

Chapter 25

Nat and I stop dead in our tracks, the unmoving Clint still hoisted between us. My body is slightly shaking from the effort it takes to uphold the steady flow of energy to keep everything frozen and from holding up the not-so-light Clint. The air fogs up in front of our faces as we breathe. All is silent and unmoving, except for Wanda, Nat, and me.

We stare at each other.

"Wanda, what are you?" I begin, my surprise in seeing her making me forget she most probably has no idea who I am—we haven't met yet.

"Who are you?" She asks me unsurprisingly, in a thick accent, much thicker than the one she has when I know her. Her eyes are glowing red and wisps of red are twirling around her hands. Seeing her again makes me feel oddly relieved somehow, like I'm not really in this weird unknown world anymore now that she's in it too. Albeit not the her I know. But it's still Wanda.

"Liv, we better—" Nat quietly warns me, and I feel her shi uncomfortably.

"How are you not frozen?" I ask the virtual stranger in front of me, ignoring Nat.

Wanda cocks her head and the red whisps around her hands turn into glowing balls of scarlet electricity. I feel Nat shi slightly uneasily.

"Freeze her." She whispers.

"I don't think that'll be a good idea..." I say, not taking my eyes o Wanda.

"Try, there's nothing else we can do." Nat urgently says and I nod ever so slightly.

I begin pulling the energy back into my hands, my brow sweating despite the frigid temperature around me. I feel the energy warm my hands and I make an enormous effort as I so on my knees and feel like I'm lifting a very heavy sack as I bring my arm up and throw the energy towards Wanda. The energy zooms towards her, but she reacts faster, not being tired from fighting like me, and sends o her own burst of red energy to meet my silvery one. The forces meet in front of Wanda and explode in mid-air, the shock blast sending all of us tumbling over. My head is pounding like mad now, the dark spots in my vision returning and I know I'm close to losing consciousness. I force myself up to standing again as Nat has already bounced back up, and is running towards Wanda who is just getting up herself.

"Nat! Don't—" Is all I have the time to say before Wanda sends a red ball flying towards Nat, who despite her insane reaction speed doesn't have time to duck and is hit flat in the chest. She comes flying back towards me, landing with a thud on her back.

"Who are you?" I look back up at Wanda who is now slowly walking towards me, her right hand toying with her magic.

"Wanda, please listen to me—" I begin, but she cuts me o.

"How do you know my name?"

"I'm a friend." I tell her slowly raising my hands in the air to show her that I'm not a threat.

"A friend to the Avengers." She hisses, her face obscured by rage.

It is now my turn to react as she throws the hissing red orb towards me. I lift my hands up to shield my face and hope that the mist will somehow appear and quite possibly stop Wanda's magic like it stopped the cab back in New York. I feel significantly more drained and stagger backward. The magic never hits me. It's le angrily buzzing in mid-air where I've frozen it in place. Wanda looks for a second as if this is of concern, but masks that expression as soon as she sees me observing her.

This time, I'm not as lucky as before. I'm way too tired to react whatsoever as she flings another spell of scarlet towards me. I feel it hit my chest with the force of a brick wall before I feel my back hit the frozen ground and everything goes black.

Every inch of my body feels like it's been hit by a truck as I slowly regain consciousness. I lift an arm that feels like it has been made with lead and place my hand on my forehead, groaning slightly. This is definitely worse than a hungover. I slowly force myself to open my eyes. I'm in a bright room. I push myself to sitting and instantly recognize my surroundings as the room in the Ra I was in before I was zapped into the past. The box I dropped is shattered next to me. I hear shuffling and groaning and look up.

Wanda—the Wanda I know, the Wanda with red hair, is slowly pushing herself o the floor, looking unsteady and confused. Behind her I can see the guards doing the same, slowly coming back to it.

Wanda looks up and sees me awake, and a brief look of relief flashes across her face before she clumsily rushes over to my side. She looks me over, but finding nothing visibly wrong with me, she breathes out so ly.

"Are you ok?" She asks quietly, suddenly looking drained.

"I-I feel like I've been hit by a truck." I laugh dryly. My ribs instantly remind me of their broken existence. And my arm is indeed back in a sling.

