

Chapter 70

(again, I am so sorry, I think I need therapy. This is not ok)

"Get Maximo." It's Strucker. I can tell without even looking. I instantly feel my heart drop. Can't they leave us alone, now that I finally...I let my hands drop from where they're being resting on either side of Wanda's face, the motion mirroring my emotions. Wanda's eyes are wide open, staring directly at me but I doubt she's even looking at me, really. The sounds of heavy boots make me look away from her petrified eyes. I can't let them touch her that's as much as I'm clear on. Anything that will make Wanda look that scared is something I will keep away from her at all costs.

Four guards have entered the cell and in their midst, Strucker, looking as pleased as a toad that just swallowed a huge, juicy fly. God, I hate her. She makes her face contort into a smile as her beady eyes take in the scene.

"Thank you for knocking, we're busy, fuck o." I tell her and her smile stretches out even further across her narrow face and it takes all of my willpower not to run at her and smack her. Oh, the satisfaction I would get...

Strucker doesn't reply. She keeps smiling widely as one of the guards breaks formation and marches towards us, making quick work of the short distance between Wanda and me, and him. I instinctively reach out, placing a hand out in front of Wanda, trying to push her back behind me, I glance at her. She seems absolutely frozen in place. Shit, that doesn't help at all to move her, but she's head down, her eyes closed, her mouth not really seeing me. Then my head turns to the guard just in time for him to easily yank me to the side, away from Wanda. I stumble as I fumble on the ground, watching as Wanda is dragged up less than gently by another guard.

"Don't touch her!" I shout but they don't care, just as I thought they wouldn't, instead a third guard joins the second in holding Wanda up, who looks like she's about to pass out any second. I jump up to standing, my legs still and unhappy with sudden movements, but I ignore the feeling of needles in my muscles as I know I can't allow them to separate me from Wanda.

"Wanda, please, fight back!" I yell in a pitchy, shaky voice, seeing Wanda so gone is scaring me more than anything. I can't let her retreat into herself. Shit.

Wanda just watches me passively, her eyes huge and glassy, and I don't need to work hard in order to easily check all the boxes for trauma. I don't have the time to dwell on what's set her to what this stems from, but I can pretty easily guess it must've come from what I read in her file what feels like eons ago about her time with Hydra. If it was anything like my time with them it must have been absolutely fucking peachy.

My entire body seems to know it needs to act, for once I feel fully aligned. I don't want anything I do won't be for my own safety, but for hers. And so I bolt forwards with strength I didn't know I possessed,

escaping from one of the guard's fumbling grip and head straight for Wanda and the two guards holding her. They seem just as mystified as I am by Wanda's sudden inability to move a muscle. For a second, they're taken aback by me and I manage to yank one of their hands o Wanda's shoulder. I struggle, not wanting to frighten Wanda but needing to use all my force seeing as the guards they're here look like all they eat is protein, my head barely reaching their shoulders. Fuck this! I think as I twist the guard's hand backward by pulling his thumb at an odd angle.

Unfortunately quickly my guard catches up to me. He pulls me o, yanking me backward by my hair. I yelp, flailing about uselessly as Wanda doesn't bat an eyelid, her eyes round as saucers.

"Cheap fucking shot." I growl angrily as I manage to elbow the guard behind me in the gut, making him let go of my hair as he gasps.

Okay, I can do this. Come on, Liv.

I swirl around, my body not needing me to tell it what to do. Countless hours in training for the Bureau would do that to you. I imagine the guard being Barry, my sparring partner back in the day. I almost smirk involuntarily, kind of enjoying this, almost being able to imagine that I am back in New York, my old life as exciting as finding an extra nugget in your McDonald's.

The guard might be three times my weight, but that just makes me three times quicker. Before he has the time to even comprehend what is happening I grab a hold of his hand and with my other hand I grab his elbow, and then I twist in opposite directions. It's his turn to yelp, his stupid face turning red in pain. Now I can't help the smirk on my face as I gracefully hop around him, bringing with me his arm.

