**Chapter 75** 

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(it's a long one, hunny bunnnies, but it's worth the read, promise x
Don't worry.
'Don't worry'? That's the best you can do!Wanda sounds annoyed
and her annoyance seeps through, both her voice and her emotions,
thus, in turn, making me feel annoyed. Oh, the joys.
What do you want from me? exasperatedly think as I continue to
follow the tattooed man further into Stark's facility, pretending
nothing is going on between Wanda and me.
For starters, don't lie to me.
Lie? When have I lied? takes a surprising amount of self-control to
not loudly retort, but I stay cool as a cucumber, like always.
I can feel youWanda's voice in my head takes on a di erent tone,
losing all of its previous snakiness and a wave of badly concealed
sadness washes over me. I know you're scared.
I'm not-
Don't lie, Olivia.
Fine.I hu and the tattooed guard turns his head slightly to look at
me. I shoot him a look and he frowns but doesn't pursue whatever
suspicion he had.
I'm scared toolt takes so much to not look back at her, but I don't.
Her admission shakes me more than I like to admit. I've always
viewed her as the strong one, even at her lowest she's been stronger
than I've ever been, and I realize with a pang of guilt how I've used
her as a sort of crutch all of these months.
The corridor takes a sudden, sharp le, and the tattooed man raises a
closed fist, making our silent group come to a brusque halt. I'm trying
to stay more alert to what is happening around me, and not only
focused on her where I know she's standing a few steps away from
me. Scared. I need to get us out of here, and soon. I don't like this at
all. I'm trying to keep my emotions in check and convince myself I am
feeling calm and confident, aware of how Wanda's emotions a ect
me when she's not careful, and how I have no idea how to shield her
from mine, which means that she must be feeling what I am feeling.
Cool, calm, and collected. Cucumber, baby.
"Hey." Someone taps me on the shoulder.
"Fuck!" I jump, taken by surprise, my heart racing. So much for
cucumbering this, then.
I turn around to look at who just tapped me and my eyes gloss over
Wanda, whose pale face looks slightly amused.
Cucumber? hear her ask but I ignore her.
"What?" I hiss at the guilty guard, annoyed at him breaking my
composure like that.
"You need to get your gun out." He indicates at my holstered gun and
I make a face.
"What, why?" I look around. "I don't know who you're planning on
shooting but I ain't a part of it."
"Vernut." The tattooed man's voice sounds in my ear. "You do as
you're told and you shut up."
"Humph." I manage to voice before I am forced to turn back around
to face the direction we were going in, feeling my hand on autopilot
fumble with the holster before eventually finding the hilt of the gun
and coming to rest with the gun pointed at the floor in front of me. I
am so done with doing Hydra's bidding.
Stay calmWanda warns in my head, and I don't even feel any
annoyance, knowing the old me would have. Now I only feel slightly
warm. She cares. She doesn't remember but she cares enough.
Stop gushingComes her voice again and I feel myself blush in
embarrassment. How can I still forget she can read my mind a er all
this time? You'd think I'd be smarter by now.
"What's wrong with you? You look weird." The tattooed guard's face
suddenly swims into view, his eyebrows furrowed in thought.
"I'm fine." I croak, feeling further embarrassed. A little twinge of
amusement courses through me, and I know exactly who the feeling
belongs to and it doesn't help me regain my cool composure the
slightest.
"You don't look it." The tattooed guard doesn't let up.
"Oh my god, if you want to ask me out just do it!" I complain and his
usual unimpressed expression slides back on his face and he turns
away from me, muttering something about promotions.
"Geez." I sigh loudly, earning a few hushes from the men around me.
"Oh my god, sorry!" I add, annoyed.
"Okay, before you completely give us away with your inability to
apparently just shut the fuck up, let's move." The tattooed guard
says, his voice reaching my ears at the same time as it sounds from
the tiny earpiece. "Vernut. You cover me. Any movement - shoot."
And so, we are on the move again. The tattooed guard is following
some sort of holographic map that is projected from a watch-like
device on his wrist. My eyes scan the corridor in front of us manically,
praying we won't encounter anyone. Surely Stark wouldn't have had
people working for him here this late? Then again, knowing Stark...
You knew Stark? Wanda suddenly asks me, her curiosity getting the
better of her.
