**Chapter 83** "So, are you always this grumpy?" I sigh heavily at the interruption and regretfully tear my eyes away from the window where I've fixed my gaze on the rolling clouds for the past hour or so, letting my overworked brain switch o. a<sup>5</sup> My eyes instantly fall upon Yelena, who, naturally, has decided to sit down right in front of me, her legs crossed in front of her on the seat of the plane. Her expression tells me I'm in for a ride. I don't try to pretend to be happy about having to interact with her. Yelena does not seem to mind at all. She cocks her head slightly to the side, watching me with an amused expression, small dimples visible on her cheeks. "Do you always interrupt people?" I shoot back at her, my voice sounding hoarse, and she just looks more amused by my words, which makes me more grumpy. Well, I was not grumpy to start o with, but now I certainly am. "What was I interrupting, exactly?" She bemusedly looks from me to the window and back again. "My staring." "Your staring." She slowly lets her grin spread on her face. "Yes. Can I resume?" I tensely smile and stubbornly look back out of the window, hoping she'll read that as a cue to leave me alone. I don't really know why I am behaving like this towards Yelena, she certainly doesn't deserve it, yet it feels like my social battery has run out with people suddenly not being dead anymore and others having your part of their history completely erased. I just want to return to my apartment and sit on the floor in the dark and stare out at nothing like I was doing earlier. Now, not even that is an option anymore and I feel like I am slipping slowly closer and closer to some edge I don't know the real e ect my falling o it will have. I just can't seem to grab onto anything to keep me from falling. And so, all I long for now is to be le alone for the few, precious moments I have before I am forced to confront Wanda again. Just the thought of her flashing through my mind makes my stomach twist. a And of course, Yelena does not leave me alone. "No. I am curious." She states simply and I breathe out heavily, looking back at her, admitting defeat. "Why was the FBI a er you?" I hesitate for a minute, wondering whether or not she really is trustworthy. I just met her. But she is Natasha's sister. Whom I have never heard anything of, ever. I narrow my eyes at her, but she just waits patiently, a little smile playing on her lips. Somehow, her honest curiosity wins me over, and I find myself allowing her questioning. "Because I snuck Wanda out of the Ra." I say, not bothering to elaborate more and Yelena nods, impressed. "Why?" She probes and, surprised, I find myself going on. "I don't really know. I guess I- I felt for her." "You felt for her?" Yelena repeats, her accent rounding my words in a curious way, her eyebrows pulling together in a frown as she tries to understand. "Yeah, I mean, she helped me and she... she didn't strike me as a bad person." I shrug and smile awkwardly. "So you stole her out of the Ra and..." "Well, I didn't steaher." I chuckle slightly at her wording. a "Okay, you took her, then." Yelena rolls her eyes. "And then, what? Why is my sister so intent on finding this witch?" "Well, you better not call her witch when you see her, she's not too fond of that." I grin and Yelena hu s. "It's because of Hydra. Surely she's told you, no?" Yelena shrugs and I frown slightly, wondering what exactly she knows or doesn't know, and what exactly has happened to the timeline a er Wanda and I messed with it. I glance around me, but no one seems invested in my conversation with Yelena. Darcy is seated a little while away, with her headphones on and beanie pulled low. I'm not sure if she's sleeping or not. And Natasha is at the front, apparently steering the jet as she apparently knows how to do that. Whatever. When I look back at Yelena, she's still waiting for me to continue talking, an expectant look upon her face. I don't know what it is with her, but she strikes me as someone who is exactly who they portray themselves to be. No motives. No games. Just straight forward. She kind of reminds me of a Golden Retriever. I push that thought out of my head, glad she cannot read minds like... a "Wanda and I went back in time and-" "Okay, pause!" Yelena li s up a hand to silence me as her face lights up. "Why do you always say that so casually, 'I went back in time'?" She mimics my voice to which I make a face. "What? You sound like that." She defends herself. "But, you can do magic, too?" "Nope. I don't really know how I went back in time. There was this weird mist-thing