

With His Dying Breath

by David Carner

For those that don't know, I was one of the authors of the account OneorEleven. I am slowly bringing over those stories. First up, one of my favorites I ever did. It's the end of Season 2, before Bryce died he did something no one expected. Chuck's life changes forever

Rated: T · Genre: Humor, Romance · Chapters: 18

Chapter 1: With His Dying Breath

I don't own Chuck

Chuck fell to the ground, and saw his friend sitting against the wall, his gun beside him. Something was wrong. Something was very wrong.

Hello, Chuck. Bryce's voice hitched. He didn't look good, he looked, pale.

Bryce. Bryce, Casey and Sarah are pinned down outside. Chuck scampered to Bryce, on his hands and knees in front of Bryce.

I'm on it. Bryce reached for his gun, winced and that's when Chuck saw it, the blood. The pain in Bryce's face.

Oh, my God... oh, my God. Oh, my God, you've been shot. What was he going to do? He had no idea what to do. Casey and Sarah in trouble, Bryce shot. What the hell was he doing, he was no spy. He was just a guy, who used to have a computer program in his head.

Yeah. I'm really sorry about this, Chuck. Bryce had regret on his face. Why was there regret on his face?

No. No, it's okay... it's okay. You're going to be fine-- it's not that bad. Chuck had to keep him talking, awake. That's what you did, right? Or was that for a concussion? He

couldn't think, he couldn't process what he needed to do. Bryce was shot, dying, again, but this time in front of him.

Take care of her. Take care of her? Take care of who, Sarah? She didn't need him to take care of her. She could take care of herself. Besides, she was leaving, with Bryce, or being assigned somewhere else.

Don't... don't say that. You're not dying. She needs you, man, okay? You... you guys are going to go on missions together and do exciting things and save the world. You'll be a team again-- it will be great. It wasn't going to be great. It was going to be terrible. It was going to rip his heart out, but she and Bryce were a team, a great team, and she was going to save the world.

She wasn't going to come. She wants... The groan Bryce made wasn't good. It sounded like...like he was dying.

Come on. Hold on, hold on, hold on. Chuck was begging with Bryce. Begging him to hold on, not to die. Bryce pulled something out of his coat.

This will destroy the Intersect. This new computer is too powerful. It's too dangerous. Bryce was pleading with him. Chuck saw it in his eyes, but...but what about FULCRUM and the greater good?

But you need... you need the computer to fight FULCRUM. Chuck was trying to reason with Bryce, but questions remained. Why would Bryce have something to destroy the Intersect computer? Why would Bryce, who had already died once to destroy this system let it be put in his head? Things weren't making sense.

FULCRUM doesn't matter, all right? They... they're just... they're just one part of the Ring. They'll use it against us, Chuck. You have to do this. All right? You have to destroy that computer, and then get out of here. Bryce was pleading with Chuck, he was begging him, but Chuck wasn't hearing it. All he could think about was stopping the people that kept hurting his family, making his dad be a nomad, hurting his friends; Bryce, Sarah, Casey...They had to stop FULCRUM, the Ring, and whatever else was out there. Chuck not only needed to save that computer, but he needed to help Bryce, be his

analyst. There was no choice.

Yeah, but you can beat them. You're a real... hero, Bryce. Bryce didn't respond. *Bryce.* He was dead. *Oh, my God.*

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That had been hours ago. Chuck was lying on his bed, exhausted. The flash had incorporated physical fighting this time, and while the adrenaline had gotten him through the ordeal, his body was now protesting what he had done.

That was the least of his problems. Sarah couldn't believe what he did, Casey seemed to wish anyone but Chuck had uploaded the Intersect, and God only knew what Beckman thought. She hadn't wanted him at the briefing and that really didn't surprise Chuck. It wasn't that she hated Chuck, she just hated him having the Intersect.

He laid on his bed, his head feeling...full. Fuller than the last time he downloaded it. He felt...different. His head was buzzing, he felt like he was on the verge of a flash, and it was driving him crazy. It was similar to how one felt when they were on the verge of a sneeze.

"Damn it," he muttered to himself. "Just flash and get it over with." That's when it hit him. The flash was different than the flash earlier that day and the one with the previous Intersect. He shook his head after it was over with and blinked. There had been no information, there had been no pictures, but it had felt like a flash.

"I ask you to destroy it, but you couldn't, could you?" he heard Bryce ask. Chuck turned slowly and looked behind him. There stood Bryce. "All you had to do was insert the chip I told you, and it would be gone. I guess it's good I had a back up made." Bryce paused and studied Chuck. "So, is this gonna be awkward?" Chuck just stared at Bryce. "This is gonna be awkward."

Chapter 2: Chapter 2

I don't own Chuck

"I'm having a mental breakdown, stroking out, something," Chuck said, pacing back and forth. His phone rang and he looked over at it. It was Casey. He went to pick it up.

"Don't tell him anything, and don't look at me," Bryce said. It took everything in Chuck not to stare at Bryce. "He can't see me. Cameras?"

Chuck picked up the phone. "What's up, Casey?" he answered, turning toward Bryce but trying to look nonchalant.

"You okay, Bartowski?" Casey asked. "It looks like you're...well...flippin' your damn lid."

"Tonight's been rough," Chuck admitted. "I hurt, physically, from the fight. I saw my friend die." Bryce gave him a smile as though he was touched. "And-and I'm pretty sure the general hates me."

"Mmm," Casey grunted.

"I know you are not a man of many words, but was that a yes, the general hates me?"

"She hates you being the Intersect," Casey told him. "She hates having to deal with you because you're a civilian."

"I guess I shouldn't mention that she's no picnic either?" The grunt from the other end of the phone was the only clarification he needed. "So, what's the plan?"

"We're going to train you, send you to a camp, in Prague," Casey told him.

"Got it, Prague," Chuck repeated.

"I can hear what he's saying," Bryce pointed out. "I'm in your head, in fact you don't even have to talk out loud to me."

"When do I leave?"

"Couple of days," Casey told him. "Walker and I will hold down the fort while you're gone, and when you get back..." he let out a frustrated sigh.

"I know, you'll be stuck with me," Chuck said.

"No, you're gonna be an agent with your own team," Casey told him.

"Well, I want you and Sarah," Chuck told him.

"May not be your decision, kid," Casey said, and hung up. Chuck hung up the phone, and went and laid down on the bed.

"You have two choices," Bryce said. Chuck laid there, not looking at him, but listening.

"Go to Prague, and train to be an agent, and lose Sarah."

I'd have to have Sarah to lose her. He thought.

"Well done," Bryce said, grinning. "Your other choice is to disappear during your trip, go into training and take out the Ring by yourself."

Why did you do this, Bryce? How did you do this?

"When they create this new Intersect, I had them put a copy of my memory in the Intersect, in case it somehow ended up in the wrong person. Everyone laughed, but I knew." Bryce shook his head. "I knew it wouldn't be easy, I knew there were those within the government that would try and screw this up and use it to their advantage...the same way they did the first one."

Chuck lay there, thinking about what Bryce had said, it made so much sense. This was the second time the upload had gone horribly wrong.

"If my memories went into my head, no big deal, they're my memories," Bryce continued. "If not, I was like a user guide."

So you're my instruction booklet The Greatest American Hero never had?

"Basically," Bryce said with a shrug. "There is a third option." Chuck started to sit up, but remembered the cameras. "Go to your father, have it removed." He was silent for a second. "And then you could be with Sarah."

Chuck didn't say anything, he lay there. That would be the smartest choice, the safest choice, the best choice...except...*And then you would have died for nothing. And-and what would become of you.*

Bryce shrugged. "I'm dead Chuck, this isn't really me." Chuck didn't say a thing. "When we get the orders to go-

We?!

"Yes, we," Bryce replied. "I'm in this with you." Bryce was silent for a second. "She chose you, Chuck. She wasn't going with me."

If I train, and become an agent, will she go with me?

Bryce was silent. "She may not be allowed, she may resign, but then you'd be an agent, and what do you think they would do if you tried to resign with the Intersect in your head?"

So I either go to dad, remove it, and you die for no reason, or we go forward with your plan?

"I mean...Chuck, there's a chance they'll let you have Sarah on the team," Bryce insisted.

If The Ring has infiltrated government agencies like you said, would you let Sarah Walker team up with the Intersect?

"No," Bryce answered. "Get some sleep, Chuck. Your body is about to crash."

Will you be here when I wake up?

"If not, just think about the troll, and you'll flash on me," Bryce told him.

Chuck shut his eyes. The smart thing to do, the right thing to do was to get the Intersect out of his head. If he did that, Bryce had died for nothing, his father was still in hiding, Casey and Sarah would be in danger. Hell they were always in danger, but more than normal if they were fighting the Ring. He wished he could talk to Sarah, but if he did, he knew what would happen.

Where would I go?

There was no answer for a moment. "There's a safe house I know of outside of Salzburg, Austria."

Salzburg...Isn't that where the Sound of Music takes place?

"Yeah," Bryce answered, chuckling.

And it's safe? Bryce didn't answer for a moment. *Bryce?*

"I would be shocked if anyone thought to look for you there," Bryce answered. Chuck didn't say anything else, it looked like he was heading to Austria. "We can get you to train there, and when you're ready, you can fight the Ring." Chuck drifted off to sleep, wondering if he would ever have a chance with Sarah after this.

Chapter 3: Chapter 3

I don't own Chuck

4 weeks later

Beckman played the footage of Chuck exiting the train watching the expression of Casey and Sarah.

"He knew exactly where to go, to avoid the cameras and our people," Sarah said, a little in awe. "It's like he has knowledge of CIA protection."

"Could that be in the Intersect?" Casey asked.

"I don't know," Sarah said with a shrug.

"Not to our knowledge, Colonel," Beckman replied. "As you know this was two weeks ago." She paused. "What I'm about to show you is highly classified." Casey and Beckman shared a look. "The Ring has begun to hemorrhage money."

"The Ring?" Sarah asked. "Wait, I thought we were after FULCRUM?"

"FULCRUM is but a part of the Ring," Beckman explained. "Members of the Ring, their businesses, are having money transferred out of their accounts to charities all over the world."

"Someone is attacking them...what, cyberly?" Casey asked. "Is that even a word?"

"It will do, Colonel," Beckman replied. "My superiors believe somehow, someone has captured..." she shook her head, not wanting to say the word.

"Oh, no," Casey said, a grimace on his face.

"Agent Bartowski of the CIA," Beckman continued.

"General, he's not an agent, he has no training," Sarah protested.

"He was captured, while heading to CIA training and the CIA, with their numerous foul ups in this project..." Beckman trailed off.

"They needed a win," Sarah said shutting her eyes and rubbing her forehead. "So they made him an agent." Beckman pressed her lips together and nodded. "General, do they realize how bad it is for them that a win is a trainee getting captured?"

"But that trainee is thought to be destroying the Ring monetarily, and that Agent Walker, is more important than capturing the traitors." Casey scoffed. "Colonel, you know as well as I while some are idealist in The Ring, many are there for other reasons."

"Damn mercenaries," Casey grumbled.

"Agreed," Beckman said. "Agent Walker, your mission is simple. Find Chuck Bartowski, and take him into protective custody however you see necessary. The only two people you are to contact is myself and Colonel Casey. Chuck Bartowski is too valuable to let anything happen to him."

"Isn't all the CIA looking for him General?" Sarah asked. The General furrowed her brow at Sarah. "You misunderstand, of course I'm looking for him, I have been."

"No, you misunderstand, Agent Walker," Beckman said. "There are some in the CIA that do not believe Chuck Bartowski has been kidnapped. They believe that he has gone rogue."

"WHAT!?" Sarah said, exploding. "The man who has selfishly given the past two years of his life, with no training, and rushed in to save his friend...these idiots think he's gone rogue? A TRAITOR???" Beckman and Casey said nothing as Sarah looked from one to the other. "You two have nothing to say?"

"Chuck Bartowski is a royal pain in my ass," Beckman began. She paused. "But...." She sighed. "For him to be thought to be a traitor..."

"It's bullshit," Casey said. "Bartowski's a moron but he's no traitor."

