



iv. Return To The Compound

"Everyone hold onto something, I'm taking us down," Sam called to the others. Steve, who was in the passenger seat, automatically obeyed. The others did as well, just in case they somehow crashed and burned. Really, it wasn't that far fetched, what, with it being them and all.

They landed smoothly, fortunately, outside the new Avengers compound. Apparently, Steve had gotten a call from there about what happened in New York to Tony, asking them to come. Steve, true to his letter from two years ago, had agreed to come.

Auralie's heart ached to see her old home. She had missed it, having a place to return to every time, consistently, and knowing that her friends would be there with her. She missed late night talks about life and books in her old room, she missed watching cartoons and action movies with Tony and arguing over what to eat for lunch with her team. Auralie missed all those things, and she wished that she was returning home in happier times.

Sam and Wanda helped Vision to his feet. The android was weakening, and now could only stand and walk with help. Auralie was concerned about him, this was not the sort of behavior she was used to from the precise and composed robot.

They went into the compound, and Auralie laced her fingers through Wanda's. Together they walked through the hallways of their former home, behind Steve and Nat and alongside Sam and Vision. Three newer Avengers following behind their leaders and trainers, two original Avengers, and Auralie, who could be considered both an original and a new avenger, for she had participated in both groups, there as well. It reminded Auralie of another moment with Steve and Nat, right when this compound was just opened, a er Ultron, that day they started training a new team.

They entered the main room and found two familiar faces waiting for them. One, Rhodey, they had expected to see. Auralie was absolutely delighted to find him walking, even if it was with braces on his legs. What was surprising was the man standing alongside him, who had been missing for three years, Bruce Banner.

General Ross was holographically projecting himself into the room. Auralie found herself looking at her scarred hands, results of her time in the ra prison, on his orders. She looked at the scars on Wanda's neck. It took all of her willpower to avoid unleashing firey wrath like the sun upon him.

"Captain Rogers, you and your teams are criminals who should not be here. The world's on fire and you think all is forgiven....." Ross started.

Steve cut him o , "I'm not looking for forgiveness, and I'm way past asking permission. Earth just lost it's best defender. So we're here to fight. And if you wanna get in our way, we'll fight you too."

"Yes," Auralie said, pushing to stand behind Steve, her hands laced in front of her so Ross could see her scars, "I suggest you stay out of our way. Your people don't have a good track record with this sort of issue, I mean, you tried to nuke New York last alien invasion. And Ross..... if you ever try to brand my girlfriend as a monster again, I don't care about the consequences, I will end you."

Ross glared at her before turning to Rhodes, "arrest him!"

Rhodes shook his head and turned o the device. He looked up at them, "you all look like shit."

"Yeah, not like we've been staying in five-star hotels," Sam shot back. It was true. Moving around all the time and fighting crime had made them weary.

"Sorry," Rhodes said, "but we don't have much time before Ross sends someone here, so let's talk."

Before they could start that conversation, they had an awkward reunion to get out of the way.

Natasha looked at the man she had failed to track down ages ago, and who she had blamed herself for his disappearance. Auralie winced internally, but externally she just called, "Hey Bruce, it's been a while."

He gave her a small smile, "Hey Ali, hi Steve." Steve gave the man a polite smile in return.

Natasha sighed, "look, Bruce....."

"Hey Nat," he said, "look, let's just put all the 'you being assigned to help we with the Hulk' stu behind us."

"Yeah," Natasha said, breathing a sigh of relief, "alright."

Sam looked at Auralie and whispered, "Awkward." Auralie snorted, in full agreement with her friend.

They explained the situation, and so far, all everyone had agreed on was that it was bad. Bruce had explained this purple alien warlord called Thanos was behind everything and he wanted to wipe out half the universe. Auralie hadn't even met the grape, but she already hated him.

As everyone debated what to do about it, Auralie made her way over to Rhodey and asked him, "Have you heard anything from Tony?"

Rhodes shook his head. He explained everything that went down with the wizards, the aliens, the Hulk that wouldn't come out, the Spiderman, and their mutual friend. By the end, Auralie was speechless and desperately hoping that Tony would be alright.

"We can't let him get all the stones," Steve was saying, "we have the mind stone, but since destroying it seems to be impossible....."

"Actually," Vision chimed in, "I've been thinking about this thing in my head, and I have come to the conclusion that a powerful energy source, similar in some ways, could potentially override it and destroy it."

Auralie knew exactly who he was talking about. She had heard the story of how Wanda had controlled the mind stone to help her and Clint escape from the compound and join Steve at the airport. She also knew Wanda would not want to kill anyone and that the witch still didn't trust herself and her powers at times, though she was becoming more confident by the day.

"But then you'd die," Wanda pointed out, "and I don't even know if I'm that powerful. What if I lose control and make things worse? That's too high a price."

"Wanda," Vision said, "you have to try. I am willing to sacrifice my life if it saves the world."

Steve shook his head, "Vision, not yet. We don't trade lives."

Vision sighed, "Captain, years ago you were willing to lay down your life for millions....."

"But you might have a choice," Bruce cut him o , "Vision isn't just the mind stone. He's made from many sources, Jarvis, Ultron, Tony, Me."

"So if we found a way to remove the stone...." Steve mused.

Bruce finished, "there might still be a whole lot of Vision le. Maybe the best parts."

"It's worth a shot," Auralie voiced, "and then Wanda could destroy it."

Wanda went pale, "I don't even know if I could...."

Auralie met her lover's eyes, "don't worry darling, I believe in you. You can do anything."

"The problem," Bruce stated, "is that I can't remove the stone, I don't know if anyone could. Maybe Tony..... but he's not here and I'm not even sure he has that knowledge."

Steve shook his head, "I know someone who could. An ally of ours. We just have to hope they're willing to help."

A/N: Can I just say, Steve's speech to Ross is awesome. I'm so proud of Steve and how much he's grown.

Also, another fun question. Top 5 favorite MCU movies? mine are.....

5. Thor Ragnarok (the comedy in this was awesome, and the cinematic visuals were so well done. The best Thor movie by far)

4. Black Panther (everything about this movie was so well done and all the characters were so developed and had such depth)

3. Captain America: The Winter Soldier (this movie was engaging and a great balance of fun and action and well-developed characters. Also, this movie introduced us to Falcon, who is awesome, and gave us our first glimpse of Wanda)

2. Guardians of the Galaxy vol 1. (this introduced me to a bunch of jackasses standing in a circle and I love those idiots so much. They are so funny and wonderful and awesome and also it ended with a dance-o . The soundtrack was great.)

1. Guardians of the Galaxy vol 2. (this continued my love of a bunch of jackasses and gave them even more characterization and funny moments. Also, Baby Groot was adorable and that ending scene was cinematically beautiful. Plus Starlord and the fact that Yondu is Mary Poppins yall. The only starring missing is tape)

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