

Chapter 22

"What, have I got something on my face?" Banner asks me, looking slightly embarrassed at my palpable amazement at seeing him.

"No, you're fine, I just, I think I... I don't know how to put this." I stammer and Banner looks if possible even more uncomfortable.

"Uh, well, why don't we sit down?" He asks me, glancing at the security guards and they give us some space.

"Yeah, ok, that sounds good." I nod and we walk across the huge entrance to some chairs.

Banner takes a seat, looking at me warily, and I realise how insane I must seem to him, all sweaty and pale in my worse for wear stupid Taylor Swift shirt. I could have picked any fucking shirt and this is the one I go with.

"What can I do you for?" Banner asks me, giving me a so smile as to encourage me.

"I, uh." I begin again, but I have no clue how to explain what is going on. "This is going to sound insane!" I laugh and place my head in my hands.

"Don't worry, I work with insane people every day, I bet you I've heard worse." Banner tells me and I look up at him.

"Promise?" I hear myself asking like a scared little ten-year-old.

"I promise." Banner smiles kindly and I sigh.

"Ok, I think I'm stuck inside my own brain." I say and notice Banner raises his eyebrows in surprise ever so slightly.

"Ok, wow. Uh, philosophy was never my strongest subject but I guess we all are -stuck inside our own brains, I mean."

"No, you don't get it." I sigh and he laughs.

"Try again then."

"Right. See, the year is 2023." At this, Banner's eyebrows actually shoot up even higher.

"Oh." Is all he says.

"I swear, I'm not insane. I just, I think I was hit in the head, or something." I scrunch up my face, trying to remember exactly what happened the moment before I woke up in my dorm in 2015. "I was in a battle, I was trying to help Wanda and-"

"Who?" Banner looks at me confused.

"Right, that's just great." I roll my eyes at the ceiling. "I am an FBI agent and-"

"Hmm, you look a little young for that." Banner attempts to joke but quickly stops when he sees the expression on my face. "Sorry."

"In 2023, I'm an FBI agent." I tell him slowly. "I blacked out during a fight, and woke up hundreds of miles away 8 years earlier."

"Ok. Do you have anyone you want me to call who can pick you up or-"

Banner begins.

"Ugh, no!" I stand up quickly. "I told you I wasn't insane. I can prove it to you!"

"Yeah?" Banner looks intrigued. "How?"

"I don't know, I can tell you what's going to happen in the future, I guess." I uncertainly shrug my shoulders.

"A fortune-teller." Banner smiles at me.

"No!" I pull my fingers through my hair. "I told you, I've lived it before!"

"Right. Go back to the brain part." Banner asks me and his calm demeanor makes me calm down slightly.

"I think I must still be knocked out or something. The real me, I mean, the me in 2023." I shake my head, trying to understand my situation.

"And this is all an illusion that your brain has conjured?" Banner asks so ly and I nod. "Tell me -what's your name again?"

"Olivia." I mutter.

"Tell me, Olivia, have you ever been inside the Avengers Tower?"

I shake my head, frowning.

"Then how could your brain come up with all of this?" Banner asks me and I stare at him.

How could my brain come up with all of this? I have indeed never been here. I look around, trying to see something familiar, something that would explain all of this.

"I might've... I might've seen this on TV." I frown.

"That's true." Banner shrugs. "Come with me."

I look at him as he stands up and looks expectantly at me. I look around for a second, hoping someone would turn and tell me what to do, but as no one pays me any attention, I stand up slowly.

"Where are we going?"

"We're going to do some tests. You've got me intrigued." Banner smiles and guides me towards the elevators.

We ride up in silence. I try to keep my eyes on my hands which are twiddling in front of me as heights make me wildly uncomfortable. The ride seems to take forever. Banner is silently watching me, I can tell. I breathe out when the elevator so ly dings and lets us out into what looks like the most expensive apartment I have ever been in.

"Not bad, is it?" Banner smiles at me kindly and walks further into the apartment.

I look around, not able to contain my awe. Huge windows open up onto a magnificent view of New York. The apartment -if one indeed can call it that, is huge, spanning di erent levels, all decorated with space furniture I am certain I'd need to throw several months of payslips at to be able to a ord them.

"Wow, Banner, bringing home a girl?" A familiar voice calls out and I look up at the balcony (yes, a balcony within a flat), and see none other than Tony Stark looking down at us.

"Tony, this is-" Banner begins, but Stark whistles loudly and jumps down from where he is stood, using two small blasts that come from his palms to so en his landing. I notice dark metal quickly crawling back up into his sleeve from his palms.

"Banner, Banner." He shakes his head. "She's half your age."

"Tony-"

"Not that I disapprove, but-"

"Ok, I don't have time for this." I throw my hands up in the air and both men look at me.

"Time for this?" Stark repeats stupidly and I sigh.

