you're going against," Gabriel explained.

"I know, I know… you and Lyuda has already kicked my ass enough. I learned," Kallista sighed.

"Gotta make sure you're prepared and let you know who's boss," Gabriel smirked.

"Come off of it you lout," Kallista scoffed as she pushed past him.

"Aww, did I hurt your feelings gatita?" Gabriel mused as he followed behind her.

"You're the worst," Kallista huffed as she continued into the women's locker room. Gabriel exhaled softly, maybe he was being a bit hard on their sparring session but he needed to be sure that she could still handle herself especially when he couldn't be there. He grimaced to himself as he entered the men's locker room.

Exhausted Jesse trudged into the locker room from his run around the Overwatch foundation with a few other recruits. He had been focused on his sparring and workouts because the mission he had to prepare for. His departure to Italy for a joint mission and possible recruit from the Frost Network. He muttered to himself as the sound of violent coughing echoed in the empty room.

Jesse chuckled a bit at the thought of a recruit coughing up their insides from Reyes or Lyudmila's training sessions. He smirked as he made his way to the stalls to console the recruit and nearly crashed into Gabriel instead.

"Reyes?" Jesse asked confused.

"McCree… What are you doing here? "Gabriel questioned as he pushed past him, and wiped his
"I jus' came back from a run… you ok? "Jesse asked. Gabriel quickly looked over at the young man and cleared his throat before he spoke.

"I'm fine,"

"I dunno Reyes it sounded like you were throwing up yer insides not to mention blood,"

"Blood? Where?"

Jesse motioned to his nose, Gabriel reached up to touch his nose and felt liquid on his fingertips. With a grimace, he opened his locker and grabbed a towel to wipe his nose.

"Kallista sucker-punched me," Gabriel replied.

"Sucker punch ya? Outta all people you let sucker punch you? Well, I'll be… jefe yer slippin' or she's got ya wrapped around her finger," Jesse huffed.

"That's not the case. I have other things on my mind,"

"Oh. I'm sure," Jesse said as he sat down against the back wall bench. Gabriel cleared his throat as he rummaged through his locker, he stole a quick glance at the young man who lounged on the bench, cell phone in hand.

"Nervous?" Gabriel asked.

"Nah… It's gonna be smooth sailing, also with my favorite game too. It's gonna be great," Jesse replied.

"Good. Think of this as a small…a very small vacation," Gabriel emphasized his last words as he pulled out a small duffle bag from his locker.

"Oh boy. A work vacation," Jesse said sarcastically.

"Take what you can get cowboy," Gabriel chuckled.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah," Jesse sighed.

"I heard that Italy, especially Milan is known for their food and wine. It's a shame that I won't see your ugly mug for two days after the mission,"

"A crying shame," Jesse scoffed.

"See you in five hours," Gabriel nodded to the man and left. Jesse scoffed to himself as he stood and shoved his cell phone back into his pocket.

"Two days after the mission—" Jesse started and stopped when he realized what the man had said.

"Holy shit! Reyes!" Jesse laughed.

-6 hours before mission start -

"Natalie, how are you feeling? " Kallista asked as she looked at the tired woman on the floating digital screen.
[Tired as hell, and I'm still not a fan of throwing up what I ate hours later]

"That sounds absolutely horrendous," Kallista grimaced at the thought.

[Well yeah...comes with the condition. How is everyone back there?]

"I want to say that everyone is the same, but you know that's quite the stretch to say," Kallista began.

[So then more stressed than usual?]

"Unfortunately. Danica is still recovering so that's good news. She should be starting therapy soon, but I also like how you automatically assume that everything is bad Nattie. Not everything is bad," Kallista sighed as she pulled up another screen with various files listed on it.

[I may not be at HQ but I'm still an Overwatch base and you know that news travels fast and well... the actual news too.]

"You're supposed to be taking it easy,"

[I am working, eating, listening, not sleeping, what else do you want from me]

"For you to have a safe pregnancy," Kallista replied as her gaze flicked from the other screen and to the woman.

[I know...but...Kalli...it's gonna get worse. How could I not worry about this?] Kallista sunk back into her chair and sighed. There were too many working pieces that connected with others but lacked the piece that connected them together.

Was the rise of the Omnic retaliation related to the Cheshire cat and to the Anti-Omnic group in South Korea and the growing organization called Null Sector or was it combined effort in Europe and Asia?

How did Talon or whoever created the "Cheshire Cat" get a hold of the base code?

How did everything come to this point?

"I know and I'm working on it,"

[Move faster so that you and Gabs can go relax somewhere]

"There's no rest for the wicked Natalie,"

[I expected a tiny reaction from that but I will say you have such a killer poker face, Kallista]

Kallista waved off the woman's comment as she laughed, there was no time for rest especially not now.

"Oh come off of it, will you? After this recruitment mission, we got pulled into I will be fully dedicated to ending the Cheshire cat fiasco," Kallista said as she stood.

[Oh! That's right...with the Frost Network?]

"Yeah. Reyes originally wanted you on this mission but somehow I got looped in but I suppose everything works out," Kallista moved to the other side of her small office, towards a large but slim terminal and began to input a code.
"Well shit. I get transferred and you get to go out on the field. That's some B.S."

"It was a quick decision and needed to be taken care of ASAP," Kallista said her focus on the terminal and the screens that populated around her.

"Or Reyes wanted the personal satisfaction of seeing his little gatita in fishnets, stilettos, a pleather one piece with bunny ears and tail."

"Oh hush," Kallista waved off the woman's comment as she moved her back over to her desk and sat down.

"You know it. I mean who wouldn't want to see you-"

"Come off of it Natalie," Kallista warned.

"I'm just messin', dang. I miss you guys already"

There was a short silence between the two before Kallista sighed heavily and began again.

"When are you due?"

"They say September...I'm barely starting to show though...just eating...a lot."

"Ah...that's not new," Kallista said as she looked at the calendar on her desk, it was barely February, she still had some time.

"Gotta eat for two and keep that metabolism going...but I dunno why Reyes went all protective mode on me. He's not my real dad"

Kallista leaned onto her desk as she watched the woman huff, the thought of how quickly Gabriel had Natalie's transfer papers ready to go made him seem like a father. It was in his nature to be protective of those so close to him, from what Kallista could tell Gabriel and Natalie had known each other for quite some time. Not to mention, life could be cut short at any moment. They all knew that but he knew the horrors all too well, he had seen many lives come and go, of course, he had his own close encounters with death, she had hers as well.

"He's the Dad of Blackwatch according to some," Kallista rolled her eyes at the title, everyone knew that he somehow took in strays so to speak and made them into the perfect agent he needed.

"I guess that would make you the Mum of Blackwatch"

"I'm not the one with a bun in the oven, Nattie. Nor am I thinking about having children."

"Touché my friend"

"He's just looking out for everyone as much as he can. You know this,"

"I know but I'm also not a child. I know my limits"

"Do you?"

"Don't give me that look. You know mama didn't raise a quitter"

"Asuka,"
The dark-haired woman quickly turned around and looked at the man who called out for her.

"Commander Reyes," She began. Gabriel nodded as he stopped near the bottom of the hospital bed and turned his attention to the woman rested on it.

"I came to check in on Dani, how is she—" Gabriel began.

"Boss," A weak and almost inaudible voice caught the man's ear, the two focused on the woman as she seemed to stir.

"Dani," Gabriel started.

"Boss…what's up?" Danica asked. Gabriel grabbed a chair and pulled it closer to the woman's bed.

"Reira…can you give us a minute?" Danica asked.

"Of course. I'll be at the nurse's station if you need me," Reira nodded and took her to leave. Danica watched the woman go before she clicked her tongue.

"You chased away my cute nurse," Danica chuckled weakly.

"I didn't you did. Besides, flirting while injured Bradley?" Gabriel questioned.

"She's cute. I can't help it and besides I'm sure you had a few attractive nurses, nurse you back to health," Danica commented.

"Maybe?" Gabriel chuckled.

"You lied to my face Reyes. I don't know if I can recover from that," Danica huffed.

"If Killer Whales can't kill you, let alone Talon. I think you'll be fine," He waved off the woman's jest as his normal, serious demeanor returned.

"How are you holding up? I've already seen your charts, but I want you to tell me," Gabriel began.

"Well I feel like shit, thankful that I have all of my limbs," Danica began as Gabriel nodded.

"I guess you know that I'll be starting therapy soon, so I'll be ready to go out on the field—"

"You're moving too fast. Get through therapy, checkups. If you're going to half-ass anything I don't want your ass on the field,"

"I know…I just don't want to sit here anymore," Danica sighed.

"Focus on recovering and then we'll talk about it," Gabriel emphasized on the woman's recovery.

He and Lyudmila had talked about the potential Danica possessed to grow in the Blackwatch ranks, she was trustworthy, reliable and knew that she was someone that could take the lead if he and Lyudmila could not.

There was always Kallista, but she was their last resort before control would be transferred to Overwatch. Despite not being as religious as he used to be, he prayed that it would never come to that.

"I hear ya," Danica sighed.
"Sounds like you've been hanging out with McCree too much," Gabriel commented.

"He's the one that's been keeping me updated on Blackwatch when neither of you can check up on your recovering daughter," Danica chuckled, Gabriel scoffed as he shook his head.

"You assholes are like family but nowhere near my children,"

"You're disowning us? Me? But Reyes—" Danica pleaded jokingly.

"Don't press your luck, Bradley," Gabriel chuckled.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. I heard you were going undercover? I wish I could see that," Danica commented.

"Let me guess..." Gabriel trailed off.

"You know he couldn't help but blab to me about it," Danica smirked.

"The one time I send him undercover he runs his mouth. That idiot," Gabriel sighed annoyed at the unnamed man's excitement for their upcoming mission.

"Cut him some slack Reyes. We're like peas in a pod, we trust each other, we don't share all of our secrets but we trust each other," She chuckled weakly.

"Sure. That's what I expect from everyone but I also expect everyone to keep their mouths shut about what we do and our missions," Gabriel leaned back in his chair and pulled off his signature black beanie.

Danica took a second before she spoke again, she had been housed in the intensive care unit since she had returned nearly two weeks ago, with minimal contact with the others. Jesse was her way of knowing what was happening in Blackwatch while she was out. His updates were needed to keep herself sane from being dragged back into the depths of her mind, back to the pit of darkness.

"You look tired," Danica commented.

"I am," Gabriel replied.

"And your hair... is longer than normal... Reyes, are you slipping?"

"Haven't had the time to get it cut. You going to point out all of my shortcomings?" Gabriel arched an eyebrow at her as he ran a hand through his hair.

"Might as well since you basically disowned me," Danica sneered.

"Don't bite the hand that feeds you, Bradley," Gabriel quipped.

"Ouch,"

"I'm glad to see you still have your humor, a clear sign that you're going to be fine," Gabriel commented as he slipped his beanie back on.

"Naturally. I got a cute nurse and the best technology to get me back on my feet," Danica sighed softly.

"You really got a thing for that nurse don't you?" Gabriel shook his head at the woman's persistence.

"I guess that's better than sulking and being depressed..."
"Exactly and…" Danica trailed off.

"What?"

"Can we talk after your mission?" The words were hesitant as they left her mouth, Gabriel picked up on it as he paused a moment before he replied.

"You didn't want to tell me now?"

"No...Not yet…" she trailed off again. Gabriel quickly looked at the woman before he cleared his throat.

"I can't promise you but I'll try to visit you before deployment,"

"Ok, I can live with that...can you bring Lyuda too?" Danica added.

"...Sure…if our schedules match up,"

"Ok," Danica nodded.

-5 hours before Mission start- 2 hours before Kallista's deployment-

Gabriel made his way from the med ward and was headed towards Morrison's office when someone called out to him, with his cell phone in hand he turned to see Kallista a few feet away from him.

"Kallista...what's wrong?" Gabriel asked, Kallista stopped a few feet in front of him and smirked.

"You always assume that something is wrong," Kallista commented.

"You're usually not out of the intel department unless there is something wrong,"

"I'm hurt Gabriel, you make it seem like I'm the bearer of bad news,"

"In most cases you are,"

"Ouch...what did I do to you?" Kallista laughed a bit.

"Nothing. What's up?"

"I wanted to touch base with you before I left for Italy...but I also have a mission proposal for you," Kallista began as she looked at the datapad in her hand.

"A mission proposal? We're already swamped Kalli, there's no room for more," Gabriel said as he motioned to move from the middle of the hallway to the side.

"It's not for you, it's for me," Kallista replied.

"For you?" Gabriel arched an eyebrow at the woman's sudden proposal.

"It sounds sudden, but it's not. I've been working on the details of this mission for quite some time. I've come to the conclusion that it's time to act," Kallista said as she gave the man the datapad.

"I hope this is for you know what," Gabriel commented as he took the pad.

"Naturally,"
Gabriel nodded as he began to review the proposal, from what he knew the Cheshire cat had been silent in terms of action, but on the web it had created a PR shit storm that Kallista and her crew silently worked with the Overwatch Public Relations and their Intel department to handle the flood of accusations and questions from the press. For the time being, he knew that the Overwatch Intel Department could handle it but he still made sure his Intel department knew about everything.

"Do you know where they are located? Their next attack?" Gabriel lowered his voice as he turned towards her.

"Not they. It and I have an idea of where they will show up next," Kallista replied.

"It? Kallista don't tell me-" Gabriel started.

"You're right. It is a sentient AI, well more like a non-lethal virus by itself...that currently has a host," Kallista replied nonchalantly.

"For fuck's sake, Kallista, how long were you going to keep this from me?" Gabriel demanded.

"Long enough to present you with this proposal and have you approve of it," Gabriel groaned in irritation at her methods.

"Let me guess...this A.I you already know about it because it's something you created," Gabriel commented sarcastically.

"I wouldn't go that far..." Kallista trailed off.

"Kallista...this is-" Gabriel started.

"It sounds bad, but it isn't...trust me," Kallista cut in before the man could voice his worry about the information she just gave him.

"Cut the bullshit Kallista. Just tell me," Gabriel said firmly as he crossed his arms, Kallista stood her ground and crossed her arms as she looked up at the man.

"I know of its origin, I know it's coding, I know how to stop it. What more do want from me? I'm doing my job so I can focus on the main reason why I'm here," Kallista replied. Gabriel sighed heavily and turned his attention back to the datapad in his hands.

"How about communicating with your superiors about situations that need special handling?" Gabriel suggested as he began to enter his unique code into the datapad but stopped before he completed the entire code.

"I will approve of this mission for you but under certain circumstances," Gabriel began.

"Which are?"

"You report back to me every six hours, I don't care if I'm on a mission or not. I want to know where you are, what you're doing and where you are going. Once this is handled, destroy all traces of this thing so that this won't happen again,"

"That was my goal from the beginning," Kallista turned her attention the digital blue holographic numbers about the Overwatch logo in the hall.

She knew that this whole situation had gone on a lot longer than what they both expected, after the recruitment mission, this would be her main focus.
"More importantly…"

"Hm?" Kallista's crystal blue eyes focused on his chocolate brown ones that were focused on her.

"What?" Kallista questioned softly.

"You come back to me...unharmed," He replied quietly.

Kallista nodded as the two held each other's gaze, Gabriel's gaze softened for a moment before he turned his attention back onto the datapad in his hands. He entered the last bit of his code and gave the datapad back to her.

"Handle this, Kallista," Gabriel added.

"I will," Kallista said as she entered her code to confirm the mission.

"Hey, Boss~!"

Gabriel and Kallista looked towards the source of the voice and saw Hayden with an older woman next to him. Gabriel and Kallista glanced at each other as Hayden and the unknown woman approached them.

"Hey Boss, Kallista, I'm glad that both of you guys are here. I want you to meet Isla, my mother," Hayden beamed a big cheesy smile.

"Nice to meet you," Gabriel greeted the woman curtly.

"Mom, this is-" Hayden began.

"Is this the Gabriel you've been telling me about?" Isla began. Gabriel's dark-colored eyes flicked to Hayden in a silent, intimidating questioning look.

"A pleasure to meet you, Miss Isla. I am-" Kallista began.

"Kallista right? You're Gabriel's little wife right? You're so adorable in person," Isla began.

"Pardon me?" Kallista gave Hayden a confused look as she blushed.

"Birro, what have you been telling her?" Gabriel questioned, the tone of his question was enough to have Hayden jump a bit.

"It slipped," Hayden replied nervously.

"It slipped? What slipped?" Kallista frowned.

"No need to hang Hayden by his ankles," Isla smiled as her elbow jabbed Hayden in their side.

"But I will admit that you two are adorable together,"

"It's not like that," Gabriel started.

"I am afraid that there is only a work relationship between us," Kallista replied.

"Of course, a Commander in a relationship with a subordinate...that's quite scandalous. Doesn't mean it can't happen " The older woman replied and shrugged.

"Hayden-" Gabriel began.
"Well, would you look at the time. There's so much more I want to show you Mom...let's go down this hallway. It was nice seeing you Reyes, Kalli," Hayden began nervously as he began to usher the woman away.

"It was a pleasure to meet both of you. Take care now and be sure to send baby pictures when they're born," Isla called out to the two as Hayden led her down the hallway, away from both of them.

"I'm going to strangle him," Gabriel sighed.

"He'll be dead before you get to him. I hope you're faster," Kallista commented nonchalantly. Gabriel snorted.

"We can easily go back to the training center and I'll be more than happy to put you on your back again Kallista," Gabriel scoffed.

"I'm thinking something a bit softer...for your back old man," Kallista commented as she playfully nudged the man before she walked away. Gabriel chuckled as he watched the woman disappear around a corner before he started again towards Morrison's office.

-4 hours before mission start-

Malik leaned back in their chair as they watched Overwatch agents enter the room and spotted a familiar face, Jin Mikami they acknowledged each other with a nod before Jin took a seat across from them. They both knew what this meeting was about, they knew what needed to be done. Kallista explained everything to them a few days prior to this meeting. In the back of their mind, they knew that this was coming it was just a matter of time.

He thought that it would have happened sooner.

"No senior agent with you?" One of the Overwatch agents asked as they passed him to their seat.

"I am a senior agent," Malik replied smugly, the agent shrugged as they took their seat.

"Yo Ramos," Malik leaned his head back to see a man and woman sit down next to him.

"Good to see you again Ramos;"

"Cain, Alice? What are you doing here?" Malik asked confused. Cain De La Cruz and Alice Rousseau, It was rare to see agents from the Reconnaissance division back at the Overwatch base even rarer for the both of them to be at this meeting. As far as they knew these two did not have any relation to Talon.

The last person to enter the conference room was one of Overwatch's top agent, Gerard Lacroix, entered and locked the door behind him.

"Afternoon everyone," Gerard began as his dark charcoal eyes scanned the conference room and momentarily stopped on Malik and then shifted to Jin.

"Thank you all for joining me. I'll skip the small talk and get straight to the point as to why we have all gathered here," Gerard pulled a small holographic keyboard from the table and began to populate smaller holographic screens.
"We're here because of Talon, this chaotic organization bent on disrupting the peace that many others sacrificed their lives for. Since the end of the First Omnic Crisis, Talon has been occupied with solidifying their stance in the underworld and have begun to take steps to upset the balance," Gerard began.

Talon. Null Sector and various anti-Omnic group, organizations, and sects appeared on each of the screens behind the man. Malik knew of all of them, instead of assisting Kallista with the Cheshire cat situation, she assigned them to research and recon of these organizations.

"Overwatch and Blackwatch have continuously worked in tangent to uncover their goals and means, waiting and watching for the perfect time to move. We all understand what will come if Talon is left unchecked,"

Malik pursed their lips together as he listened to the man speak, they were already apprehensive about this but as they listened to the man speak unsettled him. Their leg bounced nervously underneath the table, jaw clenched, hands balled into fists. They couldn't shake off this unsettling feeling from themselves.

They knew that this had to happen, they swore that they would tear down Talon with their own two hands for everything they had done to them, everything they had done to them in the name of science and to further mankind's rise to power.

*They did this to them.*

*He did this to them.*

But now that an action plan was in the early stages, it made them more than uneasy, perhaps they weren't ready for this. Malik chewed on their bottom lip and cursed themselves for letting their emotions, for letting their personal vendetta consume him. They were thankful that everyone was too engrossed in what the data that was displayed on the large screen in the front of the room, everyone except for one man who sat across from them.

Jin Mikami.

The man sat unperturbed by Malik's mental state, his pale silver eyes focused on them. As if Jin knew how it tortured them, how their memories wouldn't let them rest, wouldn't let them live and left them in worse shape than before.

Through it all, Jin remained calm, he remained calm through all of it, he kept them centered and grounded.

*They did this to him, they did this to them.*

"Is this really necessary?"

*I've told you a thousand times it is*

"But why me though? I was perfectly fine back at the castle,"

*[Tierra. We've talked about this, I won't repeat myself. You have more potential than the girls at the castle. You're like a daughter to me and I want what's best for you. The Overwatch Foundation and Blackwatch is a step up from where you are now]*

The cerulean blue-haired woman sighed as she looked at her reflection in the large dressing room
mirror.

[More potential than the girls back at the castle...]

The woman scoffed as she adjusted the bunny ears band on her head. She knew what the whole purpose of this joint mission was, she had gone over it in her head a thousand times since she, Mamma Jelli, had told her. She also knew that the woman only had the best intentions for her and everyone back at the Crimson Castle, but was this truly the best thing for her? She never could come to a solid answer.

Higher risk for a higher return. More money, more experience, but at the cost of leaving everything she had grown with behind her.

"Moira...get your head together...you have a mission to worry about. You'll deal with it when it happens," Moira told herself before she adjusted the collar around her neck and turned to exit the dressing room.

[Get your head on straight...we can go over the finer details after this? Understood?]

"Understood," Moira walked towards the rail and looked down at the casino floor before she made her way down the stairs and headed towards the gold embellished glass trays.

[The Blackwatch agents have already blended into the crowd. Your target is at poker table number 8. There are two Blackwatch agents there. One is the dealer, the other is a patron. The dealer is the lieutenant]

"The woman and the man with the terrible facial hair?" Moira scoffed as she caught a glance at the table across the way.

[You should see how he normally dresses...poor boy needs help]

"Are those really mutton chops?" Moira looked around the large hall taking in the patrons and their greedy ways

"And the other?" Moira whispered as she grabbed a circular glass serving tray and made her way to the bar to fill her tray with drinks.

[She is a server, similar to you]

"So I won't recognize her," Moira said as she gave the bartender a smile.

[I assume that she will be disguised more heavily than either of them due to her former career]

"You sound amused," Moira commented.

[The Blackwatch Commander's favorite to put it lightly. She's good at her job, former political commentator and cybersecurity analyst, but who knew that he was into those types...]

"Did you have a thing with the commander?" Moira asked as she continued through the hall

[Who knows...focus on your mission. Radio silence Tierra]
As a favor to Overwatch the mission to recruit a new agent was in full swing, but now all of the pieces were slowly coming together. He had 48 hours until he would be back on the field ready or not but he needed to see the connections himself.

"Everything is going smoothly Commander Reyes,"

"That's what I like to hear Kallos," Gabriel commented as he kept his attention focused on the security cameras of the casino.

The small team of his agents were scattered among the busy casino floor, he was their main point of contact while on this joint mission with the Frost Network, and of course, this was not a normal occurrence for him especially when there were so many senior agents on the field.

But he needed to be sure that this ran smoothly.

He wanted to be sure and judge everyone's performance, he had discussed this with Lyudmila before they were shipped off to Italy. She agreed and mentioned her own reservations about the mission and the ones selected for it but she knew that he wanted to judge the Frost agent's performance and experience her first hand before he delivered her performance report to Shepard and the others.

"Do we have visuals on everyone?" Gabriel questioned

"McCree, the lieutenant and the Frost Agent has been located," the young man began.

"And the director?"

"To be honest I can't tell quite yet. She is on the floor, but her location is pending."

"Figures," Gabriel scoffed.

