



### xiii. It Felt Like That

Everyone was loading onto the boats. The last of the group of refugees was being loaded aboard. Natasha had run to find Bruce and the others and make sure they were ok. Auralie was propped up alongside Steve on the lifeboat, helping filter people in. Clint was standing alongside them, Pietro was guiding the last people on board.

Then a woman came running up to them screaming, "Costel. My son, he was still in the market!"

Auralie's eyes scanned the crowd. She spotted the little boy trapped in the rubble. She staggered forward, attempting to run to help him, but she fell, her strength deserting her, and Steve caught her. She coughed as he held her up.

Clint ran to save the boy, he dug him out from the rubble and picked him up, beginning the quick trek back to the lifeboat. For a second, the fear in Auralie's heart eased. But then she heard the whine of a jet engine and her heart began to race a million miles a minute.

Ultron opened fire on Clint and the boy. Clint, a look of intense determination on his face, turned to shield the child. Auralie and Steve couldn't move. They were frozen as the bullets came closer. Then, all of a sudden, a blue blur and a cloud of dust rushed in.

When the dust cleared, Clint and the child were unharmed, but before them stood Pietro Maximo, covered in bullet holes, swaying on his feet.

"No," Auralie whispered, not wanting to believe it.

Pietro looked at Clint and said, "you didn't see that coming!" Then he fell to the ground, his eyes blank, his blood smeared across his super suit. Auralie couldn't see the rise and fall of his chest. She couldn't see him trying to get up. He was the one thing that Pietro never was: still.

Ultron had flown away, trying to make his escape and no one went after them. They had just lost an Avenger.

Steve and Auralie made their way to the three figures huddled in the dust. Clint regained his footing and ran little Costel back to his mother. Auralie fell beside Pietro, shaking him, trying to get him to wake up. He couldn't die here. He was going to be an Avenger. His sister needed him. He couldn't die.

Steve pulled the girl gently to her feet and picked up Pietro's body. He carried the fallen hero to the lifeboat and laid him gently on the ground. Then he went to the edge and started to fly them up.

Clint collapsed on the bench beside Pietro, Auralie sitting on the floor nearby. She had begun to cry, tears cutting through the grime on her cheek. She knew how badly this would hurt Wanda. She knew what it was like to lose a twin.

They saw Ultron go flying by, having been thrown from his jet by the Hulk. Auralie hoped he crashed and burned. The light manipulator looked up to hear Clint say, "it's been a long day."

Auralie agreed. It had been a long and hard day. But while the rest of them had lost a comrade in arms, Wanda had lost a brother. Auralie's tears increased. She wondered what was going through the witch's mind if Wanda somehow knew already.

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Wanda had been guarding the core when she felt it, the snapping of the bond that had been the most important thing to her. She thought it couldn't be true, but when she reached for him, for his familiar presence, he wasn't there. She raised her face to the roof of the church, tears beginning to pour and she screamed, sinking to the ground.

Magic streamed out of the woman in clouds. About a dozen drones were approaching the core. Wanda turned them all to ash with her anger and her pain and her sadness. As she screamed, the world turned red, and as she screamed everything around her shattered, bending to her pain.

She sobbed on the floor of that church before realizing what happened. It had been Ultron. He had killed her brother, her twin, the only person she had been able to love and rely on for so long. He had killed her Pietro.

Wanda struggled to her feet. She was going to destroy him. Not just kill him, but destroy him. She would make it hurt.

Wanda felt around and discovered the robot had crashed into an old bus not so far away. She made her way towards him, her hand glowing red. She did not care if she died on that rock, she just wanted revenge. She wanted to make him pay, no matter the cost to herself.

Besides, if she died, she would be with her twin again.

Wanda approached the battered Ultron and knelt down beside him. He spoke, his voice a hoarse and metallic croak, "Wanda, if you stay here, you'll die."

"I just did," Wanda replied icily, "do you know how it felt?"

No, of course, he did not. He did not know the pain of losing what he cared about most. But she would make him feel that pain, make him regret his actions, make him realize that if she could not have her brother safe, she would burn everything that hurt him.

You get hurt, hurt em backWanda would make him hurt alright, she would make him feel pain like he had never felt before.

You get killed, walk it out. He had killed Wanda when he took her other half from her. Now she would Avenge her family. Her heart had been plunged into an endless abyss of darkness and despair. She would kill him for what he did.

Wanda reached out with her red magic, into his chest, and grabbed onto his cold, empty, metal heart. He cried out in a sound like pain as she ripped the heart through the chest, summoning it into her hand.

She turned it over, looking at it, her eyes glowing red. Then Wanda took it and whispered, "it felt like that."

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Auralie had collapsed into Maria's arms the moment she arrived on the helicarrier. Maria held her sister close as she led her to medical. But then Auralie cried, "hey, where's Wanda, which lifeboat was she on?"

"Wanda didn't get on any of the boats, we thought she was with you," Vision said.

"What," Auralie screamed, "go find her!"

Vision soared over Sokovia, following the girl's orders. He spotted the Maximo girl sitting in a bus, and he swooped down as the city exploded, picking her up and carrying her through the rubble. He flew her back to the helicarrier and deposited her alongside Clint and her brother.

Wanda broke down in tears at the sight of his body. Clint rubbed her back, trying to soothe her, to explain what had happened and to give her some sort of reassurance. Wanda didn't seem to notice.

"Ali, we need to get you to medical," Maria whispered.

Auralie shook her head and pushed her sister aside. She staggered over to the witch and fell, on her knees, beside her. She didn't offer condolences or pointless apologies, she just held out her hand. Wanda took it and clutched it like a lifeline, afraid that if she let go, she would drown in her own despair.

Auralie whispered gently, "I know."

Because she did know. She had lost Lucian all those years ago, and that loss had haunted her ever since. It would be the same for Wanda. Auralie felt for the girl. No one should have to go through that. But Auralie couldn't raise the dead, so she just let Wanda hold on to her for as long as necessary.

It was all she could do for the sister of a man who had died a hero's death. It was all she could do for a broken young woman who didn't deserve this.

It would be a while before Auralie was finally dragged away to medical, and by then her hand would be in pain from being squeezed so tight. But she didn't care about her own pain, for nothing compared to the pain of losing a twin.

Auralie would have gone through anything to spare someone that pain, but she was never given that choice. So she sat there, on that solemn helicarrier, as it flew away from the ruins of Sokovia, looking at the body of a hero and holding Wanda Maximo's hand.

**A/N: This scene was so sad! Poor Pietro! But can I just say, Wanda ripping out Ultron's heart was nothing short of badass.**

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