"Have you ever been here?" Banner asks me and smiles, knowing the answer.

"No, she hasn't, I would most certainly-" Stark begins but I cut him o , ignoring him.

"Can't say I have. What does that mean?"

"Ok, I feel like you two have some secret you're not telling me." Stark whines and I look back at him. "I hate secrets."

I narrow my eyes at him and he shrugs. "Fine, I hate secrets if I'm not involved. I feel like I'm not involved. Involve me."

"Can we sit down?" Banner asks Stark.

"Fine. She looks like she's going to drop any minute. I've just cleaned." Stark turns on his heels and leads the way towards a couple of huge leather couches near the windows.

I follow, still reeling from the lavishness of it all. My brain must be on some insane trip, I decide. I've got a pretty vivid imagination, but this is certainly not all me. I sink down on the couch, instantly humming appreciatively.

"Girl's got taste." Stark comments, letting himself fall down at the other end of the couch, and crossing his legs, looking from me to Banner expectantly. "So? Secrets!"

"Uhm, well Olivia here... why don't you tell the story?" Banner laughs awkwardly.

And so, I retell Stark what I told Banner downstairs. Stark doesn't interrupt (surprisingly), but listens, only occasionally letting a look of surprise cross his face. Once I'm done, he stays silent. He slowly removes the sunglasses he's been wearing and studies me.

"Alright." He finally says, tapping the t at the end of the word. "I've not heard this one before."

"I'm sorry?" I ask him confused.

"I mean it's inventive, I'll give you that. Got you up here." Stark stands up. "Got enough to write about now, now please leave."

"Tony, I think she's telling the truth." Banner says and Stark looks at him.

"I thought I was keeping you occupied. Don't tell me you're bored!"

"Come on Tony." Banner shakes his head, looking down, and I feel like I have to step in.

"You're working on Ultron." I blurt out, and both men freeze, looking at me in shock.

"How did you-" Stark begins.

"Know? I told you, this has happened!" I lean back against the back of the couch, taking a deep breath. "I just don't know how to get out."

Stark still stares at me, but does eventually slowly sit back down on the couch, never taking his eyes o me.

"Let me get this straight." He then says. "You're hallucinating all of this. You're actually in the year 2023. None of this is real."

"I mean, I don't know. Yeah?"

"Tony, I'd like to do some basic tests to see if I can find anything." Banner says, looking at Stark, who takes his eyes o me and looks at Banner.

"Ok, yes. Yes. Let's do that." He seems to convince himself as he hops up to standing again. "What are you waiting for? Let's go."

Banner and I follow him through a series of doors until we end up in what looks like Tony Stark's version of a medical bay or a lab of some sort. Banner and Stark enter the room, but I stay in the doorway uncertainly.

"Jarvis." Stark speaks out into thin air, and I actually jump with surprise when a bodiless voice replies.

"Yes, boss?"

"We're going to do some tests on this very interesting self-proclaimed time-traveler."

"Getting everything ready, sir." The voice I assume is called Jarvis replies.

I watch as Banner and Stark prepare whatever tests they are about to conduct. The level of realism my brain is able to produce amazes me again, but as amazing as it is, I am honestly getting rather anxious.

The longer I stay here, the less likely I am to get back to Wanda anytime soon. I wonder how she's doing, if she's been locked up and tortured again, and if I'm going to wake up arrested and in a cell like hers.

"Earth to Olivia?" Stark waves a hand and I snap back.

"Sorry. What?"

"Get over here." Stark points and the table-like thing in front of him and Banner. "Hop on up."

I glare at him and he smiles widely, but I do as he says and climb up on the table. I lie down on my back and Stark and Banner begin pressing on holographic buttons.

"This isn't going to hurt, Olivia. Just stay real still for us, ok?" Banner tells me and I nod.

The machine whirrs around me as it scans me. I feel a sudden prick and look down and see a needle drawing out blood from my arm. It all takes about twenty seconds, and then I'm free to sit up.

Stark and Banner huddle around another holographic screen.

"So?" Stark asks Banner, who studies the screen intently.

"I don't see anything out of the ordinary..." He tells us, speaking slowly as he concentrates. "Although... what is that?"

Stark looks like an overexcited puppy as he follows Banner's focus.

"There's something in her blood..."

"What?" I ask, surprised.

They both look up from the screen at me, for the first time looking actually interested in me.

"What?" I repeat.

"You, my darling, are enhanced." Stark says and I gape at him.

"I am not." I finally among to say.

"You need to tell us exactly what happened to you before you woke up here. We need everything you can remember." Banner says and I look from one to the other.

"You're joking."

"I love a joke, honey, but this ain't one." Stark says, his face serious, which is possibly the most unnerving thing I've experienced today.

A/N: OK, I know, maybe not the smartest thing to mess with timelines... but please suspend your disbelief and just roll with it, I'll try my best not to mess things up toooooo much! ;) x