

Chapter 30 - I can see for miles

After a quick morning start up, Ema and I sat down and started planning our next project, Clint's glasses.

"You keep saying you have a plan for these, but you haven't explained anything." Ema pointed out once I sat down on the couch with my notepad.

"Well it all starts with a base of those color changing glasses. I'm pretty sure you can get normal sunglasses that transition between clear and shaded." I explained. "

"You're pretty sure?" She asked, her tone skeptical and the tiniest bit frustrated. "How about I double check?"

She floated over to the laptop and started doing her research, quickly finding that they did exist. She quickly made note of a few shops that sold them nearby and sent them to my phone in a text. We went over my ideas and I took some more notes. After sending me another few stores that would hopefully have what I needed I left for another morning of shopping, making sure I had plenty of cash in my modified card before heading out.

After stopping at a cafe for a quick breakfast I started the trip at the first of three places that claimed they carried the photochromic sunglasses. My request for a dozen pairs of the exact same type raised a few eyebrows but I walked out with what I was looking for, though they only had one set like that. The second store didn't have such a large amount of one style, but luckily the third store did, and I now had two dozen pairs of two different sunglasses, one to make a set for Clint, and one for me.

My next stop was an electronic hobby store, one I had been to before. I specifically bought a bunch of rotary selector switches, which looked like a scroll wheel from a mouse that clicked from position to position. I also bought a ridiculous amount of other electronic bits and bobs. Switches, chips, resistors, capacitors, digital screens, all sorts of things that were small and easy to store, but had straightforward concepts that could come in handy in later projects. I must have looked like an eager hobbyist getting in way over his head when the store clerk asked what I was going to do with everything and I told him I didn't know yet.

When I got back to the truck I grabbed one pair of sunglasses and combined it with the wheel switch, putting them on and clicking it through its positions. Sure enough, instead of the tint slowly transitioning from being exposed to light it flipped through various levels of darkness before swinging all the way around to being completely dark.

With a satisfied smirk I pulled out of my parking space and headed for the next stop of a few, the hardware store. I walked in and perused the aisle before buying four of the most compact thermal imaging cameras they had, two voltage meters, which I could have bought at the hobby store but forgot, two metal detecting wands as well as two of the best stud finders they had. I wasn't sure if the last one would work but there was really only one way to find out. I headed to another hardware store and bought four more compact thermal imaging cameras before driving to a store specifically for hunters.

I walked into the shop and quickly perused the binoculars, finding a compact pair that also had a rangefinder. I also found a set of the most compact night vision viewers they carried as well. This was all incredibly expensive but it was worth it... Well it was if it worked.

When I was done with my shopping at around noon I debated teleporting home for a while, before finally coming to the conclusion that having to find a secluded place to push my truck back out of its card when I wanted to drive somewhere later would me more trouble than it's worth, especially when I was only a short drive from home.

When I finally parked and made my way back to the apartment I sat back down on the couch with a sigh, taking a long breath and a moment to center myself before unloading everything.

"I think I got everything that I need." I said as Ema got closer. "I'm not sure about some of it but I'm pretty sure most of my ideas are going to work."

With Ema floating in her usual place next to my head I started unloading and organizing everything. My first test was combining the selector sunglasses I had made earlier as a test with the binoculars. The result worked, but wasn't exactly what I was looking for. I uncarded them and put them on my face.

The sunglasses were slightly bulkier but thanks to the compact concept they still looked like relatively normal sunglasses. I scrolled on the selector switch and it zoomed in and out, settling on one of four different intensities, the distance measurement in a little, semi transparent rectangle in the corner.

"What's wrong?" Ema asked when I frowned.

"I think I need to combine the glasses first and then add the selector switch. The selector switch is controlling the zoom, but I wanted it to select what kind of vision it had."

"Won't it just default to that?" She asked.

"Crap... I don't know... I think the only way to know is to try it." I said. "There is no way to know which it will settle with."

I grabbed the other style of sunglasses and combined them directly to the remaining pairs of binoculars. This time the binoculars themselves added a little scroll wheel, though instead of snapping to certain levels of zoom it was a gradual change. After I tried them and recarded them I added the scroll wheel switch. This added a second wheel to the other side, letting me turn the zoom on and off.