Twisting it behind his back in a way Barry used to love to twist my arm. As much as I can sympathize with the guard in my hands, knowing exactly where his shoulder will be howling in pain, I also can't help to want to inflict as much pain as possible, as though the more pain, the less pain for Wanda.

"Let go, Now!" Someone calmly says and I blink, looking up from behind the big guard.

I'm met with staring down the barrel of a gun. I freeze, but I don't let go.

"No!" I hear a tiny voice exclaim, and I know it's Wanda. I can't see her though, she's somewhere behind this fucking gun.

It's in the hands of the fourth guard. He watches me calmly, but his eyes betray the joy he's getting from this. Shit. Ok, I can still do this... just think...

I slowly loosen my grip around the guard's arm and he hurs s and pu s away from me as soon as he feels the loss in pressure.

For what feels like a minute but in reality must not be longer than a few seconds, everything is still. I wait in place, my chest heaving rapidly as my heart rate settles and I focus on the task at hand.

Literally. For a few moments, I'm not sure whether or not Strucker is done with me, now that she has Wanda. I dare hope they wouldn't shoot me as how on earth would they ever hope to get Wanda to do whatever they want her to do for them. But who knows, Mr. Gunshot pounds loudly and it and Wanda's cu s are all I can hear. No gunshot.

The guard holding the gun turns away from me and looks behind him. I instantly try to seize the moment and yank the gun out of his hands, but it's almost as though he knows exactly what I'm doing without having to look at me, for he pulls the gun away, and then it comes crashing down towards me and for a second I can feel a cold wave of pain from my head and then it, along with everything else, is gone.

"Fuck!" I groan, fighting an uphill battle trying to open my eyelids that feel like they have boulders attached to them. For a brief moment, I'm uncertain about where I am or what has just happened, but then my head remembers being hit and a thumping headache almost makes me puke. That e ectively returns my memory and I freeze in fear.

"Wanda?"

I focus, trying to listen for an answer. But the silence is too pressing. There's nothing. And so I force my eyes open despite the brightness of the room trying its best to blind me. I'm indeed still lying on the ground of the same lonely cell I've been inside for hours, maybe even a day by now. Wanda's uneaten meal is still on the tray next to the door, which unfortunately looks just as shut as ever. And no Wanda.

"Okay, Focus, Olivia." I tell myself as I look around the room, almost hoping that a clue might pop out of somewhere waving a flag.

Nothing pops out and no flags are waved. I sit up against the wall, trying to gather my thoughts.

I am Olivia. I am in the present. I am imprisoned by Hydra. I was here with Wanda. They took her. I need to find her.

I sit through my memories, trying to make sense of them. It feels weird trying to figure out what happened as I was...I don't even know how to think of it. Under Hydra's control? I am here, I am out though, remembering bits and pieces here and there. It feels like something has changed. I don't know if I can attribute it to figuring my own way out of the convoluted and twisted corridors of my mind by myself this time, without Wanda's help. Well, I'm sure the kissing was of some help...the thought brings out a little smile I instantly suppress, feeling almost ashamed. Here I am, daydreaming about kisses as she's...who the hell knows where she is.

As I am sitting there, I shiver. It's not the cold. I'm alone. And I suddenly think I've figured it out. Hydra, the whole thing. Strucker said they wanted to create more enhanced soldiers, enhanced like Wanda. Then enter me. I accidentally stole their potion, their mind when I knocked that container over on the Ra. Hydra figured they would use one stone to hit two birds, thanks to me. I was their way to Wanda. But whatever the mist is, was, it's not reliable. I am not reliable. I can't use it that well, no matter what Strucker seems to think. Hell, most times I've tried to use it has been an utter disaster. But who is not unreliable? Who has the power of an infinity stone right there at the tip of her fingers? Wanda. They tried to control me just as they tried to control Barnes, but what do those two missions have in common? Wanda broke through.

