

The MacGuffin Device

by Seraph, Hex, and Brucha

-New York City-

Sean Cassidy woke blearily at the ring of the telephone. It was a weekend, he was sleeping late, and not expecting any calls. Sighing, he made his way through the collected debris of pizza boxes and empty beer cans. After the poker night before, his place was a mess. The phone continued to ring, impinging on the morning silence insistently. Sean picked it up, cleared his throat, and spoke. "What?"

"Good morning to you, too."

"Fury, what the devil do you want?"

"Late night, Cassidy?"

"Something like that -- also the fact that the only time you call me is when you want something."

"You wouldn't believe I'd be calling just to see how an old friend is doing?"

"..."

"Okay, I've got something I need you to do."

"An' what might that be?"

"Let me put it to you this way -- your damn cousin is at it again. He's broken into one of America's top secret facilities and stolen a prototype for a fairly sensitive piece of tech."

"Other than the fact that my oh-so-favorite cousin is involved, what has this got to do with me?"

"I can't tell you that right now -- your phone's not secure -- but meet me at the usual place and I'll explain."

"Fine, but it'd better be a damn good explanation."

Sean placed the phone back on the hook, and looked around his apartment for clean clothes.

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-Central Park-

Sean jogged along the path at a brisk pace. His hair had grown a bit long, and it trailed behind him like a bright red flag on the breeze. He breathed more heavily than he was used to, mentally cursing his extra pounds. After a moment, he heard quick-moving footfalls behind him, and smelled the distinctive odor of cigar smoke.

“You look like hell, Sean.”

“And you smell like an ashtray. How the bloody hell can you run and smoke at the same time?”

“SHIELD’s got a no-smoking policy, and I have to smoke somewhere. Benefits of the Infinity Formula do the rest.”

“Right, how about you tell me why we’re here?”

“Like I told you earlier. Black Tom has made off with one of our prototypes. Dr. MacGuffin’s device is of the weather control variety, very nasty stuff.”

“I’m assuming I probably shouldn’t ask why the U.S. Government would be getting involved in such things. But I do want to know, why me? My damnable cousin aside, recovering weapons sounds more like the Avengers’ line of work. Anyway, I’m out of the superhero business.”

“First of all, the Avengers are off-planet at the moment; secondly, it bothers me to see you pissing away your talents when you could be doing something useful.”

Sean decided to ignore Nick Fury’s intimation that he was becoming a drunken lout -- as much Sean hated to admit it, it was true. “What do you need me to do?”

“You have to retrieve MacGuffin’s device. You’ll be provided with everything essential.”

“What if the machine’s already been activated?”

Fury took the cigar out of his mouth and smiled broadly. “And that’s the main reason you came to mind. The prototype’s made entirely out of glass, and the right sonic frequency should shatter it. Besides, you X-Men excel at breaking things.”

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-Switzerland, mid-air-

Sean Cassidy stretched out his arm, banked to the right, and winced, the stealth fabric of his SHIELD-provided suit slightly more constrictive than his usual uniform. He wondered a bit about the point of this radar-deflecting stealth costume, when he was coming in screaming anyway, but he supposed it didn't matter at this distance.

His wristwatch beeped, signaling he was approaching the rendezvous point, and he slowed down and bent his knees for landing. At the top of the mountain, he checked to make certain all his gear was still in place. Sean started down the game trail, following the map from his kit.

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-A cabin in the Alps-

Black Tom Cassidy placed MacGuffin's prototype on the table. He swore softly as he noticed the time, realizing that his contact was late. He looked up as he heard dogs barking in the distance, as if in pain. Going quickly to the door, he glanced outside into the darkness. Not seeing anything strange, he returned to the table and poked distractedly at the device.

With a click and a high-pitched whine, the machine began to glow. Black Tom cursed as he realized he had turned it on. Outside, thunder rolled, and the mercenary backed away quickly towards the door. No money was worth staying in a room with a contraption he had no idea how to control.

Outside the cabin, Sean winced as raindrops suddenly splatted the ground around him, and lightning arced across the sky. Swearing, he moved faster towards the little building. Either Storm had decided to show up, or the weather device had been activated.

A man was rapidly heading his way; Sean took aim and fired the SHIELD tranquilizer gun. The figure slumped to the ground, instantly unconscious. Sean approached cautiously and made out the less than appealing features of his cousin. He cuffed Black Tom's arms behind his back, and headed into the cabin.

The MacGuffin device was humming, glowing, and emitting small sparks, so Sean stayed back near the door. Steeling himself, he let forth a banshee scream, modulating his voice to hit the precise frequency. The machine shuddered a moment and then exploded violently. He raised his arms, lifting his cape to shield his face from the flying shards of glass.

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-Outside the cabin-

Banshee couldn't help smiling as he waved down the aircraft approaching him and the prone form of Black Tom. Stepping out of the flying car, Nick Fury raised an eyebrow.

“Interesting weather out here, Irish?”

“Well, you know what they say... everyone always complains about the weather, but no one ever does anything about it.”

-THE END-