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It was a few hours past noon before Lara could properly settle. A few
hours past noon until Natasha came into the room, convincing me to
rest while she keeps an eye on Lara. As you would expect, it took a
while before I actually agreed. A er a lengthy back and forth,
including Natasha nearly dragging me out of the room, I finally found
myself on the elevator back up with my bones aching, stomach
rumbling with hunger and in dire need of a shower.
And of course, the whole Wanda thing was on my mind too.
I get to my room, my bed looking more attractive than ever as I fight
the urge to let myself sink into the mattress and drag myself to my
bathroom. A er a warm shower that nearly puts me to sleep right on
my feet, I brush my teeth and avidly avoid looking at myself in the
mirror because if Lara looked that bad, I probably looked worse. I
mean, I defenitely felt it.
With a towel tightly wrapped around my torso, I head out to my room
to dig through my drawers for something to wear. The cold air mixing
with my damp skin made taking a nap even more enticing, but before
I could even properly get a hand on a shirt to throw on, a few knocks
pepper my door.
I don't know why I ran, maybe it was the stress, the dreading feeling
of finding Natasha there telling me something else had gone wrong in
the ten minutes i've been gone. When I swing the door open though,
I'm met with another redhead that instantly swarms me with relief
and also makes my heart thrash all at once which, i'm not sure how
it's possible.
"Hey." I say in surprise, stepping aside to let Wanda in as she
hesitantly enters.
"Nat told me what happened. How's Lara doing?" She asks as I shut
the door, fixing my damp hair to fall neatly over my shoulder as I
treaded back to my open drawers.
"She's conscious, we just need to finish her drip and she can go back
to her room. She's so stupidly stubborn, it's driving me crazy." I hu,
shaking my head as I dig out a simple black shirt and some grey
sweats.
"Well, I can see where she gets it from." Wanda hums amidst a small
smile as I toss my clothes onto the bed, landing right next to where
she was sitting.
"I know— our mom." I reply, a smirk plastered on my lips as I
approach. I can see her subtly shi ing, nervous in her spot as I get
closer— all while wearing just a towel.
"So..." I trail o, stopping right in front of her as she looks up at me
breathlessly.
I place a hand under her chin, gently holding it in place as my thumb
lingers over her skin as lightly as I could muster. I could practically
hear her heart stop, her breath hitching as I fight o a cheek eating
grin daring to show itself on my lips.
"Why are you here?" I raise a brow, promptly dropping my grasp as I
nonchalantly reach for my clothes, walking around to the other side
of the bed— where her back is turned as she clears her throat.
"I was just worried. That's it." She replies, but there's a slight tremble
to her voice that fuels my amusement.
"Are you sure?" I ask teasingly, tossing the towel onto the bed. The
moment she realizes what i've done, I visibly see her freeze in place
as she stammers for a reply.
                                                                      a
"Well—I wanted to ask something else too." She replies nervously as I
pull on my underwear, humming for her to continue.
"Why did you kiss me?" She asks in a single breath, like she had been
holding it forever and only released it now.
I quickly finish dressing up, fishing my hair out of my shirt as I
straighten the fabric of my clothes and grab my towel, walking
around to drape it over the chair in the corner. The entire time, I
could feel her eyes on me— up until I turn to meet her expectant
gaze.
"Do I need to say it? You're going to make me spell it out for you?" I
repeat her words from earlier that day, a knowing smile on my lips as
she rolls her eyes.
"I'm serious. Why'd you do that?" She pushes amidst a small groan.
"Because I wanted to." I shrug, approaching as I crawl onto the bed,
watching as Wanda shi s to completely face me with confusion still
plastered on her face.
"You know why." I reply seriously, my voice dropping to a whisper as
her eyes trail over my face almost cautiously.
"Why are you so far? Are you scared of me?" I chuckle, patting the
spot next to me because she was quite literally, on the other end of
my bed while I sat by my pillows.
"I'm not scared of you." She defends, begrudgingly complying and
moving to sit right by me.
"Should I not have kissed you?" I ask so ly, turning to look at her.
"I... wanted you to. I've wanted you to since the first night at Nat's