My head stops reeling as I'm coming to the punch line, and I feel like I've been doused by icy water. Wanda broke through. No one else. How do you fix that issue?

You break Wanda.

"Shit." I exclaim, quickly finding my feet and running towards the door, feeling incredibly cold.

I bang my fists against the door, shouting. Someone in this god-forsaken place must be around to hear me.

"Hello? HELLO?" I shout, trying to keep the panic from mounting inside of me at the same time as I'm trying not to be reminded of the way Wanda would sob about how loud I am. Comes in handy now, though, doesn't it, Wanda?

While I pound on the door, ignoring the way my throat is getting strained, I hope and pray over and over again that we're not in the same facility as last time, that we're not anywhere near that chair.

A few moments later, a or incessant screaming and pounding, the door finally swings open and I almost stumble through the doorway. Two very annoyed guards stand outside, looking at me like I've just disturbed their naps.

"Can you shut the fuck up?" The shorter one of the two asks me anything but nicely.

"Between your shouting and her..." His next words is cut short by an icy scream that travels through the empty corridor outside of my cell.

I feel like the wind is knocked out of me. I've only heard her scream like that once before. I struggle to catch my breath, suddenly feeling entirely limp as my eyes water. Her scream bounces e the walls and echoes away from me, but it stays echoing inside my head long a er she goes silent.

No, no, no.

"See, there she goes again. Fucking bitch." The guard continues and I look at him, not hearing him.

I can only think of one thing that would make anyone scream like Wanda just did, and I can't allow that to happen to her. I can't. The reminder of that blinding white pain splitting my in half makes me jump into action so suddenly the short guard has no chance. I punch him straight in the face. He howls in pain, stumbling backward as he cradles his face in his hands, blood dripping through the cracks of his fingers.

The other guard yells something and makes the wrong decision to try and put her in his aim, but in his hurry, he thinks for a second too long and I whip towards him, not bothering to play nice, so I bring my palm to the so underside of his jaw where I hit him hard. He makes a weird noise and I place my hands on his shoulders, pulling them down until his head connects with my knee which meets him halfway down.

Lights out motherfucker.

The first guard has now managed to pull out his weapon, but he seems to have smeared blood all over himself, e ectively rendering himself blind. He clumsily points the gun towards my general direction. I instantly tuck and roll on the floor, coming up to standing right next to him. I grab his gun with one hand and punch his elbow with my other. I hear a horribly crack as his bone breaks and the guard whimpers and drops the gun, falling down on his knees.

I leave the pair of them there, sniffling and crying, heading towards the right, where Wanda's scream was coming from. I clutch the gun in both hands, jogging quickly down the hallway. It's empty, thankfully. I try to listen out for any noise, but all I can hear are the echoes of Wanda's screams in my ears which enlists me to my chore.

Please don't let her be gone. Please don't let her be gone repeat as a mantra.

I actually trip and fall down onto my knees as the next wave of pain washes over Wanda. This time I can not only hear her scream, but I can feel it too. I stay paralyzed on the floor as tears roll down my cheeks. I know the pain isn't mine, but it doesn't stop my brain from thinking it is. I gasp as my limbs shake, Wanda's scream still in my ears. It's a hundred times worse to experience the chair this way.

Wanda stops screaming and the a ershocks rock through me. My jaw tightens as a wave of nausea rolls over me.

Livvy... Livvy? Her thoughts sound thick and tired, and the usual warmth that follows is gone. Instead, I just feel the way her body aches.

I stand up on unsteady legs. She's not gone. She's not gone. I look around, wiping the tears o my face. I need to focus, and begin.

"Where are you? Where are you?" I mutter to myself as I begin jogging down the corridor again, each closed door on my sides a threat.

A flash of a round room suddenly enters my vision. It's distorted, but I catch it. There are people, blurry, and a vague outline of a thick, heavy, gray door. With dread I realize Wanda's in the same exact room I was in.