Ok, I'm not going to comment on the fact that you're just listening in
You're interestingHer voice admits and I pretend that it doesn't
evoke emotions I cannot have her feel now.
Besides the point - yes, I knew Stark. So did you. I believe he would
refer to you two as bestiesThe memory brings a small smile to my
lips.
Besties?Wanda repeats slowly.
Best of friends. They'll write songs about you two smile broadens
and I swear I hear her hu behind me.
All of a sudden, a door in front of us opens and a man in a grey
jumpsuit appears. He looks up, surprise traced in all of the tired
wrinkles on his old face, and then a mu led gunshot is heard and he
doesn't have the chance to do anything else than to fall to the
ground.
I hold the gun steady in front of me, my hands trembling almost
imperceptibly. My heart is racing in my chest as I emptily stare at the
janitor. His hands are empty. His grey baseball cap with the Stark
Industries logo has fallen o his head and is lying by his midsection,
where it is slowly greeted by a pool of dark red blood. The old man's
mouth moves slightly as if he wants to say something. I can't move.
My gun is still clutched in my hands and my lip is quivering as I watch
the man slowly fade away in front of my eyes.
A couple of the Hydra soldiers move around me towards the guard. I
watch mutely. The tattooed guard follows his soldiers as they
examine the janitor, some crouching by him. A so hand guides my
gun down towards the floor. I blink a couple of times, furiously
wishing the unshed tears away. His hands were empty. Wanda stands
by me, her face serious, her brows slightly furrowed. She watches my
face and I feel too ashamed to look back at her so I look back over
where the janitor lies.
"I-" I begin, but I don't even know what I'm supposed to say. I didn't
have to shoot him. He wasn't a threat to us. But he moved. And I shot.
"I know." I hear Wanda whisper next to me, and I quickly look away,
as quickly as I can trying my face with my sleeve.
"I know." She repeats so so ly, and I know exactly what she's trying
to tell me, and her understanding makes it almost worse.
"Well, at least we know she works!" One of the soldier's voices pierces
through to me and I exhale shakily, trying to get rid of the thought
that that janitor could have been anybody. It didn't matter who it
was. I shot. It could have been Wanda.
"Yeah, shit! I wonder what else we can make her do!"
"Or get the other one to do!"
"Shut up, all of you." The tattooed guard rumbles and they all go
mercifully silent. "Yusek, Molotov, clean it up. The rest of you sorry
lot, let's go."
I walk forward like in a trans, Wanda next to me. As I approach the
janitor, the soldiers make room for us and I'm forced to look into the
man's empty eyes as they stare right out at me with an accusing look.
He looks even smaller up close. I squeeze my eyes shut and take a big
step over his unmoving corpse. I feel slightly lightheaded as we
continue on, but I don't get a moment to catch my bearings and so I
just have to keep up with the tattooed guard. He looks over at me
with a satisfied smile and I can't help but feel like he does not feel
sorry about this whole situation at all. A er all, it was he who told me
to shoot at any sign of movement. And you did without batting an
eyelid. I try to swallow, but my throat is dry. That little voice of self-
consciousness in the back of my head is right. I still blindly followed
orders despite feeling so in control. A man who had no business
dying died because of me. I try to keep my brain from swapping out
the sight of his body with that of Wanda's.
"Fischer." The tattooed guard comes to a stop in front of another
bend in the hallway.
We stop behind him, like always, and the soldier called Fischer walks
up to the tattooed guard.
"Yes, sir?"
"We're here. Are you clear on your mission?"
"Sir, yes, sir!" Fischer nods dramatically and I would have rolled my
eyes at him were I still not so shaken a er what just happened.
"Good. Vernut." The tattooed guard orders and I step up silently.
"Clear our path. Quickly and silently."
My heart sinks as I crouch slightly, taking a quiet, tentative step
around the corner. I quickly spot a group of four guards standing
guard in front of a door and I instinctively know that whatever the
tattooed guard wants is behind that door.
The guards are talking in voices that let me know they have no reason
to suspect anything is amiss. They're embroiled in a conversation I
cannot quite make out, none of them actually aware of their
surroundings at all, their guns hanging slackly by their sides. It's
almost too easy. I take a deep breath and take a huge leap around the
corner, bringing my gun up in front of my face as I quickly run
towards the men on the balls of my feet to stay as quiet as possible.
