

The A ermath

I was somewhere dark, somewhere painful. I could hear the sounds around me. The beeps of machinery. The shouting, but when I tried to open my eyes I sunk further into the darkness. I desperately tried to claw my way back to the surface. My only thought was Bucky, how I couldn't leave him. Not now, not when I had so much to tell him. I couldn't die, he needed to know. He had to know I didn't blame him, at least I didn't think I did.

It was in that moment I realised I don't blame Bucky. I blame James, but like me. He wasn't that person anymore. Winter and James, they died a long time ago. Y/N and Bucky. Maybe they have a chance.

The second Loki got news of what had happened to Y/N he stormed over to the hospital. His mind running a thousand miles an hour. A er everything they'd endured, he couldn't lose his only friend. He finally found the place in the hospital Steve had described. "Steve?" He panted out as he walked into a room with a window.

"In here." Steve replied, his voice barely a whisper as he watched the doctors work on her. Guilt flooding through him.

Loki walked over, tears in his eyes as he saw her lifeless face on the table. No sarcasm, no strength. It broke his heart, the heart she'd thawed. He looked to the side of the room. Bucky looked completely broken, his silent tears staining his cheeks.

Steve looked down at his fist, the USB drive sitting in his hand. He wanted to crush it into dust, the hurt and damage that came with it was more than he could bear. Natasha came over next to him, Steve quickly put the USB away.

"What did she tell you?" Nat asks, her voice void of any emotion as her gaze remains fixed on Y/N.

"That she trusted me." The whole room fell silent. They knew what a huge thing that was for her. Trust didn't come easy and she'd given it to Steve.

The revelation was almost too much for Bucky. His heart was shattering, tears streaming down his face as the doctors worked tirelessly to save her life. Before he realised what he was doing his fist was in the wall. He didn't use his vibranium arm, he wanted to feel the pain as the skin split. Needing the physical representation of the pain he felt inside.

Surprisingly it was Nat that came to his side. "Bucky stop." She placed her hand on his arm, which he quickly shrugged o . "I can't lose her. Not again." With one last glance at Y/N he stormed out. The glass window of the door cracking as he slammed it shut. As much as he wanted to leave he couldn't. He slumped into a chair in the waiting room, the blood staining his knuckles was all he could focus on.

Hours later Steve came to find him. Sitting beside him, Steve placed a hand on his back. "She's stable Buck."

Bucky looked over his shoulder at Steve. "Stable?"

"She'll be out of it for a while, but they're confident she'll recover.

She's strong Buck. In more ways than one." Steve reassures him.

When I try to open my eyes I immediately shut them again, the light is painfully bright. I can hear the sounds of machinery beeping, my heart rate increases. All I can think about is the machinery at Hydra.

Were they wiping me again?

Why? What did I do wrong?

"Miss, I need you to calm down. You're safe. You're in the hospital." A so voice breaks through the darkness.

Steve. A bullet. Pain. The darkness. The mission.

I immediately remember everything. "Too bright." I manage to mumble, my voice strained.

Whoever was with me soon closed the blinds and turned o the lights. I finally managed to open my eyes, the ceiling tiles themselves give away where I am. I turn my head as the nurse places her fingers on my wrist. She gives me a so smile. Once she's finished she smiles at me. "You have a waiting room full of angry men."

I can't help but smile. "I'm guessing there's four of them?"

She gives me a small nod, writing on the clipboard.

"Can you send Steve in? The blonde one." I ask and she nods.

"Of course sweetie. Anything else you need?"

I shake my head and she leaves. All I can think about is the fact someone tried to take my life. Someone doesn't want me finding out who they are. An unknown name gets added to my list.

Before I can dwell on it too much, Steve appears. I try to give him a smile as the pain starts seeping in. "I told you joining your boy band was a bad idea."

He shakes his head as he rounds the bed. Sitting in the chair beside me, I can see the tiredness in his face. "Why did you ask for me and not Bucky?" He even sounds tired. If he's not slept I doubt any of them have.

I try and move up the bed slightly, straining as pain shoots through me. "You know why. Is it safe?"

He adjusts the pillows behind me and I give him a thankful smile. "Of course it's safe." He reassures me.

"Where is it?"

He gives me a pointed glare and I know what he's going to say but he says it anyway. "You just worry about getting better first."

I give his hand a squeeze giving him a silent thank you. Regret flooding through me as I thought of what I've put him through. Yet here he was being the perfect friend. Maybe one day I'd be able to apologise, but right now there was only one thing I needed. "Can you get Bucky? I need to see him."

He smiles as he nods his head. "Of course. Get some rest okay?" He stands up and places a kiss on my head before leaving.

I can't rest, my mind running a hundred miles an hour. I don't know how to tell Bucky what I want to tell him. How do you tell someone you've hated for years that you need them? I don't have long to worry about it, he appears not moments later.

The bags under his eyes tell me he's been here the whole time. "Hey doll." I can see the unshed tears in his eyes.

"You start crying and I'll punch you." I give him a so smile.

He walks towards me, sitting on the bed beside me, taking my hand in his. "I just watched the love of my life nearly die. Just give me a minute." His eyes remain down, looking at our hands.

I grip his chin and make him look at me, wiping away the tears that's fallen. "That's why I wanted to see you. I had a realisation when I thought I was dying." I take a deep breath as I look at him. "I don't think I can ever forgive James." He nods his head, standing up. I grab hold of his wrist, ignoring the pain that shoots through me at the sudden movement. "Let me finish."

He sits back down. I link my fingers through his. "I can't forgive James, but maybe Bucky has a chance."

His eyes light up as he realises what I'm saying. "You mean that?"

He's not James to me anymore, he's Bucky. Bucky has never let me down, he's done nothing but try to protect me. I give his hand a kiss.

"Nothing like dying to gain a bit of perspective, but it doesn't mean I'm going to make things easy for you. I need you to prove you want me for who I am now. Not who I was then."

He gives me a little chuckle. "I wouldn't expect anything less. Now I suggest you get better, I have plans for us."

"I look forward to it." I pat the bed next to me. "Now get over here."

He looks at the wires attached to me, I can tell he's wary. "Bucky, get your ass in this bed and hold me so I can sleep."

That seems to get him moving, smiling he pulls his shirt o before kicking o his boots. My eyes don't leave his chest, my tongue flicks over my bottom lip. He looks good, he always has but clearing the air seems to make him even more appealing. He catches my thoughts and rolls his eyes with a smile. "Doll, you've just been shot. Get your mind out of the gutter."

I stick my tongue out at him, causing him to laugh. It's only in that moment I realise I've never heard him laugh before, but I want to hear it again. I pull back the sheet covering me and he carefully climbs in. Pulling me to his chest he kisses me on the forehead. "Get some sleep doll. I'm not going anywhere."

The second his arms wrap around me, all the pain seems to leave my body as I relax against him. Within seconds I feel my eyes close, the sound of our breathing lulling me to sleep. Before I'm dragged completely under I hear him mumble against me. "I love you, you infuriating woman."

I try not to smile, not wanting him to realise I heard him.

I love you too, you stubborn asshole.

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