# Chapter 78

"I'm just kidding!" Wanda adds loudly, now slightly awkwardly, her cheeks blushing, looking down at the cup of tea cradled between her hands whilst my heart seems to have joined the Circe du Soleil.

"Yeah, I know." I answer her equally awkwardly, shifting slightly on the couch, not fully believing she wouldn't just undo my clothes, or unmagic them as she so eloquently put it. I wonder if she has to actively hold up the spell to keep me clothed, or if I'm safe. I cast a glance down at myself. Not naked. That's a win. But did she just flirt, or is she making fun of me because she-

"This is awkward." Wanda states, her voice cracking slightly after a silent moment consisting of her staring at her tea and me staring at my hands in my lap, my brain trying to decipher Wanda's intentions.

I look up at her and she glances up at me through her lashes, before finding the eye contact too intimate, forcing her to look down again. I wonder what I am expected to reply. I wonder if she's just having a laugh, listening in on my pathetic thoughts, or if we're in the same boat. On one hand, she isn't wrong. This is awkward as hell. But on the other hand, it does sting a little bit that she feels uncomfortable enough to warrant actually speaking it out loud.

"I know." I despondently settle with, fiddling with my fingers in order to have something to do.

I feel Wanda's eyes on me, finding freedom in my apparent fascination with my extremities. I keep looking down, not wanting to make the situation even more awkward by catching her staring at me. I feel briefly self-conscious, wondering what she must think of me, sitting there, hunched over like I am, probably still splattered with my own blood, a virtual stranger to her in the middle of nothing but vast emptiness. It makes me a little sad, feeling so out of place around her. I never felt like this before. Sure, we've had our awkward moments, but something has just simply changed between us.

"I'm..." Wanda begins, her voice catching slightly in the back of her throat and now I cannot help my curiosity; I just have to look up.

Wanda's not looking at me anymore but is leaning back against the back of the couch, her head tilted just slightly back as she's looking out of the window, her expression vacant, her inner turmoil not breaking through her facade. The light from that lone little lamp on my side of the couch is casting a faint, orange glow on half of her face, the other half remaining dark in the shadows. The light is faint, but not faint enough for me to see her randomly dotted freckles on her face. It's so weird seeing her like this, the image of a person I've forever committed to memory, knowing exactly where each of those freckles sits on her skin, and yet she's so unreachable, so far and strange.

Her tongue darts out to wet her lips as she tries to find the words to describe whatever it is she's struggling to find the words for, her eyebrows furrowing slightly in that familiar manner. Her eyes keep fast on the window, their orbs shiny and reflective, mirroring the world around her in a distorted manner. Even as her cheekbones cast sharp shadows on her face, making her look gaunt and tired, she still somehow manages to look prettier than ever before. I wish I could hug her small form, hold her, kiss her lips, and break my heart for her. I can't help the feeling of slight shame mixed with my stomach tightening at the seemingly forbidden thoughts running through my head. I shouldn't look at her like that. Or think of her like that. Not anymore. It doesn't serve either of us.

Thankfully, Wanda doesn't seem to tune in to the personal radio inside of my head as she seems too preoccupied with what is going on inside her own head. I wonder if any of it makes sense to her at all, or if she's just grasping at straws. It's impossible to know how much Hydra corrupted. If only I could just look into her head, to understand, to understand her. Maybe then I could do something to help her. Instead, she just remains as far from me as ever before whilst only being an armslength away from me. I hate myself for only being able to provide her with a sad cup of tea on the other side of her closed door. She should be given so much more. My attempts at helping her are bleak and pathetic compared to what she did for me. And I should do so much more. So much more because I put her here.

I remember how my body would react to her presence after I had been forced to endure those electric shocks that burned away any good memories of her. How my head would tell me no, but my body yes. I wonder if she feels the same now. I wonder if she feels that weird pull, forbidden thoughts crawling through your walls only to corrupt your entire body as you try to understand what is happening to you. My heart sinks slightly as I watch her, realizing she hasn't shown any signs of having had her memories of me changed as I had of her. She's just passive. Like she doesn't have any emotional connection to me in any way. Neither good nor bad. Just nothing.

