

Chapter 46

What I presume to be the next morning, I'm awoken by someone pressing feather-light kisses on my forehead. My cheek. My lips. My nose. My chin. My lips. I try to not show any signs of waking up in fear of the kisses disappearing, but I cannot help but break out in a huge grin, eyes still closed, feeling half-decent for the first time since traveling back in time. If all it takes is jumping back in time and getting mysteriously ill with no cure in sight for me to be awoken like this, I'll take it any day.

"Morning, sleepyhead." Wanda's voice, still raspy and croaky in the morning, reaches my ears like music.

"Hmm, still sleeping." I hum, dragging out the fleeting feeling of sleep which is starting to already leave me, getting replaced by the now-familiar feeling of feeling something akin to being seasick.

"You slept so still I thought you were dead." Wanda complains, one of her arms snaking its way across my chest where it comes to lay still. I welcome the weight of it, my skin flushing underneath.

"And you didn't try mouth-to-mouth when you thought I was dead?" I so ly exclaim, peeling open my right eye and sneaking a glance at Wanda, dimly visible in the dark room.

Her hair is tousled, and her skin is pale in the weak light which manages to escape Stark's thick drapes, but her eyes sparkle vividly. She scrunches up her nose and sticks out her tongue in disgust.

"Ewww..." She shakes her head and a laugh escapes her, which prompts me to chuckle along with her.

"What, you wouldn't do it if it meant saving my life?" I turn my head to fully face her, opening both my eyes, frowning at her.

She juts her chin out, proudly, a little grin on her face, as she studies my face.

"No."

"Oh you're a hypocrite, Maximo." I call her out and her eyebrows rise in reply.

"Whatever do you mean?" She asks innocently while she narrows her eyes, her eyebrows almost meeting in the middle of her forehead, making her look like a tiny puppy being scolded.

"Don't do that."

"What?"

"Ugh." I groan, extending my hand behind my head and grabbing my pillow and pulling it out from under my head, and letting it smack down on Wanda's face.

She responds by letting out a little squealing noise, a very tiny crack of red electricity instantly appearing and disappearing around her fingers as she's taken by surprise. She pulls the pillow from her face, revealing her shocked face.

"What was that for!?" She shoves the pillow back to me.

"Couldn't look at your face." I chortle, leaving her looking even more undignified.

"Excuse me?"

"Couldn't risk having to unpromptedly practice mouth-to-mouth as you're so opposed to it." My reply and I feel Wanda's body physically shudder with amusement.

"Hm, I wouldn't paint me as being opposed..." She pulls a thinking face that warms my cold, cold heart and I can't help but take note of the happiness she makes me feel; it's such a strange and unfrequented state of being.

"Well, then." I pull her in closer and kiss her boldly, the joy in me growing exponentially, and I feel like I could float away if I weren't for her lips anchoring me and her body melting against mine.

There's a swi and sudden pounding on the door outside before it flies open, making both Wanda and me jump and awkwardly entangle ourselves from the other as if we've been struck. The light from the hallway outside is harsh in contrast to the light in our room, and for a few heartbeats, my eyes struggle to readjust as my head starts solemnly pounding with the now-usual headache I've known for a few days.

"Sorry, Didn't mean to -uh, interrupt." I hear Natasha's low voice come from the doorway, and for once it's laced with something other than matter-of-factness; she sounds amused, almost.

"It's okay." Wanda pipes up next to me, sitting up on the bed, trying to appear casual, and falling.

"I've come to get you." Natasha nods at Wanda, and now that my eyes have readjusted, I can see her amused smirk. She definitely saw something she wasn't supposed to.

"Why?" Wanda instantly retorts, and Natasha crosses her arms over her chest, the fabric of her oversized crumpling, as if there's something she wants to try something."

"Stark and I want to try something." She snoopily replies, as if there's nothing more to it.

"I mean, if you're not busy." She adds, her smirk growing as her eyes flick over to me.

I can feel the heat rise in my cheeks, and when Wanda looks at me, I can tell she's feeling her blush too, and I note with a slight twinge of something almost akin to irritation that even embarrassment suits her. Damn her.

Wanda guiltily looks away from me and back at Natasha, who's still standing in the doorway, arms crossed, looking mightily happy with herself and her choice not to wait for an okay to come in.

"I'm not busy." Wanda tells her and chuckles awkwardly.

I note that her reply makes me feel disappointed, and in response, my body seems to remember it's supposed to be ill, as I feel the room tilt slightly like I'm on a boat on rough seas.

"That's what I like to hear." Natasha tells Wanda and with a nod, she turns on her heels. "Might wanna lock the door next time."

