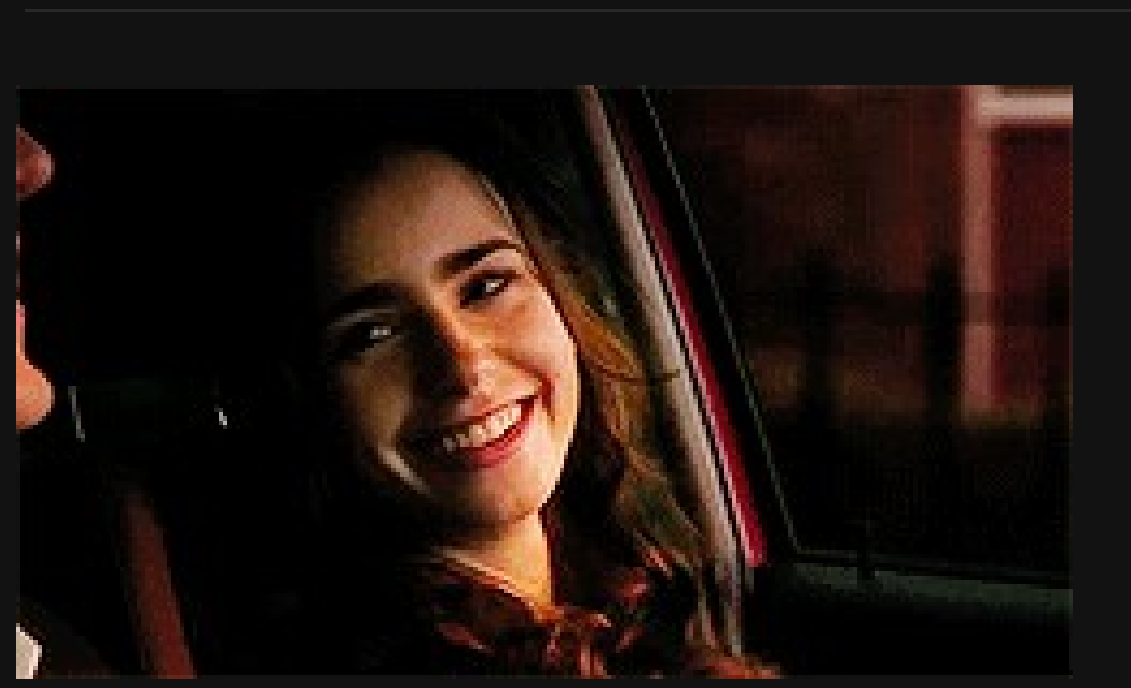
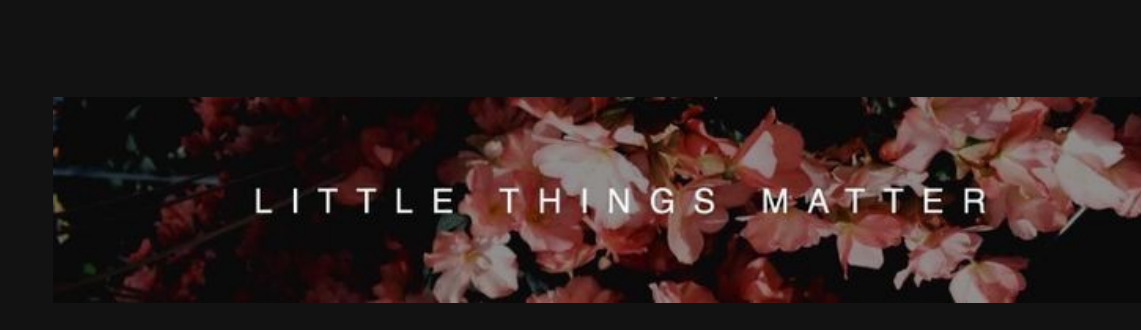
『 xix. DON'T WORRY CHILD』



◤ chapter nineteen, DON'T WORRY CHILD ◢



Wanda peered through the doorway to see Davina's lying figure. She bit her lip in concern, hating to see the woman like this and not knowing what she can do about it. Looking for another moment, knowing that Davina must have heard the door open yet did nothing, Wanda sighed and turned back, closing the door and eyes finding Brinley's and Finn's.

She stepped into the kitchen where they were standing, concern still etched on her face. "What happened?" she asked, "Davina was fine last time I saw her."

Brinley looked at Finn, communicating silently with the boy until he turned towards Wanda and said, "Davina's mom is back."

This caused Wanda to be taken aback, shock written all over her. "I thought she was in jail. For assault – right?" Wanda asked, trying to recall the piece of information the Royce woman had shared with her.

