

## Chapter 18 : bad timing

Nat's POV

Arriving at Y/n's door I saw that Clint followed me.

"JARVIS, what is Y/n's condition?" asked Clint.

"Miss Y/n has eight broken ribs, a broken nose and hasn't eaten in two days."

"Oh my god..." muttered Clint. Oh my God indeed

"I think it's best if I go alone," I said. He nodded, still in shock from what he had just heard. Then he started to leave.

"I'll make her a sandwich," he said as he le

I watched him leave and then turned to the door of Y/n. I took a deep breath and knocked on the door. No answer... I wasn't really expecting one but maybe she passed out and just can't answer. I knocked again and put my ear to the door. I heard a faint yes. I opened the door and saw Y/n sitting on her bed, staring ahead. I examined her room and saw her bloody clothes in the corner. I then examined her and saw that she was clean, her face was indeed deformed by her broken nose and the bruises covering it. Breathing looks like it hurts. She really looks like she's in bad shape. She then put her emotionless eyes on me for a brief moment before bringing them back to face her.

"Of all the people who could have come to see me, you are the last one I would have expected." she said weakly.

"Steve told me what happened. He told me you knew."

"So what? You came so you could take it out on me too? To get your revenge? Go ahead, feel free. I won't fight back." she said in a bloody tone. "I deserve it anyway..." she added with a sigh. So the other agents had a good run at her huh? The thought made my blood boil.

"Don't talk nonsense Y/n. I would never take it out on you. What those agents did was unacceptable." I told her firmly. She laughed sarcastically. She worries me, seeing her like this breaks my heart. She turned her gaze to me and I saw the emptiness in her eyes.

"It had to happen sometime. I'm sure you've been itching for it all along and now seeing me like this gives you immense happiness. You must be disappointed to have missed the show, huh?" What she said shocked me, does she really think I hate her that much? Damn it Nat slowly approached her bed.

"Of course not Y/n." She hu ed. "Listen to me Y/n, it's true that at first I was mad at you, I was having a hard time accepting your presence and I wanted us to keep you in a cell but that was hypocritical of me. I understand how you feel Y/n. And -"

"No you don't!" she snapped. "You have no idea what it's like to be hated by everyone, to learn that you're not who you thought you were, to learn that you've killed over 100 people for an organization that's always treated you like nothing, to learn that you're really just a killing machine, a monster! You don't know what it's like to understand why people hate you and share their opinion. You don't know what it's like to hate yourself more than others hate you..." she tells me, screaming at first and then whispering towards the end. She is now in tears. "I hate myself so much..." she added in a sob. I then take her in my arms and she breaks down in my arms.

"I understand Y/n. Believe me, I understand more than you think." I whispered to her, adding so words from time to time. She came out of the hug, wiped her eyes then looked at me. The sight of her eyes so sad broke my heart.

"Do you hate me that much?" she asked me, her voice breaking. I frowned and smiled sweetly at her. I shook my head no.

"No, of course not Y/n. I don't hate you." I replied in a so voice.

Y/n's POV

"No, of course not Y/n. I don't hate you." She answered me in a so voice. I searched her eyes for any trace of uncertainty, lies or anything else but I found nothing but sincerity and compassion. Does she really understand how I feel? How can she understand me? How can she not hate me? She should hate me! She should -

"Get out of your head a little will you?" says Nat, pulling me out of my thoughts. She looks at me with so much compassion, understanding, love... Wait love?! I looked away and looked elsewhere, I started to think again but not about the same thing. I felt my heart beat faster. I felt a gentle hand take my face and gently turn it towards the owner of the hand. She smiled at me.

"Stop thinking y/n. I don't hate you, Clint doesn't hate you, Steve doesn't hate you, Tony doesn't hate you. Who cares what other agents think, don't hate yourself for something you had no control over. You didn't choose to be born into HYDRA, you didn't choose to become one of their soldiers. You were forced to be something you didn't want to be. What is important is not the you of the past but the you of the present and the one you want to be in the future. You are not a monster, you are not a killing machine. You are a girl who has never been free in her life, who has never been able to make her own choices and who is now realizing this. You're just lost, and we're here to help you, by showing you that you're not what others say, by helping you discover who you really are. You are Y/n Ivanov, agent of SHIELD and potential future avengers. Prove others wrong, show them who you really are, show them you are not what they say." I was speechless, she had never spoken to me like that, let alone helped me this much. I threw myself back into her arms, tears streaming down my eyes. She ran a hand over the back of my head, through my hair and massaged my head.

"Thank you Tasha..." I whispered into her neck.

"My pleasure Принцесса (Princess)" she whispered back. The nickname gave me butterflies in my stomach and didn't help my heart to calm down. I tightened my embrace. I love being in her arms so much, I feel safe and at peace.

"I missed you..." I whisper. I felt her smile and she tightened her embrace in turn.

If someone had told me months ago that I would end up in her arms, I would have literally died laughing. I didn't expect to have such a good time with her.