And with that she shuts the door behind her, leaving Wanda and me in darkness again, darkness much more pressing than before. I see Wanda's silhouette turn to face me and then she lies down to me again, her hands on my shoulder. I turn my head to look at her and her eyes meet mine, glistening in the darkness.

"She might have a point with the door." I say just to break the silence.

Wanda h s l s one of her hands slightly o my shoulder, and twists her fingers slightly, which promptly are surrounded by her scarlet. I hear the door click, and the scarlet glow disappears, leaving us in darkness again.

"Better?" Wanda asks me so quietly I have to strain to hear her.

"Oh damn." Is all I can say and Wanda chuckles, as always proud of her magic, and I wish I could feel the same, but mine hasn't made itself known for days now. "That was pretty hot."

"Oh, this old trick?" Wanda moves her fingers again in that way she does, and the scarlet promptly reappears, dancing on her fingers, its' glow reflected softly on Wanda's face.

"Door's locked." Wanda tells me, and although I cannot quite make out her face, I am positive she's smiling an almost imperceptible smile.

"I think I've stopped breathing." I whisper, which to be fair, I think I really have. I cannot believe this is my reality.

"I'll break my rule." She says and then she's kissing me again and everywhere her skin touches mine feels like it's on fire.

I fall, lost in her and all that is her, her bubble wrapping itself around me so tightly I forget that anything or anyone else exists, which is why when the slam of a hand on the door is heard it's double as jarring for me. We pull apart for the second time today, my heart racing and my body struggling to adjust to the rollercoaster that is my feelings this morning.

"I didn't mean lock the door now!" Natasha yells from the other side. "Let's go, Maximo!"

Wanda giggles so ly next to me, burrowing her face in my neck.

"Oh my god, I feel like I'm living with my parents." She complains against my neck, her breath leaving goosebumps on me as it caresses my skin.

"You should probably head down before she breaks the door down." I whisper and Wanda l s her head and looks at me searchingly.

"Will you be okay?" She asks so ly.

"I think I can handle being without you for a few hours." I smile down at her, amused and she rolls her eyes. "But you're sweet."

"I meant, how are you feeling?" She doesn't let me distract her, still looking at me with those eyes of hers and I am careful not to wander and get lost in them.

"Pretty banging right now." I grin and Wanda's eyebrows rise, confusion crossing her face.

"Banging?"

"It's something they say in England. You haven't? Oh my god, no! It doesn't mean."

"Pity." Wanda nonchalantly says her face straight as she watches me, and then she's getting o to get ready, leaving me absolutely shaken and for once, wordless.

"I'm going to try to go for a walk in the park today, Jarvis." I speak out into the empty room as I pull on my shoes, sitting on the corner of the bed to try to conserve some energy.

"Sounds fabulous." Comes the reply from the bodiless AI.

"Will you let Wanda know when she comes back from kicking your boss' ass?" I grin.

"I will. Although, Mr. Stark's suits are nearly unbreakable, so I doubt" Jarvis begins.

"Jarvis, let me tell you Wanda is kicking his ass. It's okay. It doesn't reflect poorly on you."

"Anything else I can help you with, Miss Amery?"

"Nope." I say, standing up. "Just let Wanda know I'm out if I'm not back before they're done. Also, please just call me Olivia."

"Alright, Olivia. Noted. Have a nice walk."

I make my way down towards the ground floor rather gingerly, afraid to have to cut my plan short in case someone finds me having fainted or something. I shudder at the thought of being locked indoors another minute. I hate feeling cooped up, even if I have Wanda for company. With her being away, and nothing to distract me from my thoughts, I just have to get out. I know Wanda would probably have something to say about me going out alone like this, but merely the thought of waiting for her to come back to distract me is enough to make me shudder. No, I cannot stand being inside another second, I need to move. Central Park isn't far away from Stark's tower, and there are always benches I can sit down on if I need a break. I can do this.

The lower down I get, the busier the tower seems to become. I've almost forgotten how huge of a place Stark's home actually is, being holed up on the highest floor with only the occasional outsider popping in. No one casts a second look at me, which tells me Stark hasn't at least ordered a full lockdown for Wanda and me, and I manage to walk out the glass doors with minimal di iculty.

The sounds of the bustling city hit me with full force, and for a second, I feel overwhelmed; my skin going all clammy with cold sweat, and my heart pounding loudly against my still sore ribcage. I take a couple of deep breaths, telling myself I'll get better once I get to the park, where it'll be quieter and calmer. And so, I begin walking. As a New Yorker myself, the agonizingly slow pace I'm walking down the street at is irritating me as much as the people overtaking me, some looking at me annoyed or even muttering something to me. I cannot move more quickly though unless I want to risk throwing up or passing out, both of which seem like equally possible options at the minute. It takes longer than it should, but I do finally make it to the park, which instantly feels like a relief equal to a painkiller.

