



## xxii. Funerals and Finding Bucky

**A/N: Guys this story has reached 10k reads and over 500 votes and honestly that's a lot for my stories and I just want to say thanks.**

Auralie and Sam sat on either side of Steve at Peggy Carter's funeral. Both had agreed to go and support their friend without a second thought. Steve had carried in the body and participated in the procession and was now watching Peggy's great niece, Sharon Carter, giving a speech.

"Aunt Peggy always said," Sharon was saying, "even when the whole world is telling you to move, it is your duty to plant yourself like a tree beside the river of truth and say no, you move."

The words struck a chord within Auralie's heart. She had been fighting for a long time. She had been fighting for the fate of the world and the freedom of humanity. She had been fighting smaller battles, trying to learn how to handle her emotions and support her friends. There, of course, was this newest battle with the government and the Sokovia accords. There was the fight for her rights and all the pride rallies, protests, and celebrations she had gone to because she wanted to love who she loved. There were big fights and small fights, internal and external fights, and sometimes it was easy to forget why she went through all that trouble. So Auralie was thankful to Peggy Carter and her words for reminding Auralie to stay strong.

She looked at Steve. There were tears in his eyes. She took his hand and squeezed it reassuringly. Though he was grieving for Peggy, he had his determined face on, and Auralie knew he was not giving up his own fights.

Soon the ceremony was over and Sam, Steve, and Auralie were left. Steve and Auralie, who both knew Sharon a bit from Shield, wanted to give her their condolences. Then they heard the clicking of heels and saw Natasha, dressed in black for the funeral, came in.

Steve stood up and went to meet her. Auralie and Sam stayed where they were. They could tell that it was Steve that Nat wanted to talk to, and they would respect their friends.

Steve and Natasha briefly debated the Sokovia Accords. Natasha was going to sign, and Steve was not. However, they kept the discussion civil, knowing this was not the time or the place to fight. Auralie listened intently. She discovered that Clint said he was retired, Tony, Rhodey, and Vision were all going to sign, and Wanda was undecided. Auralie also knew that Sam agreed with Steve and that she herself would not sign.

"You could still sign," Natasha said, in one last attempt to change the soldier's mind, "staying together is more important than how we stay together."

Steve sighed, "you know I can't do that."

"Yeah," Nat agreed, "I know."

"Well then, what are you doing here?" Steve asked.

Natasha looked up at him, "I..... I didn't want you to be alone." She reached for him and wrapped her arms around him. His arms wrapped around her and they stood like that for a long time.

Auralie and Sam were still there of course, and they had gone there to support Steve and to make sure he wasn't alone. But Natasha coming had a different significance. Auralie and Sam and Steve were usually in agreement about things. Natasha and Steve were two different people, but they still cared about each other and put their relationship before any sort of fighting. The fact that they could still get along even in these circumstances made Auralie have hope for the days to come.

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A few days later, everything had gone to shit.

The Winter Soldier had supposedly blown up the UN, the king of Wakanda was dead, and the whole world was looking for Bucky Barnes. Natasha had just called Steve (she was ok, thankfully) and warned him to stay out of it. Of course, that was not about to happen.

Thanks to a tip-off from Sharon Carter, they had found Bucky's apartment. Sam was on the roof for aerial support and to keep watch. Steve and Auralie were in the apartment, waiting for the man they knew in their hearts had not bombed the UN.

"Do you think he's been ok for the past three years?" Steve asked, looking at Bucky's notes, the cobbled together pieces of the past he had managed to find.

"I can't begin to tell you, Steve," Auralie said honestly, "but I hope so."

It had been three years since she had met the broken puppet of Hydra. She had been eighteen then, and a lot had changed. Shield was gone, the Avengers were crumbling, and Auralie had met Wanda.

One of the things that had caused Auralie the most fear in the past few days was worry for Wanda. She was terrified of what the government would do to the sokovian. They saw Wanda as a monster, not as the wonderful person Auralie knew the witch was. Auralie wished Wanda was with her now. She hoped Wanda was alright. She also wondered what would happen to former Shield agents like Maria. Her sister had been busy, and they hadn't seen each other much, but damn Auralie wished she had Maria to help her.

But Auralie was twenty one and she had been dealing with this sort of shit for her whole life. She would have to stay strong like she always did.

They heard the keys turning in the doorway. Bucky was back. He came in, holding a bag of plums and looking very startled.

"Do you know me?" Steve asked.

Bucky eyed him warily, "you're Steve, from the museums."

"What about me?" Auralie asked, "you wouldn't know me from any museum."

Bucky met her eyes, and she could see the surprise. He said, "you're Auralie. We met by the river. You wanted to help, I think."

"Yeah," she said so ly.

Bucky seemed less worried, but then he turned back to Steve and seemed more apprehensive. Steve said, "you pulled me from the river. Why?"

"I don't know," Bucky shrugged.

"Yes, you do," Steve whispered.

Bucky nodded, and both Avengers breathed a sigh of relief. He remembered them.

That was when Sam cried, "we have incoming."

Steve shot her a look telling her to start the escape plan they had made. First, she held out her hand to Bucky, who passed her the bag of plums. She figured that he wouldn't want them to go to waste. Then she raced for the fire escape and began climbing up, going to help Sam distract them. She spotted Bucky punching through the floor and grabbing a backpack.

Auralie knew Steve would take care of him as she pulled herself onto the roof, where Sam was waiting.

Her good friend looked at her and the grocery bag she held and asked, "are those plums?"

Auralie smiled sheepishly, "yes."

"How are plums important right now?" Sam asked.

Auralie gave him a look, "plums are fruit and fruit is nutritious. Now shut up and get ready to fight Wilson."

**A/N: Bucky is going to play a bigger role in Auralie's story. And you can bet that Auralie will make sure that Bucky gets all the plums he wants.**

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