Too Much Information

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Summary

When Blair returns, Simon tries to find out what happened.

Notes

Originally written for the Sentinel Angst list in 2004 and then appearing in My Mongoose in February 2005. A big thanks to T.W., Bluewolf and CarolROI for betaing this.

The second I see Sandburg's face, I know my suspicions are correct.

Not that it's any great detective work, mind you. When one of my detectives, who's had a bug up his ass about his missing partner for over two years, suddenly has to take a week of vacation right now for no particular reason, I think I'm justified in thinking I might know a little something. Seeing Sandburg's beaming, energized face -- looking like he's had a real vacation for a change -- simply confirms it.

Before he can sit down at his desk, I wave him into my office.

"What's up, Simon?" he says cheerfully and throws himself into the chair across from me.

I take my time examining him. Sandburg looks good -- tanned, happy and healthy. What really stands out though, is that he looks at peace with himself and that surprises me. I don't think I've seen that look on him since... well, since before Barnes. Definitely not since Ellison's disappearance.
Sandburg’s eyes narrow. "What?"

I stare at him a little longer, just because I can. Then, just as he drops his eyes and starts fidgeting, I ask, "So how’s Jim?"

Sandburg freezes, gawking at me. "How did you know?"

Smothering a laugh -- occasionally surprising the underlings with my omnipotence keeps them on their toes -- I glare deadpan at Sandburg. "I know you, kid. And I’m not the only one. I suggest you spend plenty of time this morning talking about the pretty girl you spent most of your vacation with. It would explain the... glow." Yes, I'm having fun with this.

Sandburg looks startled, then thoughtful. "It shows, huh?"

"Like an open book. Don't keep me in suspense here, Sandburg. How is he? Where is he? What the hell happened?"

Flinching just a little, Sandburg tells me, "He doesn't want me to tell anyone." He stares down at the surface of my desk. "He's not coming back."

Okay, that stings. Not that I wasn't expecting something like that. If Ellison is alive and wants to come back, he'd crawl here on his hands and knees over broken glass. If he's alive and not here with Sandburg... well, that's pretty clear in itself. "Why not?"

"He's made a new life for himself. You should have seen him, Simon." Sandburg's back to doing that glowing thing again. "He's rejected the whole 'Sentinel thing',' Sandburg makes quote marks with his fingers, "but he's still got his senses and he's using them to protect people. Just like he always has." Now there's an edge of sadness in his voice. "Except he's doing it without me, without a guide."

"He's not having problems?" Remembering those days, it always seemed like some weird Sentinel quirk or other was ambushing Ellison and Sandburg was the one to figure it out.

"Nothing that he mentioned." Sandburg looks straight at me, slightly defiant. "I didn't ask. The last thing I wanted was to prove to Jim that it was the Sentinel I was interested in, after all."

There's something different about Sandburg and it takes me a minute to put my finger on it. For the past two years, I've seen him resentful and grieving and stubbornly in denial. The Sandburg I've gotten used to is not a happy man. The one I'm looking at now... His eyes are calm, with hints of sadness and regret, but mostly acceptance. Well damn, it looks like the kid has grown up. Guess I can't be calling him 'kid' anymore.

"Are you okay, Blair?"

Sandburg nods. "Yeah, I am, man. Knowing he's okay, having a chance to say things I've needed to say, getting closure... It's all good." He smiles shyly. "Jim said I can come visit next year if I want, and he'll teach me surfing."

Surfing, eh? I file that little tidbit away. "So that's it? Jim runs out on us and now everything's A-OK? As easy as that, is it?"

His chin comes up. "You know it isn't, Simon. But I spent two years looking for him..."

We stare silently at each other, remembering those two years. His eyes are apologetic, but determined. Finally, I sigh and ask, "So am I about to lose my best detective?"
He breaks into a big grin at the compliment. "No way, man. This is my life here, with my friends. This is where I want to be."

Surprised at how relieved I am to hear that, I smile back, then decide enough is enough. "So, what are you still doing in my office? Get back to work!"

Sandburg is up and out the door like a shot, then he pops his head back in. "Oh hey, I almost forgot to give you this." He flips a letter through the air at me.

"Sandburg!" I yell in outrage as I make a grab for it, while he just laughs and heads over to his desk where Brown is loitering with intent to gossip.

I recognize the handwriting on the envelope. Sliding it into my desk drawer for now, I get back to work myself. I'll read it later tonight, when I'm home alone, with a couple of shots of whiskey to keep me company. Blair may have made his peace with the man, but I sure as hell haven't.

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