

CHAPTER IX: SNOOPING AROUND

"Marshall, there you are!"

Reno looked up to see a raven haired woman in a gray jacket and matching skirt walking toward him.

It was twelve thirty. He was sitting in the employee's lounge on his break. Just as he had every day since he had started here. One would think that she'd begin to see a pattern. Yet for some reason she still seemed surprised every time she found him here.

He lifted his foot up and pushed the chair out beside him with it.

"Have a seat Darsa," he said, the sweetness in his voice completely concealing his total disdain for her. Darsa was the kind of person who could grate on anyone's nerves. Her voice was annoyingly whiny. She was a total ditz. And the worst gossip in the place on top of that. There wasn't one person here who she didn't drive crazy, and yet she was so oblivious that she didn't have a clue as to how people really felt about her.

"Thank you," she said sweetly, taking the seat beside him. "I've been working so hard today and it's just barely afternoon. Usually when I'm busy the day goes quick, but today seems to be dragging on and on."

"Uh huh,"

Kind of like your voice, Reno was tempted to say.

She leaned closer to him.

"Did you hear? Laredo got canned," she said.

"Oh really?" Reno responded.

"Yup," Darsa said, nodding. "The boss found out he had his resume out on the internet, looking for a new job. He was a really good worker too, but that didn't seem to make any difference. Guess they figure if you're looking someplace else you're not going to be motivated to do your best here."

"Yeah," Reno agreed. He had been given a prohibitively long list of rules and regulations when he was hired. He hadn't looked at it, of course, but he assumed that was on there somewhere.

"Laredo doesn't know how they found out about it, but I think Dillon might have told them. Everyone knows how ambitious he is, and he's next in line for Laredo's job. I think it was a little bit of sabotage."

"It's possible," Reno replied noncommittally. This was one of the main reasons Darsa was so disliked. She just loved to spread rumors, the more insubstantial the better, it seemed. Reno suspected that if she didn't have all the facts, and she never did, she just filled in the blanks herself.

"And I also heard that the Mr. Van Cleff was spotted in the building yesterday coming out of his office, down the back way, which no one is supposed to know about, with an older man, and he seemed to be acting very deferentially. I think it was the President."

Reno nodded slowly. There were two reasons he put up with Darsa's chatter. One was for things like this, that buried amid all her speculation and outright lies, there might be a gain of useful information. Since Reno had started working here he had never seen the President of the company. That wasn't so unusual. It was a big company, he'd only been here for two weeks, and the President might have many other things to do. But from what he had gathered, no one at all who worked here had ever seen the President of the company, no matter how long they had been working here. Though Reno hadn't seen him himself, the Vice President, Julian Van Cleff, was a common sight on the topmost floors, and seemed to take care of the everyday business of running the company. But the President himself, or herself, for that matter, was a mystery. Reno found that very strange. He was almost tempted to snoop around on the top floors hoping to run into the President, just to satisfy his curiosity. But if he considered the security down here tight, it was nothing compared to the upper floors. It might have been possible to get in up there, but he had a feeling it would take the entire resources of the Turks, and right now, the payoff just wasn't important enough to risk that.

No, he had enough on his mind right here on the second floor. Which brought him to the second reason he hung out with Darsa. It had been almost two weeks, and Reno still hadn't found a way to steal a key-card and get into the secure storage area. To tell the truth, he was getting a little frustrated at this point. He had been sure he'd have the key-card a lot sooner than this. But everyone in the place was so careful. He had never seen an organization that stressed security so strongly. Of

all the people here, Darsa seemed the best candidate to leave her key-card in a position to be lifted. He knew she kept it in her purse, and the snap on the purse would be simple to open if he got the chance. She seemed to like him, which didn't surprise him, most all women did. But of the women he had met so far, she seemed the most likely to fall victim to his charming personality.

"Oh, and that movie about that ship, you know, the one everyone's been talking about? It opened up at the Junon Drive In today. I'd just been *dying* to go see it," she added.

