Chapter 49

is forcing me to switch positions every so o en as it becomes unbearable underneath me. The bright fluorescent lights aren't much better either, they are only exasperating my headache which is my only companion. My dreams prove no escape either and every time I wake up I feel like I've aged ten years before I sink into my restless sleep again to repeat the pattern, my dreams making no sense to me not recommend my stay here. Later that day, or in the middle of the night, or maybe even the next morning, what do I know, is when something finally happens again. My insides churn as the now-familiar sound of the door opening reaches my ears, and I sit up, leaning against the wall furthest away

My sleep is anything but restorative. The hard ground underneath me

at all, most of them feel like they're someone else's. All in all, I would a from the door, in vain trying to moisten my mouth in order to be able to speak to whoever is about to enter my humble abode.

The door opens and the same guards as before step in, and this time,

they're not accompanied by anyone else. I silently curse my battered body, I'm certain I could have escaped if I wasn't so weak. It's only the two of them, hell, I've taken on more before. If only I could use my mist, but even the thought of it makes it retreat even further in me, as if there's some unfamiliar force pushing it down. The guards shu le towards me, their expressions a mixture of disgust and contempt as their eyes land upon me. "What, you haven't o ered me a shower." I croak out, attempting to

deflect with some bad humor. "That'll be the least of your problems." The burlier of the two answers, a gleam in his eye I do not like at all. "Let's go, get up." "No." "We aren't asking."

I hu, but I'm too tired to argue, and honestly, I'm sick and tired of being holed up here. Maybe they're taking me on a nice little stroll. Or maybe I'm getting some food. God, I'd kill for some water.

They stand by and watch me as I struggle, apparently we're not in that much of a hurry. My legs complain as they're forced to bear my weight again and my stomach aches from the kick earlier. It feels like all blood is draining from my head once I'm standing, and I have to

lean heavily against the wall behind me. Satisfied, the two guards

stomp up towards me and with malicious grins on their scarred faces.

They each grab one arm and half carry, half drag me with them out of the cell without so much as another word. I fail to again keep a track of our progress through the facility whoever designed this damned place did a fantastic job of making each and every turn of a corner lead into another corridor that looks exactly like the one you just le. The guards don't speak whilst we walk, and the only sounds we make are the dragging of my boots against the linoleum floor and the heavy footsteps of theirs which echo against the cold walls. We pass just a couple of people, most of them clad in similar dark combat gear as my guards with heavy firearms dangling next to them, but the rest oddly enough look like

doctors of some sort, and they're the ones who stare with unabashed interest. I feel more and more dread the longer I spend here, my stomach already in such a tight knot I doubt it'll ever untwist. One last turn of a corner and we're met by two other guards who look exactly as unimpressed as the two on my sides as we approach. "We're ready." One of the guards speaks, not casting a glance at me, him too sporting a subtle Russian accent. "Good. I can't wait to see this." One of the two on my side answers and the two new guards turn and lead us towards a thick, grey door. The door opens and I'm led inside. My brain struggles to make sense of this entirely new space I'm in, but eventually, I realize we've entered something akin to a laboratory. The walls are white, and the

their usage is. Four of those people with white coats on mill about the machines without even looking up as we enter. "What are you-" I begin, my voice still raspy and broken, but then I'm dragged forwards, towards the chair. Every inch of me is screaming to stay away from that chair, so I begin

to struggle against the strong arms leading me forward. But in my

weakened state, I'm no match at all, and so all I can do is struggle as

room is circular with a huge chair in the middle of the room, attached

to a bunch of machines I cannot even begin to comprehend what

the chair gets closer and closer. Before I know it, I'm thrown onto it and suddenly my legs and arms are being attached to the chair and I can only move my head. "What's happening?" I ask, and for the first time, I sound scared. No one replies. The guards keep fastening leather band a er leather band around my limbs and the white coat people keep fiddling with tubes and beeping machines behind me. When they start fastening a thick strap around my head, that's when I honestly start panicking, and not being able to move at all only makes it worse.

"I would save my strength if I were you." That sickly sweet voice

The woman who visited me in my cell earlier is now standing in front

of me, a long coat over her shoulders, her hair up in a tight bun. Her

painted red lips stretch into a wide smile when she sees she's got my

attention. It takes me a minute to even notice a couple of men in suits

breaks through to me and I stop struggling.

standing behind her. "That's better, isn't it, Olivia?" She speaks again in such a familiar tone, and I clench my jaw in anger. "What is this?" I ask her darkly.