"Hey!" A voice loudly shouts and I jolt, turning around just in time to see a guard run towards me from behind.

I turn around, quickly hiding the gun behind me, hoping he hasn't seen it. The guard draws his own weapon, pointing it at me. He looks young, younger than me. I back away a few steps.

"Freeze." He says, his voice heavy with a thick accent I can't quite place. "I take you back."

"Where is Strucker?" I ignore him. "Where is Strucker and where is the round room with the chair?"

I can't tell if he notices the way my voice shakes. But my question seems to take him slightly by surprise as he lowers his gun just a few millimeters. It's enough for me, though. I pounce forward before he has the time to even blink. I grab the barrel of his gun, yanking it forwards. He's lost his balance and he has to take a few steps towards me to rebalance himself. Unfortunately for him, though, that brings his groin directly where I want it and I bring my knee up once again.

The boy screams out in pain, and I quickly twirl around him, placing my gun by his temple as I place my hand over his mouth to attempt to muffle his scream. The boy shakes, slightly pent over, his hands on his groin. Then, he fucking bites my hand.

"Motherf..." I pull my hand away from him in shock and he tries to grab my gun the same way I just grabbed his. I'm too quick for her, though, and I hop backward, kicking him in the knee, making his leg buckle and he slams down on his knees, swearing.

"I don't have time to fight you. Where is Strucker?! point the gun at him and he nods, placing is own gun down on the ground and pushing it towards me.

"Okay, I show you. Just don't hit me in the balls again."

"I can't promise anything." I mutter and the boy clambers to standing as I grab his gun and place it under my belt by my lower back.

"This way." The boy awkwardly walks past me in the direction I was going originally.

"Hurry." I tap him with my gun in the back, making him speed up a little.

Every step feels too slow for me, but at least Wanda hasn't screamed again. I try to tell myself that's a good thing, not a bad thing. I try to keep myself open, just in case she can find me. I can't hear her again, though. I try not to analyze why.

The boy tries to down a corridor to my right, and we're suddenly face to face with two guards, standing outside...the door. I don't even care about the guards, they're just a minor obstacle. I draw both guns and point one at the guards, one I keep on the back of the boy's head.

"Open that door or I blow whatever brains he has rattling around in there out." I loudly say and the boy stops walking, his whole body still. I don't doubt him believing me. The other two guards though look less than impressed.

"No." One of them says and I undo the safety, letting the click fill the silence.

They keep staring at me, as though I'm nothing more than a boring advertisement in the middle of their favorite show. Oh, for fuck's sake.

"Strucker!" I yell at the top of my lungs, knowing full well that if Wanda's scream can travel that well, they can absolutely hear me on the other side of that door. "I'm outside and you are opening that door right now!"

I have no idea what my plan is. I feel slightly unhinged. The guards seem to think the same, as they look at each other with questioning looks. I push the gun I'm holding to the boy's head forwards so it taps his skull.

"Fuck o, you." I growl and he doesn't need to be told twice.

He scurries down the hall, past the two guards who look at him as he runs past. He rounds a corner, and then his footsteps get quieter. I aim my now free other gun at the guards, pointing each gun at each guard.

"Fucking hell." I swear, the wait making me impatient.

I need to get them to act in there. I aim, and fire both guns simultaneously. The noise is almost deafening in the contained hallway, and so are the shouts that follow.

Each guard falls forward, away from the door. I step forward, walking towards where they're crawling away from me, both clutching their knee in the same way as they drag themselves and their bust kneecaps away from me, no longer looking at me as a boring ad.

I come to stand right outside of the door. I aim one of my guns and shoot the lock on the door. I don't even care where the bullet ricochets. It doesn't hit me. I kick the door in and it swings open.

I step into the circular room.

My heart pounds loudly and I keep my guns high.

Wanda.