"Casey, you're nearly gushing," Beckman said, grinning. "Agent Walker, bring your fellow agent home, protect him. He is a high value target. The CIA finally agrees with you." Beckman grinned as she cut the feed.

"What the hell does that mean?" Sarah asked, turning to Casey.

"We don't have time for that," Casey said. "You get to leave now to find him."

"And where the hell do I look for him, Casey? WHERE?" Sarah asked.

"Start where he disappeared," Casey said with a shrug. "Why wait until Prague to make the more, why not somewhere else?"

Sarah turned on the footage of Chuck in the station, watching him move, almost like he was guided. "Have we checked on Ellie? Do we know she's okay?"

"Bartowski hasn't contacted her, that we know for sure," Casey told Sarah.

"But does Chuck think Ellie is captured?" Sarah asked. She gestured toward the screen.

"Casey, someone is telling him what to do. Someone who knows the CIA protection standard operating procedures."

"Who?" Casey asked.

"That's the million dollar question, isn't it," Sarah said. She watched him get in a car as it took off. "Do we know where that cab went?"

"Tabor," Casey answered.

Sarah turned to him. "Tabor...in the Czech Republic?" Sarah asked. Casey nodded. "Tell me something, has all of the money taken from the Ring gone to those charities?"

"No one knows Walker," Casey said with a shrug. "That kid," Casey said with a modicum of respect in his voice. "Look where it went, cancer hospitals for kids, children's shelters, women's homes..." he shook his head. "The only way they even figured it out was the large amounts of money that came in. Bartowski covered his tracks. And then, then the numbnuts turned on computer microphones, and transmitted different Ring members discussing past crimes or future plans, and sent them to law enforcement. He's waging war on them."

"I'll get him back, Casey," Sarah told him.

"When you get him, hide him," Casey said, turning to Sarah. "Only contact me if it's safe. The moron has a target on his back now, and he's gonna need someone to protect him." Sarah nodded, turned, and headed toward the stairs. "He's an agent now,

Walker.” Sarah paused, but never looked at Casey. She gave a nod and headed out the door. She had known something was wrong with him when she told him she would meet him in Prague. She didn’t know who had Chuck Bartowski, but there was going to be hell to pay.

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“Dr. Ellie Woodcomb?” the delivery man asked.

“That’s me,” Ellie said.

“Sign here please.” Ellie signed for her package, and went to her office. She hadn’t ordered anything, she didn’t know where Chuck was, and she was beginning to get worried. She opened the box and saw a cell phone with a note taped to the screen to check her contacts. She opened the contacts, saw 1or11 and shut her eyes. She hit call.

“Elanor,” her father said on the other line. “There’s something you need to know about Chuck.”

Chapter 4: Chapter 4

I don't own Chuck

Three days later

Tabor. The Czech Republic. Sarah looked around, taking things in. There she saw the small family grocery she had shopped at. The tailor that was still working out of the building that looked like it would fall down at any moment. Why the hell had Chuck Bartowski come to Tabor?

Sarah had started her search in Prague, but she was sure it was a waste of time. The longer she was there, the more she was sure the man she was looking for was in Tabor, or at least he had been.

She and Bryce had several safe houses over the years they had procured as the Andersons. She walked up to the spot where the abandoned car that had been stolen from the Prague train station was found. Money had been left in the car, more than enough to refill the fuel that had been used to drive to Tabor.

Such a move screamed Chuck Bartowski, but it didn't scream that he was captured, or going against his will, and that puzzled her. She turned and looked down a familiar street. The disposal of the vehicle was timed perfectly. The car dropped off at night, Chuck left here, and could have gone any direction...any direction at all. Sarah knew where he went, at least she thought she did.

Her target was less than half a mile down the road, and she took off walking, making good time. As she approached the house, that looked dilapidated, she took in a second to be pleased with herself. The house sat off the road, protected by a fence. It was the perfect camouflage. What looked to be a falling down house, was much more than that. She knew the front door was barred, but she was more interested in the locked garage.

She walked up to the door and examined it. It hadn't been forced, but she saw where it had been opened, which meant someone knew the code. She could see tire tracks of

what she could only assume was the Skoda Octavia that was once housed in the garage. She walked back to the house, went around to the back door, and looked at the potted plant that sat on the back porch. There were two ways to get into the safe house. One was a key, the key she had. The second...

She examined the plant, and saw that it had been moved. Someone had found the keypad that was buried in the bottom of the flower pot. She pulled out the plant (a realistic looking fake) and examined the keypad closely. It had not been forced open, there were no marks or signs that someone had got to the inside of the pad. She put it back, straightened up the flower, and walked to the door. Again, there was no sign of forced entry.

The number to get into the house was her grandmother's telephone number, minus the area code, that she had stayed at frequently as a kid. Bryce didn't know how Sarah had come up with the seven digit code, and she had never told him.

"Chuck, what are you doing?" she asked softly. She pulled out the key, turned the lock, and waited. She heard a hiss, a tumbler turn, and the door opened. She pushed the door open, and walked in. She hit the light switch, and shook her head. The entire house had been dusted. "He was here, alright," she muttered to herself.

She walked over to the covered couch, and dropped herself onto it. How the hell did Chuck Bartowski know about her safe house, the car, and how to get inside? She hopped up, knowing there was one more thing to check.

She walked over to the desk, pulled open the door, and saw a safe in front of her. She spun the dial first one way, then the other, and back the same as the first way. The safe popped open. There was money, weapons, and passports in there, but on top of everything, on a pile of money that wasn't as tall as it was the last time she saw it, was a sticky note.

I O U it said in that neat familiar scrawl of his. She smiled as she saw what was hastily added at the bottom. *I'll pay it back, I promise, I won't do you like Morgan.*

She shut the safe, turned the dial, shut the door on the desk, and walked back over to the couch. She sat down, and pulled a map out of her bag. She looked at it, and searched. She closed her eyes and shook her head. He wouldn't.

Salzburg, Austria. That was her closest next safe house. She folded the map up, and stood. She could check a few security cameras. See if her car had driven in that direction. She'd like some confirmation, but her gut was telling her where he was. But the question was why? Why had Chuck left? Because that was becoming clear. He wasn't running away from danger and being a traitor. Someone running away didn't hack the Ring and do all the damage he had done. Someone running away didn't leave sticky notes saying they'd pay the money back.

Chuck Bartowski was doing something, and someone had gotten into his ear for him to do it. Was it his father? No, that wasn't it, because as much as she liked Stephen, he ran away from problems, not to them. What the hell was in that new Intersect? She picked up her phone, and dialed the number. "Casey, we may have a problem."

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"Eleanor," Stephen said over the encrypted phone he had made for him and his daughter. "I just heard from Charles."

"Is he okay?" Ellie asked. She was in her office. She still wasn't one hundred percent sure what the hell was going on, but she now understood that Chuck was trying...well, she really wasn't sure what he was trying to do, and for that she thought she might murder him when he came home. After she hugged him.

"He's fine," Stephen told her. "He wanted you to know not to be surprised if someone showed up there looking for him."

"And if they do?" Ellie asked.

"Tell them you have no idea where he is," Stephen replied.

"Well, that's the damn truth, isn't it," Ellie said. "I need to go, someone is at my door." Ellie hung up, still a little annoyed. She locked the cell phone in her safe, stood up, walked over, and opened the door. "Sorry about that," she said to the tall man standing

there. "HIPPA regulations," she explained. "I had to put up all the paperwork before I saw you."

"I understand," he said. "I work for the government myself, so I am always appreciative for those that keep secrets."

"What can I do for you..." Ellie trailed off.

"Shaw, Daniel Shaw of the CIA," he said, shaking Ellie's hand. "I'm here to talk to you about neuroscience." Ellie smiled at him.

Chapter 5: Chapter 5

I don't own Chuck

Three weeks ago

He was standing in Castle, studying the map of the Czech Republic as Bryce was walking him through his plans. "I...we...hell, Sarah, once had a safe house here she let me know the code to."

So we can stay there?

"No," Bryce said, shaking his head. "She'd figure it out."

And that's bad?

"Chuck, you don't understand, at the end of the day she is who she is, she'd stop you," Bryce told him.

I thought you said she had picked me.

"She did, Buddy, but you're gonna be an agent now, and she's going to treat you like one, like she did me." Chuck didn't say anything. "Chuck-"

Bryce, I need to make this very clear for you. While I'm glad you're here, helping me, there is only one way I'm doing this, and this is my way. I'm driving, I'm making the decision, not you. You are now supporting me, and that means giving me intel, making suggestions, but at the end of the day going along with what I say.

"Chuck, I know the CIA," Bryce began.

Yeah, I know you do, and that's how we're going to beat them. The Ring is expecting a push back from the CIA.

Bryce was silent. "So...so you're saying by doing things...off the book..." Bryce trailed off, starting to understand. "Chuck, that's dangerous."

Chuck looked around, saw no one was watching him and looked straight at Bryce. *Buddy, you saw how doing it the CIA's way got you.* Bryce didn't reply. Neither of them noticed the camera recording Chuck.

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Now

Sarah watched the tape of the day she told him in Castle that she would meet him in Prague and they would run. She knew that day that something was wrong. She watched him in the video, looking at something...someone...what was in that Intersect? She paused the video and thought back to that day.

"So, I'll be there to meet you in Prague, Chuck, we'll leave then," she had told him.

"Sarah, what would a life be like on the run?" Chuck asked.

She glanced over and saw that Casey was nowhere nearby. "I've done it before," she confided.

"With the Intersect?" he asked. "Won't that put you in danger?"

"I can manage," she told him.

"You shouldn't have to," he said softly.

Her phone rang, pulling her out of her thoughts. She looked over at it and saw it was Casey. "Walker, secure," she answered.

"Walker," Casey said, a somber tone in his voice.

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Ellie thought her eyes would cross with the questions Shaw was asking her. "Agent, please, I know you are serious in your questions, and I know you are serious about your job, but a computer...in someone's brain...that's science fiction."

"Dr. Woodcomb," Shaw began. "It's not science fiction, it *is* cutting edge technology, but it is not science fiction."

"Well, it's above my understanding," Ellie said, rubbing her temple. "I'm sorry."

Shaw started to talk when his phone went off. He looked down at it, and his eyes went wide. "Shaw, secure but in public." He listened and looked at Ellie. Ellie rubbed the back of her neck. Something about that look was unnerving.

"Are you sure?" Shaw asked. "No, I'm on my way." He hung up, and stared at Ellie for a moment.

"Is something wrong?" Ellie asked.

"It seems a case I was working on they have found someone, that we thought kidnapped." Shaw paused, a look on his face like he was trying to figure out what to say next. "I need to go confirm what I was told." He paused again. "Doctor, in your professional opinion, would you tell the family what you suspect, or wait until you confirm what has actually happened."

"Always confirm," Ellie said.

Shaw nodded, and stood. He hesitated and held out his hand. "Thank you Doctor Woodcomb." She shook his hand. He started to say more, seemed to think better of it, gave her a tight lipped smile, turned, and left her office. She followed him to the door, and as she saw him turn down the hallway, she locked the door.

She walked over to the safe, opened it, and saw a message that said to call ASAP. She dialed the number. "Dad, what is it?" she asked.

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"Casey, are you sure?" Sarah asked.

"I haven't personally verified, but it matches the dental records," Casey told her. He was silent for a moment. "I know it doesn't help, but he's getting a star."

"I'm still following the leads here," Sarah told Casey.

"Your orders haven't changed," Casey said. "You can come home for the funeral."

"Have they found an actual body?" Sarah asked. There was a silence on the other end.

"Casey?"

"No, Walker-

"Then I'm not going to the funeral," Sarah told him.

"Walk...Sarah," Casey said softly.

"I'll call you back when I have a better lead on things here," Sarah told him, and hung up. She picked up the note and examined his scrawl. Tears came to her eyes. "Damn it, Chuck," she said softly.

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"Dad?" Ellie said softly.

"He's been confirmed killed by the CIA," Stephen told Ellie. "Good work."

"It was simple enough to get you the dental records, you did the hard work swapping them out," Ellie said. "Now, if you don't mind, I have to go play a grieving sister, all while not telling my husband what is going on. When he gets back I may murder Chuck, you tell him that, dad."