"Tell me about when we met." Wanda surprises me by asking me, her voice gentle and her eyes surprisingly vulnerable as she turns her head to look at me.

I pause slightly, waiting for her to confirm she's not making fun of me, that this isn't some kind of a trap. She waits silently, her pupils large and dark as they pierce me. I let out a little breathy, nervous laugh as the memories come back to me, slightly unwillingly, slightly distorted, and unnatural, but they come back nonetheless. If there was a way I wanted to go about regaining Wanda's trust, my first choice wouldn't have been this story. Wanda's lips twist up in an almost imperceptible, uncertain smile at my unusual reaction to her request.

"What?" She asks softly, sounding almost like I'd just made fun of her.

"Sorry. I just-" I quickly jump on the opportunity to make myself appear more normal to her. "It's kind of a long story."

"I'd say we've got time." Wanda says heavily, giving me another small smile that doesn't quite reach her eyes, and I can tell she's really trying for me.

"Yeah, I guess we do." I drop all humor from my tone and cross my legs in front of me, getting slightly more comfortable, very much aware of the dichotomy in Wanda's previous statement.

Wanda watches me wearily, staying silent. She seems to have forgotten about the tea, which I'd wager now must be the perfect temperature to drink. I struggle for a second to find the beginning of my story, wondering where exactly Wanda wants me to start. She watches me, her eyes guarded and I realize I need to be the brave one for the both of us.

"Want me to start from when I shot you or you broke my arm?" I ask her with a straight face and she can't help the surprise sneaking its way through her walls.

"You shot me?" She repeats, her voice slightly snarky. "Why am I not surprised."

"Ok, that time though, it was warranted. Actually, both times have been warranted." I hold up a hand and Wanda's right eyebrow rises.

"Did you just completely disregard the fact that you broke my arm?" "After or before you shot me?" Wanda asks, looking slightly pleased with herself.

"Not important." I quickly retort and her lips draw up in a small smile.

I continue on by trying to recall how me and her got here. My throat gets slightly raspy from the lack of rest, but I ignore the slight burn and talk on while Wanda listens silently, not interrupting me once. Even so, it takes me what feels like hours to catch her up on the events up until now. I try to discern any sparks of recognition at the words I'm uttering, but she's a closed book. Not even the methods I've used at the FBI prove particularly effective on her. She just sits, her legs pulled up to her chest, her arms around her legs with her mug in between of her pale hands. Her eyes watch me, that guarded expression hindering anything else from piercing through. I get no reaction from her as I tell her how she gave herself up to S.W.O.R.D. for me, and how she was taken back to the Raft. Not even my slightly humorous retelling of how I got her out of there gets as much as a twitch of her lips. I do think I catch something flash behind her eyes as I tell her about the mist and how I somehow absorbed it on the Raft and was then taken back in time to the Avengers.

When I get to the point where she left me to find Agatha, she finally purses her lips slightly, the biggest reaction I've been awarded so far. I tell her about how Agatha got her to try something she never truly explained to me after I found her engulfed by her own powers up on that mountain looming over us even now. She blinks a couple of times, as if clearing her eyes from whatever emotion was trying to peek through. When she looks at me again, expectantly waiting for me to go on, she's back to her passive state from before. And so I continue on, pretending as though I'm not trying to grasp at any minor reaction I can get from her in order to try to put the pieces together.

As I tell her about our time at Stark's with him, Natasha and Steve, I remain purposefully vague on the way our friendship seemed to evolve into something different. I don't know why I'm reluctant in my retelling, somehow feeling as if I told her about the way everything would just melt away as she kissed me, she might take that away from me. I realize that if I'm never going to experience that side of her ever again, I want to at least be the owner of those memories and feelings. And so I focus on how I was captured by Hydra and poisoned against her, and how I eventually regained my memories. I make it sound like the memories just came back to me, not that they came back because of Wanda's magic. And then I make it to Agatha, Hydra, and Strucker again. My heart tightens anxiously as I recall how I was left in the cell by myself while they took Wanda away from me. How I tried to find her. How I found her.

