



▸ chapter ten, A STILLNESS ▾

LITTLE THINGS MATTER

The Maximo girl liked her apartment. It was small – much smaller and less efficient than the one Stark had let her stay in while she was apart of the Avengers – and she had to share it, but she was used to being confined in small spaces with others. At least this place had a proper bed and kitchen and was across the hall from the man who had gotten her the place.

She stayed here with Steve and Bucky, the latter of which had joined them only three or so months ago from Wakanda. The princess there worked fast and his brain had been cured, derived of all HYDRA had implanted there. Steve was happy to have his friend home but Wanda was still warming up to the man. He was nice. Quiet, calculating, but nice, and adjusting to the present age. But she couldn't help but feel uneasy when he was in the room with her.

They shared memories of what HYDRA was truly like as a puppet of their creation, but their paths were so different. He never believed in them while she had once been one of their greatest supporters, happily doing their dirty work. And he wasn't open, he was so closed off and distant it reminded her of Natasha. They always stood away from the group, watching for irregularities and Wanda felt unnerved – watched and scanned, just as it had been in her cell.

Sam was across the hall, staying with Desmond Owens – the nice man who had gotten the apartment for them to stay in – in his guest room. He was shy and didn't like much attention and crowds of people made him uncomfortable. Crowds could just mean all of them plus Asher Brinley, who often stayed over with them. She seemed nice and was close to Davina, which Wanda liked. Davina was nice to her and her cheeks went pink easily. It made her smile.

"Hey," Steve stood in the doorway of her room, wearing his jacket which meant that he was leaving, "I'm heading out. Watch Bucky for me?"

"Bucky'll be fine without you, Steve," she said, accent slipping out as it usually did at the apartment, "He doesn't need a babysitter."

Steve sighed. "I know he doesn't, but I don't like leaving him here by himself. He's just – he's not used to everything and, he's my best friend, Wanda."

She stood up, smiling at him to see Bucky sitting on the couch, presumably watching the news. All he liked was the news, even when she tried to get him interested in cartoons. Steve said it was helping him adjust, but she didn't see how. Plus, cartoons were much more entertaining.

"The whole world knows that he's your best friend, it's not news. He'll be fine by himself, Sam's just across the hall," Steve shot her a pleading look and she couldn't help but cave, "Fine, I'll watch him for you."

"Thank you, Wanda. I'll be back in an hour or two," Steve said as he left her room, stopping before Bucky to tell him that he was leaving and seeing his friend nod before stepping out the front door, leaving Wanda and Bucky alone.

Slowly venturing into the living room, she took a seat on the chair next to Bucky, turning her head to the TV to see – shockingly – the news. She hated watching the news. "So...do you mind if we watch something else?" she asked carefully, not even knowing if Bucky would respond or just give her a look.

"I like the news," he spoke, surprising Wanda a bit, if she was being honest. She nodded, not saying anything else, picking at her nails as she tried not to focus on the words coming from the newscaster's mouth.

It was silent between the two for a moment. Insufferable silence where she wanted so desperately to fill it with sound or just leave the room because she couldn't take it. How Steve did this every day, spending hours in silence with this man, she didn't know.

"You don't have to sit in here with me," Bucky broke the silence and her head whipped up to look at him, "I don't need a babysitter, no matter what Steve thinks."

"He just wants to make sure that you're okay," Wanda told him so softly, though she did agree with him; the ex-Winter Soldier definitely did not need a babysitter.

"I am okay – or, I will be, but I can't move on with Steve pressuring me to be the same person he knew. I changed. We've all changed," Bucky stressed and she found herself nodding along.

They all had changed; she had changed. From the scared little girl, to a puppet, to twin-less and so many more stages until where she was right then; sitting with the Winter Soldier. Or, ex-Winter Soldier. There was no hiding from that.



Davina looked around the room she helped unpack. Boxes were still littered everywhere, but the living room – with a new couch, TV, and coffee table – was complete. Or, as complete it could be with the current furniture that Conrad had.