"Eleanor," Stephen began.

"This is not awesome, Dad," Ellie said. "Not. Awesome."

Chapter 6: Chapter 6

I don't own Chuck

Three weeks ago

"Your going to have every CIA and NSA agent in the world looking for you once we do this," Bryce said, as the train made it's way down the track.

There's only one agent from each agency that I want to look for me.

"Chuck, you're on your own, no team," Bryce insisted. "The Intersect was designed for-"

I know, I know, one agent, but you had your own team. I don't understand why they...your bosses, don't value human life more. I really don't.

Bryce was silent for a moment. "You know, you're right, and that's probably why your superiors...I guess my superiors since you were never technically an agent, are so bothered by you."

I told you Bryce, we're doing this my way.

"I hear you, Chuck," Bryce told him. "So, we're putting the Intersect team back together, just changing roles?"

No. Chuck sighed and looked over at the two agents that were watching him. They were looking all over the train at everyone, except him. *The CIA and NSA got themselves into this mess, we're going to do it the Chuck Bartowski way.*

"You're gonna kill Beckman," Bryce said chuckling. Chuck grinned.

Nope. I'm going to kill myself. Bryce's eyes widened. *Think about it Bryce, if I'm "dead" then who is going to interfere?*

"That's kinda genius," Bryce said softly.

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The train pulled out of the station, and Chuck had his hand on his leg to stop it from bouncing from nerves. "You okay, Chuck?"

Not hardly. Chuck glanced around at the agents, still not paying attention to him, but instead to every other passenger on the train. *They have no thought about me running, do they?*

"They're trained a certain way," Bryce said with a shrug. "They are trained to take orders, do what they're told. They have independent thought, but only when told to make a field decision. But to run, especially because you have a better idea than your superiors? No, Chuck. Never."

Am I making a mistake?

"I don't know," Bryce admitted. "I got you kicked out of Stanford because I thought you couldn't do this, and clearly, you are doing this. Has my judgment been affected by my training? Maybe. But it doesn't matter. As you so eloquently told me, 'you're driving'."

Well, the road may be about to get bumpy.

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Now

Sarah spent two days in Tabor looking at video surveillance footage, trying to find her vehicle, confirming her suspicions. She sat up, excited, having finally found what she was looking for. She spotted her vehicle leaving Tabor, heading the direction she thought it would. Sarah ran her hand through her hair, trying to figure out what, if anything that meant. She zoomed in the best she could, but the quality of the video was poor. It could have been Chuck driving, it could have been someone else.

She shook her head. The vehicle was heading down the highway that was the closest route toward her next safe house. Anyone else would have left Tabor another way, but if it was Chuck...it was almost like he was begging her to follow him.

"Damn it, Chuck, what the hell are you doing?" She rewound the tape again, and this time she caught something. The vehicle...it didn't go straight down the road, it pulled

into traffic, which meant...it had come from this shop.

She got up from the chair, headed into the front of the gas station and approached the owner who she had earlier convinced she needed to see the tapes. She scrolled through her phone, stopping when she found what she was looking for. "Do you know this man?" she asked, showing the owner a picture of Chuck.

The man looked at the picture than at Sarah. "Are you Sarah?" he asked, making her eyes widen. The man chuckled. "He said you would react that way." She was going to murder Chuck, she really was. "He told me to tell you something...but..." the man shrugged.

"What is it?" Sarah asked, refraining from rubbing her forehead in frustration.

"He said, 'The hills are alive.'" Sarah just stared at him. "He told me to tell you what movie it was from-"

"Oh, I know...Did he say anything else?" Sarah asked.

"He said he was sorry," the shopkeeper told her. "He seemed to mean it."

"I'm sure he is," Sarah said.

"He seemed so happy, except when he said he was sorry, it was like..."

"We had a little disagreement, but he's my guy, so I'm going to go get him," Sarah told the shopkeeper. "Thank you."

"Good luck, and don't worry, he told me not to tell anyone else." Sarah stopped. Oh, God, Chuck, what did you say? "He told me about his crazy ex-girlfriend tracking him down and I wasn't supposed to tell anyone anything."

"That's my guy," Sarah said, smiling as she exited the building. She got in her vehicle, started it, and sat for a second. She reached up to the visor, and pulled down the picture of the two of them they had shot just before they met Roan. She rubbed her finger over it. "He's my guy," she said softly. "I'm coming, Chuck, and you better have a damn good explanation as to why you're dead."

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Stephen's computer made a notification noise. He rolled over in his chair to the computer, and hit the notification. The camera had found her, at the shop in Tabor. She was coming, just like Charles said she would. He didn't like this, he didn't like this at all, but Charles had told him they did it his way, or no way at all. He began to type the message. *Julie Andrews inbound* He sent the message and sat back. It was out of his hands now. He had done everything Charles had asked him to. He needed to call Elanor, but that could wait. She was really unhappy with them right now. Really unhappy.

Chapter 7: Chapter 7

I don't own Chuck

Two weeks and a half weeks ago

"I'm a criminal," Chuck muttered to himself. "I've committed Grand Theft Auto...is there an equivalent of Grand Theft Auto in the Czech Republic?"

"Does it matter?" Bryce asked, his head laid back against the passenger seat, bored out of his mind, having listened to Chuck go on and on about him now being a criminal. "Buddy, this is the spy life."

"If I leave gas money, will that be okay?" Chuck wondered aloud. "I was able to get in without damaging the car, hot wire it without damaging the car. Maybe they'll think it was a joyriding teen." He turned to Bryce. "They have those here, right? That's not just an American thing?"

"This is the worst ideas in the history of ideas," Bryce groused.

"Well, if you don't like it, you can just leave!" Chuck snapped, and suddenly he was all alone. "Bryce?" Chuck called. He had sent Bryce away. Chuck remembered how Bryce had told him to bring him back, but right now, he needed quiet, he needed to be alone.

In his head he now had access to all the safe houses Sarah had procured over the years with the Anderson cover. Apparently she had many others while she was with something called the CAT Squad (he really wasn't sure if he should ask her about that or not) but after there was apparently some distrust amongst the members, all the properties they had acquired were sold.

Sarah apparently understood real estate very well, because she made a huge profit. She used those funds, along with others the CIA had approved, to obtain various safe house and stock them with cash and other needed things. He had always known it, but he had more proof than ever that not only was Sarah Walker a certified badass, but also one of the smartest people he had ever met...and he had gone to Stanford, so that was really

saying something.

His plan was simple, get to the first safe house in Tabor, borrow some money from Sarah (he hoped one day the CIA would reimburse him or it was going to take forever to pay her back), borrow a vehicle, and access the net to begin his reign of terror on the Ring.

He didn't understand the CIA and NSA. If you know where money is held by groups, why not freeze it? It was a bloodless attack and killed morale. Or better yet, send the money to needy kids or some other charity.

As he drove and the miles melted he hoped she understood his plan when she finally caught up with him. He was going to have to contact his dad for help with some of this, and he was going to have to convince him to convince Ellie. He sighed. Ellie was going to yell. She was going to yell so loud.

Ellie had a blind spot when it came to Chuck, and he knew it. If Chuck wasn't related to her, she would tell him this was the best idea because the only person it put in any danger was him...well, maybe Sarah, but Sarah was Sarah and Chuck was pretty sure this level of danger was something she would scoff at.

To be able to break an organization without ever having to fight or kill, or if they did, only involving minimum people...it was the optimal solution...except in Ellie's Bartowski's mind because it would eventually put one person in the cross hairs, himself.

He had to draw out the Ring leaders, that was the key, and Chuck knew, after reading report after report in the Intersect, that there were those in the CIA and NSA still that were working for the Ring. Chuck also knew by messing with the money, that would draw out those assisting the Ring, and by stopping them, they could begin to slowly drain the Ring of all support. If they had no money, no suppliers, and no one to help, the Ring would collapse in on itself. At least that was the plan.

That was why he needed Sarah. While she always shook her head at his plans, she never told him they were so outrageous they wouldn't work. She would point out flaws and they could tweak them. He didn't know why she had resisted so much of what her fellow

agents seemed to have ingrained in them. He didn't know why she seemed to be able to think independently and realize there were multiple solutions to most answers in life. He wasn't arrogant enough to think it was him, but he hoped, and he prayed that maybe, just maybe, he was a catalyst in changing her way of thinking.

Over the last few days on the train, when Bryce wasn't there, he had gone over mission report after mission report of Sarah before she came to Burbank, and he saw it even then. That spark of independence, of understanding that sometimes there was a different solution than point and click. Not that she didn't follow orders, but in spots where she could save a life, she did. In spots where others would take an easier way and not worry about casualties, she took the harder path, but the one that saved innocents.

He couldn't help but think about that drive from Barstow, where she admitted what she was doing could send her to prison. Apparently he was worth it. As he pulled into the safe house he hoped and prayed she still thought so. If he was right, knowing the CIA and NSA the way he did after two years, he was certain if he were presumed dead, they would send Sarah to find out who had kidnapped him and why. That was what Chuck was counting on. That part he was certain. Sarah's reaction....he had no idea.

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Now

Stephen tripled checked the name Eleanor had sent him. Daniel Shaw. Special Agent Daniel Shaw, Ring expert. Stephen felt nervous about this. His instincts told him Shaw was dirty and Charles should run. But Charles never ran, never, even when he should. Charles always ran in to danger. He was so much like his mother, protecting his family, protecting others, at his own detriment. He couldn't do like Mary and Charles. It wasn't in him. He stared at the screen for a long time. Finally he opened a window and sent a message. Maybe it was a mistake, but this was about family, and it was time, it was time to start making amends.

Chapter 8: Chapter 8

I don't own Chuck

Two weeks ago

"For the love of God, don't sing it," Bryce pleaded.

"The hills are alive....with the sound of...musiccccc," Chuck sang. Bryce disappeared, making Chuck happy. For most of the drive they had argued back and forth. Bryce kept insisting that Sarah was not going to forgive him for this, and Chuck argued that he was going to explain everything to her, because that's what grown adults did, have a conversation.

Bryce insisted Sarah didn't talk and Chuck kept silent. Sarah didn't talk, but she did communicate, you just had to listen, observe, and trust what you were being told by her. Sarah Walker was about action, about doing, and that was her language. Chuck had had nothing but time the past few weeks and thinking back over their time together, he now truly understood what Sarah was telling him. She cared about him.

Bryce had told Chuck that Sarah wasn't going with him right before he died. Barstow had been a moment of almost, but because of their continual luck it hadn't happened. Chuck didn't know what Sarah was going to say or do when she found him, but he would talk to her, and he would until she listened. He was going to explain everything, and then trust in her the way she deserved to be trusted.

As he pulled into the safe house, he looked around. Sarah had done right again. It was isolated, a trail ran up one of the hills in the back. There were trees perfect for chopping wood. "Still gonna do your 'Rocky' training?" Bryce asked.

"So you get to pop up whenever you want to if you go away?" Chuck replied.

"I guess, you're the one with me in your head," Bryce said with a shrug. "Listen we have to talk."

“Not now,” Chuck said, and Bryce disappeared. Bryce was right, Chuck had to build up his endurance, and he was going to do it old school style. Chuck sighed. This was gonna suck.

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Now

Ellie watched Daniel Shaw leave her apartment. Hopefully this would be the last time she had to see him. She had made Daniel tell her everything. She glanced at her far wall that connected with John Casey’s apartment. John Casey was NSA. That did not surprise her one bit. He had the build, the demeanor, but more importantly, it made sense why he protected Chuck. She wasn’t an idiot, she knew something was off about Chuck and Sarah. She also knew something was off about Casey. She hadn’t put it all together, but she knew something had been going on.

She had some suspicion that Casey was actually Sarah’s father and that’s why Chuck and Sarah were so hot and cold. Chuck had a plan, Stephen had a plan, but it was time for Ellie to enact her plan. She knew people, she was a brain doctor, and she read people like a book. There was one thing she knew, John Casey respected the hell out of her brother, and now she knew why he did.

Ellie was sure Chuck hadn’t counted on Daniel Shaw to be so hounding with Chuck’s family, and she had to help Chuck, or his plan was dead before it even began. She was tired of having to fake tears when Daniel was around talking about Chuck. She got up, walked out her door, across the courtyard, and over to John’s apartment. She rapped on the door.