Her eyebrows rise as she looks around with something that

resembles pride.

exaggerated sigh.

"Haven't you figured it out yet?"

"I'm not usually a fan of being strapped down like this before even being bought dinner first." "Oh, I can see why Maximo enjoys you. You're funny. God knows she needs some humor in her life." The woman speaks, rolling her eyes as though she's closely familiar with Wanda, close enough to know her well which only makes me angrier. "What are you-" I begin, but the woman interrupts me with an

"Who's we?" I ask, trying to wrap my head around all of this. "Well, might as well tell you now, it's only fair." The woman shrugs, walking closer to me, her eyes sparkling bright with excitement. "Not like she'll remember it, right boys?"

The men she walked in with chuckle so ly, and I look at them with

"Oh, come on, Olivia. You don't think we've kept close tabs on you

ď

ever since Maximo gave herself up for you in Sokovia?"

the most venomous expression I can muster. Granted, I must not look that intimidating, strapped in this godforsaken chair without even being able to move my head. "I told you earlier; you don't expect to steal from Hydra and get away with it so easily." As she's talking, she's walking slowly around the

chair, inspecting it. Her heels click against the floor hollowly. "Ever

since our success with the Maximo twins, we've been focused on

creating humans, more and more advanced." I lose sight of her as she rounds the chair. "Hydra has friends in high places, you know. There are many who agree with our mission. That substance you so eloquently referred to as 'mist', that was our little creation." She's coming back around again, her perfume wrapping itself around

"Now, when you decided to take it from us, there were people who

exactly like we hoped someone would. Granted, you weren't who we

me like a snake and I feel, if possible, even more sickly.

intended it for, but I spoke up for you, Olivia."

that I haven't figured it out yet.

"She hasn't stolen anything from you!"

wanted to terminate you straight away. But I saw you as an

opportunity. You managed to understand the substance, use it

She pauses in front of me, looking down at me. I stare back, not

wanting to seem surprised by anything she's saying, although I have a thousand questions I want to ask just on the tip of my tongue. The woman smiles at me as though we're old friends, as though she expects me to thank her. "While everyone's top priority is to recapture our asset, I saw you as a way to do that, I just needed to buy you some time." "Your asset?" I ask, not being able to bite my tongue any longer. "Wanda Maximo, of course. I told you, you don't steal from Hydra

and get away with it." The woman explains, looking slightly surprised

"We created her, Olivia. Her entire existence is our property." The

woman's calm voice is a sharp contrast to mine. "And we know we

cannot just hope to bring her in, she needs to come in willingly. And

that's where I see your use." đ "I'm not going to help you." My teeth are clenched and anger is slowly boiling up inside of me. "If you don't know that you're stupider than you thought." "Oh, but you are." The woman smiles again and I wish nothing more than to be able to wipe that grin o her face. "Maybe not now, but soon." "Wanda's going to see right through whatever plan you've made up." I warn her, my chest fluttering with anger and anxiety, hoping I'm right.

"But she trusts you, doesn't she?" The woman walks up right next to

I try to shake her o me, but the straps are fastened too tightly.

Instead, I'm le with only being able to stare at her with as much

"I am not helping you. Might as well just kill me." I shrug and the

"Many wanted to! Don't worry, we're not killing you. We're just...

woman actually laughs, her laugh cold and empty, echoing around

"Oh Olivia, don't make that face. You should be proud of being a part

me and touches my cheek, looking into my eyes.

of bettering the human race. Your help is invaluable."

it's the only thing she can do. God, I hate her.

"But you will. Hydra always wins."

"Why not? What have you done to me?"

begin to understand what is going on.

No, no, no...

on the plastic and wait.

what they're doing.

down my throat.

hard ground.

side as someone taps my back.

chair which is all I know now.

"Higher." I hear a cold voice say.

anger and hatred as I can.

the walls of the circular room.

changing you for the better." She gleefully looks down at me and pats me on the cheek before stepping away from me. "Changing me?" I ask, some hesitance noticable in my voice. "Well, yes." The woman turns around, looking at me in surprise. "As you said: you're not willing to help us with Maximo just yet." "I won't ever." I stubbornly repeat, and the woman just smiles, as if

She steps back and watches me with curiousity. Am I supposed to

perform some trick? I try again to summon the mist to help me

escape, but my hands just tremble, looking completely normal.