My finger pulls on the trigger and another mu led gunshot emanates
from my gun. The guard furthest towards me yells out in pain, sliding
down the wall while clutching his right shoulder.
The other three guards are taken completely by surprise, shouting
and looking around, fumbling inexpertly. I manage to shoot another
one of them in the thigh before the other two have managed to draw
their guns.
By now though I'm close enough to be able to kick up high and
directly at one of their outstretched guns, making it go fly and slide
away from us with a whine as its owner yelps out. I quickly grab his
shoulders and pull down with all my might, bringing my knee up to
his abdomen. He lets out an undignified sound as he slowly melts to
the floor. I use his back to press myself up in the air as I swing my
torso to the right, making my le foot swing quickly and crash into
the fourth guard's jaw. It breaks with a sickening crunch and I feel like
throwing up as he falls to the floor, crying. I hear a gunshot and I
swivel around. The second guard I shot in the leg is pointing his gun
at me with a terrified expression. I watch him as he goes to shoot
again. I quickly let myself fall to the ground as I pull out one of the
two knives I've been given and as I drop down I swing it towards the
guard. It flies through the air gracefully, twisting time and time again
upon its shiny self until it finds its target, the long blade burrowing
itself in the guard's bicep. He instantly drops the gun with a yelp. I
dive forwards and swat the gun away from him.
"Well done. Slightly too much flourish, you could have just shot the
lot of them. Didn't have a problem with that earlier." I hear the
tattooed guard comment in my ear and I look up, slightly out of
The rest of the group are walking towards me as if they're taking a
stroll through Central Park. I lock eyes with Wanda, who watches me
with an expression I can't quite read. I look away again, feeling so
stupid as the guards around me on the floor moan in pain.
"Get up." The tattooed guard dryly tells me and I tiredly leave the
floor, my legs feeling like they're filled with jelly and my head empty
of any witty retorts.
"H-T and Darius, take care of them." The tattooed guard tiredly
commands and two soldiers step forward towards the writhing
guards on the floor.
The tattooed guard walks up to me and without even so much a
glance at me or the people on the floor he passes us and comes to
stand in front of the door the guards were guarding. He gets out the
same device he used on the door on the outside to get us in, and just
like that door, this door obediently gives a little click, and then it
swings open for him. I watch his silhouette disappear into the room.
Then I am shoved in a er him by one of the unnamed soldiers,
Wanda receiving the same treatment. As the five of us enter the room
I startle as I hear four gunshots from the hallway outside.
We're inside something that looks like the innards of a giant
computer. It's a massive room with shelves upon shelves of cramped
computers and wires which all hum and blink happily. My mouth falls
slightly open as I am pushed inwards. The intricacy of this entire
room is beyond me. I don't know where to start. I assume this must
be some sort of giant motherboard for all of Stark's machines and
operations. The room is stu y and there is not a single window in
sight, nor can I see any entity made of flesh and bones except for our
The tattooed guard has already made it a good way towards the
center of the room where the shelves of computer stu are slightly
further apart, creating a natural center towards which we all
gravitate, our footsteps echoing unwelcomingly amongst the buzzing
of the machines. The hair rises slightly on the back of my neck. I feel
unwelcome here.
"Fischer. It's all you." The tattooed guard turns around and looks at
us.
"Yes, sir. It should be somewhere here." One of the soldiers, Fischer,
breaks free of our group and hurries towards the tattooed guard.
Fischer looks around in amazement, his eyes quickly scanning the
rows of wires, expertly looking for something.
"You have to give it to Stark." He whispers as he walks up to one of
the rows, extending his hand out to touch the patchwork of
electronics. "This is pretty impressive."
"You're not here to shop, Fischer. We're on a time crunch." The
tattooed guard mutters and Fischer refocuses.
"Right, yes, of course." He silently replies and turns around on his
heels. "Ah! Here!"
He scuttles over to the far side of the free space where some sort of
screen is sitting, half-hidden. We all follow him. Wanda looks rather
intimidated by her surroundings, her green eyes flitting up and down
and right and le, scanning everything. I accidentallyend up
standing next to her as we watch Fischer bring the screen to life.