apartment." She admits, much to my surprise.
"Really? I thought it was the park." I reply, watching her hands travel
to adjust the ring on her finger once more as she nods slowly.
"I thought so too. I told myself a lot it was that—but then the thing on
the couch happened and I realized why I was so... nervous." She
explains so ly, eyes dropping to her hands like her words were too
delicate to be said looking into my eyes.
"I liked you then, I think I always have." She hums.
"Even when you were throwing me against the training room walls?" I
chuckle so ly, watching a smile etch onto her lips.
"Okay you deserved that. You were such an asshole." She shakes her
head amidst a small, airy laugh, the crinkles by her eyes appearing as
she glances my way.
"You weren't any better. You gave me such a hard time— you were so
pushy and rude." I defend lightly, slowly breaking the tension as she
relaxes back against the headboard of the bed.
"Because I couldn't understand why I was so... intrigued by you. It
was confusing to me. You annoyed me but at the same time I always
wanted to be around you." She explains in a hu, her smile never
wavering as I lean back to mimic her position.
"It's the same for me. When I le the facility a er asking you to come
with me— I looked for you. I couldn't find you for a while, then you
turn up and suddenly you're with the Avengers. I kept telling myself
all I wanted was revenge but—I guess what I wanted was to know
why you threw me out." I share so ly, subtly moving close enough for
our shoulders to touch.
"I really wanted to hate you, y'know." I turn to her, finding that she
was already looking back, intent on listening to my words.
"It would have been easier." I add in a whisper.
"I guess it would, but when have we ever had easy?" She smiles and I
do too, because the spark of familiarity was slowly coming back to
life.
I felt glimpses of how I did back at Nat's apartment, those nights we'd
spend plastered on every surface talking about the world as our
hands, our legs, our hearts intertwined like a second without
touching felt torturous.
"You could have had it with Vision. He loves you, y'know." I say, a
tight lipped smile plastered on my face as Wanda releases a so
breath.
"I know and i'll be completely honest, there's a part of me that does
love him too. It's like I look at him and I know him, he knows me and
that's just that." She replies, turning to move her gaze back down to
her hands as I try to listen despite the way my heart faltered at her
revelation.
                                                                      a
"But when i'm around him, there's also a part of me that feels lost. I
always wonder if the connection we have only relies on what we're
made of and I— I don't always like what i'm made of." She says so ly,
her words tracing the air with a shining fragility and vulnerability like
she was giving me a front row seat to her darkest worries.
"And when i'm with you, I only feel like me. I feel... small, like i've
always dreamt of. I'm not wondering if how I feel is real." She turns to
me, sincerity shining in her eyes as my heart stills along with my
breaths.
"You get under my skin more than anyone i've ever met. You're
stubborn and short tempered and reckless and I'm supposed to hate
it but I don't." She chuckles so ly at her own sentiments as the
corner of my lips twitch into a small smile.
"You're not easy and yet, here I am because—this is real to me. The
night we spent out in the city, changing our names and doing
everything the night o ered us like there was no tomorrow, that's
when I knew." She subtly moves closer, pressing our shoulders
together even more as our thighs begin to touch as well.
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"That's when I knew I love you— the kind with no confusion or
doubt." She finishes and without ever looking away, I take a breath
and finally slip my hand into hers, stilling her restless fidgeting and
intertwining our fingers despite my thrashing nerves.
"You really want to do this?" I ask amidst my buried fears, feeling her
squeeze my hand lightly as she puts on a gentle smile.
"Unfortunately, I do." She breathes, her nose lightly scrunching as she
My eyes drop to her lips and I'm wondering if I could— If I should kiss
her. The fragments of reservation that came with the newness of it all
still lingered, because even though it all felt familiar, it felt foreign at
the same time. It was like standing inside your house, but the walls
were painted a di erent color and the furniture was rearranged. You
still know your way around, you know you're home—but every step
and every view feels new.
