



## Chapter Twenty-Three

Wanda's magic had been working from the moment she had appeared in Alex Von Strucker's office, it had seeped into the ground and spread beneath the building. It had worked on corrupting and breaking down the foundations the building stood on before spider webbing up into the walls. It would cause endless issues now it was unleashed.

The time that she had spent had been long enough that Wanda had been able to see exactly where the Hydra base was. It had been far too easy to see into Alex's mind and then to allow her magic to confirm it. She had tried to reason with him, to offer a way to resolve this without anyone getting hurt but Alex had made the choice when he had refused to return Y/N to the compound.

Wanda wouldn't stop now until Y/N was back, if she had to tear the building to the ground then she would. Standing up from the circle of candles, Wanda put the Darkhold back into hiding, a pocket between realities where only she could summon it from. With a flick of her hand the candles extinguished and she then strode out of the cabin, her magic swirling around her as she lifted off from the ground. It wouldn't take her long to reach her intended location and she didn't anticipate anyone trying to stop her.

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Stephen Strange stood in the conference room of the compound, Wong at his side as they both listened to the Avengers explanation as to what had happened in the hours before their arrival. Stephen had already noted a shift in the balance of magic, which was now explained by the use of the Darkhold by Wanda. Wong had also expressed great concern for the repercussions this could have to the natural order of magic. Stephen and Wong had already been trying for a few hours to locate Wanda.

"If Wanda has indeed allowed the Scarlet Witch in fully, then this raises the seriousness of this situation" Stephen sighed as he looked at the team, "Not all magic is the same, I won't go into the exact details of the delicate balance it works on but the magic that Wanda accesses is very different to mine. Wanda, well the Scarlet Witch wields Chaos Magic, the most destructive and powerful magic that is known. There is limited research held on the Scarlet Witch, but what we do know is there was a time she was worshipped as a Goddess and her powers are unrivalled. It pains me to say it but even the Supreme Sorcerer would struggle to outmatch her."

Nat and Yelena exchanged a glance between them, for awhile they had in private discussed their concern about just what Wanda was capable of and whilst they had expected it was dangerous, they hadn't expected it to be on this level. Nat expected most of the team had, had their concerns as well. For so long though Wanda had been in control of the power, of the Scarlet Witch but the current situation had opened a doorway for the Scarlet Witch to gain more influence over Wanda's actions and feelings.

"So what do we do about it?" Steve asked, "We can't just let Wanda, no matter how powerful you say she is, go up against an entire Hydra facility alone. For all we know she is walking right into a trap. They already have Y/N, we can't let them get Wanda as well."

"Wanda has warded herself well, trying to find her is going to take a little bit of time" Wong answered, "As soon as we locate her, myself and Stephen will be able to portal you all there. For now I suggest you all carry on trying to find out more about these Hydra plans and have a way to stop that for when we do find them."

Tony frowned deeply as he leant back in his chair.

"Alright, Bruce and I will carry on with FRIDAYS help trying to crack into the Hydra files held by Shield and see what we can find out from there" Tony replied, "Everyone else, I suggest getting suited up and being ready to move as soon as we get the information we need."

The door to conference room opened and Sharon walked in.

"You won't need to crack the files, I still have access to all of Shields systems as part of my role with the CIA. Just tell me what we're looking for" Sharon said as she took a seat next to Steve and pulled her laptop from her bag.

"Anything and everything to do with Y/N and the Von Strucker's. Focus on Baron's research and experiments. Hopefully in that we'll find out what it is that we've been missing so far" Steve answered, giving Sharon a small encouraging nod, he knew her staying at the compound was difficult.

Sharon gave a slight nod back and immediately turned her focus to her laptop.

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Alex had felt a ripple of panic and fear the moment Wanda had looked at him and said she was coming for him. He had been planning to carry out the experiment in a couple of days but now with the threat of Wanda Maximoff showing up, the plans needed to be accelerated. A number of the scientists were warning him it wasn't ready, but he simply had guards hold guns to their heads to get them to carry on working.