"So why are we here again?" Jesse questioned as he leaned on the bar

*[Stop asking stupid questions, McCree]*

Jesse grimaced at the woman's comment, he had a visual on Lyudmila's table and the woman herself, he also managed to catch a glimpse of the blue-haired woman, the person they were working with supposedly but to him, it felt like they were just her back up.

"How about ya tell me that to my face?" Jesse replied under his breath

*[I will.]*

*[When I said radio silence I meant it.]*

Jesse scoffed at Gabriel's warning, he had yet to even catch a glimpse of the woman and she had insulted him already. Lyudmila had mentioned that there were other agents on the field but he
wouldn't recognize her due to her previous socialite life. He gently sloshed around his drink as he looked to the crowd of the rich and famous again, he was all for undercover missions, but this type bored the hell out of him, he needed some type of action something to –

"Fancy meeting a cowboy out of his natural habitat,"

In mid drink, Jesse finally realized there was a man leaning on the bar next to him.

"R-Ruben? Holy shit when did you get here? What are you doin' here?" Jesse stuttered.

"Do not make a scene. Do you not remember how this works?" Ruben casually chided Jesse at his sudden appearance. Jesse scoffed at the man's comment.

Ruben Sanders, one of Blackwatch's senior field agents in the Recon Division. It was rare to see any of those agents unless they were paired with a specific mission. The man known as Van Gogh was a former assassin for an organization called De La Lune and was accepted into Blackwatch due to the man's willingness to bring down the organization. But with the man's specific work in Blackwatch, he was normally seen and not heard.

"Well, you know...we occasionally need a holiday here and there," Ruben coolly took a drink from the tumbler of clear liquid.

"Holiday my ass, ya know damn well yer here for a job" Jesse scoffed as he took a drink of his own and took another look at the casino floor. The bar where Jesse had taken up residence had steps leading up to it, elevated a bit higher off the ground which made it easy to keep an eye on the floor and people that casually lingered before they tested their luck against the house.

It was also the perfect spot to watch for when Lyudmila began to set up her station to begin the game. He quickly thought back to the game nights where Lyudmila played a few games card games, he just didn't think that it would lead to this.

"Let us see here, a Frost agent, Lyuda and yourself. I take it there's a joint mission going on yeah?" Ruben's question pulled Jesse's attention back to the man.

"Somethin' like that," Jesse replied as he caught sight of Cerulean blue in the crowd.

"Never thought I would see the day where the cowboy cleans up so well," Ruben chuckled.

"Real cute Ruby, ya sure ya should be drinkin' on the job?" Ruben laughed a bit at the man's question and smirked.

"What are you talking about mate? I am on holiday, approved by our high and mighty Commander Reyes," Ruben replied as he gently pushed himself from the bar.

"Holiday," Jesse repeated sarcastically.

"Anyway, I will not be a bother to you...," Ruben began and nursed his drink a bit.

"You comin' back to Zurich?" Jesse sipped his deep copper-colored drink, Ruben shrugged nonchalantly.

"It depends on how long my holiday decides to be,"

With a smirk Ruben slipped into the crowd of people, Jesse huffed as he downed the rest of his drink.
Gabriel's voice pulled McCree from his thoughts on why the man was at this specific casino. From previous missions, he knew if the man was involved nothing good would come from this mission. Jesse sighed to himself as he casually made his way through the crowd of people and towards the table where Lyudmila had set up and began to wait for the table to fill.

**[Kaines…status update]**

*I'm on the casino floor, I've already spotted two targets…*

Jesse continued towards the partially empty poker table and took a few glances around to see if he could spot the woman.

**[Have you made contact with the Frost agent?]**

*Negative.*

Jesse took a seat at the poker table and gave the dealer, Lyudmila a nod. He made small talk with some of the patrons as he waited for the game to begin. The table they had set up at was the last public table that led towards the VIP entrance, both Lyudmila and Jesse would have prime sight to see which VIP came and went.

"Would you like a drink, sir?"

Jesse turned to the olive-skinned, platinum blonde-haired woman dressed in a black leather one-piece that cupped and hugged her in all the right places. His gaze shifted from her body to her exotic looking brown eyes, the color seemed a bit off but the large pointed bunny ears on her head caught his attention. Jesse quickly looked the woman from head to toe and licked his lips before he spoke.

Fishnet stockings, black stiletto heels…

"Why yes I would, angel face," Jesse replied. The woman smirked as she lowered the tray in her hair for him to take a drink from the assortment she had on her tray. Jesse quickly took a drink from the tray and focused back on the woman.

**[McCree…]**

"Yer mighty fine sweetheart, what's yer name?" Jesse smirked as he gave the woman his full attention. The woman smirked again as she placed the tray on to the chair behind her.

"Camilla…and yours?" she replied with a coquette smirk on her lips.

"Jesse…Camilla- baby how about after this game we—"Jesse began when she leaned forward.

"Your bolo tie is crooked…let me fix that for you," she began, Jesse's eyes flicked towards the woman's breast and quickly back to her face.

"Why thank-"

"You're so predictable, stop thinking with your dick, mate,"

It took Jesse a moment to realize what the woman had said. As the woman straightened herself, the smirk on her lips was clear.
"Have we…met before?" Jesse asked. The woman laughed as she turned to Lyudmila with a coy smile on her lips. Lyudmila nodded to the woman, Jesse watched confused as the two women exchanged an unsaid message.

"See you later cowboy,"

Jesse watched the woman gracefully pick up the tray she carried before and then back on to the casino floor.

"Was that…who I think it was?" Jesse muttered to himself.

[Who else?]

"Damn…I didn't even know that was her…"

[That's the point, focus on your mission…]

"…How do ya handle all of that Reyes-," Jesse quipped.

[You're extra talkative today boy, maybe you should cut back on the alcohol]

"Bingo," Jesse chuckled and took a sip of his drink.

[Focus, McCree]

"You're progressing much quicker than we thought you would," Reira commented as she helped Danica walk around the rehabilitation center.

"Well after getting your ass kicked so many times in the past you adapt pretty quickly," Danica chuckled.

"Did…you have a hard past? If you don't mind me asking," Reira asked cautiously as they moved towards one of the cushioned chairs. Danica paused before she sat down, her brow knitted together in pain. Slowly she began to rub her knees in an attempt to release some of the pain that built up in her joints.

"You're feeling pain," Reira commented.

"I do but that's normal right?" Danica replied as she leaned back in the chair.

"It is but we can stop—"Reira began.

"No! I mean no…I don't want to sit around anymore…I'm not really helping anyone while here," Danica sighed.

Reira remained quiet as she watched the woman's face contort from the pain that racked her body. It had been several weeks since she had been rescued from the SASI (South African Sea Incident), since then Reira and occasionally Dr. Mikami had been assigned to her recovery.

She had watched Danica suffer through the recovery process, the peeling of her skin, the nightmares all of it. She wondered how much longer Danica would be able to continue with her head held high before she broke.

Reira knew that Dr. Mikami was there to monitor her mental condition and to see if she was capable to return back to the field for Blackwatch, both Lieutenant Dontsova and Commander Reyes had
approached both her and Dr. Mikami about her recovery. They were worried about her and her recovery, she could see why the woman hid her pain but they knew it would be only a matter of time before she would-

"How about over a cup of coffee?"

"Huh?" Reira said confused


"S-Sure!" A slight blush tinged Reira's cheeks as she helped Danica stand.

"Do you think you can make it to the cafeteria from here or should I go grab it?"

"No. I can do it," Danica replied.

"Did you want your cane—"

"No. I can do it," Danica replied firmly as she smiled at the woman. Reira searched the woman's amber eyes before she nodded.

"It's a bit away…I hope you're ready," Reira sighed at the woman's stubbornness.

"We're about to find out," Danica laughed.

---

"I know this may be uncomfortable for the both of you but I am sure you understand the severity of this operation and that it needs to be successful,"

Malik leaned back in their chair, brows knitted together as they half-listened to the man.

Gerard Lacroix, a high ranking official in the Overwatch division. He spearheaded the operation against Talon thus he willingly placed a target on his back, all to rid the world of the Talon organization.

From the previous meetings that had them away from their space in the Blackwatch Intel office, Malik was currently in a private meeting with Gerard, and Jin, to discuss their past with Talon and the operation's needs from them.

"We are aware sir," Jin spoke first. Gerard glanced at Malik and then to Jin.

"I assume you both have been informed by your superior officers—"

"What do you need from us?" Malik spoke up. Jin and Gerard turned their attention to Malik. Malik had been silent for the majority of all of the meetings they had about future ops and for them to suddenly speak up was a surprise.

"I want to know exactly what you need from me. I want to get this over with as quickly as possible,"

"It's not that simple agent Ramos," Malik clicked their tongue in irritation and muttered something under their breath, they knew they were impatient and knew the longer the conversation dragged on the worse it would get.

"I need your complete cooperation for these ops to be successful. I have been briefed on the missions that Blackwatch has conducted involving Talon…but as the two of you…” Gerard trailed off. Silence fell over everyone in the room.
"You want to know about...the tests...and...about us," Jin said cautiously.

"Correct. I want to know -"

"No," Malik replied. "I can't...I don't want to talk about it,"

"Agent Ramos-

" No,"

Jin sighed softly as he turned study Malik for a moment and turned back to Gerard.

"I apologize, but may we have a few minutes alone?" Jin asked.

"Of course," Gerard replied as he stood and exited the room. Jin watched as the man exit the room and closed the door behind him. Once the coast was clear, Jin turned to Malik.

"Mali...we have to do this," Jin said.

"I am not against doing anything that would take Talon down but this...those experiments..." Malik trailed off.

"Mali..." Jin trailed off as he reached to touch their scarred hand. As quickly as Jin placed his hand onto Malik's hand, Malik quickly pulled theirs away.

"We...have to," Jin said quietly as he adjusted his glasses.

"I know but I don't—"

"Remember what Commander Reyes told us? He told us that something like this would happen, now is that time,"

"Jin—"

"You can't keep running from this Malik...isn't that what Mikael told you?" Jin added. Malik flinched at the mention of Mikael's name.

"I know I can't keep running..." Malik sighed.

"Then please Malik...let's do this and bring down Talon...for the others..."Jin pleaded.

"Fine,"

Jin nodded to himself if mentioned the man's name was enough to get Malik to cooperate then he would grin and bear it no matter how much it hurt. He knew about their relationship together, he knew that anything that involved him the man had a hard time cooperating. Perhaps they truly avoided him.

The game was over and a few had managed to scamper away with extra winnings than what they had before and surprisingly Jesse was one of those people. In addition to the winnings, he had managed to befriend Blackwatch's target, Carmelo.

"Taylor, was it?"

Jesse turned around as he ran a hand through his hair to see the man on his cell phone and then
proceeded to shove it into his overcoat.

"Joel is fine, what can I do for ya Mendoza?" Jesse asked with a toothy grin.

"With all of your bluffing, you played pretty well. I owe you that drink," Carmelo chuckled.

"That's quite alright ya hear. It's a game that's all," Jesse chuckled.

"I insist," Carmelo smirked. Jesse studied the man for a moment before he saw a familiar blonde-haired waitress caught his attention.

[Watch yourself, McCree]

"Oh I hear ya alright," Jesse chuckled.

"But ya see these fine ladies walkin' around," Jesse commented as the woman approached, Carmelo also turned his attention to the woman.

"A drink?" She asked with a coy smirk.

"What do you got sugar?" Jesse smirked, Kallista smirked as well.

"I have Gin & Tonic, Bourbon, Scotch, and currently pineapple martinis. Which would you like Sir?" Kallista asked.

"Something as sweet as you sweetheart," Jesse said as he took one of the pineapple martinis.

"Flattery will get you nowhere sir," Kallista cooed.

"I can try," Jesse smirked and winked. Jesse knew that she couldn't break character otherwise everything would be ruined, he took every chance he could get to tease her without any consequences.

"I'll try one of those pineapple martinis please," Carmelo began.

"Of course," Kallista balanced the tray with one hand and used her other to give the man the martini. Carmelo took the glass and then her hand, and placed a gentle kiss on to it.

"Oh?"

"Show off," Jesse muttered under his breath.

"Have we met before?" Carmelo asked as his hazel colored eyes never left her golden honey-like ones.

"I don't think so. I wouldn't forget you handsome," Kallista replied smoothly as she slipped her hand from his.

"What's your name beautiful," Carmelo asked, Kallista smirked as Jesse sighed.

"Trying to steal the girl from under my nose Mendoza?" Jesse teased.

"I mean she would clearly know whose better," Carmelo chuckled.

"Ouch! We just met and I feel burned already," Jesse laughed.

"Camilla. My name is Camilla," Kallista replied.
"A beautiful name for a beautiful woman…” Carmelo trailed off as he looked Kallista head to toe.

Kallista glanced at Jesse and him at her, he knew that the small device in her hand hidden by the tray was forcibly and remotely hacking into the man's phone. How much more time she needed, well…

"Handsome you're finished with your drink already, want another one?"

"Naw, that's quite alright gatita. This guy owes me a drink," Jesse said with a smirk and gently nudged the man next to him. He glanced at the woman to see if he could catch the woman's reaction and shook his head slightly as the smile on her face stayed the same, but her exotic brown eyes told him something different.

"Right. About that drink…Camilla I would like to talk to you after…” Carmelo began.

"No promises sir, I am working you know," Kallista smiled as the two began to walk away. Once the two were out of her sight her smile faded into a stoic glance.

"Were you able to establish a connection?" Kallista whispered.

[Yes. I am already pulling up his call records, the origin of the call, IPs you name it.]

"Good," Kallista replied as she began to survey the floor for Lyudmila to hand off the device.

"I knew it," Kallista turned to the person that had caught her attention.

"The elusive director herself;"

Kallista took a moment before she replied to the one that called her out, she knew who they were as they clearly knew who she was.

"Did not think you would be here Miss Director," Ruben said as he walked over to her.

"A drink sir?" Kallista replied. Ruben glanced at her for a moment and smirked.

"I see… Hmm, what do we have here…? Scotch, Bourbon… I didn't think Reyes would put you on the field," Ruben commented as they looked at their drink choices.

"I have my reasons for being here," Kallista replied.

"Do you Miss Director? " Ruben asked as they took the tumbler of scotch.

"Of course…everyone has a part to play in the grand scheme of things," Kallista said her accent heavy with each word.

"And not to satisfy a personal desire?" Ruben countered.

“That's quite an accusing comment Ruben and to whom are you directing that to?” Kallista asked nonchalantly. Ruben chuckled and shrugged.

"To whomever the shoe fits I suppose. I see many things but seeing you on the field is rare… Miss Director, "

"Do behave Ruben…you're supposed to be on holiday. Let's keep it that way, shall we?" Kallista said as she smiled, she was still on the field and needed to keep appearances.
"Of course, I just wanted a drink…Camilla was it? Thank you, take care now and good luck it seems like you have attracted quite the crowd," Ruben commented as he nodded towards the bar before they took their leave.

"Great," Kallista muttered as she flicked a piece of her blonde hair over her shoulder.

Jesse half-listened to the man as they conversed about world events, women, gambling and more. He expected to be backup for the majority of the mission and didn't expect to be face to face with Blackwatch's target.

Carmelo Mendoza and the Pavetti heiress were spotted on the casino floor and could be seen from the VIP suites. The recruitment mission instantly became an Intel gathering mission.

Jesse took another sip of his drink and spotted the Frost agent again, the cerulean blue loosely curled tresses, russet brown colored eyes, she wore the identical outfit as Kallista. He could see the fake smile on her lips as she greeted the patrons but the look in her eye she was on the lookout for her target.

In the back of his mind, Jesse knew why she was being recruited but he didn't understand what Blackwatch had to do with this. This wasn't their type of mission-

[Kaines. Your status]

[I've made contact with the Frost Agent…and our good friend Van Gogh]

[And?]

[Target is located on the VIP suite floor, based on the information I have her target is not Pavetti but Destalova.]

[She told you that?]

[Process of elimination, Reyes.]

[I don't need sass from you as well Kaines. McCree has made contact with our target...you know what to do]

[Understood. Also, just so you know if I break a heel you're buying me new ones these were expensive]

"I'll buy you whatever you want…if you do your job which I hope I won't have to worry about," Gabriel replied a small smirk on his lips.

[Of course not, just who do you think you're talking to Reyes]

"Lo se, gatita,"

Gabriel turned his attention back to the security feeds of the casino and immediately spotted Lyudmila who had shifted into her second stage, security on the floor, near the stairs to the VIP suites.

"There's nothing out of the ordinary. We are still running smoothly,"
"And Carmelo's data?"

"Working on it. I'm working on it with Aleks working on it as we speak…I'll let you know as soon as I find something good," Elias replied.

"Good," Gabriel leaned back in his seat and glanced at the red digital numbers on the many monitors in the van.

He had 48 hours until he would be back on the field, the stronger medication that Angela had given him had taken care of most of the issues, the migraines, muscle soreness, fatigue, for the longest time he knew something was off with him and progressively got worse.

Truth be told, he was becoming a little worried, but not enough to pull himself from the field. He couldn't, he had work to do for both Blackwatch and Overwatch.

"Commander…there's an unknown video call coming in for you. Would you like to take it?"

"Patch it through," Gabriel replied as he straightened himself in his chair. Within seconds a video of a woman with ebony shoulder-length curls, fair skin, sharp hazel colored eyes stared back at Gabriel, just from the look alone, he could tell who the woman was.

"Evangeline," Gabriel said simply.

{Gabriel.}

"I am running an operation right now. What do you want?" Gabriel asked.

{Don't give me that. You know exactly why I am calling.}

Gabriel sighed quietly as he stared back at the woman.

"She's fine, the mission is running smoothly…is that what you wanted?" Gabriel replied.

{No.}

"Then what?"

{I want information from you and your team}

"Why?" Gabriel questioned, curious to know what the woman would want when she could get it just as easily as he.

"What's in it for me?" Gabriel countered.

{I didn't think you were that greedy Gabriel…I'm giving you one of my best agents and you're asking for more…how rude}

"Technically Eva…she's not for Blackwatch. I am doing Overwatch a favor and helping…don't pull that bullshit on me,"

{Don't pull your technicality bullshit when it fits you, Reyes…but I relent for now. Fine. I want info on Mendoza, you can have whatever you want.}

"I want info," Gabriel began.

{Be more specific}
"The Cheshire cat. I think that equals up to the info you want on Carmelo,"

Gabriel noticed the woman's demeanor change at the mention of the Cheshire Cat. The reaction she had told him more than enough information that he needed.

{The Cheshire cat you say? Reyes, I thought you had your team working on that situation}

"I like having my bases covered…and I'm sure that one of your girls has come across info while on the field," Gabriel replied casually

{Wipe that smug look from your face Reyes. You act as if you have me figured out, this is far different from my days in Blackwatch}

"Don't put words in my mouth, Eva. You know my information runs expensive,"

Evangeline stared blankly at Reyes before she laughed, Reyes crossed his arms as he waited for the woman's response. They both needed something, he made his offer and now the ball was in her court.

{Fine. I'll send it to your little Intel director-}

"No. Send it to me directly," Gabriel corrected her. Evangeline studied him for a moment before she sighed and waved off the man's correction.

{Oh? A fight?}

"Far from it. I want it in my hand. Nothing more, nothing less," Gabriel replied. Gabriel watched as the woman studied him and his expression before she replied to him.

{Sure. Have it your way}

Moira walked calmly to her assigned VIP suite, the suite with Pavetti, Destalova and she assumed others were partners. She was only allowed to bring herself and nothing else to the VIP floor, she had already checked in with a Blackwatch agent who stood guard at the entrance to the floor. She had everything she needed on her body and if needed she could be resourceful.

Moira stopped in front of the door and knocked, she painstakingly went over all the details of the mission, learned the layout of the entire casino, memorized all the emergency exits, entrances, security patterns, security camera locations, all of it.

Perfection was her strength and weakness.

Each of the rooms had card and chip readers for security purposes, two-way authentication to keep those who were supposed to be in and keep those who weren't supposed to be there out. If she needed to get into a room, the keycard slotted in the front of her heeled shoe courtesy of the agent that stood guard and the stairway to the VIP suites

In seconds the door opened to a tall slender red-haired woman dressed casually in a navy blue suit.

Mireya Destlova. Her main target.

"You must be our girl for tonight?" her voice soft, low in tone.

"Yes, Miss Destlova," Moira replied with a curt smile.
"Wonderful. Come in," a small toothy smile spread across the woman's face.

"Quinn, my love, our girl has arrived,"

"Good. I was getting worried that the management was lacking here...again," a dirty blonde haired woman replied, annoyance laced in every word.

"My dear your standards are too high for a place like this," Destlova commented.

"My standards are where they should be," Quinn replied.

Moira smiled slightly as she quickly surveyed the room, a woman with bright crimson hair, obsidian-like eyes, sun-kissed skin, dressed in red. She knew who the woman was. Elena Vescovi, a media mogul in Italy and almost royalty with how much wealth the woman had been given.

Although the woman next to her, she couldn't place a finger on her but felt as if she had seen the woman. The woman wore dark-colored clothes, her hair an inky black against the pale skin and pale like eyes. The most striking feature about the woman was the scar that ran across the bridge of her nose. The two women stood out to her the most as she took in everyone in the room, mostly female except for one lone male who seemed to be antsy

Moira knew what she was getting herself in to, women that preferred the women to dance for them.

"Would you like for me to make everyone one drinks before I began?" Moira asked.

"I'll take my drink to go," the only male in the room spoke up.

"Leaving so soon Carmelo? We've barely talked," Quinn began.

"You told me all that I needed to know. And besides, I have a cute blonde waiting for me on the floor," Carmelo replied.

"Oh? Does Black know about this?" the woman smirked at the man, as she finally looked up from her cell phone.

"He encourages it,"

"Oh, wow...well that's new. Didn't know that's what you two were into," Quinn chuckled.

"What would you like sir?" Moira asked as she moved over to the small bar.

"Gin and Tonic, please. The less you know the better,"

"Our servers were 10 percent compromised but not enough to cause alarm for anything else," Moira listened in carefully as she made the simple drink, she was trained in this sort of thing she shouldn't be nervous but she was.

\{Breathe Tierra...you can do this...you've done this countless times...\}

Moira listened to the woman console her as she handed the man his drink with a smile. Carmelo thanked her and began towards the door.

"Oh before you go, Carmelo, have you talked to Park yet?" Quinn questioned.

"I don't have a reason to. My loan and debts have been paid off," Carmelo replied.
"He should have contacted you by then. That's odd," Quinn commented as she leaned back in the plush chair.

"You forget his lovely project is making things a lot harder in South Korea at the moment," Carmelo chuckled.

"Serves him right,"

"We'll see about that Mendoza," Destlova commented bitterly as she went over to Moira at the bar.

"But nonetheless, if you're leaving please leave. It's my wife's birthday and I don't want you to ruin it. Ladies don't be shy come and order your drinks," Destlova motioned for the other women to come over.

"Where's Aleks? He's supposed to be helping Kallos," Linda commented as she looked around the near-empty Intel office.

"He got an urgent call from the team in Malaysia, I don't know the details, but he should be back soon," Magnus replied.

"Oh I see," Linda sighed as she flopped down in her desk chair.

"What's with you?" the dark-haired man glanced up from his main monitor and to the woman.

"I...I feel like things are slowly unraveling?" Linda said unsure of the words that had just come from her own mouth. Magnus arched an eyebrow at the woman and waited for her to follow up with an explanation.

"The Cheshire cat situation, the uprising in South Korea, the Talon attacks...and Commander Reyes," she began as she buried her hands into her thick hair.

"You lost with me with Reyes, what's going on with him?"

"I was going to visit Danica when I overheard Dr. Ziegler talking with Captain Amari about the healing serum in her darts. She mentioned Reyes needing something stronger and condition," Linda began.

"Woah, woah, woah...What?" Magnus questioned.

"Exactly. My intuition has been eating away at my logical thinking...and I think something is wrong with him,"

A stagnant tense pause filled the office as the man mulled over the information she had given him. A heavy sigh sounded through the office as the man slumped in his chair.