"You can kiss me, if you want." Wanda speaks up, a knowing smirk on
her lips as I roll my eyes.
"Get out of my head, Maximo ." I whisper as I use my free hand to
pull her in, pressing my lips onto hers to give her a lingering—gentler
kiss than the one we shared earlier and I wonder if it would ever stop
feeling so ethereal.
"Have you had lunch?" I ask a few moments a er we pull away, both
of us still reeling in the feeling of our newfound territory as she
shakes her head.
"We could grab something from the lounge and hang back here for a
bit. I'd have to go down to Lara in a few hours, but I don't mind just...
spending time with you until then." I o er, trying to keep a steady
tone despite my nerves.
"I don't know, is it a date?" She raises a brow, our fingers still
intertwined as I chuckle so ly.
"Hardly, but sure—yeah." I shrug.
"Sure? Yeah? How romantic." Wanda mocks playfully, pulling her
hand away from mine as we both make a move to crawl o the bed
and head to my door.
"This feels weird." Wanda hums as we're treading down the hallway,
awkwardly matching paces as our hands brush but never actually
have the courage to intertwine outside the confines of my room.
"It does." I agree, coming to a stop in front of the elevator as I feel her
stare shi to me.
"I like weird." She smiles as I look back at her, rolling my eyes as I bite
back a smirk of my own.
"You're blushing." She points out in a playful tease, bringing a hand
up to poke my cheeks as I swat her finger away.
"Am not." I argue, but she keeps trying to poke me that we get into a
full on swatting war without even noticing that the elevator doors
have opened... and somebody is inside.
Jess.
Wanda's demeanor immediately changes, arms dropping to her sides
as we both step inside. Jess shoots me a small smile, the sadness still
swimming in her eyes as I o er her a subtle nod. I was still upset, but I
wasn't mad enough to completely act like she didn't exist to me.
"Lara's doing well." Jess breaks the silence as the doors close,
standing behind Wanda and I as I go to press the button for our floor.
"That's good." I clear my throat, feeling the thickening tension only
get heavier as the seconds pass.
Taking me by surprise, Wanda casually slips her hand into mine,
intertwining our fingers as my head snaps to turn to her. She's
looking ahead, acting as nonchalant as possible as she grips onto me
firmly. From my peripherals, I can see Jess' eyes locked on our hands,
taking a subtle step back as I will myself to keep my gaze ahead.
The door eventually dings open, Wanda stepping out first and
tugging me ahead as I step out without another look back. Silently,
she leads me to the table where a variety of food were plastered.
Without ever breaking our contact, she hands me a tray as we begin
our descend down the line of options.
"She's gone." I mumble silently, almost as if to remind her but she
only sends me a look that spirals me into silence.
We basically spend the line hand in hand, somehow managing to get
a coherent order in as we get to the end of the line, having it packed
up into a paper bag before heading back to wait by the elevator
doors.
"Could you be any more obvious?" I hum, keeping my eyes on Wanda
who was insistent on acting clueless.
"What?" She shrugs, keeping her eyes ahead like she hadn't just
acted like a dog—marking her territory and all.
                                                                      a
"Why do you hate her so much?" I ask out of pure curiosity as the
doors open, Wanda spending no time in stepping inside as I'm pulled
closely behind.
"I don't hate her." Wanda argues, finally dropping my hand to press
the button for our floor.
"You're a horrible liar." I stifle a laugh, resting back against the wall as
she turns to shoot me a glare.
"I just don't trust her." She explains casually, but her face said
everything her lips didn't.
Soon enough the elevator opens and we head back to my room,
Wanda leading the way as she uses her magic to quickly swing my
bedroom door open. I kick it shut behind her, setting the bags down
by the nighstand as we both crawl into bed.
"Why don't you trust Jess?" I think aloud, Wanda taking her spot next
to me as we laid there, shoulder to shoulder just staring at the ceiling.
"Intuition." She hums in reply, flipping herself over to lay on her
stomach as she looks back at me.
"Why are you so curious? You like her?" She asks, attempting and
quite honestly failing to keep her expression neutral as I bite back a
smile.
"You gonna toss her against the wall if I say yes?" I raise a brow
playfully as she props her head up against the palm of her hand.