The door opened and there stood John Casey. He was nervous, she could tell, and that made her smile on the inside. “I think you better let me in,” she said softly. “We don’t want to have this conversation out here in the courtyard.” John grunted, opened the door, and moved out of the way. Ellie entered and made her way to his living room. It was furnished exactly how she thought it would be.

"So he told you everything," Casey said pulling her out of her thoughts. Ellie turned and faced John. She swore he swallowed. "Your brother saved lives countless times. He was a true American hero, Ellie."

"Is," Ellie said. John gave her a confused look. "He *is* a true American hero." John's eyes widened. "But, I think you already suspect that." John cleared his throat. "I need your help, John. If he is to stay safe and pull this off, Daniel Shaw needs to quit coming to see me. It's upsetting." John nodded. "I can take care of that."

"How much damage has he done?" Ellie asked. John remained stoic looking. "Oh, come *on*! We both know he's out there wrecking havoc if he faked his own death!"

The corners of John's mouth turned up. "They have no idea what the hell hit them," John told her. "You're sure he's alive?"

"You sure I can trust you?" Ellie countered.

John Casey walked over, picked up a bible and a picture of Ronald Regan, put his hand over both, and spoke. "I swear."

"He's alive," Ellie told him.

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Chuck was chopping wood, the way he had been for the last two weeks. While there wasn't massive muscles, his endurance was greatly improving. He felt stronger, and more importantly, he was keeping his body busy while he thought about his next move. That's when he felt it, two eyes on his back.

"Chuck!" he heard. He turned around and saw her standing there. Her eyes were holding his, piercing into him. Her face a mask. He had no idea what she was thinking.

"Sarah, thank God you found me," he said. She walked to him, stopping right in front of him. "I've got so much to tell-" She slapped him across the face, so hard he wondered if his jaw wouldn't unhinge. He turned back to her, rubbing it, and working it. "Okay, that's fair. I deserved-" He stopped talking as she grabbed his face in her hands, pulling

him in for a kiss. He forgot everything he was going to say. He forgot every thought in his head. All he knew was she had found him, and maybe now they had a shot at something real.

Chapter 9: Chapter 9

I don't own Chuck

Two weeks ago

He was running up the hill, slowly. "You didn't pay attention to Rocky and how tired he was from all the working out, did you?"

"I....hate.....you," Chuck managed to get out. Bryce was in front front of Chuck running effortlessly, but backwards, facing Chuck, smirking.

"You know I can read those thoughts you're having about me right now, right?" Bryce asked. "Don't waste the oxygen."

You think this isn't going to work?

"Actually this is a great idea," Bryce replied. "I mean, it's one thing to flash and be able to physically do different fighting moves, but if your body isn't in shape to deal with what happens, you could hurt yourself."

I'm so glad you approve.

"Snarkiness doesn't become you, Chuck," Bryce pointed out. "May I remind you, you're taking a hell of a shortcut to being a spy. You need to put in some of the work."

Chuck didn't say anything for a moment. Instead he stopped running, leaned over, and threw up what he ate for lunch...or maybe dinner the day before.

"That's disgusting," Bryce muttered.

"That's also how it tastes," Chuck replied, making Bryce wince. "You're right," Chuck said as he straightened. "I have not had classic training. I haven't been put through hours of torture or learned many of the things you have."

"And you think that gives you an advantage?" Bryce asked.

"In this particular case, yes, but it's also why I need someone with me who understands the government way of thinking," Chuck replied. He was silent a second. "Look, I know you're here-"

"Chuck, I didn't believe in you, believe you could withstand the CIA and still be you." Bryce shook his head. "Two years with two agents, and you are still you. I was wrong. I get why she should be here." Bryce grinned. "Also, she is better looking than me."

"While I appreciate all of that, AND she is," Chuck began, making Bryce grin. "There is another reason I need her." Bryce smirked at that. "No, not that." Chuck took a deep breath. "There is every possibility that the intersect fried my brain and you are not real but a hallucination and I've gone bonkers."

Bryce pressed his lips together and bounced his head side to side, considering what Chuck had said. "I have to admit, I did not see that coming."

Chuck widened his eyes at his friend. "Okay, back to running."

"A spirited walk," Bryce corrected.

"Jogging?" Chuck pleaded.

"Fine, jogging," Bryce conceded, as he began to run backwards.

"You're just showing off!"

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Now

"Colonel," Beckman began. "Why is a civilian here with you?"

"Not a civilian," Ellie said, making Beckman's eyes go wide. "The sister of a dead American hero...or so you want me to believe."

"Colonel?" Beckman asked, confused.

"General, you know who Dr. Woodcomb is," Casey began, knowing he was in the middle of a fire fight he was liable to meet his maker in. "Ellie wants us to, her words, 'drop the act because she has something we need.'"

“What could a civilian doctor have that we need?” Beckman asked, genuinely curious, remembering her history with other Bartowskis.

“Proof of a spy in your ranks,” Ellie said, holding up a flash drive.

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One week ago

Stephen poured over the data Charles had found while hacking Ring computers. The information Charles had found had been absolutely valuable. Charles had forwarded everything to Stephen, allowing Stephen to send what needed to be sent to the correct agency.

It was data that was heavily encrypted that worried him the most. He had set up a program to decrypt it but so far nothing had worked. Charles was now considered dead, there was a CIA agent hounding Ellie, and Charles’s former handler was on her way to find Charles.

Sarah reminded Stephen of his former CIA handler...his queen. He missed her. What they had done had turned out to be a mistake, he was now sure of it. Charles had done more to fix things than either of them had in the past ten years. Charles attack on the Ring had hurt Volkoff Enterprises and Charles now had another target on his back, one that he didn’t know existed.

He received a notification and he looked at the screen. Tears were in his eyes. He read the words over and over. He had told her everything that had happened and the situation that they were now in, that Charles was in. *Do I need to come home?* God, yes, he needed her to come home. He knew he was half out of his mind with what the Intersect had done to him. He knew he needed her, but at this moment, to not complete her mission...that was admitting failure. He started to type, when his computer dinged again.

He pulled up the encrypted data and found it was a recording. He quickly recognized one of the two women, and he knew what this was. He did a search on the second woman’s image to get a name on her. He turned back to the message that had been sent

to him, when the computer dinged again. He was surprised how quickly she was found, and then he read who she was and knew why.

He turned back to the message, told her everything and sent her a copy of the recording. He opened a second message box and sent Eleanor a copy of the video and a message. *You may need this, do with it what you think best.*

The first message box opened up. *I'm following him.* He knew that was exactly what she would say. He typed back, *Come home soon, we all need you.* There was no response, she was already gone, but he knew that, he wasn't surprised. He would wait for her, because she was worth waiting for.

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Now

"And what proof do you have Dr. Woodcomb?" Beckman asked.

"This is a video of Sarah Walker's red test," Ellie said. Beckman sat up straight and Casey looked stunned. "Her target that night, was Evelyn Shaw, former wife of Daniel Shaw." There was absolute silence. "Now, I get, that, in and of itself, is not enough, but there are numerous communiques between Daniel and Ring leadership on here as well. Daniel Shaw is not only a member of the Ring, but one of its highest members."

"Chuck me," Casey muttered.

Chapter 10: Chapter 10

I don't own Chuck

One week ago

Chuck took a sip of his Chardonnay, another Ring bank account wrecked. He wasn't sure who this Volkoff character was, but that was the fourth deal with the Ring Chuck had mucked up in the last two days. A flash hit him when he thought about Volkoff. He blinked.

"Yeah, there are bigger baddies than the Ring," Bryce said, leaning against the desk, his arms crossed.

"I'm never gonna be done with this, am I?" Chuck grouched.

"I wouldn't say never," Bryce replied. "It's just...complicated."

"Ellie hates that word," Chuck said, typing again.

"Chuck, we need to talk," Bryce began.

"You know how bad that phrase is?" Chuck asked, going back to hacking. "Listen, I know you and Sarah had a history, and I don't want to know about it."

"Chuck," Bryce said, trying to interrupt.

"Bryce, let me get this out," Chuck insisted. "I know what you think of her, but I know what I think of her, so you need to let us do whatever it is we will or will not do."

"Buddy," Bryce tried again.

"Sarah moves at her own pace, and we've had our issues, and the asset thing and it's been a lot, for both of us, but what you don't understand is, I trust her, with my life," Chuck went on.

"Buddy, I'm degrading," Bryce said.

"And," Chuck bull-rushed on. "I'm going to tell her everything and let her go from there. That's the only fair thing to do." He paused, done speaking and what Bryce said finally sunk in. Chuck turned to Bryce. "Wait a minute. What the hell do you mean degrading?"

"Chuck the Intersect was built to retain information, and while you'll always have access to everything I know..." Bryce trailed off. Chuck stood, concern on his face. "Hey, I'm really dead."

"Yeah, but...but...you're not," Chuck said, gesturing toward Bryce.

"Well, I am, but thank you," Bryce said with a grin. He sombered. "All I know is everyday, more and more of me is slipping away, and soon all you'll have is facts, files, and things the Intersect was built to process." He looked down at himself and then back to Chuck. "I am not one of those things." "I can fix this," Chuck said, wiping his hands on his pants. "I can-"

"Chuck," Bryce said gently. "No...no you can't." Chuck looked up at him. "And it's okay."

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Now

"So he's got Volkoff running around mad," Casey said, pointing toward Russia.

"Why is that important?" Ellie asked.

"The biggest illegal gun supplier in the world?" Casey asked. Ellie's eyes went wide. "Exactly." Casey pointed to twelve red x's throughout the United States. "These are all cells Bartowski has basically shut down through emptying their bank accounts and recording information and hacking Ring members computers."

"So what's the problem?" Ellie asked.

"We are trying to find out who are the 'Twelve'," Casey explained. "The supposed head of the Ring, or the Elders. We think Shaw is one of those Elders." Ellie nodded. "If we knew the other eleven, we could really support your brother."

"I see," Ellie said.

"We know you're getting your information through your father," Casey told her. Ellie smirked. "Have him look through the data he's collected and see if he can figure out who they might be."

"Okay," Ellie answered, studying the map.

Casey watched her. "The sooner, the better," Casey urged.

Ellie looked up at him. "Who says he hasn't heard you and isn't already doing it?" Casey just stared at her. "This assignment really isn't your favorite, is it?"

"I hate this assignment," Casey growled.

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Two days ago

What the hell was Chuck Bartowski up to? That's all Sarah could think about. How had he found out about her safehouses? Not that she was mad, she'd of gladly told him about them, in fact, she was thinking about using some of them when they ran. There was no way he was dead, that she was sure of, but that meant he had faked his death, and she was going to slap him silly for even making her worry like that. For making her wonder, was he alive. He was alive, he had to be alive. If he wasn't she'd kill him.

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Two hours ago

"Bryce," Chuck said out loud. "Bryce!" No answer. "The terrible troll raises his sword." Nothing. Tears began to fall from his face. "Attack troll with nasty knife," Chuck said softly. There was no flash, there was no Bryce. He was gone. Chuck knew the past few days Bryce hadn't been the same. And now, he was alone. Chuck Bartowski was truly and completely alone.

He had his father he could contact on secure channels through the computer. He could pass messages to his sister, but he was in Austria, alone, trying to stop The Ring, and he had no one. She was supposedly coming, but would she? The entire time he had gone forward with his plan, there was one thought in his head. He loved her, and he knew he

did, but he had never stopped to ask himself, did she love him.

And know, he was all alone. He went outside, grabbed the ax and began to chop wood, trying to will his pain, his hurt, his loss of his friend, through his arms and shoot out through the end of the ax as he split each log. He tried to make himself believe he had done the right thing. But had he? Had Bryce ever really been there, or was he absolutely insane? Had his mind conjured up the whole thing?

He chopped wood for an hour straight, proud of his growing endurance, when he felt them. He felt eyes on him. He swallowed, and slowly turned. Was she real? Was she a trick of the mind....another trick of the mind? And then those blue eyes held his, and every worry, every question he had, left. She had found him.