"Linda, Linda, Linda. You actually had me worried for a moment, there's no way in hell there's anything wrong with Reyes. At most he's probably just staying up late, spending some quality time with someone, and catching up on missions. That shit is normal," Magnus sighed.

"But the healing darts? The components of those are-" Linda began.

"I know that they are made of, look don't stick your nose in his business," Magnus commented.

"Oh but it's ok for you to stick your nose into the Director's business even though she's closely related to him?" Linda shot back. Magnus clicked his tongue in annoyance.
"Look. The man is damn near indestructible. Let's leave it like that ok?" Magnus sighed.

"Magnus you can't just sit there and ignore it," Linda huffed.

"I'm going to ignore it until he brings it up. Which would be the time he retires and that's nowhere in the future," Magnus waved off the woman's worry.

At that moment the door slid open and Aleks rushed in and also flopped down into his chair, the two glanced quietly at the man.

"So?" Magnus questioned.

"Konrad and a few other agents are in the hospital, some of them are showing signs of being poisoned..."
Changes are sometimes needed to make room for the new but those changes can sometimes leave holes, holes the housed the ugly things best left unsaid or forgotten.

The Blackwatch team from Mayalsia back tat the based and poisoned by an unknown source, the recruitment mission in full swing, of course, there's always room for snags and change.

"Poisoned? by who?" Magnus questioned.

"Who knows at this point…right now they're being examined. They were at a local hospital but we had them transferred back to Zurich with the MDs that diagnosed them," Aleks exhaled.

"Did you inform the Lieutenant or the Commander?" Linda asked.

"I sent a message to the Commander since he's running their Intel for this mission…but…” the blonde trailed off.

Silence blanketed the room as the news of their comrades being poison sank in. They knew that Malaysia had been somewhat peaceful with minor disturbances, nothing large enough to cause alarm.

"Do we even know if it was deliberate?" Magnus was the first to break the silence.

"We aren't sure. The MDs that accompanied them back are filling in Dr. Ziegler and her team as they try to figure out what the hell is going on,"

"All while Commander Reyes and the Lieutenant are out," Linda sighed.

"They should be finished soon…this recruitment ops should be no longer than just a night," Magnus commented and attempted to bring up the current mission dossier for the group. He received an

"Access Denied" message instead.

"Um?"

"All of the Commander's missions along with Lieutenant Dontsova's mission have been restricted by the Director," Aleks commented.

"When did this happen? Did we get a memo about this?" Magnus questioned as he leaned on to his desk.

Aleks hesitated, Magnus raised his eyebrows at the man's reaction. Aleks never hesitated on sharing pertinent information that they needed to be aware of but his hesitation proved that there were other factors at work.

"A few weeks ago,"
"How do you expect those who are assigned to those missions to access their dossier information? Don't you think that information is integral?" Magnus shot questions at him, he was focused on discovering the root of the issue.

"Those that are selected to provide support for the mission are granted access to that information," Aleks began.

"Can we access the Director's dossier?" Linda asked as she attempted to access Kallista's mission dossier only to find nothing.

"What?"

"As far as we know...everyone on that mission is technically not on a mission,"

"Aleks...is there something going on that we need to be aware of?" Each word that came from the man's mouth was hesitant, carefully selected. Aleks sighed and ran his hands through his thick blond hair, he scratched at the stubble that had grown due to lack of time and motivation.

"Aleks—"

"Look it's hard to say, but...probably. As right now there's nothing that we can do at the moment," Aleks finally spoke.

"That's the vaguest shit I've heard you say in a long time," Magnus scoffed.

"And this is why I didn't want to say anything," Aleks replied nonchalantly and noticed that Linda had become silent.

"You ok over there?"

"I'm fine," Linda replied as she looked at the man.

"We have to keep our mind focused on the current tasks at hand. Magnus, I'm handing over Kallos' information to you while I work out this mess with the Malay base and Konrad,"

"Right," Magnus huffed as he focused on his screen, Linda quietly followed suit and began to work on her current project with recon agents in the local area.

"Hopefully, I'll be back in 20 minutes," Aleks murmured as he looked at the two before he stood. He wanted to tell them what Kallista had told him before she left, but her suspicions were rightly placed. This was information that needed to be withheld until there was absolute proof had been found.

Aleks shook his head and exited the room.

"Now do you believe me, Magnus?"

[10 minutes has passed since the Frost agent has entered the room...]

Jesse glanced up from his cell phone as he heard Lyudmila's voice over their comm units.

[Look alive people. Be on guard just in case back up is needed. Kaines I have a new plan for you, siphon as much information as you can from the casino servers. The Frost agent should be fine for a few minutes longer. McCree, you're Kaines' backup until then]

"Oh wow, Reyes. I'm only good for backup huh?" Jesse scoffed.
"Ya know what—"Jesse began.

"Sounds like a plan boss," Jesse was quick to change his tone at the mention of his vacation being threatened.

"Was there anything specific you wanted?"

"VIP clientele, funding, payouts, etc"

[Understood]

[Dontsova has already changed her position so your chance to get to the VIP floors is nil, McCree. I'm already working on a different way for you to get to the upper floors. Standby]

"Stand by he says," Jesse murmured to himself as he looked around the floor and towards the VIP stairs. Lyudmila had indeed kept her part of the plan- she made sure that the Frost agent got to the VIP suites, accessed her target location, all without issues. It was now the Frost agent's turn to complete her part of the mission.

Jesse sighed heavily as he tried to act normal, he made small talk with those willing, flirted with the hostesses on the floor, gambled his limited amount of credits away and gained some, indulged in too many drinks. Sure this was a good start to his upcoming vacation but it made him uneasy.

Could the agent be trusted?

Would she complete her part of the plan?

Would someone catch on to her?

Would someone catch on to them?

Albeit this wasn't his first undercover mission, he had learned and completed many covert missions under Blackwatch, some were less enjoyable than this however questions lingered at the back of his mind. He knew that he was a part of the finest team but knew that any mistake they made could cost them the mission, their lives.

Jesse sighed again as he looked at his cell phone when Kallos' voice abruptly pulled him from his cell phone and a plethora of messages from 'friends' that should be the director now]

"What?" Jesse said out loud as he looked around. He quickly regained his cool and spoke again.

"Is she ok?"

Jesse began to move through the crowd all while attempting to not draw attention to himself as he searched for the woman. Jesse didn't want to assume the worst about Kallista, she was kept off the field for various reasons so he assumed the worse, her cover was blown and she was recognized by someone.

[Change in plans, McCree you know how things work. We picked up the Frost agent's beacon]
"Yer kiddin' me,"

[Nope. Get a move on]

"Will she be ok though? You tell me that an' I'll get a move on," Jesse asked as he continued to look around the crowd for the woman.

[So worried about the Director... I'll be sure to let Reyes know you're still doing your duty]

Jesse heard the man snicker on the other side of his earpiece, Jesse rolled his eyes. "C'mon now,"

[She'll be fine I'm sure. You need to get to that VIP floor]

Jesse had made it almost on the other side of the casino when he casually stopped at one of the various bars that littered the casino floor when he spotted Kallista cornered by one of the more hidden casino terminals. Jesse clicked his tongue in annoyance at the man's persistence, it was Carmelo Mendoza, Blackwatch's recon target. For a moment, Jesse hesitated to follow through with his orders, he knew the man would be an issue when he fixated on Kallista the first time she had appeared. He didn't know he would be this persistent in pursuing her.

"Where is Reyes?" Jesse questioned as he continued to watch the interaction between the two.

[He's on a call with the Strike Commander and Petras]

"All of the times fer a phone call. You sure she's gonna be ok?" Jesse scoffed.

[You have a mission to complete. Worry about her later, she is a trained agent just like you are]

Jesse looked at his cell phone, he still played into his part in trying not to look suspicious. "I'm pretty sure I have more training than she do,"

[You can rub it in her face later, McCree. Get a move on]

"I'm getting', I'm getting"

Jesse made his way to the VIP suite stars and looked at the fairly large and bulky man that stoically looked down at him.

"Can I help you?"

"Well ya see there's a party my friend is hostin' and I—"Jesse began.

"If you're not there now that means you weren't invited," the man cut him short.

"I got caught up in my game. Ya know we can't just leave when the pickin' is getting' good," Jesse began as he sized up the man.

"Do you have a key card?" the man questioned him, Jesse hesitated for a moment.

[Left breast pocket, Kallista put it there earlier]

"Keycard ya say?" Jesse began to dig into his pockets in search of the keycard Kallista slipped into his breast pocket. He dipped into his overcoat and pulled out an ebony card. The large man-sized up Jesse before he stepped aside slightly and allowed him to the stairs.

"Go on up and try not to cause any trouble," the guard mumbled as Jesse walked past him.
"You got it, boss," Jesse smirked as he quickly ascended the stairs.

"I'm clear," Jesse whispered as he began down the hall of doors.

[Far right room, room 18]

"Got it," Jesse huffed as he quickly moved down the hallway in search of the room. He steeled himself for what would be behind the dark-colored door before he used the ebony keycard to enter the room. He didn't know what to expect behind the door, what if the woman was being held at gunpoint, already dead?

Jesse sighed heavily and carefully swiped the ebony card and gained entry to the suite, the man was nearly toppled over by the body that nearly collided with him.

"The fuck-?"

A larger bulkier woman attempted to restrain the Frost agent and could see that the woman struggled as she subdued another woman that attempted to choke her. Jesse moved quickly to take out the assailant and to help the agent. With a bit of a struggle, the two managed to subdue the larger woman.

"Well shit," Jesse sighed heavily.

"Who are you?" Moira panted as she slicked back her hair and adjust the large bunny ear accessory she wore.

"I'm help…you ok?" Jesse asked.

"You didn't answer my question," Moira narrowed her eyes at the man, ready to attack him if she needed.

"Woah sweetheart, no need to get all in arms, I'm just here to help…sent by Blackwatch," Jesse replied as he held up his hands to show that he meant no harm to her. Jesse noticed the woman eyes as they roamed over him in search of anything that would show deception.

"We good?" Jesse questioned.

"For now."

"Well shit, what a tough crowd. I come in here to help out and yer judgin'me," Jesse scoffed.

________________________________________________________________________________

"Now my dear…"

"You're very persistent you know," Kallista commented disinterestedly as she tried to hide her annoyance with the man. He had caught her as she was using the terminal behind her to enter into the casino's servers, she took a gamble by hacking into the system to upload one of Blackwatch's seeker and observer programs into the servers so that she could get in and get out without being caught, but now Carmelo Mendoza had been sought her out since she encountered him on the casino floor.

"I am very persistent when it comes to something I like," Carmelo replied, his voice low, hints of a playful danger laced every word.

"Oh? If I were to say that I'm not interested? What then?" Kallista posed the question to the man and took note of the slight twitch in his eyebrow.
"C'mon don't be like that at least give me a chance and don't give that look. Have we met before or do you have a twin?" Carmelo began, blatantly ignored Kallista's question and continued to push.

"I don't-"

"Camilla-"

Carmelo and Kallista turned towards the voice that had called out to her, annoyed Carmelo sized up the man before he spoke.

"Can I help you?"

"Yes, actually. It seems to me that you are bothering one of my employees,"

Kallista sighed softly as she recognized the man in front of her, it was Ruben, another agent, who must have seen her interaction with the man and decided to step in. The man was not apart of the mission originally, for him to step in was an impromptu decision.

"This is my boss," Kallista spoke up.

"I'm talking to her at the moment, I'll be done in a few minutes," Carmelo replied.

"Sorry, sir. She is on the clock. You can talk to her after her shift. Camilla, come here," Ruben replied curtly as he held out his hand for the woman to take his hand. Kallista nodded as she tried to move away from the man only to have Carmelo block her with his arm.

"I said I would be done in a few minutes," the man pressed.

"Sir, please do not make me throw you out for harassment," Ruben began as he held contact with Kallista, Kallista rolled her eyes.

"It's bad for business throwing your customers out. I know the owner of this casino and if you want to keep your job I suggest you buzz off," Carmelo waved off the man and turned his attention back to Kallista.

Ruben quickly placed a hand on the man's shoulder and before he could utter a word, Carmelo threw a punch, Ruben stumbled a bit and quickly followed up with a punch of his own.

"Bloody Hell," Kallista sighed as she quickly moved out of the way of the fight

[Kaines…what the hell did you do?]

"I didn't do a damn thing," Kallista scoffed.

[Fix it before it gets worse.]

"I'm working on it," Kallista sighed exasperatedly, at this rate the mission could go south and fast.

[The timing of everything will be critical, there's no room for hesitation]

"I know, it's just a matter of time before the shit hits the fan," Gabriel exhaled smoke and snuffed out his cigarette on the alley wall.

[I know. You know my hands are tied unless I have proof to show Petras….and you know how anal he is about that. You'd be up shit creek in no time be sure to communicate with
"I'm sure she's gonna be happy to see me," Gabriel replied sarcastically.

"Aren't we all? Anyway, you already know how I feel, I don't need to say anything," Gabriel huffed as he looked in the direction of the van. There was a pause on the other end of the phone, the man indeed understood why his division was becoming more and more restricted, scrutinized and was forced to 'ask' for permission and clearance.

There were signs that he and some of his team noticed that seemed to be on a crash course towards the other division, an explosion.

"Yeah,"

"Naturally," Gabriel leaned against the alleyway wall, his mind mulled over the restrictions the Blackwatch division had been hit with.

"I'll see you when you get back...Also...Gabe"

"Yeah," Gabriel knew what was coming next, he wanted to know about her, about Natalie.

"Why hide it when you already know. You're supposed to know everything, remember?

"Thank you"

"Yeah," Gabriel answered back and ended the call. He shoved his cell phone into his trouser pocket and made his way back to the truck, as he opened the doors and was greeted by an ear ringing alarm.

"Kallos-" Gabriel started.

"I'm working on it, everything just decided to go bad all at once," Ellias replied, his eyes darted to and fro the various screens with security feed in the casino.

"Where is the Lieutenant?" Gabriel asked as he grabbed his dress coat and quickly put it on.

"Moving towards one of the sources of the disturbances," Ellias replied.

"I'm going in," Just as quickly as Gabriel entered the truck, he was out of the truck and briskly slipped pass the distracted security and into the crowd of people that were cautiously made their exit from the casino.

"Yer ankle ok?" Jesse asked as he helped the woman stand.
"It'll be fine. It was a stupid mistake," Moira chided herself as she went over to her unconscious target. As Moira took the woman's cell phone and attached a device to it, Jesse noticed a red emergency light that had begun to blink as if something had triggered it. He quickly looked around before he moved over to the viewing window and looked down at the casino floor.

"What the fuck?" Jesse hissed at the small commotion that seemed to escalate into something bigger as it moved around the casino floor.

"Kallos-"
[You have two minutes before the Italian authorities are on the scene and on your ass]

"Are you fuckin' kiddin' me?" Jesse hissed as he turned to Moira and looked her over. She was injured and based on her reaction she would hide her injury until much later.

[Jokes on missions are not my thing McCree]

"Fine. We got this," Jesse replied.

Moira pursed her lips together as she continued to siphon information from the woman's phone, and moved towards Pavetti's phone while the other continued to work. She had done this many times before and under more pressure than the Italian authorities.

This wasn't anything new.

But her sprained ankle from the sudden rush of being assaulted by one of the larger ladies and then the guard- Moira criticized herself for the mistake.

"Fuck," Moira cursed under her breath as her fingers began to hesitate.

"What's the status? Do we know what happened?" Jesse questioned and turned his attention back to the woman. Moira glanced at him then back to her mission, she had already made one mistake, she couldn't make anymore.

"I got it," Moira huffed as she took a step forward, pain shot through her ankle and caused the woman to stumble. Jesse moved quickly and caught the woman before she fell.

"Don't touch me," Moira hissed as she shoved the man away, Jesse held up his hands to show that he didn't mean to offend her.

"Hey. I'm jus' trying to help whether you like it or not peaches we're stuck together an' we gotta get a move on before we're caught," Jesse scoffed at the woman. Moira clicked her tongue in annoyance, she knew the man was right and everything would have gone smoothly if she didn't let her guard down for that split second, she would have been out of the suite and out of sight without his help.

[Tierra…this is Reyes from Blackwatch. What's your status?]

"I've completed my task, the commotion on the casino floor poses a problem of securing an escape route," Moira began as she shifted her weight.

[I've lost connection with my agents. There's something here jamming our signal but not yours. You know the layout of the place right? You have one minute before the place is surrounded. Use that time wisely]

Moira scoffed at the man's warning and began to limp towards the door with Jesse right behind her.
"I assume that was Reyes? I lost connection with him," Jesse began as he tried to help her, again Moira shoved the man away.

"Back off," Moira growled.

"Listen, Angel Face. I ain't tryin' to get caught again, not now, not ever. I got a real sweet vacation ridin' on this mission's success, so you let me help you on outta here and that's it," Jesse stated firmly. "You hurt an' that's gonna slow us down. So you tell me where to go an' we'll make it outta here,"

Moira knew the man was right but her oversight was heavy on her mind, it weighed down on her consciousness.

"Fine,"

As soon as the word left from her lips, Jesse had scooped the woman up into his arms and was already headed down the hallway opposite of the commotion. Moira shifted the white wrist cuff to reveal an ebony bracelet around her slender wrist, with a simple tap a blue holographic screen appeared.

"What's that?" Jesse questioned as he suddenly darted down a darkened hallway to avoid security guards that dashed around the corner and down the hall they were just in.

"A map, what does it look like?" Moira scoffed, Jesse rolled his eyes at the woman as he cautiously stepped back into the hallway.

"Well sweetheart, I hope yer better with directions than compliment, cos we need to get a move on —"

"There was a fourth party within the casino?" Magnus questioned.

"Yeah, that's what the director told me. She's trying to see if Kallos can pinpoint the source but his chances are almost nil at this point," Linda sighed.

Linda was contacted by Kallos as soon as Kallista and the others were in a safe distance and hidden from the authorities as the chaos escalated within the casino. Kallos wanted to confirm that Jesse and the Frost agent had escaped and stayed out of sight. Kallos and their Commander had lost communication with all of the Blackwatch agents on the field. She worked together with the man to establish a connection with the Frost agent's network, reestablished communication with Jesse and confirmed they were ok.

As for the fight that had broken out between the two men, it was contained by both Gabriel, Lyudmila and other security within the casino, but the events that occurred next stunned the crew and the agents at the casino. Other fights began to break out, it was almost as if a riot had begun for no clear reason. There was something in the casino that had triggered the reaction. Both women and men were affected, guards viciously attacked anything and everything in their immediate sight, Omnic servers, dealers, other guards, etc.

It was Chaos.

Mass Chaos.

Neither the small Intel crew of the mission team had seen something unwarranted spread so quickly and viciously. Once Kallos had contacted the Intel crew, Kallista followed up with the crew and alerted them to something big on the horizon. For once she didn't have an idea of what could happen,
they were in the dark.

"You think it could have been some type of neurological agent that caused the reaction?"

"Who knows but that looks to be the likely answer. There were no other indicators that point to something different," Aleks replied as he clicked through the images of those that were arrested.

"None of these people have criminal backgrounds…"

"This is a whole other investigation that doesn't include us. We have all of these recon reports coming in…and we're down two people," Magnus began. He knew that the crew needed to focus on their current work and parse the information and relay it to the appropriate agent all while dealing with the current missions of other Blackwatch agents.

**New outbreaks of riots against humans an omnis alike…**

*Talon had made an appearance again under the guise of two new companies that focused on biomedical and biogenetics.*

*The Cheshire cat had made its appearance in the United States, again.*

Something within the casino was the catalyst and now everything in the world moved at an accelerated pace, almost too fast they couldn't keep up.

"When is the Director returning?" Linda questioned.

"Approximately three hours from now. Is there something you need?" Aleks asked as she clicked over from the photos and back to the world map with current missions.

"Just curious…we…I want to know what I need to do," Linda replied.

"Have more faith in your judgment, Truffles. You know what to do," Magnus chuckled.

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A few days had passed since the recruitment mission in Italy, the paperwork for the transfer for Moira Cruz to join Overwatch had been approved and she was slated to start within the coming weeks. She was to work mostly with Overwatch missions and part-time with Blackwatch due to Gabriel's connection with her former employer.

Gabriel had already returned from his short mission to Poland and was slated to leave in the next few days. It was just to be another observation mission on a Polish nationalist group that was steadily becoming a voice that the Polish government couldn't ignore, neither could Overwatch.

The man was seated at his desk, focused on the mission dossier, an unlit cigarette hung from his lips as he leaned back in his chair.

*Knock…knock…*

"It's open," He continued to focus on the dossier as the person walked into his office and stopped at his desk. There was a hesitant silence in the room as Gabriel looked up at the man that stood silently in front of his desk and then to the datapad he had placed on his desk.

A datapad with the digital letters that read 'Letter of Official Resignation', he took off his glasses and picked up the datapad.

"I suppose you finally figured out what you wanted to do," Gabriel commented. Mikael placed his
glasses on the top of his head and rubbed his eyes before he managed to nod his head in agreement. Gabriel was thankful that the man didn't hide this from him, he had come to him several times in search of guidance, for answers on what he should do.

He always told him the same thing- that he should do what he thought was best for him and his future.

Gabriel looked over the document, it stated the formalities, the reasoning for the resignation, the date of the last day and finally the spot where Gabriel needed to sign.

"Two days, huh," Gabriel commented.

"Yeah...I didn't know what-" Mikael started, Gabriel held his hand to silence the man.

"You don't have to explain yourself. You're doing what you think is right for you and your future," Gabriel replied and gave his signature of acknowledgment, submitted his signature and handed the man back the datapad.

"T-Thank you...it's a bit difficult to completely wrap my head around this," Mikael sighed. Gabriel nodded as he watched the man nervously fidget underneath his gaze, the silence was heavy, both of the men could feel it.

"Do we need to have a going-away party for you?" Gabriel asked and cleared his throat, hoping to diminish the silence in the room.

"Maybe," Mikael replied cheekily.

Gabriel looked at the man surprised, he knew that the man had told a select few that he thought about resigning and hadn't decided on his answer yet, to have a party to announce that would be—

"I'm kidding, don't give me that look," Mikael said and nonchalantly cracked his neck.

"You know I want this to be as painless as possible...if I see everyone it'll make it harder to leave," Mikael replied. Gabriel nodded in agreement and stood from his chair.

"No party and my lips are sealed,"

"Thank you...Gabe. I appreciate it," Mikael sighed heavily. Gabriel took a good look at the man, he looked tired, had bags and dark circles underneath and around his eyes, he looked a bit pale.

Over the years Gabriel watched the man grow and flourish in Blackwatch under the role the man had given him. They both knew the role wasn't perfect but Mikael took on his role with pride and assisted with missions and gear as much as he was able to. The role of Defense Specialist with the background of an archeologist, but it worked out in the end.

It was bittersweet to watch the man leave.

"You're one to talk," Mikael also chuckled. Gabriel smirked as he walked over to the man and extended his hand for him to take. He could see the hesitation in Mikael's face before he took his hand and gave it a firm shake.

"Thank you for your service, Mikael. You were an important member on the team, you will be sorely missed," Gabriel began when suddenly Mikael pulled him into a hug.

"Alright, Alright you big softy," Gabriel chuckled.
"Just let me hug you damn it," Mikael hugged the man tighter, Gabriel laughed again as he patted the man on the back and returned the hug.

"Alright, Genji this test will show us how you will fair in battle and to see if we need to make any adjustments to your tendons and sensors. Please inform us if you experience any pain and we will stop the test,"

Seraphina looked down at the two men from the safety of the viewing glass several feet above the chamber. Her brows knitted together in frustration as she looked at the cyborg-like man that stood in front of what looked to be a Blackwatch agent. She was told that the man would not be included in war or bloodshed, she was told that she would be the first to help rebuild a man and give him back the life that was taken from him.

Not this.