"Uh huh," Reno said slowly, well aware of the look she was giving him. She had been hinting at a date for some time now, but in spite of the need to get in her good graces, he had been reluctant. Even with his Turk training, he was afraid that if he went out with her the constant babbling would eventually get to him, and the temptation to fry her with his nightstick become too great. And that would ruin all his carefully laid plans.

Still, he had been talking to her for two weeks now and still didn't have the key-card. He supposed that he was going to have to bite the bullet.

"Actually," he said slowly. "I'd like to see that myself."

"Really?" she said immediately. "Well then why don't we go together?"

Reno nodded.

"I'd love to," he managed to say.

"Great," she said happily. "There's a showing at 8:10. Would that be good for you?"

"That would be fine," Reno replied.

"Okay, great," Darsa said. "Here, I'll give you my number. You can call me later to get directions."

She opened her purse and rummaged through it for a moment, finally pulling out a pen and small pad. Reno looked at her pursed, lying on it's side open in front of him on the table. He thought he could see the key-card, so tantalizingly close.

He moved his hand, knocking over his coffee and spilling it onto the floor.

"Oh damn," he muttered.

Darsa looked up.

"Oops," she said.

He reached over and grabbed some napkins out of the holder. But he had made sure there were only a couple in it.

"Could you hand me some napkins from that other table?" he asked politely.

Darsa turned to look at the table beside them.

"Yeah, sure," she replied.

She finished writing, then stepped over to the other table, grabbing a handful napkins. She came back and handed them to him. He quickly wiped up the mess and stood up.

"Do you need more coffee?" Darsa questioned.

"No, that's okay," Reno replied. "I was almost done with it anyway, and I have to get back to work."

"Oh, okay then," Darsa said as Reno started to walk away. "So, I'll see you tonight around seven thirty?"

"Yeah, that sounds fine," Reno said as he walked rapidly out of the room. He walked down the hall, her keycard safely stashed away in his pocket, trying to keep the smug expression off his face.

He made his way immediately to the warehouse. He didn't know how long it would be before Darsa discovered her card was missing. He didn't think she'd notice anytime soon. She worked in personnel, and he knew she didn't need it to get in there. Given the fact that Vanguard seemed so careful with security, he didn't even understand why they had given a card to a ditz like her in the first place. But he wasn't going to complain. Not when it had all worked out in his favor.

Still, he figured it would be wise to use it as quickly as possible. He couldn't depend on her not noticing it was missing, and if she did, she would probably report it and they might deactivate it. He needed to do what he had to do before that

happened. Hopefully she wouldn't notice anything at all, and he'd figure out some way to get it back to her before she caught on, perhaps at the movies that night.

Not that he was anxious to follow through on that. The thought of spending the evening listening to her drivel was enough to send a shudder down his spine.

He walked into the warehouse. As usual there were a few workers putting new inventory on the shelves, or taking things off the shelves that had to be shipped out. He was a regular sight in the warehouse these days, however, and none of them paid any attention to him.

He stopped when the door to the secure area came into view.

He hoped he'd find some incriminating evidence in there. It would make things a lot simpler to be able to get some evidence and just bolt from the place. Not to mention he wouldn't have to show up for that movie.

There was a camera near the door. He'd already checked it out. It panned back and forth, so all he had to do was time it right to not be seen. He hoped the rest of the investigation was just as easy.

He looked around. No one was nearby. He waited until the camera was turning the other way, then quickly slipped along the wall until he was underneath it, beside the door. He looked around one more time rapidly, then ran the keycard through the lock. The door clicked. He pulled it open and quickly slipped through.

He stopped and looked around. The room didn't look much different than the main warehouse floor. There were three aisles, lined with shelves, all filled with various items. He didn't see anyone else in sight.

