

"You know when I didn't believe you about how he might be too far gone? Yeah this is more terrifying than I thought," Scottie muttered as her and Natasha stepped over body after body as they headed to where Clint was about to finish off the Japanese man who was begging for his life minutes earlier.

"Shut up," Natasha muttered, the seriousness in her voice making Scottie remember the situation they were in. Her hand rested lightly on the gun tucked against the back of her bulletproof vest as the duo moved through the rain to stand metres away from Clint's back.

Scottie listened to the heavy rain as she shut her eyes for a moment, reminding herself that if she did have to use the gun to protect herself from Clint if he was just that far gone, she would never be able to kill the man. She was probably a liability on Natasha if this didn't turn out the way they had planned it to - which Scottie was worried was likely after seeing the street turn red from the rain water washing the blood towards the street drains.

"You shouldn't be here," Clint suddenly spoke in English, having wiped the blood of the now dead Japanese man off his sword by using his sleeve. He had pulled the mask from his head before he spoke, making it obvious to Scottie that he for some reason had cut his hair into a mohawk. Scottie squinted slightly at it, not liking the look before Natasha's voice brought her back to the matter at hand. "Neither should you."

As Clint slowly turned around to look at the duo with despair in his eyes, Scottie noticed his eyes flicker slightly at seeing her standing there. It was in that exact moment she realised why Natasha was so insistent on bringing her along - Clint had never had the chance to be told that she was alive. She had reappeared at the start of the battle with Thanos, and he had le before anyone had been able to contact him after the snap. Natasha was hoping that seeing Scottie alive and older would convince Clint that there was some hope left.

"I've got a job to do," Clint said, keeping his voice monotone as he tried not to let the reappearance of his old friend get to him. He didn't want Natasha and Scottie to get in the way of his new life.

"Is that what you're calling this? Killing all these people isn't gonna bring your family back," Natasha told him matter-of-factly. Scottie knew she was right, and the slight tears in his eyes as he looked angrily at them told Scottie that he did too. It had been so long since she had seen the man but she knew instantly from the look in his eyes that the same old Clint was still in there under this hardened exterior.

They both moved towards the man in sync, Natasha hogging most of the umbrella as the rain started to hit Scottie. She ignored it, knowing that a little bit of rain was the least important thing about this entire exchange. Clint tried not to look either of them in the eyes as they watched them move closer, knowing there was a reason that they had come for him after all this time.

"We found something," Natasha started, looking to Scottie for backup.

"A chance, maybe..." Scottie continued, pausing as she noticed the fresh tears now rolling down Clint's face. She had almost mistook it for rain but as they'd gotten within a foot of the man she saw them pouring freely from his eyes the way hers were from hers. She hadn't expected this exchange to hurt so much.

"Don't..."

Clint turned his head away, the word falling from his lips like a plea. He almost sounded just like the man he had murdered minutes ago when he had begged for the man to not kill him - but Scottie didn't care for the other man the way she cared about Clint. Her heart was scrunching up and dying from the break in his voice when he asked them to stop.

"Don't what?"

"...don't give me hope."

There was a pause as Natasha's face twitched, trying to find the right words to say. Scottie could see the distress on her face that she was also trying to hide and the girl had to remind herself that these two had spent all their lives being taught how to mask their emotion from everyone - everyone but seemingly each other.

"I'm sorry I couldn't give it to you sooner."

Natasha reached out, her hand grasping on to Clint's as the man finally turned back around to look at his best friend. Scottie gave them their moment, watching as Clint sighed and held her hand back before finally releasing it and turning to look at the other woman who was now soaked to the bone from no longer being under the umbrella.

He studied her for a moment, noticing the bags under her eyes and the way she had lost that old sparkle in her eyes. Something about the way she carried herself made him instantly aware that he wasn't the only one who had lost a soulmate. He opened his mouth to speak, watching as Scottie awaited his repose to her being alive.

"You look like shit."

quinjet ride back:

There was a gentle silence on the ride back to base. Natasha was piloting the quinjet by herself, while Scottie had stepped out of the main space to change into some dry clothes. Her clothes had been too wet and without her powers being able to heat herself up, she knew she would get a chill if she stayed in them. Clint had done the same as he had passed him some of Steve's spare clothes that had been stored in the quinjet months prior and while they were a little loose on the man, he seemed content enough.

"So did you like... actually die?" Clint eventually broke the silence, his voice gruff as he looked up at the girl from across the jet. Her blonde hair was significantly longer than the last time he had seen the girl on the concourse in Germany, and he noted that she had aged more than he expected - but that had been almost seven years prior.

