

Leaving

I couldn't help but feel guilty for taking Steve with me. His life, his friends, it was all in New York, the one place I couldn't be any longer. While my heart was breaking by leaving, there was no other choice. I wouldn't stay where I was constantly being judged for my past. I did that enough myself, I didn't need it from others. Much less the man I thought would love me until our dying day.

Steve was watching the road, stealing occasional glances over at me. I knew he was hoping for more than a friendship between us, but I couldn't make that promise. Not even a little bit.

"Are you sure about this?" I asked so ly.

"For the millionth time, it's fine." He smiled reassuringly. "I'd rather be with you than at the compound."

His hand rested on my leg, the feeling more comforting than I'd ever admit.

"The world needs a Captain America though."

He gave my leg a small squeeze, a smile to go along with it as he glanced over at me.

"You need him more right now."

"Even a er I dumped you?" I teased, trying to lighten the mood.

"Did you want to?" He asked seriously, seeing through the front I was putting up.

A multitude of answers ran through my mind as I thought about it.

Had I wanted to? Not really, I liked what we had. I couldn't admit that to him, admit just how desperate I'd been to have Bucky love me again.

"I don't know." I shrugged, deflecting the answer slightly. "It was complicated."

"If you wanted to, you would've done it weeks ago."

"Maybe." I turned to face the window, not able to keep looking at the puppy dog eyes he was giving me. "It doesn't matter now."

I could see the reflection in the window of the smile he was giving me.

"What's that look for?"

"I'm just glad you let me come with you."

Me too I wanted to tell him, but that would give him hope where I wasn't sure there was any. So instead I did what I do best, I pretended everything was fine.

"I might change my mind if you don't stop driving like an old woman."

"You still haven't told me where we're going."

"Just keep driving. You'll see."

The music filled the car as the miles rolled past. My mind wandered to Bucky, wondering if he was missing me as much as I was missing him. I doubt it, but the hopeful part of me hopes he is. I want him to regret what he said and come crawling back to me, I wouldn't forgive him but I wanted it nonetheless.

I pointed out directions until we reached a hotel where I planned for us to stay the night. I didn't want to fly out to our final destination until tomorrow.

Steve placed the car in park before we headed inside. It wasn't a grand hotel, but it wasn't shabby either. I grabbed a quick shower before wrapping the so lush white robe and wrapping it around myself. As I came out Steve kissed me gently on the top of my head. A small reassuring gesture that I refused to admit meant more than any words ever could.

I walked over to the large window, looking out at the night sky as Steve went into the bathroom. A lone tear fell down my cheek as Bucky's words repeated over and over in my head.

You'll always be a villain.

You'll always be a villain.

You'll always be a villain.

I couldn't let him be right. It was too easy to slip back into that mindset. To let the darkness I fought to keep back, swallow me whole. To user my grief and anger the way Hydra had taught me.

Steve came out of the bathroom wearing the same robe I was. My lips li ed into a small smile as he gestured down at himself.

"Well don't you look adorable." I teased.

He walked towards me, not saying a word. As he reached me he looked at me like I was the most important person in the world.

"Don't look at me like that."

"I can't help it. You're beautiful."

Even a er everything he still had a way of breaking through to me. I rested my hands on his chest, feeling the so cotton of the robe beneath my fingers.

Almost painfully slowly he leaned his head down towards me. Every instinct told me to pull away, that this wasn't right. I ignored them all, letting his lips press gently against mine. Letting him bring me the comfort I desperately craved.

I let the world around me disappear, just for a moment as I surrendered to his kiss. His hands gently holding my face. His hands were always so so compared to Bucky's.

Bucky.

I pulled away at the mere thought of him.

"I'm sorry. I-I can't."

He used his thumbs to dry the tears I didn't realise had fallen.

"I know. It's okay."

I leaned my forehead against his chest, needing to feel the comfort he could bring me. I knew it was selfish, but a er everything I couldn't find it in me to care anymore. I'd been beaten down so far that I just needed to pretend that I was worthy of his a ection.

"Come on sweetheart, you need some sleep."

I let him take me over to the bed, pulling back the covers so I could sink into the so sheets. He climbed in beside me, not making a move to touch me. He was waiting for me to come to him. Not pushing the comfort that I guessed he needed as well as I did.

Steve waited. Hoping she'd come to him, seeking comfort in the way he knew he could provide. He had to tread carefully, if he pushed her too hard then she'd pull away. He couldn't risk that, not a er everything he'd done to get to this moment.

When she rolled over, her sad eyes looking up at him, he li ed his arm. She snuggled up onto his chest, wrapping her arm around him tightly. He didn't hide the smile plastered over his face, he couldn't. Everything was going just how he wanted it to. He'd be the shoulder for her to cry on, the one that brought light to her darkness. She didn't realise that by doing that, she was feeding his own selfish desires.

In time he'd win her back.

"Thank you." She mumbled against him.

He kissed the top of her head, taking in the scent that was entirely her.

"Nothing to thank me for. I'd do anything for you."

Little did she know just how true them words were. He'd take on anyone and anything that threatened to take her from him. He knew his amount of love for her was toxic.

It was too late for him to want to do anything about it.

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