



xix. Pushing Limits

Scott had explained the machine to Auralie before running off to join the Avengers in fighting Thanos. Auralie didn't really understand most of it since she wasn't a very technical person, but she understood enough to make it work, and that was what mattered.

But she hesitated. She was afraid, very afraid. This could be her end, this could kill her. And she would never get to say her goodbyes to Maria or Wanda. She couldn't go out without making sure those goodbyes would be heard.

She found a pen on the ground, and a newspaper, which she ripped the blank margins off of. She knelt down and began scribbling two quick goodbyes.

One to her sister.....

Maria, if you find this, you know what happened. I just want to thank you, one last time, for taking a chance on me, for taking care of me, for teaching me so much of what I know. You're the reason I am the woman I am today, and I am so glad I got to know you, to be your sister. You're the greatest family ever, and I love you. Don't be sad, don't cry for me. I don't have any regrets, not if what I'm doing ends with you being safe. - Love Ali

The other to her soulmate.....

Wanda, darling, if you're reading this, just know I wish we had more time. I wish we had a thousand years or longer to be together. I think I get it now, why we protect the world. We protect the world because there are people out there who love others. And we can't let them be taken from those they love. We know that pain, we cannot let them go through it. Wanda, thank you for making me happy, truly happy, and teaching me to love again. I'm sorry it had to end like this. But life isn't worth living without love, and I am willing to die for love. Please be happy Wanda, please try, because you deserve it. I love you so much. I love you more than anything. Goodbye Wanda. I love you. -

Auralie

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Tears were forming in her eyes, but she blinked them away. She had done enough crying. She was on a mission now, and there was no crying on a mission. She dropped the pen. She placed the pieces of paper where they wouldn't blow away. Then she looked down at the little box of metal hooked up to Scott's van.

She had always assumed she would end up dying on a mission. She expected to work for Shield forever, and that was a dangerous job. She had thought the same when she joined the Avengers. But she had never thought of this. No one had. She heard the distant sounds of battle. Her friends were counting on her. It was time for Auralie to act. She cleared her mind and was focused, deadly focused. It was a level of certainty and focus that she rarely ever achieved, and it had been ages since she had. Usually, she had only been this focused on missions with Maria.

Though this mission was for Maria, and Wanda, and the Avengers, and to make sure the whole damn world wasn't ripped apart.

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She picked up the box and took a deep breath. She looked up at the cloudy sky and drank it in, even though it was rather boring because she didn't know when she would get to again.

"I love you," Auralie whispered, to Wanda, to Maria, as if they could hear her in their infinity stone caused state. Then she slowly began to activate her powers. Her hands began glowing first, then the glow trailed up her arms until her whole body was glowing, save her eyes, two pinpricks of darkness amongst her light.

The box began to vibrate, and she kept radiating light, which got brighter and brighter. She went from glowing like a lightbulb to being bright, like the ball of fire in the sky that gave life to everything on Earth. Her light became more and more powerful, but not destructive because she controlled it.

And it hurt. That much control put a strain on her mind, that much light put a strain on her body. But she kept going. If she was to die, she would burn up in a star of her own making, trying her best to save the world. It sounded epic. There were worse ways to go.

Of course, she would rather not go at all. But she wasn't sure that was an option.

She could feel the power being generated working to combat Thanos's infinity stone charged spell. But it wasn't enough. She attempted to increase her light, but it didn't work. Her powers had limits, and she was reaching them fast. Soon she would burn out, and that would kill her. And it still wouldn't be enough to save everyone.

No. Auralie was a woman on a mission. She would finish her mission. She screamed because she felt like she was burning up, but still, she increased her light. The box was shaking in her barely steady hands, but she dug her nails in as best she could.

From the battlefield, they could see Auralie and her force of light as the stars. Thanos could feel the world shaking, as an energy force, he never planned for combated his stones.

Auralie didn't know this, of course, she didn't know anything. Everything had been erased from her mind. She only knew she needed to burn brighter. She had forgotten why she had forgotten her own name. Maria and Wanda's faces were blurring in her mind, overwhelmed by light. She was not a girl now, she was a star.

A thought snuck its way into her mind: this must be the endgame. This must be death.

It got no reaction. She was a star now, and stars didn't care about something as silly as death. The girl had worried about that, the star didn't. The star had no worries.

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The girl would have been in shock by the star, she would have never wanted to become it. The girl would have wanted to be with her loved ones. But the girl was gone, and the star pushed harder, breaking at the limits of its power. The walls cracked, they cracked more, and then.....

They shattered.

The infinity stone barrier keeping the dead heroes and civilians from returning. They all shattered, and for a moment, the stones' power was out of hand, and the barriers were broken. The goal had been accomplished. The mission was done.

Auralie felt her light begin to fade, felt her whole body ache, felt her mind ache too. She was the girl again, but the star had taken so much out of her, she didn't remember who she was or what she had done.

She did remember two things. Names, very dear to her, that not even the stars could burn out. Maria and Wanda.

She smiled as she whispered those names, and then she collapsed, everything going black.

A/N: So, this chapter was very intense, but I really enjoyed writing it for some reason. I hope you liked it too.

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