

(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: We do a little trollin'.

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He was probably supposed to be intimidated, Myk-Zod imagines. This... 'Johann Schmidt' was clearly threatening all manner of torture. And to be fair, it wasn't as though Myk-Zod had experienced much torture throughout his life. Hardship? Perhaps. But torture... no.

And yet... and yet, he finds himself staring back at the mad alien with a blank face. Somehow, it's actually relatively easy to just let the implied threats wash over him. Perhaps if he'd been isolated longer it would not be, but Sergeant Barnes' company, as well as his example, have shown Myk-Zod exactly how to respond to these egomaniacs. Stone wall them.

Of course, unlike Sergeant Barnes, he had no soldier's rank or identification number to rely on. No form of identification he intended to give his captors at all in fact. Ultimately, all he has is his silence. That, Myk-Zod employs judiciously, staring back at Johann Schmidt with what he liked to imagine to be an 'alien' and unnerving stare.

It even works for a half a second, the man actually showing just a flicker of uncertainty as he glances to Dr. Zola and furrows his brow.

In response, the sniveling doctor blanches a bit.

"He speaks our language Herr Schmidt, I assure you. He was able to carry a conversation with me when I drew blood from him from the first time!"

Hah. Johann had actually thought for a moment that his words were falling on the ears of the ignorant. Myk-Zod sees the flash of indignant fury in the human man's eyes and can't help but feel a little victorious at having pulled one over on him even if he hadn't actually done anything.

Alas, a glint of his satisfaction must show in his own eyes because suddenly the mad man is looking down at him again, eyes narrowed like he can see right through him now. And after a moment... he holds out a hand towards Zola, his eyes remaining fixed on Myk-Zod.

"A saw, doctor."

"Ah... w-what?"

"Fetch me a saw!"

"I... I... o-of course."

Myk-Zod watches on as impassively as he can manage as the sniveling doctor rushes to another part of the lab... and a moment later brings back a butcher's tool, a sharp metal instrument with a serrated edge. The intent is obvious, even as he hesitantly holds it out to Schmidt, only for the other man to snatch it from his grasp rather viciously.

"The fuck... you gonna do with that thing?"

While Myk-Zod stays quiet, the other prisoner in the room does not. Sergeant Barnes had been in a state of slumber when Schmidt first showed up, but it seems he's woken up and been watching the proceedings for a beat now. The Hydra Leader pauses and glances back at the restrained soldier with a glint in his eyes, only for Zola to clear his throat.

"Ah... apologies Herr Schmidt. This one has proven to be a promising subject for my work... I can gag him if you like."

It's funny to see someone like Arnim Zola actually standing up for someone else. Even if he's doing so purely for selfish reasons because he's enjoying experimenting on Bucky Barnes. Still, it seems to work in the end, because Johann turns away from the Sergeant, not even bothering to engage with him, and instead gets back to threatening Myk-Zod.

Stepping forward, he brings the serrated edge of the saw down on the skin right above the armband and gives Myk-Zod a sly smile.

“While it would be... unfortunate if I were forced to damage you in order to get what I want, I have never been unwilling to get my hands dirty in pursuit of power. So, alien, consider this your last chance to surrender this device peacefully... before I make you surrender it violently.”

“... You’re wearing gloves.”

Myk-Zod’s first words to the leader of Hydra cause Schmidt to blink, looking taken aback. His brow furrows in confusion.

“Excuse me?”

Glancing down at the man’s hands, both of them covered in black gloves, Myk-Zod arches a brow.

“You said you’re not unwilling to get your hands dirty, and yet you’re wearing gloves that will keep you from getting your hands dirty. That does not make sense. It’s illogical.”

Pedantic in the extreme? Yes. Myk-Zod is very much fucking with his captor on purpose. And yet... to these men, he is Other. He is the alien here. And he can see, for a moment, as Johann Schmidt gets this constipated look on his face and Arnima Zola frowns thoughtfully, that they actually think he doesn’t understand that the Hydra Leader was using a figurative expression.

And then Bucky, poor sick Bucky, has to go and ruin it by snorting in amusement. His soft, tired chuckling breaks the impromptu silence and Myk-Zod watches as it dawns on Johann Schmidt that he’s clearly been had. Again.

