Chapter 36

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When I start slowly coming to the next morning, I marvel at how well rested I feel. Every single part of my being feels fuzzy, it's that feeling I haven't had in so long -restfulness. I have no idea when the last time I slept through an entire night without a single dream. Just pure, sweet, nothing. My thoughts are slow like I'm still half asleep. I feel so warm and relaxed. I groan slightly, stretching out my legs. A so complaining sound reaches my ear and with a jolt, I'm taken back to where I am, and most importantly, with whom I am. It suddenly takes so much e ort to not react to the weight I am now noticing around my stomach and chest. My heart races as I slowly peel open my eyes. The bedroom is still dark, bathed in that so light before the sun properly rises to illuminate the world. It's still dark enough to drown out any colors, rending the world in dierent shades of gray, except for one vibrant color right next to my face. Draped over my chest is a head covered by a tousled mane of red hair so unmistakably Wanda's it brings a small smile on my face. She's nestled against me with her arm over my stomach as she's still fast asleep, probably completely unaware of her position. I try to even out my breathing as to not tip her o to me being awake. There's an odd want to stay like this forever and never move again. The realization shocks me since I've never been the kind of person who enjoys being all touchy-feely and clingy, and usually, I get very uncomfortable when another person is this close to me. Now though, I don't recognize any of the usual feelings this proximity would normally bring. There is no need to push away or to retreat, none of the usual stu iness and anxiousness that comes with having my personal space invaded. Instead, I just find myself wanting to stay as still as possible so that I won't disturb Wanda, finding it oddly calming to observe all the subtle shades of red and orange of her hair. Somehow, by the way she's draped over me, I suspect she might need this closeness even more than me. Especially a er her confessions to me last night. I figure it isn't every day that she feels comfortable enough to ask for someone to be there for her, and I feel a warmth spread in my chest at the thought of me being the person she chose. "Hmm, you know you can actually breathe. Won't wake me up." A raspy voice sounds from underneath all that hair and I chuckle so ly, only now realizing that in my e orts to not wake her, I've actually stopped breathing. "I'm sorry -I didn't want to disturb you. You seemed like you needed the rest." I answer her and she hums so ly in reply, making no move to get o me. I am only now becoming aware of my hand on her back. It just lies there, casually, but the realization makes me feel like it's anything but casual. My hand is suddenly all I can concentrate on, the feeling of her warmth radiating through her shirt is almost too much to bear. I have no idea what to do with my hand all of a sudden. If I move it, she might think I am uncomfortable, which I am not. But I don't want to make her uncomfortable by not moving it. It's too much. It's way too intimate. I could pretend to have to move a strand of hair o of my face. But what if that makes her move away? I don't want that. But it feels like it weighs a ton, resting there like it's the only natural place for it to be. Shit. What does one do with one's hand in a situation like this? Oh my god. If I just-"Shut up. I'm trying to sleep here." Wanda breaks the silence and moves slightly, trying to get more comfortable and I mentally kick myself. Mind reading, right. I have to stop being so notsubtle around her. What's wrong with me? I am never this self-conscious normally. "Sorry. Are you comfortable?" I ask her when she shu les again, her legs accidentally kicking mine. "Mhmm." She answers and I decide to feel brave enough to absentmindedly stroke her back in small, light touches. "Hmm." She says again and I take that as her being okay with the touch. I close my eyes, my body still feeling heavy despite being intensely awake at the same time, the constant feeling of Wanda pressing up against me enough to keep me overthinking to the tenth degree. Everything she told me last night is suddenly playing over and over again in my head. I wonder if she regrets anything she told me -if she was just feeling too vulnerable due to her exhaustion from spending so much energy, thus lowering her usual guards. I hope she doesn't regret anything. I keep picturing how sad she sounded when she asked me to hold her, and how detached she was when talking about her past, and I have a feeling that despite her being so open with me, that she's barely even grazed the surface of her feelings. I wonder if I'll ever get the chance to learn more about her, or if yesterday was just a rare once-in-a-lifetime situation. The thought makes me sad. I realize I actually want to learn more about her, and not because I am intrigued by her professionally, wanting to connect all the dots in her case file, but because I genuinely want to learn all I can about her. I don't know where all of these early morning realizations are coming from, but they're making me slightly uneasy. The more time I spend basking in my luck in having learned so much about Wanda, the more I suspect she was just in need of someone, anyone, yesterday, and that it won't happen again. "Livvy, you're really going to need to stop thinking so much." Wanda suddenly says and I open my eyes when I feel the weight of her head leave me. Wanda looks up at me through her lashes with a meaningful look plastered on her face. Her expression makes a smile creep up my face. She looks much more rested although there are still dark circles under her eyes, and she's still a little too pale for my liking, but seeing her regard me with that look and a glint in her eye makes me relieved. She narrows her eyes at my expression, her eyes darting from my eyes down to my mouth and back again in the blink of an eye. "I'm sorry." I smile apologetically and she rolls her eyes at me as a smile of her own graces her face. She hu s and drops her head back down on my chest, getting comfortable again, surprising me slightly. "What?" I ask her, looking down at the back of her head. "You keep apologizing." Wanda mutters against my chest, but I can hear from the tone of her voice that she's amused. "I want to say sorry, but I guess that's o -limits?" I smile against my will, finding our usual banter easy to slip into, and it makes my head spin that she's being so relaxed a er all the scenarios my head was just making up. "No, you can't. Not to me." Wanda says and her arm tightens around my waist. "What, I can never say sorry to you?" I repeat and she chuckles. "Nope. Sorry." "But what if I accidentally shoot you in your stomach when I am aiming for your shoulder? How rude of me to not say sorry then." "Humph." She snorts and turns awkwardly, making it so that she's lying almost horizontally over the bed, her head on my stomach looking up at me with bright green eyes. "I truly hope you're not going to need to shoot me again, or I might have to break your other arm too." "Yeah, you're right, I can't risk that." I laugh breathily and she smiles at me. "How does it feel?" She wonders, sounding small. "Erm, I was a little surprised I guess, but I don't mind it." Her expression changes to a slightly confused one and I register that she's not talking about us, now. "Your arm." She clarifies and I feel mortified, but she only looks at me with an amused, tiny smirk. "Oh!" I giggle awkwardly, making her head bob slightly on my stomach and she lets out a small sound of indignation. "Oh, sor-I mean, my arm, it eh, it's ok." "It doesn't hurt?" She ignores my awkwardness, allowing it to play out but doesn't react to it. "I guess sometimes. I did forget my painkillers. I still need to have the metal screws removed at some point." She bites her bottom lip, dropping her gaze from my face and I comprehend she feels responsible. "Hey, don't worry about it. I've done quite well with just one arm, or did you forget I actually busted you out of the Ra like this?" I nudge her, trying to lighten her mood again. It seems to have worked as she lets out a silky little laugh. "You did have some help." "You barely helped." I roll my eyes and she nudges me. "I still feel bad." "Honestly, Wanda, it's fine. It's my villain origin story. Makes me all mysterious and cool walking around with it in a sling. It's a real headturner." I can tell she doesn't really believe me, her eyes dropping to my le arm where it lies next to me. I see her formulate something in her head, and I once again wish I could know what goes on inside her mind. Her tongue quickly darts out to moisten her lips and she sits up on the bed, sweeping her hair behind her shoulders. "Oh, no, I know that expression." I say, widening my eyes in mock terror. "I want to try something." She says and presents her hands to me. "Give me your arm." "No." I tell her, not wanting her to feel like she owes me anything. "Yes." "No. I told you, it adds to my character-" "Oh shut up." She giggles, dropping her serious expression and leaning over me, grabbing my arm gingerly. "What are you doing?" I frown, not liking where this is going. "I'm going to fix it." She answers, looking up from my arm and meeting my eyes with such sincerity it makes my heart jump a beat. "Wanda, you really don't have to, especially a er yest-" "I've made up my mind." She interrupts, that small frown appearing on her face. "I don't want to be rude, but how much do you actually know about anatomy?" I scrunch up my face and she chuckles. "My scarlet can figure it out." She smiles, batting her eyes. "Please?" "Ugh, okay. But if this ends up like that scene in Harry Potter..." I trail o as she tilts her head in question, and I see she must have no clue what I'm on about. "Just don't remove all my bones, please."

