

Chapter 5: A Better Idea!...Maybe

"You call this a better idea?"-Dinah Selby

"You call this a better idea?!" Dinah was still asking that night.

Reno growled. "You got a better one?" He swung up onto the chocobo's back.

Dinah climbed onto her own chocobo, keeping quiet.

"That's what I thought," Reno said indignantly. They shot off into the night, riding side-by-side.

"You've still got to admit, though, that this doesn't stand a very big chance of succeeding. I mean, we traded those tourists the bike for the chocobos, and paid the girl for her clothes--since mine were blood-soaked--and I guess that part was okay. But we're also making the assumption that we're going to be able to catch the 10:15 ferry to Junon. And even without the bike, we're going to be pretty conspicuous riding into town, and they've got to be watching for us," Dinah replied skeptically.

"What do you think would make us conspicuous?" Reno asked, his face the picture of innocence.

"Umm, I don't know. Maybe your flaming red hair and nightstick and gun and knife and--"

He caved under her sarcasm. "All right, all right already! I get the point! I can conceal my weapons, and I'll do something to my hair. And no, I'm not going to dye it!"

"How did you know that was what I was going to suggest?"

"That evil glint in your eyes," Reno muttered. "And what about you? You've got to be conspicuous in some way too. You can't be perfect."

"Lynley, you've spent your whole life as the center of attention. I mean, that seems to be practically your goal; to make everyone pay attention to you. On the other hand, my life depends on my skill to be inconspicuous. I think I'm better at it than you are." As much as Reno hated to admit it, it was the truth. Dressed as a man again, Dinah wouldn't even rate a second look.

He knew it was true, but Reno still tossed her an annoyed glance that was stolen by the darkness. But his words weren't stolen. "Bitch."

"Bastard," she snapped back. They continued on into the night, trading insults as they went.

3 hours later...

Dinah checked the time on her watch, using the little green glow button. "We've got nine minutes to get there."

Reno shrugged it off. "Don't worry. We'll get there in time. See? There's the town right up there. Let's go!"

They raced their chocobos across the last stretch of open fields, then leapt off them once they reached the entrance to the town. The odd pair swiftly took off everything that would have linked the two birds to humans, and let them go. The two birds rushed off, warking happily.

The two humans dashed into the town, their feet thudding against the cobblestones. Reno and Dinah made a quick stop at

their respective hotel rooms, where they found that their luggage was still in their rooms. Reno quickly snatched up a black jacket from his room, tossing it over one shoulder and stuffing money and other necessities into his pockets, while Dinah did the same in her room. Then they went back out the door and onto the street.

They ignored anyone who was out, but everyone who was out didn't ignore them. One tall, husky man, after seeing them rush past, swiftly pulled out a cell phone and held a brief, terse conversation. He nodded, closed down the cell phone, and followed the Turk and ex-research specimen.

"Don't look back, but we're being followed," Reno muttered to Dinah out of the side of his mouth. Instinctively, she started to turn around.

Reno's voice stopped her. "I said don't look back. We'll just have to beat him to the ferry."

They dashed across the bridge to reach the dock. She came to an abrupt halt as she reached the wharf. "Shit!" The ferry was already untied from the pier, and was beginning to steam toward the distant city of Junon.

Reno didn't even skip a beat. He grabbed her by the hand, and half-dragged her along with him on his mad dash to the ferry. "Unless you want to get caught by that guy back there, then we're getting on this boat!"

"Lynley, you're insane!" Dinah insisted. But she didn't resist. "And let go of my hand!"

Reno dropped her hand immediately, and Dinah easily kept up with his long, ground-eating strides. Reno broke his own directive, looking back one more time before he was too close to the boat. The man was still chasing them, and was pouring on speed as he realized what they were planning. He won't catch us though. Reno thought cockily to himself. We're too fast. Reno may not have been the most modest of people, but he was telling the truth there. He and Dinah were swift sprinters, and the man behind them was too large to be fast. The man apparently knew it too, because he quickly came to a halt and pulled out a gun.

