Chapter 42

Wanda has seemingly decided that the only way to get me to actually relent and stay in bed until Stark and his team can figure out what is going on with me, is to lay down on the bed next to me. Maybe she thinks that by showing a good example, I'll follow. I do appreciate the thought behind it, but the two of us sharing an already not greatly comfortable hospital bed, does nothing to improve how comfortable the bed is and doesn't make me want to lie down any more than before. My right arm is slowly going numb against the railing on the side of the bed but I don't move a muscle, in fear of Wanda realizing that I'm not comfortable at all and that she'd get up. If it means her staying, I'll suffer. Woe is me.

Wanda has interlaced our fingers, having joked that she'd physically hold me down should I attempt to run for it. I don't doubt that she is very aware of my body not being able to run me anywhere at the moment and that I have no intention of doing that, not as long as I get to enjoy her presence no matter how uncomfortable I have to be. I doze off at some point, still extremely tired from having gotten us back in time, and my brain needs a pause from trying to come up with reasons as to why I failed and this entire mission has gone so wrong, and how I'm going to get us both back to the current timeline in one piece.

My dreams must be bleeding into Wanda's somehow, or rather Wanda's must be bleeding into mine because I keep seeing images I do not recognize; images of an old, dark room which fills me with a sense of longing as a dark-haired woman is cooking something in the kitchen, a smell I don't recognize but makes Wanda happy.

"-And why are they here?"
"Shh, Steve!"

"I know, I know."
"Tony, what did you give that one?"
"Fluids, I didn't dare do anything else without the results."
"Right. And what's wrong with her?"
"I'm not sure."
"Do you think she's faking it?"
"Why would she do that?"
"I'm just trying to figure out-"
"Well so am I!"

"Children, play nice."

"Tony, I'm don't want to be the pessimistic one here, but how do we know they can be... trusted?"
"Look at how cute they are!"
I make no sign of being woken up by the hushed voices I can hear. I instantly recognize the voices as those belonging to Natasha, Steve, and Stark. My heart pounds slightly faster at the realization, but I try to remain calm, reminding myself that technically, we haven't met yet. So, they have absolutely no idea who I am, again. The only thing I can't figure out is how it is that logically, they should have recognized me last time I jumped back in time, but they didn't. Why?

Wanda stirs slightly next to me, and the trio start -not-so-subtly hushing each other.

"Which one is the witch?" I hear Steve whisper to the others.

"Ginger-spice over there."

"Please." Natasha huffs and Stark chuckles quietly.

"Sorry, you can be Ginger Spice if you want."

"No."
"What's with the face, then?"
"I don't understand." Natasha mutters. "How come we haven't heard of any witches running around before?"
"She didn't tell me anything."
"And you brought them here?"
"What, I took pity! Witchy said they knew, or know, me? Said we were friends.Personally, I doubt that, but."

"Did Jarvis manage to run anything on them?"
"That one is a student at Columbia. The other one, no idea."

"And did he analyze her powers?"
"He did. Well, tried."
"What does that mean?"
"There's not much to analyze. It seems they are internal, similar in energy levels as a kind of nuclear process, but there's no molecular trace."

"How did she get them?"
"I don't know." Stark admits, and I can hear the doubt in his voice.

"It can't be natural, can it?" Steve whispers.

"I honestly don't know."
"What do they want?" Natasha wonders and no one replies. "Alright, well, let's find out."
"Natasha, wait-" Steve begins, but too late.

"Alright, you two. Up. Wake up. Let's go." Natasha loudly orders and I open my eyes, figuring it's time to stop pretending to be asleep.

Wanda jolts next to me, clearly having been sleeping rather deeply. She bats her eyes, stunned, until she seems to remember where she is and she sits up, seeing Natasha standing by the foot of the bed, with Steve and Stark slightly behind her. Wanda stares at the people in front of her a little too long for it to go unnoticed.

"Nat-" Wanda finally breathes out, her voice trembling.

Natasha cocks her head slightly, clearly noting Wanda's reaction to seeing her.

"Who are you?" She asks Wanda, all business, no trace of emotion in her voice.

Wanda hesitates slightly, clearly overwhelmed by seeing Natasha again, and being spoken to in such a cold tone. I wiggle up slightly higher on the pillows behind me and Natasha's eyes flit to me before she goes back to stare Wanda down. Wow, okay, she clearly doesn't view me as a threat.

Well, you are hooked into an IV.Wanda's sarcastic voice sounds in my head and I huff.

"I asked you a question." Natasha speaks again and Wanda bristles slightly next to me. I didn't think Wanda would ever be intimidated by anyone, and yet here we are.

"I'm Wanda." She caves in a little voice, unlike anything I've heard from her before.

I shoot her a questioning thought which goes unanswered. Wanda just fiddles with the rings on her hand, as if she's a small child being berated by her mother. What the-

"And why are you here, Wanda?" Natasha continues, completely ignoring Wanda's hesitancy.

"I- we-" Wanda stutters and I feel like I have to step in, it's like watching a trainwreck.

"It's my fault. We weren't meant to come back here" I explain, my voice croaky, forcing me to clear it.

