



xxiii. Scarlet Shadows

The next day, things only got more confusing.

a⁵

Rhodey, Sam, Bucky, Auralie, and Wanda were all in the control room going through and updating their database system. That was a fairly normal occurrence. After all, part of being the Avengers meant having up to date intelligence. If they didn't have the needed information, they could not do their job.

However, just because it was necessary did not mean it was fun. Sam had seemed to forget Cap had put him in charge. He and Bucky were getting into ridiculous little arguments over everything. Rhodes was getting annoyed with his teammates, and rightfully so. Wanda was attempting to pay attention but was also trying to get Bucky and Sam to be serious.

As for Auralie, well, she was a dedicated worker, and though she wasn't very organized herself, she understood that her friends needed this system to be neat. She was always willing to help her friends. But her heart was not in it today. Still, she was trying to stay focused, even though her brain was drifting to other places.

a⁷

"So Ali," Rhodes said because he didn't want to deal with Sam and Bucky, "are you and Wanda thinking of getting the place you saw yesterday?"

"Yeah, we're going to check about filling out some paperwork in a day or two. We liked it, it was a nice place, not too far away," Auralie mused.

"Cool," Rhodes shrugged, "I mean, you and Wanda are the only ones who don't really have your own place. I mean, I've got my place, Sam has his own house in DC, Bucky has a key to Steve's new apartment..... it's about time you two get a place to hide when we're annoying you."

Auralie smiled, "yeah, that's an added benefit. Not that I don't adore you all, but sometimes we need our space."

"I hear you," the armored Avenger replied.

They lapsed into silence again. It was uncharacteristic of the five of them to not be talking at all. It was very awkward. So it was only natural that Auralie felt the primal instinct to break the silence and sing.

Two things about Auralie. She could not sing in key, at all. It was always out of key. And when she did sing, she usually ended up singing songs from cartoons. She was a dignified superhero like that.

"There are a hundred and four days, of summer vacation, and school comes along just to end it," Auralie sang out, completely out of tune.

a⁶

Sam put his head in his hands, "oh no, not again."

a⁷

Bucky, who was confused, said, "we get summer vacation? Since when?"

a⁸

"So the annual problem, for our generation, is finding a good way to spend it," Auralie continued, still off key.

Rhodes shot Bucky an amused look, "she's singing the theme song from a cartoon she and Tony like to watch."

"Like maybe," Auralie cried out, excitedly. Wanda smiled at her girlfriend fondly and started clapping along. In the three long years since they had known each other, Auralie had introduced Wanda to cartoons. You would never guess it, she seemed so serious when on the job, but Auralie had her childish moments. It was something Wanda loved about her, that softer side. But then again, Wanda loved everything about Auralie.

a¹⁰

It was after Auralie finished singing the Phineas and Ferb theme song that things became really disastrous.

a¹¹

A lightbulb had gone out in the lamp in the corner. Out of habit, a grinning Auralie tried to send a glowing ball of light to float in its place until they could change it. Of course, her light powers were not working, so no glowing ball of light appeared.

But unlike the last few times, she had tried to use her light, this time Auralie got a reaction. Dark shadows trailed across the room from Auralie's hand, knocking over files and rattling the lampshade. Auralie and the others all let out a gasp and the shadows disappeared.

"Alright, I'm just gonna ask," Sam said, "what the hell?"

Auralie whirled around to look at Wanda, "your powers! When you brought me back, they must have altered mine! So now, instead of light..... I have shadows."

a¹²

"Oh shit," Wanda stepped forward and took Auralie's hands, "you're probably right. But what're we gonna do about it."

a¹³

Auralie looked at her shaking hands, "I'll just have to learn how to use them. Like I learned how to use my light. Training all over again."

"Ok, but what's that gonna be like," Sam asked, "how long, how hard."

"I don't know. Powers are difficult sometimes, especially learning a whole new set of powers. I guess I'll just have to try, and hope we can all help each other. Maybe I'll call Nat and ask her for some training exercises," Auralie mused, more to herself than the others.

Wanda hugged Auralie to her and whispered, "I'm sorry about what's happening to your powers."

"It's alright, you did what you had to do," Auralie whispered back. She pressed a quick peck to Wanda's lips before saying, "I should probably call Maria. She'll want to hear about this."

a¹⁴

The shadow manipulator left the room, and Bucky asked, "is Ali ok."

a¹⁵

"She just has a lot going on. We'll figure it out," Wanda said. Then she looked down and whispered, "I hope."

Wanda was feeling sort of guilty. She was glad Auralie was still with her, but now she was responsible for all the pain Auralie could go through with her new shadow powers.

Wanda held out her hand and twisted a curl of scarlet magic between her fingers. Her powers were so strong and all-consuming. A part of her was afraid that they would doom them all. And she couldn't stand the thought of hurting her friends, of hurting Auralie.

She took a deep breath. They would just have to do the best they could. That was all they could do.

A/N: I feel like this chapter is kinda crappy. I just had to show that Auralie's powers have changed from light to shadows. And two, I wanted to canonically show that Auralie sings songs from cartoons, even though she cannot sing. Honestly same.

a¹⁶

[Continue reading next part](#) □