I pause for a moment, my tired throat aching as I pretend to just pause in order to recall. Wanda waits patiently, like she has been doing for the past... however long. I blink, looking away from her.

"And after, I found you with them, and they..." I glance at her, but have to look away almost immediately again. "They were doing some tests on you. I guess the same things they did to me. Strucker said Hydra wanted us to do their bidding, because of, well, your powers and whatever powers I apparently have. So they were wiping you clean."

"And they used you against me, didn't they?" Wanda finally speaks, her voice much lower than mine, almost nothing but a breath of air. But I heard her.

"I... I'm the reason why you can't remember." I sigh and look up at her, waiting for the blow.

Wanda's eyes narrow slightly as she watches me. Her lips are pressed together and she doesn't move, except for those green eyes which don't miss anything. My heart clenches in my chest, as if it knows it might be pulled apart at a moment's notice. But the blow just never comes.

"I try to remember." Wanda slowly speaks, her tongue rolling over her 'r's slightly. "But it's like... there's just nothing."

"What do you mean?" I dare to push her slightly. Wanda scrunches up her nose slightly as she lets her legs down from hugging them, instead going to sit cross-legged with the probably now cold cup of tea precariously balanced on one of her thighs.

"I think remember everything, just nothing you just talked about." Wanda frowns and looks at me with her head slightly tilted in question.

"Nothing at all?" I hesitate.

"Nothing. All I know is that I saw you. When I was strapped to that chair." Wanda's voice goes slightly cold and I swallow, knowing exactly where she is going with this. "I saw you standing there with that thing in your hands. And when you pushed-"

Wanda shudders slightly, an involuntary reaction to her memory and I wish she wouldn't go on, because I know. I know and I don't want to hear it coming from her lips. Wanda doesn't go on. She goes silent, her frown still persistent on her face, her whole focus on me, watching my reaction. I realize there's a reason for her telling me this. She's gauging my trustworthiness. My truthfulness. If, based on my story, she chooses to believe me, then I surely wouldn't have caused her that pain, but if she goes by what her head tells her, then I am a liar and a danger to her.

"Wanda, I-" I begin, but looking into her eyes I fall silent. There is a steeliness in her eyes, a guardedness, and a slight fear even, but beyond that, I see real hurt. And having seen that, I can't try to justify my actions to her.

"I'm so sorry." I say heavily and she takes a small breath, her lips parting slightly and she shuffles slightly on the couch.

"In your story-" Wanda slowly begins again and I take a calming breath, oddly feeling like I am sitting in front of my favorite teacher trying to explain to her how the window I broke in school was nothing but an honest mistake.

"You say you remembered everything you lost." She states, but it sounds more like a question.

"I do. The memories feel slightly weird, like they're from a dream, like they're slow to come to me. But yes, I remember." I explain, aching to comfort her as despite her steely exterior she just looks so broken, trying to question me without her fear showing through.

"You didn't say how." Wanda juts out her chin slightly, her eyes on me like they can see right through me.

"How what?" I ask in a small voice, trying to buy myself some time.

"What are you not telling me?" Wanda questions me after a brief pause, her shoulders tensing up slightly.

I hesitate, something she doesn't miss. I feel my heart beat faster at the realization that I might have to confess to her. I'm certain she's picking up on my thoughts, or at least the very surface level of them as she looks like I've just confirmed her suspicion.

"Olivia." She says, my name slipping off her tongue and sounding so wrong. I don't think she ever used to use my full name before.

"There's a reason Hydra did what they did to us." I croak out, feeling vulnerable where I'm sitting without anything to fiddle with, so I grasp at the right sleeve of my hoodie, beginning to nervously toy with it. Wanda's eyes flit down to my hands in my lap and then back up again.

"What do you mean?" She asks me slowly, her eyes narrowing as she tries to figure out what I'm hinting at. In the midst of it all, I appreciate that she isn't reading my thoughts because she so easily could just figure everything out that way. Maybe that would be the easiest way.