He walked down one aisle. The shelves seemed to be stocked full of various machine parts. He didn't recognize a lot of them. But some he did. In spite of his laid back attitude, Reno did take pride in his ability to do his job, and do it well. No one else but Rude knew, but he had studied up on Vanguard, trying to learn all he could so he would be prepared once he went in. Since Vanguard was mainly a power company, that was what he had brushed up on. He wasn't sure at first, but walking up and down a few aisles and looking at the equipment he was pretty certain what it was for. Everything on the shelves were parts for a reactor. A Mako reactor.

"Well, well, well. Seems you can't trust anybody these days."

Reno spun around at the sound of the voice. Darsa stood a few paces behind him, a gun in her right hand.

Reno stood there for a moment. This was definitely not something he had expected.

"Damn," he muttered.

"The boss had a feeling there was something suspicious about you," Darsa said. "That's why he asked me to keep an eye on you."

She walked over to him, a smile on her face.

"Surprised?" she said. "You're not the only one who can act, you know. It took me a while to perfect that little number, but you have to admit, it works. Especially on arrogant people who happen to think they're smarter than everyone else. Nothing like a little overconfidence to cause you to make a mistake."

Reno just looked at her without saying anything. Unfortunately she was right, and he couldn't believe he had fallen for it.

"Well, I hope you found what you were looking for," she continued. "Not that it's going to do you any good. C'mon, there are some people who would like to have a word or two with you."

Reno scratched his head, nonchalantly bringing his nightstick up, but before he could do anything the door to the room opened and eight Vanguard security men entered the room. Reno looked them over for a moment and realized the odds were too great. With a sigh he lowered the nightstick and followed Darsa out the door.

Heads turned to watch as Reno was escorted down the hall. A few of them, who knew Reno, gave questioning looks, but no one said anything. Reno just smiled as he walked by.

They reached the elevators and entered. Darsa punched the number for the top floor. Reno tried to look bored. He had wanted to take a look on the upper floors, now it looked like he was going to get a chance. Who knows, he might even end up meeting the President. At least his curiosity might get satisfied before they killed him.

A few moments later the doors opened. Reno looked around as they exited the elevator and walked down the corridor. He was a bit disappointed. The hall didn't look any different from the halls on the lower floors. They passed a lot of doors, but all of them were closed.

Eventually Darsa stopped at one door and opened it. Reno followed her in to find himself in what he took to be a meeting room. There was a table surrounded by chairs in the center of the room. A small water cooler in one corner was the only other furniture. Darsa motioned for him to sit. He complied.

"Wait here," she commanded. "And I wouldn't suggest you try anything stupid. There will be plenty of guards in the hallway, and we've got our eye on you." She motioned at the camera that hung unobtrusively from the ceiling above the water cooler. "It was interesting working with you, but I don't suppose I'll be seeing you again."

"You never know," he replied coolly.

She looked at him a moment more, then shrugged and walked out the door, closing it behind her. Reno sat there in silence, staring absently at the wall. Things weren't looking too good right now. He didn't have any illusions about what Vanguard had in store for him if he didn't get out of this somehow. Still, for some reason he wasn't all that worried. He had been tight spots before, and had always managed to slip out of them. True, he had fallen for Darsa's little act, and for that he could kick himself. But there wasn't much he could do about that now except learn from it and not underestimate them again. Hopefully, somewhere along the line he'd get a chance to extricate himself from this.

And again, hopefully it would be soon. He doubted they'd kill him right off the bat. They'd probably want to know what he had found out and who, if anyone, he was working with. He probably had a couple of days, but the sooner he sprung himself the better. If he didn't report back after work tonight Yuffie would know something was wrong, and he wanted to get out of here before she did something bone headed like tried to come in here on her own and rescue him. He knew from the start that having Yuffie as a backup was a risky proposition. He just hoped he didn't have to pay for that with his life.

The door to the room suddenly opened and a man entered. And for the second time that day Reno got a surprise.

