

## 0.6

Natasha leaned against the metal sign as she waited for the silver car to park in front of her. She had a small smirk on her lips as she watched the doors open, noticing that the billionaire was still sporting his arc reactor power supply even if he had semi-retired from this life. His hair was in its trademark quiff as he threw the keys at one of the recruits that was walking by, winking at him before he fell into step with the Russian red head.

"How is she doing?" He asked, the short playful atmosphere instantly crashing into the ground. Natasha shrugged weakly, knowing that if there was anyone in the world who cared about Scottie Casey as much as she did it was Tony - if not more.

Scottie was like the daughter that Natasha had always dreamed of, but she was also just like a little sister to the woman. When she had first met Scottie, the girl was scared and weak.

"She's been better Tony," Natasha told him, her small smirk falling from her lips as they began to head towards the lounge area. Natasha knew that most of the team usually gathered there, so that meant that if Scottie was going to show her face it would most likely be there. She doubted the girl would though, it had been almost a week since she had last left her room especially after the incident with Sam during training.

The man nodded, rubbing at his scuff around his jawline as he remained silent. He had an idea but he wasn't sure how on board the rest of the team was going to be about it especially when they were so keen on having her become a fully active member of the force again.

"Are we sure being here is the best idea for her?" Tony said, holding the door open for Natasha as they moved into the elevator to head towards the team lounge. She furrowed her eyebrows as she studied the man to see if he was joking or not.

"Tony, she literally told Wanda that she was going to end up killing her or being the reason she dies," Natasha reminded the man, recalling the phone call she had made to the man a few nights prior.

"I don't know if it's safe for her to be anywhere else."

Tony shook his head. "There is a place. Besides, she's not worried she'll kill Wanda - she's got survivor's guilt. Look, her parents died and she lived. She helped us to create a murder bot and she lived. Loki tried to kill her and she lived, but Coulson died. She's not destructive - she's scared."

"This place?" Natasha sighed, watching as they neared their floor. "You mean the tower, don't you?"

Tony laughed lightly, but there was no humour in his tone. "Not quite."

"Listen kid," Steve said, placing his hand gently on Wanda's shoulder as he manoeuvred around the girl to get to the refrigerator on the other side of the kitchen. "You just need to give her time."

Wanda sighed deeply, rubbing at her eyes where dark bags from restless nights could be seen.

She had been worried sick about Scottie since her outburst at the lake six days prior and while Friday, the AI that Tony had installed throughout the facility for the Avenger's use, had assured her that Scottie had not ran away and was in fact in the building - it didn't do much to cure her concerns.

"How long?" She asked, her voice slightly rougher than usual, a feature that Steve noticed as he passed her a bottle of water from the fridge. Muttering a thank you as she took the bottle, she watched him sigh softly at her concern. "What if she doesn't need time? You guys gave her almost two years before you had to go find her - how long can she possibly need to realise that she isn't damaged, that she isn't unlovable?"

Steve went to reply, his hand rubbing lightly at the slight stubble that was beginning to form on his chin. He looked up just before he spoke and he suddenly realised that a long conversation was about to be had. Scottie was standing at the edge of the room, a cereal bowl in her hands as she stared slightly open-mouthed after hearing the passion and dedication in Wanda's voice as she ranted about the girl.

Wanda noticed his reaction, spinning around and coming face to face with the blonde. She was sporting identical bags under her eyes and her eyes looked red raw from the tears that had been constantly flowing for days. The girl looked like hell - but Wanda still found that the sight of her managed to take her breath away. Clutching a grey, scabby bear in her right hand she looked vulnerable and a lot younger than she really was.

Steve quickly excused himself, knowing that there was a lot of unresolved tension between the girls after their argument. The rest of them had watched it from the windows of the faculty and the look on Wanda's face as Scottie had stormed away had told him more than he would ever need to have asked and while Natasha told him that these things were better left unsaid when it came to their lives, he wasn't going to stop what was forming between the two girls even if they hadn't realised it yet.

Watching as Steve walked out of the room with a small smile in her direction, Scottie continued to head towards the sink with her grey bear still clutched in her hand. She could feel Wanda's eyes boring into her but she didn't know what to say or do to even move on from her previous outburst.

"That's a cute bear," Wanda said eventually, her eyes focused on Scottie's back as she waited to see if the girl was going to just simply ignore her as if the exchange had never happened. She watched the blonde tense slightly almost as if she wasn't expecting Wanda to have spoken.

"Thanks," Scottie muttered, so low that the girl barely picked up on it. "Tony gave me it."

Wanda could tell from just the tone she used when she spoke about the obviously loved plush that there was a backstory there that she wasn't going to get to hear that night. She was okay with that; but she wasn't okay with this conversation ending so soon.

"Scottie."

"Wanda."

They both laughed awkwardly as their names left each other's lips at the same time. Wanda motioned for Scottie to speak first and the girl nodded as she tried to form the words that were swirling around in her mind. Heaving in a couple of deep breaths, Scottie tried to compose her runaway train thoughts.

"When I was younger, I was the social kid," Scottie started to tell Wanda, jumping up on to the marble kitchen counter top as she began to talk to the Sokovian. Her bear was wrapped tightly in her hands, her eyes not meeting Wanda's as she looked toward towards the bear while playing with a frayed ear. "Everyone was my friend, everyone WANTED to be my friend. I was the blonde preppy cheerleader, straight As and destined for law school. I was the pride and joy of not just my school district but my parents."