She shakes her head, smiling, and looks down at my arm. She places it down on her thighs and her hands hover over my forearm. Her fingers twitch and I watch with awe as her magic appears. It's at the same time absolutely terrifying to witness, but also so beautiful. Wanda looks up at me with a curious expression but doesn't o er up a comment. She looks down again with a concentrated face, and her magic delicately approaches my arm, wrapping itself around me. It's an odd sensation, like sticking your arm in something which is at the same time intensely cold, but also warm. I gasp as a sharp pain emanates from what I assume are the metal bolts moving in my bone, but the

feeling is instantly dulled as that familiar wash of Wanda's

consciousness fills my head. I realize she must be taking the pain

away from me. I just hope she doesn't feel it instead. Her face gives

no clues if she does or not. I try to keep looking at her instead of my

arm, afraid of what sight will meet my eyes if I do look down. The

temptation proves too strong and so I dare to let my gaze flutter

down. My cast has been broken apart and underneath my arm lies

wrapped in scarlet. My brain stalls as it tries to comprehend the fact

that metal pins are slowly being pulled out of my arm, plopping out

covered in blood and magic, and yet there is no associated pain. As

soon as Wanda's magic must feel satisfied with having extracted all

scarlet slides across my skin, and when it leaves, there is not a single

trace of anything ever happening to my arm. My skin is silky smooth.