He recognized the man. And it was obvious from the surprised look on the man's face that the feeling was mutual. Reno suddenly realized he was in much worse trouble than he had thought. For a moment they both just stood there looking at each other, then the man broke into a wide mirthless grin.

"Well, well, if it isn't Reno of the Turks," he said slowly. "Of all the surprises."

"You're Julian Van Cleff," Reno said slowly. It was not a question.

Mr. Van Cleff walked over and sat down in a chair across from Reno.

"Yes," he replied. "I see you remember me from our last conversation. I'm flattered. You know, when you declined the job of killing Barret Wallace I thought you had gone soft. But I found out that wasn't true. It turned out you had a plan of your own in mind. When I left your office that day, I thought you weren't going to be of any use, but I never imagined you'd end up actively opposing my plan, in fact, that you would be the one to foil it. You have no idea how much trouble I got in for that."

Van Cleff stared at Reno, but the Turk did not reply. There was nothing he could say.

"For a long time afterward I dreamed about getting revenge," Van Cleff continued. "You have no idea how many stupid ideas came into my head on how to take you out, how to ruin the Turks just like you nearly ruined me. They made a pleasant daydream, but of course, I didn't act on any of them. I'm a businessman. I had more important things to attend to than something so petty as revenge. It's funny, but in none of my daydreams did a scenario like this arise, that you would just be handed to me on a silver platter."

Reno made no attempt to hide his boredom. He'd just as soon get this over with than have to sit here listening to Van Cleff gloat.

But Van Cleff was obviously enjoying this.

"Ordinarily we'd have to question you to find out what exactly you had in mind, but I think I can pretty much figure that out on my own," he continued. "I really don't need you at all, do I? I guess now it's just a matter of deciding on the most painful way to achieve your demise. I'll have to ask around and see if I can get a consensus on that. In the meantime, we'll find someplace safe to keep you. I know enough about you to know that you aren't here on your own. The Turks always work as a team, and finding one means the others are not far away. I suppose we'll have to figure out a way to deal with all

of you. Hadn't really planned on that quite yet but I suppose it's inevitable. The Turks were probably going to get in our way eventually. So what better time than now?"

Mr. Van Cleff stood up.

"Well, I'd love to continued chatting with you, but unfortunately I have business I have to attend to. We'll find a nice comfortable place to keep you in until we're ready to deal with you. Someplace that's nice and quiet and will give you plenty of time to think."

Van Cleff stood there for a moment looking at him. Reno studiously studied the far wall. Finally the man shrugged, then turned and walked out of the room. The smile still remained on his face as he strolled down the hall. He just couldn't get over his luck. Of all the people he had to snag sticking their nose into Vanguard's business, it had to be Reno. The President had not been happy about the failure with Barret Wallace. He had almost lost his job for that, and perhaps his life. And all because of Reno. Fortunately the President was astute enough to realize he still had some value, and that anyone could make a mistake. But it was pretty clear that that one mistake would be the only one he got a chance to make.

He stopped at the door marked Vice President. Pulling it open he entered. He walked past the secretary and into his main office. Without stopping he walked to a door and the back and passed through it. A narrow hallway led a short distance to another door. A hallway very few people save he and the President knew about. His own back entrance into the President's office.

The office was dark. A small lamp cast a pool of illumination on the desk, but that was the only light. The President sat in a chair behind the desk, facing the window. Though she did not turn when Van Cleff entered, he had no doubt she was aware of his presence.

"Madam President?"

The chair swiveled around. The blonde haired woman looked at him, her face an emotionless mask. In the dim light, he could barely make out the scar that ran across her left cheek. If not for that one flaw, she would have been quite attractive, he thought superfluously.

"What is it Julian?" she questioned.

"We've discovered a spy. We caught him snooping around in the secured inventory section. It's Reno of the Turks."

The slight lifting of one eyebrow was the only indication that the President was surprised by this news.

"Really?" she said slowly. "That's interesting. That's very interesting."