"Dr, Ziegler…," the pink-haired woman began.

"I know Dr. Hasibuan…this isn't the best path for him…but…" Angela trailed off.

"As Doctors, we are supposed to—"

"I am well aware as to what doctors are meant to do, and I know that you are more than well aware," The blonde said as she turned to face the woman, Seraphina could see the apprehension on the woman's face. She knew. She knew that what they were doing to this man was wrong.

"Then you already know what I am going to say. You already know my disapproval with this," Seraphina stated firmly.

"I am sure that you are well aware of his condition…just imagine if we were to leave or remove ourselves from this project…he could be subjected to something much worse than this," Angela continued.

"He already lost his past life, why would Overwatch put him back on the field? For him to possibly lose his life again?" Seraphina questioned.

"I…I don't have all the answers…and I will admit that I have attempted to remain numb to this…but…" Angela trailed off.

"Is everyone and everything just an expendable soldier to Overwatch?" Seraphina began as the anger that she had kept compartmentalized as she worked on Genji's recovery began to unravel.

She wasn't one for allowing her emotions to interfere with her work but the amount of time she had spent with the man and watched him recover from the incident that had left him in the condition he had arrived in, and now to see the man—

"Dr. Ziegler—"Seraphina began.

"I know! I know…I don't need to be accused of anything…" Angela trailed off.

"But take a moment and think Dr. Hasibuan…knowing what you know about Genji, you've been by his side since he began his recovery and his surgeries…take a moment to imagine if you did decide to leave and about the next person to care for him…"

Seraphina crossed her arms and sighed as she listened to the woman, she already knew what the
woman was going to say and had gone over it a million times in her head as she cared for the man.

Angela, several other doctors, and Seraphina were tasked to assist that man known as Genji Shimada back to full health by through all of the cutting edge technology that Overwatch possessed. In a way, the man was the reason she had been sought out by Overwatch. They wanted the best of the best to be on this team, she didn't know the story behind the man or why Overwatch wanted to, in a way, resurrect the man. His injuries were severe, both Angela, Seraphina and the team of doctors nearly worked around the clock to keep the man stable, to keep the man alive.

Seraphina had spent nearly all of her time with the man and when she wasn't she attempted to sleep, to assist with the injuries of the agents that came in from missions.

She knew what the woman was going to say.

Angela turned to look at the woman, her brows furrowed, her lips pursed together, Seraphina sighed heavily.

"I get it…I don't like it but I get it," the woman replied.

"I had an inkling that you may have already understood where I was going to go. I've thought about this several times…It…would be best that we stayed with him…until he's fully healed," Angela sighed as she turned back to the viewing glass.

"Let's just get this over it,"

At that moment, the doors slid open and Strike Commander Morrison followed by Ana Amari and Winston entered the room.

"Strike Commander, Captain Amari, Winston! I didn't know that we were having visitors," Angela commented.

"Me either," Winston replied nervously as he moved over to the large viewing glass.

"I wanted to see the progress on this project and if there have been any improvements," Morrison said as he walked over to Angela and Seraphina.

"I was just curious," Ana commented with a small smile.

"You are more than welcome to view," Angela smiled.

"Now that…Genji…" Seraphina began

"It that what he asked you to call him?" Morrison questioned.

"Yes. Now that Genji has complete function he has improved 75 percent and shows signs of steady improvement. His cognitive function is normal, blood pressure, normal, he has been outfitted with what you see currently to fit the needs of Commander Reyes, Overwatch, and his own personal needs," Seraphina explained as she looked at the man's medical charts on the screen next to her.

"I see. Has he been in battle yet? Not simulated," Morrison asked as he too moved over to the window.

"Not quite yet. We put him through simulators first as Winston and Agent Spiros and the Blackwatch mechanics team worked on his weapon," Winston replied.

"So then this is the first training session with his weapon," Ana commented.
"Yes. For obvious reasons," Morrison added as he glanced at Ana.

"Just thought I would ask,"

"We've put Genji through therapy sessions, both physical and mental just to cover all of our bases even if there were no discrepancies..." Angela trailed off as she turned towards the window and to the two men on the ground below.

"Start the training session,"

Angela nodded to the man, then glance to Seraphina next to her, Seraphina looked away from the woman. Angela sighed quietly as she leaned forward to the microphone.

"Agent Van Gogh...Genji...please begin combat,"

Kallista sighed softly as she felt the soft scratch of the man's beard against her arm, lips on her shoulder and then to her ear. A strong arm wrapped itself around her waist that anchored her to the man, the heat gently roused her from her sleep.

"Gabriel," Kallista murmured as she melted into the man's warmth, the man whispered a rumble of a 'hey' against the shell of her ear before he placed another kiss on her shoulder.

"Good Morning to you too. You're wide awake and clingy, Gabriel," Kallista murmured.

"It's the afternoon and you slept through training and your morning meeting," He placed a soft kiss to the shell of her ear.

"Oh shit..." Kallista sighed heavily.

"How are you feeling?" He questioned as he placed another kiss on to her shoulder/

"I've been...exhausted...a little weak but the medication that Angela gave me is helping...I think," Kallista sighed.

"Let me know if I can do anything for you..." Gabriel trailed off.

"You know I can help myself," Kallista chuckled softly as she reached back to caress the man's cheek. She slowly opened her eyes to a dimly lit room, her blackout curtains partially raised to allow some sunlight into the room.

"I know, but I'm also your CO and I also don't want you to collapse from exhaustion," He placed another soft kiss on her shoulder before he spoke again.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah..." Kallista sighed heavily as she ran her hand down her face.

"So...tell me..." Gabriel began.

"Hm?"

"How long did it take you and your friends to create the Cheshire cat?"

The shiver that ran down Kallista's spine chilled he blood despite the warmth the man gave and the heat shared between them. The kiss that he placed on her shoulder sent another shiver through her body.
"What?" Kallista whispered.

"You heard me…tell me everything about it and no more hiding Kallista."
"Huh?" Kallista uttered.

"I'm waiting…"

Kallista hesitated as a million questions ran through her head. How did he find out? Who told him?

"Oh? You're being shy now? I'll start then…the signature that the Cheshire care left behind when it hacked into Sterling Black's network left remnants behind that were similar to an old AI that had caused a shit storm years ago," Gabriel began, his lips at the woman's ear and hand splayed across her chest his thumb lazily drew circles as he spoke.

"I did a little more prying and you want to know what I found? Loki, the Norse trickster god, an AI….sound familiar Miss Fata Morgana?" Gabriel questioned.

"…yeah I know about it," Kallista replied, her answer barely above a whisper

"Of course you do. You're an intelligent woman and also you and your friends made it," Kallista stiffened against the man, at his words and the hand that began to travel towards her neck, his fingers dragged against her supple skin ever so slow.

"So tell me gatita…why is the Cheshire cat so similar to that very same AI you and your little friends created? Hm?"

Kallista's heart hammered in her chest as the man spoke to her about the secret she held about the Cheshire cat. She had known about the signature since she traveled to the United States to gather information from Black's networks. She made it a point to keep all information about the Cheshire cat to herself and distribute information that she created out to the others. She purposely omitted information about the Cheshire cat's signature.

"I…" Kallista began

"Hm?" He lazily rolled his hips against her as his hand splayed across her neck.

"W-we made the Loki AI but we didn't make the Cheshire cat…" Kallista's breath caught in her throat as she felt the man's arms around her waist tighten.

"T-the design…was stolen and remade into what you see as the Cheshire cat," Kallista hesitated again, the man behind her noticed.

"And your friends didn't do it?" Gabriel asked.

"N-No. They wouldn't," Kallista stuttered.

"How do you know?" the man's question was nothing less of growl.

"Because I have the original designs…given to me by one of them," Kallista replied.

"How did you get them?"

Kallista hesitated again, the man behind her noticed.

"Kallista…"
"They were given to me by one of the people that created it when I traveled to the United States," Kallista blurted out.

"You knew this and you didn't bother to tell me?" Gabriel asked, his voice low, firm and measured as he spoke. She couldn't see his face but she could feel the danger that radiated off of the man as he teased and interrogated her.

"I…needed to make sure…" Kallista trailed off.

"Make sure of what?" Gabriel growled.

"That it wasn't the God Brigade…it's not them I—"a soft pathetic moan slipped from her lips as the man's hand began to tighten around her neck.

"How do I know if you're not lying? How do I know you're telling the truth Kallista?" Gabriel sighed behind her, a sigh of disappointment almost.

"The original design is in Lyuda's office, She—"Another moan slipped from Kallista as the man rolled his hips again.

"Who is behind this…tell me," Gabriel growled. A soft gasp shot from her throat as the man's hand was snuggly around the woman's neck.

"I…I don't know…but I'm working on stopping it. I have a trajectory of where the source is coming from,"

"Where?"

"The United States," Kallista replied.

The hand that was snuggly around her neck released itself as did the arm around her waist, the dangerous heat behind her gone. Kallista sighed heavily and buried her head in her pillow to hide her embarrassment and the fact that she had been found out.

"Just imagine if Overwatch found out about this Kallista," Gabriel began "Have you thought about that?"

"They weren't going to find out…I would have taken care of it before then," Kallista replied as she looked up at the man.

"Apparently not," Gabriel scoffed, Kallista frowned as she brushed her bed hair from her face as she continued to look up at the man. The look he gave her was the same look he had given her all those years ago, stoic, detached.

"If you don't help me Kallista I can't help you," Gabriel said as he crossed his arms.

"What did you expect me to do? Tell you that that AI was made by me but not me?" Kallista shot back.

"Yes. Did you forget where you are? Did you forget what we do? Who we are? And Who I am? Get your head on straight Kallista. You are no longer some run of the mill hacker," Kallista sighed heavily as she sat up in her bed.

"Normally…you would be written up for withholding information from a superior and be disciplined…but-" Gabriel suddenly stopped and took out his cell phone.
"You're in luck because you still need to figure this shit out and I expect it to be figured out soon. No more games Kallista, the consequences will be worse next time," Gabriel warned as she turned to the door as he answered his phone.

"Reyes here…"

"There she is…oh?" Magnus commented as Kallista entered the Intel office. Magnus instantly saw the slight pout that the woman had on her face, he had seen it multiple times before and it was usually after she has met Reyes before coming to the office.

"Good Afternoon Director Kaines," Linda greeted the woman.

"Director Kaines…how are you feeling?" Aleks asked as he stood.

"Hey," Kallista sighed as she gave a murmured greeting to her small team.

"Uh-oh…" Magnus began.

"What?"

"Did you get a spanking from Reyes?" Magnus smirked.

"Come off of it you twit," Kallista frowned. Magnus chuckled slightly at the woman's icy insult, he knew that behind that insult that he had hit his mark.

"You are feeling better though? Commander Reyes told us that you were resting…are you sure you should be up and moving?" Aleks began.

"I'll be fine. I can't waste any more time," Kallista sighed. "Alright, give me updates and your extended plan for work for the next two weeks,"

Kallista looked at the three as she stood between the desks and pulled a holographic keyboard from the terminal closest to her. She glanced at the larger desk across the room, it was empty, the desk belonged to Malik who hadn't been seen for several days. Kallista knew that it was the man's time to focus on one of his long-term goals, Talon.

"Hmm…"

"When is Malik coming back?" Magnus questioned.

"At this point, I'm not sure," Kallista replied as she focused on the larger screen, logged into the system and watched as various active dossiers and messages appeared.

"So far everything has been normal in terms of this specific office but there's been an increase of activity around certain Blackwatch outposts," Aleks began.

"I assume those are around the hot spots," Kallista said as she pulled up a small map on the screen to show the Blackwatch outposts. Indeed she could see the increased activity in countries where Overwatch was present and countries where Blackwatch was present.

"How many overnighters have you all pulled?" Kallista asked as she used two fingers to drag and open a dossier next to her.

"I don't know. I found Aleks and Linda dosing off at their desks or even sleeping when I came in," Magnus commented.
"Alright…I'll start to circulate everyone's work to the others…in the meantime, we're short-staffed and I've already begun transfer work for Kallos to join while myself and Malik are out. Also, I'll reach out to a few of our other teams to see if they can parse and filter information,"

"Where are you going this time?" Linda questioned.

"To the United States, again," Kallista replied.

"Why?" Aleks questioned

"To handle the Cheshire cat. Even though Malik isn't here, he's been assisting me locate the origin of the Cheshire cat. I'm going to personally take out the source," Kallista replied.

"How long will you be away?" Linda asked.

"You lot are asking a lot of questions—why is Van Gogh in Med Bay?" Kallista pulled up the man's profile and medical files.

"He was injured during a training session with a new recruit," Magnus sighed. "Not too sure how I feel about the guy,"

"Who? And what do you mean?" Kallista questioned.

"A shi—" Magnus began when the woman's cell phone began to ring. She paused a moment before she answered the phone call.

"Yeah….Now? ok," With just those few words the phone call ended and the phone went back into her back pocket.

"Apparently I have an important meeting with Reyes?" Kallista replied confused.

"Probably about the incident and the new recruits," Aleks commented. Kallista sighed heavily, with the situation that she was in hours ago with the man she was hesitant to see him so soon.

"You look like you don't wanna go," Magnus commented.

"No. I'm fine. I'll get Kallos to come over since I'm heading that way," Kallista began as she closed out the dossiers and screens before she logged out of the administration system.

"I'll be back, carry on,"

Kallista pulled her hair into a ponytail as she exited from the office and walked towards Reyes' office. As she made her way to his office she made a list of things on her phone that she needed to take care of before she even attempted to show the man her proposed plans for her mission to the United States.

She needed to check on Danica's recovery and now Ruben since he was in the Med-bay, she needed to call Natalie to check on her she was due soon. She then needed to make sure she talked with Malik about his current task and how he was felt about the situation, she then needed to talk to Mikael about his departure tomorrow. After she completed those tasks she made for herself, only then would she begin to create her dossier for the United States. As she wrote down her tasks a highly encrypted message appeared on her phone, without a second thought she opened the message.

[C. Tesfaye: What's this about ditching the coop?]
KC Kaines: What do you mean?

C. Tesfaye: I got a message from Ella about mission critical

KC Kaines: I assume it from someone who did some prying…

C. Tesfaye: Did you mess up Kal?

KC Kaines: I didn't

D. Yelen: Gabriella and I know what happened…it would be best to call

KC Kaines: I think I can be there. Let me know what times best work for you all

C. Tesfaye: I'll be there

G. Attia: Same…and I probably was a little exaggerated about that…my bad

G. Lockman: I'll be half dead but I'll be there

KC Kaines: B is in Indonesia right?

G. Lockman: Yepp

D. Yelen: And Sam is in the Maldives with her husband…so we best not disturb her

KC Kaines: No worries

Kallista closed the group message and shoved the phone into the back pocket of her jeans before she knocked on the office door.

"It's open"

Kallista entered the man's office and headed towards the man's desk, the door closed automatically behind her.

"I'm sure you're already aware of Mikael's departure right?" Gabriel began as he watched the woman sit down in one of the chairs in front of his desk.

"Yeah. I saw the paperwork and talked to Lyudmila about it," Kallista replied.

"Good," Gabriel nodded.

"How are you feeling about it?" Kallista questioned. "Since he was here with you at the beginning of Blackwatch,"

"It's a little bittersweet but it is his choice for his future," Gabriel began. "Unfortunately…we are never guaranteed a future in this line of work,"

"Yeah…" Kallista trailed off and shifted in her chair.

She knew the risks about their job, their line of work and encountered death more times than she would have liked to. Nor did the thought of her future cross her mind, she always went with the flow and adapted when she needed to but now…
"Have you thought about what you wanted to do after Overwatch?" Kallista asked. Gabriel looked up from the paperwork on his desk and then to the woman across from him.

"It hasn't crossed my mind in some years now…" the man trailed off.

"Has it changed since the first time you thought about it?" Kallista asked.

"I was younger back then…but…you know the simple things. Retire back to LA, a nice and quiet home in a secluded area maybe start a family," Gabriel started. "You know, what soldiers normally want after putting their lives on the line for so long,"

Kallista smiled slightly, his plans for the future were indeed simple but spoke volumes about what he wanted.

"What about you?" Gabriel asked as he leaned back in his chair.

"I've never really thought about it…I don't know maybe see if any of my relatives are still alive? Reconnect with them? Become that one relative that's too snobbish to be bothered to go to family events? I don't know," Kallista replied avoiding the thought that nagged her as she spoke about her façade of a future.

Gabriel chuckled as he shook his head at the woman's antics, he knew that if the woman didn't take the deal that he and Jack offered her years ago, she would be in prison for life. In a way he was glad that she took the deal, she was an invaluable member to his already small team, he had various teams all integral to Blackwatch's operation but the Intel crew at the Swiss base was important to him.

She was important to him and was curious about what she had planned for her future.

"I didn't think I could retire from this," Kallista laughed.

"We'll consider if you can retire and go free," Gabriel smirked.

"Oh wow, thanks," Kallista replied sarcastically, the man chuckled.

"Now…I didn't call you here to just talk about the future we can have those types of conversations over coffee…" Gabriel trailed off. As soon as the words came from the man's mouth he could see the woman light up with controlled excitement.

"Are you asking me out on a coffee date Gabriel?" Kallista smirked, the man smirked as well.

"After you handle that situation you got yourself into," Gabriel replied, Kallista huffed.

"Recently, I had some agents make contact with an agent from the Philippines," Gabriel began and handed the woman a datapad.

"Oh?" Kallista took the pad and began to review the information on the new recruit. "Rodel Dimaguiba…interesting…I'm sure you saw the riots that took place in Malaysia and Indonesia right?"

"Of course. With Doubek and the others coming back poisoned it's just a start I'm sure," Gabriel began.

"The Supreme and Honorable Society of the Sons of the Nation…" Kallista began. "An insider to an Anti-Omnic group?" Kallista looked at the man with an arched eyebrow.

"We need to take it down from the inside. Get into the minds of those are against Omnics free rights
to learn what the most effective ways to bring them down. The information that we have on that group violates the laws set by the UN and I'm sure you know the rest,” Gabriel explained.

"They are more violent than the others, to be honest," Kallista commented.

"He'll be mostly on the field station in Asia but he'll be here until he completed the training," Gabriel shifted in his seat.

"I see," Kallista placed the datapad back on the man's desk. "What else do you have?"

Gabriel chuckled a bit at the woman's eagerness and the smug look she gave him as she leaned back in the chair and crossed a leg over the other.

"You heard about Ruben?" Gabriel began.

"No. I just found out that he was in Med Bay this afternoon, what happened?" Kallista questioned.

"An incident during a training session with a new recruit," Gabriel replied.

"A new recruit injured one of your lead recon agents and you didn't chew them out?" Kallista looked at the man surprised.

"Surprising right? This one is different though…” Gabriel trailed off, Kallista arched an eyebrow.

"Remember Japan—"

"It's that project isn't it?" Kallista interrupted.

"Yeah…"

"Is he ready?" Kallista asked.

"You are the nosiest person I've met, you know that right? No one besides myself, Jack and a few others were supposed to know. And here you are talking about it like you were involved," Gabriel sighed

"You also forget it's also my job to know everything, and I'm clearly doing my job," Kallista tilted her head and smiled.

"Too well…are you going to tell me willingly or do I have to force it out of you?" Gabriel questioned.

"…All you have to do is ask," Kallista replied hesitantly.

"I assume you saw his injuries, will he recover? Ruben?" Kallista asked in an attempt to change back to the subject at hand.

"Yeah…Angela and Dr. Hasibuan was there and got him emergency surgery," the man sighed as he took off his beanie and tossed it on his desk.

"Was it bad?" Kallista asked cautiously.

"Unfortunately…no one expected him to react the way that he did…but Ruben is going to make it. Don't expect him to be readily available," Gabriel replied

"Alright then…and your newest recruit?" Kallista said as she intertwined her fingers together.
Gabriel pushed his chair back and stood, Kallista watched as the man walked over to the door and opened it. Moments later, Jesse and an unknown entered the room.

"Afternoon Kalli," Jesse greeted the woman as the other remained silent.

Kallista quickly looked over the man and took note of the cybernetic, prosthetic legs, the tubes that partially peeked from the man's hoodie, the metallic jaw, the red cybernetic eyes, and grumpy stare. Gabriel closed the door behind the two men and went back to his desk and sat on the edge,

"You're—" Kallista began.

"Kallista meet our newest recruit… Genji Shimada,"

Genji's crimson stare focused on her as she did him, there was a moment of silence before Kallista stood and extended a hand.

"Nice to finally meet you…Genji," Kallista said as she looked at the man. Genji remained silent as his crimson cybernetic eyes examined the woman before he looked at the woman's hand.

"Wakarimasuka?" Kallista asked

"...Yes. I understand. Nice to meet you," Genji replied as he gingerly took the woman's hand and gave it a gentle shake. He quickly withdrew his hand and shoved it back into this hoodie.

"Kalli, I didn't know you speak Japanese," Jesse commented.

"It's been a while…welcome to the team Genji," Kallista took note of how shy and reserved the man was, opposite of how the man was previously.

Kallista knew of the restoration project, she didn't know all of the details about the project but she did know that the man was a target of the organization. She didn't have full access to the project but she was given some information from Seraphina, who was the main doctor on the reconstruction phase of the project. She didn't dive too much into the project due to her own time restraints and responsibilities.

Kallista turned to the man at the desk to see if there was something else he needed to tell her, and that's when it clicked.

"He's the one-?" Kallista began, Gabriel nodded.

"I see…"

"Jesse take Genji back to see Dr. Hasibuan. I'll come to find the both of your later," Gabriel nodded to the man.

"You got it," Jesse nodded.

Kallista watched the two men leave the man's office and close the door before she turned back to the man.

"You sure this is a good idea?" Kallista questioned.

"Yes. We've been trying to break down the Shimada Clan for years…the way he came to us wasn't the most conventional—" Gabriel began.

"You mean he was nearly assassinated you mean?" Kallista spoke up. Gabriel hesitated for a
moment before he spoke.

"I won't lie," Gabriel replied.

"Mmm…" Kallista crossed her arms as she looked at the man. Gabriel sighed as he looked at the woman.

"Don't give me that look. You're not off the hook yet Kallista," Gabriel said.

"I didn't say anything," Kallista replied. "There's a lot of things happening at once. I need coffee and a moment's time to catch up on everything."

"Get your coffee and get your ass in gear Kallista. Time is not on your side,"

Gabriel watched the woman wave off his warning but he knew that time wasn't on their side in general. There were so many moving pieces that moved together, in tangent, separately to the point that it was nearly difficult for the man himself to keep his mind focused on world events let alone everyone within Blackwatch.

There was something or someone behind the scenes that pulled the strings that move everyone like puppets. Gabriel sighed heavily and moved behind his desk, his attention focused on the view outside his office.

Left to his thoughts for a few minutes, there was a knock on his door. He glanced at the small holographic notification that stood out from his computer screen. His next meeting.

*Knock Knock*

"It's open," Gabriel said, his back to the door. The person entered the office, closed the door and promptly sat down.

"Lyuda," Gabriel began.

"Long time no see Reyes," Lyudmila replied, Gabriel turned towards the woman and nodded.

"You make it seem like we haven't seen each other in months," Gabriel chuckled as he sat down.

"It feels like it but you know that's what happens when you're on the field non-stop, you lose track of time," the woman replied.

"You're right about that," Gabriel sighed.

There was a short pause between the two before Lyudmila spoke.

"You're feeling better…I assume?" Lyudmila questioned.

"What makes you think I was ill?"

"When you're at the base for the time that you've been here I assume you're really sick or injured or there's something you want to handle yourself," she replied.

"Oh?" Is that so?" Gabriel replied cheekily.

"Gabriel——"

"My health is fine…as for something big…you already know what's going on," Gabriel waved off
the woman's concern.

He could see her hazel brown eyes as they quickly looked over him and followed by a sigh. She was a very perceptive woman, she saw things he may have not seen and more.

