The air is cold and fresh against my face, making my breath fog up in front of me. The little plumes of warm breath quickly dissolve into nothingness in front of my eyes, constant reminders of my physical e ort. It seems as though the little bit of sleep I managed to catch on the plane helped invigorate me slightly, I note as my muscles feel slightly stronger than before. I shake o the feeling in my chest as my body recalls the feeling of Wanda's warm body next to me, her thigh grazing mine, her fingers intertwined with mine, and her head on the crook of my neck, her breath tickling the skin of my neck. I grimace, willing the sense memory to leave. đ I return to the present. I do a mental check on my body. It is true; I do feel slightly less groggy than before, and a little more alert, as I trod through the deserted highlands somewhere in the northwestern States, apparently. I don't know if it was my nap or the fact that despite my protests, a small, little, easily extinguishable flicker of hope when it comes to Wanda has been lit inside my chest, but I am stepping forwards behind Natasha with some purpose instead of only dread. There might be an end to all of this. I might finally be able to retrieve that which Hydra stole, rendering their plans useless. Then, I will have paid o my debt to Wanda. She will be safe from them, at least. I try to not think of what follows, once her need for me is gone. Who am I kidding? I'm only here because... well, because they still need me. And who knows what happened to my weird powers. Am I still able to turn back time or did that mist have an expiration date? Maybe, maybe this, right here, me marching behind Natasha and Steve, both of whom should be long gone, is the beginning to the end. I try to envision a life in which I go back to how everything was before Wanda. The mental image of returning to my cold flat makes me shiver, and a cold settles in my chest. I realize I don't want that. No matter how much I should not allow my feelings to dictate my thoughts, they return with the promise of Wanda. Her laughter echoes in my ears and it reminds me of the time we spent in the Tower, just her and me, talking in bed about god knows what. And even though that will never be my reality anymore, I am not stupid enough to think my old life could ever be a possibility either. I ran from the FBI. I know enough to know there's no going back. Maybe I could settle down in my grandparents' cabin... a We've been walking for a while, now. My muscles are warm and it feels good to move with purpose. The Glock that rests on my thigh feels just right, too. My footsteps easily follow Natasha's, matching her stride and pace. Her red hair glistens in the darkness like a little fire. Steve leads us as we march onwards on flatlands I doubt see much of humans. The silence is pressing, but I don't feel contained. I feel the opposite. I feel great, even. My lips curl up into a small smile as I think back to the jet, and who we le behind. Yelena complained the entire time we got ready. Vision and Darcy were busy looking down at the screen of the clunkiest computer I've ever seen, and Wanda, well, she hovered near me the entire time, a silent contrast to Yelena. She seemed to find excuses to help me with my gear, apparently finding the way I attached the holster to my thigh unsatisfactory, although I know it was done to standard. My smile widens slightly as I think back to how when we were about to leave and Natasha and Steve were checking in with the rest of the team, making sure everyone was updated on the plan, Wanda pulled me slightly to the side. Her warm forest green eyes held mine in place as a small frown appeared on her face, making a few small wrinkles appear on her forehead. She clearly wanted to say something to me, but she seemed to struggle to find the right words. Instead, I carefully placed a finger in the middle of her forehead and applied a light pressure, which made her relax her so features with a slight chuckle. "You'll get wrinkles." I teased her with a smile. My words made her eyes widen slightly and I swear they became slightly glassy, as if she was overcome by the emotions of a memory. Whatever happened passed quickly and silently, as when I dropped my hand from her face reluctantly, she blinked, her dark eyelashes clearing her eyes of the remnants of the unnamed emotion, replacing it with a warmth I hadn't observed in them in a while. It made my heart beat lightly. As I went to step away from her, she quickly and almost awkwardly wrapped her arms around my neck, catching me by surprise as she pulled me in, pressing her body against mine. My arms wrapped themselves around her waist as if by their own accord as I inhaled precariously, her scent washing me clean. The moment didn't last long, but it felt like it did. In a split second, I felt how right it felt and how right shefelt against me and how the warmth from her body enveloped me, making me feel at peace, and how her sweet scent pulled at my heart, which seemed to beat for her heart so close by. She hugged me slightly tighter as she turned her head slightly, her breath brushing warmly against my ear. a "Don't do anything stupid." She whispered to me, her voice low and surprisingly, I couldn't detect any trace of sarcasm in her tone, only truthful caring in all its rawness. a With that, she lessened her grip on me, letting me know it was time to let go. My arms fell from their place around her waist and she stepped back, a rosy color creeping up her neck to find its place upon her high cheekbones. Her eyes fluttered down onto the ground as she seemed slightly surprised by her own forwardness. "Stupid?" I whispered to her, making her look up at me innocently, making me melt. I raised my eyebrows at her questioningly, and she tried to suppress a sweet smile. a "What are you grinning at?" Natasha's suspicious question brings me away from my memory and I look up at her as she walks slightly sideways, watching me intently. "Nothing." I lie unconvincingly, making the Russian spy narrow her eyes at me suspiciously. "Is nothing in this case perhaps a certain someone with green eyes?" She slows her gait down slightly to match mine, our shoulders bumping together as we walk side-by-side, following Steve. "No. It was just a joke I remembered." I flatly tell her, wishing that she'd drop it. a "Hmm." She hums so ly on my side and I look at her. "You are smitten, my dear." "I know." I admit heavily a er a slight pause. "So is she." Natasha promises, which, despite my best e orts, does make me giddy. "I'm not so sure." I try to play it o and Natasha almost laughs but stifles the sound. "I can read her as much as she tries to pretend otherwise. I've spent