I then pull away a little to get out of our hug. Her hand that was in my hair then slid down my cheek, she wiped my tears gently with her thumb. My pulse suddenly quickened and all I could look at were her eyes. Her eyes are an incredible emerald green. I could look at them all day and not get bored. I'm mesmerized. I then lowered my eyes to her lips and wet mine. I bit my lower lip and felt my heart beat so loudly in my chest that I think everyone could hear it. I saw her bite her bottom lip as well, I brought my eyes up to meet hers. I saw her looking at my lips then she looked up as well. Her pupils were visibly dilated. My breathing quickened. I looked at her lips again with envy. I part my lips and our two faces slowly began to come together. I tilt my head slightly so that our noses don't touch. Just as our lips were about to meet we heard a noise that startled us and we quickly separated from each other. I turned my face and looked away, embarrassed. I coughed to clear my throat and perhaps to dispel the unease that had just settled in the room.

"Agent Romano ?" asked JARVIS. Ah, so that was the noise. Damn you Stark for inventing an artificial intelligence with such bad timing. 𐄂

"Hmm Yes?" replied Nat a er clearing his throat.

"Director Fury requests to see you and Agent Ivanov in his o ice in ten minutes."

"Very well."

A more than awkward silence settled between us. Did we really almost...? Oh my god yes! I can't believe it! I almost kissed THE Natasha Romano !!! THE Black Widow!!

"Y/n?" called the latter. I turned to her and met her eyes, we looked away faster than the light.

"hmm we should go, let's go through the kitchen first, Clint should be there." said Natasha.

"Hmm okay let's go." I try to stand up but the pain in my body is too much. Natasha saw that I was in trouble so she helped me up. Her touch gives me goosebumps. Once I stand up I try to walk by myself but I can hardly feel my legs. I guess that's what I expected a er not walking for two days. So the moment I put my foot on the ground I felt my leg give out and I fell. But before I could fall far, Nat caught me and put an arm around my waist and took one of my arms and put it around her shoulders. Damn it Nat, you're not helping my heart at all here.

"A er the meeting I'll take you to the infirmary." she said as we walked out of my room.

"No need, I'm fine, I'll -"

"Don't talk nonsense Y/n. You were beaten up and you have broken ribs and a broken nose. And you haven't eaten in two days. I don't want to have to train a vegetable."

"Oh and here I thought for a moment you cared about me."

Natasha glanced at me and I saw her smile out of the corner of my eye.

"I'm sure you missed me while you were on the mission, just admit it, you must have been thinking about me the whole time huh?" I asked sarcastically. I can hear her chuckle slightly.

"You have no idea how much..." she muttered which made me smile.

We then get to the kitchen where we see Clint and Steve talking. When we enter, they both turn to us. When I met Steve's eyes he looked down which made me feel guilty.

"Here Y/n, eat this." Clint said as he pushed a plate with two sandwiches towards me. Nat helped me sit down on a chair and I began to eat with reluctance. God, I was hungry. While I was eating the others were having a conversation, I didn't pay attention. I thought about what Fury wanted from me.

"Come on Y/n, we have to go see Fury." Natasha snapped me out of my reverie. I stood up with di iculty, leaning on the table. Natasha o ered her help which I refused. I just got my strength back, I can do this.

Before having had time to go out, Steve calls me, I turn then towards him.

"Do you have time for us to talk a er your meeting?" he asked me shyly.

"Natasha has to take me to the infirmary a erwards." I said, I saw the disappointment on his face. "But if you can wait any longer, I'm available right a er. We could have one of our movie nights." I o ered with a shy smile. Steve was surprised, but the relief showed on his face. He smiled at me and nodded. We said goodbye with Nat and headed to Fury's o ice.

On the way, we passed several agents who looked at me sideways. They started whispering again as I passed. We stopped in the waiting room in front of Fury's o ice. The agents present continued to talk behind my back. Until Nat started coughing loudly. All the attention was on her. She glanced coldly at the agents.

"Is something wrong?" she asked in a cold voice.

"Uh no no, we were just passing through. Sorry, Agent Romano ." one agent said before leaving. The other agents then muttered an apology before leaving.

Damn Nat that was hot. 𐄂

I look at Nat with admiration and shock. She saw that I was looking at her and raised an eyebrow, amused and shocked at the same time. Wait?

"I said it out loud, didn't I?" I asked then, petrified. I felt my cheeks catch fire. Natasha smirked. 𐄂

"Yes you did." she replied.

"Oh god," I said, closing my eyes in shame.

Then I felt her breath on my neck, and I heard her say in my ear, "You're cute when you blush." My breath hitched.

I opened my eyes wide and blushed even more. Natasha just smiled, amused and pleased with the e ect she had on me. Damn you Nat.

"Let's go," she then says, mentioning Fury's o ice door. I'm in absolutely no condition but hey, no big deal. Here we go.