"Whatever you say, Reyes," the woman shrugged. "Just know I'll be there to help you up if you fall,"

"Ouch Lyuda," Gabriel chuckled. Again the woman shrugged but with a small smirk on her lips.

"Well now, I feel backstabbed,"

"I told you, Reyes, you would see me coming if I were to do that," Lyudmila said as she crossed a leg over the other. Gabriel chuckled again.

"We've got lots to talk about," He began, the woman across from him nodded.

"I've checked up on Bradley. She's completed therapy and just moved into the lower basics training sessions, for the most part, she's doing well," Lyudmila began.

"I heard which leads me to the next point that we need to discuss…we lost a few squad leaders for the team here at HQ," Gabriel began as he pulled up profiles of the agents that lost their lives on the field.

"Unfortunately, they were good people," Lyudmila trailed off as her gaze dropped from the profiles and to her hands.

"We need to send another team to that location…New Zealand. There's something obviously wrong and doesn't want to be found," Gabriel continued.

"I can only assume it is Talon related. I've read the reports from that recon operation…and the enemies were a bit overkill," Lyudmila commented. Gabriel nodded and sighed.

"Most of our agents are spread out and working at full capacity…" she continued as she looked at the small device that projected a small hologram screen with a map with their agent's placements around the world.

"Is that what I think it is?" Gabriel arched an eyebrow, her shoulders dropped with a sigh.

"I finally decided that I needed to use one of these things. I got Magnus and the Intel crew to help me out with it," Lyudmila replied.

"I'm proud of you," Gabriel chuckled.

He knew that the woman was not technological savvy at all, she struggled with the more advanced devices that were used in Blackwatch. She usually delegated using any technology to anyone else in the team and if she could avoid it she would. He couldn't help but chuckle at the woman, it was a big step for her.

"I would appreciate it if you didn't laugh at me. I already feel and look like a grandma," Lyudmila scoffed.

"Right. Right. My bad," Gabriel replied with a smirk plastered on his lips.

"…with the loss of the two field officers and senior agents, Doubek and Van Gogh out on medical leave, Natalie still out, and Bradley is recovering…and a few others…" Lyudmila began.
"We need to make some changes and quick…we're losing too many agents. Gabriel sighed.

"What are you thinking?" Lyudmila looked up at the man.

"We already have replacements for HQ but we also have agents that are already qualified for a promotion," Gabriel began. "We also have two support agents joining us, Asuka and Dimaguiba, and then there's Genji—"

"How did Kallista handle that? Knowing that he took out one of her agents?" Lyudmila questioned.

"She was a bit hesitant but she didn't really have much to say about the matter…she has other things to worry about," Gabriel replied.

"Naturally," Lyudmila replied. "I assume you're going to suggest someone?"

"Bradley for sure. After she's been checked out by Angie and Mikami she should be all set," Gabriel explained.

"I agree…she already has the qualifications and experience," Lyudmila nodded. "Do we know when Natalie is due?"

"I think next month or so?" Gabriel replied and scratched the back of his head.

"Has it really been that long?" Lyudmila sighed as she looked at her cellphone. "Did she tell you what she was having?"

"Oh definitely, he going to lose his mind…whenever he finds out," Gabriel chuckled.

"That's exciting to hear. You feel like a grandfather yet?" Lyudmila chuckled.

"Grandfather? Out Lyuda am I graying or something?"

"Not that I am aware of, but half of the agents call you dad so…" She trailed off. Gabriel sighed and waved off the woman's comment.

It was already near the end of August, Natalie was transferred to Canada in late December, early January it had been nearly nine months had passed and so much had happened since then.

"We've got to be prepared for whatever is thrown at us…right now whoever is pulling the strings is trying to overwhelm Overwatch and us…so we need to be able to strike back efficiently and effectively," Gabriel began, a clear shift in subjects.

"Of course," Lyudmila nodded. "I haven't checked in on the new recruit, Moira was it?"

"I'm not sure of all of the details, but I think she is already in her training with the other Overwatch agents," Gabriel replied.

"Any idea when she will be joining?"

"No clue, I think that's a bit ahead of the game at the moment. She needs to get all settled with Overwatch before she's introduced to our band of misfits," Gabriel sighed.

"Sounds like a plan," Lyudmila nodded.

"And besides…we need everyone that we have here to be on the same page,"
"Everyone? That includes Kallista and her team too, correct?" Lyudmila questioned. The man closed out all of the screens that hovered above his desk and turned his attention back to the woman.

"Yes. Even her,"

"Our little Intel Director is a house of secrets," Lyudmila began. Gabriel leaned back in his chair and sighed, he knew what the woman eluded to.

"Too many secrets. I don't know if they are well-intentioned or not. The only way we find out is when the shit hits the fan or it's too late," Gabriel sighed. He noticed she looked at him expectantly.

"What?"

"Nothing," Lyudmila replied and stood.

"It sounds like you have something to say Lyuda," Gabriel said as he watched the woman head towards the door and stop.

"I'll go check on Bradley and see where she stands…also…Spiros is leaving soon right?" She turned to look at the man at his desk.

"Either today or tomorrow," Gabriel replied.

"Ah. I see…are you ready?" Lyudmila asked.

"For?" Gabriel asked.

"For Malik…you do know that Mikael literally told no one else that he's leaving besides us and Kallista right?" Lyudmila began. Gabriel sighed as he finally realized what the woman referred to.

When Malik first arrived at Blackwatch they were already attached to Jin Mikami, but as time passed he could see Malik had turned their attention away from Jin and began to focus more on Mikael and avoid Jin as much as possible. Gabriel was sure that the Mikael didn't tell Malik, and he wouldn't have been able to Malik had been away on Talon focused missions for the past two weeks.

"Also…" she began as she stood in front of the door, she looked over her shoulder.

"I mean this in no ill will…Reyes…but do you think she didn't tell you because she didn't trust you to believe her?" Lyudmila began.

"What are you getting at Lyudmila?" Gabriel questioned.

"The reason why someone would hold back information like that is either out of fear, lack of trust or for the protection of the person or themselves," Lyudmila said. Gabriel stared silently at the woman.

"Or it could be nothing," the woman added with a slight shrug.

"You're full of cryptic messages today Lyuda. What's going on?" Gabriel asked. Lyudmila waved off the man's concern with a smug look.

"It's nothing. I'll let you know what is going on with Danica later today,“ Lyudmila replied and exited the man's office.

Gabriel leaned back into his chair and thought about what the woman had said just moments before. He had gifted the entire Cheshire cat situation to Kallista and her Intel crew but didn't even bother to check in on her and her team about it, he trusted her to handle the situation before it escalated to
something worse. But the thought of the woman not trusting him to even mention that she had the original designs of the Cheshire cat, to even mention that she had been in contact with her old team bothered him.

"What are you doing Kallista," Gabriel sighed.

Kallista sat on the outdoor patio of one of the cafés near Overwatch HQ on a phone call, there weren't many days where she was able to steal time to herself and outside of the walls of HQ or indulge in the freshly made espresso drinks.

{So…after doing a bunch of digging…Gabriella and I found out who was prying} Diana began.

"Who?" Kallista questioned before she took a sip of her coffee.

{An organization called the Frost Network…I will say they are a bit interesting and tenacious} Diana continued.

"I assume they were looking for things about the cat?" Kallista whispered. She knew that she had to be careful of what she said in general, especially in public. The phone call consisted of some of the God Brigade, an old group of elite hackers that Kallista used to be a member of. They had all gathered to discuss the events of the Cheshire cat, find out who had pried into their old designs and who had essentially exposed Kallista.

"The Frost Network…hmph," Kallista commented as she adjusted her sunglasses. The Frost Network was the organization that Moira was recruited from. Kallista assumed that Gabriel must have asked them to look into the Cheshire cat because she purposely omitted information from her reports and worked on the case herself without the help of her team.

{They went through every piece of information that and looked under every orifice, nook and cranny they could until they found what they were looking for…or at least some of it} Gabriella spoke up

Currently, two women, Diana and Gabriella, were the main speakers as Kallista and two others listened as they gave them the information on what they had.

{They're good…they even went so far as to look at even older AIs and compare…kudos to them} Gabriella scoffed.

{Any idea what they wanted with this information? This is very specific and there's really no need to look into this the Cheshire cat hasn't-} Camille spoke up.

{Before you finish that statement Milly, have you checked the forums as of late? Or the news for that matter?} Gabriella cut off the woman before she could continue.

Kallista looked at the holopad that she carried with her and looked pulled up various reputable news sites and saw that the headlines featured the Cheshire cat.

- Copy the copycat! Governments are growing concerned about the Cheshire cat's next attack -
- Cheshire cat induced violence within the Omnic community in Bhutan -
- Government vs the Cheshire cat, what are governments doing to protect the networks -
"Bloody Hell," Kallista sighed.

{Yeah, it's getting pretty bad…like real bad} Gabriella sighed

{Ok, but it's not our problem it's not our AI…actually…} Gwen who had been silent until this moment spoke up.

{I wouldn't even consider it an just a simple AI anymore…Diana and I were trying to look at how it affects the programming, the internal systems of omnics and what it actually does…and it's more like a virus…a virus that knows what it's doing} Gabriella began again.

{Ella…are you telling me this is a sentient virus?} Camille began.

{Unfortunately, I think so}
Kallista sat a bit agitated at the realization of what she allowed herself to fall into, she had sat on the issue too long in hopes that the mole within the Overwatch Foundation would reveal themselves quickly but that didn't happen. It didn't help that her thoughts were a jumbled mess paired with the revelation that someone had stolen the God Brigade's code and morphed it into what the world knows as the Cheshire Cat.

A code that was once a joke was now a serious threat to AI and Omnic security.

After the conversation she has with some of the members from the God Brigade, Diana and Gabriella had sent more data about the Cheshire cat and possible leads to where it was stolen, where it was recreated and modified. But one of the statements that played over and over in Kallista's thoughts was Gwen's statement about the Cheshire cat's current algorithms compared to the original.

If this is truly a sentient virus...there is a possibility that this virus has already attached itself to a host, a body

It had grown and adapted to something completely different than the original, it even surpassed its original modifications and only continued to grow. With the constant change of its processes and firewalls, it would be difficult to work with but she was confident enough that she would be able to find a weak point.

However, the most important and more pressing detail was the fact that it could already have a host and time was against her.

With an exaggerated sigh, Kallista leaned back in her chair and crossed her legs. Gabriel had already discovered that she had been withholding information from him about the Cheshire cat, but she was lucky enough that no one in the R&D department spoke a word about her hacking into Sterling Black's network without the proper clearances.

But now, the Cheshire cat had evolved into something she knew that she wouldn't be able to handle solo and would need the help of the others to quell the now rogue A.I. Despite how serious the situation was the women in the encrypted group call, the women laughed at the prospect of them helping her and how much she had changed.

She worked for the people that they and the others sought to expose years ago.

There were a few other details that Kallista purposely omitted from the conversation, the unknown experiment that had left her with chronic pain that left her unable to function, the bouts of blindness, muscle soreness and more.

Nor did she tell them that the man they once targeted for their planned "Justice Crusade" was now her commander and lover.

"Athena,"

Yes, Director Kaines

"Has Agent Malik Ramos returned?"
"Thank you," Kallista straightened herself in her chair as focused back on the uncompleted mission dossier she had begun nearly two years ago only this time she had more information to begin to formulate a plan. Three possible leads that took her to the United States, to California to be exact. She already had a list of those she could call on, of course within her means of being Blackwatch's Intel Director.

"You want her to join?" Lyudmila asked, her expression was stoic but she was in fact shocked at the suggestion from the red-haired woman.

"Oh c'mon Lyuda," Danica began to jokingly plead with the taller woman. Lyudmila sighed softly and crossed her arms.

"Have you even spoken to her about this?"

"Naturally. You don't really believe I would suggest someone join without asking, do you?" Danica asked with feigned surprise.

"You are seriously asking me that Bradley?" Lyudmila countered.

"...Good point but I'm serious this time. I know we're lacking a bit especially with Konrad being out, you the lack of resources, a possible investigation-" Danica began and immediately stopped when she noticed the woman's sharp stare on her.

"An investigation? Who told you that?" Lyudmila questioned, at that point, Danica knew her casual demeanor needed to be dropped and quickly

"I heard it as Reira and I were finishing up my therapy a few weeks ago in the courtyard," Danica began.

"Reira was able to get some information from Dr. Mikami but not a lot though,"

"I'm surprised Jin would say anything," the taller woman commented as she kept her cool.

"You know the saying, be wary of the silent ones. He looked to have secrets underneath his lab coat," Danica commented.

"And the loud ones?" Lyuda questioned with an arched eyebrow.

"They're idiots, they run headfirst into things," Danica replied and crossed her arms.

"I believe otherwise, the loud ones may be idiots but they know the most and use the fact that people believe they are idiots to hide what they know," Lyudmila replied.

"You think so?" Danica commented.

"I've seen it too many times to count..." Lyudmila trailed off and heaved a sigh. "I'll mention your suggestion to Reyes on one condition though," Danica's eyebrows perked up as she waited for the woman to continue.

"We need to have a talk. You, myself and Reyes. We need to talk about what's going to happen once you're medically cleared," Lyudmila began.
"W-what do you mean?" Danica asked hesitantly.

"You sound unsure. We just want to talk about your future in the Blackwatch and what's best for you," Lyudmila replied. She could see the hesitation that had set in Danica's features, even so, the woman nodded in agreement to the terms that she had set.

"Y-yeah sure," Danica nodded with a hesitant smile.

"I'll talk to Reyes about Asuka but don't expect too much," Lyudmila said as she turned to leave.

"S-Sure," Danica smiled as she watched woman leave.

Buried in the depths of her mind, there was always the lingering feeling of fear that had steadily grew as she recovered. She had been off the field for nearly three months and the pace of her recovery only fueled the fear within her. She barely cleared her therapy sessions and nearly failed the checks to clear her for training. Just the mention of future talks and her place within Blackwatch frightened her, it made her sick to her stomach just the thought of being...released...released from Blackwatch, the only thing she had left.

She had been told many times that she would recover with time and with the advanced medicine she would recover quickly and yet she still pushed herself. She pushed herself because she needed to be on the field, she needed to be active for Blackwatch, she pushed herself because this was everything to her.

Danica watched silently as the taller woman walked away and once the woman was out of earshot, the woman momentarily lost her composure. She slumped slightly against the wall as her shoulders trembled, her heart drummed in her ears as she tried to calm herself down before she began to panic.

She couldn't let them release her, she would have nothing left.

Lost in their own thoughts, lost in the revelation of what had happened to their loved one they were oblivious to the woman that called out to them.

"Hayden? You ok?"

They flinched at the sudden hand that was placed on their shoulder, they quickly turned to focus on the smaller woman that stood next to them. With a shaky sigh they nervously they ran a hand through their hair, they watched as Tali sat across from them at the table they had managed to take.

"Tal, how's it going?" Hayden smiled, Talli crossed her arms as she looked suspiciously at them.

"I should be saying that to you," She replied, Hayden chuckled nervously.

"I have no clue what you mean? How is Daniel?" They questioned in an attempt to try to change the subject.

"If you try to change the subject again I will make a scene," she threatened boldly as her honey brown eyes scanned cafe. "And there's a lot of people here, your choice Hayden,"

"What? Tal, you drive a hard bargain. Why would you do that?" Hayden sighed as they looked down at the immovable and unwavering woman.

"Well?" She said expectantly.

They knew that the woman wouldn't give up until she got what she wanted and she was right there
were a lot of people in the cafe. They had decided to dress in their civilian clothing and hang out in the Overwatch Foundation cafe, away from their comrades and other agents, just around civilians. With a sigh, they began to speak quietly.

"I'm just hearing a lot of chatter about something that happened a while back and to put it bluntly I am not happy about it," Hayden began, Talli intertwined her fingers together as she listened to Hayden speak.

"There's just a lot of changes and I guess I'm just having a hard time adjusting,"

"I see what you mean...others have seen the change and strain on Overwatch and especially in Blackwatch," the woman said as she leaned back in her chair and began to pick at her cuticles.

Over the past month, the Overwatch Foundation had been targeted by smear campaigns, departments that thrived in Overwatch had been consolidated into other departments or completely gutted. Those changes alone added to the stress of the already taxed departments and it occasionally left gaps for the departments to manage. To add to the stress, the recruitment for Overwatch field officers have been on the decline whereas the terrorist like groups and organizations were on the rise.

**Bulgasari**

**Null Sector**

**The Cheshire cat**

**The Honorable Society of the Sons of the Nation**

**Talon**

**and more**

Blackwatch already had an idea of what was going to transpire around the world, overwhelm Overwatch. Systematically overwhelm the organization, expose its weaknesses and break it down piece by piece. No one had an inkling of what would happen if Overwatch fell.

"But, we can only follow orders and do so much. You're just going to stress yourself out for no reason," Talli began.

"Tal, It's our job to be five steps ahead of Overwatch and ten steps ahead of the enemies," Hayden began.

"That may be true but you stressing about what hasn't even happened yet. It takes your focus away from the present, the now which is important," the woman sighed.

"You're right...and I'm sure there are a few people that need to hear that too," Hayden chuckled.

"No kidding!" Talli grinned.

"But you know...all we can do is keep our heads high...at least that's what Gabe would have said," Hayden sighed.

"Our fearless leader, Blackwatch has got it rough," Talli added.

"Tal...you're a Blackwatch agent too," Hayden chuckled.

"I don't feel like it! Reyes and Lyuda never include me on missions," Talli huffed. "I only get to go
in extreme circumstances,

Hayden chuckled at the pouting woman, they had accidentally heard a few conversations about the woman's instance or 'mildly' annoying persistence to be put on the field. But what the woman didn't know was that Reyes was protective of her and wanted to keep her far from the field as he could. Despite the woman's traumatic childhood, she persisted on joining Overwatch, more so Blackwatch. She was placed in Overwatch's Engineering department but worked closely with Blackwatch and their separate projects as needed.

"You know that Reyes put you where he knows that you would excel, and I know that Lyuda agrees. You're a smart woman, your education and experiences with engineering, science and in the biomedical field damn near is on par with Torbjorn and some of the top nurses and doctors within the med division," Hayden explained.

"Thanks but save it, I've heard that excuse from Angela and a few other more than I can count," Talli huffed. "I know the real reason as to why I am where I am I don't need it to be sugar-coated,"

"Ouch Tal. I was only telling the truth and besides you might replace Mikky-" Hayden said and almost immediately regret washed over them as the woman immediately focused on him.

"Mikky? What' happened to Mikael? What happened?" Talli questioned as she sat up in her chair. Almost immediately, Hayden kicked themselves at the mention of the man's name and tried to quickly change the subject.

"H-have you thought about what Daniel would think if you were suddenly put on the field? I'm sure he wouldn't want his soon to be wife on the field in danger."

"He has his first escort mission coming up. Me being on the field is no different. What happened to Mikael?" Talli questioned. Hayden sighed and ran a hand through their blond hair and ran a hand down their face, he knew the woman wasn't going to stop questioning them until she had the answer she searched for.

"Well?" Talli looked up at them expectantly as she crossed her arms.

"C'mon Tal don't put me in a bind like this," Hayden sighed.

"You did this to yourself. Now it's time to deliver. Talk,"

"Well...this is it Spiros," Gabriel began.

"Although we didn't work with each other often it is still hard to see you go," Morrison began.

"Thanks...it's a bit strange to hear that coming from you but I understand where you're coming from," Mikael replied. "Formalities and such,"

"Not only that, but the work that you've done for both Overwatch and Blackwatch is priceless," Morrison continued.

"So much praise…" Mikael chuckled with a smirk.

"Did it change your mind?" Morrison quipped.

"Well…" Mikael began

"Stop trying to butter him up. He handed in his resignation, and no take-backs. He's out," Gabriel
scoffed jokingly.

He joked but his words were true, he wouldn't let the man back in once he had the resignation letter. Of course, Morrison would be able to override his decision but he would try to stop the man in any way. Their job was dangerous on and off the field, Mikael had decided to escape the delicate and dangerous cycle of protecting the lives of the innocent with their own lives.

He was free of the vicious cycle.

"Oh gee...thanks Gabe," Mikael scoffed.

"You knew what you were getting into. You knew this was coming," Gabriel replied.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah," Mikael sighed as he waved off the man's reminder.

"Talk about tough love," Morrison commented.

"This is normal. I'm sure you know that he means what he says,"

"True, so very true. But you can call me Jack," Morrison said as he held out his hand to shake.

Mikael glanced at the man's hand momentarily, stole a quick glance at Gabriel before he took the man's hand in a firm handshake. The two men glanced at each other gave each other a firm handshake.

"It'll take a bit to get used to it...like a year or longer," Mikael commented. Mikael had an ear to ear grin on his face as he looked to Gabriel, in turn, Gabriel gave him a knowing silent glare.

"That's fine," Morrison nodded. "I wish you all the luck, Mikael,"

"Thanks," Mikael nodded.

"Good luck out there Spiros, you know how to get in contact with me," Gabriel nodded and held out his hand to shake.

"Yeah, thank you for that. I really appreciate it," Mikael replied as he took the man's hand and gave it a firm shake. Without warning, Gabriel was pulled into a hug-

"Gaaabe- tha mou leipsei" Mikael whined in his mother tongue "Make sure you call me for the weddings,"

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. Get off of me," Gabriel sighed as he gave the man a quick pat on the back.

"Wedding?" Morrison gave Gabriel a questioning look, Gabriel shrugged as the man still held on to him.

"Pnigese se mia koutalia nero!" Mikael sighed as he released the man from the tight grip of his hug.

"Don't let that look fool you, he knows what I'm talking about," Mikael said as he released the man from the tight grip of a bear hug.

"Sure, I'll call you for Tal's wedding," Gabriel shrugged.

"And yours " Mikael cheekily added.

"Get out of my sight Mikael," Gabriel growled.
"Thank you for all of the work you and your team have done for me. It really cuts down on the leg work," Kallista began. "All of the reports seem to pinpoint to the west coast. I hope you don't mind my short intrusion for a bit, Melody," Kallista's hands seemed to glide over her holographic keyboard as she spoke.

[No. No. No. You're fine. There's no such thing as intruding! You're my boss. Tell me what you need and I'll be sure to have it waiting for you]

"I don't need much, just the agents that's been working on what I gave you a couple of weeks back, and access to the portal," Kallista replied as she pulled multiple holographic screens from her main monitor, the screen had images of agents within the woman's, Melody's, jurisdiction.

[Understood]

"As it seems right now…the data that you've given me points to Seattle, Silicon Valley, Los Angeles, and San Diego. I'm not too surprised seeing how they are the biggest technology hubs on the west coast but it could also be a fruitless chase," Kallista commented.

[It could be, but Director Kaines two of my agents confirmed strong leads in Seattle and in Los Angeles. It's a legit company…lemme see what kind-one sec..uh]

Kallista arched an eyebrow as she waited for the woman to continue, papers were shuffled, data pads clacked against each other and a short cry came from the woman on the line. With a soft sigh, Kallista leaned back in her chair as she waited for the woman to continue.

[Hold on I got this…it's a pharmaceutical company to be exact]

"A pharmaceutical company huh…” Kallista trailed off.

The agents the woman referred to were agents that had recently left from annual training and assessments at HQ and back to her assigned station in California, Thea Warg, also known as Artemis. She was an agent for the recon division for Blackwatch that was stationed in the United States. The second agent was Maxime Lavoie, known as the Huntress, another recon agent based in Washington and near Canada. These two women were the two agents that gathered and confirmed the vague data Kallista had sent a week before.

Upon being given the role of Director of the Intelligence Division that also gave her the responsibility for the entirety of the vast network of agents Reyes had stationed around the world. There were some agents who she would know only by name and voice and never meet, and there would be those that she would see regularly.

[When are you expected to arrive in Seattle?]

"You'll know when I get there," Kallista replied and took off her glasses.

[Is there something wrong knowing when you're arriving? Is there something I should be aware of Director?]