"No. I don't care." She hums, looking away as I chuckle so ly and
reach for her face, gently trailing a finger up her jawline until my
hands tangle with her autumn hair, petting so ly.
"I don't like her. We just talk a lot." I reply seriously, raking my fingers
tenderly against her scalp as strands of her hair fall perfectly to frame
"She gave you a journal." Wanda points out, nodding over at the book
that sat on my nightstand.
"It's my journal now. It does help a lot, y'know. It helped me
understand most of what i'm dealing with." I reply so ly, watching as
she moves to lay her head upon my chest.
"I'm sorry you had to do it alone." She whispers, my hands never
leaving her hair as I plant a gentle kiss atop her head.
Her words bled into my heart, the tenderness and sincerity that
dripped from her lips made me feel so warm. Every breath she took
pressed against me as I kept a hand on her, barely comprehending
where we are—how it escalated to having her back in my arms but I
really didn't mind. If I knew that having her so close would be the first
piece of serenity i'd gain since coming back to the compound, i'd
have swallowed my pride and risked it sooner.
But things found a way of working out, at least with her. The past
week had been hellish, a rollercoaster ride of torturous scale— and
there was still a part of me on it. A part of me that questions what I've
done, a part of me that wonders if I ever even deserve her—deserve
this.
"It was the only way. I could have never understood if I wasn't doing it
alone." I soothe, feeling the heaviness that hid behind her words.
"You don't have to be alone now." She looks up at me, cool green
eyes shining with tenderness as a small smile places itself onto my
"I know. It scares me." I reveal so ly.
"Why?" Wanda asks, bringing a hand up to trace mindlessly against
the fabric of my shirt as a hum of thought falls from my tongue.
"Because you're really here now. I can't shake the feeling that every
moment spent with me is putting you in danger." I say with
reluctance.
"Danger is part of our lives. It will always be. If I were to fall, i'd rather
do it by your side." Her words trace through the air with genuine
delicacy as her eyes speak a million words without ever moving her
mouth.
She essentially said the same thing Natasha did and maybe they were
both right. Danger will always linger in the life we chose, but god—
every time I look at her, her in all her beauty and power I feel like i'm
only a breath away from her devouring me whole. I can feel the purity
of my emotions spiral with every touch, every moment where my
hands are on her and she's looking back at me like i'm the only thing
that exists in this universe and its just as terrifying as it is magnificent.
Have you ever loved somebody so much that sometimes, it hurts?
You take one look at them and you know in your heart you'd pull all
the stars in the sky, steal the moon and the sun to keep them happy.
You'd do anything for them, like their mere existence was the life of
the world beneath your feet, the color in the trees and the skies and
everything that surrounds you and just having someone mean so
much, make you feel so much is scary.
It's scary because you know if you ever lost them, if they were ever
hurt or pained or wronged that you wouldn't think twice to set the
world ablaze and tear it apart just for them. And I would—I would for
her. For this girl in my arms, her fragility and power all in my grasp
and I know i'd salt the earth behind me and rip it to shreds if she ever
got hurt.
"You terrify me." It falls from my lips in a so breath, like it was never
meant to be said.
"I know." She whispers, balling up the fabric of my shirt in her hand as
she moves herself up to place a gentle kiss on my lips that makes my
heart go absolutely crazy.
"I don't know if i'd ever get used to that." I chuckle so ly as we pull
away, Wanda resting her head back down on my chest with a small
smile.
"Me too. It's still a little weird—but in a good way." She hums, the
vibration of her words ringing against me as I absentmidedly trace my
finger down the length of her upper arm.
"You're like—the second person i've ever kissed in my life." I reveal,
which apparently takes Wanda by surprise.
"What? Really?" She asks, genuinely shocked as my finger stills and I
nod in confirmation.
"Who was the first?" She wonders aloud.
"Estelle." I reply.
The way I felt with Estelle was a world and a half away from Wanda. It
was like a completely dierent universe when she kissed me, it was
rough and rushed and blood pumping—it was fleeting. It was the
kind of high you knew would never last, the adrenaline that only
