"And she's just -what? Cured? Just like that? Cause you say she is?" Stark squints suspiciously looking from Wanda to me, looking like he is waiting for either of us to break and admit that the opposite is true. **A**

"I don't know." I admit and feel everyone's gazes fall on me and it makes me slightly uncomfortable. I shi slightly, feeling as though I am meeting my friends the morning a er having been absolutely and completely blackout drunk, not being able to remember what I did or said the night before, just hoping it wasn't as bad as I am imagining.

I feel Wanda's hand nudge against mine just a little. The action helps me feel slightly more grounded and I let out the breath of air I've been holding in. I sneak a glance over at her to my side, and she gives me a tiny smile, telling me she's right here with me.

"You don't know" Stark repeats my earlier words in a mocking tone. "You don't know if you're just going to suddenly try to kill her again or not?"

"She wouldn't be the first I try to kill." I sarcastically say to him and he rolls his eyes in reply, still not looking nullified whatsoever. It's almost rather cute, how much he is trying to protect Wanda. It just makes me uneasy to no ends to know that he is trying to protect her from me

"No killing, preferably. Thank you." Natasha pipes in from her position sitting on the kitchen island, popping in sunflower seeds into her mouth, looking unbothered. I haven't missed the way she's kept me under close surveillance ever since Wanda and I joined them in the kitchen, adding to my sense of foreboding. Something is wrong.

"And if there's any killing to be done here, it'll be by me." Natasha continues, popping another seed into her mouth and it crunches between her teeth as she stares at me. Jesus.

She shoots me a look and I raise my eyebrows at her in almost like a challenge of sorts. Try meJ feel Wanda shi slightly against my side and I know she's trying to tell me to calm down, that I'm really not in a position to piss anyone o. I know that, but the way they're treating me... like I'mthe bad guy...

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"I agree with the no killing." Wanda says and Natasha's eyes flit over to her and then bounce back to me. "We have to give her a chance, how else is she meant to heal?"

Stark lets out a hollow laugh at that.

"With all due respect, youstill haven't healed from the stab wound that shegave you!" Stark motions to me wildly and my mouth falls open. What?

"I know, thank you for reminding me -I'd forgotten." Wanda calmly replies with a slight twinge of annoyance in her voice as my stomach drops.

I did what???

Don't worryJ hear Wanda's voice suddenly reverberate in my head, answering my question I hadn't necessarily meant for her to answer.

You're loudWanda promptly replies to my train of thought.

What did I do to you? look at her, horrified.

Wanda meets my eyes, trying to look stoic but I can read her too well and notice the slight look of guilt on her face. Her hand brushes against mine again, but this time the motion doesn't ground me but rather makes me feel almost worse than before.

Wanda??

"So, what is our game plan?" Natasha asks, bringing everyone's attention back on her.

My eyes don't leave Wanda though as I continue to stare at her profile, horrified. Stabbed her?What on earth was Stark on about? Surely I couldn't have -but it does explain Wanda's gingerly way of moving around and the way a little curtain of pain would descend across her features every once in a while. Is that because of me?

Livvy, I mean it, stop.

I frown at Wanda but dutifully look away, pretending to be invested in the conversation unfolding in front of me when I've, apparently, tried to fucking kill Wanda. What the fuck???

Confusion and unanswered questions race through me. It's not like I exactly got a chance to quiz Wanda on what the hell happened once I woke up. I can remember some broken fragments of the past days, but it's not enough for me to piece together where I was and what happened to me. The last thing I properly recall was my fight with the man in the mask when I took my walk in Central Park. And now I'm back in the Tower like nothing happened, well, except for me stabbing Wanda.

Livvy, stop overthinking it; it's not that badWanda warns me in my head without looking at me.

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I study her, trying to physically note anything that might be wrong with her. She looks slightly paler than usual and I wonder if she's been eating properly; her cheekbones are slightly more prominent than I remember them, and her eyes just slightly more sunken in-

Thanks for that.

I ignore her. Other than that, she looks fine to me.

Just fine?

I literally am trying to figure out if I've just tried to kill you and you're worried about how I think you look?raise an eyebrow at her and she smirks a little, trying to keep a straight face whilst pretending to listen to the conversation as Stark and Natasha are debating something completely unimportant to me at this moment.

Well, I would like the person I like to think I look good.

'The person you like?' repeat, a smile spreading across my face as warmth spreads in my chest.

I don't know if you've noticed, but I don't go around kissing just about everyone.Wanda shoots back at me dryly.