in the Ra and I touched it... and then I could go back a few times. I don't know. It might have worn o now. I can't do "You sure?" Yelena narrows her eyes at me. "What? Do you want me to prove it to you?" I sarcastically ask and she shrugs. "Why not." "No." "Okay." I look out of the window, trying to keep myself from allowing her to make me grin stupidly. I can tell she's smiling too, without having to look at her. A short-lived silence settles between us as she gives me a little space to breathe. Suddenly, I don't mind her presence anymore. I almost enjoy it. "So, no magic for me?" Yelena asks a er a little while and I turn back to face the blonde. "I mean, yeah, no." I laugh awkwardly under her stare. "I've not been "Problems performing under pressure. It's normal, Olivia. Don't be ashamed." She teases and I flush. a "That's my joke." "It's a good joke." Yelena smiles sweetly and I shake my head at her. "How did you come back to now?" Yelena shi s slightly in her seat, apparently getting comfortable now. Great, let the interrogation go on. "There's this woman, Agatha, she's another witch-" "We can call her a witch?" Yelena interrupts with a gleam in her eye. "Yes." I relent, trying to stop my smile from growing. "She has some issue with Wanda, and she's helping Hydra. She brought Wanda and I back to Hydra." "And?" Yelena sits up, sensing there's more. I sigh tiredly, looking away from her and out at the skies outside. The clouds have gotten heavier since I last looked out. It might be raining down below, but up here, the sky is clear. "They have this way of... of making people forget about things." I slowly speak, trying to keep my focus on the clouds and their shapes. "They used it on you." I hear Yelena speak so ly. I don't reply, she isn't dumb. Just as I thought she continues in the same so voice. "What did you forget?" "I don't know if the machine wasn't quite... finished, or something, but I lost everything." I tear my eyes o the clouds and fix Yelena with my stare. She nods slowly, as if she understands. I don't see how she really would, unless she had to be strapped to that chair, too. And for some reason, I don't mind. I want her to understand. I want her to care, to feel bad, to feel sorry for me. "I'm alright with that, I can remember now. It's just that they can turn me on and o however they please." Voicing the thing that has been lurking over me like an evil shadow makes my stomach tighten up uncomfortably, and I wish I hadn't eaten that beef jerky Natasha handed me before takeo . I feel slightly sickly. Yelena watches me silently, clearly processing what she has just been told with a slightly vacant look on her face. Then, she blinks a couple of times, clearing her clouded eyes. "Trust me. I understand." Her voice is thick and for the first time, I feel a slight twinge of interest, of wanting to know more about her. She doesn't let me question her, though, because just as though she knows I'm about to turn the questioning around, she continues, the vacant look gone from her expression. "And what did they make her forget?" She asks, her voice low, a despondent look on her now, almost as if she knows my answer. "Me." I simply say, my voice calm and my face expressionless. Yelena studies me for a while; I can see the wheels turning behind her eyes. She hums so ly, as if she's come to some understanding or conclusion, and takes a breath. "And she won't remember, like you can now?" "No. She was the one who made me remember." I give her a sad smile, and then I shake my head. "I can't do the same for her." "Hmm." Yelena just hums, her eyes traveling away from my face onto the window out of which I have been staring out of. I allow myself to do the same, and together we silently watch the changing scenery, a calm energy settling between us, and I can't explain how, but I feel comfortable for the first time in a long while. That might be why my eyes finally dri shut a er some amount of silence, and I glide seamlessly o into a light sleep, my head rolling to the side slightly to come to rest against the wall of the jet. "Psst. Hey. Hey. We're - whoa!" My heart pounds in my throat as I clumsily grab the hand that suddenly has come to rest on my shoulder, twisting it quickly to the side to paralyze my attacker. "Shit, I'm sorry!" In my half-asleep state, I somehow recognize the now half-familiar voice of Yelena and I quickly let go of her hand, meeting her shocked stare. "Sorry." I grumble awkwardly as she frowns, massaging her now free hand. "It's okay." She so ly says, her eyes round and warm. I clear my throat, sitting up straighter in