an unfortunately large proportion of our time together keeping her together." Natasha smiles a bittersweet smile at the memories, and I'm struck by how she has an entirely di erent view of Wanda, how she knows things I don't, and it almost makes me slightly jealous. "I promised I would leave her alone a er we fix this." I admit to Natasha, which makes her hu.

"I don't think she'd want that." She looks at me pointedly. "I don't think you want that, either." "I... no, I don't." I once again find myself admitting something I would

have fought tooth and nail to keep private before. "Then stop being a little bitch and get on with it." Natasha so

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eloquently suggests, making me giggle. "I don't want to make her uncomfortable. She... she's still holding

onto Vision." Natasha looks at me, now completely serious. "You need to give her a fucking break, Liv. She obviously loves Vision, yes, but she also loves you. I think her love for Vision is more of a... of a safety blanket. Her love for him is her remembering how safe she felt back when he was all she had. I don't think she needs that same love now. She's not the

I stay silent, letting Natasha's explanation hover over me. As much as I find myself wanting to agree, I still can't quite understand how this is meant to help me. đ "Yes, but that doesn't change the fact that -"

"You can't explain everything, Liv, or make sense of everything. You just need to give her some time, man. I mean, what, she's lost her memory of you like, a week ago? You can't put a time constraint on her, that's not fair."

"And if she never remembers me?"

same as she was when they met."

"Well, then you make new memories with her." Natasha tells me as if it's the clearest thing in the world. "You made her like you once, god knows how you did that, but if you did it once, you can do it again." "P ." Is all I can say, which makes me receive her elbow in my ribs. "Ouch, what?"

"I'm sure snogging her helps, eh?" Natasha grins slyly and I feel heat rush into my cheeks. đ

"Wh-what?" I stutter awkwardly.

"I'm not called the Black Widow for nothing, Liv." Natasha winks at me and I wish the ground would swallow me here and now. "You- no. We never-"

"Mmhmm." Natasha smiles even wider. "And I could never kick your

ass." "Actually, you couldn't." I grin at her and she lets out a so laugh. I watch her for a moment, marveling at how she is able to make me feel so comfortable with her. It makes me remember the way she instantly took me under her wing the first time I went back in time. "Yeah, I'll let you believe that. Seems as though your ego needs it." Natasha turns her nose up at me with a self-congratulatory upturn to her lips as she looks out in front of us, her smile slowly diminishing. I look away from her, reminded of the precariousness of this moment with her, and how I might never be able to have another heart-to-

heart with her, ever. As if on cue, as if she is privy to where my thoughts have wandered, she places a hand on my upper arm. "Vision and I... we've talked." She tells me in her raspy voice, her tone

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is heavy. My heart drops slightly at this turn in the conversation, so I focus my gaze on my boots as I take step a er step on the dried grass. She lets

her hand drop from my arm. "We don't know exactly what you two changed by going back in time,

but we both know you have to fix it." "How?" I curiously ask, which makes the woman next to me go silent in contemplation for a while.