'Olivia, I thought you would have understood by now, it won't work."

" Ihaven't done anything to you my dear. I told you, we've had help

really really does not like your Wanda." I frown, confused. Who,

from someone, let's say in the future, who really doesn't like you, and

Hayward? He fits the bill, but he's a bumbling stumbling idiot, I doubt

he could have anything to do with this. "Alright, whenever you're ready." The woman orders, her voice taking on a much more authoritative tone now, one I haven't heard before. I hear the machines coming alive behind me as the men in white

coats begin tapping away on buttons I cannot see. One of the men

begins fastening di erent wires to my temples. Once he's done, he

pries open my jaw and shoves in a bite block into my mouth which

straps holding me in place again, my heart beating erratically as I

The machines begin whirring louder and an uncomfortable warmth

begins spreading by my temples where the wires are attached to me.

I wiggle, trying in vain to get away. I close my eyes, scrunching up my

A white-hot pain flashes through my skull and I chomp down on the

plastic in my mouth hard. I will not scream. I try to think of something

face in concentration. I will not scream. I will not scream.

keeps my mouth from completely closing. I begin to fight against the

that will get me through, and an image of Wanda lying next to me in bed, smiling at me so that her dimples reappear pops into my head and I hang onto her like a lifera as another flash of stabbing pain echoes through my head, momentarily distorting my conjured image of Wanda. I will not scream. Another flash of white and my body involuntarily spasms, and Wanda disappears and is replaced by nothing but white pain. When the flash dissipates, I open my eyes, gasping as though I've just finished exercising. For a moment, I don't recognize my surroundings, but then it washes back to me. I'm still here. Wanda's far away. The woman's eyes meet mine and she narrows them slightly, and then she too disappears as I'm yanked back into my head by the electric

current and I lose all form of thought as all I can do is just bite down

Another wave of pain shoots through me, this time through my entire

shimmering image like the first one I saw of Wanda reappears, but it

body and it feels like my head is about to split in half. A weird,

looks wrong, it's like I'm seeing her through a funhouse mirror.

"Again." The pain obliges, my body goes sti and I can't help the

scream that tears its way from my lungs and escapes my lips.

Over, and over, and over again. I lose track of time and of reality as the pain digs its claws into my flesh without leaving any trace. All I am is muscle and flesh, waiting to be ripped into. I forget why this is happening, I forget where I am, I forget why there's an image of a redhaired woman in my head and a er a while, I even forget who I am, and what I want and what I'm supposed to be doing. The leather straps dig into my arms and legs, but that feeling of pain is almost welcome. When the plastic I've been biting down on is yanked out of my mouth my jaw clenches shut. Fingers are meddling with things

around me. I can't make clear of anything, who these people are and

screaming in pain but I can't even focus on it, I can't understand it.

mu led and incomprehensible. Then the world spins and I'm o the

Voices are speaking in a strange language all around me, their words

My head drops down onto my chest when it's freed, my neck

á

a

"I'm so sorry." Someone's hand is on my forehead. I don't understand. My entire body burns. I'm lying on something hard. I can't open my eyes. The light is too bright. "When you stop fighting it, it'll hurt less." The voice speaks again, but I don't know what they're talking about. What am I fighting? What will hurt less? Everything hurts. I try to answer, to say something, but my voice doesn't want to leave me, my

throat burns from the e ort. It's like I've been shouting for hours.

"Here." Something cold trickles down my cracked lips and cools

Water. I eagerly swallow whatever I am given until it ends up trickling

down into my tired lungs and I begin coughing. I'm rolled onto my

When my fit is over I roll up into a ball. I can at least hide from the

light slightly. The light is still way too bright, it hurts. Everything hurts, but my head is nice and fussy. It's like all of my thoughts have been ripped out and replaced with so ness. "Don't fight it next time." The voice speaks again, and the hand leaves my back and comes to rest on my cheek. It's not a hand. it is a hand. but it's like any hand I know. It's cold, it's

metallic. It's a robot. Am I in the future? The robotic hand is cool

against my warm skin. It feels nice. I wish I could tell the voice I want

metal hand whirs ever so so ly as it leaves me and I float away on the

them to stay. But I can't even think of the words. I can't think. The

A/N: Things ain't going too well for Liv, are they?: I Hope you don't mind that there's no Wanda in this one either, but she'll be back very soon...

Continue reading next part \Box