Scottie shrugged before looking back up to Clint. Her hands had been playing with the leather band around her wrist that he knew had an identical twin that belonged to the other piece of Scottie's heart. Clint was aware he had lost friends in the snap, but he had never explicitly known who until recently. He'd had a glimmer of hope that Wanda was simply in retirement rather than sharing the same fate as his family, but the dull look in Scottie's eyes made him realise he was wrong.

"I don't actually know if I did die and was brought back or if I was just in a coma," Scottie answered truthfully, no-one ever having actually asked her that before. "To be fair I don't know who took me, I just assumed it was Hydra."

Clint nodded, pursing his lips before studying her for a moment longer. He knew she had lost Wanda but there was something else not quite the same about the girl since he had last seen her.

"Scottie, what happened to you?"

She understood that he didn't mean when she was missing but rather what had changed in her since they last met. She shot him a small saddened smile as she moved to sit next to him, offering her palm to the man to show him what she had truly lost. Clint raised an eyebrow before placing his palm against her own, noting instantly that her temperature seemed to run the same as his.

"We came face to face with Thanos, before he got all the stones. Ehm, he was a lot stronger than anything I think any of us had ever encountered, but when he had gotten the stones they didn't work for him," she explained, seeing Clint's eyes widen in surprise at hearing that they originally hadn't worked. "Wanda had broken the stone - which Thanos had then recovered with the time stone - and when it broke the energy latched on to the closest thing it had to a stone which just so happened to be me. We all knew I was strongly linked to that stone somehow, but I never expected it to be that kind of connection."

Out of the corner of Scottie's eye, she saw Natasha lower the headset from her ears as she listened in on the story. Scottie had never spoke to anyone about what she had felt in that moment but they all knew it must have been a surreal experience to absorb the power of an infinity stone.

"I felt... invincible," Scottie admitted, ignoring the pity in Clint's eyes as he waited for the crack in the story that had led to Thanos winning anyway. "Every single vein in my body felt like it was born for that, like I had been waiting my whole life for the missing piece of me. And it was incredible Clint. I was so sure I was invincible as I fought him, one on one, and I was winning. I really thought we had won."

"What happened?" Clint gently asked, not finding it in him to be angry at the idea that she might have been the reason Thanos was able to snap. He could never be angry at her.

"He said he had killed Tony."

Clint didn't need to ask about that. He knew exactly how she would have frozen in her spot, he knew the thousands of thoughts that would have run through her mind and he knew how Scottie Casey viewed Tony as the father she never had. He knew that Thanos had obviously figured that out too.

"I froze obviously," Scottie continued, wiping away a loose tear that had fallen from her eyes. She was angry and upset and she knew Clint had lost so much but so had she and everyone else and it was all because she had frozen. It was on her. "He really didn't hesitate to try and beat the infinity stone's power right back out of me."

"Let her for dead," Natasha chimed in, having now risen from where she had initiated autopilot for the last few minutes of their journey and was moving towards where the duo were sitting. "I really thought we were going to lose you again."

"But you survived," Clint noted, a gentle smile on his face as he looked at Scottie with a sense of pride - something the girl truly believed she didn't deserve.

"Mostly," Scottie mused, pushing her hair back from her ears so that Clint could just make out the nano tech hearing implants that Tony had created for her. "My hearing didn't quite recover from Thanos crushing my eardrums when he hit my head."

Before Clint had the chance to say anything else, FRIDAY announced over the Quinjet system that they would be landing any second. Clint gave Scottie one last squeeze of her shoulder before he copied Natasha in rising to their feet and gathering anything that wasn't to be left on the jet.

"It doesn't matter what we've lost," Natasha told them both as the ramp began to lower on to the dark grass outside, the coldness making Scottie aware that it was raining here too. "If we can pull this off, we can get it all back."

"Hey kid, we're going to go try the suit out if you want to watch," Bruce told Scottie as she grabbed a bottle of water from the fridge. She nodded to the man, not saying anything as she trailed behind him towards the lab.

Scottie had tried to convince them all to let her try out the suit but the idea was immediately shut down by everyone. The only person who had been on board for her trying out the suit was the talking racoon, Rocket, and that was simply because he and her didn't particularly see eye to eye on what Footloose film was better. He had been holding a grudge for almost three years now and she didn't see him letting go of it at all.

Scottie hopped on to the counter next to where Bruce was standing, watching as Clint entered the room in the new red and white suits that Tony had designed - with a little tweaking here and there with the help of Bruce. Scottie had to admit that even if the suit didn't possess the ability to travel through the Quantum realm, it would have made a nice uniform for the Avengers in an alternate reality where they all wore matching outfits.

"Wow, looking good Sir."