kicks for a few hours then dissipates with time.
"Oh, yeah I remember you telling me about that." Wanda recalls,
nodding slightly against me.
"Do you regret it? What you did with her?" She curiously questions,
not a hint of o ense or malice in her words. She sounded so
genuinely intrigued, like she was trying to know me without the veil
of our rampant emotions.
"Sometimes, yeah. There's this little part of me that wishes it were
more special than a one night stand with a girl who robbed me the
next morning—but it's an interesting story to tell." I say amidst a
small smile, making light of my words.
"And she tried to kill you." Wanda adds pointedly, her insistence
garnering a small laugh from me because she sounded so dead set on
adding that bit.
"Yes, I remember vividly. I thinkyou were there too, i'm not sure." I
joke, not needing to see her face to know she was probably rolling her
eyes.
"How about you? Who was your first kiss?" I ask, realizing I had never
actually heard much about her life before the facility— or a er we
had parted ways there.
"There was this boy at the orphanage, I was fourteen and he was like
— sixteen and Pietro nearly tore his head offor kissing me. He was
nice, though. He had a skateboard and I thought it was the coolest
thing ever." Wanda shares lightly, her little smile shining through the
way she spoke.
"You think he'd tear my head o for being here with you?" I question
jokingly, but Wanda shi s to look up at me with sincerity.
"He liked you. He teased me about you all the time back then. I
think... you two would have been friends." She says, not knowing just
how her words dug into my chest. I knew what he meant to her, and
to hear that— to have her say that with such seriousness hit me
harder than I could have ever imagined.
"I would have loved to be his friend." I smile, never breaking our gaze
as Wanda releases a so, content breath.
"I love you." I say aloud, the actual words falling from my lips and
tracing into the air as Wanda freezes, almost in disbelief.
I knew she had always heard it in my head and there was a part of me
that couldn't have the courage to actually make it real, to say it with
my own voice without the feeling of repentance and fear. This one
came naturally, honestly, with her looking back at me with so much
tender sincerity that I couldn't notsay it. Even if the foreign feeling
still lingered, the words sitting new on my tongue, I meant every bit
of it with my whole heart.
I pull her in this time, face in my hands as our lips meet. It was
gentler, more careful like it bore the world on the line. There wasn't a
single hint of desperation, neither of us pulling the other in with
fervor—but just genuinely enjoying the intimacy. Our lips moved in
sync, taking our time with the pad of my thumb tracing gently upon
her chin to hold her head in place.
I could never get enough, just when I think i've felt it all she kisses me
again in a way I didn't know existed. Maybe this one was my favorite,
because it felt like I had her completely, without rush. Just her lips
moving against mine, the world revolving around us in that moment
and that moment only.
When we pull away, there's this look in her eyes that sends the
butterflies in my stomach crazy. A small smile on her lips, satisfaction
shining on her face as I take in just how beautiful she is.
"So, hungry?" I ask, making her laugh as she nods and promptly
crawls o of me.
Wanda summons the paper bags to us, each unravelling our
sandwiches in comfortable silence. It was nice to be able to just be
with her again, I missed times like these more than anything. Our
moments, despite how mundane it may be, just existing with her in
doing normal things. We had used to eat together in Nat's apartment,
or she'd be reading a book while I watched television. It was calm,
like a security blanket that wrapped over us.
"This never gets better." I mumble, taking a bite out of the mediocre
sandwich as Wanda hums in agreement.
"I miss your cooking. The pasta you made on the first night of my
arrival was really good." She recalls with adoration, taking a reluctant
bite of her own food.
"Is there a kitchen I could use here?" I ask curiously, swallowing the
last bit of food in my mouth as Wanda loses herself momentarily in
thought.
"I think so. The stove in the dining area where we have our dinners
work, I think." She reveals, opening a gateway of possibilities that
sparkled in my mind.
"Right. Are you doing anything tomorrow night?" I question, watching
curiosity prod onto her features.
"I've got training with Nat for most of the a ernoon, but no. Nothing
for the night. Why?" She asks, head tilted a bit to further show her