She's on the chair. Her head is hanging slightly to one side, but is kept up by a thick, leathery strap that goes around her head and is tied to the back of the chair. There are wires connected to her temples, to her chest, her legs, and arms. She looks so small. She's surrounded by men in white coats, but I can only see her. Her red hair looks somehow paler, and it's clinging to the sides of her face, her almost translucent skin covered in fine drops of sweat. Her eyes are closed, but her eyelids flutter open slightly and she sees me, or maybe she doesn't, I can't be sure. Her eyes look like she's been crying, her green irises juxtaposing the redness of the usually crisp whites of her eyes. Her brows furrow slightly and then her eyelids flip over her eyes once more as she mutters something to herself.

I'm spurred back into action and I run over to her, forgetting about everyone else in the room. I drop one of the guns on the floor by her bare feet. It clings against the cold floor. I ignore the red marks on her small ankles where the straps have dug into her skin. I keep one of the guns trained towards where I assume Strucker and more guards are standing as I keep my focus on Wanda.

I kneel in front of her, looking her over. She's still wearing what she was wearing the night to Stark's party. Her shoulders are exposed and somehow look better in the harsh light. I can see her bones already formed and forming on various parts of her body, making her look like a weird sort of amalgam. I place my free hand on the side of her head. She feels cold to my touch, something I've never felt before. Usually, her scarlet keeps her warm no matter what. Her skin is clammy and her eyes flutter open slightly at my touch.

"Wanda? Hey, hey, it's me, it's Livvy. I'm here." I whisper to her and her eyes try to find me, but it seems like she can't really see me. Her pupils stay dilated although the light is almost blinding me and I almost have to squint.

"Livvy?" She asks, her voice raspy and her tongue slow.

"Yeah, it's me, honey." I smile against the tears that threaten to spill from my eyes.

She remembers.

"You're loud." She mutters, her accent thick, eyes half-closed and I let out a small laugh of relief. At least she still remembers her favorite line.

"And you're going to be okay. I promise. I got you." I whisper to her, giving her a quick kiss on her forehead.

"I...have you seen Sparky?" Wanda asks innocently, her voice so low I can barely hear her. She frowns and her eyes slowly flit across the room without stopping to look at anything in particular.

I don't know what to reply, wondering if she's talking about her scarlet or the chair or something else. I try to focus on the fact that she remembers me, or at least it seems like I. I bring my other hand which is still holding the gun to the other side of her face and I so I turn her head as much as her restraints allow, making her focus her unfocused eyes on me. They meet my eyes and seem to grow slightly in her face, making her look almost cartoonish, her high cheekbones creating dark shadows on her cheeks as her big eyes watch me with no emotions.

"Hey, Wanda, can you hear me? I ask her so ly, trying to get her to focus. "It's me Livvy and."

"You..." Wanda struggles slightly. "love me."

She struggles to get the words out and her eyebrows poke upwards and fresh tears spill from her glassy eyes. I feel an uncomfortable stab in my chest.

"I do, love, I do." I fight to not let my own tears start spilling again as I wipe her away.

Wanda hums and she closes her eyes, apparently not having any strength left in her. I press my thumb in the middle of her forehead, right in between her eyebrows, just like I did so long ago. Her brows so on under my touch as she relaxes.

"Alright, that was very cute." I turn my head so quickly my neck whines, but I'd completely forgotten about anyone else for those few moments.

Shit. Liv. If you fucked up now...

"But you kind of interrupted us." Strucker emerges from a group of people I must've missed as I ran past to get to Wanda.

I stand up, my back towards Wanda, and aim the gun walking both hands straight at Strucker's heart. Strucker stops the gun using both hands.

"You won't shoot me." She says, confidently and anger explodes in me.

"I won't?" I challenge her, tightening my grip on the gun.

"No." Strucker simply says and I let out a merciless laugh.

"Let's test your theory." I growl and my finger tightens on the trigger.

"Stop, Prikazyayu tebe podchinit'sya, soldat Vernut." Strucker speaks so quickly I don't have time to react at all before it's too late.