Wanda turns her red head slightly, her eyes meeting mine. I try to
read her, but she's being unusually still. There's just the slight tension
in her brows.
"Just bypassing... right..." Fischer murmurs to himself, his fingers
tapping on a keyboard he's dug out of somewhere at a furious rate.
The screen in front of him flickers and glimmers with white text on a
black background as he types. I watch with slight envy. I am useless
with technology. Even my old iPhone which I've owned for closer to
six years now remains somewhat of a mystery to me. That's why I
always had Felicity back at the bureau who would sort me out in the
tech department.
"There are so many firewalls." Fischer mutters, his tone now slightly
stressed.
"Are you getting there?" The tattooed guard steps closer to Fischer,
squinting at the computer screen from over Fischer's shoulder.
"I'm closer than when I started, Greer." Fischer replies, not looking
away from the screen.
I almost miss it. But I know I didn't mishear Fischer. He called the
tattooed guard Greer. I frown, my head snapping up to look at the
tattooed guard closer. From the corner of my eye, I can see Wanda
frown just as I did and look at me with a questioning look, but I'm too
busy staring at Greer.
"Holy shit." I exhale, amazed.
"Vernut, I don't have time for you now." Greer waves me o without
looking at me.
"We haveworked together before." I exclaim, my voice rising slightly.
"Vernut, I'm not joking. Shut. Up." Greer straightens out his back and
looks at me and it hits me with full force.
He's the same asshole with whom I had to carry out my original
mission for the FBI and S.W.O.R.D. I stare at him for a second or two,
mouth open in shock. Greer stares back at me with a plain
"Take o your mask." I tell him and his bushy eyebrows rise on his
forehead. "You heard me."
"I did." He says slowly. "I don't know why you expect me to follow
your orders."
"Because I said so!" I raise my gun, pointing it straight at his heart.
"0."
Greer stands still for a second. He turns his head to cast a glance at
Fischer. He gives him a tiny, imperceptible nod and Fischer continues
tapping away on the keyboard. Then, he chuckles, li s his hands, and
undoes the black mask covering half his face. Without it, I can now
clearly recognize him. My chest constricts with anger as my head
replays our first and only interactions. I let out a cold laugh that
echoes in the chambers.
"It's you."
"Well done. You've solved the mystery." Greer li s the corners of his
mouth into what might look like a smile if you're insane.
"What the fuck are you doing?" I ask him, gun still pointed straight at
him.
"Right now? Humoring you."
"No, asshole. You worked for S.W.O.R.D." I cut him o .
 Yes?" Greer unhelpfully says, sounding bored.
"So? What the fuck are you doing working for Hydra?" I growl, my
patience wearing thin.
"Hydra, S.W.O.R.D., what's the dierence, really?"
"They're both run by massive assholes, that's true. But-" I begin and
Greer lets out a loud sigh.
"Yes, yes, if you look high enough I am afraid we all work for the same
people."
"What do you mean?" I lower my voice slightly and my gun too,
getting too caught up in what Greer is divulging.
"Hydra, S.W.O.R.D., the FBI, all of them. You can't surely be so naive
as to think they wouldn't all fall into complete anarchy were they not
all working as one?" Greer looks at me with something other than
annoyance for the first time.
"And so what? You don't give a shit? Just in it for the easy money?"
"Easy money?" At that, Greer actually laughs. "I wouldn't say easy
money. First that bitch, then you, and now both of you. Fucking hell."
"Watch your mouth. I'm still the one with the gun." I grit my teeth in
"Yes, I can see that." Greer agrees, sounding as though he is humoring
a young child.
"What's he doing?" I nod at Fischer.
"Strucker was not joking when she said you two were the start of
something new. Especially her." Greer looks over at Wanda with a
look of ill-will on his face. I grip the gun tighter.
"Apparently she let Stark do tests on her when y'all were there." Greer
continues. "Strucker is very interested in those."
"What?" Wanda's croaky voice sounds on my le for the first time.
I look over at her, and she's staring at Greer with wide eyes. She
shakes her head slightly, then looks at me with an almost blaming
look in her eyes.
"Olivia?" She asks me, a tiny crack in her voice breaks up my name in
two.