confusion as a smirk peppers onto my face.
"Well do you want to have like— a proper dinner with me? I'll cook." I
o er, watching a ection flood her eyes as a small chuckle falls from
her lips.
"Okay this one definitely sounds like a date." She laughs so ly,
making my heart glutter as she shakes her head.
"It is. So is that a yes?" I raise my brows and she nods, satisfaction
painted onto her face.
"I'd love to." She smiles.
We eat the rest of our food in content silence, so close together our
thighs were pressed like any distance would be physically impossible.
I understood mostly how people felt— as seen in the movies where
they couldn't get enough of somebody, that when the physical
barrier is broken all the way and you just adore touching them in any
form possible. May it be a hand to hold or playing with their hair or
shoulders pressed together— even the innocence was addicting.
Maybe it was because the a ection was something I had dreamt of
before things had gone awry. I remember myself, young and hopeful,
si ing through DVDs that had anything to do with romance. It was
always fascinating to me—yet I had never experienced it first hand,
until now. Until Wanda's tender smiles and the gentlest touches, until
she felt like she wanted to be around me just as much as I wanted to
be around her.
"I should probably get a television here or something." I hum lightly,
noting the silence that neither of us minded, but it could get loud
when I was merely alone.
"Or a record player. You loved Nat's." Wanda points out, both of us
cleaning up as she o ers to take mine to the trash along with her own
paper bag.
"I guess I do. I'd probably spend so much time in record stores, the
variety would send me into overdrive." I chuckle so ly, shooting her a
grateful nod as she tosses our bags into the bin beneath the
bathroom sink.
"I've only ever heard you listen to classical music. Do you listen to
anything a little more recent?" Wanda asks curiously, walking over to
the bed as she reclaims her spot right next to me.
"I haven't had much of a chance to, really. Do you?" I ask, leaning
back against the headboard as Wanda does the same.
"Here and there. Most of the english songs i've listened to are from
Nat, she makes a lot of playlists and when we drive together I just
listen." Wanda shares lightly.
"I'd have to consult with her then." I hum, my eyes travelling to her
hands as reluctance strikes in me again. I know we've done a handful
of things in the past few hours—but that doesn't mean she doesn't
still make me nervous.
"I make you nervous?" Wanda asks, reading my mind as I let out a
defeated hu . It does still slip my mind that her abilities allow her to
do that, which in thought kind of makes me even more nervous.
"Sorry— your thoughts are kind of loud sometimes." She chuckles,
hesitating for a moment before slipping her hand into mine.
"This is new to me. I feel like a clueless kid." I finally reveal, seeing no
point in denial when she's already been in my head.
"Well you're not alone. It's not like i've had any time to go on dates
the past few years. Even back in Sokovia, things were always too
complicated to even think about something like that." She soothes,
her thumb lightly tracing the back of my hand as she spoke.
"I don't want to hurt you." It slips from my lips before I could catch,
the most prominent thing on my mind tied to my inexperience.
How was I supposed to know how to act? What to do? Those thoughts
plagued my head the moment I had kissed her earlier that day, the
fear that i'd unknowingly hurt her feelings— or worse, break her
heart. It felt more delicate than anything I had ever treaded, in
combat the main point is to hurt whoever you're facing. It's brutish,
cut-throat, it's what I'm used to. Tenderness wasn't so prominent in
my nature, most especially not in ties to romance.
"You probably will." Wanda hums, earning my gaze as I look to her
curiously. Her eyes are trailing on our hands, a ghost of a smile
painted on her lips.
"But then again, I probably will too." She says so ly, finally turning to
meet my eyes.
"Haven't we learned enough to know we always find our way back? I
don't think there's anything you could do, or say to keep me away."
She says gently, her reassurance comforting me like a warm blanket
on a cold night—but not entirely.
I knew myself better than anyone, I knew how the world works for me
and if it goes how I foretell, there would always be something for her
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to walk away from. But I don't say a word, I only smile and o er her a small nod because I adored that she was trying, that she took the