"Oh shit," Reno muttered. It makes no sense. Why would they try to hurt the girl if they're trying to get her back? Then again, she could have lied to me... Almost before these thoughts finished running through his head, Reno decided that there was no time for thought now. His head turned back to look at the boat, and he snapped out a quick warning to Dinah. "He's got a gun!"

That was when the gunman decided to prove that he had possession of a weapon. He opened fire.

"Great! This just keeps getting better and better!" Dinah said, sounding angry and frustrated.

"Shit!" Reno yelped, ducking the flying bullets and splinters. He had been wrong. They weren't shooting at Dinah. They were shooting at him.

The ex-Turk moved closer to Dinah, figuring that the man wouldn't want to risk harming her.

"Hey, what're you-" she began to protest.

Reno still heard the sharp retort of gunfire. "Is this guy fuckin' nuts?!"

Dinah glanced back to him for an instant, but then turned her attention back to the goal: the ferry. As a testament to her stamina, or rather whatever stamina the mad scientist Hojo had given her, she wasn't breathing hard at all. "We're going to drop right into the water, you fucking idiot!"

Reno grinned at the slight note of panic he detected in her voice. "Why? What's the matter with the water?"

"Just shut uuuuupppppp!" Her last word became elongated and drawn out when she took a flying leap off the edge of the pier. Before she could catch her breath, flail, or react, she was slamming into the slippery back end of the ferry with bone-jarring force. Dinah instinctively reached out, managing to grab hold of the on-deck railing that kept passengers from falling overboard. She painfully pulled herself up, over the rail, and onto the deck, where no one had even noticed her appearance. No one had even seemed to notice the gunfire.

How stupid/deaf can these people be? Dinah lay flat out on the deck for a moment, catching her breath. Then she sat up onto her knees, peering out through the gaps in the rail. Where the hell is Lynley?

A resounding thud and a curse answered her question. Leaning over the edge of the rail and looking down, Dinah could see Reno clinging onto the side of the ferry for dear life. He was easily in her arm's reach, but she held back, grinning at him triumphantly.

Reno had had that same look on his own face enough to recognize it. It said something like 'I have you where I want you now! Ha ha!' "Shit."

Dinah's smile grew wider. " 'Shit' is right, Lynley."

Reno decided to try to bluster his way out. "C'mon! Just pull me up! I got you here, didn't I?"

"Lynley, if you hadn't been here to knock me unconscious in the first place, I would have moved on right after you saw me at the dock that night! They wouldn't have found me in the first place!"

"Uh..." Reno, the consummate wordsmith and incurable talker, couldn't think of anything to say.

"Any other reasons why I should pull you up?"

Reno decided to just talk, and not come up with some sort of a strategy. "My grip is slipping and I'm gonna fall and get chopped into bits by the propellers. While I'm sure that would please you to no end...pull me the fuck up!"

Dinah sighed, then reached a long arm over the back of the boat and grabbed Reno by the back of his collar. Dinah braced herself against the railing, then pulled upwards none too gently.

There was a gagging sound. "You could be a little gentler; you're fuckin' choking me!" came Reno's voice from where he was clambering up the back of the boat.

"Would you rather have me drop you?" Dinah retorted.

"Point taken." Reno's head appeared at the rail, and he swiftly pulled the rest of himself up. Then he scrambled over the rail and sprawled out on the deck, panting.

Wordlessly, the woman spun on her heel and marched into the interior of the ferry.

"Crazy bitch," he muttered to her back. He climbed to his feet and leaned on the rail, watching the bright lights of Costa del Sol swiftly recede into the darkness. The wind whipped around him, sending his loosely bound hair flying.

He watched the frothy white trail that the boat was cutting through the water. I wonder what Rude, Elena, or any one of a number of people would say to what I'm doing right now? ...Come to think of it, what am I doing right now? I'm helping some girl I don't even know and have no connection to whatsoever...

Stupid, stupid fucker, Reno.