



Chapter Twenty-Seven

Three Months Later

The leaves on the trees surrounding the compound had begun to turn a mixture of burnt orange and worn yellow, there was a crisp chill in the air and the days were slowly growing shorter. Summer was finally making way for the autumn months of the year. The season was not the only thing that had changed.

Wanda Maximoff had become a ghost of the person she had been, with each month that had passed by, a smaller part of her had fallen away. She had searched tirelessly that first month, reading the Darkhold from cover to cover, over and over again, trying to find a way to save her, to save Y/N.

No matter how many times she tried to figure out a way to travel through the multiverse, none of them worked entirely and Wanda had been unable to even figure out what universe Y/N could have ended up in. She believed though, still, that Y/N hadn't died. She wouldn't accept that as being a possibility.

In the immediate aftermath, the team had been the ones to bring her back home to the compound and Wanda had forgiven each of them. The reasons they had fallen out, they seemed so small now, now that she was faced with losing Y/N. Bucky had stuck with her for the days that had followed, as she tried to process what had happened. He had cared for her like a brother, just simply being there offering her a shoulder to cry on as she fell apart.

Nat and Yelena had also in rotation with Bucky been there. None of them had wanted Wanda to be alone. The atmosphere in the compound had been sombre those weeks, but in the last month the others had finally begun to resume their normal routines, taking on missions and sorting out their own personal lives.

None of them had pushed for Wanda to move on though, for her to join them, they understood that she needed space and had to process things in her own time. That didn't stop any of them worrying though, they were all aware of the way that Wanda was withdrawing into herself and had become almost obsessed with the multiverse.

Stephen and Wong had reassured the team though, that they were keeping a very close eye on the magical balance in their own universe and had set up various warning systems. These would alert them to any threats that might occur as a repercussions for what Hydra had done, but also monitor what Wanda was doing.

So for the time being, they allowed Wanda to grieve.

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The gravel of the path crunched beneath Wanda's boots as she walked, she had taken to walking through the grounds of the compound in the early morning. It was a part of the day that allowed her to take in the silence before the others awoke and the compound became a hub of activity.

Turning the corner, Wanda looked at the lake, it stretched out for a mile in front of her and was surrounded by trees. This had become the spot she always ended up at, no matter what route she took she would find herself standing on this side of the lake, on the shore line. Here, this was where she had shared that last kiss with Y/N all those months ago.

Wanda closed her eyes, the memory replaying in her mind. She missed her, more than words could ever explain. Without Y/N it felt like the most important part of her had been torn away, a wound that couldn't ever fully heal, no matter how much time passed.

Sitting on the pebbled shore, Wanda looked out at the still water of the lake, her hand reaching down to pick up one of the pebbles. When she had projected herself into Y/N's dream, Y/N had said to her: "I pushed aside all my training and put myself right in the line of fire, all to make sure you were safe. And I know that I would do it again and again if I had too."

That was exactly what Y/N had done at the Hydra facility. She had put Wanda and her safety above everything else and done it without hesitating. Y/N had seen one way to save her, to save them all and sacrificed herself to do it.

Wanda's lower lip trembled, her mind going to that memory, the memory of Y/N jumping into that black hole. As she opened her eyes a single tear rolled down her cheek. She had been lost in her thoughts, that Wanda hadn't noticed someone else had come to the lake until they cleared their throat to let her know she wasn't alone.

Looking up, Wanda smiled sadly at Bucky.

"Thought I might find you up here when you weren't in your room" Bucky said as he walked over and lowered himself down to sit beside Wanda, "I'm sorry if I've interrupted, I just wanted to come and make sure you were alright. I've got to head to Wakanda for a couple of weeks and didn't want to leave without saying goodbye."

Wanda knew that Bucky had been putting off going to Wakanda for the last month, he had told her that being there for her was more important. Even though she had told him over and over again that he shouldn't keep Shuri and T'Challa waiting.

"No matter how hard I try, I can't feel her, Bucky" Wanda told him as she looked down at the pebble in her hand, "I just can't feel her..."

"I know I've said it before, but we will figure out a way to find Y/N and bring her back from wherever she is. Y/N is tough and I believe that she will have figured out a way to survive no matter what universe that thing spat her out in" Bucky said as he looked over at Wanda, "Don't give up, okay? You're quite possibly the most powerful being in not just this universe but all of them Wanda, so if anyone can work out a way to travel between them it's you."

"I'm just so tired Bucky" Wanda said so ly, "I'm tired of losing the people I care about. I can't keep doing this. Sometimes I wonder if I'm ever meant to know what it's like to be truly happy, because just as I feel it, it's taken away from me."

More tears fell rolled slowly down Wanda's face as she thought about her parents and her brother, Pietro. Now she was adding Y/N that list of heartbreak.

"Why don't you come to Wakanda with me? If there is anyone that can figure out a way to fuse magic and technology together in a way that is safe, then it would be Shuri. Maybe there is a way to recreate what Hydra did but better, you know a way to open a portal into other universes without the danger."

Wanda considered it, it was the first idea in awhile that sounded like it had the potential to work. She didn't want to let herself hope too much though, it would only make it worse if it turned out not to be possible.

"Nat and Steve are coming as well, so don't worry you won't be stuck with just me" Bucky added with a slight smile.

"Thank you Bucky" Wanda said as she lent against him.

"Always got your back Wanda" Bucky replied as he put an arm around her.

They stayed sat on the shore of the lake for a little while longer, before Bucky finally said that they would need to get ready to leave that afternoon. Wanda agreed to meet him, Nat and Steve on the Quinjet.

Back in her room, Wanda pulled a bag out from her closet and began packing things. As she moved around her room, Wanda came to a stop by the armchair that was tucked in the corner of her room, it faced toward the wall of floor to ceiling windows that looked out onto a view of the grounds. On the top of the chair there was a worn grey sweatshirt, on the front of it printed in blue letters that were now partially faded was, FBI.

Wanda had found it amongst the bag of things that had been left in the room Y/N had been given at the compound. Picking it up, Wanda hugged it to her, the scent of Y/N's perfume still lingered on it.

"I will find you Y/N, no matter what it takes" Wanda spoke so ly, reminding herself of the promise she had made Y/N when she had pulled her from that machine.

Putting the sweatshirt into the bag, Wanda zipped it shut, before heading out of her room. She hoped that going to Wakanda would be the right choice. That this would be the place she'd be able to figure things out, because she wasn't sure how much longer she would be able to hold herself together.

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