my seat, my body aching in that familiar way it always does a er I've slept in a funny position. I somehow feel more tired a er sleeping than I did before. It's like I've gotten no rest at all, my body greedy for more and angry about the interruption. The le side of my neck is unbelievably sore, making me feel slightly grumpy, wishing I hadn't slept at all. Speaking of, I notice that the view out of the window has changed to that of dark, silken clouds with a slight ray of an orange tint stubbornly still pushing through from the setting sun. the stars are visible in the sky, coldly shining their hard light as though they are making fun of the sun's demise. "Natasha wanted me to tell you that we are landing in fi een." Yelena explains, seeing my confusion. "Oh." I nod and she gives me a small smile and walks away from me towards Darcy. I watch her for a second, no thoughts in my head. Then, I awkwardly get up from my seat, walking past Darcy and Yelena up towards the front of the jet where Natasha is still sitting. She gives me a look as I sit down on the empty seat next to her, careful not to bump into any of the controls. "Had a good nap?" She asks me in her hoarse voice, a little smile on her face. "Don't play the martyr. I'm sure this has autopilot." I counter her, looking at the dozens of buttons in front of me. "Don't trust machines." Natasha simply says, looking out in front of her, her hands casually on the steering system, and the jet so ly glides to the le . I sneer at her comment. If only she knew. "Nervous?" She asks me and as if my body couldn't remember it was supposed to be nervous, she's just reminded it, and a knot forms in my stomach. "No." I lie badly. "You'll be fine." Natasha straightens out the jet, pressing a couple of buttons and I feel the speed decrease slightly. "You know, I don't believe in soulmates or shit like that." "Good to know." I sarcastically smile and she hu s. "Don't be funny. I'm trying to tell you something, here." Natasha gives me a look and I roll my eyes, but let her continue, afraid I very well might get slapped if I don't. "I just think we all have our person, you know?" She pauses and I know I'm not meant to answer. "I don't know. I think I've found my person, but... anyway, what I wanted to say is I remember how you two were, back when you stayed with us. I know your cards haven't been the easiest, but I think you are each other's person. Whatever that means to you." Natasha watches me with an expression I cannot quite name, but I can tell she's being as sincere as she can. I give her a small smile to show her I appreciate her words. I just can't really reply. I fear should I actually talk to her about Wanda I might cry and you would catch me dead crying in front of Natasha Romano . So, a quick smile will do. Fortunately for me, Natasha also seems to agree that my smile will su ice as an answer, as she gives my shoulder a small pat and then she pretends to focus on steering the jet. I return my gaze onto the landscape in front of me as we breach the clouds, my heart swelling with a ection for the woman next to me. If I were better at dealing with emotions I might hug her, but I can't seem to move as my arms are made of lead, apparently. So instead I sit there, silently watching the emerging landscape zoom by faster than the eye can catch it, my nerves alight inside of me at the prospect of being reunited with someone else I wish more than anything I could wrap my arms around and hug. A er a few minutes, I'm able to start making out details from the ground below, which mainly consists of hundreds upon thousands of dark trees. On the horizon, I can see a very familiar mountain begin to take shape. Darcy and Yelena join us in the cockpit, Yelena placing her forearms on the back of my seat, leaning some of her weight comfortably against it. "Can I land?" She asks Natasha, who hu s as if she's just been asked to lend her a million dollars. "No." "Why? You always get to take o and land." "Because I want to live." "P. It's easy. I can do it. Please?" Yelena nags on, making me grin in my seat as Natasha looks like she wishes someone would gag her sister. "Yelena-" "Natasha." "Not now. Maybe when we go back." "That's a lie." Yelena moans, tapping me on the head and I li my head up to peer at her leaning above me. "See how unfair?" "To be fair, you were kind of a reckless driver of a car, so-" "Oh, shut up. No fun." Yelena pushes my head down and I laugh, for a moment forgetting my nervousness. "Thank you, Liv." Natasha gives me a smile which I reciprocate. "Not fair! You're friends." Yelena sighs. "You