Well, it is slim pickings around here I must admit...

You're ridiculous.

"What are you two smiling about?" Stark interrupts our conversation.

"Nothing." Wanda and I answer at the same time, causing Stark and Natasha to look even more suspicious.

"Are you not interested in the slightest in defending your actions?" Stark asks me and I shake my head.

"No." I answer him calmly. "I think whatever you choose to be best will be the right thing to do." Stark looks slightly surprised at my answer and I feel Wanda's eyes burn into the side of my face. "I can't remember what I've done, but if I've tried to hurt her, then... then I shouldn't be near her."

"What?" Wanda exclaims, her accent creeping back just the slightest, making the word sounding slightly thicker than usual.

"They're right, Wanda." I sigh, scratching at my forehead, trying to get rid of my annoying headache. "I don't know if I'm back to normal, and if I have tried to hurt you in any way... I can't remember anything. So, until I do know that I'm safe, I don't want to risk anything."

Wanda hu s, looking around the room for support, but none comes. I know they all agree with me. When she realizes she's alone on her side of the argument, she crosses her arms over her chest and turns towards me.

"I don't care. I can take care of myself; I've got my scarlet." "Wanda, you had your magic when she attacked you." Natasha points out and I tense at her use of words, feeling absolutely like crap, the thought of hurting Wanda makes me shiver.

"Yes, but I was... I was taken by surprise." Wanda trips up slightly.

"Do you expect her to warn you anytime she's going to try to kill you? 'Oh, hey, Wanda? I think I'm going all Vernuton you now, so, yeah, just to warn you I'm going to stab you in five seconds. Okay, here I go'." Stark does a rather bad impression of me, earning scowls from nearly everyone in the room.

"Oh, Piz-dets!" Wanda swears in what I recognize as Russian, looking severely annoyed now.

"Language." Natasha warns her and Wanda tuts, annoyance growing in her.

"I'm an adult and I choose for myself, and I choose Livvy." Wanda pouts in a rather adorable way, and as much as I'm feeling all sorts of anxious, her words do make me jittery.

"That's all fine, but what if she snaps and goes all homicidal metal bitch on you when we're not there?" Stark asks and I want to both slap him and sink into the floor because he does have a point.

What the hell have I been up to lately to earn this amount of mistrust from everyone? And if it truly is deserved, why am I not getting it from Wanda? If I've tried to hurt her -if I havehurt her, then why isn't she mad, or afraid, or at least slightly bothered?

Afraid?She sounds slightly amused. Of you?

I shoot her a look which I am hoping is saying how much I am not amused right now. She smirks slightly.

"Do you think you could help Bucky, Wanda?" A voice that hasn't said anything speaks up, so ly and quietly.

Everyone turns to look at Steve, who is standing slightly further away from everyone else. So far, he's been silent, looking deep in thought. Turns out he wasn't wondering what to do with me, though. Now he

is looking directly at Wanda next to me with a hopeful expression.

Wanda shi s awkwardly, her mouth slightly open but she doesn't start speaking. She looks at me for a second, but I have nothing to o er, so she looks down at her hands which she is now anxiously toying with in front of herself.

I look back at Steve, whose expression of hope is slightly faltering.

"Wanda?" He nudges her again.

"I -I don't know, Steve." She mumbles. "It's... it's di erent." "Please, can't you at least try?" His tone makes my heart churn uncomfortably, and I realize what a terrible position he's put Wanda in.

Wanda, who hates the fact that she has the power to listen in on anyone's innermost thoughts and feelings, Wanda who has struggled with respecting peoples' privacy because of those powers, Wanda who said she would get lost and overwhelmed in a world of other beings' inner lives. Wanda who has spent years struggling with her abilities, and who has to accept the fact that most everyone is scared of her because of just that. I watch her, understanding the fight that is happening within her. Being asked to use the powers she struggles with so much to breach someone's mind the way I faintly remember her breaching mine is not a small ask of her.

"Steve, I don't know if Wanda can do that." I speak up, looking at Steve and he looks up at me.

"But she helped you."

"Yes, but she knows me, and we share enough memories for her to find them in me. And I'm okay with her doing that. She doesn't know Bucky, and I doubt he wants her in his head like that, Steve." "I could tell her." Steve nods excitedly. "I could tell you everything you need to know about him."

"Steve, it doesn't work that way." I sigh. "You can't ask Wanda to do that. It's... complicated."