She smiled at her work, moving around to collect the boxes that held the little things Conrad had brought with him from LA – some even from their childhood – and took them to the door, leaving them right beside it so he'd remember to throw them out later. She then moved to the kitchen to start emptying out the dishes and silverware that her friend had, opening cupboards and placing the cups and bowls inside.

"So," Conrad's voice broke out, coming from the hall, "I ordered a pizza since I still haven't been grocery shopping."

Davina rolled her eyes at the man, "You've been here for a week, Conrad, you need to get some groceries."

"I'm fine. There's a nice pancake place across the street and you invited me out to dinner yesterday, so I'm okay," Conrad defended himself. "Although, I have been craving some gushers recently and that's something you definitely can't find at a restaurant..."

"Even more reason to go," Davina told him, "But fine. Come help me put all this away."

"Ugh, fine."

"Hey! This isn't even my place. I'm the one helping you move in because apparently you've been incapable of doing anything for the past week you've lived here," she reminded her.

"I've been busy with work, you know I moved cause of the job opportunity, right? I told you about that and everything?" she nodded, "Yeah. I've been busy settling in and doing my work and when I come home I'm too tired to unpack."

"I am a college student who also works a part time job and I'm still the one unpacking your stuff," Davina reminded him.

"You work at a flower shop – how tiring could that be?" Conrad questioned, putting away some of his cups.

"Clearly, you've never been inside one during February because it is brutal. You don't have a moment to even think as people are pouring in, demanding the best flowers for their partner when they don't even know what their partner even likes yet they expect me to use some mind powers to know the right choice!" Davina vented, "I mean, come on, I can only work with what you give me here. It's really annoying when business men do it."

"So sorry, forgive me for thinking that your work is not so demanding," Conrad mockingly apologized and she shoved him slightly, causing him to laugh. A few moments later, he aimed to change the subject, "You have anyone to spend Valentine's Day with? I mean, February starts tomorrow."

Davina shook her head, "Sadly, I am terribly single and have been for the past couple years. My last girlfriend actually broke up with me days before Valentine's Day so that she wouldn't have to buy me a present."

"Man, that fucking blows," she hummed in agreement, "Must've been a bitch."

"Yeah," Davina admitted in a sigh, "I just didn't realize it until she dumped me. I was heartbroken, actually, but Brinley held me together through it all and we watched a lot of Rom-Coms together."

Conrad nodded. "I had someone tell me that they were married a few weeks of us being together."

"Oh my God! What happened?" Davina asked, slightly appalled but mostly interested.

"Well, they tried to make it seem like it wasn't a big deal and that their wife was fine with him having his – and I quote – mistresses, as like a synonym for mistresses or whatever, but I told him to fuck off and never saw him again," Conrad recounted.

"Wow, how could there be people out there who do things like that? I just – I don't understand," Davina gaped still.

Conrad shrugged, "That's just humanity, V. Well, parts of it anyway."

There was a knock at the door and Conrad grinned at her. "Hope you're ready for some pizza," he said as he went to the door, definitely not tripping over the boxes that Davina had placed there earlier.



That night, Davina returned home with a stomach full of pizza and hurting because of the amount of times Conrad had made her laugh. She was smiling to herself as she opened up the door, going inside to see how dead everything seemed.

It reminded her for a moment of her old place that she shared with her mom, coming home every day after school to dust covering everything and a stillness that never seemed to break. The instant dull in the mood once you stepped inside. Sometimes her mother would be on the couch, dead asleep, and sometimes she wouldn't be there at all.

She sighed to herself, shaking the memories from her mind as she stepped inside. "Brinley?" she called out, seeing if her roommate was home.

There wasn't a sound in response and she didn't think much of it. Really, she wasn't expecting her friend to be home based on the feeling she had and the fact that Brinley had been spending most of her time out of the apartment.

Davina went to her room and took a shower, thinking nothing of the stillness – the eerie quietness of the place. After all, Brinley as probably spending the night at Desmond's.