Van Cleff gave a silent sigh of relief. He hadn't been sure how she would take this news. The fact that the Turks were snooping around made it clear that someone was suspicious of them. He wasn't sure if that suspicion might interfere with their plans.

"And if he's here the others probably can't be far behind," she said, apparently thinking out loud.

He assumed she was talking about the other Turks.

"You've got him locked up in a safe place?"

"As we speak," he replied.

The President nodded.

"All right. Double the security, and I want you to run background checks on everyone here."

"Everyone?" Van Cleff said slowly. They had thousands of employees. That would be a daunting task, and it had already been done with each person when they were hired.

"Everyone," the President said in a voice that made it obvious the command was not open to discussion.

"Of course," Van Cleff replied. "I'll get right on it."

"Good. Do you have anything else to report?"

"No."

"All right then."

The President turned away, back toward the window in an obvious gesture of dismissal. Van Cleff turned and walked out the door he had entered without another word. For a long time the President sat in her chair, pondering this development.

Reno. It had been a long time since she'd heard that name. He was one of them. One of the one's who had ruined all her plans. All this time she had put off revenge, all this time she had planned so carefully. Were her plans finally about to bear fruit?

But this was not the time to become overconfident, she chided herself. Things had been going well, but only because she had planned them out so carefully. They had all underestimated her, had all thought her nothing but a bimbo. That had worked in her favor, but she still had to be careful. She knew the members of Avalanche, Cloud and some of the others, were searching the Nibel mountains. She knew what they were looking for, and that they were close. If they found anything now it could still cause her a lot of trouble. Hopefully the capture of Reno, of one of their little group, would cause yet another distraction for them, delay for at least a little longer. Just like she hoped the trouble in Ifalnia would. Yes, everything was going according to plan, even if it was moving a little slowly. She only had to keep applying the pressure. Keep Avalanche so busy reacting to her moves that they had no time to make any of their own. It was time to turn things up a notch. She would have to speak to Gilan Bradford as soon as possible.

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"Lai Li had analyzed the information you sent us. She says there's no way the power plant there could be producing all the power that it's outputting."

Elena frowned.

"What do you mean, Rude?" she questioned. She glanced over at Vincent, who was sitting by the window, not seeming to be paying any attention to her phone conversation.

"The solar generators they're using are insufficient to provide the power for all of Junon that they're covering," Rude said. "They have to be getting more power from somewhere else. Are you sure the solar generators you showed us are the only source of power there?"

"Yes," Elena replied. "I've been through the whole power plant. Those solar generators are it. There's nothing else there."

"That doesn't make sense," Rude replied. "Those generators aren't large enough to supply more than a third of the power that plant is producing. There's got to be another source, and it's got to be a major source."

"I'm telling you, that's all there is," Elena said, just a bit testily.

"Are you sure there's not someplace that you didn't see, that you can't get too?"

"There's no place in the plant that's off limits to employees," Elena stated. "I'm telling you, I've combed every square inch of the place and that's all there is."

Elena heard Rude conveying that information to Lai Li.

"Well, there has to be more to it," he continued a moment later. "If the source of power isn't there, then they've got to be bringing it in from somewhere else. There's no other explanation."

Elena hesitated a moment.

"I suppose that's possible," she said slowly.

"More than possible," Vincent remarked.

"Hum?"

"Take a look at this."

"Rude, hold on a minute," she said.

She walked over to Vincent. He pointed out the window. From the hotel room they had a great view of the ocean, in fact, that was one of the drawing points of this particular hotel. Though the ocean itself was quite scenic, you couldn't say the same about the beach here. This part of the beach was situated in the downtown area, not far from where the old cannon used to be. To the right was the airport, to the left, Vanguards power plant. This was an industrial area, not a resort. The

water was a deep unappealing blue. Brownish white foam from some unknown source formed a line between the waves and the sand. Trash littered the beach. Vincent was pointing toward the power plant, but Elena didn't see anything of interest.

