

Acceptance

⚠ ⚠ ⚠ **TRIGGER WARNING!**

Mentions of rape, please please don't read if this upsets you!

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"There he is. The hero that finally caught me." For a moment I got lost in his eyes, thankful that my mask was covering most of my face. The last thing I needed was for him to see how much he effected me. How just being around him made me feel safe. I had an image to uphold, one I couldn't let slip, not yet.

"Take the mask off Winter. Show everyone who you truly are."

I knew he meant more than just my physical mask. Something no one else would pick up on, but I did. He knew. He could read me like a book, it was always something I loved about him, but now? I hated that he could see through me so easily. I had to change the conversation before he made it obvious.

"You sure you want your best buddy to find that out?"

His eyes showed his anger more than his face did. He'd lied to Steve for me and I wasn't sure how Steve would react to that, it was the only play I had right now. Cause a riot and hopefully get forgotten about in the fallout.

"That's why you let me find you?" Finally a bit of truth, he didn't know where I was all along either. I already knew that but to hear it coming from him gave me a small sense of pride.

"Did you really think this was your victory? That I didn't want you to find me?"

He paused, his eyes finally leaving mine as his voice softened. "What do you want Winter?"

"How did Zemo phrase it?" I taunted him. He knew what I wanted, what I always wanted. The Avengers torn apart. To rip their lives apart like they had with mine.

"To see an empire fall."

I took a step closer to him, wanting him to see the anger in my eyes.

"Exactly. How do you think Stevie boy will react when he finds out you lied to him?" I pulled the mask off my face, enjoying the way the air hit my skin. "When he finds out his precious Willow was me all along?" I threw the mask down on the floor, elated that I no longer had to wear it. That for once I didn't have to hide who I was, the first time in a long time, I was just me. A woman hell bent on getting revenge for a life that was stolen from her.

"Why did you target him?" I could see the way his fists clenched.

Anger at how I'd treated his best friend clear as day.

"Because he's the only thing you care about!" I spat at him before turning my back to him. I may have needed him to quell the rising panic in me, but it didn't stop the rage I felt at his abandonment. The way he'd let me be tortured and forced to let Rumlow inside me over and over again. Bucky was the first person I'd voluntarily slept with and he knew how important that was to me. The tears threatened to fall as I began remembering it all over again.

"We both know that's not true."

I turned around, letting the tears fall freely as I shouted at him. "If that was true. You would've come back for me! You would've stopped them! Stopped him!" Loki took a step towards me, wanting to comfort me, but I held my hand up to stop him. I wasn't finished. Not yet. "Instead you got a new life. A new family. You know what I got James? I got nothing but pain and suffering." I got as close to the glass as I could. "Now it's your fucking turn."

He let without another word as I crumbled. Loki stopped me from hitting the floor, his arms catching me before he laid me on the bed. He didn't say a word as he let me scream and cry myself to sleep. The gravity of what had happened finally sinking in. I wasn't being trained. Rumlow raped me and it was about time I accepted that.

In the hospital wing, Steve opened his eyes, confused as to where he was. The last thing he could remember was Bucky saying he knew where Winter was. Then it went black.

"Nat? What happened?" Nat walked over to his bedside smiling down at him.

"I hit you really hard in the head."

"Why?" He watched her look guilty for the first time. Like she didn't want to tell him the truth.

"They were controlling you."

"Who was?" He had a feeling he already knew the answer to his own question but he had to ask anyway.

"Winter and Loki." She paused before taking a deep breath. "There's something else you need to know."

"Winter and Willow are the same person." He admitted staring up at the bright ceiling. He'd known for a while, he'd just kept quiet about it for a Bucky's sake.

Nat placed her hand on his arm, trying to understand why her friend felt the need to hide this from everyone. "Why didn't you say anything?" Nat knew how taken Steve was with Willow, how much confidence she'd given him. It was hard to think that the same person was a trained killer. The way Steve had described her was completely different.

"I saw how Bucky looked at her." The way they'd looked at each other that night in the bar. There was only one other person Bucky had looked at that way, Winter. Why Bucky hadn't told him, he wasn't quite sure but he knew there had to of been a reason.

"She's locked up now." Nat reassured him. "She can't hurt anyone else."

Panic shot through Steve as he tried to sit up, the pain in his head stopping him. "Yes she can. Herself." He knew how tortured she was, that much he'd witnessed when she finally stayed the night. The way she tossed and turned as nightmares plagued her. He never told her about it, she'd talk about it if she wanted to. It was on that night he started trying to dig into who she was. He never found anything, nothing except a fake ID.

Knowing she was locked up didn't actually make him feel any better. In fact it was the opposite, he felt responsible for not helping her when he found Bucky. Steve knew Bucky was working with someone, he just assumed she wanted to work with Hydra. It was something he could never forgive himself for. If they'd have helped her, done their jobs, she might not have a heart full of hate.

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