"Vision thinks you need to somehow go back in time and make sure you do not find that mist in the first place." Natasha slowly explains, sounding as though she doesn't quite understand the idea herself. "But..." I frown. "I can't do that. I don't know... I can't use it anymore." "I know. But... We'll figure that out in due time, Olivia." Natasha simply states with a weak smile. "First, let's make sure Hydra can't use Wanda's scarlet. Then, let's see if we can't coax that mist out of

you." "Yeah, easy." I mutter just as Steve holds a hand up in the air next to his head, coming to a halt.

"Guys. We're here." Steve turns slightly to look at Natasha and me. Natasha and I take the last few steps which lead us up to Steve in unison, both of us silent. The night is still clinging onto us, the flight

from Sokovia letting us hang onto the darkness. I subconsciously brush my fingers against the cool hilt of the gun on my side, the feel of it grounding me slightly and reminding me of how I've trained to do this. I can do this. It's just like being on a mission with the FBI. Except this time, I'm breaking into a worldwide hidden terrorist organization with Captain America on my right and the Black Widow

on my le . It's exactly the same, right?... a We're stood on a slight hill, looking down at more vastness, not a single tree in sight for as far as the eye can see. I squint, trying to decipher what exactly Steve can make out in the darkness. Albeit I have good vision, I can't compete with his enhanced sight. Just as I

turn to ask him what exactly I'm looking for, he points towards a spot slightly to our right.

"There, do you see that slight hill?"

"I guess." I squint, looking at what looks like a spot where the grassland bulges outward a little.

"That's it." Steve lowers his hand and looks at Natasha and me with

such a somber face it makes me nervous. "What do you mean that's it? Where's Hydr-"

God when we said that it's a hidden

what? It to be on the Ei el Tower?" Natasha snidely comments and I hu.

"No, but-"

"Well, you're looking at the entrance. According to my intel, we're standing over it, even now." Steve mutters, looking down at the ground below his feet.

"What, it's all underground?" I exclaim in slight amazement, following his eyes and looking down at the unassuming dry grass beneath me.

"Yup." Natasha confirms, popping her p.

"Cool." I murmur in lieu of anything better to say.

"Eh." Natasha shrugs and li s her wrist up to her face. "Yo, Darce?" A couple seconds go by in silence, and then suddenly Darcy's voice

crackles to life from Natasha's wrist.

"Hello, lover."

"She wishes." Natasha looks at Steve with a smirk. "We're here." "Oh, took you a while."

"Liv was slow." "Hey-" I try to interject, but Natasha pushes me nonchalantly.

"The adults are talking." She mutters to me. "Darce, have you managed to find their security system?"

"You know I found it a minute a er you le ." Darcy brags and I roll my eyes at the same time as Natasha does. a

"Atta girl." She purrs to her wrist with a slightly wonky smile. "I'm popping our earpieces in now, one second."

Natasha fumbles in the pockets of her dark cargo pants for a second before she opens her palm in front of her, three small, shiny, beige earpieces lying there unassumingly. Natasha hands me one, then Steve, and the last one she pops into her right ear as I follow suit. For a second, it blocks out noise from my ear as it adjusts. Then, it filters sound through again and I can now hear Darcy clear as day in my ear.

"One, two, one, two, can ya hear me?" "We hear you." Steve says, his voice at once coming through the earpiece as well.

"Joy." Darcy says, and then there's a small shu ling sound.

"Y'all still alive?" I now hear Yelena's voice.

"Yes, we are." Natasha answers, sounding impatient. "That's a surprise." Yelena's voice sounds genuinely amused, as

opposed to her sister's.

"Can we get back on track, please?" Natasha wonders with a straight face, her eyes fixed on the mount in front of us.

"With pleasure. I will sit back down and have the best conversation of my life with silent witch, over here." Yelena mutters and I can't help but imagine the sight of Yelena and Wanda in the jet, which makes

my lips twist upwards slightly. "Darcy, can you confirm you have full access to their security

systems?" Steve asks, as always the professional.

"I can indeedly confirm. Vision is here with me, he's nodding." Darcy confirms proudly.

"Okay. And have you managed to find where they keep the file?"

Steve prompts as he motions for Natasha and me to follow him.