Finn nodded, looking angry at the thought of Anna Royce. "Five year sentence. We all forget that it was over, and now she's back," Finn muttered bitterly.

"So much has happened that we didn't even think about her," Brinley added in agreement, "And then she ambushed us two days ago when we were coming back here."

Wanda frowned, "What did she say?"

Everything that Wanda had heard about Anna Royce hadn't been kind. Alcoholic, neglectful, angry, violent – she didn't want to think about what it was like for Davina growing up, what situation she was constantly in, but her mind always seemed to wander to the worst of scenarios.

"It wasn't terrible, really, but the shock of her being there – and how she was just so kind," Brinley shook her head, "It wasn't right. I didn't like it, I don't like it."

The Maximoff woman looked between the two. "Is there anything I can do to help?" she asked.

Brinley shook her head and Finn shrugged. "I don't think there's anything we can do," Finn confessed, "I mean, none of us really know what it was like. Asher wasn't around yet and I was too much...even Rosie never learned much."

"But Conrad knows," Brinley uttered and Finn looked at her as if she were a genius.

"I totally forgot about him! I haven't seen him since I got back," Finn smiled.

Confused, Wanda frowned and it was then that Brinley turned to explain to her, "Conrad used to be Davina's best friend in high school. He was over all the time – he has to know. I think he's our best chance."

"For what exactly?" Wanda questioned, feeling terribly left out as she was the only one who wasn't there at the original confrontation.

"Anna wants Davina to help her. Money wise and everything. And, well, Davina's never been able to say no to her mom," Brinley explained and Wanda shook her head.

She felt protective of Davina, for what she hoped wasn't obvious reasons because that went an obvious rejection. She didn't want her to get hurt, and Anna seemed to be one of the main sources of pain for her. So, as she looked between the pair, she made the decision right then; Anna would stay the hell away from Davina, no matter what.

♡

"Mom?" Davina uttered, looking at the woman she hadn't seen in five years – not since she had gone to prison. There had been one visit, right after she was locked up, but after that she was convinced by Brinley to never see the woman again. To move away from the apartment she lived in with her mother and began anew somewhere else. Without any remnant of Anna Royce.

Her heart was beating in her chest and her eyes were wide with unbelief. Brinley made a protective stance next to her, ready to attack if needed and Finn was glaring at the woman. But, this didn't seem to faze the woman as she smiled so warmly at her daughter.

It reminded her of when she was younger. Before Finn was born and before her father began to draw away, too busy with Lucy Alderson – or what he excused as 'work'. When they were a happy family of three and would go to the park together for a picnic. Anna looked at her as if she were the world, warmth spreading through her because nothing bad could touch them. There was so happy, the perfect family.

But that image was turn, ripped to pieces so soon when she was so young. Anna Royce no longer looked at her like that, her mother didn't feel like her mom anymore.

"I've missed you so much, dear," Anna said gently, "Look at you, I'm so proud of you."

She felt like she couldn't move. The world was spinning and she was standing there and no one on her side was saying anything because no one knew what to say. Anna Royce was supposed to be in prison – she was locked up. She had a five-year sentence and had...had no more time to serve.

God, it had been five years. How could she forget about such a huge event? How could she not have been more cautious?

"What are you doing here?" Brinley spoke for her, voice low and gaze not wavering.

For the first time, Anna's eyes turned from her daughter to Brinley and the smile remained. "I just had to see Davina, she's my daughter," and with that she turned back to her, "I went back to our apartment, imagine my shock when I was told that you hadn't lived there in five years."

Her heart plummeted.

That was why she was here; because Anna never imagined Davina leaving her. After everything, she still lived at home. Even during college, she stayed right there with Anna and paid all the bills, brought in the money, and was the only person she could depend her. She never though that Davina could move past her.

"Yeah, I moved in with Brinley," Davina found her voice, thought it still wavered.

Anna stepped forward. Unconsciously, she moved back. "That's nice. I'm so happy that you have someone there for you."

"How the hell did you find where to Davina lives?" Finn questioned bluntly.

Almost venomously, Anna's eyes turned to him but she covered it up quickly. "I went by David's, he told me where I could find you," she said as kindly as she could.

Finn, of course, scoffed at that. "Of course dad told you, that sounds just like him," he sneered and Anna almost nodded in agreement.

Davina, however, sent her brother a glare. "Finn!" she reprimanded him and he didn't have the decency to look ashamed for what he said. She huffed before looking at her mother, "Why did you want to find me?"

She almost added mom to the end, but decided against it. It was better that way.