"It's... he did." I relent, remembering how Stark and Natasha wanted
Wanda down in the basement that time before I went out to Central
Park and set all of this bullshit in motion. "But I'm sure it's nothing-"
"You're sure it's nothing?" Greer interrupts me and I look at him with
a twist in my stomach. "We're pretty sure it's something. Pretty sure
we're gonna find something that makes us finally not have to deal
with either of you anymore."
"What do you mean?" I ask and he sighs and turns to look at Fischer.
"Almost there?"
"I have it here, I'm just trying to figure out a way to access it. The files
are encrypted..." Fischer rambles, some beads of sweat dripping
down his neck.
"Fine, fine." Greer sighs and looks back at me. "Still pointing that gun
as if you think you could ever fire it?"
"I don't give a shit. Makes me happy pointing it at your face." I sneer
and he just looks at me unimpressed.
"Whatever makes you hap-" He begins but is suddenly interrupted by
a large blaring horn and a flashing red light. "What the fuck?"
"Shit! I got the files but as soon as I opened them his firewall
activated!" Fischer exclaims in a panic.
 'Get the files right now!" Greer roars and Fischer furiously slams his
fingers on the keyboard.
"H-T, Darius! Anything?" Greer yells into the comms and I assume the
answer must only be filtered through his earpiece as mine stays
silent.
"Fischer!" He yells and turns around.
"Wanda!" I exclaim, seeing my chance, and grab Wanda's slack hand
in mine and pull her to the side, trying to drag her away from the
soldiers.
One of them tries to stop me, and I can't physically do anything to
defend myself against him. He slams his hands on my chest, pushing
me backward onto Wanda and e ectively knocking the wind out of
me. In a split of a second, a small crackle of scarlet energy slams into
the soldier and sends him flying into the shelf opposite of us.
I turn to look at Wanda in amazement. Her green eyes meet mine,
wide and filled with energy. Her lips are slightly parted and she
staggers slightly on the spot, grabbing my hand for support which I
quickly give her, stepping forwards to grab her waist.
"You okay?" I ask her and she shakes her head.
"Quick." She breathes out and I don't have to be told twice.
I quickly lead her past a few rows of computers, putting in distance
between us and the others in the midst of the chaos, which gives us a
little bit of an advantage. My legs feel unwilling to move, but their
protests aren't loud enough for me to have to give heed. Wanda leans
heavily on me, apparently not joking about the taxing nature of the
collar around her neck.
"Wanda, you-"
"Olivia, please shut up." Wanda gasps exasperated, shooting me a
look that clearly tells me I shouldn't even bother.
"Okay, stop here, we can hide right here in this corner!" I tell her,
pushing her towards the indentation in the shelves.
She looks slightly mad at being treated like that but honestly, I don't
really care right now. My brain is working triple time trying to come
up with a way to get us out of here.
"Vernut! Co-" I hear Greer begin to shout but Wanda quickly jumps
towards me, slapping her hands over my ears, and I swear her eyes
are a shade somewhere between green and red.
"Thank you." I mouth at her and she smiles a taunt smile before
dropping her hands in surprise as a new noise reaches us.
The sound of a dozen or more boots entering the room. Those are
definitely not people belonging to our original group. I turn my gaze
back to Wanda in a panic. Fischer and Greer have those files that I
know in my deepest self that Strucker should never get. I don't know
what Stark has on Wanda, but if it's as valuable as Greer said...
But I'm staring at Wanda's face and my choice has been made for me.
Her chest is rising and falling rapidly as she's trying to stay calm but I
can tell she's feeling more and more overwhelmed. The new
consciousnesses she has to block out too surely aren't helping. I look
down at my hand with the gun and then back at Wanda. Her eyes
slowly still in movement as they meet mine.
"No." She slowly says, her voice dark.
"I can't think of any other way." I say, trying to keep my voice steady.
"Olivia, no!" She squeaks as I li my gun towards her.
"Wanda, please, I need you to just trust me. I promise, it'll be alright."
I take a step to the side so that I'm on her side a few steps away.
"Olivia!" She yells, her voice taunt but it's too late.
I've fired the shot.
A/N: Oh lord, what has she done did now?????
I also hope you're excited for the next few chapters, haven't written
them yet but I am excited for them!!!
                     Continue reading next part □
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