"Yessss..." Darcy answers while she clearly works on the computer, the sounds of her fingers hitting the keyboard in a furious tempo can be heard through the earpiece. "Yes, I think I've got a way there."

"You think?" Natasha mutters, unimpressed. "Well, I can't be a hundred percent sure, can I?" Darcy mutters back

while I can hear a so "amateur" in the background from someone who sounds suspiciously like Yelena. a

I continue to hear the faint sounds of the keyboard in my right ear as the three of us slowly and carefully trek towards the slight hill. As we advance, I cannot help but be impressed by how Steve and Natasha were able to find the base in the first place. As far as I can tell, we're

miles from the nearest place of civilization, in the middle of god knows where, and the base we're looking for is so cleverly hidden it would take me falling right through the ground into it for me to realize it was here in the first place.

"Steve?" I jog slightly to catch up with him.

He hums, turning his head to look at me. I am once again struck by how he looks so much more worn than he used to when I knew him. Before he begins to become suspicious of my staring, I find my voice again.

"How did you find this place?" I ask him, my voice barely above a whisper now that we're so close to our target.

"Oh, well, I, er, I actually didn't find it." He tells me, stuttering,

sounding slightly taken by surprise before his usual somber expression veils his face. "Bucky did."

"Bucky?" My stomach seems to sink in me at the thought of Bucky having to deal with Hydra ever again a er what he went through at their hand.

"Yeah." Steve sighs. "A er Wanda helped him, he went awol on me for a couple of years. I never did figure out everything he did and the places he went... in any case, he came back, saying he had something for me. It was stu on Hydra. He'd never stopped working against them."

Steve's tone sounds sentimental, so I give him a small smile of encouragement as he falters slightly at the memory of his closest friend.

"Said he owed it to himself, and to Wanda." Steve looks at me with his intense eyes. "And to you." Although there isn't a trace of anything negative in his eyes, no judgment, I still feel blameworthy, for some

reason. "And, so he..." I croak out, willing Steve to stop dissecting me with his gaze.

"We worked for a while together on uncovering more of Hydra's secrets. Then, we finally learned of what their plan with you two was, and what they were planning with Wanda. Bucky was furious. And I think he was scared. His... experience with Wanda in his brain really shook him up, and I think... I think he was frightened of thembeing able to do that to him again, without the help of any machines." Steve goes silent for a while, letting my thoughts freely run back to the chair. I shiver, my movements becoming involuntarily sti. I understand Bucky's fear. Although Wanda's magic freaks me out a little sometimes, I am mostly okay with her powers, but I assume that might just be because of Wanda. In the hands of someone I did not trust... The thought of Strucker being able to do what she did without having to use the chair...

"What, uh, what did you do then?" My voice sounds hollow as I try to push the chair away. Never again.

"We tried to breach one of their facilities, one in which we thought they stored their data." Steve's voice now matches mine in flatness, and I feel dread. "We were wrong. We'd been fed false information.

We-eh, we." Steve struggles to articulate himself, and as though she knows,

Natasha's now on his other side, looking up at him tenderly, her face full of care. I frown, wondering how their relationship evolved a er I met them last.

"It's okay." She whispers to him, which seems to steel Steve somewhat, as he is able to continue, albeit only in two very short,

gru sentences.

"I was able to get out. Bucky didn't."

My heart seems to want to prove to me it is indeed able to sink further down, as that is exactly what it does when I hear Steve's last two words. Something else I can add to my list of failures. I know no one will admit it to me, but I know Bucky died because of me, really. He should still be alive. But he continued to try to fix my mistakes. I feel so ashamed I can't make myself say anything to Steve. Everything I could possibly say would be insu icient.

And so we walk the rest of the way in pressing silence, and now, in contrast to earlier, I feel claustrophobic in the vastness that surrounds the three of us. The cold presses in on me and I struggle to see where I place my feet on the ground, the hill getting closer and closer with every step we take. There's a tightness in my chest I'm all too familiar with.

It's not your fault! stumble slightly as I hear her thoughts in my head, not having expected this at all. Her presence pushes away my other, less positive feelings, almost as though she's consciously cutting me o from them, like a shield. I breathe out heavily, feeling oddly disconnected from myself as she takes away my guilt.