have to take her side." "Liv, do you think you can guide me when we get closer to the mountain?" Natasha asks me, ignoring her sister, her tone back to serious and I nod, all the butterflies within me taking flight at once. "Good." Natasha says and adjusts the course of the jet. "Do you... how is she?" I pause, thinking over her question, knowing exactly what she means to ask without wanting to ask it. Will Wanda be happy with us visiting or will she be the opposite? "I doubt she's going to throw us a welcome party." I smile tensely. "I doubt she is going to recognize you, Natasha." I add so ly, watching Natasha's reaction closely. "Her mind's kind of scrambled at the moment." "I guessed as much." She sighs heavily. "I always saw Wanda as a little sister of sorts. Just as annoying as you, Yelena, don't worry!" She quickly adds. "Humph. I'll be the judge of that." Yelena states and Darcy chuckles. "I knew I liked you." Darcy airily says, her smile evident in her voice. Natasha purses her lips and I can't help but grin at their antics. "I like you too, funny lady." Yelena butters Darcy up, earning a pleased sound from her. "You, dear sestra, not so much right now." "Forget about me?" I crane my head up to look at Yelena who taps me in the middle of my forehead with her finger. "Don't worry, Marty McFly." She smiles. a "Okay, concentrate, everyone, please." Natasha mutters sourly and I look back out of the window, my stomach twisting as I notice how close to Mount Wundagore we really are. "Liv? You're up." Natasha slows the jet down considerably and I strain my neck looking down below, trying to see anything familiar. I notice the huge, shimmering lake slightly to our right, meaning Wanda's cabin should be just on the other side of the mountain, out of sight. I consider for a moment lying, telling them I actually don't remember at all where the cabin is and this was a mistake, but I don't. Something within me wants to see her so badly, despite everything. It's like I'm an addict, and I've not beaten my addiction, although I desperately know I have to, and I want to. Kind of... "Just behind the mountain." I so ly speak, my voice barely above a whisper, but I'm heard. The jet makes a so lurch to the side, silently and smoothly rounding the mountain. With every inch, we zoom closer to her. I sit tense like a spring about to snap, trying to focus my mind on the sight in front of me instead of the possibilities of what might happen in a few moments. As much as I try not to, I can't help but imagine a more than warm homecoming; Wanda suddenly being able to remember and spreading her arms out to take me in so that I can finally crumble. I know chances are against this, me, as always. And yet. "Okay, is that it, down there?" Natasha breaks the tense silence, pointing down at what is indeed it. I nod, not trusting myself to speak right now. Something more solid might just escape me should I try to communicate verbally. The jet takes us closer until we're hovering just a couple of hundred meters away from the dark cabin, and then we descend swi ly. As soon as I feel us touch solid ground, I spring up onto my feet, not bothering to check with anyone else about a possible game plan we might have. I just want to be the first to see her. I hurry to the back of the plane, eagerly waiting for Natasha to open it up. Slowly, painfully slowly, the back of the plane does open up. The familiar breath of fresh air hits my nose instantly and I feel a melancholic feeling somewhere in my chest. The grounds outside are silent and dark, the sun apparently just having set. It's that eery twilight zone between sunset and night. I quickly march down the ramp, hearing another couple pairs of footsteps not too far behind me. My eyes are glued to the little cabin. It seems dark inside. I falter for a moment as I take my first step on solid ground, wondering whether she has le . There's no indication of her. The lights inside are I turn around to face my companions, a stupefied expression on my face. I can't believe she's le. Where would she have gone? She knows she cannot trust her memories, so what is le for her? Unless... I shoot back the thought. Hydra cannot have gotten here already. I le to prevent just that from happening. Yelena and Darcy have stopped a few feet from me, Natasha hurrying through the back of the plane towards us. Yelena and Darcy are staring at the cabin behind me. I feel embarrassed, somehow. I've led them all this way for nothing. I'm supposed to be the one to know Wanda, and yet I've read her so wrong. "I'm sorry, guys-" I croak awkwardly, my voice piercing