Clint shot a small smirk to Scottie, pretending to do a runway strut towards the group before Bruce interrupted their moment of mucking around. He had finished setting up the platform, and he was ready for them to complete the final test run before the real event.

"Clint, now you're gonna feel a little discombobulated from the chronoshift. Don't worry about it," Bruce explained as the man took his position into the platform, noting the way his mouth twitched nervously at the described feeling.

"Wait-Wait a second, let me ask you something," Rhodey interrupted them all with a thoughtful look on his face. "If we can do this, you know, go back in time, why don't we just find baby Thanos, you know, and..." He trailed off as he made a gesture of what Scottie could only imagine was meant to resemble them hanging baby Thanos with a rope.

"First of all, that's horrible..." Bruce instantly said, causing the rest of them to squint at his sympathy for baby Thanos. Scottie certainly thought it was an excellent idea and that it would have saved her five years of nothing but suffering.

"It's Thanos."

"And secondly, time doesn't work that way," Bruce continued, ignoring everyone's protests surrounding his disgust for them wanting to just kill baby Thanos. "Changing the past doesn't change the future."

"Look, we go back, we get the stones before Thanos gets them... Thanos doesn't have the stones. Problem solved!" Scott Lang agreed, thinking about how he had missed Cassie growing up all these years.

"He has a point," Scottie admitted, nodding towards Scott's idea.

Nebula shook her head from where she had been standing silently the entire time. Scottie almost flinched as she woman spoke, having forgotten she was there from how quiet and unmoving she had been. "That's not how it works."

Clint shrugged, kicking at an invisible spot on the ground with his boot as he looked around at them all. "Well, that's what I heard."

"What? By who?" Bruce interrogated them, worried that Tony had been telling them things that didn't make sense with the laws of physics and quantum science. "Who told you that?"

"Star Trek, Terminator, TimeCop, Time Aler Time... Rhodey listed off, his mind running through all of the films he knew that had involved time travel.

"Quantum Leap! Scott added.

"A Wrinkle in Time, Somewhere in Time..."

"Hot Tub Time Machine..."

"Hot Tub Time Machine. Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure, basically, any movie that deals with time travel," Rhodey confirmed, turning to look at Bruce with a smug look on his face. Scottie nodded in agreement.

"Die Hard No, it's not one..." Scott added, almost sounding disappointed when he remembered Die Hard was a Christmas film but not a time travel film.

"Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban?" Scottie added as she thought back to one of the films that Wanda had loved to make her watch.

"The point is, this is known," Rhodey finalised, trying to prove to them all that there was an easy solution to their five year long problem.

"I don't know why everyone believes that, but that isn't true. Think about it: if you travel to the past, that past becomes your future. And your former present becomes the past. Which can't now be changed by your new future..."

"So... Back To The Future? a bunch of bullshit?"

Everyone paused for a second, reflecting on their past beliefs as Bruce began to press buttons on the platform controls. Scottie watched with wide eyes as he began the countdown to send Clint away, the man's helmet snapping down over his face.

"Alright, Clint. We're going in 3... 2... 1!"

Somewhat surprisingly, it had worked. Clint had returned with not just his sanity and in good health but with the physical token of Cooper's baseball glove to prove that not only was time travel now a possibility but that they were also now able to bring things back with them.

"Okay, so the 'how' works. Now we gotta figure out the when and the where. Almost all of us has had an encounter with at least one of the six Infinity Stones."

"Well I'd substitute the word encounter for 'damn well, causing Scottie to snort in agreement. She subconsciously rubbed the arm that Thanos had broken five years prior before releasing that everyone else felt just as on edge as she did.

"I haven't, I don't even know what the hell you're all talking about," Scott noted, causing Natasha and Scottie to roll their eyes at him while Bruce continued with the Pymming particles.

"Regardless, we only have enough Pym Particles for one round trip each, and these stones have been in a lot of different places throughout history."

"Our history. So, not a lot of convenient spots to just drop in."

"Which means we have to pick our targets," Clint said, his super spy brain kicking back in as everyone slipped back into a familiar routine.

"Correct."

"Let's start with the Aether," Steve said, motioning to the reality Stone on the screen. "Thor, what do you know?"

Scottie turned with the rest of the team to look at Thor, expecting the god to have answered Steve about the stone that only he had ever had an encounter with. His sunglasses rested over his eyes and Scottie squinted as she tried to see if he was even breathing.

"Is he asleep?" Natasha asked, her head tilting in amazement as they all studied the man.

"No," Rhodey interrupted with a scowl in his face. "I'm pretty sure he's dead."