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There he was, chopping wood. He turned and their eyes locked, and in that moment, she knew exactly what the phrase, "My guy," actually meant. She was going to kiss him, and slap him. She wasn't sure of the order, but both were going to happen, and there was a good chance she was going to kiss him more than once.

Chapter 11: Chapter 11

I don't own Chuck

"That wasn't what I was expecting," Chuck admitted as she pulled away from him, her eyes searching his.

"I've got a lot of emotions I'm dealing with inside, Chuck," Sarah told him. "I don't do emotions well."

"I haven't noticed," Chuck replied. She gave him a look. Chuck cleared his throat. "Listen, while I would love to have a talk about us, and that, and...well...us, I need your help."

"Do you?" Sarah asked, making Chuck give her a questioning look. "You've got Beckman impressed, hell you've impressed Casey, so...I mean this. Do you need me?"

"Always," Chuck said quickly, his hands gently holding her arms. "I haven't been doing this by myself, you laid the groundwork for so much of this. I've followed your trail. I've done everything I thought you would do if you had these skills."

"How the hell did you know about my safe houses?" Sarah asked. Chuck pressed his lips together and furrowed his brow. "Wait," she said, her tone softer, her hand on his arm now. "I'm not mad, I just didn't know anyone knew about these, and for it to be in the Intersect..."

"It wasn't," Chuck told her. She gave him a questioning look. "Bryce was in the Intersect."

"Do what now?" Sarah asked.

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One week ago

"Charles, what have you done?" Stephen muttered, watching the worm Charles had created make its way into Volkoff's computer systems. Stephen sat back and thought

about the implication of what had just happened. He was finally in, and had a doorway. Charles had given him an idea, but he wasn't one hundred percent sure it would work.

Removing the Intersect from Charles had been simple enough, so theoretically he could remove Volkoff from Henry. The Intersect had been loaded into Charles from a computer screen so the removal could be done the same way. It would take some time, and it would be risky, but maybe it was time to take a risk.

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Now

Chuck had methodically explained everything that had happened that Sarah had not known about since he had uploaded the Intersect. He answered every question and even some she hadn't asked. Chuck knew she wasn't happy with him, but was she mad, that was the question.

"Would you like some vegetable soup?" Chuck asked Sarah. She turned toward him, an amused look on her face. "I made a lot of it, and it's just me here...now...not that Bryce ever ate anything, it's just I wasn't quite sure how to portion things, and-" he quit talking as her hand took his. "Thank you," he said softly. "I wasn't sure you'd come."

"I wasn't sure you wanted me," Sarah told him, hurt in her eyes. "I thought you had run off to be a solo super spy."

Chuck cleared his throat. "I needed to get away from the CIA and NSA and make them think I was gone," Chuck replied. "I admit, I should have told you, but...I was afraid you'd either try to talk me out of it or we'd be overheard."

Sarah didn't say anything, she just nodded, listening. Chuck swallowed. "Bryce wanted me to go it alone...if it was Bryce....if I wasn't hallucinating-"

"I don't think you were," Sarah told him. Chuck stared at her. "The way you moved to avoid those agents...it was like someone told you when to move."

"That's exactly what happened!" Chuck exclaimed, relief on his face. Sarah smiled, but it wasn't one of happiness. "Sarah, he wanted me to do this by myself, but I told him I

needed my team...you and Casey."

"Casey isn't here, Chuck," Sarah pointed out.

"But Ellie is there with him," Chuck told her. Her eyebrow raised. "She was contacted through my dad."

"Listen," Sarah began.

"I get that I hurt you, and you thought I didn't trust you, but I do, I did," Chuck hurried on. Sarah looked away, and Chuck knew he had to press on. "I knew you'd find me, I knew you'd come, because that's who you are."

"A CIA agent that finds her target," Sarah said, anger in her voice.

"No," Chuck said softly. "Your Sarah Walker, and you knew I was in over my head and you came to save my ass."

She snorted and crossed her arms. She looked him right in the eye. "I'm not happy about this, Chuck."

"And, I get that, but tell me this, and I mean this, what other choice did I really have?" The question hung there and she had no real answer. "Listen, it's late, and I really need a shower." "You do," she replied, scrunching her nose. Chuck tried to look hurt but her flat look killed that quickly. "Go, get a shower, and we'll revisit..." she looked around and gestured vaguely. "This, in the morning." Chuck nodded and headed toward the bathroom. Sarah walked to the door. "I'm going to get my stuff." Chuck nodded. "Chuck," she said, making him turn. "Bryce is really gone?" Chuck nodded, sadness on his face. "I'm sorry. That's the third time he's died on you."

"You know, he was the only one that kept me sane these past few weeks," Chuck admitted. "You know how I'd do by myself."

"Yeah," Sarah said. She nodded and headed out the door. Chuck walked into the bedroom, grabbed his clothes, and went to the bathroom. One, long, hot, luxurious shower later, he exited, seeing Sarah in the bed, her eyes a million miles away. "Hey," she said softly.

“Hey,” Chuck replied, giving her a smile. “I’m gonna grab a pillow and sleep on the couch.”

“There’s plenty of room,” Sarah told him.

“Yeah...but...” he trailed off, confused by the amused look on her face. “You know how well that worked in Barstow.”

“Well, Casey won’t be interrupting us this time,” Sarah told him.

“Wait, what?” Chuck asked, very confused.

“Chuck...you’re considered dead, you’re an agent that is dead,” Sarah began.

“I’m an agent?” Chuck asked. Sarah nodded.

“Chuck...I didn’t come all this way to find the Intersect,” Sarah told him.

“Sarah,” he said softly.

She straightened her back and stared him right in the eye. “I came for my guy.”

Chapter 12: Chapter 12

I don't own Chuck

"I came for my guy."

Those words slammed through him and a Bryce flash began. His mind took him through all of Bryce's memories with Sarah. How she looked at Bryce, how she talked to Bryce. Thankfully, somehow, the very intimate moments were not there. There was lust there, there was a lot of physicality there, but what wasn't there was Bryce Larkin ever being Sarah's guy. Chuck stared at her for a moment. It was in that moment he made a decision and he was going to live with it, no matter what it cost him.

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Casey walked out of the Ring hideout, a look of pride on his face. Twelve agents from the CIA, ten from the NSA, four from the FBI, and a few from other international agencies had all been swept up with this newest wealth of information provided to Casey by team Bartowski. That's when Casey saw Shaw. The decision had been made not to take him out yet, to see who all he could lead them to.

Shaw was trying to look pleased, but Casey saw the stress on his face. Casey kept waiting for anyone who was captured to give Shaw up, but no one did. Casey didn't personally know Shaw, so that's why he didn't speak to him, but Casey nodded to Shaw. Shaw returned the nod, turned and walked away. Casey noticed a shadow in the alleyway. Who was watching Shaw? One of theirs? Casey shrugged. If someone were to take Shaw out, Casey would see what he could do about getting that person a medal.

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"Is he alone?" Ellie asked the scrambled digital face on the TV.

"She's there," the face told her. Ellie crossed her arms and nodded. "I could use your help." Ellie looked intrigued. "What if I told you an Intersect could implant a personality onto someone?" Ellie's eyes widened. "And we need to remove it...for our family's sake."

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"Chuck?" Sarah asked timidly. Chuck smiled at her, and not just any smile, the one he got when he let himself believe they could be real. "You're not saying anything, and that scares me." Chuck nodded, walked over, and sat on the bed, beside her.

He took her hand. "You've been through a lot the past few weeks." "I have," she began.

"Please, let me say this, all of this." Sarah nodded. "I have Bryce's memories...*all* of Bryce's memories." She blanched. "Well, not those," he said hurriedly. "I don't know if he kept them out, or my mind won't let me see them or," he stopped. She was giving him a look and he was spiraling. He cleared his throat and continued. "What I did see was that at no point, was Bryce Larkin your guy." She looked away, twisting her lips.

"He wasn't," she said softly. "He was..." she trailed off.

"He is an ex," Chuck said, and she turned to him, a grateful look on her face. "So a little while ago, in case you forgot, you kinda rocked my world, once with a kiss, and once with a slap." She winced at that. "Hey, I deserved it." A soft smile covered her features. "You also said you are dealing with a lot of emotions and you don't do real well with those."

"I don't," she admitted. "But, Chuck,"

"Wait, please, let me finish, please?" She nodded reluctantly. "You've found me, I'm safe, and you're here, I'm here, we're here." He squeezed her hand. "Sarah, we go down this road there's no going back." She gave him the same look that she gave him when she questioned him about the two bed cell after Barstow. "And, I think you know that." She nodded, barely, but she nodded. "So, tonight, you get some sleep, here, and I will go to the couch." "Can I talk now?" she asked. He nodded. "I promise I will behave, sleep here."

"I don't know if I can behave," he said softly, making her eyes widen. He leaned in, kissed her on the forehead, pulled back, grabbed a pillow and stood. "I think there's something else you really need to know."

"Okay," she said softly, a little taken back by everything he had said.

"I don't think what I'm about to tell you is any state secret, or anything you haven't figured out, but just in case you have been trying to ignore it...I love you Sarah Walker." He took a deep breath. "I'm going to say it again, because it feels so damn good to finally say it. I love you. So you need to know, that if you take that next step with me, then you are going to have to deal with Chuck Bartowski the boyfriend, or whatever term you want to give me. You think I didn't listen about staying in the car then..." he trailed off and shrugged.

She giggled and blew out a deep breath. "Chuck," she began.

"Hey, I don't expect anything, just so you know, I just wanted you to know," Chuck told her. "Good night."

He turned and headed toward the door. His hand was on the doorknob when she spoke. "I fell for you somewhere between you fixing my phone and you saying tall girls could be ballerinas." Chuck slowly turned to her, his eyes wide. "I love you, Chuck Bartowski, and I was furious at you for not telling me what you did, and why you did it, but at the same time, you did the most Chuck thing possible. You left a trail that only one person could find. You trusted me...and all you asked was that I trusted you." She wiped at her eyes.

"Sarah," he began. "Nope, I need to say this," she told him. He nodded. "My entire life has been filled with secrets and doing things in a way that...that...ugh." She looked up at the ceiling, frustrated. "I just want to be straightforward and honest for once in my damn life."

"I love you," Chuck said softly. "No secrets, no lies, I love you."

She turned to him. "I love you. No secrets, no lies, no more."

"Together," Chuck said.

"Together," she replied, nodding. She took a breath, and grinned. She pointed toward the door. "Now get out, or in the next ten seconds..." she trailed off, but they both knew exactly what she meant.

"See you in the morning," he grouched, opening the door.

“Good night, Chuck,” she said softly.

“Good night, Sarah, I’ll see you in the morning,” he said, and then he shut the door.

“Yeah, you will,” she said softly, lying back into bed. The worry, the fear, it all left her, and seconds later, she was asleep.

Chapter 13: Chapter 13

AN Doing two chapters in one, no update this weekend

I don't own Chuck

Her eyes opened like they did so many times on missions, but for once, she was confused. Usually when she woke up she was alert, aware of her surroundings, and knew what was going on. This morning...this morning she wasn't. First...his lingering scent was here, which made her feel...comfortable. So comfortable, she had slept deeply, something she never did while on missions. The only time she ever allowed herself to was at her apartment in Burbank, or the nights she slept over with him. Who was she kidding? She couldn't stop herself from sleeping deeply when he was around. He comforted her. No one had ever comforted her like that, and that was uncomfortable.

She shook her head at that conundrum and remembered where she was. He had slept in this bed until last night. She smiled. Last night. He could have slept there...but if he had, she wasn't sure how much either of them would have actually slept. The smile turned into a smirk. And then she realized why she woke up so confused. She smelled something. Bacon. Someone was making bacon.

She threw back the covers, padded over to the door, opened it, and the smells of breakfast assaulted her. She headed toward the kitchen and pulled up short, other senses assaulting her. There was Chuck, in his pj bottoms, a tee shirt on, hair mussed from sleep, barefoot, making breakfast. She was hungry, and not just for food.

He turned, saw her, and smiled. "Hey," he said softly. "Coffee is over there, and it will be just a minute on your eggs."