Kallista hesitated to answer the woman's question, she had a sneaking suspicion that someone had breached various mission dossiers of high ranking agents and with the recent missions, losses and casualties Kallista began to think that whoever were viewing these details were from the recon division.
"No. Nothing is wrong. Just formalities…" Kallista sighed. There was a pause on the other side, she knew the woman wanted to press but decided against it.

[Right...ok then. Will you need transportation?]

"Yes," Kallista began as she slid her glasses back on and began to type. "I've sent you the request. Commander Reyes has already approved it and -"

[You still call him Commander Reyes?]

"Pardon?" Kallista questioned.

[...How is Commander Reyes? Is he doing well?]

"He is well…" Kallista replied suspiciously.

[That's good. I also received your request. I'll make sure it's there for you]

"Thank you, Melody,"

[Not a problem Director, also I'm a little excited to meet you in person]

"I am nothing special. I am just a simple woman in charge of many moving pieces, that is all," Kallista replied.

[You sound so modest and posh at the same time...I know who you used to be and who you are]

"You saying that makes me believe that you've been doing some unnecessary research," Kallista began.

[Not entirely...just the standard lookup. Besides...the legendary Fata Morgana working for Blackwatch? How could I not?]

"That was six years ago...leave it where it is," Kallista commented.

[I suppose you're right...sorry about that. Do you need anything else, Director?]

"No. If I do I'll be in touch,"

[Sounds good. Have a good day]

"You as well," Kallista ended the call and leaned back in her chair.

Six years had passed since she was captured by Blackwatch since she was called Fata Morgana, since she even had the idea to search for her parents. In the back of her mind, she knew what the woman was going to say Once a hacker always a hacker.

Kallista knew the woman was right, but she was more disciplined, other things to focus on. She had given up the search for her parents and the group known as the God Brigade had moved on with their lives - an abrupt gasp shot from Kallista as she gently touched the back of her head.

"Fuck...another episode…" Kallista cringed as she carefully began to rub her temples in hopes to soothe the oncoming pain.
"McCree why are you in my office? Don't you have somewhere to be?" Gabriel asked as he looked at the man from his computer monitor. Jesse had lounged in the man's office for the past three hours on his phone and idle chatter. It was rare for the man to be in his office for more than ten minutes before he hauled ass off somewhere else to avoid anything work-related, but now the man casually lounged and kept himself occupied.

"It seems like you dun want me in here jefe," Jesse replied as he continued to scroll through his phone. "You expectin' someone?"

Even though he couldn't fully see the man's face, he could feel that man smirking from behind his cellphone.

"And who might I be expecting?" Gabriel questioned.

"I dunno...you tell me I asked first," Jesse replied as he finally took a glance at Gabriel, the look was enough to tell him to drop whatever joke he led up to.

"Aw c'mon, don't give me that look everyone needs a break here an' there," Jesse countered.

"You had a three-day vacation two weeks ago," Gabriel replied

"Ok...but this is-" Jesse began.

"Get out of my office Mccree," Gabriel sighed.

"But ya didn't-" Jesse began again.

"I said out,"

"But-!" Jesse tried

"Out!" Gabriel growled

Mccree exaggerated his sigh as he stood and shoved his phone into his pocket. With an annoyed look, Jesse glanced at the man, turned heel and exited the office all while muttering words under his breath.

Gabriel shook his head as he watched the man leave. He noticed that the man had been nearby since he returned from his vacation in Italy, at first Gabriel didn't think anything of it but Jesse continuously spent more and more time around him.

It was rare.

Abruptly the door to his office burst open and nearly had the man with a gun aimed at the person who stood in front of his desk.

"Jesus fucking Christ, Malik," Gabriel sighed in relief and removed his hand from the gun underneath his desk.

"Why didn't you tell me?!" Malik started and stared intensely at the man.

"What do you mean?" Gabriel questioned, he took note of their intense stare, heavy breaths.

"What didn't you tell me he was leaving?! Why didn't you tell me?!" Malik shouted and suddenly hunched over on the man's desk, gloved hands balled into a fist.
Gabriel looked stoically at Malik hunched over on his desk, it seemed as if they had just returned from a mission, their exoskeleton was on as well as his field gear. It took Gabriel a moment to realize what they were referred to and another moment to realize he knew that this was coming. Ever since they had rescued Malik many years ago, Malik had attached themselves to Mikael like a security blanket and distanced themselves from the man known as Jin Mikami.

He just never knew how attached they were to Mikael and how much it would affect them.

"Malik-" Gabriel began firmly

"No! You knew! You knew and you didn't tell me, Reyes!" Malik shouted in response, it caught Gabriel off guard.

"You thought you were protecting me?"

"No...I didn't," Gabriel replied calmly, he knew they were dangerous when unstable.

When they first and Malik at an abandoned Talon facility they unexpectedly experienced Malik's true ability. Whatever Talon had done to him and possibly many others, it gave them abilities that he had never seen before.

Mind-altering abilities.

"Then why?!" Malik shouted

"I was asked not to say anything by Mikael," Gabriel replied as he watched the man's golden eyes slide close, his body still trembled.

"So, I need you to calm down before you hurt yourself or others,"

"I...don't...really care," Malik murmured.

"Malik," Gabriel began as he watched the Malik collapse back into the chair in front of his desk. There was a moment of silence between the two, Gabriel kept his attention on them, their eyes were squeezed shut.

"Did...did I do something wrong?" Malik began. "Did I do something wrong that he didn't want to tell me that he was leaving?"

"No. You didn't do anything wrong," Gabriel replied.

"Then...why didn't he tell me? Why didn't he wait for me?" Malik questioned as they looked to Gabriel for answers. "Why didn't he tell me?" Tears threatened to spill from the corner of Malik's eyes.

-The Next Day –

"I'm not sure what else you can say to help them. The choice was ultimately Mikael's," Lyudmila sighed tiredly.

"There isn't anything I can do. I'm not some god that can bring people back against their will," Gabriel replied. "They have to accept what's going on and learn how to move on from it,"

"Exactly, have you told Kallista about it and what to expect?" the graying woman said as she stirred her dark-colored drink.
"I haven't, I actually haven't seen her all day," Gabriel commented as he realized he in fact that he hadn't seen her since yesterday.

"Oh? That's not like you, Reyes," Lyudmila replied tiredly.

"I'll get to her. I wanted to make sure that you were aware of seeing how Kallista will be out of the office for a while,"

"Sending your trump card out on to the field?" Lyudmila chuckled.

"She has a mess to clean up of her own making," Gabriel replied

"Let me guess…the Cheshire Cat," Gabriel nodded silently.

The entire situation with the Cheshire Cat seemed to worsen as time progressed and the world had become more and more strained the longer the Cheshire Cat existed. With the information that he had drawn from Kallista, her and her old partners knew how to handle it quickly and effectively. They had other things to worry about.

"Reyes…" Lyudmila began, the man arched an eyebrow as he looked at the woman.
"Supposedly...there's a pending investigation into Blackwatch,"

"...I know...I heard," Gabriel sighed.

"Any information you would like to share?"

"Not really. Verona contacted me yesterday and wasn't able to give any more details about it but you know we'll hear about it first," Gabriel replied and lounged back in his chair. Lyudmila grimaced and sipped her drink as she too leaned back in her chair.

"Is it the leak?"

"Not sure. Kallista is also looking into that but…" Gabriel trailed off "We have to be prepared for whatever happens,"

"You sure do ask a lot of your team Reyes," Lyudmila commented before she sipped more of her drink.

"Only because I know that my team can handle it," Reyes replied.

"You assume so-" The woman began when suddenly the man heaved and started to cough. "Reyes-"

"I'm-fine," Reyes coughed as he turned away from the woman. Lyudmila pushed a box of tissues towards the man as she watched to see if she needed to act.

"I'm good...I'm good," Gabriel sighed and looked at his hand, there was blood void of its normal crimson color but black.

He quickly clenched his hand and grabbed a tissue with the other, and hoped that the woman didn't catch a glimpse of it. A short pause quickly settled between the two before Lyudmila spoke.

"Bradley approached me with proposition…" Lyudmila began.

"Yeah? About what?" Gabriel cleared his throat and silently thanked the woman for not questioning him right then and there.
"She suggested that Asuka joins the Blackwatch support division,"

"Asuka? The nurse that's in charge of her recovery?" Gabriel questioned.

"That's the one," the woman replied,

"Of course she would," Gabriel scoffed and chuckled slightly. "I hope she gave legitimate reasons instead of half-assed ones,"

"Asuka is field support agent currently in the Overwatch division, you know that we need all the support agents and assistance we can find since our numbers were cut," Lyudmila began.

"You're right but I am not going to put anyone on the field. She is still new to Overwatch and I'm not about to put an inexperienced agent on the field," Gabriel countered the woman's argument.

"I understand but…" Lyudmila trailed off, She didn't have to say it, he could see it in her worn and tired features, she was worried.

They had suffered some losses, cuts to their funding and agents and now this unknown impending investigation that would be launched against Blackwatch.

"I know you're worried...but we've been with less...this is nothing," Gabriel replied

"That's not entirely what I'm worried about Reyes,"

"Then?"

The woman's hazel eyes slowly roamed over the man before they slid closed and a sigh passed her lips.

"I'm worried about morale, I worried about the agents, I'm worried about you," Lyudmila replied, he sighed quietly and shifted in his seat.

"Lyuda...we will be fine...I will be fine...everyone here is built to handle whatever is thrown at them," Gabriel began softly as he looked at the woman.

What he said was true about everyone in Blackwatch, but she had every right to be worried and even though he wouldn't admit it to her or anyone, he had his own worries about Blackwatch and those who plotted against Overwatch.

"You say that even though I know better," Lyudmila sighed and whispered something in Russian.

"We've been through worse, besides, Jack nor Verona will not leave us to hang," Gabriel added.

"Hopefully," the woman sighed tiredly.

"Fuck...I'm exhausted," Magnus sighed heavily and reclined in his seat.

"I'm surprised. You're usually the one who sleeps like a log," Linda commented.

"I had...a bit of a self-realization yesterday that kept me up," the dark-haired man replied.


"You make it seem like it was something I couldn't do," Magnus shot back.
"Just...surprised is all," Aleks replied softly.

Linda glanced at the dark-haired man before he and Aleks began to bicker between one another. With a sigh she ran a hand through her long blonde hair and grimaced at the split ends she saw before she turned her attention to the empty chair adjacent to her desk.

"Do you know when Malik is coming back?" Linda spoke up.

"He should have returned yesterday, but I'm sure he's recovering or at least attempting to," Aleks replied

"Oh…" Linda replied softly.

"Worried about him?" Magnus questioned

"A little bit. I wanted to know how he was doing...you know we haven't seen him in weeks," Linda commented.

"Oh...I know it's not really our business-" Aleks began

"It's important to morale," Linda cut in.

"Since when is morale important to you?" Magnus questioned as he sat up in his chair. Silence fell between the three, they knew the office was small and a close-knit group. But the sudden change in Linda's tune about Malik was strange.

"Hey y'all-,

The three in the room turned their attention to the men that had entered the room.

"McCree? What are you doing here?" Aleks spoke up in an attempt to break the sudden tension that filled the room.

"We interruptin' something here?" Jesse questioned as he looked at the three quietly. Magnus sighed as he sat up in his chair, Linda slicked her blond hair back silently and turned her attention to the monitors.

"Well ok then," Jesse looked at the three and then to the man next to him.

"Kallos what's up?" Magnus questioned his eyes focused on the box in the man's hand.

"What do you mean?" the man asked as he entered the room and placed the box on to the other empty desk.

"I didn't know you were coming today...the director didn't mention it to us," Aleks said and took out his cell phone to check for any missed messages.

"Speaking of the director, where is she?" the man asked.

"Ah...Kalli is in the med bay," Jesse spoke up as he leaned on the door frame.

"Is she ok?" Linda spoke up her attention suddenly focused on the man at the door. Jesse looked at the woman curiously before he spoke.

"Yeah...just a standard checkup…” Jesse trailed off. "She told me to tell y'all not to worry about
Malik or her an' deal with the Epsilon files...whatever those are," Jesse began when a hand was placed on the man's shoulder.

"Hm? Van Gogh? You still here-?"

"The Lieutenant wants to see you," Ruben said as he nodded to the others in the office.

"Yo Van Gogh," Magnus gave the man a quick wave. Ruben nodded again and promptly left.

"Thanks," McCree called after the man. "Well...Lyuda's callin' and it look like y'all already know each other. So catch y'all later,"

Jesse nodded to the group and stepped out of the doorway to allow the door to slide close.

"Epsilon files huh...I guess this is a bit of a training session..." Aleks began

"Better now than later?" Kallos added.

"Yeah, I suppose so? Go ahead and get yourself settled, we could all use a refresher on these files," Aleks sighed as he sat down at his desk and focused onto his monitors.

"So how did you get roped into Blackwatch?" Magnus questioned.

"You make it seem like Blackwatch isn't the place to be," the man chuckled and placed a piece of his loose dark hair behind his ear.

"Well.." Magnus trailed off. "We've been dubbed the 'Shit Starters' by Reyes so..."

"I wonder how we got that name," Aleks commented sarcastically.

"Blame Malik and Natalie," Magnus replied nonchalantly.

"And you," Linda added.

"Whatever do you mean...Linda," Magnus replied sarcastically.

"Elias...ignore those two," Aleks sighed, Elias chuckled.

"I didn't get roped in, Director Kaines and I have worked with each other on other missions, I am familiar with the way she works," Elias started. "Besides Blackwatch is an integral piece to Overwatch even though not everyone understands that,"

"Aww thanks for the compliment Kallos," Magnus smirked.

"It's true though, I'm not being facetious. Blackwatch does more for Overwatch than you or the others may know," Elias replied.

"Rub it in why don't you Elias," Magnus said sarcastically. Elias shrugged with a smirk.

"Director Kaines are you sure you should travel abroad in your condition?" Angela questioned the woman as she put her shirt back on.

"I don't have a choice, Angela. I can't put this off any longer. Besides, it's a direct order from Commander Reyes," Kallista replied as she adjusted her black turtleneck.

"Even so. If you explain to Commander Reyes about your condition, you know he would agree with
me," Angela replied.

"And that's why I won't say anything. Neither can you," Kallista replied as she turned to the young blonde doctor. The woman pursed her lips together as she looked at the dark-haired woman. She was right, she couldn't say anything to Reyes no matter how much she wanted to.

Doctor-Patient confidentiality.

"Kallista, please at least consider at least telling him," Angela pleaded with the woman.

"It's nothing serious, I've been dealing with this for six years I think I'll be ok," Kallista replied

"That's is not what I am referring to," Angela replied firmly.

"I'll tell him when I get back, besides the medications you gave me are supposed to help right? I'll manage," Kallista replied.

The blonde sighed heavily and crossed her arms.

"You two are so stubborn. Fine. You are to report any symptoms or abnormalities as soon as you begin to experience them. I mean it Kallista," Angela stated firmly.

"Ok, mum," Kallista replied with a smug smile.

"Kallista, I am serious, I am worried about your health and you've been avoiding your check-ups," Angela began to scold the woman. "And I am worried about your condition worsening while you're abroad,"

"You're worrying too much. If you keep this up and you will have gray hair just like Morrison," Kallista huffed.

"Don't give me that haughty attitude of yours Kallista," Angela crossed her arms as she looked at the woman.

"Sorry, I know you're worried about my well being, but I will be quite alright," Kallista sighed "I promise, I'll be fine,"

"I will make sure that there is emergency medication for your specified locations," Angela began as she turned her attention to the small data pad in her pocket.

"You sure-"

"It's only standard medication...well...the dose isn't standard but I think you understand," Angela began.

"I do...and thank you,"

A pause had settled between the two women before Kallista began towards the door but stopped as she heard the woman speak softly.

"I...I wish that I could help cure you all faster…"

Kallista stood with her back to the woman, hand just above the panel to open the door, she knew that the woman wanted to help the three of them with their symptoms but a cure was far from her grasp. Since the incident five years ago, the woman increased the time she spent on research, consultations, experimentations, anything she could find, anything that could give them some type of relief from the
pain that seized their bodies.

"I-" Angela began.

"That should be the least of your worries Angela," Kallista replied.

"It's something I think about constantly. What if something happens to Jack or Gabriel on the field? What if something happens to you-"

"Dr. Ziegler," Kallista began as she turned to face her, Angela flinched at Kallista's sudden movement and focused on her.

"We're soldiers, agents, we do what we are ordered...even myself. You can't shield us from whatever happens on the field. You should know this," Kallista continued.

"I understand but if anyone I want to help...is you. What happened to you was wrong and shouldn't have happened," Angela began "If I-"

"Stop. I told you I will be fine. You have other more important tasks to work on so please don't worry about me, " Without another word, Kallista promptly exited from the woman's office.

Chapter End Notes

Rough Translations:

tha mou leípseis - I will miss you (Greek)

Pnigese se mia koutalia nero! - You'll drown yourself with a teaspoon of water/ Stop being so dramatic (Greek)
Chapter Summary

"Blackwatch, the Clean up Crew. You got a mess, we can clean it" - Blackwatch agents are on the move as well as other Anti-Omnic groups and Talon. Kallista now alone, arrived in the United States to execute her plan to stop the Cheshire Cat and to avoid bringing attention to the God Brigade. She reaches out to agents in the US for all the help she can get.

More Cameos~!

It didn't take long for the news about Mikael's resignation and the disappearance of Malik to spread within the small division of Blackwatch. The division was already small enough and with every resignation, department switch or death it set Blackwatch back and sometimes scrambling to find a suitable replacement or quick fix.

"I hear the Malik is back an' haven't seen 'em since he ok?" Jesse questioned.

"He needs some time to recover," Gabriel replied his focus on the plethora of holographic screens around him and his personal terminal.

"I guess...he was pretty torn up, huh," Jesse commented as he lounged on the black sofa.

"I knew he was attached to Mikael but I didn't realize how much," Gabriel commented as he leaned back in his chair, his head lolled back on the cushion of the seat.

"He is an adult, he needs to know when to let things go and move on. He should not be coddled through this," Lyudmila added.

"Ouch, Lyuda with the hard remarks," Jesse commented, Gabriel sighed heavily and rubbed the corners of his eyes.

"Well..." Lyudmila began.

"She's not wrong. I will admit that I haven't been the best at disciplining some agents and one of them is Malik," Gabriel replied.

"I hope I ain't one of those people," Jesse added, Gabriel silently looked at the man causing the man to look up from his cellphone with a cocked eyebrow.

"You doing your job?" Gabriel asked gruffly.

"Course," Jesse replied.

"Not being lazy?" Gabriel asked.

"Well..." Jesse trailed off.

"Then you're a problem," Gabriel replied firmly.
"C'mon jefe," Jesse sighed.

It was nearly midnight when Gabriel finally had time to himself and time to seek out the elusive Intel director. Normally he would have seen her at least once a day just to see how she was and if her team needed anything. That is what he told himself as he found himself in front of the office, he wanted to check to see if she had come up with a solution for the shitstorm that she conveniently inserted herself into.

He silently entered the office and was mildly surprised at how blue the office was. He knew the group had made some modifications to the office but didn't realize it went to this extreme, not that it bothered him. Blue led lights lined all the walls in the office and illuminated the entire office with a soft blue glow, the monitors in the office were black but the keyboards mirrored the blue glow of the office.

Gabriel took a quick glance around the office and realized the office was empty, normally there would be one person in the office to help Kallista when needed but there was no one, not even Kallista. He took a moment to himself as he looked at the large screen near Kallista's office that showed tasks that needed to be completed when suddenly the door to Kallista's office slid open.

"Gabriel?" Kallista questioned as he saw the man near the doorway as he glanced around the office.

"Hey,"

"What are you doing here?"

Gabriel watched as the woman exited from the office and placed her cellphone and data pad on one of the desks and turned her attention on him.

"I wanted to check in on you and other things," He replied quietly.

"Is everything ok?" Kallista asked as worry laced her features, he nodded.

With his reassurance the worry that laced her features melted into a warmer, affectionate gaze as she reached up to caress his cheek, gently scratching at his beard. There was a soft appreciative rumble in the back of his throat before he gently took her hand and placed a kiss on her knuckles.

"I'm fine. How is everything here?" he began.

"Malik hasn't been seen since they returned, I assume we won't see them for a while," Kallista began as she rounded one of the desks and to a wall terminal, Gabriel followed her and leaned against the wall next to her.

"Magnus is...well Magnus," Kallista continued as she began to type on a small holographic keyboard. Gabriel shoved his hands into his jacket pockets as he continued to listen to the woman,

"Kallos is doing well and Aleks is well...our good poster boy..." she trailed off, Gabriel quirked an eyebrow. He knew that Aleksander was indeed the poster boy of the department, he did everything by the book and occasionally slipped information about the department to the man.

"Linda at least...I've heard that she's been more curious than usual...which is a bit bizarre," Kallista

"How so?" Gabriel questioned.

"She is the type to follow the rules, ask questions if they are important to her current task, but she's
been asking questions about specific missions that are clearly out of her field," Kallista replied.

"Like?"

"My mission dossiers, your mission dossiers, Ana's dossiers," Kallista replied as she looked directly at the man, her sharp crystal blue eyes focused on his golden whiskey ones. "Things that don’t concern her."

"What are you going to do about it Miss Director?" Gabriel questioned as he gave her a smug look. Kallista scoffed and continued to type.

"I don't have solid proof as to what she is attempting, she works in the same department so that makes things a little more difficult," Kallista replied.

"Don't let it bite you in the ass Kallista," Gabriel commented as he pulled off his well-worn beanie.

"Right," Kallista replied. "If it doesn't, you sure will," Kallista managed to catch a raised eyebrow and then a smirk before the man turned to look at her.

"With how my luck is since being the director and being found out by you, I'm quite sure it will," Kallista sighed, as if on cue a slim disc slide from the concealed disc drive.

"I'm sure," Gabriel replied smugly. "You can't hide anything from me. We've discussed this,"

"You're right, we have," Kallista said as she took the disc and began to type once again.

A short paused had settled between them for a moment before Kallista broke the silence between them.

"Are you...really ok?"

"Why do you ask?" Gabriel questioned as he slipped his hat back on. "I'm fine, same old me," Gabriel replied

"And the new recruits?" Kallista slipped the disc into another concealed disk drive and continued to type.

"Are you my third-hand man now? My left-hand man?" Gabriel quipped.

"I am third in line if anything were to happen to you or Lyuda," Kallista turned to the man and placed a hand on her hip. "And that would make me your left-hand man and we know what happens with that,"

"I walked into that one," Gabriel chuckled.

"You did," Kallista replied.

"I will say that I'm surprised, doing your own research on hierarchy. Want a gold star?" Gabriel chuckled.

"Cute. You can keep the gold stars for everyone else," Kallista replied.

"You're right... you would be in charge if anything were to happen to Lyuda or me. But if anything were to happen to you, control would be transferred to Jack and his Intel team," Gabriel explained. The words caused her to pause for a split second before she continued with her work. Truth be told
she didn't expect to have so much authority or be so close in line to take control of Blackwatch if an emergency struck the small division. The thought of her being frustrated many years ago by not being on the field was laughable and now.

*She wanted the opposite.*

*She wanted to be the last resort.*

*She wanted to be the last one on the field.*

"Ah, Overwatch controlling Blackwatch...that'll be the day," Kallista laughed slightly.

"Right..." Gabriel trailed off in his own thoughts for a second before he reached out and brushed stray pieces of hair from her face, the simple gesture made her woman turn her attention from the screen and to the man.

"Gabriel...you're acting strange...." Kallista trailed off.

"I told you, I'm fine," Gabriel replied as he continued to brush her hair from her face.

"You always say that," Kallista replied softly as she looked up at him.

"I know," the man smirked as he leaned down and gently brushed his lips against hers in a soft kiss.

"Normally we would have more time to prepare for missions like these but today is not the case. We have new faces with is but they are our comrades on and off the field. With this in mind, we protect our own. This mission has many variables, unknown variables but that will not stop us," Lyudmila began as she stood in the middle of a group of Blackwatch agents that were set to board the Blackhawk Delta to New Zealand.