the silence. "Uh, Liv...?" Darcy meets my eyes with wide eyes. I frown, not understanding her reaction. In response, she just nods at something behind me. I pull a face and turn around to see what she is looking at. The face I'm pulling melts o me in an instant as I see a familiar silhouette quickly approach us from the cabin, two glowing red orbs by her side. a Never have I been more relieved to see a furious Wanda Maximo. My shoulders relax slightly as I take a couple steps towards her. She doesn't quite slow her march towards us, her hands li ing up in front of her, her magic following her movements, lighting up her front. She wears an angry expression, but I don't care. It's like not being with her for a couple of days has made my body forget who she was, and now, being just fi y meters or so apart, every cell of me has remembered and awoken and shivers are running up and down my length as I watch her, mesmerized. a "You le!" Wanda angrily shouts at me, stopping abruptly in her march, her chest heaving and her long hair so ly waving in the wind around her face. đ "I did." I reply so ly, not sure if she can hear me or not. "You're back." Wanda correctly announces, her voice still shrill and I know her well enough to even from my distance tell that she has worked herself up in a state. "|\_" "Leave." Wanda's voice shakes slightly and she flings one of the scarlet orbs towards me, but it singes past my le ear without me having to duck much. I am almost certain she missed me intentionally. Almost certain. Wanda's face is scrunched up as she watches me, her eyebrows knitted together and I just want to walk up to her and hold her until her tension melts away, but I'm not bold enough. "Fuck me." I hear Yelena whisper behind me, but I ignore her, never taking my eyes o Wanda, who's conjured up another ball of magic she is toying with. "We need to talk." I try to assert as much calmness into my voice as possible to try and defuse the situation, but Wanda clearly doesn't seem a ected whatsoever. "You said your peace. I asked you to stay and you le . Now I want you to stay gone!" Wanda's pitch rises at the end of the sentence and I try to not let her words a ect me, although it feels like I've been hit in the stomach and I can't breathe. a "Wanda, please listen to her." Natasha calmly speaks up, her voice so di erent to both Wanda's and mine emotionally charged ones. "And you are?" Wanda's eyes snap up to a spot behind me, her scarlet crackling a little merrier. "I'm Natasha. You know me." Natasha so ly explains, her voice sounding almost bored and it is clear she isn't intimidated at all by Wanda's show of magic. Wanda hesitates. Her round eyes flit back to me for a second before they return onto Natasha, and then Yelena and Darcy. Then back onto me again and I feel my knees almost buckle under her attention. I wish I could just turn my feelings for her o . I promised myself I would, and yet here I am. "I don't care. I want you all to leave. Now." Wanda tries to match Natasha's calm demeanor, but she fails, her voice cracking and exposing her. She twirls her magic slightly higher, as if to show she means it. "Wanda-" I begin boldly, but Wanda's green eyes snap back to me and I can tell she can't take it. "No!" She whimpers and seemingly without thinking about it, another ball of scarlet is making its way towards me, and this time it is really heading for my face. I can't seem to move and I am certain the magic is going to hit me, and I brace myself for the pain. But instead, something collides with me and I'm pushed out of the magic's path by Yelena. We stumble down on the ground as Wanda's scarlet collides with the jet with a loud crackle. The ground catches me harshly and a singe of pain travels through my right shoulder. "Wanda? Wanda, what's going on?" My head snaps up at the voice I haven't heard many a time, but I instinctively know so well. My stomach drops at the sight and I think I might actually be sick.

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A/N: Who dat?????

heading again! Yay!

Apologies for the long long wait, I've been a busy bee and was also struggling a little bit with getting this ball rolling again, but fear not, I've worked through what was bugging me and I know where we are

Hope you enjoyed the Yelena content, she's quite fun to write, you

Ps. Can I just say how much I appreciate you all??? I was so anxious

Continue reading next part  $\ \square$ 

u were all so lovely I want all of youl

might see a bit more of her in the coming chapters...

See you not too long in the future! ;)

comments on my headstone