"What was that thing?" Wanda looks around, as if trying to find the mist that once was in the box.

I shake my head, not knowing what or how to answer. I remember everything that just happened to me as vividly as if it really happened, but now I'm doubting myself.

"Did you... did you also... see things?" I ask Wanda.

"What?" She shakes her head, frowning. "Did you hit your head?"

"How long was I out?" I ask Wanda who now looks down at me, concern in her green eyes visible again.

"Seconds." She answers and I grow more doubtful. She scans my face. "We need to get out of here. Can you stand?"

I nod and she tries helping me up, which must look slightly comical as she is still very out of it from the drugs she's been given. We both make it to standing eventually, but now so have the agents on the other side of the room, and they're starting to get ready to advance again. The blast from the mist exploding must've knocked them down too.

I look around, desperately trying to find a way out of the room that doesn't include running through the agents. To my amazement, I spot a door behind us. I grab a hold of Wanda's arm again and begin dragging her towards the door, crouching down slightly, hoping we won't be seen. Wanda doesn't thankfully question me but follows along.

The door opens silently with a small click as I present the ID I stole from the guard back in Wanda's cell. We tiptoe in and I quietly close the door behind us. An automatic light flickers on as it senses us. The room looks like it's a kind of supply room to the lab on the other side of the door. Again, I feel like I've won the lottery as I spot another door on the other side of the room.

"Don't touch anything." Wanda snarkily remarks behind me and I roll my eyes.

The door on the other side opens as well and we step into a stairwell. I look back at Wanda, making sure she's alright and she dips her chin just slightly, letting me know she's alright. And with that, we begin climbing. This seems like a very back-doors type of stairwell, and I'm pretty certain that if we get caught, it will definitely not be here. The only sounds around are the sounds of our footsteps on the metallic stairs.

"We need to make it into the main hangar. There's a helicopter there ready to take o." I say over my shoulder.

"Can you pilot that?" Wanda asks, slightly out of breath.

"No." I honestly reply and I hear her hu behind me. "This breakout isn't up to your standards?"

"No." She says and I hear the smile in her voice. "Last time I was rescued out of here it took five minutes. And no stairs."

"Well, I'm sorry I'm not Captain America."

"No, that's definitely not America's Ass."

"Excuse me?" I stop in my tracks and turn around to look at Wanda. She looks up at me with a wonky half-smile and I can't help but smile back although I'm trying my hardest not to.

"What?" She innocently asks. "It's true."

"Humph." I turn back around, shooting her one more warning glance before continuing our climb.

Somehow, we find our way—unnoticed, back to the hangar bay. How that happened, I've got no idea. Currently, we're lurking behind a big pile of what looks (and smells like) black trash bags. I keep scanning the hangar, trying to figure out a way to get us through the massive bay to the helicopter all the way on the other side without being detected. I'm racing through scenarios, but however I plan, we end up caught. I even consider all the things Natasha Romano taught me in the past—or in my fever dream or whatever the hell I experienced when the mist blew up.

"At some point, Olivia, we're just going to have to try." Wanda finally speaks up with a sigh at er what must be thirty minutes or so of just sitting there.

"Well, Wanda, I am trying to not get you thrown directly back into that lovely cell of yours." I retort back. "And I am not looking to make you company in there."

"You wouldn't last five minutes." She chuckles, but I hear the real pain behind the attempted humor.

"No, I don't think I would." I look around at her half-obscured face seriously. Her smile drops.

I turn back around and sigh. I don't want to admit it, but she is right. Our best shot is just to try, at this point.

"Ok." I say, putting an end to my planning. I turn around and look at Wanda, who looks back at me expectantly. "We're going to take it step by step. First, we make it to that cabinet. It's not big enough to cover both of us, so as soon as we make it there I'm going to run straight behind that pillar-y thing there, do you see it?"

She nods minutely and I nod back, pleased. "When I give you the go, you follow. Then, we just need to make it to that railing, and then a straight shot to the chopper."

"Easy." Wanda makes a bad attempt at some humor.

"Honestly, it will not work. But it's the best plan I can think of." I shrug, feeling kind of hopeless. I don't know what on earth I was thinking. There was no way I would be able to break out the most wanted enhanced individual in the world from the Ra.