"We will not fail," the woman began.

*"We are nothing but shadows and dust, we do what we must. No matter the cost,"

In a matter of days, everything began to shift into a faster pace forcing everyone to move just as fast. There was movement within the Anti-Omnic groups around the world, Talon had made moves around the world, and within the United Nations talks about the next steps to halt Talon and where to take Overwatch had become difficult to maintain due to strong disagreements.

The officials in the UN wanted to apply more pressure on to Overwatch, limit its movements around the world, restrict its power. Despite the pressure, Overwatch and Blackwatch continued to function as normal.

Danica and others were on their way to New Zealand and Australia to investigate sightings of Talon and the Anti-Omnic group that steadily gained popularity within the country. Although the transport was silent and eerily calm, Danica's mind raced. It was her first mission in her new position within Blackwatch, two days before she was set to head out with a small group, Reyes called her into his office to talk.

A large sigh slipped her lips as she clenched her fists and released, it had become a simple gesture to help her relieve some of the stress she held.

*The Talk.*
She remembered the pressure, the overbearing squeeze in her chest as she entered the office. Immediately she convinced herself that they no longer needed her, they didn't need someone who was injured, weak, a liability on the field.

She was convinced they were going to discharge her.

They were going to snatch the only thing she had left that meant the world to her, they were going to take away the only family she had left.

As they began to speak she held back her fear until she couldn't hold back, she cried. She began to bawl and plead to both Reyes and Lyudmila not to discharge her. What came next left the woman stupefied.

They weren't going to discharge her, they wanted to know if she still wanted to serve Overwatch let alone Blackwatch due to her traumatic experience, they wanted to know what she wanted to do.

Even after she made a fool out of herself, they reassured the woman and told her the truth as to why they wanted to speak to her, they offered her a promotion to fill the absence of senior leadership.

"How does it feel to be back on a transport Dani?"

Danica looked up to the person that spoke to her, it was Hayden. They were also on this mission to assist with operations and because they knew the area more than anyone on the team.

"As long as I'm not in the water, I'm good," Danica replied.

"No more swimming with the fishes, eh," another agent quipped.

"Not anymore," Danica chuckled. She knew that they were making a light-hearted joke to break the silent tension in the transport.

"We got your back Dani," Hayden reassured.

"Hell yeah, we do. We missed ya," another agent spoke up.

"Awww thanks, guys, I'm gonna run your asses into the ground though," Danica smirked.

"Can we trade her for someone else?"

"You keep that up, you'll be the first one Carlevaro,"

"Oh, shit we have another Reyes on our hands,"

Kallista stood quietly in the train station to the local airport, her attention focused on her cellphone in hand. As usual, she dressed casually so that attention wouldn't be focused on her, at her side she had a small duffle bag that held clothes and other devices she would need on her solo journey to the United States.

Her mind was crammed with plans on how quickly and efficiently to stop the Cheshire cat and how to avoid attention being focused on the God Brigade.

"You think you can just leave without telling me?"

Kallista quickly looked to the man next to her, it was Gabriel. He wore his normal hardened look as he focused on the train map and times on the screen that hung from the ceiling. With a sigh, Kallista
put away her cell phone and place a hand on her hip.

"I can't escape you can I?" Kallista questioned.

"The real question is do you want to try," Gabriel replied.

"Now I'm curious," Kallista smirked.

"Don't. You won't like it," Gabriel shook his head. "C'mon let me take you to the airport,"

"You cannot expect me to be curious about that statement," Kallista laughed slightly at the as she followed after him.

As the two exited from the train station, Kallista spotted a sleek black, sporty looking car. Confused, Kallista stood dumbfounded.

"What? Never saw a car before?" Gabriel chuckled as he opened the door for her to get in.

"I didn't know that Overwatch had the budget for something like this," Kallista began as she got into the car.

"Only for special events," Gabriel replied as he closed the door and headed over to the driver's side.

"Special events huh," Kallista commented as the man got into the car. "This is nowhere near the newer model of cars...this is a classic,"

"Oh really? I didn't notice," Gabriel replied with a smirk as he started the car. The normal soft whir of the ion battery had been replaced by a low roar of a gas powered engine.

"Special events, huh," Kallista chuckled slightly.

"Mmmhm,"

Within seconds the two were on their way to the airport.

"Aren't you supposed to be leaving soon?" Kallista suddenly questioned.

"Yeah," he simply replied.

"And you're here? I left without telling anyone on purpose," Kallista added.

"Oh, I know. That's why I'm here," Gabriel replied.

"I try to stay out of your hair and you willingly come find me," Kallista laughed slightly, he chuckled.

"If I leave you to your own devices too long you get into trouble. This right now is a prime example,"

Kallista frowned as she turned her attention to the passing cars.

"No slick come back...I'm surprised Kallista," Gabriel smirked.

"Whatever,"

Several minutes later the two arrived at the airport, Gabriel had parked and walked with her into the airport just before security.
"Thanks for the escort Commander Reyes," Kallista replied sarcastically and turned to the man. She quickly looked him from head to toe and realized he wore nothing that showed that he worked for Overwatch, in fact, he wore dark colored jeans, a basic white t-shirt and what looked to be a basic jacket.

Just like her, he was dressed as a civilian. She quickly pieced things together and realized what he had done. The smirk on the man's lips confirmed her suspicion.

"Gabriel…" Kallista began.

"Hm?"

She quickly closed the small gap between the two of them and wrapped her arms around the man's neck, he wrapped his arms tightly around her in a hug.

"You're slipping today Kalli…" He chuckled.

"Shut up," Kallista replied as she pulled back to look at him, his smirk was still plastered on his lips. She leaned forward tilting her head slightly as she pressed her lips to his, he eagerly responded to her kiss. As quickly as it started they broke the kiss and gave each other a knowing look. He placed his forehead to her and closed his eyes, she did the same.

"Be safe," Gabriel whispered.

"You too," Kallista replied softly.

-Several Hours Later-

"Bradley, you know what your goal is. Don't blow it,"

{I'm offended you think I would blow this. Not gonna happen boss. I got this...no worries}

"We'll see," Gabriel replied

{Bombshell out}

"Ready to go jefe?" Jesse asked as he headed into the Blackhawke Delta. Gabriel shoved his phone into his pocket and followed after the man into the ship the door closing after him. He tossed his duffle bag into his seat and stood in the middle of the ship as the engines buzzed and roared to life.

"McCree, Yavorov, Cruz, Hajime, Sassani and the rest of you. This mission isn't like our usual ones," Gabriel began as he held onto one of the hooks used to stabilize a person shooting from the door of the ship.

"Are they ever usual?" one of the agents spoke up causing a few of the other agents to chuckle.

"True," Gabriel smirked. "Local government's team has been cut off, probably slaughtered along with the personnel of the building. Last reports state omnic activity but we'll see when we get there. Long story short, It's become a cleanup mission," Gabriel continued, another round of chuckles came from the agents.

"How is that any different than what we do?"
"Yavorov has got jokes today," Jesse chuckled, Yavorov shrugged.
"No jokes. No lie," another agent chimed in.
"We're always cleaning up after and for Overwatch...and whoever else," Yavorov added.
"Hey now, don't you go say that around the others," Jesse laughed. "Don't wanna ruffle any of those pristine feathers,"
"Blackwatch, the Clean up Crew. You got a mess, we can clean it,"
"Listen up!" Gabriel barked immediately putting a stop to any additional banter, the air carrier fell silent.
"There are times for jokes, Yavorov, McCree, O'Connell it ain't now," Gabriel began. McCree smirked as he turned his attention to the silent blue-haired woman across from him.
"We have new agents on the field let alone what slaughtered the agents and personnel still remains on site," Gabriel began.
"I know we move and function like a well-oiled machine when focused. Let us not forget who we are, what we do and what we stand for. Take care our own, leave no one behind,"

- Several hours later in the United States -

"So, the agent I put on your request-" Melody began as she led Kallista through the halls of the Overwatch base in Los Angeles, California.
"Hey, Mel...oh who is this?"
"Oh Sam, good timing let me introduce you to the Director," Melody began as she and Kallista stopped in front of the casually dressed man. Kallista quickly gave the man a once over and extended a hand for a handshake.
"Kallista Kaines, Blackwatch Intelligence Department," Kallista began. The man known as Sam glanced at Melody before he focused solely on Kallista.
"Director Kaines," Sam began. "Sam Turner, nice to meet you,"
"A pleasure," Kallista replied, Sam's eyebrows raised slightly.
"You are much nor beautiful in person and you have an-" Sam began.
"Ok. That's enough from you," Melody cut in and slightly shoved the man back from Kallista.
"Thank you," Kallista replied with a small smile.
"Mel, you-" Sam started again as he continued to focus on Kallista. His attention only to be pulled away from her and to
"No Sam, don't you have a mission to prep for?" Melody began. "This way, I can show you to your office,"
"Nope," Sam replied. Melody sighed and gave the man a knowing glare.
"Ok. Ok. I get it," Sam raised his hands in defeat.

"This way Director," Melody began and started down the hall. Kallista gave Sam a nod and smile and followed after the woman.

"Here you go. I know it's not elaborate like HQ but our space is your space," Melody said as she opened the door to the small office.

"Thank you. I just need it for a week or so I should be gone," Kallista said as she entered the office and gave it a quick once over.

The office was sparse, small windows near the ceiling, the desk was simple and looked to be made of wood and metal, the desk chair simple. Not standard office furniture.

"If you need anything please don't hesitate to let me know, I'm sure you won't have any issues getting in contact with me," Melody nodded as she watched Kallista move over to the desk and began to unpack what looked to be small devices.

"Will you need food or a place to stay?" Melody asked.

"I got it covered. Thank you," Kallista smiled as she looked at the woman, she noticed the woman looked concerned at the woman.

"You're worried," Kallista began.

"Normally no but the fact that you're here and won't tell me about what your business is making me worried," Melody began. Kallista sighed and leaned on to the desk.

"What else do you expect me to think?"

"You're right. I've become a bit more guarded of the people I give information out to but this mission is highly classified," Kallista began.

"Well, I can clearly see that," Melody said as she walked into the office and closed the door behind her. At that moment Kallista turned on a small device and looked around the room.

"What-" Melody began but Kallista held up her hand to silence her for a moment before she turned it off.

"What was that?"

"Just clearing the room of any bugs that may have been placed even after you did your sweep,"

"It's that serious huh," Melody commented.

"It's a bit worse than that," Kallista replied.

"So...then there's a leak...," Melody began quietly.

"Perhaps," Kallista replied.

"And you're here for the Cheshire cat... correct?"

"Perhaps," Kallista replied with a smirk, Melody as well.

"Oh...I can see why Reyes fell for you," Melody began.
"Pardon?"

"Nothing," Melody began as she opened the door to the office. Sam and another agent were at the door as if to listen to the conversation they had.

"You two dingos think you could really listen into our conversation. There's a specific reason she has this office," Melody began and started the chide the two. Kallista noticed the young woman being chided by Melody.

"Agent Warg…” Kallista began, almost immediately the three turned their attention to Kallista. The woman with the slightly curled brown hair, emerald green eyes, fair skin and a scowl plastered on her lips stared back at Kallista.

"Who's Agent Warg? Don't know her," the woman commented. Kallista crossed her arms sighed.

"Still stubborn, Thea,"

"I was gonna say if you answered her she's got you and me wrapped around her-"

The man didn't finish the sentence as Thea shoved her elbow into the man's rib cage.

"Please be on your best behavior you two," Melody sighed.

"I didn't expect you to actually show up here. I'm surprised," Thea began as she entered the office.

"You're quite bold now that you're back on home turf," Kallista commented casually.

"Oh... fighting words…” Sam commented quietly.

"Hush-" Melody hushed the man's and pushed him out of the office and let the door close behind them.

"Ouch...that was rough," Thea replied and crossed her arms.

"Had to let you know where you stand even without Reyes, besides I heard you were grounded," Kallista began as she sat down at the desk and gave the woman a knowing look.

"It was an accident but yeah...I'm grounded at least for now. Commander Maxwell is reviewing my...case," Thea replied.

Kallista nodded, she heard about the incident that occurred with the woman but she was still able to do recon for her specific mission not that Kallista complained but she was surprised that Gabriel had a hand in the entire situation.

"Anyway...I really am surprised that you're here though. No one said anything about you coming," Thea began

" I know. I didn't tell anyone only a select few...for security reasons," Kallista replied.

" Oh the big, bad, scary Blackwatch Intel Director," Thea smirked

"There are other reasons but we'll keep that a mystery," Kallista opened her small laptop and immediately pulled several holographic screens from it. A bright green holoscreen that contained data on Cheshire cat, local news, along with Stirling Manufacturing and Mendoza Pharmaceuticals.

Thea quickly scanned the office for a chair, but realized that there was none and opted for the floor.
"How long do you think this is going to take?" Thea questioned.

"No clue, but I hope it doesn't take too long...this has become a pain in my ass," Kallista replied.

"It's that bad huh," Thea quirked an eyebrow at the woman.

"It could if we let it sit it could escalate to another GOD A.I..." Kallista trailed off as she noticed Thea's eyes widen a bit at the mention of a GOD AI.

"Another one…"Thea trailed off.

"A shit storm to put it bluntly," Kallista said as she sat down across from Thea. "We do not have the luxury of time on our side, I am quite sure you are aware of what is at stake,"

Her sharp blue eyes focused on Thea's blue-grey ones, silently Thea nodded.

"What do you need me to do?"
Abroad pt. 2

Chapter Summary

Chaos is the catalyst for change, may it be good or bad.

While abroad Kallista and Agent Thea Warg plan their way to infiltrate Mendoza Pharmaceuticals and hopefully quell the threat of the Cheshire cat. Even while away, change is happening within Blackwatch and Overwatch.

Change is inevitable, change can be halted for a moment but never stopped.

Too close to the sun: Rising Overwatch Scientist dismissed for controversial work…

Konrad looked silently at the datapad in his hands and sighed heavily. Although he had been recovering within the local hospital but he tried to keep up with the events that happened back at HQ. He considered himself lucky when it came to visitors, there were days he was visited by his colleagues at the central Med-Bay and other departments at Overwatch. He was even more thankful to be visited by at least a few Blackwatch agents.

"Shit…this was just released a few hours ago…I'm surprised," Konrad commented quietly.

Konrad glanced at the man at the side of his bed, the new scar on the man's cheek, Ruben Sanders or Van Gogh was one of the Blackwatch agents that visited him more than once.

"Did you know her?" Ruben asked.

"Barely. I knew of her but I didn't really work with her. I mean I'm a nurse and she's a scientist…you know where I'm going with this," Konrad replied.

"I suppose…"Ruben trailed off.

"I'm surprised you're here, everyone seems so busy," Konrad began.

"That is true, but I came because I wanted to see you before I left for my next mission," Ruben replied

"Aw, aren't you cute?" Konrad chuckled.

"I am serious Konrad," Ruben replied.

Konrad sighed as he placed the pad on the side table next to his bed, he ran a hand through his shaggy blond hair.

"Let me live a little, I've been stuck here for almost a month…"

"When are you expected to be discharged?" Ruben asked softly as he leaned back in his chair, hands in his lap.

"I dunno…they said there's still remnants of the poison in my system and my surgery they want to
make sure my recovery isn't affected,"

"Hopefully not much longer yes?" Ruben gave a quick but crooked smile.

"Hopefully, I miss y'all," Konrad smirked.

"I see that you have picked up McCree's vocabulary," Ruben smirked.

"Yeah…it's addicting," Konrad chuckled.

"Indeed. Well…I must leave now. When I complete my mission I will come to see you again," Ruben began as he stood.

"Sounds good, how is everyone?" Konrad asked. Ruben crossed his arms and looked at the man in thought.

"I am sure you are aware this is not the best place to discuss things as such but…nearly everyone is on the field…including the Intel Director," Ruben stated.

"Well shit. It's gotten to that point…” Konrad muttered.

"Unfortunately but that is normal in our line of work. I am sure you are aware," Ruben smirked and gave a slight nod.

"Yeap," Konrad nodded to the man and watched as the man silently exited the room.

"I need to get better and get the hell out of here," Konrad said as he picked up the datapad again and focused back on the shocking article.

"Damn…O'Deorain…what did you do?

"Who knew it would be so awkward to be out in the open with you," Thea began as she sipped her drink.

"I'm offended you would find it awkward to be out with me. I am just a normal person," Kallista commented casually. Thea pursed her lips together and adjusted her sunglasses as glanced at the woman across from her.

With a sigh, Thea sipped her coffee as she leaned back in her seat, her attention now on the people as they meandered along to handle whatever business they had to attend to that day. Thea and Kallista were seated on the ground floor of a chic boutique café in San Jose, California, near their target location.

"Yeah…but I mean…you are my boss and I feel like I'm underdressed," Thea commented as she pushed her sunglasses to the top of her head and looked Kallista from head to toe before she looked at her clothes, jeans, sneakers, and a basic tank top.

"This is just who I am and the clothes I picked up on short notice," Kallista replied as she placed her cell phone face down on the table. "Now…"

"Picked up on short notice huh, you look like one of those social media influencers or models or whatever they call themselves," Thea commented, Kallista smiled.

"Maybe…in a past life," Kallista replied simply. Thea arched an eyebrow at the woman's answer but opted not to ask...for now.
Normally, Thea saw the woman dressed in what came to be her normal khaki bomber jacket, dark-colored jeans, and her sleeveless turtleneck crop top and boots. Today she wore a white loose short-sleeved blouse with a pastel pink knee-length pleated skirt and white heels.

"Fine, Fine, focusing on recon," Thea shrugged and placed her glasses back on.

"A quick rundown of the pharmaceutical company…"

"Mendoza Pharmaceuticals. Looks generally like an office building, wasn't able to get a layout of the building but with enough time a 3D layout could possibly be made," Thea began.

"That might be helpful but time is against us," Kallista began as she leaned back in her seat. I know about the CEO already so you can skip that part," Kallista said and sipped on her hazelnut iced coffee.

"Mm, I figured as much…" Thea trailed off and noticed the woman patted her forehead with a napkin.

"Too hot for you Director?" Thea grinned.

"Not yet acclimated to the weather…nor do I want my face to melt," Kallista sighed. "Switzerland's temperature is pretty tame to California summers,"

"Didn't you used to live in Mexico?" Thea questioned.

"Someone has been doing research," Kallista smirked as she adjusted her sunglasses. "I did but it's been six years since I've been there,"

"Do you want to go back?" Thea questioned.

"At some point…but with house arrest, it is a bit more difficult," Kallista leaned back in her chair as the thought of her home filled her thoughts. If she really wanted to she could have easily traveled to Dorado with no issue. None of the items she had were tracked except for her cell phone which she could have easily disabled but that would alert people she didn't care to confront about it.

But it's been six years, would they really take the time to review her travel log?

A moment passed and she completely dismissed the thought because she knew that Gabriel would look into if there was something abnormal about her travel.

A slight pause settled between the two as they sat idly.

"I see," Thea commented quietly.

"But here I am living in Switzerland where I've been spoiled by tame summers and now I am melting in the Californian heat," Kallista sighed.

After Kallista had rested the next day the two women were on their way to San Jose- to the city where the possible source of the Cheshire cat originated from, Mendoza Pharmaceuticals. A place where Kallista had visited although illegally. She used Overwatch's prototype cybersecurity technology to visit its networks in the data cloud.

The two women were now seated in a trendy coffee shop near the main building scouting for Mendoza employees. Kallista knew she could have launched her own infiltration into the networks
of the company but knew the request would be immediately dismissed by both Gabriel and Morrison and it would be risky. Everything now was risky, too much time had passed and she and the others were not fully aware of how capable the Cheshire cat was or how it would respond to her.

They had to take a different approach. Infiltrate and decimate from the outside in.

"I'm surprised that Reyes doesn't show up here more often," Thea commented breaking the silence between the two women.

"Why is that?" Kallista questioned.

"I'm sure you know he's from Los Angeles, I think he has family in LA but I'm not entirely sure. Melody wouldn't confirm or deny it," Thea sighed.

"I knew he was from LA but I didn't know he still had family. That's not something that we…talk about," Kallista replied as she narrowed her eyes at the woman.

"I'm surprised," Thea grinned.

"What's that shit-eating grin for?" Kallista arched an eyebrow.

"Well normally," Thea began "Uh…look there's a group," Thea began as she adjusted her sunglasses. Kallista casually glanced in the direction of the group of employees from the Mendoza Pharmaceutical company.

"Perfect," Kallista smiled. "Would you like more of what you ordered or a snack?"

"Yes to both. I forgot to eat," Thea grinned sheepishly.

After a moment Kallista took her phone and began into the café towards the counter where the group of Mendoza employees stood and waited in the queue. Kallista stood quietly behind them and focused on her phone in her hand.

Kallista knew snagging the badges would be near impossible, the badges were required to pass the guard station before even entering the building, and also she was no petty thief. With prototype technology from the R&D department, she took this chance to test out how functional the programs and devices were. For this specific program she just needed to take a picture of an identification card with a chip and with that picture, the program would scan the encrypted chip inside of the badge, de-encrypt the chip's data to make it customizable to suit the job, encrypt the data again and finally print an ID badge.

A duplicated and fully customizable ID from a simple scan phone image.

Without much of an issue, Kallista was able to take a photo of the first ID that hung from the unsuspecting man's belt loop. She needed one more so that both she and Thea would be able to join her in the infiltration. As the queue moved Kallista saw that the two had turned towards her as they picked out things they wanted from the bakery. In the guise of taking a wide photo of the bakery, Kallista took a picture of the two women and moved in closer as if she too were looked at the options available.

One of the women looked directly at her and smiled, Kallista at that moment unsuspectingly snapped a photo of the woman's badge as she leaned her phone on to the edge of the counter. Kallista smiled and took off her glasses.

"All of this looks delicious. I could not help but take a picture for my blog. What do you fancy?"
Kallista asked.

"I've tried everything. It's all amazing you can't go wrong with anything," the woman replied.

"That's good to know. Hopefully, I can decide on what to pick," Kallista smiled.

After a few moments, Kallista returned back to the patio with a tray of various different tea sandwiches, pastries, and more coffee.

"That's a lot of food," Thea commented as she took off her sunglasses and focused on the tray of food.

"I got distracted," Kallista replied as she placed the tray on the table.

"I assume you got what you wanted?" Thea asked as she eyed the sandwiches.

"Of course," Kallista smiled as she took her iced coffee from the tray. "I'm just hoping that this works. I have a lot of prototypes but I can adjust if I need to," Kallista replied and reached for a sandwich.

"Um…excuse me…Miss?"

Kallista and Thea froze for a moment and turned their attention to an older looking woman that stood behind Kallista. Kallista turned to look at the woman

"Y-yes?" Kallista quirked an eyebrow.

"Are you Camilla Torres De Luciano?"

Thea looked to the older woman and then back to Kallista confused at what the woman called her.

"I am," Kallista smiled.

"I knew it. I told my girlfriends that you were her. You looked like her from a distance," the older woman began. "I hope you are doing well, you haven't been on television in years," the woman began as she looked at Kallista with worry.

"Ah yes. I have been tackling health problems, hopefully, I will return once I have my health all sorted out," Kallista replied.

"That's good to hear. I apologize for disturbing you and your friend here, please take care of yourself,"

"Thank you, you as well," Kallista smiled at the woman and watched as the woman returned to her friends.

"Camilla Torres De Luciano…huh?" Thea began. "Television?"

"A previous life," Kallista replied quietly.

"So mysterious and secretive Miss Director. You're even posher than I thought you were," Thea smirked and took a bite of her sandwich. Kallista sighed softly and took a sip of her coffee.

"…sorry," Thea added.

"I am an English woman, what else did you expect? But don't worry about it, I was wondering when
this would happen," Kallista began. "I'm sure Gabriel knew as well…hence the house arrest," Kallista gave a small smile before she took a sandwich.

