

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

A/N: Myk-Zod meets Howard Stark.

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... No, Agent Carter is right. Nodding to her, Myk-Zod offers a smile.

“That does indeed sound good to me, Agent Carter. Though I have not met this ‘Howard Stark’ yet, I will almost certainly be more comfortable working in a support role.”

Bucky can’t resist jumping in at that.

“So you’ll make us some special alien tech then? Give us laser guns like Hydra is running around with? Actually... do you recognize those at all? Maybe Hydra is being backed by another one of your kind or a different alien species altogether or something.”

Myk-Zod arches a brow as both Peggy and Steve turn to look at him at that supposition. Truthfully, he had not missed the strange energy weapons that Hydra seemed to have mixed in with the more conventional firearms humans seemed to employ. And while the prisoners Captain Rogers had freed had brought plenty back, Myk-Zod also hadn’t missed how there didn’t seem to be any similar weaponry anywhere in this camp before their arrival.

... Based on everything he’d seen so far, he did not think that it was alien interference, however. Instead, it was more like...

“From what I’ve seen so far, Hydra is not being supplied with alien weapons. The energy weapons you’re talking about share something of a ‘human made’ design to them in my opinion. Rather than being completely and utterly unnatural, they were clearly crafted by human hands from what I’ve been able to glean.”

The disappointment on Bucky's face and the alarm in Peggy's eyes makes Myk-Zod continue on.

"However, I do believe they might have found some sort of extraterrestrial power source or piece of alien technology not native to your species or civilization. Given the fact that they have not already conquered you all with these weapons, they must be relatively new to their discoveries..."

Peggy reluctantly nods at that.

"Yes, Hydra is Germany's scientific division... or rather, it's supposed to be. There's some question to whether Hydra and its leader, Johann Schmidt, are actually still serving under the SS and Hitler. We've even heard rumors that they might be breaking away entirely... which could explain why the war hasn't already been lost with these new weapons in the hands of every German Soldier in Europe."

The human woman's face tightens, her ruby red lips pressing into a thin line as she looks at Myk-Zod carefully but also with an intensity that she doesn't even bother to conceal it.

"Would you do it? Would you help outfit our forces with alien technology, Michael?"

He tilts his head to the side.

"... If we went too big with it, my true nature might be discovered. And unfortunately, I cannot say that your world will have all of the resources I need to create the things I know how to create. Or even the tools. However... I should be able to come up with some things for a small group. Say, a certain special forces unit under a new Captain?"

Myk-Zod looks to Steve at that, prompting the big blue-eyed blond to blink in surprise before smiling at the thought. Bucky, meanwhile, lets out a crow of victory. Peggy looks like she might have wanted more... but in the end she reluctantly nods, conceding the point.

“I can understand wanting to keep your head down. Teaming you up with Stark should be the right move then. You two can share ‘discoveries’ as you like and whatever you develop can be kept under wraps even as we use it to win the war.”

Sweeping her gaze from him to the other two men in the tent, Peggy straightens up and lets out a slow breath.

“It’s decided then.”

Then, she pauses... and finally arches a brow.

“If you would all please vacate my tent, I would love to get some shut eye before all our lives get even crazier than they already are in the coming days.”

Steve jolts and flushes.

“Oh! Yes, of course!”

With that, the three of them file out. The sun setting in the distance, Myk-Zod lets out a slow breath of his own as he feels the empowering effect steadily diminishing as night finally falls fully. However, what strength he’s already gotten from this Star System’s Yellow Sun... does not go away as far as he can tell.

He feels it in his form, from his soft tissues down to his bone marrow... and he knows he’ll never be the same again. Every day he spends on this world... is one step further from the man he was when he first arrived.

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BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

The sound of four gun shots in the small, relatively bustling bunker is... well, nearly deafening truth be told. Everyone stops what they’re doing and turns to

stare at Agent Carter, who just puts the pistol she'd used back down on the table and nods to the man she just shot at.

"Yes, I think it works."

Steve Rogers, now officially a Captain in his country's military, slowly lowers the gleaming circular shield he'd held up for Peggy's inspection and stares at her with wide, wounded puppy dog eyes. To be fair, he's certainly not the only one just outright gawking at the firebrand of a woman at the moment.