"Hey, we'll be fine." Wanda says, sensing my doubt. "If only I could get these o..."

She looks down at the cuffs around her wrists. The red light is still merrily blinking, blocking any attempts at any sort of energy flow.

"Can't you do the thing you did back in the cabin?" I ask her and she chuckles dryly but doesn't reply. "I take that as a no, then."

I turn away from her and take a deep breath, readying myself. No use in sitting here chatting until they find us. I scan our surroundings one more time, waiting for the perfect opportunity to sprint.

"Ready?" I whisper.

"Ready." Comes the answer.

"Ok... Go!" And with that I run out of hiding, making a beeline towards the cabinet I pointed out earlier. This is the shortest run we have to make, and indeed, I make it to the dark corner the cabinet is in, and a second or two later Wanda bumps into me, and I know I have to run out so she can hide. I speed o, ignoring the prickling sensation in my ribs. My heart feels like it suddenly is dipped into a bucket of ice water when I hear a sudden yell.

"Hey! You!" A man's voice shouts out and I stop dead in my tracks, glancing over to make sure that Wanda hasn't moved from her spot in the shadows.

"Uh, yes?" I gasp, trying to calm down my beating heart. I'm very aware that I am now the center of attention as every single guard in the huge hangar bay has been alerted to my presence.

"What are you doing?" The same guard yells over at me, beginning to march towards me slowly, hand on his gun.

"Trying to find Maximo. Looks like I'm working harder at it than you. I thought she'd be a bigger priority than stopping FBI agents from doing their work."

The agent is now mere meters away from me. I can tell he's not buying my story. My head and heart are both racing as I feel like I am glued to the floor, unable to escape.

What do we do? suddenly feel the now familiar warmth wash over me as Wanda enters my mind.

I don't know I think, panicking. I'll distract everyone, and you just run to the chopper.

I can't fly it! Wanda's voice clips back in my head.

"Show me your ID badge." The guard orders.

"I... must've lost it." I make the most horrible attempt at a lie.

Figure it out! I think back at Wanda whilst simultaneously sheepishly grinning at the guard.

"Place your hands on the back of your head." The guard tells me brusquely, and from the corner of my eyes, I can see several more guards approach us.

"Well, that's rather rude." I say, nodding down at the arm in the sling. As the guard looks down, I yell out: "Now!"

I grab the guard's head before he has time to block my hand, and yank his head down slightly as I push myself o the floor, performing one of (I think) Nat's favorite moves. I land on the guard's shoulders, straddling his neck between my thighs, and use the weight of my body to pull him down on the floor. My ribs scream out in protest, but my priority now is to create enough chaos for Wanda to be able to unnoticed make it to the helicopter.

My plan is working as most of the guards in the hangar are now rushing over. I pounce o the floor, stealing the guard's gun, and dive behind a metal crate as I begin hearing shots fired. The bullets rain down on the metal container I'm hiding behind. I lift up the gun and begin firing back, without popping my head over the container to aim. I don't care whether my bullets reach their destinations, all I want is everyone's attention fully fixed on me.

I hazard a peek around the crater before I do have time in hiding almost instantly by a rain of deadly gunfire. I am forced the time to glimpse a read-headed figure running towards the helicopter behind all of the guards. I raise the gun again and shoot haphazardly, making sure not to point the gun towards where I saw Wanda running.

"That's Maximo!" I hear a sudden shout and I curse out loud.

I peek out from behind the crate, and see that I've failed in my mission to keep all attention on me. Most everyone's attention is on Wanda, who is, bless her, running as hard as she can towards the helicopter. My attention falls upon one guard that steps out from behind the helicopter, his gun raised towards Wanda. She has no time to react before the guard fires.

At the exact same time, I yell out in fear, trying to stop her, or trying to stop the bullet. A sudden, forceful, silver explosion shoots through the entire hangar, looking like a sort of shimmering sound wave. Everything goes still, and I feel like I've been drained of all my energy.

My mouth falls open in shock. Everything has stopped moving, just as it did before.

A/N: Well, we're back in the now! Woo! Had to get a small dose of emo-Wanda in here somehow ;) Also, sorry for the slightly slower updates... life is busy busy. anyway, hope you liked this chapter! x