I could argue against that.think tiredly, feeling worry in my chest which I think belongs to Wanda.

in my head and her emotions in my chest.

And what would you gain from that 3 he counters and I close my eyes for just a second to steady myself in the sudden whirlpool of emotions that belong to me and others that do not. No matter how many times we talk like this, it will never stop being weird feeling her

Were you in my head all this time?wonder and open my eyes, feeling slightly unnerved by the prospect of her possibly witnessing

Natasha's and my conversation. No Is all she says, and I can recognize her hurt and I know I should

trust her by now, knowing she won't ever break my trust in that way. I'm sorry.

She doesn't reply.

Wanda? You there? Or, here?

A er a moment of silence, I hear her sigh in my head, which is such a strange sensation I look to Natasha and Steve, half expecting them to have experienced it too. Naturally, they haven't and are having their own little whispered conversation slightly in front of me. I return my

attention onto Wanda. Wanda? I think again, louder, afraid she's le me again.

Stop yellingShe finally sounds in my head, and I feel a little amusement seep through from her and I can't help but smile at her ongoing joke. That small bright flicker of hope is back. Maybe she remembers...

I didn't plan to intrude... I just... I was with you and I... I heard what Steve said about... your friend, and I... I felt youHer voice sounds timid, it's almost as though she expects me to get angry at her. ส์ You felt me? All the way from here?question her instead, amazed, which earns me a fleeting feeling of her pride in her scarlet.

I've told you you're loudShe cracks a joke and I suppress a snort. But it's di icult, Livvy. I mean, Olivia. Sorry. I didn't mean to- I mean I'm not sure I'll be able to reach you once you go down.

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I try to organize my unruly emotions, trying not to let Wanda feel the way it a ected me hearing her old nickname for me again slip o her tongue so easily as though nothing's changed between us. It takes me a second, while she patiently waits, certainly feeling the rush of emotions through her end of our connection.

Just don't do anything stupid, please?hear her thoughts once more, feeling a warm rush spread through me, an emotion I cannot quite place but know it's hers. It isn't uncomfortable.

I can't promise I start to try to crack a joke, but she sends out another thought that makes me falter.

I need youShe admits, the warm feeling in me suddenly replaced by so many confusing emotions I cannot pretend to keep track as she quickly backtracks.

I mean -we need you. To come back. Yelena would miss you too much.She tries to cover her tracks and I feel giddy. Stop thatShe whispers in my head, no doubt feeling my elation.

Wanda Maximo needs me.I bravely think and her embarrassment rushes through me, which makes me grin.

Well, my love, I won'tit's my turn to pause as I realize what I called her. But before I have the chance to cover my tracks, she sends out one last thought.

It's okay. Just come back. To me.

And then I know she's gone and I'm alone in my head again with my untamed emotions galloping around my chest like wild horses and I cannot catch them and push them aside. I let out a breath of air I wasn't even aware I was holding hostage, making my head spin slightly. I can't keep up with her. But that little spark of hope I felt earlier in my chest makes itself known again.

"Darcy, we're here." Steve's voice brings me out of my reveries as I almost slam into his back.

We've stopped right by the little hill, and now, being so close to it, I can definitely recognize that there is something unnatural about the way the ground bulges up. My fingers graze the gun on my side again as my eyes scan the little hill for any signs of an entryway.

"You're going to want to step back, I'm about to open the door, but I'm not sure if they've posted any guards here." Darcy's voice crackles to life in our ears and the three of us step back. I go to pull my gun out, but Natasha's hand stops me. "We need to be

as quiet as possible." I nod, understanding what she is saying. It's all hand combat for now. I step slightly from side to side on the balls of my feet, trying to ready my body for what's to come. I wish I wasn't so indebted from the lack of sleep, and that whatever little fever I was plagued with earlier would leave me alone. I know my body is not 100%, and I desperately

need it to be. Because now I need to come back. Suddenly, the ground beneath our feet trembles, and the mound in front of us begins to creak open.I watch the ground open up in front of us with my mouth slightly hanging open in awe. Natasha's hand suddenly pulls me back behind her as she crouches down slightly,

Steve next to her mirroring her pose. I want to argue, saying I do not need to be coddled, but I'm cut o by voices emerging from the opening on the side of the hill. At first, the hole is dark, but it begins to crackle to life as torches are turned on.