"Honey, I know I haven't been the greatest mother to you, but I love you, and I want to start again," Anna said calmly, "I was hoping that you would still be at our apartment when I returned so that we could live together and I could try and make up for my absence all these years."

"Of course you're just looking for a place to live," Brinley spat at her. There was a flicker of anger as Anna looked at her but she quickly calmed herself. She must remain calm.

"All I want is to make up for what I've done," Anna defended herself, "And I was hoping it would be easier with Davina living with me."

"Well too bad," Brinley said, "Davina isn't moving any time soon and we don't have any room for you."

"I think that is for Davina to decide," Anna said before looking at her daughter. There was a pause as she said nothing and then her mother asked, "Davina?"

Davina looked at her roommate and then her brother before looking back at her mother, "I already have a home."

Anna, defeated, sighed but everyone could hear the frustration. Then, she put on her award-winning smile. "Well, if I can't convince you, can I at least have some money to get a hotel room? There's not exactly a lot in my bank account," she asked.

"No, she can't," Finn stepped in for her.

"I wasn't asking you, boy, I was asking my daughter," Anna shot back at him.

Davina eyed her mother and then spoke, "I don't have the extra money to lend you."

Anna pursed her lips, attempts diminished again, "Alright. Well, if you want to talk, I guess you know where to find me."

She walked away from them but Davina nodded nonetheless. She did know. She'd be at her favorite bar, blowing whatever money she did have left from before she was sentenced five years. Davina didn't look at her friends as she went inside the building, avoiding them until they got to the apartment and she went straight to her room.

She didn't miss the conversations they had, their annoyed bickering with her mother. She shut her eyes – she just wanted to forget.

♡

Brinley made the call, explaining the situation to Conrad and begging him to come over, which he agreed to with no complaint. They all waited anxiously, Wanda's magic flaring though not going far enough to cause harm. Finn stayed on the phone with his mom, explaining the situation to Lucy and telling her that he couldn't come home yet. Davina needed him.

Brinley tried to calm herself down, but even with her gained control over her powers, she still felt the fire lick her finger tips. She decided that a shower would help and went to the bathroom, feeling the cascading water calm her. All while Davina stayed in her room, as lifeless as ever.

Eventually, there was a frantic knock at the door and Finn opened it. No words were spoken as Conrad rushed to Davina's room. He even stopped when the door opened and he saw his friend there and he looked at her body with sympathy. He walked into her bedroom and closed the door behind him, taking a seat on the bed close to her back. He knew that she felt the bed dip, knew that she was aware he was in the room – and yet she was doing nothing.

Like old times when they were both teenagers and Davina begged to stay at his house so many times to escape the stillness of her own, Conrad brushed his fingers through her hair. No words were spoken for minutes.

That was until Conrad said, "They told me Anna's back." Nothing. "And that she wanted you to move back in with her."

Still, there was nothing and Conrad sighed. "V, you know that you don't have to house her. You don't owe her anything," he said, "You don't have to feel guilty."

This caused her to turn and she looked into his eyes, conveying every feeling that was trapped inside her. He felt his sympathy for her magnify. "But it feels like I do," Davina whispered, "She – she gave me life and she wasn't always like this."

"I know, but people change. And she did. Greatly. You stayed with her for years, you paid for her housing – you don't have to do it anymore," Conrad whispered back at her.

Davina looked down. "She just wanted some money, I have some to spare..."

"No, Davina, you don't. Not for her. You know exactly what she's going to do with that money, and it won't go towards a hotel room or even a new apartment," Conrad said to her, and she did. She knew where it would go, but still, she had some money to spare, what was a little for her mother?

"But what if she isn't lying this time? What if she really wants to improve herself?" Davina asked.

"She's said this to you a million times, V, and she never has. If she really wants to get better, she would start looking for her job or not go back to a bar," Conrad said.

"She can't help it."

"Yes, she can," Conrad told her, "She just doesn't want to. You don't owe her anything, you don't have to help her. You shouldn't help her. After everything you did, everything you gave up for her, she should be the one lending you money. Not the other way around."

"She couldn't have any money to lend me," Davina pointed out.

Conrad rolled his eyes and couldn't help the chuckle bubbling, "It's just an expression. I know that she's broke."

"And what if she does better herself? I can't just ignore her forever, it would crush her," Davina said.

"You went five years without seeing her and I'd like to argue that they were the best years of your life – maybe not counting the last one, but whatever. Put yourself first," Conrad said.

She looked at him, "You know I can't do that. So what if my life was better without her, what if hers is worse without her?"