I can finally breathe again. The late summer green of my surroundings soothes my headache slightly, and I begin to walk at an ever so slightly quicker pace. My underused muscles stretching and contracting with some di iculty, but their struggle just makes me feel all the better, just like exercise always does.

I easily find a path I used to take when I came here to jog early in the morning when the park would be nearly empty. It's slightly di erent now in the light of day and with a few people trailing along, but it's a significantly more quiet part of the park, which suits me just fine. A few people jog by me, but I don't pay them too much attention.

As my body falls into a comfortable rhythm, it frees my mind up and my thoughts begin to wander freely and without constraint, and I let them, feeling like I can handle it now that I am physically moving and away from the center of my worries. At first, my thoughts seem hyper fixated on Wanda, which isn't too unusual, their trajectory seemingly wanting to go to overanalyzing every move and word she made and uttered, my training at the FBI allowing my brain to easily latch onto certain moves or gestures and begin to dissect them. I'm not too bothered, as I'm still riding on a weird, euphoric high a er my last few moments with Wanda, but I do begin to feel slightly unnerved again once I've exhausted that topic and begin to wonder why my magic isn't reappearing, and what is wrong with me, physically, and how on earth I am meant to get myself and Wanda back to the future before we ruin the past all too much. And when I do get us back, will things have been changed by our meddling?

My being so consumed by my thoughts and the familiarity of the path makes me not pay too much attention to my surroundings, which leads to someone bumping into my le shoulder.

"I'm sorry." A man with rather long, dark hair says, smiling a smile that doesn't quite reach his eyes, which stare at me intently.

"Don't worry about it." I tell him, and he nods and we continue our separate ways.

It takes a few minutes, but I find my pace again and my thoughts begin to wander again. What is wrong with my powers? It surely can't be anything to do with this environment- Wanda's work just fine. Could it have something to do with the fact that she had her powers already in 2014, whereas I obviously did not? Or did I damage them somehow when I failed to bring us back correctly?

Just for the hell of it, I stop walking and look down at my hands which I hold out in front of me. I frown in concentration, trying to bid that stupid mist to appear around my hands like it used to, but nothing happens. I can feel it simmering just beneath the surface, but I can't reach it. It just won't appear. I gasp, breaking my trying to call on the mist and I stagger slightly, probably looking like I'm drunk, but having pushed myself just now has suddenly made my feeling of sickness double.

"Won't work." Someone says and I look up, my vision slightly swimming in and out of focus.

The same man I bumped into earlier is standing next to a huge tree which is casting a shadow over him. He has his hands in the pockets of his jacket and he is regarding me with those cold eyes.

"W-what?" I stammer, still focusing on trying to remain standing.

"Your magic." The man speaks again, still not moving from his spot under the tree.

I struggle to focus my vision on him, to see if I know him from somewhere. How else could he know about my magic? But the shadow the tree is casting on him proves too much for my piercing eyes, and he is reduced to a dark shadow with two piercing eyes.

"How do you?" I struggle to form the words. "Who are you?"

The man doesn't reply, he just watches me. I stagger to the side and am thankfully caught by the trunk of a tree before I trip to the ground. I lean against the trunk, the hard grooves in the wood almost hurting me through the thick hoodie I'm wearing. I struggle to keep my gaze on the man, his presence somehow making me feel very uneasy. And it's hard to make me feel uneasy. Habitually I fumble with my hand on my thigh, but there is no gun there. Shit.

The man is slowly walking towards me, his eyes never leaving me. I note he is wearing a thick leathery jacket despite the Autumn weather not being cool enough for that yet.

"St- stop." I extend a hand out towards him.

He stops and looks at me through locks of long, greasy dark hair.

WANDA'S POV

"I'm happy with that. I'm very happy with that." Stark babbles on in the elevator as it's taking us up towards the living quarters.

"You still need to run more tests." Nat warns him, looking at him with that look she has.

I can feel Stark's mind race happily on, stopping, then racing on again as a new idea enters his mind. Nat's is more quiet just like it always was. I stop listening to their conversation, getting lost in my thoughts as I watch her profile. That familiar, cold feeling slowly creeps through my body as I watch her, and I struggle to keep it from reaching my heart.

"Watch out -you're going to make Olivia jealous." Nat suddenly turns her head and whispers to me as Stark keeps droning on about something, oblivious.

My heart does a small jump and the cold feeling is gone, replaced by heat as I feel my face flush. I wish it would stop doing that! My scarlet swirls underneath my skin, seemingly awoken from a slumber, making me feel even warmer than necessary.