Wanda's fingers stop twitching and her scarlet dissipates and at the

same time, I feel her remove herself from my head. I feel oddly cold

and empty. She looks slightly more pale as she touches my arm with

and looks into my eyes with a questioning look. I just stare at her, my

completely normal, albeit a little sti. I look up at the woman in front

the lightest of touches. She seems happy with what she's managed

mouth opens in shock and her face falls slightly.

I look down at my arm and flex my fingers. No pain. It feels

"You're amazing." Is all I can say and her face lights up.

"It feels ok?" She asks, concern in her voice but pride written all

"It's perfect. Holy shit." I can't help but laugh and she beams down at

"Are you ok?" Her voice trembles slightly.

of me again, still looking at me wide-eyed.

across her face.

me.

metal, my arm jolts oddly as my bones are rearranged. Then, the

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"It's sometimes a good idea to accept help." She teases me and I roll my eyes at her, still overwhelmed with what she's just managed to do. "Thank you." I say, trying to convey how much I appreciate her. She doesn't respond, but shi s to hug her knees into her chest, but smiles sweetly. A silence settles in as I lie there, looking at her. I'm struck by how intense her eyes are as they keep my gaze fixed on them. I'm afraid I might fall into them and not find my way out ever again. How am I only now noticing how green they are? "What are you thinking?" She enquires gently and I raise my eyebrows at her. "What? I said I don't like to listen if I can avoid it. So, tell me. Your thoughts are very active." "You just fixed my arm. I'm still reeling, babe." I laugh, and she tilts her head at the term that just slipped out. I grin awkwardly, hoping she doesn't overthink it. She doesn't say anything, so I feel obliged to go on to cover the awkward moment. "I guess I'm still processing everything from last night." I tell her honestly and momentary darkness crosses her face and I feel annoyed at myself for bringing it up and spoiling the moment of rare relaxation for her. 'How are you feeling about it all?" She asks me and I'm surprised by the question. She cares about me enough to ask me how I'mfeeling when it's obvious I should be asking herthat same question. "What is it?" She catches on to my reaction. "Oh, I just feel like I should be asking you that question." She goes silent, her eyes suddenly finding something behind my head really interesting. "You know what?" I suddenly exclaim, the sudden switch of tone to my voice making her look back at me again with raised eyebrows. "As much as I am enjoying this lie-in, I'm not going to lie to you, I am starving. It's not easy growing new bones." Her expression brightens, and I know she's thankful for me not pressing her about yesterday. I recognize everything she told me yesterday was an insane step forwards for her, and I don't feel like she

needs to push herself more. If she wants to talk about it, she will. I am

"I think I was the one who did all the work. You just lied there." She

"You never have to ask permission from me if you're talking about

breakfast. I love me some breakfast." What the actual fuck was that,

Wanda chuckles at me, evidently also finding my statement amusing.

I feel a blush creep up my neck, but she's thankfully already swinging

scrunches her nose and nudges me in the side with her foot.

"Debatable." I shrug, propping myself up on my elbows.

not going to force her, not now.

"Can I make us breakfast?"

Liv? I love me some breakfast??

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her legs o the bed in her excitement. I feel slightly unhappy about her warmth leaving me as I wouldn't have minded staying in bed the entire day, so I go to follow her just to keep her presence near me, but she stops as I throw the covers o my body. "What are you doing?" She asks me and I stop, confused. "Coming to make breakfast?" I ask her and she shakes her head. "No, I want to make it for you." She tells me, suddenly slightly shyly. "And I kept you up half of the night, it's only fair." "No way Jose." I say and swing my legs over the edge of the bed. "I am the best at making breakfast. Plus, you've already played doctor today. It's only fair I get to play chef." "Is that so?" She tilts her head teasingly.

"Is that doubt I hear in your voice, miss Maximo?" I tease back,

"I guess I didn't really see you as a breakfast person." She looks at me

crossing my arms across my chest.

I laugh at her adorableness.

"May the best pancake win."

inquisitively and I shake my head slowly, tutting disappointedly. "Ah, why, had I not pursued a career with the FBI I would have opened the best breakfast diner in the entire state of New York, you know." "Really?" "Really. Now get out of my way, I am making... well, I don't know what you actually have. Do you have ingredients for pancakes?" I ask her clumsily and she smiles even wider. "Pancakes?" "Do you not like pancakes?" I question her, feeling uncertain now. "Only if we have a pancake-o ." Her eyes sparkle with excitement and

A/N: Thank you so much for all your comments on the last chapter!

here's some more of the same (but slightly more flu y, I realize this

They were so awesome to read! Since you liked the last chapter,

Also, um, are we... catching feels??? (ALSO, over 10K reads? That's insane. must be me refreshing this over and over;)) **Continue reading next part** □

entire story has been quite dark thus far??)