



viii. The Train

Wanda Maximoff had arrived with her twin and the robot in Seoul, where they arrived in a lab. The head scientist, an associate of the Avengers, Helen Cho, was there with her masterpiece, the cradle. ↵

"Scream and your entire staff dies," Ultron said. Wanda tried not to flinch at the violence of the threat. She had thought a lot about what she did to the Avengers and it sickened her. She wasn't sure if she should keep fighting this fight.

"I could have killed you that night, but I didn't. Do you know why?" Ultron asked the doctor. ↵

"The Cradle," Cho responded.

Ultron explained what he wanted, and Cho replied, "but that's impossible. The cradle only creates tissue, it doesn't generate a whole new body."

"It can, you can. You're a brilliant woman Helen," he held the scepter to her chest, "but we all have room to be improved."

A little while later they were all standing there. The cradle was doing its job and Cho had just connected Ultron to the new android so he could transfer his consciousness. Wanda had sunk into her own head, listening to her brother and Helen Cho's thoughts. But then she heard other thoughts in her head, dreams and floaty, wispy strands of thoughts that she had never gotten the chance to hear before.

She took a step towards the Cradle, "I can read him. He's dreaming."

"I wouldn't call it dreaming exactly," Cho said, "it's Ultron's base consciousness."

Wanda ignored this statement. That might have been the scientific explanation, but not the magical. Ultron was a product of science, yes, but he was also a product of magic. The scepter was clearly a magical, powerful object, and it was a part of Ultron's origins.

Wanda came to the edge of the Cradle, bracing herself on it and delving into the robot's dreams. But what she saw was horrifying. The world being destroyed. She reeled back, screaming, and Ultron stood up. ↵

Pietro wrapped his arms around his twin and pressed a kiss to her forehead, trying to comfort her. Wanda looked at Ultron, "how could you." ↵

"How could I what," he said, his voice taking on a colder tone.

"You said we would destroy the Avengers, make a better world," Wanda cried. ↵

Ultron replied, "it will be better."

"When everyone is dead," Wanda said, her own voice taking on a cold edge. This was not what she wanted. She would not stand for this.

"That is not," Ultron realized he had been raising his voice and took on a calmer tone, "the human race will have every opportunity to improve."

Wanda asked, "and if they don't?"

"Ask Noah," Ultron replied. ↵

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When Auralie and Steve arrived in the lab, they found an injured but alive Helen Cho laying on the ground, covered in blood. The cradle was gone.

Auralie surveyed the area. There were a few scuff marks that could have been blasted from Ultron, and muddy sneaker prints that she assumed belonged to Pietro. Natasha could have come up with more observations, but Auralie had found what she needed. Ultron and the twins had been here recently. They were probably still in the city.

"The gem," Cho was telling Steve, "you can't just blow it up." Auralie wondered if that was true. The gem was more powerful than most scientific defenses, yes, but magic..... she snapped out of her thoughts and followed Steve, knowing they had to get the cradle from Ultron. ↵

Auralie and Steve, with the help of Clint and Nat, who were in the quinjet, found Ultron in a truck moving across the city. The twins were not with him. Auralie took that as a good sign, that they had reevaluated and found working with Ultron was wrong.

Steve and Auralie faced Ultron on top of the truck. Ultron sneered, "you know what's in that cradle, the power to make real change, and that terrifies you."

"I wouldn't call it a comfort," Steve agreed.

Auralie hissed, "this isn't change, it's genocide." ↵

Steve threw his shield, which embedded itself into Ultron's chest. He had the gall to look onended, before tossing it to the side. Auralie sighed and took matters into her own hand, her light and Steve's punches holding back the drones while keeping them distracted.

Natasha, meanwhile, was riding her motorcycle through the streets. She found the dropped Shield and sighed, "I'm always picking up after those boys."

She drove by and tossed the shield back to Steve. He and Auralie quickly made mincemeat of one of the drones, before Ultron grabbed Steve and threw him into a nearby train car. Auralie, in a moment fueled by adrenaline and no rational thinking, jumped on the robot. He went flying towards Steve, trying to shake her, but she held fast. Natasha sighed, knowing it was up to her to get the cradle. ↵

Ultron, meanwhile, landed in the train and only then did Auralie release him, and that was after he dealt her a blow that sent her flying to the other end of the train. She attempted to pull herself up, but the train was in motion and Auralie was shaking. Ultron was about to fire to kill when, out of nowhere, a blue blur crashed into him, knocking him aside. ↵

Ultron raised his hand to fire on Pietro instead, but Wanda was there too, blocking his path with her magic.

"Please, don't do this," Ultron said to her.

"What choice do we have," Wanda spat back. ↵

Then Auralie was back on her feet and blasting a ray of light that sent the robot flying out of the train. Steve pulled himself up and the two Avengers looked at the twins. Steve asked, "can you stop this thing?"

Wanda nodded. Auralie gave the girl a reassuring semi-smile, then turned to Pietro and said, "get the civilians out of the way."

Pietro dashed away to begin clearing people out of the streets. Wanda took a deep breath and channeled her red magic, sending it through the train to activate the breaks. She pulled with all her might, and the train made a loud screeching noise as it came to a stop.

In this noise, Auralie missed Clint yelling, asking if anyone knew where Nat was.

The train finally stopped and Wanda, Auralie, and Steve got everyone out. People stood on the streets, calming their fear, and Wanda went over to her brother, who was sitting on a bench, panting. ↵

"I just need a minute," Pietro said.

Steve replied, "I'm tempted not to give you one."

Wanda opened her mouth, about to apologize, but Auralie cut her off, "it's alright. You worked with Ultron but you stepped up and led when it matters. I know you don't want to hurt people. I know you've been hurt. It's ok, you can change."

Wanda shot the blonde girl a look of immense gratitude, tears brewing in her eyes. No one had ever said something kind like that to her for a long time, with the exception of her twin.

"The Cradle," Wanda cried, remembering the reason Ultron had come to the city in the first place.

"Don't worry," Steve said, "we got it. It's going to Stark's now. He'll take care of it."

Newfound fear shone in Wanda's eyes, "no he won't."

"Stark's not crazy," Steve protested. ↵

"He'll do anything to make things right," Wanda cried.

Steve fell silent. That was true. Tony wanted so desperately to protect everyone, to protect the world, that he took risks, sometimes too big of risks. Tony was a very good man, but sometimes his judgment was clouded, and it backfired hugely.

Wanda pointed out, "Ultron can't tell the difference between saving the world and destroying it. Where do you think he gets it?"

As the full realization of what Tony was going to attempt hit her, Auralie could only breath, "oh no." ↵

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