“Okay, step one is a success.” I said. “I’m really glad that worked. Let’s try it with the night vision.”

I repeated the process with the compact night vision viewers and the same style of sunglasses, resulting in a pair of eyewear similarly bulky to the modified binoculars. These had two rubber click buttons on the side that changed the intensity of the night vision as well as a small wheel that adjusted the small zoom capabilities the original device had. I added the scroll wheel style selector to the night vision glasses, the selector appearing again on the opposite side and allowed me to shut the night vision on or off.

“Okay, here is the moment of truth.”

I quickly combined the two modified pairs of sunglasses together and pushed them out. I turned them over in my hands. They remained a reasonable thickness for a normal set of glasses and had controls on both sides. One was the selector scroll wheel and the other was a combination of the zoom control from the binoculars and the intensity control for the night vision. I put them on and smiled as I clicked through night vision, binocular and normal modes.

“Well, at least we have something to hand in, even if the rest of this fails.” I said with a smirk, putting the modified sunglasses down and picking up one of the handheld thermal imaging devices.

I turned on the device and scanned the room, nodding as I could detect heat sources, exactly like one would expect. I picked up another pair of sunglasses, the same style as before and combined the two. The result was a bulky pair of thermal vision glasses, though they were a bit too large to really be called sunglasses. They had the same basic controls similar to my last creation. In an attempt to make them more compact I added a second pair of sunglasses, resulting in something much similar to the night vision or binocular sunglasses I had just made.

I put them on to inspect them, nodding as the image seemed very similar to what it had been but with more depth perception. It was a weird sensation, seeing thermal vision in three dimensions. The temperature key in the corner was interesting but useful. I shook it off and carded the glasses again, carding the other pair as well and combining them together. The result worked perfectly, a set of sunglasses that cycled through binocular vision, thermal vision and night vision.

“Fantastic, that worked perfectly!” I said with a smile, putting down the pair with a nod. “Now for the part that’s a bit of a stretch.”

I picked up one of the thermal imaging cameras and combined it with the voltmeter, frowning at the result. It was even now, a thermal imager and a voltmeter in one. But that's not what I needed. I picked up the second voltmeter, the one that was supposed to be used to make a second pair of glasses and combined it to the combination.

"Aha!" I said happily. "That did it!"

I pointed the now electricity imager around the apartment and laughed as I could see various blue lines, wires crossing the ceiling and floor. I pointed it at the TV, my eyes widening as I could see all the wires and circuits.

"This is incredible." I said, still scanning around the room. "I'm building one of these asap."

I quickly combined it together with two pairs of sunglasses and a selector wheel, before combining it with the combination glasses. Once again I tested them, the selector wheel flipping through everything while the controls on the other side adjusted the image in different ways. I carded the glasses and started on the next mode, combining two of the metal detecting wands with one thermal imager, resulting in a metal imager. I scanned the room and could see every screw, wire and nail. The TV was riveting, I could see through all of the plastic to the circuit boards underneath. It reminded me of an airport x-ray machine, though my hand was slightly more visible and I couldn't see any bones.

Quickly going through the same steps as before I combined the stud finders to a thermal imager, sweeping the result around the room. I gaped as I looked into the apartment next to mine. The view was partially blocked by the TV and a picture frame on the other side, but I was still looking through the wall! It looked as if the wall and everything in it had turned invisible, though I could see the walls of their apartment. It was strange how it determined what I was trying to look through, seeming to only affect one wall at a time, as when I scanned to look at the outer wall of the building it was opaque until the camera switched and the other wall turned opaque and the outer wall faded.

I combined the final addition to the glasses and smirked, holding the final result in my hands before putting them on and slowly clicking through the different options.

"These... came out even better than I could have hoped for." I said to Ema, noting that she didn't run on electricity as she hovered around. "Go get in your exosuit so you can wear them."

A minute or so Ema was walking around the apartment, scanning and looking around. Eventually she handed them back to me, gently sitting on the couch beside me.

“Those are incredible.” She said. “You are absolutely making me a pair of those. What are they ranked?”

“They are a solid B.” I answered, carding them again before retrieving the bonding materials from the fridge. “I’m making both of us a pair of these. They are way too useful not to.”