In fact, I do the opposite of reacting, I do nothing. I stand there, like a statue, my body unwilling to move. My finger is still holding the trigger halfway down.

I was so close.

"Ah, isn't that so much quicker than with Barnes? See, I promised you progress." Strucker turns to look at two pale men in suits behind her and they nod, smiling slightly.

"Now, Vernut." Strucker turns back to me. "Put your gun away."

I try to resist, but my body obeys her, ignoring my screaming brain. It's like I'm trapped. I can still think as myself, but I have no control over anything. And so, I watch my hand put the safety back on the gun and then I feel myself place it by my favorite spot on my

"There you are. Now, why don't you do us the honors?" Strucker turns back to me. "I think Maximo here could use one last dose, don't you?" Strucker's smile widens, her eyes glinting with malice.

I panic. Surely she doesn't mean...?

But I know she does. I bite down hard on the inside of my cheek, trying to snap myself back. Can't, I won't!

Come on, Olivia! Snap back, think of-

"Vernut, go over there to Alexei, he'll show you what to do." Strucker says and I hum around compliantly, walking around the chair and Wanda towards an older man with long, gray hair who looks like he should have one foot in the grave. He smiles at me.

"Nice to see you again, Vernut. I had the pleasure of treating you, too." He speaks and hands me a little box with a heavy, black chord connected to it.

I feel boiling inside. I try to punch the man, but my body disobeys me and all I do is shoot out my hand a little too aggressively. I take the box from Alexei. I shoot him daggers with my eyes. He smiles.

"Good, good. Oh, how exhilarating." Strucker says behind me and I feel like sobbing, yelling, cursing, you name it.

"Vernut, why don't you take a step to the side so Maximo can see you. Hans, make her wake up." Strucker barks her orders and we all obey like ants.

I step to the side so that I'm standing slightly away from Wanda on her left side. I'm still holding the box I now see has a dark button on. I want to drop it. To destroy it. To burn it. I know what it does and the thought of it makes me sick. Yet I stand there, still, holding the box nicely in my hands.

Another of the men in a white coat, the one I assume is called Hans steps up and gives Wanda a couple of hard smacks on her cheek. The sound echoes in the round room and I feel my hatred burn hot. I bet if I had Wanda's powers they would all be ash.

Wanda moans so ly and her eyes open and her brows furrow again. Her head is once again leaning against the strap. Her pure green eyes lazily trail across the room, trying to orient herself. I wish she doesn't see me. I wish she won't notice, won't comprehend. But she does. Of course she does. The instant her eyes fall on me I know she recognizes me although she doesn't understand the situation. The way her lips curl upwards in the smallest, most imperceptible so small smile more than I ever thought it would. It's as if she thinks that since I am here, she is safe. I can't help the tears that fall silently.

"Outstanding!" Strucker exclaims but I can't take my eyes o Wanda. "Is everything prepared, Alexei? One final time should do it?"

"All set, madam." Alexei responds, and I hear his machines whirr excitedly.

"Press the button and watch."

I don't think I've ever fought against anything as hard in my life. My arms are trembling. Wanda blinks slowly, her round eyes still on me. I want to scream at her to just look away. Tears threaten to blur my vision completely, yet not a single sound escapes me. I can't look away. I beg with myself to snap out of Wanda's grasp, but I won't. All of my muscles fight to do as I've been told. Wanda won't allow.

"Livvy?" Her husky voice asks the silence and a small sob escapes my trembling lips.

Maybe it wasn't all me, er all. Maybe it wasn't just me who broke loose last time. I didn't do it on my own, I used Wanda. Maybe I'll never be able to break free. I should never have stayed with her if this is the result. Loneliness is better than this.

"Livvy?" Wanda asks once more, sounding slightly afraid.

And I press the button.

AIN'T WILL. DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY. I DON'T HAVE THE WORDS. THIS IS NOT WHAT I PLANNED TO HAPPEN, AN ALL-OUT WAR. I NEED A MOMENT TO

Continue reading next part