"I love this part of you." I smile, making a move to drape an arm over

"The part that isn't throwing you out of rooms?" She raised a brow, a

"Yeah—I don't miss being treated like a paperweight." I chuckle, feeling her slip a ring onto my finger that instantly gains my attention.

"Maybe don't give it back to me this time, it ruins the purpose." She jokes, planting a quick kiss on my cheek as I bring my ringed hand up

It felt so natural to feel it there, the metal wrapping around my skin, the cool press against my finger. It felt less empty, and the red was a perfect shade of her magic. The one that flows through her fingertips, the same crimson that glows in her eyes. It felt like I was carrying a part of her constantly, always there in my grasp to bring me comfort.

We spent the rest of the a ernoon lazily lounged upon my bed, Wanda pulling a book from her room while I only laid my head upon her torso, watching silently as she loses herself in the bit of literature in her hands. It was so calm, so serene, the a ernoon barely even felt

When it was time for me to go, she walks me to the elevators, fingers intertwined and quickly scoping the area before planting a firm kiss on my lips and bidding me goodbye. It was fair to say I spent the journey down with my heart in a sea of flutter, and an undeniable

I arrive to find that Natasha had pulled a chair into Lara's cell, sitting on the other end of the glass as Lara laid in bed next to the same metal pole where her drip hung from, still avidly attached to her arm. Natasha could sense the confusion radiating from me, because I hadn't expected Lara to be allowed back to her room until late that

"She requested to finish here. Said she'd rather feel like a prisoner than a patient." Natasha explains without hesitance, promptly rising

"At least she's not ripping the tube out." I sigh, earning a look from

surprised she hasn't killed anyone in the process too." Natasha shares

"Word travels fast, you know." She gives me a knowing look, one I knew all too well as an unintended blush creeps onto my cheeks.

"We're not doing this." I warn lightly, a small smile placing itself onto

As happy as I am with where Wanda and I stood, I don't think I was ready to speak of it so openly just yet. I wanted to bask in the privacy, the feeling that what we have is ours and ours alone, existing without

"I'm just saying—it's about time. Also, Steve's looking for you. You should go and see him when you're done here, it seems urgent." She says, a glint of curiosity in her eyes as my brows twitch into a furrow.

"He didn't tell you what it was about?" Steve always told Natasha, which was why I found it just as odd as she did that she wasn't

"No. He was being weird about it, I didn't pry." Natasha shrugs.

"Alright, I'll find him later. Thanks for keeping an eye on things, Nat." I drop the topic, o ering Natasha a grateful smile as she waves me o

I take her previous spot, settling into the chair as I watch over Lara, who was curled up in bed with her back to me. I really didn't expect much, I was merely down there for my own peace of mind because I was still reeling from the events of this morning. I didn't seek out conversation, I honestly just wanted to make sure she'd be alright and if sitting in silence for a few hours would ensure that, then it's a small price to pay for all i've deprived her of the past few years.

"Come to bask in my misery?" Lara's flat, emotionless voice bleeds

"I've had enough of it in one lifetime. I'm just here to see you through most of the night. It's been a rough day for you, I don't wish for you to be alone." I explain as calmly as I could, not hoping to engage in any

"It's almost funny, hearing you say that. You don't wish for me to be alone and yet that's where you le me for years." She shi s, turning to sit up on her bed. I don't miss the way she stifles a wince, like her

"I can't take it back. I'm done trying to but I am here now, i'm here and I won't leave you again. Even if you are incredibly stubborn, as you have always been." I note, watching her eyes travel to me

through the glass. It was the first time she had ever gazed back at me with indi erence, or if she had any emotion, it definitely wasn't

"Why are you doing this?" All that her voice held, was defeat—

"Because I love you. You don't have to believe me, but I do. You'll always be my sister, Lara. No matter how complicated and rough things are, there's always a place for you with me." I say with utmost sincerity, merely hoping that she could feel it from where she sat. She promptly looks away, still barring me from reading her face as she

"I'll be fine for tonight. You can go." Is the last thing she says to me

Continue reading next part  $\Box$ 

"Oh if you only knew. It's the fi h time we had to reattach, i'm

amidst a tired breath, placing a hand on my shoulder.

her lips as she raises her arms in surrender.

the burden of opinions that were sure to flood in.

informed of the details if it was sourgent.

from the speakers, much to my surprise.

sharp exchanges she could be setting up.

despair, like she was genuinely asking.

makes a move to lay back down.

throughout the night.

movements hurt.

shining through.

and heads out.

time to ease my worries as tenderly as she could.

playful glimmer in her eyes as I nod happily.

for inspection.

"This is perfect. Thank you."

smile on my lips.

from her seat to approach me.

Natasha as she shakes her head.

night.