"Then she just has to suffer," she glared at him and he sighed, "Look, I remember what it was like. You never wanted to be at home and cried so many times because she wasn't around for you. Don't put yourself through that again."

"But she might need that."

"You don't. For once in your life, put yourself first. If you let her back into her life, it's going to damage you instead of bettering you, and I don't want to see you hurt because of her again. I hated seeing you cry over her, I don't want it to happen again," Conrad told her calmly.

She bit her lip and pondered over his words. She didn't want to leave her mother in the cold – it was her mother. She loved her mother, even through everything, and the thought of being so rude to her, so harsh. Refusing to help her...it hurt. It made her feel so guilty because she could help the woman and yet she was refusing not to. She didn't want to feel guilty.

"Come on, promise me that you won't help her," Conrad said softly and she was brought back into reality as she looked into his eyes. "Please?"

She didn't want to promise him anything but that meant turning her back on her mother – her own mother – but she didn't want him to be angry at her either. But, a voice in her head argued, Anna Royce had turned her back on her daughter a long time ago. It would just be fair. And as she continued to look into his pleading eyes, she couldn't help but nod.

"I promise," she said, uttering the two words that sealed the fate of Anna Royce. The two words that would forever end the relationship between the mother and daughter. And, miraculously, the guilt pooling in her stomach lessened and she felt just a bit lighter. Maybe – maybe – this was better.

He smiled gratefully at her and hugged her. She couldn't help but hug him back, closing her eyes as she just felt how close he was. "I hope you know that I'm doing this for you, I just don't want to see you get hurt," he whispered in her ear.

She just nodded. "I know," she told him back and they held each other from a moment before breaking away.

Conrad looked back at the door. "Brinley's really worried about you, so if Finn. And Wendy's still there – she looked tense."

Davina bit her lip. She didn't mean to make anyone worry, she just needed some time to think over what she was going to do. "I heard Wendy over the phone, she really cares about you," Conrad continued.

"What are you on about?" Davina asked him before he could say anything else and she just gave her a knowing smile.

"Oh, you know, just that I've seen the way she looks at you and how you look at her...you aren't that discreet, you know," Conrad said and she scoffed at him.

"I have no idea what you're talking about," she lied, turning away from him.

He cackled lightly at her. "Sure you don't, Royce. And I'm sure that you don't want me to send her in," he teased.

She couldn't help but blush. "Her fingers feel nice in my hair," she justified.

"I'm sure that's the only reason," he said, standing up and going to the door.

She was only alone for a moment before Wanda was in her room, looking at her before rushing to give her a hug. "I was so worried when they called me," she confessed.

"I'm sorry," Davina said, "I didn't mean to make you worry."

Wanda drew back with a face of confusion. "Why would you be sorry? You didn't do anything wrong."

"But I made you worry and you shouldn't have. I was just taking some time to think over stuff," Davina said.

"You mean your mother? Brinley and Finn told me about it," Wanda said, "And of course I was going to worry, I care about you."

She felt something in her chest flutter at the confession that Wanda cared about her, but she quickly squashed it with the thought that the Maximoff woman only meant it as friends. There was no romantic connotation to it, she shouldn't even entertain the thought that there was.

"I care about you too," Davina said, speaking before even thinking of what she was saying and she was about to panic when Wanda smiled at her.

"You do?" she asked, almost insecure at it but Davina confirmed it with a nod.

"Of course I do. I like to think that we've gotten close over the past year," Davina said and Wanda laughed.

"We have. You've become someone that I care a lot about," Wanda confessed to her and again, the flutter appeared.

Davina smiled at her. "Well, I am very honored at that," and she didn't realize for a moment that her tone had an underlay of flirtation. She wanted to smother her face in a pillow when she did.

But Wanda didn't look taken aback by it, instead inviting it with a smile. "Yeah? You should," Wanda teased, leaning in closer to her until their noses were almost touching. Davina couldn't help it if her eyes dipped down for a moment to Wanda's lips and Wanda could help if she did the same.

Davina swallowed and was tempted to pull back. It could all be a joke, this could mean nothing. She could be imagining all of this, but she didn't pull away. Even if it meant nothing, she was still so close to what she wanted.

"Is this okay?" Wanda asked in a low voice and Davina felt her breath hitch in her throat before nodding. Not a moment was wasted after that as Wanda closed the gap and brought her lips against Davina's. To deepen it, Davina brought her hands to the back of Wanda's neck, forcing her closer – not that the woman objected.

They stayed there for a moment before breaking away and both drawing in oxygen and trying to regulate their breathing again. Both were smiling at each other and Wanda rushed in for another kiss. Davina didn't object. Instead, she welcomed it.

Continue reading next part