"You know how I like my eggs?" Sarah asked. Chuck gave her a look. "Is that in the Intersect?"

"It is, but not the government one, or the Bryce one," he replied. He was silent for a second, but then he continued. "It's in the Chuck Intersect of all things Sarah." Sarah

walked over beside him, reached down, snagged a piece of bacon, and began to chew it. The toaster went off as toast popped out. "That's your toast, lightly toasted. There would be chocolate croissants, but we're trying to lay low, and if I went into the village every morning..." Chuck trailed off and shrugged.

"Smart," Sarah said, getting a plate, putting her toast on it, grabbing some bacon, and smirking at him as he gave her a look, leaving him only a couple of pieces. She wasn't going to eat it all, but she felt like he deserved it after making her search for him. She moved over to the bar and began to eat. He walked over to her, pan in hand, an amused look on his face and gently put her eggs on her plate.

She held up a piece of bacon and he leaned in and took a bite. "I did good," Chuck murmured.

"You did," Sarah agreed. "Careful, you're gonna turn some woman into a real girl and want to do this with you every morning."

"There's only one I'd want to, and I don't want to turn her into anything," Chuck told her. She took a sip of her coffee, her mouth suddenly very dry. "Of course there is one problem." Sarah turned to him slowly. "The person I'm interested in makes a marvelous breakfast, so I'm not sure which of us make it."

"I'm voting for you," Sarah said, taking a bite of her eggs and giving him a look as she stifled a moan.

"Is that for me or the eggs?" Chuck asked, as he winked at her and headed to the bathroom. Sarah watched him go, wondering if he knew the answer.

-ooooo-

"So I make you lose your breath?" Sarah asked, in a normal tone.

"You're not funny," he panted out, jogging beside her up the mountain side. "When it was Bryce, I didn't have to talk out loud...also he ran backwards to taunt me."

"That's not nice," Sarah said, moving a few steps in front of him, quickly turning around to jog backwards, and then turning back around and laughing at the look on Chuck's

face. "You've done good, Chuck."

"Don't let me fool you, Sarah," Chuck said softly. "I got by with Bryce's help, but if you hadn't of shown when you did..." Chuck trailed off.

"Your only alone when you want to be," Sarah told him. She took a deep breath. "I should know."

"Wow, okay," Chuck replied. "We're doing this, now, while jogging up a mountain side."

"We can wait until we get back, if that's what you want to do."

"No, I'm doing what you want to do, with us, I mean, with the Ring...I'm taking all suggestions but..." he trailed off.

"Ahha," she said, understanding dawning on her. She touched his arm and they stopped jogging. "So that's what this is."

"That's what what is?" Chuck asked.

She gave him a look, grinning, and shook her head. "Chuck, you're not Bryce."

"I don't know-"

"Chuck, you're worried that whatever was in your head has been taken over by Bryce," Sarah told him. Chuck looked away. "You have a plan on how to take down the Ring, and you believe it should be done your way, and not the CIA/NSA way because that's what the Ring is expecting, yes or no?"

"Yes," Chuck replied. "But Sarah-" She held up a hand and he clamped his teeth shut. "Bryce would have done what he thought, but he never would have listened to my suggestions." Chuck looked unsure. "He also wouldn't have listened to any suggestions I had about training."

"Okay," Chuck conceded. "BUT what if somewhere down the road..." he trailed off, not sure how to put it into words.

"Sounds like you need someone who knows you and Bryce to be around you to make sure you're safe, and not turning into someone else," she said softly.

"I would have to trust them," Chuck replied, reaching over and taking one of her hands. She reached over and took hers. "Sounds like a long-term assignment to me." She paused and looked him in the eye. "Know anyone who might fit that bill?"

"I know one, but I'd never ask her to do it," Chuck replied. Sarah nodded, let go of his hands and began to take off jogging.

"Come on, I gotta keep you fit so you can take down the Ring before you go crazy with these multiple personalities in your head," she said. Chuck began to jog after her, grumbling, but not looking that upset.

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They got back to the house, and Chuck began to peel off his shirt. "What are you doing?" Sarah asked him.

"I've got wood to cut," Chuck replied. "And right now, I'm really hot, so I'm going to do this for a while, and put it back on when I get cold."

"Oh," Sarah said, watching him pick up the ax. She swallowed. He wasn't super chiseled, but he had put on a bit of definition. "Well, I guess-"

"Do you care to stay out here with me, unless you're cold of course," he rushed out.

"No, no, I'm fine," Sarah told him. "Do you need to talk about something?"

"Yeah," Chuck told her. "I'm sorry." Sarah pulled back her chin. "I asked you to go on a vacation with me. I wasn't honest." He chopped a piece of wood, and Sarah found it very difficult to pay attention to what he was saying. He leaned against the ax handle, and she looked him right in the eyes. "I wanted more than a damn vacation, I wanted there to be an us."

"I know," she said softly. "I wasn't going with Bryce."

"I know," he replied just as softly. "So I guess the question becomes, what do we do about it?"

She wet her lips, drawing upon all the courage within her. "We go forward, together, and if they tell us we can't, then we remind them how easily we can disappear."

"Sarah, I can't disappear," Chuck admitted. "I've missed you, Ellie, Morgan, Devon...damn it, I miss Casey."

"He misses you," Sarah told him.

"Really?" Chuck asked, excitement in his voice. Sarah winced. "Oh," he said. "I can't go on the run."

"They don't have to know that," Sarah told him. "Besides, I don't think it will be a problem." She knew he was waiting on her to take the lead in this, and she knew why. "I love you, Chuck, I'm in, whatever it takes."

Chuck nodded. "Okay," he said, letting go of the ax and walking over to her, kissing her gently on the lips. He wrinkled his nose. "Sarah..."

"You smell," Sarah told him.

"Yeah," he replied. "Why don't you go shower, I'll finish here and then I'll take one."

"Okay," she said softly. She headed inside, and Chuck went to work on the wood.

-00000-

She had come into the bedroom as he walked out of the shower. She stopped, gawking. He was drying his hair, only wearing a pair of boxers. Her eyes were locked on him, where his boxers sat on his hip bone, she looked up. There she saw the definition that had made it's way into his chest. Jesus, this was not fair. He had always driven her crazy with his mind, his attitude. She loved the way he was, how attractive he was, but now...this? This was totally unfair.

"You okay?" Chuck asked.

"I am not," Sarah replied. Enough. It was time. It was past time. She walked over to him, took the towel from him, and began to dry his hair for him. She couldn't help but smirk at the way he swallowed. "Are you in this with me?"

"Yes absolutely I'm in," he said quickly. She stopped, lowered her eyes to his, and held his vision. "This is happening?"

"Yes," she replied, and she pulled him against her. Their lips collided and two years of desire swelled up and threatened to explode in that very moment. She felt his hands hold her securely but gently. She felt him nearly hum in happiness against her. He felt her hand thread its way through his hair and her other to gently caress his back. He felt her walking him and suddenly he went backwards, falling onto the bed.

"Sorry," he breathed, his lips inches from hers.

"Don't be, and you should know it may happen a lot more frequently," Sarah told him.

"Uh, Sarah, I don't know that we have supplies for...uh..." Chuck trailed off.

"We don't need them," she said softly. His eyes widened at that. "I didn't have the heart, or the nerve to tell you that morning in Barstow, I was scared Chuck." She sat back, still on top of him. "I was scared of what making love to you would do to me...to you...to us. I knew that if we did...there was no turning back."

"It's one thing to want a different life, but to have to actually make that step," Chuck said softly. It wasn't accusing, just the truth. She nodded. "Hey, I'm here, and I'm willing to wait as long as needed, take as many baby steps as needed." She locked eyes with him. "Sarah, all I ever wanted was us to be honest, and this," he said, gesturing between them. "It's honest, it's raw, and I know what you just said...I know what that means to you."

A slow grin covered her face. "How do you always know?" He gave her a confused look.

"How do you always know just what to say, what I need to hear?"

"I have no idea," he admitted. "But I am damn sure glad I seem to." He started to set up, when her hand in the middle of his chest stopped him. She slowly shook her head, the grin changing to a smirk. "Sarah?"

"Chuck, shut up and kiss me."

Chapter 14: Chapter 14

I don't own Chuck

They were sitting on the couch the next morning, drinking coffee. Chuck was sitting normally, Sarah wedged into the corner, her legs lying over his lap. She was drinking her coffee, while he was rubbing her legs. "Hey," she said softly, making him turn his head toward her. "*Definitely* not Bryce." Chuck couldn't help but grin.

-00000-

"We need to meet, all of us," Shaw barked into the Ring phone. He was sitting in an underground parking garage. "Volkoff is becoming mad, and do you know what he has done to other customers for not following through on the funds he was promised?!?" Shaw listened for a moment. "I KNOW WE HAVE NO MONEY!" Shaw was seething. Someone was bleeding the Ring dry and he had no idea who. It was driving him crazy. "Next week, Friday," Shaw barked. "Yes, Volkoff will be there. We have to make him happy or it could be the end of all of us."

Shaw turned off the phone, started his vehicle and drove away. He never noticed the parabolic mike pointed at his car from another car in a dark corner of the parking garage. The owner of the mike pulled out a phone and sent a message. *If you really can do it, it's time.*

-00000-

Ellie reread everything Stephen sent to her and looked up at the screen. "So, this is it?" she asked.

"It is," replied the digitized voice. "It may be our last shot."

"You do know that I know you're Stephen Bartowski, right Orion?" Casey asked, coming down the stairs.

"John!" Ellie yelled at him.

"Calm down, Ellie," Casey said. Ellie found it interesting that she was the only person that Casey called by her first name. She secretly wondered if it was because she scared him. "It's time we quit fighting this thing on multiple fronts and we all work together." Ellie nodded. "Stephen?"

"He's already making his plan and has broken off contact to me," Stephen replied, letting them see his face and voice. "What do you need me to do?"

"Dad, come here, quarterback this operation from here," Ellie said. Stephen looked uncomfortable. "You know we do have better equipment."

"You do," Stephen admitted.

"I swear to you on my picture of Ronald Regan that I'll protect you," Casey told him. "I want you and Ellie here."

"You need someone, John," Ellie told him. "In fact, maybe you need two someones."

"Oh, Christ, no," Casey muttered.

-00000-

"So this is how it is, you finally get the girl and now you ignore her?" Sarah teased him as Chuck was working on the laptop and looking at a map on the table. She squeaked as he spun and pulled her into a kiss. Chuck pulled away slightly. "I was kidding, but geez, I may kid more often if I'm going to get that kind of reaction out of you."

Chuck's computer had dinged while they were drinking their coffee. Sarah marveled at how he had moved into action. She worried about him, with the "Bryce Intersect" in his head, him being a spy...well, kind of, and this whole hacking thing, but she was quickly learning, Chuck Bartowski was still Chuck Bartowski. He was her guy. Her Chuck. Nothing had changed. He was still the same guy, just operating on a larger scale.

"I've cut all contact to the outside world," he told her turning back to the table. He spun back to her, worry on his face. "Is that right? Is that what I should do?"

"Hey," Sarah said, her hand on his arm. "What's this?"

"Up until now, I've had all these...others out there...in case I need them. And-and, I know I have you, and you're amazing but..." Chuck trailed off.

"Now you're alone, with just me, no backup, no support, no intel from the outside, and we have to make the call," Sarah told him gently. "Welcome to being a spy." Chuck nodded. "What?"

"I'm so not cut out for this," Chuck grouched. Sarah laughed and his eyes went wide.

"Oh, God," Sarah said, trying to sober her laughing. "Chuck...Chuck, you've been doing spy stuff for a few years now. You've saved lives, when not trained to. You've made calls in the field you shouldn't have to. What you're feeling right now is doubt, and I understand that, but Chuck...you're good at this. Maybe not in the classical way that Graham, or Beckman, or Casey, or even I would do things, but Chuck...Baby-"

"Baby?" Chuck asked, his mouth dropped.

"Really," she asked, pulling back her chin. "I wax poetic about your accomplishments and that's what you focus on, me calling you Baby."

"It's what's most important," Chuck said with a shrug. "Not that the other wasn't, but without you..." he shrugged again.

"Jesus," she muttered.