She paused, raising the bottle of water she had taken from the fridge to take a sip before looking back down at the bear clutched in her hands. Heaving a breath out of her body, Scottie continued.

"My parents were scientists. They were incredible people until they weren't. I got sick, Wanda," Scottie explained, finally looking up at the red-head. "Really sick. Terminally sick. It was the one thing that my parents couldn't solve with equations. Of course, being widely known in their field meant that news of the ironic tragedy spread fast and next thing I knew two men in suits were offering my parents a cure."

The girl scooped as she thought back to that dark, cold, rainy winter night before continuing with her story.

"They wanted me fixed so badly that they didn't believe me when I said this treatment I was undergoing wasn't fixing me. My vitals had improved, but I knew that I was changing for the worst."

Scottie stopped, sitting in silence with no energy left to finish her train of thought. The girl rubbed subconsciously at a small scar that Wanda hadn't noticed before on the back of her hand, her eyes closing as she seemed to relive the memories behind closed lids.

"What happened?" Wanda probed, even though she had a decent idea of what might have gone wrong for the Casey family. There was only one ending to the story and she knew it already - she just didn't know the journey that would lead them there.

Scottie sighed, looking back down to the bear as she finished up her story for Wanda. "I exploded. Literally, whatever they did to me had caused my body to hold all the sunlight it touched. And just when we all thought I had been cured, when I was back to being a normal teenager at a normal school with normal friends and a normal family, the abnormal happened. My dad had made one remark about the TV volume, and that brief flicker of anger ignited something in me. Next thing I knew, I was standing outside of the blazing house, watching as firefighters dragged out the bodies of my parents."

A heavy silence filled the room and Wanda instantly regretted asking her to continue with the story. She knew the hurt of losing your parents but she had always been able to turn that hurt into a need for revenge. It was different for Scottie and she saw that now. It's not like you could get revenge on your parent's murderer when it was yourself.

"Since then I've always really just been alone. Not like always cause the team is great and all and Tony has been amazing taking me under the wing but no-one really understands what it's like to be so young and to go from having everything to having nothing at all. I was stranded, alone and scared in a city where all I had was a burning weapon of destruction built into my body."

"Oh Scottie..."

Scottie paused for a second but continued on with the rest of the story. They had a little bit more to go before Scottie would finish talking.

"Natasha and Clint brought me in. Strange reports of a girl shooting sunlight from her hands wasn't exactly the news that SHIELD was wanting people to be discussing, so they sent them in to collect me," Scottie said, a shiver going up her spine as she thought about how SHIELD had originally planned to keep her locked up for the rest of her life. "When they got there and realised I wasn't some homicidal maniac but just a scared teenager they saw something in me that no one ever had before. And they introduced me into this chaotic family, and I never looked back."

"Scottie, I didn't know... about any of that," Wanda tried to find the words, not really sure how to take in everything that Scottie had just told her. There was so much raw emotion floating in the space between them as Scottie continued to fiddle with the bear in her hands.

"You couldn't have," the girl told the red head, moving closer to her and taking her hands in her own. She noticed the proximity between her and Wanda become closer but she didn't step back - and nor did Wanda.

Wanda nodded, freeing one of her hands from Scottie's to reach up and push a loose strand of hair behind Scottie's ear. As she went to move her hand back to her side, she rested it against the blonde's cheek allowing for Scottie to make the next step.

The blonde took the bait, leaning in until there was only mere millimetres between their lips. Her hands gently fell on to Wanda's waist, the two of them seemingly waiting for a second before they made the move of going from just friends to more than friends forevermore.

Just as their lips almost touched, the two girls shot apart as the warning alarm started to ring throughout the building. They both looked at each other in a mix of confusion, concern and despair at their moment being disturbed before it could finish.

Before Scottie could even say anything, the kitchen doors burst open as Steve and Tony sped into the room with Natasha hot on their heels.

"Wanda, with me now!" Steve yelled, tugging at the metal bands on his wrists that allowed for his shield to always come strapping down to him. The girl cast Scottie one last look before sprinting o down the corridor after the man.

Natasha and Tony's attention was focused on Scottie, aware that a moment had clearly been interrupted between the two girls. But they had no time for gossip.

"HYDRA have attacked the German Ambassador and are recking havoc in Munich. We need to go, but you are staying right here!" Natasha told Scottie, pointing a finger at her before darting off after the others.

Scottie gaped like a fish at the order, turning to Tony in disagreement but felt her shoulders drop at the look of authority on his face.

"Go with my driver, he'll take you back to the tower! You are not cleared for field duty yet!" Tony yelled as he rushed down the corridor, the rest of the team close on his heels as they sprinted towards the training quarters to gear up for the battle they would be travelling half the world to reach.

Scottie wanted to protest but she knew he was right - there was no way that she was fit for active duty when she had been refusing to train for almost a week. Watching from the car that the driver had led her down to as the quinjet took off, she could only hope that their mission went smoothly and without any hitches.

"Where to, ma'am?" The driver asked from the front seat as the girl slouched into the soft leather seats in the back of the car. Looking out at the disappearing plane, she knew that Tony was right.

"The tower please," and just before she went back to silence she found another thought struck her. "Actually can we stop by Queens first? There's a really good deli that I'm dying to get a sandwich from."

Scottie Casey was about to get so much more than a meatball sub, little did she know it.