Nat's lips rise in a knowing smile and she returns her focus to Stark, with the smile not leaving her face. I wet my lips and break my stare, looking down at my feet instead, hoping that they'll continue their conversation without me having to get involved. I try to not focus on their thoughts, instead searching to find Liv's somewhere above us, but for some reason, I'm struggling today.

The entire morning has been the same; I've not been able to easily anchor myself in the familiar, comforting feel and sound of her mind, which has led me to feeling on edge and uncertain, both feelings I absolutely loathe. Stark's idea of a fun time isn't the same as mine either, and the hours we've spent in that gym testing out some new prototype he's had built has le me quite irritable.

I watch as the floors pass by, agonizingly slowly. At least I can now get back into my room and see Livvy again. She always, without fail, manages to brighten my mood. Even when she's ill and grumpy herself, she makes that coldness disappear on its own and I don't have to constantly fight to keep it at bay.

Finally, the elevator comes to a so stop, and the doors smoothly open, allowing Nat and Stark to exit first, and then me. I begin eagerly walking towards my room, but a familiar voice sounds, which makes me almost trip as my breath hitches.

"Miss Maximo?" Hesays, my name sounding so familiar in his voice. I turn back around, seeing both Nat and Stark watching me, but not seeing him almost believing I would. The coldness is back, and something presses against the back of my throat. My Vision. Till we meet again.

"Olivia asked me to inform you that she has gone for a stroll in the park."

Not my Vision. Jarvis. It isn't him.

I blink stupidly, not knowing what to say or do. His voice is so clear, so familiar, so close it threatens to completely overwhelm me. Before I have the opportunity to do anything, not-my-Vision continues as if nothing happened.

"Miss Romano, I have an update on Mr. Barnes."

"Yes?" Nat eagerly presses him on.

"You asked me to keep looking for any signs of him in the city."

"Yes?"

"I have a match."

"Jarvis, get to the point." Stark speaks to the air.

"Apologies, Sir. A security camera has picked up an 89% match to Mr. Barnes today at 11:38 am."

"Where, Jarvis?" Stark speaks again, his eyes wide with excitement matching that of his mind's, while Nat has her mask on her face and her mind.

"Outside 5th Avenue Station."

"What station is that?" Stark looks around at Nat and me for help.

"Where is that?"

"It is the subway station on the southeast corner of Central Park."

Not-my-Vision speaks, his voice lulling my senses, making my mind forget where I am for a second.

In the silence that ensues, I almost believe Vision is going to appear around the corner or wrap me in a hug from behind. He doesn't, though. He isn't here. The cold creeps all the while closer.

"Wanda! Wanda!" I snap back to reality as Nat's voice rings in my ears.

I look up at her, confused when I see her expression, and hear her mind loudly for the first time in years, her feeling of dread starting to mix with my coldness, pulling me further away from myself.

"Did Olivia tell you where she was going?" Nat asks me, her voice not betraying her emotions.

I shake my head, not completely there, yet. Why is she so unnerved? Jarvis, are you sure she didn't tell you, either?"

"I'm sorry, Miss. Romano." He sounds sorry. It tugs at my heart.

"Search for any signs of her, and quickly, Jarvis." Stark says, meeting my gaze with his wide eyes, which aren't wide with excitement anymore.

Another second of silence ensues while not-my-Vision searches for Livvy. I don't understand why Stark and not-my-Vision nervous energy. I search myself, finding only cold and more cold and darkness, and a little spark of a feeling or something unlike the cold and the dark makes itself known when I think of the state Livvy is in, and of her leaving the safety of the Tower and going outside by herself, without any means of defending herself now that her silver isn't working. All three emotions do not make a nice mix, and my scarlet is bubbling threateningly close to the surface.

"I have a match, Sir." His voice rings in my ear, further complicating my emotions.

"Jarvis, when I said get to the point I meant it." Stark says, his eyes not leaving me.

"The same camera outside 5th Avenue Station, at 11:37 am, sir."

The cold creeps further up towards my heart as I begin to understand Stark's and Nat's emotions. Nat told me about Steve, and about his friend, once. His friend whom she didn't trust, whom she said she would never forgive. His friend who tried to kill him. His friend Bucky, his friend Barnes.

"Nat?" I look towards my only friend in the world, who's not yet my friend, and for the first time, she looks back at me and allows me to read her fear.

A/N: Here we go, distinguished guests, hold on to your hats and scarves!

I am also going to be uploading new chapters more o en now, do not worry and sorry for the slow updates!

Again, thank you so much for voting and adding this to your reading lists, it's so lovely! And to you guys commenting - it's so great and fun for me to read I absolutely love it!

Till the next one! x