Natasha looks at me, now with slightly more interest, confusion etched across her face. I suddenly feel like melting just like Wanda under her steely stare, but my FBI training is kicking in somewhat despite feeling groggy, and so I stare back. I see an accidental micro expression slip past Natasha's facade, her right eyebrow quirking up just a millimeter in surprise before she slips on her unreadable mask again.

"Alright. Tony tells me you believe you're from the future. How do you travel through time?" She questions me.

"I found a gas which I accidentally inhaled, or something." I feel Wanda's eyes upon me and I know exactly what she's thinking.

Natasha looks confused and clearly doesn't know what to respond with. I shrug, not knowing how to help them as I myself have no idea what the mist actually is.

"Nothing's showed up in your blood work." Stark now walks up to stand next to Natasha.

"Well, I'm not a physicist. Or doctor, I guess." I shrug again, feeling slightly more tired again, the room swaying slightly as if I am on a boat.

"Hm. Are those your powers? Time-jumping?" Steve now asks, his voice a lot kinder than Natasha's.

"I guess so." I say, feeling odd to be viewed as someone with powers. I don't like it.

"Right." Steve frowns, clearly confused, and I wish I could clear it up for him, but I can't.

"And you?" Natasha looks back to Wanda. "Stark said you peaked all his... instruments, is that what you called them?"
"A bit barbaric, they're a lot more refined than instruments, but yes." Stark shoots Natasha a look, then he looks at Wanda as well, and I swear they almost look scared. I don't blame them, but it's still weird seeing the Avengers look so hesitant.

"So? What do you do?" Natasha steers the conversation back onto Wanda, who gets uncomfortable under the attention again.

"I, uh..." Wanda looks at me quickly, as if I'm supposed to be able to describe her powers better than she can. "I can move things with my mind."

That's what she settles on? I don't fail to note she completely omits the part about being able to read and control minds. I don't blame her. The trio looks unconvinced, but Stark seems to breathe out slightly out of relief.

"She did give me a whooping. Nothing I couldn't handle, of course..."
"Is that all you can do?" Natasha doesn't take her eyes off Wanda, and I can instantly tell she knows there's more to Wanda than what she's letting on.

"Y-yes." Wanda lies and I have to keep myself from rolling my eyes at her bad lying.

"Right." Natasha squints at her. "And you know Stark?"
"I know all of you." Wanda's voice breaks slightly and I sneak look at her to make sure she's okay. These people were her family for a while, and all three of them are gone. She must feel so overwhelmed at the minute.

"How do we know you?" Steve asks Wanda, crossing his arms over his chest and I try not to stare. Wanda glances at me, and I swear there's a tiny, little knowing smirk playing on her lips.

"From work." I say and everyone looks slightly amused, except Natasha.

"Right." Natasha looks unimpressed. "You think you're funny. I don't."
"Oh, wow, okay." I say, taken aback. "Slightly rude, but okay."
"Well, well, I don't find it amusing when two strangers show up and insist they know us when we've never even heard of them."

"Well, that's because we haven't met yet." I roll my eyes, leaning back against the pillows. This is not going to be easy.

"What?" Natasha snaps, her fuse seemingly also shortening.

"We haven't met yet." I repeat, not very helpfully.

"So you said, yet here we are, meeting." Natasha stares at me, but her tactics aren't as successful on me as they are on Wanda.

Wow, she was more fun last time around. This Natasha is clearly watching her back. Fair enough though, I don't know how I'd react if I were in her place. Especially meeting someone who just blew a hole in the block using magic.

"And why did you come back in time?" Natasha asks me, her voice still cold.

"Well, Wanda..." I begin, not knowing how to finish my sentence.

Somehow, I doubt that telling them we've come back in time to try to save people we know from dying will go over very well. Once again I wish I hadn't gone along with this plan. It's honestly surprising to me it hasn't gone even worse than this. There's still time, I think sarcastically.

"Wanda what?" Natasha eggs me on.

"Well, we... we have to set some things right." I finish and Natasha looks unimpressed.

"You said you know us. Do we know of this plan?" Steve asks, and I wish once more I could just sink into the ground and disappear.

"I think you'd agree with it." Wanda whispers.

"Hmm." Steve looks at her.

"I just, I'm confused." Stark pipes up. "Sorry, but hopping around in time, is this something you do every weekend?"
"I've done it once." I say.

"Right. And it doesn't mess with the future, or anything?" Stark questions me and I feel like a school child in a meeting with my teacher after having completely flunked my test.

"Honestly, I don't know."

"Well, that's reassuring."

"Huh, you tell me." I chuckle and everyone looks at me. "What? It's true."
"Let me get this straight." Natasha begins and I close my eyes, knowing that whatever she's about to say won't be fun to hear. "You two decide, on a whim, that you're going to travel back in time, to 'set things right', you having only been back once, not knowing what's going to happen at all, and now that you've fucked up you find us and want our help."
"Well, I wouldn't put it quite like that-" I open my eyes, ready to defend myself, because the way Natasha just put it... well, it sounds worse that way.