"When they got me, they found all of my memories of you and us together..." I try to explain to her in a way that wouldn't scare the crap out of her, because I can sense that she's very much on the edge about sitting here with me, probably longing to go back to the solitude of her room.

"And they twisted them. I came out of there wanting to hurt you." I watch her trying to understand, her frown deepening.

"Why would they want that?" She asks and my heart pounds slightly more vigorously.

"Because they knew that if it was me who hurt you, it would be... worse, I guess." I shrug awkwardly as she watches me and I wish she would just understand on her own.

"Why?" She questions, not unlike a toddler in her genuine curiosity. It's cute, but I wish I could just shake her by the shoulders, it's just so obvious.

"Why do you think they took away all your memories of me, Wanda?" I prompt her, dancing around the subject.

Wanda takes a deep, slow breath as she studies me. This is what animals at an auction must feel like, I briefly think. Wanda wets her lips again, something I now realize is a bit of a nervous giveaway on her part.

"Does it hurt you?" She wonders, her head tilting to the side again, her voice so soft.

"It does." I admit, my voice shaking slightly as my emotions bubble to the surface and I try to repress them.

"Why?" She asks again, now in almost a whisper.

"Why do you think?" I ask her back, still not giving in.

We hold eye contact for a little while, my heart hammering in my chest, my palms slightly sweating. I watch Wanda's chest rise and fall steadily, wondering if her heart is racing away like mine is. If it is, she isn't giving it away. She pulls her cardigan that has slipped off her shoulder back on, her eyes never leaving mine. I wonder if the silence has lasted for an eternity or just a second. I could never tell time while my eyes were locked with hers.

"Because you love me." Her lips finally whisper, and she frowns slightly, biting her lower lip as if the action would make the words she uttered somehow retreat back onto her lips.

The tension leaves my body now that she's said those three words, a statement I no longer have to safeguard. I smile sadly at her and nod, not really trusting my own voice to carry. And besides that, what more is there to say, really? She said it and there's nothing more to add or to explain away. A truth has never been so simple.

"And I loved you." Wanda whispers again, this time directing the statement more at herself than me.

Again, I give her nothing more than a small nod. I cannot explain that one away either, despite it not really being my truth, but hers. But as far as I know and feel, it was the truth. I am not certain my voice isn't to be trusted as my gut wrenches slightly at the realization that that truth exists in the past, echoing the tense she used in her sentence. I loved you. It was the truth for a moment in time.

The silence spreads between us, heavy and unpenetrable. I don't know what more to say, my body is suddenly feeling exhausted and it's a real struggle to keep my eyes open. Wanda studies me for a little while longer, her face dropping slightly and she looks more tired than before, the dark circles under her eyes suddenly much more visible. Her cheeks look more hollow and her skin looks paler. And yet she holds some sort of magic beauty to her, and I doubt she could ever not be beautiful in my eyes. After a while, her eyes slowly drift away from me as she sinks back into her own little world inside of her head, one I will never visit, but I let her.

I sink slightly deeper down on the couch, resting my head against the back, my eyelids dropping down over my eyes and I have to keep fighting gravity. I'm just so tired. So tired of holding it all together, so tired of fighting.

"I think your tea is cold." I hear myself say, my voice thick with sleep and I fight to look at Wanda, my vision slightly blurry.

She blinks confused, then looks down at the mug in her hands. She's not drunk from it once. She then smiles slightly to herself, and the mug suddenly and silently begins to steam, the water seemingly hot again.

I smile to myself too, the sight of her calming, and knowing that she's right there beside me, physically at least, I quickly float away into a land of darkness.

A/N: Hope you liked this one! :) I'm always feeling a little uncertain with these slower chapters, idk why but i just feel like if one hundred million things aren't happening you'll be bored :)))

Anyways, slower chapter very much needed, i think it's kind of indicative of how Liv's and Wanda's relationship has changed so massively now... will they ever get back to where they were... who knows? What do you think? Looks great so far doesn't it, lols

(sorry for any typos etc, I'm just as exhausted as Liv atm)

Till the next one my lovelies! x

Continue reading next part