"I'm sorry-" he began.

"I never had a chance against you," she said, cutting in, shaking her head, smiling. "Never had one chance and I tried to kid myself for two damn years."

"I didn't even bother trying to kid myself about you," Chuck replied making her laugh. They both stood there, lost in each other's eyes. "Man, I hate to do this..."

"We've got work to do," Sarah told him. "WE."

"That can be taken sooooo many ways," Chuck admitted. She smiled at him. "But for now, preparation." Chuck turned back to the table, where the map was laid out. "Now, according to my bug, they're going to Paris."

“How did you bug a Ring phone?” Sarah asked.

“Oh, I didn’t,” Chuck replied. “I hacked into the computer of one of the Ring Elders and he listened to the call on speaker phone, a direct violation of their protocols,” Chuck told her. “That’s an old time trick.” “Hacking into someone’s computer, and listening to a phone call is an old time trick?” Sarah asked.

“No, waiting for a villain to be over confident and reveal their master plans is,” Chuck explained.

“And how did you learn of this old time trick?” Sarah asked.

“Chuck swallowed and his cheeks reddened. “Every classic movie, comic book, or pulp fiction book ever,” Chuck replied, scratching the back of his head, embarrassment on his face.

Sarah pressed her lips together, trying to hide the amusement on her features. “I see,” Sarah said. “Well, it worked.” Chuck beamed. “So, tell me the rest.”

Chuck pointed at the map. “We have to go to Paris and set up, and I happen to know you do have a safe house there.”

“I do,” Sarah said. “What about Volkoff?” Chuck looked at her and she smiled at him. “I get intel as well.”

“Are you still getting it?” Chuck asked, concerned.

“I have gone officially dark,” Sarah told him. “It’s just me and you.”

“Volkoff is being handled by my team,” Chuck told her. Sarah gave him a look. “Team Bartowski.”

Chapter 15: Chapter 15

I don't own Chuck

It was a ten hour drive from where they were in Austria to Paris. Chuck had asked Sarah to drive to give him time to think. He was having some difficulty breaking into the Ring's computer network inside of their headquarters. Sarah told him he'd figure out how, and he knew he could, he just didn't know if he had time to.

He had to give the Ring credit, they were aware of how flawed the US's cyber security was and had gone to great lengths to protect themselves.

"Is there a way you could get in, without hacking?" Sarah asked.

"Yeah, if I could get a flash drive into one of their computers..." Chuck trailed off, thinking.

"Kind of leaving the back door open so you could slip in and out?" Sarah asked. Chuck nodded. "Okay, then what we need to find is a computer we can gain access to."

"But they're all inside, the computers," he pointed out. "And I'm dead and you are too probably too well known amongst this group of spies."

"Let's get there, case the place, and then, if I have to, I can use some other skills I learned," she trailed off, uneasiness on her face.

"You know," Chuck said softly. "I've learned a lot about you over the past few months, thanks to Bryce." She looked over at him, but he was staring straight ahead. "I mean, that's not right, I already knew some of these things, but seeing Bryce's memories put things into context."

She said nothing, continuing to drive but knots were forming in her stomach. He let out a chuckle. "I thought you didn't tell me much, but poor Bryce, he was even more in the dark than I was." He turned to her. "I'm not saying this right. What I'm trying to say is, I see how you let me in."

"I've never let anyone in farther than I have you," she said softly. "Chuck...my first name...it was Sam." Chuck's eyes went wide. "But, I haven't been Sam for a very long time...if ever."

"Thank you," Chuck said softly. "So, what should I-"

"Sarah, Chuck," she said a little forcefully. "Sorry, it's just...I've felt like Sarah ever since I've met you."

"Good," Chuck replied. "I mean, good that you're comfortable with who you are." He was silent for a moment. "Gah! What I mean is-"

"I know what you mean," Sarah said gently, taking his hand and smiling at him.

-ooooo-

"Fine, I'll take your husband and the bearded gnome, but you owe me Ellie!" Casey growled.

"How about I forget how you bugged my apartment for the last two years?" Ellie asked.

"I feel we're now even," Casey answered quickly. Morgan raised his hand. "What Grimes?"

"Was my house bugged?" Morgan asked.

"No, no one gave a damn about your sandwiches," Casey informed Morgan. Morgan looked disappointed.

"You sure about this, Babe?" Devon asked Ellie. She gave him a kiss.

"Yeah, I'm sure," Ellie told him. "I'll be here with my dad, what trouble could I get in?" Casey gave her a look, but said nothing. The three left Castle and Stephen spun toward Ellie. "What?"

"We have to go to Russia," Stephen told her.

"Okay, then we have to get tickets." Stephen shook his head. "Do I even want to know?"

-ooooo-

"Are you *sure* you know how to fly this thing?" Ellie asked from the co-pilot's seat, looking out the window at the ground very far away...*again*.

"It's simple, you're mother taught me," Stephen told her.

"When?"

Stephen thought for a moment. "A few years before you were born."

"And you've flown since then, right?" Ellie asked. Her father said nothing. Ellie looked out the window at the ground below. "I am going to kill you Chuck Bartowski," she growled.

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"There is no good way in there," Chuck grouched. "Damn it! All of this work, this planning, and I've screwed up."

"Chuck," Sarah said calmly, her hand on his. "It's Paris, the city of love, calm the hell down." He grinned at her, and chuckled. They were sitting outside at a cafe, having walked around the compound that the Ring meeting was supposed to take place in.

"What am I missing?" Chuck asked. Sarah raised an eyebrow, and sat back, amused. "You're calm. You've seen something I've missed."

"The guard station," Sarah said, sipping her coffee.

Chuck darted his eyes toward it, and then back to her. "I'm missing something."

"The mirror on the station, to let the guard see better, from my angle I can see into the station and see his computer," Sarah told him, grinning.

"And you see a drive I can put a flash drive into?" Sarah nodded. "So how do we get the flash drive in without the guard knowing."

"All that has to be done is the flash drive inserted, right?" Chuck nodded. "How long does it take to upload?"

"Thirty seconds, tops," Chuck replied.

"Trust me?"

-00000-

Edgar was bored out of his mind. He was paid great money, but there was never anything to do. He looked down the street, and then back to his paper, when he did a double take. Walking down the street was a gorgeous blond woman in a red dress, heels, and obviously having a night out on the town. He heard the voice of a man and saw a tall man chasing after her.

"Janice," he called out. "Janice, baby, please don't."

"Will you give it a rest?" She said to him. "I've had with you and your constant jealousy." She kept walking and saw Edgar. "Sir, sir, can I please come in there for a bit. That's my ex-boyfriend."

"Janice, baby, please," the tall man begged.

"Go, right in, but don't touch anything," he told her. Edgar walked out and confronted the tall man. "You need to leave."

"But she's my life," the tall man pleaded. "You don't understand, she's so...amazing, and I'm so freaking out of her league."

"You are," Edgar replied. "So you have a choice. Continue to be like this and lose her, or trust her." The tall man dropped his gaze to the ground. He sighed, and raised his head, looking over Edgar's shoulder at the woman. "Okay," he said, resigned. "Please, tell her I'm sorry, and that I'm going home." Edgar nodded, and watched the tall man turn and walk away.

"Thank you," the woman told him. "He just gets so jealous." "Are you okay?" Edgar asked.

"I'm fine, is there any chance you can call me a ride?" Edgar nodded, picked up the phone and made a call.

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Chuck waited in an alley, tapping his hands on the steering wheel. He saw a car pull up to the hotel, and Sarah get out of the car. She headed inside, and after the car pulled

away, she crossed the street, heading for the car Chuck was in.

“Did it work?” Chuck asked, as she got in.

“Yep,” she chirped. “You were perfect.”

“Nah, just following my partner’s lead,” Chuck told her, putting the car in gear and driving back to their safe house.

Chapter 16: Chapter 16

I don't own Chuck

A rundown airstrip somewhere in Russia

The two stood there, looking at the plane. One wheel was broken off, one of the wings severely bent where it had bit into the ground and dug up dirt as the plane came to a halt.

"So you forgot how to fly?" Ellie asked as calmly as she could.

"No, I remembered how to fly," Stephen disagreed. "I never was good with the landing part." Ellie turned to him slowly. Her eyes were wide, disbelief covering her face. It was at that moment the plane exploded. They were far enough away they only felt the briefest fingers of the shock wave. Ellie's glare intensified.

"Oh, boy," Stephen muttered. "I hope the CIA is gonna reimburse someone for that." Ellie didn't know her eyes could go wider, but they did.

-00000-

"Are you sure about this plan?" Ellie asked, as they walked up to the front desk of Volkoff Industries.

"No, but your brother is," Stephen told Ellie.

"I am going to kill him," Ellie replied. "I mean it. Kill him, bring him back to life, and possibly kill him again."

"If we survive this you mean," Stephen said. Ellie turned to him, her eyes wide...again.

"Whoops," Stephen muttered.

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The two found themselves in front of Volkoff minutes later. "Well, Stephen...or should I say Orion, I have you."

“Or, I have you,” Stephen said. “I’ve always wanted to say that.” “Dad!” Ellie hissed.

“What?” Stephen asked. Volkoff watched, shock on his face. “This guy kept our family apart for years, you think I’m going to play nice with him.”

Volkoff lifted a gun and pointed it at Stephen. “I think we both know this is over.”

“That’s not the best idea,” Stephen told Volkoff. “I have infiltrated your systems and held a notification from you.” The gun wavered. “Would you mind putting that down, those things make me very nervous.”

Volkoff lowered the gun. “What have you done?”

Stephen lifted his arm, slowly. Pushed back his jacket, slowly. “I’m going to hit this button which will allow you to see, okay?” Volkoff nodded. Stephen pushed the button and a notification went off on Volkoff’s computer. His eyes went wide and anger covered his face.

“WHAT HAVE YOU DONE!” Volkoff screamed.

“I think we have his attention,” Stephen said to Ellie.

“I’m going to kill him,” Ellie muttered. “Murder even.”

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Some weeks ago, a safe house in Tabor

“So it’s not just the Ring?” Chuck asked.

“Nope, it’s the Ring’s weapon suppliers as well...or should I say supplier,” Bryce told Chuck.

“Volkoff,” Chuck said, making Bryce nod. “So he’s the key. What is his goal?” Bryce looked confused. “What drives Volkoff?”

“Power,” Bryce answered

“And how is that achieved? How does Volkoff measure his power?” Chuck asked.

“Simple, money,” Bryce answered. Chuck grinned.

A few hours later, after he had messaged his father and learned new information, he found himself sitting there, a stunned look on his face. Volkoff actually had an Intersect. Bryce was pacing. "So let's pretend Volkoff is a bad guy, and not some guy affected by an Intersect, how would you get to his money?"

"Simple, before I steal any from the Ring, I'd let one payment go through to Volkoff, while having a tracer in there," Chuck explained. "Once in Volkoff's account, I'd empty it."

"Okay, now you have Volkoff off-balance," Bryce said.

"Literally," Chuck said softly. He messaged his father with Bryce reading over Chuck's shoulder.

"OMG!" Bryce breathed.

"Bad idea?" Chuck asked.

"No, it's freaking brilliant," Bryce admitted. "Why didn't I think of that?"

"Cause you're not me," Chuck told him, making Bryce move to swat Chuck, but his hand passed through him, making both men uncomfortable.

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"You took something from me I loved, and now I took something from you that you loved," Stephen told Volkoff. "I win. My wife is free of you."

"But I'm going to kill you," Volkoff said, raising the gun again.

"WHOA!" Ellie said, raising her hands, and stepping between them. "This is nuts. Give him back the money, and he lets mom go, simple as that."

"No, it's not, you know he'll just rise to power again and your mom will keep coming after him," Stephen said. "Besides, you just blew her cover."

Ellie closed her eyes, berating herself.

"Give me back the money, and I let you and your daughter walk out of here," Volkoff offered. "You get to have one big family reunion. Otherwise, I kill you, then your

daughter.”

“Fine,” Stephen said, sighing like he was beaten. He pulled up the wrist computer and began to type on it. “When I tell you, you’re going to need to go to your account and hit the accept button.”