Peggy though, proceeds to ignore all of them and simply walks away. After a moment, Steve races after her and everyone else collectively decides to put the incident behind them and return to whatever they were doing before.

Of course, Myk-Zod knows exactly what happened... because unlike everyone else, he'd inadvertently overheard everything. The past several days since their escape from the Hydra Facility had left him with plenty more 'sun time', which had only continued to enhance not just his physicality, but also his senses. His eyesight, his hearing, his sense of smell and touch and taste... all of them were improving by leaps and bounds day after day.

As such, Myk-Zod had heard the conversation that a certain Captain Rogers had with a young blonde woman near the front of the bunker. A young blonde woman who had immediately recognized Steve as the hero he was thanks to a newspaper she'd been reading and proceeded to show her appreciation... by pulling him between some shelves and kissing him.

Unfortunately for poor Steve, they'd been caught mere moments later by a certain agent. And by this point even Myk-Zod recognized that Peggy was carrying a torch for the Captain... and that Steve probably felt the same way. That said, he certainly didn't have to let the blonde kiss him... he was literally superhuman, as it turned out.

Myk-Zod had had his suspicions before of course, but it was only as they'd traveled back deeper into friendly territory to get things in order that he'd learned more about Steve's story. Mostly because Bucky had had a lot of questions too.

Apparently, Bucky and Steve were childhood friends... and all their lives, Steve had been scrawny to a sickly degree, along with being at least a foot shorter than Bucky. When Myk-Zod had first learned this, he'd been rather confused... was it common for humans to have such extreme growth spurts into adulthood?

As it so happened, it was not. Rather, instead Steve had been subjected to biological experiments and something he called the 'super soldier serum'. It had made him bigger, stronger, and tougher than any other human in the world... save for their enemy, who was apparently another example of the same serum, albeit an earlier version.

... Myk-Zod had to admit, he was a little concerned to hear all of this, because it put some of the things Arnim Zola had been doing back in his laboratory into far starker perspective. And he was starting to question exactly what was in all of those medieval syringes that Zola had injected Bucky with...

"So you're Mikkel Zod, huh?"

Regardless, back in the present, Howard Stark turns to face him with an arched brow and a slightly defensive frown. Smiling in return, Myk-Zod inclines his head.

"That's me, yes. You may just call me Michael or Mike though, if you wish. I am not picky."

Stark snorts derisively, his mustache wiggling a bit as he works his jaw.

"No, I suppose you wouldn't be. Heard you were picked up and put to work by the Head Scientist of Hydra himself. Not to worry, working for me will be a cakewalk by comparison. I'm a lot less likely to shoot you for insubordination, for one thing."

Working 'for' him... the word usage does not at all go over Myk-Zod's head. Peggy had said he would be working alongside Howard to help outfit Steve's new special forces unit. That unit now had a name, the 'Howling Commandos'.

Still, it sounded like Howard Stark believed Myk-Zod would be working under him rather than alongside him.

Flashing a cheeky sort of grin, Howard winks.

“You got any questions, feel free to ask, alright champ?”

The condescension is a bit much, Myk-Zod can't help feeling. And so, even though he was originally going to leave it be and hold his tongue, he can't help but say something after all now that Howard has... invited questions.

“Actually, I did have a question if you don't mind.”

Blinking in surprise, Howard raises a brow.

“Alright, shoot.”

“It's about the Vibranium... Shield that Captain Rogers just walked off with. You said that was all the Vibranium you had?”

To be fair, he's not just seeking to needle Howard here. That shield was the third thing to truly catch his eye since arriving on this world. The first two being the energy weapons Hydra fielded and this 'super soldier serum' that Steve had benefited from respectively.

This... Vibranium, from what Myk-Zod could see and what Stark had said about it, was incredibly intriguing. If it really did have the properties that the human scientist said it did, then the possibilities were downright endless. Only...

“Yes, that was all of it. Why?”

Arching a brow, Myk-Zod makes sure to offer nothing more than a carefully confused frown as he tilts his head to the side.