"How would you put it, funny?"
"Alright, hey-" Wanda speaks up and Natasha looks at her with raised eyebrows.

"I think we're all getting slightly tired." Stark speaks, cutting through the tension. "Why don't you two stay here and rest up, while we... do things."
"That sounds good. Natasha?" Steve looks at his friend with a meaningful glance.

Natasha slowly looks away from Wanda and me to look at Steve. Her shoulders drop slightly and she sighs, looking back at us.

"Alright. But we're locking you in."
"Excuse me, why?" I pipe up, finding her totally unreasonable.

" Why?" She repeats. "Why do you think?"
"Liv, it's fine." Wanda stops me before I can retort.

I huff, but stay silent. Natasha and I stare at each other until Stark clears his throat and I look away.

"Right, well, this has been a lovely reunion amongst best of friends." He claps his hands together and smiles. "Now, you two, you just stay there, enjoy the bed, but please, no magic."

Wanda and I blush slightly and I look down at my hands in my lap, finding my right thumb immensely interesting while Wanda starts fiddling with her rings again.

"Fabulous." Stark concludes and without looking up I can see the three Avengers leaving the room, leaving it instantaneously less claustrophobic. The door clicks shut after them, and then it's just Wanda and me.

"That went well." I sigh and look at her.

She doesn't reply but keeps twiddling with her rings. I can easily tell something's on her mind again by the way she gnaws at her lip and is bent on not looking at me.

"You good?" I ask her hesitantly.

"Did you have to be so defensive?" She finally looks up at me, steely-eyed.

"Excuse me?" I say, shocked.

"All you managed to do was get us locked up here." Wanda huffs, clearly annoyed.

"Wow, alright." I feel like she's punched me. "Well, I'm sorry I couldn't instantly return you to where you wanted, I'm not a fucking time-uber."
"I never said you were."
"But you just did, though." I return her insinuating tone and she looks up at the ceiling. "What? You get to be frustrated but I don't? Who's the one that has to be hooked up to this IV?"
"I never said you couldn't be frustrated!" Wanda groans loudly, rubbing her face with her hands.

"What are you saying, then?" I question her, starting to be in a really foul mood.

"I don't know!" Wanda loudly says into her hands, her voice muffled.

"Well great! Great chat, Wands. Really great!" I sink back deeper into my pillows, crossing my arms over my chest.

A silence falls over the room, and Wanda's still got her face buried in her hands whilst I lie there, sulking, feeling extremely sorry for myself. I feel like if anyone's got the short end of the stick here, it's me.

I'm midst ranting away in my thoughts when I clock a new sound in the room. The sound is coming from Wanda, and it's her breathing shallowly. I frown and stare at her. Her shoulders are rigid and she's still covering her face with her hands. Then, another one of those sounds, and I realize it's her sniffling. Is she crying?

"Wanda?" I whisper, getting no reply.

I hesitate, wondering if I honestly should just give her some space. Deciding against it when she does another one of those muffled whimpers, I turn onto my side and reach out and grab the hand closest to me and gently pry it away from her face, holding it between my hands. Wanda blinks her tears away rapidly, looking away from me.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to yell." I apologize easily, surprising myself, since normally, I would be the last to do so.

Wanda sniffles, scrunching up her splotchy face in an attempt to regain control of her emotions. I don't know what else to say, so I circle my thumb against the back of her hand in what I hope is a soothing gesture and not a placating one.

"I'm sorry." She finally says, her voice thick. "It's just... a lot. Seeing them again."

Of course, I should have figured. I guess I have no idea exactly how close Wanda was with Steve, Stark, and Natasha, but I should have understood it would be hard for her in any case.

"I should have realized, sorry."

"No, it's fine." Wanda shakes her head, fighting a new wave of tears. "It's a little difficult."
I hum softly in agreement and Wanda's fingers squeeze mine quickly. She wipes her face with the sleeve of her cardigan and looks down at me and gives me a small smile.

"I never saw how similar you and Nat are until now."

"You mean we're both stubborn bitches who happen to be wildly attractive?" Wanda chuckles, surprised by my candor.

"Yes, of course. That too." Wanda laughs softly, making me smile. "You're both great friends."

"We did get along last time, I swear."

"I believe you." Wanda squeezes my hand again and shuffles down to lie next to me on the bed again. She studies me a while, before sighing and looking up at the ceiling.

I stay silent, just regarding her side profile for a little while.

"Stark called you Ginger Spice." I suddenly say, and Wanda's head turns to look at me.

"What?"
"Wanda, seriously? No...? Spice Girls?"
Wanda shakes her head softly, her eyes round in question and I laugh.

"Unbelievable! If you wanna be my lover, you gotta get with my friends?" I half sing to her and she frowns, clearly having no idea what on earth I am referring to.

"Was that you getting with my friends earlier?" Wanda teases, scrunching up her nose again and I stop myself from booping it, although I really want to.

A/N: Nat's not having it here haa! Slightly shorter chapter, but still a fun one, hopefully! Oh lord, oh lord, I wonder what may happen next....

Continue reading next part