After several hours of surveying the location and building, Thea and Kallista made their way to the train station back to Los Angeles.

"Today was fun…I was able to get out and enjoy the sun, eat some really good food," Thea began.

"Right. I had fun too. It's been a while since I've been able to do something like this," Kallista added as she ran a hand through her hair and looked at her cell phone.

"Does Reyes not take you out on dates?" Thea began and looked to Kallista. The woman's sharp blue eyes were already on her.

"Uh—"Thea began nervously.

"I didn't know—"Kallista began when echoes of shouts rang through the bustling train station.

"WE WILL NO LONGER TOLERATE THE CORRUPT GOVERNMENT! OUR EYES ARE OPEN!"

Kallista and Thea both turned to look in the direction of where the voice originated from and the civilians that were focused on the area.

"That doesn't sound good," Thea commented as she glanced at Kallista and Kallista at her.

"NO LONGER HELD BY THE SHACKLES OF THE GOVERNMENT. WE WILL NOT ALLOW THE OMNICS TO HAVE POWER. WE WILL RISE UP! WE WILL RISE!"

"Is this—"Thea began as she could clearly see more people had gathered while some began to quickly walk away from the impending commotion.

"THIS IS OUR TIME"

Kallista watched with a critical eye as security guards began to approach the group of people who had started to shout when suddenly they lunged at the security guards that approached them as did the other members of the group.

"Holy Shit-!"

The sound of the train horn boomed through the tunnel and train station and sped past its expected stop followed by an explosion. Immediately, chaos erupted in the train station.

"So Nattie…the truth finally comes out," Lyudmila commented.

{Yeah…I'm sorry it came out this way…and especially about Vincent…}

"I wish you would have said something before it got to this point," Lyudmila said as she adjusted the cell phone by her ear.

{I know…I couldn't make up my mind… and now that I have children}

"You have to do what is best for you," Lyudmila replied.

{I understand. I'm also sorry that I'm telling you instead Gabo}
"Oh no. You're still going to tell Reyes. You're not weaseling your way out of this one," Lyudmila replied.

{C'mon Lyuda}

Lyudmila chuckled as the woman's whine, it had been months since she had heard the woman's voice, and they only communicated through emails or texts and never a phone call.

"This is something you have to do. I cannot and will not do this for you. When Reyes returns you can tell him. I can also assume you will need to talk to Morrison as well. He's worried about you,"

{I…know…I heard about what happened with him and Vincent which is why I've been avoiding him…}

"It's going to catch up with you Natalie. Do something before it becomes worse,"
Old Memories, New Memories

Chapter Summary

There's only so much you can do for those you care about, Jesse knows this and seeing how Gabriel's health is degrading he can only be there when the man falls. There's only so much that he and the others can do.

Without fail, Blackwatch continues forward with its missions.

With no injuries, Kallista and Thea continues to move in on the Cheshire cat and hopefully before it escalates into a worldwide threat.

"Boss...you ok?"

Gabriel turned to face the agent that sought him out even though he deliberately avoided all of his agents as they assisted with the cleanup of their mission.

"W-What? Yavorov...what are you doing? Why aren't you with the others?" Gabriel quickly interrogated the young man.

"I dunno Reyes...trying to figure out why you suddenly vanished," Yavorov replied smugly. Gabriel scoffed at the younger man's cocky response and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand.

"I'm fine. Nothing to concern yourself with," Gabriel said as he turned around to face the man. He could see Yavorov's hazel eyes study him to see if there were any changes with the man to comment on. He huffed at the thought of the young agent's concern with his health.

"Listen, Reyes. You know we're not stupid," Yavorov sighed and crossed his arms.

"If you were you wouldn't be on my team or in Blackwatch," Gabriel replied gruffly as he walked past the man.

"Really Reyes? I'm here to tell you we're worried about you and you just brush me off?" Yavorov huffed as he followed.

"Save it,"

No matter how hard he tried to avoid everyone they sought him out and usually as the worst times. He couldn't let them see him like this. Unbeknownst to him, Jesse watched as Gabriel walked past him and began to check in on his crew completely oblivious to his watchful eye.

"You were right cowboy," Yarovov sighed.

"I know and I have been fer a while," Jesse replied confidently.

For the past month, Jesse had taken it upon himself to observe their commander all based on a hunch, there was something off about the man. Ever since that day, he had found him in the locker room on the brink of coughing up his lungs and with a bloody nose, there was no doubt in Jesse's mind that something was wrong, really wrong. But he also knew that Gabriel wouldn't peep a word about his
condition, let alone go to the medbay willingly.

It worried him, ever since he was taken into the Blackwatch he had never seen the man so worn down, tired, as sick as he was now.

"Don't let it get to that big head of yours," the blond scoffed.

"Fuck off," Jesse grinned and glared at his comrade.

" Anyway, there's something definitely wrong with him, he was coughing up a damn lung when I found him," Yavorov commented quietly.

Jesse remained silent as he continued to focus on Gabriel. It seemed as time went on his condition degraded and wondered if anyone else caught on to the man's health. The heavy coughing, the nosebleeds and whatever else he hadn't seen yet. He thought for a moment about the Soldier Enhancing Program that he participated in, was his condition degrading because of that or was it something else? He didn't know of the specific details but knew that he would be there to help Gabriel up when he fell.

Gabriel had done so much for him he couldn't abandon him in his time of need.

"McCree! Yavorov! Get your asses over here! We're leaving!"

"Well…whatever it is eventually it will come to light. I'm sure when the Director catches wind of it, he won't be able to hide it. She seems to be really close with him," Yavorov commented before he started towards the carrier.

"Yeah…" Jesse trailed off and wondered if Kallista knew.

"I wonder how long the director will be out," Linda asked softly as if she spoke to herself.

"Why? You need something?" Aleks questioned, his attention still focused on the data pads in his hands.

"It's just a little strange for her to be on the field. So I was just curious," Linda replied softly.

"Ah yes, Reyes basically has her on house arrest," Magnus commented.

"House arrest? The Director?" Ellias questioned.

For a moment the crew had forgotten that Ellias was a transfer as they all looked to one another and then to Ellias. Everyone had their secrets from their previous walks of life in Blackwatch, Kallista was no different. Only those on a need to know basis knew of Kallista's previous life. Despite her looks, she was a wanted criminal that was realistically on a tight leash and house arrest.

"I-It's not actually house arrest," Aleks spoke up in an attempt to correct Magnus' seemingly innocent comment.

"It was a joke. The Director doesn't leave HQ much because of safety concerns," Magnus casually explained when the door to the office suddenly opened. The group quickly turned their attention to the person that unexpectedly entered the office.

"Honey, I'm home~"

"Malik? You're back?" Linda questioned surprised.
"You sound as if I wasn't supposed to come back Truffles," Malik replied casually.

"We haven't seen much of you in weeks…we didn't know if you were going to be gone longer," Linda countered. Malik shrugged as they entered the office and sat down at their desk.

"Long time no see Malik, you ok?" Magnus questioned as he looked at them from head to toe.

"Yeah. Probably not my best behavior got drunk, had sex, maybe did some drugs. Not sure can't really remember," Malik sighed and leaned back in their chair.

"That sounds super healthy," Ellias commented. Malik sneered as they looked at the new agent in the office.

"Old habits die hard," Malik shrugged. "Alright. What is going on here? Kalli is gone?"

"Yes. The Director is out—" Aleks began.

"Out as in?" Malik arched an eyebrow, genuinely worried about the woman.

"On the field," Aleks replied.

"Oh she escaped her silk leash…I'm surprised. Gabo is getting pretty lax with her," Malik nodded for the man to continue with his update.

"Yeah…about that…" Aleks began and stole a quick glance at Ellias and then back to Malik.

"Ah," Malik sighed and reclined in their chair. Similarly, like Kallista, Malik's previous life was on a need to know basis for their protection from being prosecuted.

"The Lieutenant is returning from her mission, the Commander should be returning as well,"

"Alright, what needs to be done?" Malik began and adjusted their glasses.

"Perfect, we've been delegating some of the work to other smaller divisions of Blackwatch so there's not too much," Aleks began.

"Mhm," Malik nodded as they listened.

"I've made it to the location beginning to extract the data," Hayden whispered.

[ Roger ]

[ Enemies disabled. You may move freely]

[I have your back]

Hayden sighed softly as they effortlessly hacked into the computer terminal of a confirmed company that aided Talon and had connections to Cassius Park. Hayden had already been stationed within the company to act as an informant and bide their time to act.

Within seconds they began to siphoning information to pass on to Intel crew.

"Connection secure. Download 10 minutes, upload in five minutes. We'll be out of here soon," Hayden sighed.
Though they were on a mission, they were back in their home country of New Zealand. Hayden was sure that Reyes picked them for this mission-specific mission for the simple reason that they were from New Zealand and had family. Upon given their mission details, they made plans to stay after the mission and hoped that Reyes wouldn't give them a hard time just for shits and giggles, although he was known to do that regardless.

A smile formed on their lips as they thought about their small and upcoming vacation. They knew that Isla would be happy to see them and Finley.

Despite their upcoming reward after the joint mission, in the back of their mind, in their gut, there was something about this mission that felt wrong.

"Bradley…you all set?" Hayden whispered.

"[As good as I can be]"

"Genji—" Hayden began.

"[We have movement]"

"I caught wind of what happened in San Jose. Is the Director ok?" Lyudmila questioned as she entered the Intel office.

"Lyuuuudaaa" Malik grinned.

"Welcome back Malik. Are you feeling better?" Lyudmila questioned as she looked down at them.

"Better isn't the right word I would use but I could be better," Malik trailed off. "You know…joint pain, muscle soreness, etcetera,"

"Go get seen by Dr. Mikami," Lyudmila replied, she could see them visibly balk at the suggestion and timidly looked away from her.

"Lieutenant, we haven't heard anything from Director Kaines…yet…nor did we know she was in San Jose," Aleks began. Lyudmila looked at the man surprised and nodded slowly.

"Something is jamming our connection to her and her actual location. But we can confirm that it is still active," Magnus began. "That's as much information I can give you since my permissions are limited on what I can do,"

Lyudmila sighed softly, it slipped her mind but she remembered how cautious Kallista had been about the details of where she would travel and her mission in general. The fact that her own team wasn't able to access her mission details meant that something was amiss in the office.

"I am sure whatever it is will be sorted in a few hours. In the meantime—"Lyudmila began

"Possibly, but I'm sure the Commander will hear something from her or Melody and her team," Aleks replied.

"How did the mission in New Zealand go?" Linda spoke up.

"I didn't go to New Zealand. I was on a different mission," Lyudmila replied as she looked towards the woman, Linda's brows furrowed slightly at the response.

"In any case. I am going to check in with Reyes and visit Konrad. He should be discharged soon."
Aleks if you need me you know how to contact me,

"Understood," Aleks nodded as he watched the woman nod to everyone in the room before she left. A short pause filled the room after the woman's exit from the office, Ellias was the first to break the silence.

"You Blackwatch agents and your unspoken messages and secrets," Ellias sighed.

"What else did you expect?" Malik smirked.

"We're the clandestine service. Know all, share none," Aleks commented.

"We wouldn't be Blackwatch if we didn't have secrets," Malik added.

"Yeah, yeah yeah," Ellias rolled his eyes.

"I didn't know the Lieutenant went on a different mission. It's not even updated on her mission dossier," Linda commented.

"It was a last-minute change," Aleks replied.

"Oh…"

{My friend and I were on our way back to LA when all of a sudden we heard shouting…like a declaration of something followed by explosions and then the train crashing…}

"Well, Well, Well…look who's a T.V Star," Sam grinned as he looked down at the woman next to him.

"Shut it," Thea hissed.

"At least you came up with a semi-decent name. Stella Dovanis," Melody commented.

"It was the first name that came to me. Sue me," Thea replied.

"It is unique. I'll give you that," Sam commented and turned his attention to Kallista as she entered the room.

"Director Kaines," Sam began and smiled

"Calm down dingo number two," Melody said as she paused the playback of the news.

Nearly eight hours had passed since Kallista and Thea's narrow encounter with the Anti-Omnic sect within San Jose. Although they were able to avoid injury, Thea had been pulled aside to do an interview for the local news segment, of course, Kallista politely declined and hid her face from the cameras as much as possible.

"So far Director, only glimpses of your skirt and the back of your head made quick appearances in the segment," Melody reported as she leaned on the back of her chair.

"That's good," Kallista, sighed as she stood next to Sam and gave him a small smile.

"Your skirt it's ruined," Sam commented. Kallista looked down at her skirt, it was stained with blood, dirt, and soot from the incident.
"It's fine. I'll get it cleaned later," Kallista replied and turned to Melody. The two women jumped into action to help those that were injured and took an alternative route back to Los Angeles. There was no time in between to change and once back in LA the two went to work on dissecting and processing what had happened.

"Have we gotten any information about those that were involved yet?"

"Yes. There's nothing too significant about them. Their records were pretty much clean or just minor offenses...well for the ones that have been identified at least. There are some things that missing still," Melody replied as she populated some of the individuals who were involved in the attack. "There were some that died and some that are still being identified,"

As the profiles were populated, the three women began to scan through the individual profiles, one by one until Thea spoke.

"That one," Her voice was soft but certain.

"Hm?" Melody looked over her shoulder.

"That's the one I tackled to the ground. When I took him down he was muttering something," Thea continued.

"Like what?" Kallista turned to face Thea.

"Something like...I can see it...it won't leave me...the cat," Thea repeated the words that she heard when she tackled one of the attackers to the ground. Sam looked at the three noticeably smaller women and sighed.

"This is beyond me, I'm going out," Sam turned and exited from the office.

"Are you certain that's what they said?" Kallista asked.

"For the most part, yeah," Thea nodded.

"I can only assume they are referring to the Cheshire cat...were they hypnotized perhaps?" Melody began as she turned back to the profiles.


"It's possible,"

As the two women spoke, Kallista began to think back to the initial design of the Cheshire cat and compared it to some of the characteristics it currently displayed. She thought back to the time she encountered it back in Sterling Black's network space and what was said to her, that moment she realized she had forgotten a major piece.

The Cheshire cat was Artificial Intelligence, a program-

"Pull up their medical files," Kallista began.

"Anyone specifically?" Melody asked.

"Any of them. It doesn't matter,"

Within seconds Melody had produced holographic screens of each of the individual's health records.
"What are we looking for?" Melody and Thea asked.

"Surgeries. Look," Kallista began and pulled their attention to one of the individuals. "They've had eye implants recently,"

"Yeah? Getting eye implants are fairly normal nowadays, what's the point?" Thea asked.

"These two have as well…" Melody trailed off. "Director…you're not implying what I think you are?"

"Um?" Thea looked at the two women confused.

"I am. It's possible," Kallista replied.

"What's—"Thea started.

"That's impossible. Who is this person? To gain access like that?" Melody sighed.

Kallista pursed her lips together at the realization of how far the God Brigade's design of LOKI had advanced into what was now know as the Cheshire cat. She gathered from her encounter with one of the MacAllister twins in network space and how the young woman was different, hacked by what she assumed was being controlled by the hacker and not by the A.I.

"What is going on? Tell me," Thea cut in.

"From what I can ascertain about the Cheshire cat, it can affect or essentially affect anyone of cybernetic means or visual implants," Kallista began. "I don't know how far it can go…but it may be able to control their movements,"

"Wait-What?!" Thea replied shocked.

"If you examine their medical records you can see that each of them had some type of visual surgery either implant or an upgrade. These implants are in short wired to work with their brains to give them a picture," Kallista pointed out the surgeries on each of the identified assailants' records.

"Holy Hell," Thea whispered as she looked at the records

"Director…" Melody began as she looked to Kallista, brows tightly knitted as she realized the severity of the issue at hand or knew how the situation could worsen if not taken care of quickly.

"I know. I have several of my sources working on it…and I'm sure it has something to do with Mendoza Pharm," Kallista replied.

"So, we will need to go to Mendoza Pharm then," Thea stated.

"Yes, but to what extent…I'm not sure yet. I need…coffee and a bit of time," Melody sighed softly as she rubbed her eyes and then temples.

"It sounds like you're already planning on going somewhere….so where to now?" Melody asked as she leaned forward onto her desk.

"Washington State. One of the prime suspects is there…and the other I'm not sure," Kallista began. "In foresight that something like this would happen…, I've been in contact with an agent there keeping an eye on Mendoza,"
"Does Reyes know about this?" Melody asked, her eyebrows raised.

"Nope—"

"Can I—" Thea began.

"No," Melody cut the woman off before she was able to fully ask her question. "You forget, you're still suspended."

Thea sighed.

"I need you here because I may need you to go undercover," Kallista began as she took out her cellphone.

"Director, she's suspended and you're—" Melody began.

"It's better than just sitting here and training, at least I'm being useful," Thea cut in.

"She's right. Besides out of all of the agents here she knows the most. Clearly we can't count on Sam…who has abandoned us," Kallista replied, Melody sighed and leaned back in her chair.

"Fine. Let me know what you need me to do," Melody replied and shrugged. Kallista nodded.

"You're the best," Thea smiled at Kallista.

"Don't you start with me," Kallista smirked and crossed her arms. "I'm going to have a shower, I'll have some mission details prepped for you shortly," Kallista yawned.

"Rest easy, Director," Thea added as she watched the woman wave off her concern and exit the office.

"That's the gist of it," Lyudmila replied.

"So the usual then," Gabriel replied, Lyudmila nodded.

She knew that she would still need to turn in the reports and an eventual mission debriefs but she needed to see him, to speak to him as soon as possible. Before Gabriel and his team had returned, Jesse messaged her about their Commander's health. The message fueled her silent concern about the man and paired with her gut feeling worry was an understatement.

"Reyes, have you heard from Kallista?" Lyudmila suddenly questioned.

"No…did something happen?" Gabriel sighed.

"There was an omnic attack in San Jose. I think she was possibly caught in it," Lyudmila began. "The Intel team hasn't heard anything from her."

"Ah," Gabriel nodded tiredly. "I haven't heard from her…but if something would have happened to her Melody would have contacted me."

Lyudmila arched an eyebrow at the man's slow and tired like movements. She understood that he had recently returned from his mission and would be a bit fatigued but this seemed different, he seemed different. And yet, Lyudmila hesitated to ask, she hesitated because she knew that his response would be the same and attempt to brush off her concern for his well-being.
"I'm tired. Don't give me that look," Gabriel spoke up. Lyudmila nodded.

"Even if you weren't the only way we would know if something is truly wrong is by you being in the hospital or med bad," Lyudmila replied, Gabriel chuckled. He knew that she was right.

"Well old man Reyes. I'll leave Kallista's well-being in your hands," Lyudmila said as she stood.

"I'm sure you have more gray than I do, Lyuda," Gabriel chuckled tiredly.

"You're not supposed to say things like that to a lady Reyes," Lyudmila laughed as she exited his office.

Once the door closed, Gabriel slumped in his chair tired was an understatement. It was if all of his energy had been sucked dry, muscles sore, eyes heavy and was barely able to stay conscious as he spoke to the woman just moments ago. There were times when he had overworked himself to exhaustion but this time it felt different.

The black blood he coughed up, the nosebleeds…

The simple movement of putting his feet onto his desk was strenuous and drained the little energy he did have. He knew that he had to talk to Angela for some type of relief or he knew that whatever this was would continue to worsen.

Beep! Beep!

Gabriel reached into his pocket and nearly dropped his phone, eyes barely focused as he looked at the screen, a message from Kallista.

{Camilla: I'm checking in…I am still alive}

His eyes roamed over the message several times before he finally mustered up enough strength to respond back to her.

{G. Reyes: Good. You ok? Not hurt?}

{Camilla: I'm good. No injuries. I'm getting closer to finishing this}

{G. Reyes: Good. Pic?}

It took a couple of moments before he received a picture of the woman. Her hair was pinned into a bun, she wore her signature black-framed glasses, dressed in a shirt he thought he had lost months ago. A small but crooked smile formed on his lips as his eyes drooped slightly, he was thankful that she was safe.

{G. Reyes: Cute}

{Camilla: Get some rest...I know you're tired}

{G. Reyes: yeah…}

{Camilla: Night}

"Dad?!" Hayden gasped as they held their side and looked at the person shocked at their sudden appearance.
The downfall of their mission began with the sudden activity on both sides and stir of movement within Hayden's vicinity.

[Birro. I am coming]

"No-Wait!" Hayden choked on their words. "M-Maui...is that...you?"

[Man down! Man down!]

[Reira!]

Hayden heard their teammates panicked chatter and the announcement of one of their teammates injured but the man in front of them held their attention. A man they thought they would never see again.

"What are you doing? Don't you remember me?" Hayden shouted when suddenly the larger man rushed towards them to finish their job - to destroy all intruders. Abruptly the door shattered into large pieces as a familiar red blade had cut through the metal, the distraction allowed Genji into the room and halted the man's attack on Hayden.

"G-Genji! Wait! No!" Hayden shouted. Genji hissed in annoyance as he held back from cutting the man down but instead used the back of his blade to push the man back effectively putting space between them.

"Why?" Genji growled his crimson eyes trained on the assailant in front of them.

"I know him-" Hayden grunted as more blood seeped through their fingers and onto the floor.

"We don't have time," Genji replied as he held his stance in front of Hayden and was ready to strike if need be. The one known as Maui, their gaze was focused solely on Hayden and ignored Genji completely.

[Reira's been recovered. We've accomplished our objective. Target eliminated]

"We move," Genji replied firmly, Hayden winced at the man's order. They knew no matter how much they wanted to speak to the man they knew as Maui but knew that the person in front of them was not them. They also knew that Genji would not hesitate to put the man down regardless of their pleas.

"Y-Yeah…" Hayden hesitantly agreed.

"We need back up," Hayden said as they began to move towards the exit. With each step they took Maui took a step forward.

[Roger]

"Do you always wear that dumb hat?" Moira questioned.

"It's not dumb," Jesse replied.

"It's dumb because it doesn't match and besides this is a date you're supposed to dress to impress," Moira began.

"Fine. Fine. I'll take it off," Jesse sighed and removed his signature hat, he slowly ran a hand through his hair before he grinned at the cerulean haired woman. "Happy?"
"You look twenty times better," Moira sneered before she took a drink.

"It's just a habit of mine, but since you did agree to go on this date with me, I gotta make sure you're happy," Jesse said as he leaned back in his chair slightly.

At first, Jesse was hesitant about the blue-haired woman when she first joined Overwatch, there was something about her that rubbed him the wrong way and he thought that she was just some regular Overwatch agent that he would never see again, especially after the incident in Italy. He was surprised when he saw the woman in the Blackwatch division, on missions and slowly growing on him.

"Thanks, by the way, I know I was annoying about this," Jesse began. Moira's russet brown eyes looked over the man for a moment and sighed.

"You were definitely persistent I'll give you that...but I've also had worse company. Not much to lose here,"

"Oh C'mon. I'm not that bad. I'm charming, I'm funny, I'm handsome and-" Jesse began.

"And you're a cowboy with a bad sense of fashion," Moira finished.

"Listen," Jesse began as he sat up in his chair.

"Mnhm...I'm listening," Moira replied with a smirk on her lips.

"Don't give me that look," Jesse chuckled as he leaned forward.

"Natalie?"

{H-Hey Jack}

"Where have you been? Are you alright?" Morrison fired off a myriad of questions and forced himself to hold off throwing more questions and to let her speak. "Sorry...Hi..."

{I actually should be saying that to you...I ghosted you basically}

"You did...I didn't expect that at all," Morrison replied

{I...I know. I got nervous and you know being pregnant made it worse}

"About that..." Morrison trailed off. "Can you tell me about... him or her?"

{Twins. Emma and Miles. They are almost splitting images of you...I didn't expect that}

"Neither...did I," Morrison replied quietly. There was an awkward silence between the two, before Morrison spoke.

"Um...can I see them?" Morrison questioned hesitantly.

{Of course...it is the least I can do since you helped me with everything...}

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