“The rarest metal in the world... with such interesting properties and so many untested uses. And you... made it into a shield? I’m sure someone of your intelligence has his reasons, of course. I’m just curious... why?”

Howard Stark opens his mouth... and then pauses. For the second time since meeting, Myk-Zod sees the human scientist at a loss for words. The first was after Peggy unloaded four bullets into the Vibranium Shield he’d made.

Finally, he seems to find his voice, clearing his throat and narrowing his eyes like he’s not sure whether to scowl or not.

“... It was just a prototype idea. The capabilities of the metal, specifically the ability to absorb and reflect kinetic energy, made it perfect for something of this nature.”

Myk-Zod lets a trace of ‘polite’ incredulity into his voice as he furrows his brow at that.

“... And was that the only use-case you could think of for your only source of such a rare metal?”

Sputtering, Howard puffs up in outrage.

“O-Of course not! I had plenty of ideas, I was just-!”

“Hm. But now that Captain Rogers has taken a liking to it... that priceless, extremely rare metal will never be anything *but* a shield.”

“You- that’s- I’m-!”

Myk-Zod just smiles and tilts his head.

“Yes, I can see I still have much to learn from you, Mister Stark. I look forward to working *alongside* you in supplying the Howling Commandos with whatever they need to defeat their enemies once and for all.”

In the end, Howard doesn't respond with words. Instead, he seems to reach a tipping point. For the briefest of moments, Myk-Zod wonders if the other man might try to hit him or something. But no, it would seem that Howard Stark is not a soldier nor a fighter.

Instead... he simply turns on his heel and walks away. Not an entirely unreasonable response in the end. In fact, it might just speak to a maturity that Myk-Zod had already pegged as nonexistent within the human scientist.

Ah well, as far as first impressions went, he maybe could have done better. The only issue was, Howard Stark reminded him a bit too much of Zor-El and Jor-El in the short amount of time he'd been listening to the man talk before they'd had their first meeting. Supremely confident in himself above all else, egotistical in the extreme, and narcissistic to a fault.

If Myk-Zod was wrong in his comparison, he would learn soon enough from future interactions and if an apology was deemed necessary, he would be willing to give it. However... he had to admit, Stark already lost a lot of potential credit in his eyes just for turning a material as fascinating as Vibranium into a fucking shield of all things.

... He wondered if the metal was truly as rare as Stark made it out to be. Perhaps more could be procured before Myk-Zod's time on this world was done and he could-

"Hey there."

Blinking, Myk-Zod turns to find himself approached by a familiar woman... the very same woman who had flirted with and kissed Captain Rogers just a little while ago. Blonde and blue eyed with an impressively curvaceous figure that her too-small uniform hugs in all the right ways, she gives him a coy look and a flutter of her eyes.

"I don't know if I've ever seen anyone talk to Stark like that. You're the new scientist, right? Going to be working with Captain America and the Howling Commandos from here on out?"

For a moment, he considers just not engaging with her... but eh, he already potentially ruined one first impression. He might as well not outright shut down a second. Smiling, he nods and holds out a hand.

“That’s correct. Doctor Mikkell Zod, though you can call me Michael or Mike as well.”

Taking his hand in her own, her blue eyes glitter with obvious avarice as her coy smile becomes downright lascivious.

“Well Doctor Zod, I’m Lorraine... Private Lorraine. And I’d love to... show you around the place.”

Obviously he’s not an idiot. She’d struck out with the good Captain, in large part because Agent Carter interrupted them mid-kiss and Steve’s guilt meant he would probably never let anything more happen. Now it seemed she’d decided to try her luck with Myk-Zod next.

Private Lorraine was clearly a woman who knew what she wanted and was willing to use her feminine wiles to get it. She also, admittedly, reminded him at least a little bit of Alura, albeit an Alura closer to his age... or indeed outright younger than him.

The question was... did he really want to get involved with any humans in an intimate fashion while here on this world? To be fair, what was the other option? That he stay completely celibate? Hm...

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A/N: I feel it should probably be said for anyone who might have forgotten, but Private Lorraine is played by Natalie Dormer in the Captain America: First Avenger movie.

She very much does rock the uniform, lol.

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