I went through the binding process, using another lock from my materials and completing it quickly. The glasses smoothed out, the frame getting dark purple highlights, while the lenses gained a purple shimmer when you turned them. I smiled and recard the sunglasses, now completely useless to me.

“Before you do that I need you to make a ring or something for driving.”

“A ring of driving? Well it would be useful for you to be able to drive.” I admitted, nodding for a moment. “Yeah that's a good idea.”

“You should go get the materials now.” She said before continuing. “When you're done I'm going to drive to Illinois and then to Texas.”

“What? Why?” I asked, confused. “I thought we were going to do that later?”

“We can go on a trip to California later.” She explained. “You need an option that will really get you out of New York, something that can buy you as much time as you need. I can drive non stop to Illinois and then non stop to Texas and be back before you need to go to Shield to deliver Clint's glasses.”

“Why don't we go together?” I suggested. “That way we can trade places behind the wheel occasionally to sleep or relax.”

“No. There is only one thing you are doing tomorrow, and that is taking a break.”

“I don't... Okay I do need a break but what about you?”

“Carson, I appreciate the concern but I don't need breaks. For one thing stress is a symptom of biology, which I don't have. I also don't get bored, which means driving for thirty five hours or more would be a break. Plus, being able to shop in Chicago and in Austin will make it a lot less likely that someone will figure out what you're doing. We need to get this sorted as soon as possible.”

I thought about it for a moment before letting out a long sigh, nodding and standing from the couch.

“Alright, fine.” I agreed reluctantly. “I'll go out, get what I need for a book of driving, card the truck and travel upstate. You can leave from there, it should save you a few hours at least.”

I carded Ema and her exosuit, snagged a baseball cap, a scarf, a shirt and a pair of jeans. I grabbed Fury's gloves on the way out as well, taking two landing pads with me in the Deck. From the apartment I drove directly to a bookstore, buying a few books on driving, and a simple gold ring from a nearby pawnshop. I also bought two high quality, high draw weight bows from a sporting goods store I happened to drive past, as well as a huge bag of parts for them. I parked in a parking lot, made sure there weren't any cameras around before getting out of the truck and carding it.

"Travel Upstate."

I almost slipped and rolled down the hill when I arrived at the upstate landing pad. I took a deep breath before sitting down on a rock and pushing out Ema and her exosuit. The sun was slowly starting to set as her metallic body formed around her.

"Hmm... having a body does have its charm I suppose." Ema admitted as she sat next to me. "Everything ready?"

"No, give me a second to put your ring together." I answered, quickly combining the books and her new ring. "Remind me to make that into an advanced driving skill ring later, alright? I didn't want to waste too much time looking for the proper books so that's just the basics."

She nodded and took the ring, sliding it on as I laid out her outfit. She slid everything on easily, making her body shift into things to fit everything easier. The gloves were last. As she dressed I told her about my other purchases.

"How did you like using the bow?" I asked as she put her scarf up and around her face.

"It was nice, the ring made it easy." She said with a shrug that looked completely natural. "Why?"

"Because I will hopefully be making some better weapons for myself in a few days and I figured I could upgrade it a bunch with some stuff I just bought and that could be your weapon."

"Yeah... that would be good." She agreed with a nod. "As long as I'm not stuck with that forever..."

"Do you really think I would force you to only use that?" I assured her, shaking my head. "Eventually I'll be making a whole lot of extra stuff for both of us. For now I just want to make sure you have a powerful ranged option when you need it."

"Okay. I look forward to seeing what you make then." She said before standing. "C'mon, the quicker I get going the better."

I nodded and walked down the hill behind her, stopping beside the long road. It took a few minutes of us hiding behind trees before we found a good moment to push out the truck, the two landing pads going in the passenger seat. Ema climbed into the driver's seat and started the truck. She pulled down her scarf and gave me a metallic smile.

“Go home, order pizza and relax.” She said reassuringly. “I’ll keep you updated.”

“Alright, drive safe.”

She nodded and pulled away... before pulling a U-turn and heading the opposite way. I watched her drive for a moment before checking the other way to make sure no one was coming.

“Travel Home.”