"What?" she questioned.

"See those cables?" Vincent questioned. "Those power cables. They lead into the ocean."

Elena squinted. Vincent had eyesight like an eagle, much better than anyone else's, save maybe Aeris. At first Elena saw nothing at all. But after following Vincent's finger, she noticed three dark lines leading from the plant into the sea. Hardly noticeable from here, they must have been pretty big to be seen at all from this distance.

"You think that's where they're getting the power from?" she questioned slowly.

"I think it's quite possible," he replied. "Which I find very suspicious. Those cables lead out into the ocean, and we both know what's out there, now don't we?"

For a moment Elena didn't reply, then her eyes suddenly widened.

"The Junon undersea mako reactor!" she blurted out.

Vincent nodded.

Elena heard a voice. It was Rude. She put the phone to her ear once more.

"I'm sorry Rude," she said. "Something has come up. I'll call you back later."

Without further explanation she hung up the phone.

"Do you think they're using it again?" she said. "With all that happened and all the people here in Junon, I would have thought they'd have safeguards against that."

Vincent shrugged.

"Who knows?" he replied. "I thought they had safeguards too, but who can say. I do know that when Cloud and the others were trying to resurrect Aeris, the Mayor here made them go into the reactor to get the schematics for it. He told them he was going to use them to try to make a more efficient coal burning reactor, but who knows if he was telling the truth? The whole thing seems very suspicious."

He slowly got to his feet.

"Anyway," he continued. "We're not going to find out anything by sitting around here. I'd say it's time we paid that old reactor a little visit. Let's go."

"Now?" Elena questioned.

"Why not?"

Elena nodded. She had just gotten back from work. It was late afternoon, a good a time as any. Vincent wasn't the type to put things off.

"Okay," she said.

They left the hotel. It only took them a few minutes to walk down to the entrance to the underwater tunnels that lead to the reactor. Elena kept her eyes open, looking for any signs of activity, but there was no one in sight.

Eventually they reached the heavy metal doors that had been built to close off the reactor. They were closed, and the area was deserted.

"I don't see any signs of activity," Elena commented.

"Neither do I," Vincent replied. "But they might just be covering their tracks."

He walked over to one of the doors and pulled it open with some difficulty. It creaked as it moved. Elena looked at the door skeptically. It didn't seem like they had been opened in a long time. But she didn't comment.

Vincent slipped through the door and Elena immediately followed. After the downfall of Shinra the reactor had been shut down, but monsters had continued to plague the lower area of Junon for some time afterward, supposedly from leftover radiation. Quite a few expeditions to eradicate the beasts had been mounted, but none had succeeded, and most had

never been heard from again. Eventually the people of Junon had just decided to seal the reactor up, leaving the monsters to fend for themselves or perish inside. As far as Vincent knew, Cloud and the others had been the only one's to enter the reactor since.

But that had been a long time ago. Cloud had mentioned to Vincent that they had only met one creature on their journey. Perhaps even that was gone now. With the way clear, it was quite possible some unscrupulous characters had reentered the reactor and started using it again. Even though it was near the city, no one came here anymore. The mako power could be coming from right under the peoples nose here and they might never notice.

The theory made sense, but as Vincent looked around himself he could plainly see that the reactor was still silent and deserted. At least, this part was. They were far from the main core, however. If anyone was using it, they wouldn't want to be noticed. They might even had built another entrance. They wouldn't know for sure until they took a look at the core.

Vincent walked quickly down the hallway, Elena trailing behind.

"Do you know where you're going?" she asked.

"More or less," Vincent replied. He had been in reactors in his early days with Shinra, and although he didn't really remember much, he thought he could manage to get them to the core eventually.

Elena looked at Vincent dubiously, but followed without further protest. After all, it wasn't like they had much choice. They couldn't ask anyone for directions. And though she had been a member of Shinra herself, she had never paid much attention to the reactors.