"Quick!" Natasha whispers and as one, the three of us lunge towards the sides of the opening in the hill, trying to hide ourselves from view as we press against the cold ground which is almost vertical behind our backs.

"Is it malfunctioning again?" I hear someone ask, their voice sounding like they are standing right by the opening.

"I don't fucking know." Another voice sounds.

Natasha suddenly is climbing up the hill, silent as a bat. She expertly makes her way up, so that she has positioned herself directly above the opening in the ground. She looks up at Steve and me, gives us a wink, and jumps into the opening with a grin on her face.

"What the-" Is all I can hear before a confused commotion erupts. I push o the hill, ready to dive right in to help Natasha, but something catches me. I turn my head, confused, seeing Steve holding my back, shaking his head. I try to yank myself free, but his

grip is iron around my wrist.

"Let go!" I whisper loudly, but he just shakes his head. Just as I begin to question Steve's sanity, Natasha's voice reaches us, beckoning us to follow her. She doesn't sound the slightest out of breath. Steve smiles at me and lets me go. I instantly run to the opening, seeing Natasha in the mouth of some sort of dark tunnel, holding a flashlight in her hand, standing in the middle of four knocked-out guards in dark clothing. Natasha does a little curtsey.

"Your majesty." She says as I step in and I roll my eyes at her. "I was going to help, but Steve-" I begin but she tuts, cutting me o .

"Sure, sure." "You lot inside?" Darcy asks us in our ears and Steve confirms. As he does, the doors begin to close behind us, plunging us into real darkness, only the few flashlights around us o ering us any visibility.

"Natasha, stop being a showo ." Yelena warns, sounding grumpy and I chuckle. It must really irritate her having to wait behind.

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We quickly make sure the men are restrained. Having been forced to wear it myself, I identify the Hydra clothing on them, which makes my blood boil, and I make sure to tighten their restraints just too tightly.

"Alright, Darce, lead the way." Natasha says, handing me one of the guards' flashlights and then we are o , Darcy's voice in our ears telling us what we should expect.

The tunnel is dark and damp and keeps slanting down so ly, leading us further into the ground with every step we take. We don't meet any other guards (unfortunately for them), but a er a couple of minutes, rugged fluorescent tubes begin to adorn the damp walls and we are able to turn our flashlights o . The only sound we hear is the hollow

sound of our boots on the hard floor. Then, we reach the end of the tunnel. There's a thick, grey steel door in our way. We approach it carefully. I can't hear anything from the other side, but that doesn't

mean anything. The door is so thick. I notice a keypad on the side with a blinking red light. "Darcy?" I whisper, and the light promptly turns green. "You're a

magician." I hear her chuckle on the other end, and Steve slowly pushes the door open. Instantly, a guard sticks his face through the door, his eyes widening in surprise as he recognizes Steve, but Steve doesn't let him

unconscious. We step through, entering an empty room that mostly resembles some sort of cold holding area. Three other guards are standing on the other side of the room, their guns pointed toward us.

"Stop right-" One of them begins, but something shiny flies at him,

Before anyone has the chance to react whatsoever, Natasha flings two more of the shiny razors at the other two men. The men look surprised as their throats open up and they fall to the floor. I can't help but almost pity them, Natasha did not even give them a chance. I doubt I would have been able to deflect her attack, which makes me

"Okay, we need to change our clothes." Steve tells us and I shoot him

"Olivia, tell me you listened to us when we were talking through the game plan." Natasha scolds me with a smirk, knowing full well I did not. I grin back at her, honestly not having listened as I was too busy trying to figure out if Wanda's sleeping next to me meant anything to

"We're Hydra soldiers now." Steve tells me, beginning to take the

"Hail Hydra." Natasha mutters as she goes to do the same.

I was honestly going to give you an even longer chapter, but unfortunately, this is already SO long that I had to break it up, so

Hope you enjoyed this one, have a drink for Queen Liz and I will see

Continue reading next part □

you're going to have to be patient yet again <3

raise any sort of alarm as he hits the man's head against the half-

open steel door and the man crumples down on the floor,

lodging itself in his neck which instantly bleeds crimson.

look at her slightly unnerved. She doesn't seem bothered.

a ba led look.

jacket o one of the guards.

A/N: Hello sweet angels! xx

you soon loves x

her.