After listening to Thor's partially traumatic retelling of his encounter with the Aether, Tony had made the smart call to order in a bunch of Chinese food for their lunch. It had been a while since Scottie had some good old fashioned take out and she was quite content to sit and eat it all day.

"Quill said he stole the Power Stone from Morag," Rocket told them all as he paced across the table. Scottie and Clint shared a look, the man knowing what she wanted and passing her the prawn crackers over.

"Is that a person?" Scott asked, still trying to keep up with the entire story when he still wasn't really sure what an infinity stone was and why it was sometimes a stone but other times was in people's bodies such as Jane or Scottie.

"Morag's a planet. Quill was a person."

"A planet? Like in outer space?"

"Oh, look. It's like a little puppy, all happy and everything. Do you wanna go to space? You wanna go to space, puppy? I'll get you to space," Rocket teased Scott, patting him on the head as if he was a dog.

The rest of the team laughed, glad they were able to find some humour in this stressful planning time. Soon they had finished their lunch, with everyone mostly breaking off into smaller groups again.

"Thanos found the Soul Stone on Vormir," Nebula told them about the next stone, the one that was destined to take more from the team than they currently knew.

Natasha looked up from where she was writing in her notepad, her eyebrows furrowed at the unfamiliar word. "What is Vormir?"

"A dominion of death, at the very center of Celestial existence," Nebula told them all seriously.

"Oh lovely," Scottie muttered, taking a sip from her soda as she listened to what the blunder woman was telling them.

"It's where... Thanos murdered my sister."

Everyone looked up from what they were doing, a thick silence engulfing the room at the information. They had known Thanos had killed Gamora - Nebula's sister - but they had been almost forgotten about it. It wasn't something that had ever really been mentioned.

"Not it."

Scottie shot Scott a disapproving look as the rest of the team gradually got up from their seats and started to spread back out into smaller groups of two and three. The blonde remained in her spot however, something sticking out in her brain as she tried to process her thoughts.

Something about Nebula's sisters death wasn't sitting right with her. The second Nebula had said the name of the planet, Scottie could have sworn she had felt a slight spark in her body that had reminded her too much of when she used to have powers. Pairing that with the uneasy feeling at the thought of any of them going to where Thanos had murdered his own daughter made her very uncomfortable.

Scottie swore in that moment she would only ever step foot on that planet as a last resort. Standing up, she headed back into the main room to ask to not be it for that mission.

"All right. We have a plan. Six Stones, three teams. One shot." Steve told them all, motioning to the screen where the stones had been categorised by date and location.

Scottie had managed to get herself on the mission to 2012 New York, being paired up with Steve to collect the sceptre due to her history with the stone. It also helped that Tony didn't want to be too far away from his daughter in case disaster struck so her being paired with Steve was the best scenario for his conscious, especially as he knew Steve was the best fighter on the team.

Not much was said between Natasha and Scottie as they geared up together. The red head knew that there had been something on her mind all day, other than just the time heist.

"You okay?"

"I can't afford to lose you too Nat," Scottie finally admitted, turning around to look at the woman with a sad look on her face. "And something about Vormir just doesn't feel right to me."

"Hey, hey," Natasha mused as she moved over to wrap the girl in a tight hug. "You aren't going to lose me. And besides, if something wasn't right about Vormir I'm sure Nebula would have told us to be careful by now."

Scottie nodded, and while it didn't do much to calm her down she knew it was all she had to go on.

She couldn't lose Natasha.

"Five years ago, we lost. All of us. We lost friends... We lost family... We lost a part of ourselves. Today, we have a chance to take it all back. You know your teams, you know your missions. Get the stones, get them back. One round trip each. No mistakes. No do-overs. Most of us are going somewhere we know. But it doesn't mean we should know what to expect. Be careful. Look out for each other. This is the fight of our lives. And we're gonna win," Steve told them all as they stood in a circle on the platform. "Whatever it takes. Good luck."

Scottie pushed her fist into the circle that they had all made with their hands, before stepping back into her place between Steve and Natasha. The nerves running through her body were significantly higher than usual and she still couldn't shake the feeling that this wasn't right.

"All right. You heard the man. Stroke those keys, jolly green," Tony yelled down to Bruce who nodded and replied that everything was ready for them to go.

"See you in a minute," Natasha told Steve and Scottie, a playful smile across her face as she moved in her spot in anticipation. Scottie grinned back, her nerves slowly fading as she was reassured by everyone's positivity.

"Last one back is on washing up duty!" Scottie yelled, causing everyone to laugh before their white suits covered their bodies and the machine booted up.

Scottie wasn't sure what was about to happen, but she really hadn't predicted that things were going to go as downhill as they would.