Volkoff nodded, put down his gun, and began to type. He looked up at Stephen. Stephen wavered. “Again, I will kill your daughter.”

Stephen grumbled under his breath, and punched a few more buttons. “It’s ready.”

Volkoff grinned an evil grin. “You never were a match for me, Orion. You haven’t the stomach to do what needs to be done.” Volkoff clicked the button with the mouse.

Hello Hartley the screen read.

“What have you-” Those were the last words that Volkoff said as the computer sequence began.

“Gave away my mother’s cover,” Ellie scoffed. “Who the hell do you think I am, some kind of amateur? I’m a doctor for crying out loud.”

“He really can’t hear you,” Stephen said. Ellie turned to him, the glare back...again. “However, maybe you should continue, work out some of that frustration.”

“Like how you went out for pancakes?”

“Oh boy,” Stephen said.

“Where am I?” they heard the confused voice of an Englishman say.

“Ready?” Stephen asked Ellie.

“Yes,” she said. “Hartley Winterbottom, I’m Ellie Bartowski, the daughter of Mary and Stephen Bartowski.”

“How is that possible?” Hartley asked. He looked at Stephen. “How are you this old.”

“I have a story to tell you,” Ellie began.

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A few hours later, Volkoff led the two, at gunpoint, onto his private plane, bound for France.

“I could fly,” Stephen said softly.

“OR, the trained pilot could,” Ellie countered.

“I owe you so much,” Hartley said as the plane took off.

“Do you think you could cover the cost of a plane?” Stephen asked. Ellie groaned and leaned back in her seat, her hand covering her face. She was going to kill her brother.

Chapter 17: Chapter 17

I don't own Chuck

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN THEY'RE IN RUSSIA?!?" Casey screamed.

"You're taking this rather calm," Morgan said to Devon.

"Dude, that's Ellie we're talking about, she's..." Devon trailed off.

"Awesome?" Morgan asked.

"Awesome," Devon replied. "Why is he yelling at his boss?"

"He's not," Morgan replied. "He's just mad because he just realized that he's the magnet."

"He's the magnet?" Devon asked. "I don't understand."

"He's the one everyone is watching. Chuck is 'dead', Ellie and Stephen are in Russia, and Sarah's looking for Chuck's killers," Morgan explained.

"Wait, if Chuck isn't... 'dead', then what is Sarah really doing?" Devon asked.

Morgan gave him a flat look. "She's with her man," Morgan told him.

"They are together?"

"Dude, it's Chuck, how can any woman resist him when he puts on the full Bartowski?" Morgan asked.

"You're taking this very calmly," Devon pointed out.

"Years of watching spy movies, tv shows, and reading comic books," Morgan replied with a shrug. "It's what comes next that worries me."

"What do you mean?" Devon asked.

"The twist," Morgan explained.

"The meeting is today," Casey told Morgan and Devon. "Shaw set them all up to meet Volkoff alone."

"How do you know this?" Morgan asked.

"The guy who...was Volkoff told Ellie and Stephen," Casey began, but stopped, watching Morgan nod sagely.

"The twist," Morgan said. "The Elders are walking into a trap, but it's not ours."

"Shaw knew he was being followed," Casey said. "We have to find Walker and Bartowski, this thing is going pear-shaped."

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The Elders entered the room, no clue what that they had been sold out to Volkoff. Shaw had offered up everyone that had shorted Volkoff money so they could be assassinated as a show of power for Volkoff. They were all stunned to see a brunette woman sitting at the head of the table.

"Who are you?"

"I'm Volkoff's representative," she said. The eleven looked at each other. "If you walk out that door, a hit goes on your head." There was mumblings and grumblings but the eleven all sat. "You are the Elders?" They all nodded and voiced their answers. "You have all turned your back on your government?" Again they voiced that they had. Frost pulled out two pistols, and began to fire. She shot everyone, leaving one bullet in one pistol. "Looks like I have one more to find."

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"Chuck what's going on?" Sarah asked, watching the monitor.

"I'm afraid we've been played," Chuck admitted.

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Austria before Sarah arrived

"You know, everyone has a plan, until it falls apart," Bryce said softly. Chuck looked up at him. He was watching the red test of Sarah's. "That's what is driving him," Bryce told Chuck, pointing at Sarah shooting Evelyn.

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Austria after Sarah arrived

"That was Daniel Shaw's wife," Chuck said softly. Sarah looked at him, her eyes wide. "He's a ring elder." She blew out a frustrated breath. "He's searching everywhere for me."

"Does he know about...us?" Sarah asked.

"He probably suspects," Chuck admitted. "I'm sure after our 49-B, Roan's after action report, and anyone who's paid any attention to us, it's known." Sarah chuckled. "Our choice is to go all the way with this, knowing one or the other could die..."

"Or run," Sarah said. "And we'd be running the rest of our lives."

"Have I missed anything?" Chuck asked her.

"Nothing I can see," Sarah admitted. "But there's always the possibility one of us missed something."

"I don't think it's possible for you to miss anything," Chuck told her. "I think the last two years I missed quite a lot," Sarah countered.

"I was speaking professionally as a spy," Chuck replied. "So, what is the CIA play here?"

"Tactical retreat, wait for backup," Sarah told him. She sighed, and shook her head. "Together?" he asked.

She took her hands in his. "Together."

-00000-

Now

Morgan's phone rang. "Hello."

"Morgan, we need help," Chuck said into the phone and then told him where they were.

"Gotcha," Shaw said, listening in to the phone conversation on the bug he had planted in Morgan's phone.

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Weeks ago, Austria, pre-Sarah

"So, if it was you, who would you bug?" Chuck asked.

"The weak link," Bryce said with a grin. "Morgan Grimes."

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Weeks ago, Austria, post-Sarah

"So if you were Daniel, would you come alone?" Chuck asked.

"Yes, but I'm not Daniel," Sarah replied making Chuck snort. "He'll come with back-up, but who?" Chuck gave her a look. "He would have sold out the other Elders by now, so who?"

"Someone who he just made look very powerful," Chuck said with a grin.

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Now

Chuck and Sarah were sitting at the same cafe they were a few days ago, outside the entrance of what used to be Ring headquarters, but the Elders were all now dead. Save one. He came walking up to them, followed by four men, clearly armed.

"You idiot," Shaw said, shaking his head. "We saw you, we knew what you were doing."

"Huh," Chuck said, drinking his coffee. "This is really good." Anger flared across Shaw's face. He walked over and grabbed Chuck by the shirt collar. A waiter started to move toward them, but he saw the weapon the bodyguard flashed at him and scurried away.

Sarah started to stand, when something went into her neck, and she felt herself losing control of her limbs. "SARAH!" Chuck yelled. Shaw jabbed Chuck with a needle, feeding

him the same drugs.

"I love you," Sarah said softly.

"I love you," Chuck told her.

"Isn't this cute," Shaw said, grinning. He stood and turned toward his four armed escorts. "Pick them up." Chuck felt his eyes growing heavy. Sarah's were shut.

"Stop," came a voice, and he thought he saw the four men react. His eyes shut. He was fading. A gun shot rang out, and that was the last thing he remembered.

Chapter 18: Chapter 18

I don't own Chuck

He groaned, his eyelids heavy. He opened his eyes and looked around. Chuck tried to sit up but his muscles refused to cooperate. He was in a bed...a nice bed, in a nice room. He looked out the window and saw the Eiffel tower. "We're okay," he heard a voice beside him. He turned and looked and there was Sarah, looking about like he felt.

"What happened?" Chuck asked.

"You nearly got me killed," he heard Ellie's voice say. The two turned and saw her standing in the entrance way, an amused look on her face. "My father...*our* father...flew a plane."

"And landed it," they heard Stephen yell out.

"That's debatable," Ellie grumbled. She gave Chuck a long look. "You two figure this mess out?" Chuck and Sarah looked at each other and then back to Ellie, not sure what she meant. "Are you together?"

Sarah's hand took his. "Exclusively," Sarah told Ellie.

"About damn time," Ellie said, shaking her head, turning and walking away. She paused and turned back. "Get out of bed and get in here, we're only telling this story once." Ellie left the room.

"It worked," Sarah said to Chuck.

"About that exclusively part," Chuck began. Sarah gave him a flat look. His hand went to her cheek, cupping it. "What do you say about moving in with me?" She swallowed, and looked very nervous. "It's okay if you don't want to," he began.

"I love you," she told him. "And I want to make this work, but..." she trailed off.

"Hey, I have a lot of memories that aren't mine," Chuck told her. "I know that you live out of a suitcase, that you struggle with opening up. Again, if you don't want to, it's

okay.” With that, he leaned in and gave her a gentle kiss on the lips. “Let’s get in there before they send Casey.” She nodded. He got up and headed toward the doorway. “Yes,” she said so softly he didn’t hear her.

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The main room was full, and the General joined them via computer. Chuck’s plan had worked. Hartley had shown up, his men thinking he was Volkoff. He told them to stand down and Mary took out Shaw. Morgan verified that she had shot him in the head because that was the only way to make sure someone was really dead. Casey grunted in irritation over that.

Stephen and Mary were headed back to Burbank to try and figure out their lives. Casey and Morgan were heading back as well, Big Mike still didn’t know they were gone. Ellie and Devon decided to take a second honeymoon since they were in Paris. Chuck wanted to point out they hadn’t been married that long, but Sarah shook her head, cutting him off.

“Agent Walker, Agent Bartowski, what are your plans?” Beckman asked.

Chuck started to answer when Sarah stated quite clearly, “We’re taking a vacation together, and we’re exclusively dating.” Chuck’s eyes went wide. “And, when I get back to Burbank, I will be moving in with Agent Bartowski.”

“For his protection?” Beckman asked. “Agent Walker, he is a full agent with an Intersect to protect him.”

“No, General,” Sarah said. The entire room was quiet. “I’m moving in because I love him and want to be with him.”

“Thank God!” Beckman said. Sarah’s eyes went wide.

“Thank Christ,” Casey muttered. Sarah looked at him, shocked. “What, Walker? You’ve been mooning over this moron for two damn years.”

“That’s agent moron,” Chuck corrected. Casey grunted.

"I mean I question your spy ability with how badly you've hidden your feelings," Morgan added with a shrug.

"Buddy, she's the best," Chuck told him.

"Spies aren't used to being loved for who they are," Mary said, making the room go silent. "We're trained for a lot of things, falling in love...not so much."

"Do you have any plans for this vacation?" Beckman asked.

"I think I'd like to take a nice long train ride," Sarah told Beckman. She turned to Chuck. "If that's okay with you."

"It's your decision, but, one question." She waited and as the grin began to grow on his face, she knew what he was going to ask before he did. "Do I get to go with you?" She shook her head at him.

"Yes," she said softly.

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Austria before Sarah showed up

"What if I lose her?" Chuck asked Bryce. Bryce gave him a confused look. "What if she dies in this, or I do?" Chuck was silent a moment. "You did."

"Then you live each day like it's a gift," Bryce told him, shrugging. Bryce blinked out for a moment and then came back. "Listen, you and Sarah...nothing can keep you two apart, so be you, love her man." Chuck nodded. Bryce winced and Chuck stood, concerned. "Chuck, she deserves happiness, and so do you, so for me, please, just be honest with her, just be happy, and just be."

"I will, Buddy, I will," Chuck said.

"I know you will," Bryce said with a smile. "Take care of you, and of her." Bryce disappeared.

"Bryce," Chuck said out loud. "Bryce!" No answer. "The terrible troll raises his sword." Nothing. Tears began to fall from his face. "Attack troll with nasty knife," Chuck said

softly. He was gone, and Chuck was all alone.

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Now

Everyone had left the room, it was theirs. "Listen," Chuck said, turning towards towards her, putting his hands on her waist. "If you don't want to move in with me, you don't have to. I only said something because Bryce reminded me that in this life we could be gone at any moment."

"Then we quit," Sarah said. "But, I want to move in with you."

"Sarah, do you want to quit?" She shook her head. "Then we don't." She took his hands.

"We do this...together."

"Together," Sarah said, as she slipped her hands from him and wrapped them around his neck.

"Sarah," Chuck began.

"Chuck, shut up and kiss me," she told him, and he did.

A/N: Thanks for reading.