Elena kept both her eyes and ears open. But she saw no one, heard no unusual sounds. The floors were covered with dust, the equipment old, broken and rusted. The farther along they went the more obvious it became that no one had been in here for a long time. Still, Vincent showed no sign of turning back. She supposed as long as they had gone this far, they might as well go to the core, just to be sure. But by now, she was pretty certain the place was deserted.

Vincent pulled open another door, opening up into a large room, larger than any they had been in so far. In front of them the wall formed a semi-circle, bulging out toward them. In the center of the wall stood a open doorway, the words 'Reactor Core' written above it, though they were so faded they could hardly be seen.

Vincent walked forward. With each step they could see more of the next room. With each step they could see that they were on a wild goose chase.

The next room was trashed. Equipment, furniture, some of it so twisted and broken so much that it was no longer recognizable, was strewn about the room. There was a staircase in the middle of the room, but it was bent to the side, as if a giant hand had reached out and twisted it violently. There were offices up above, the glass of their windows shattered across the floor. Huge claw marks had raked the walls, leaving marks six inches deep in solid concrete. Elena's eyes widened at the damage. She certainly didn't want to meet whatever caused this.

They stood there for a moment in silence, looking at the devastation around them.

"Well, it looks like the place is deserted," Elena said finally. "How bout we get out of here now? Whatever did this must have been pretty angry. I don't think I want to meet it."

Vincent didn't reply. He walked over and looked up the stairs.

"I believe Cloud mentioned this room was like this when he and the others came here," Vincent finally said. "If so it's likely whatever caused this is long gone. I don't think we have anything to worry about."

Elena gave Vincent a look of disapproval. Maybe the room had been like this before. Maybe Cloud and his friends hadn't run into the beast. But that didn't mean it was gone for good. Maybe they had just been lucky enough to miss it. There was no reason to believe it wasn't still hanging around, that it might not show up at any moment. But it didn't seem like Vincent was giving it a second thought. Already he was making his way up the broken staircase.

"Do you really think this is wise?," she said. "We're here. We've seen the core. It's obvious that no one is using this place to generate power. We were wrong. So why don't you just admit it and let's get out of here."

Vincent pulled himself up onto the catwalk at the top of the stairs.

"That still doesn't explain where the power is coming from," he said. "Or where those power lines lead."

"Vincent..." Elena said, shaking her head. How were they supposed to find out where the power cables were going from in here? Or was he just being stubborn. "Come down!"

"You come up," he replied, as he disappeared into one of the offices.

Elena stomped her foot. Why did he have to be so hard headed? She was tempted to remain right where she was, just out of spite. But she looked around and realized with Vincent out of sight she suddenly felt very much alone. If that monster did decide to show up, she wanted Vincent to be right beside her. With a very unladylike curse, she started up the stairs as well.

Reaching the top she looked around again, more nervous than ever. If whatever it was that had caused this showed up now, they had no easy way to escape. With the stairs in the condition they were in, they wouldn't be able to get down them quickly.

She walked quickly down the catwalk, trying not to think about it. Hoping instead that she could convince Vincent to get out of here as quickly as possible.

He had gone into the last office, right at the end. There was a gaping hole in the catwalk that she stepped gingerly around before entering the room he had disappeared into.

She noticed the other offices had been small when she had walked past them. But this room was much bigger. To her surprise she saw that the far wall was made of thick glass. Vincent stood with his back toward her, looking out at the sea beyond.

She walked over until she stood right next to him. He pointed.

"There's the cables," he said. She looked out and saw that they ran along the ocean floor, right past the reactor, to disappear into the distance to the west.

"What do you know," she said slowly. "They don't come here at all."

"No they don't," Vincent replied. "They go west, out into the ocean. Looks like they follow the same path the ferry takes to get across."

He stepped closer to the glass, as if one step forward could help his eyes penetrate the distance the cable must travel.

"Looks like it's time we paid a little visit to Costa del Sol," he said thoughtfully.