"Find Karla, I'm going to need her abilities to try and encourage my darling sister to comply" Alex demanded of one of his guards, who grunted in response and left to go and find Karla.

In order to start the machine and keep it running, it would require Y/N's powers. Alex had hoped they'd have more time to figure out a way to extract them from Y/N so they wouldn't actually need her to use them. However time had run out and so far through all the beatings and verbal assault, Y/N had not even shown a flicker of her power in response. So they were no closer to figuring out how to trigger it without Y/N.

Alex had therefore come up with a plan that would force Y/N to use her powers, he would present her with a situation that he knew would break her resolve entirely. That way she would willingly use her powers, he would leave the part out about how the machine would likely drain her, resulting he imagined in her not surviving the process.

"You asked for me?" Karla appeared at his side, looking down from the suspended gangway at the scientists and agents scurrying around the machine.

"My sister is going to need to be encouraged to do what needs to be done. I'd like you to appear to her as the one person she appears to care very much about. We're going to convince her that Wanda Maximoff has been captured by us" Alex explained to Karla, a mutant with shapeshifting abilities that had become an invaluable asset to Hydra and this mission.

Karla smirked darkly understanding exactly what Alex was planning. With barely a second of effort, Karla's true identity vanished and now standing beside him was Wanda Maximoff.

"Hail Hydra" She said to Alex quietly as two guards grabbed hold of her, slamming wrist restraints and a collar around her neck.

"Hail Hydra" Alex grinned as he nodded for the guard to follow him, dragging Karla as 'Wanda' with them.

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Wanda flew through the trees, her magic swirling around her as she moved. Already she had sensed attempts by Stephen Strange and Wong to locate her and each time she had lashed out and cut it off. There was no doubt in her mind that the entire team were trying to locate her, but she didn't care, they had lied to her and right now all her focus was on getting to Y/N.

Slowing slightly, Wanda pushed up to be above the tree line and found herself looking at the facility that was the target of her anger and disgust. Pulling on a tendril of the magic she had woven into the foundation of the building, Wanda watched the ground shake. She wanted Alex Von Strucker to know that the Scarlet Witch had found him.

Eyes glowing with a deep crimson, Wanda readied herself to attack the facility with every bit of magic she possessed. As she raised her hand, a ball of red chaos magic swirling in it, the air around her shifted and a portal appeared to her left.

Stephen Strange floated through it, alone.

"Wanda, stop. Please listen to me" Stephen spoke as he drifted to be in front of her, the magic of his cloak holding him there.

"There is nothing you can say Stephen to stop me" Wanda snapped at him, "They will pay for what they have done."

"This could be a trap Wanda. Von Strucker's plan could have been to have you and your magic turn up here, do you really want to end up giving him exactly what he wants?" Stephen asked, trying to reason with her.

"I'm the Scarlet Witch, there is nothing these pathetic people could do to stop me" Wanda said with growing annoyance.

"Wanda we talked about the Darkhold, I warned you of the dangers of using it. You're breaking the natural order by allowing so much Chaos Magic to be freely used" Stephen said, hoping that the rest of the team were getting into place with Wong's assistance, whilst he kept Wanda distracted.

Wanda tilted her head as she looked at Stephen.

"You break the rules and become a hero. I do it and I become the enemy. That doesn't seem fair" Wanda replied.

Stephen shook his head.

"Wanda you are not our enemy, but I cannot allow your magic to go unchecked. You may think this is the right thing to do, but I'm warning you the more you use the more it will corrupt you. It will make a monster of you" Stephen explained, concern lacing his words, "Let me help you Wanda, please."

"I'm sorry Stephen, but I will not lose another person I care about" Wanda answered as she launched her magic out toward him.

Symbols had anticipation that talking Wanda down wouldn't work and symbols of protection instantly appeared around him. They were cast by himself and reinforced by Wong who was now below with the rest of the Avengers.

At least Stephen had brought them enough time to assemble.

Though seeing Wanda, seeing the Scarlet Witch he wasn't sure even all of the Avengers would truly be enough to stop her.

Not when Wanda seemed to be beyond reasoning with now.

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