"I see." He says curtly, not even putting up more of an argument. I can tell how hurt he feels, but even if he cannot understand, I won't let them force Wanda to do that unless she agrees to.

"I think it's something you have to work through together, Steve." Wanda says apologetically. "I'm sorry."

"Don't worry." With that, he walks away with a stiback, all of our eyes on him.

"I should-" Natasha says, still looking at the spot where Steve rounded the corner. "This conversation isn't over."

She hops o the counter smoothly, pocketing her seeds, and begins to follow Steve. Just as she gets to the corner she stops, though.

"No locking the door. The door stays open."

"I'm not keeping the door open,Nat." Wanda yells a er her, but Natasha has already disappeared.

"Open, Maximo !" Natasha yells back. "Don't make me force you!"

"Well, you heard her." Stark says, his hands on his hips. "The door stays open. Jarvis?"

"Yes, sir?" The British voice so ly sounds and both Wanda and I flinch slightly, me having completely forgotten about the bodiless robot, and Wanda, well, I don't know.

"I want you to keep an eye on these two right here." Stark tells his robot without taking his eyes o Wanda and me. I'm beginning to feel like a child being told o by her parents. "Any unusual activity... monitor their heart rates, you know the drill." "Yes, sir."

"Right. Well. I guess we're good. For now. You're not allowed outside, though. Either of you." Stark gives us a last look, then slaps the counter dismissively and struts away, picking up the tablet he was working on earlier.

I turn to Wanda with a grin, noting the look of sadness she quickly masks as she turns to me.

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"Well, we're grounded, it looks like." I tell her, amused.

"Looks like." She agrees, a small smile growing on her face.

"What do people do when they're grounded?" I ask her and she shrugs.

"I don't know, I was never grounded."

"As if." I chuckle. "Little Wanda Maximo never got up to anything bad?"

She smiles and bites the inside of her cheek. I cock my head to the side, questioningly, amused at the thought of a young version of this Wanda running around somewhere ignoring her parents.

"One time I did steal some cookies from our neighbor Katalin."

"Look at you." I say, mockingly impressed and she laughs.

"Hey, everyone was scared of old Katalin!"

"So brave." I mock her slightly and she rolls her eyes.

"Anyway. Thank you." Her tone becomes serious again and she meets my eyes.

"For what?"

"For what you said to Steve." She looks down at her hands again which are anxiously twiddling with each other again.

I follow her gaze and step forward, taking her hands in mine, stopping her anxious tick. She looks at me, surprised, but with a small glint of a smile in her eyes. I give her hands a light squeeze.

"I don't know exactly what you did to help me, but I know it must have been di icult for you." I tell her and she blinks. "I also know how you struggle with hearing others and I would never want you to have to do that to someone else if it didn't feel right."

"When did you become so observant?" She murmurs, making me grin proudly.

"I'm pretty smart."

"I don't know about smart, maybe pretty..." Wanda says, blush creeping up her cheeks.

"Are you flirting, Maximo ?" I tease her, pulling her closer to me by her hands.

"Maybe." She replies, her blush intensifying.

"It's cute."

She scrunches up her nose a little the way she does when she finds something amusing and I feel my heart flutter a little. She looks down at our intertwined hands and I'm just staring at her, feeling at once totally secure and so insecure, wondering how on earth I got here. "Wanda?"

Wanda looks back up, her round eyes pausing a second too long on my lips on their way up to my face and she smiles sweetly, making me again question if I'm not making all of this up in my head. How could someone like her find someone like me worthwhile?

"What happened to me?"

She pauses, clearly thinking. I wait anxiously. She squeezes my hands.

"Nothing worth dwelling on."

"But Stark said-"

"Livvy, please." Wanda sighs.

I bite my lip, really not feeling comfortable with not knowing. It's almost like there's someone else in my head, just ready to take control over my body and that feeling scares me to death. I feel one of Wanda's thumbs gently caress my hand and I make eye contact with her again.

"Are you going to keep overthinking everything or are you going to kiss me?" Wanda whispers slyly and I chuckle. Fair play.

I don't drop her hands as I lean in towards her, my heart beating excitedly against my chest as it feels Wanda near. I close my eyes as we're mere inches apart and -

"Heightened heart-rate detected." Jarvis' suddenly booms out, making us jump and I let go of her hands, eyes wide open again. "Fuck." I exclaim and she looks flustered again.

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A/N: Classic Jarvis, eh?...

All good in paradise, or...... d⁵

Continue reading next part \Box