An expression of deep fury spreads across the man’s face and his grip on the saw tightens. Myk-Zod clenches his jaw and curls his hands into fists in turn,

staring dismemberment in the face with quite a lot more courage and strength of will than he ever thought he would.

Certainly this was not how the Kryptonian saw his journey into the multiverse beginning and ending... but at the same time, he did not escape one group of petty dictators and tyrants just to roll over and submit to the very next ones he came across.

The human presses the serrated edge of the saw into Myk-Zod's skin, prompting a grimace as he feels the beginnings of his flesh giving away. Zola looks on rather stricken, clearly afraid that Schmidt will kill him with this act and they will lose all of the knowledge in Myk-Zod's head.

And then, as though Rao himself has decided to take a personal hand in things... alarms begin to go off. Everyone in the room, from Bucky to Zola to Schmidt and even Myk-Zod, jerks and jolts as loud piercing shrieking noises fill not just the room, but every part of the greater facility they're held in.

Jerking around, Schmidt growls.

"Dr. Zola! Come, we shall assess the situation from the Command Center."

"A-Ah! Y-Yes, of course!"

Looking back at him, the Hydra Leader sneers.

"You have until this current mess is resolved to decide whether you wish to keep that arm or not."

And then he's gone, sweeping out of the room with long strides that force Zola to scurry in order to keep up. Funnily enough, he still has the saw in his hand as he goes, dripping with a few drops of Myk-Zod's blood.

Looking down at his arm, the Kryptonian finds a small cut there, approaching that of a gash but nothing too serious. It should stop bleeding on its own quickly enough.

“... Balls of steel, man...”

Looking over to see Sergeant Barnes staring at him with respect in his tired, exhausted eyes, Myk-Zod blinks.

“Pardon?”

“You’ve got balls of fucking steel... didn’t give that bastard a single inch. Inspirational...”

Myk-Zod chuckles in amusement at that, smiling a crooked smile.

“I took my cues from your actions, Sergeant Barnes. If anyone here is inspirational, it’s you.”

It’s the human’s turn to blink for a moment before smiling right back.

“Heh... thought I said... to call me Bucky.”

Dipping his head as best he can in his restraints, Myk-Zod grunts.

“Of course. Bucky.”

Silence falls for a moment between the two of them. Except it’s not really silence with the alarms going on in the background. In fact, the sound of the alarms is only growing, as if more of them are going off elsewhere in the facility. And alongside those sounds... Myk-Zod thinks he hears the sounds of distant fighting as well.

“Shit... think we might... actually get rescued. Hey... Mike...”

Looking back to Barnes, Myk-Zod arches a brow. The sickly human struggles with his words.

“You gotta... disguise yourself... if you can. If we get rescued... don’t let my side know you’re an alien either. They got... eggheads runnin’ experiments in their laboratories too...”

Well now. That was discouraging to hear. At the same time, it was also greatly appreciated advice... if Myk-Zod got the chance to incorporate it. At the moment he was still dressed in nothing but his jumpsuit from Krypton and the armband on his wrist. And since he couldn’t break free of his restraints... if they DID get rescued, whoever found them would see him for what he was all the same.

Still, he nods his head appreciatively to the Sergeant.

“I’ll keep that in mind, Bucky.”

“Mm... make sure you do...”

Things fall quiet between the two of them again for another few minutes. Myk-Zod strains his ears, trying to hear what’s happening... until suddenly, a certain doctor comes rushing back into the room. Arnim Zola barely spares one look in both his and Bucky’s direction before making for the office that overlooks the laboratory.

Myk-Zod watches Zola through the observation window as he frantically packs a square case full of papers and other things. There’s an urgency in him that wasn’t there before, a franticness to his movements that goes beyond just being afraid of capture.

When he comes rushing back out of the office, holding a hat of all things down on his head, he stops for only a moment, regretfully glancing to Bucky before looking directly at Myk-Zod. He almost looks like he wants to say something, to make one final offer. In the end though, it doesn’t appear that he has the courage for it. Instead... he turns and runs out of the room, racing away as fast as his short legs will carry him.

It’s less than a minute later that the pounding feet of someone with far longer, far stronger legs comes down the corridor towards the laboratory. At first Myk-Zod

thinks its Johann Schmidt and wonders if he will seek to divest Myk-Zod of his armband as quickly as he can before fleeing.

Fortunately, that does not come to pass. Instead, the man who rushes into the lab holds a primitive firearm in one hand and looks to be on the opposing side judging by the way he's looking around like he's searching for hostiles. Not to mention the helmet on his head that looks unlike anything Myk-Zod has seen from the guards of the facility so far.

"Bucky!"

Ah, and he even recognizes Sergeant Barnes... how fortuitous.

"Wha- Stevie? Thought you... were smaller."

"Shit Buck, what did they do to you?"

Clearing his throat as this newcomer frets over the Sergeant to the point of completely ignoring the alien in the room, Myk-Zod gets his attention at long last.

"Setting aside the doctor's experiments on Sergeant Barnes, even before he was brought in here, I'm told he developed pneumonia. He requires medical aid as soon as possible."

For a long moment, the new human takes him in. Myk-Zod returns the favor, observing his chiseled physique, square jaw, blue eyes, and blond hair peeking out from under the helmet. He's quite the strong-looking human soldier, the Kryptonian has to admit.

"What... who are you?"

Before he can answer, Bucky cuts in.

“Stevie... this is Mike. He’s good people. Just... a little far from home. They wanted to cut off his arm. He stared ‘em down and practically dared ‘em to do it. Reminds me of a little Brooklyn Scamp, heh...”

This ‘Stevie’ flushes at Bucky’s inane ramblings. But then, as he’s releasing the other man from his restraints, Sergeant Barnes suddenly shows a startling degree of strength as he reaches up and grabs ‘Stevie’ by the front of his top.

“Mike’s good people, Steve... don’t let anyone have him, you hear me? Gotta... hide him. Gotta make him one of... us.”

Glancing over in Myk-Zod’s direction, understanding fills those striking blue eyes and the newcomer lets out a slow breath.

“... Got it. The name’s Steve Rogers by the way. Nice to meet you, Mike.”

Without one more ounce of hesitation, he moves over and frees Myk-Zod from his restraints. For the first time since leaving Krypton behind, the Kryptonian is able to rise from the table he’d been strapped too and actually move around.

“... Likewise, Steve.”

“Need to get you both out of here, but Bucky is right... if we can, we should get you some clothes or something. Cover up all of... that.”

Steve gestures to his current attire, the skintight jumpsuit that he has on. Myk-Zod can only nod.

“I will search for something like that. I will also help with Sergeant Barnes. He has done everything in his power to show me that not all of your species are despicable wastes of space throughout our shared captivity. I owe him my sanity.”

“... told you to call me Bucky...”

Steve smiles, even as Myk-Zod moves to help support the sickly Sergeant's weight.

"Yeah... Buck is like that. The life of every party, even in Hell itself I guess... c'mon, let's get out of here."

Myk-Zod certainly doesn't need to be told twice. That said, he keeps an eye out for human clothing he can steal along the way even as the three of them move out of the lab and down the hall. As sick as Sergeant Barnes is, he's completely right that Myk-Zod has an unprecedented opportunity here.

With Humans being so close in appearance to Kryptonians, he could 'blend in' so to speak with the faction that Steve and Bucky belonged to. After all, it was doubtful that the likes of Schmidt and Zola would be sharing his nature as an alien visitor with their enemies...

It was just a matter of choosing the right disguise... the right role, even.

Of course, there's also a temptation to just cut his losses and leave. The armband isn't out of power yet; he'd been smart enough to charge it for multiple trips just in case whatever world he first wound up on didn't have a way to charge it further. He should really just activate it and hop to yet another world.

Two things stay his hand and keep him firmly in this world, however. First is Bucky Barnes. He'd been serious when he said Bucky saved him... and he would have always questioned how things ended if he didn't at least make sure to see Bucky to safety and hopefully full recovery first.

The second though was a voice in the back of his head quietly reminding him that Arnim Zola has his blood. And as a scientist himself, Myk-Zod is not unaware of what that could mean, especially for a society as primitive as this one seems to be so far.

Sure, he could have just washed his hands of the whole situation and let the humans do what they wanted with his blood while he left this universe behind entirely... but no, Myk-Zod had more of a sense of duty than that. He would

need to get his blood back... and put an end to any research into Kryptonian Biology that Dr. Zola had started. As soon as possible.

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A/N: Remember to Vote, leave a Like, and let me know what you think!