

Waking Up

Bucky's eyes fluttered open, the dark room helping with the pounding in his head. For a moment he panicked, thinking he was still trapped within the Winter Soldier. He had no idea where he was, it was unsettling.

The door creaked open, a slither of light illuminating the room. He could tell he was in a room at the compound, he just wasn't sure which one. His senses heightening as Nat walked in. She could see the panic in his eyes, guilt coursing through her. It had been a week since Steve left with Y/N. He took the red book with him, a backup just in case. For that entire week Nat had been too consumed by her guilt to let it go on any longer.

It took a few days after confining Bucky, but she'd finally managed to rid him of the programming that Steve had activated.

"What happened?" Bucky croaked out.

When he realised his words had come out of his mouth, he relaxed slightly. He was back in control once again. 'For now' The soldier's words echoed in the back of his mind.

"You won't like the answer." Nat told him as she turned the lights up slightly.

He sighed. "I knew this would happen."

Nat placed her hand on his leg, pulling away when he flinched at her touch.

"This isn't your fault Bucky. I should've stopped him."

"All he had to do was say the goddamn words." Bucky growled.

He stood up, raking his hands through his hair as he began to pace the room. The betrayal of his best friend weighed heavy on his heart. The man that had always held a special place in his heart had betrayed him in the worst way possible. There was no coming back from this. The end of an era.

"You remember who it was?" Nat asked shocked.

Steve told her that he wouldn't remember who used the words, the soldier would keep that information from him.

"It was different this time. I was awake, but trapped."

Just admitting what had happened was hard enough. The heartbreak, the anger, the pain. All of it threatening to consume him as he remembered the words the Soldier had spoken to Y/N. The lies that had split from his lips, the way the light left her eyes, the agony as she left his life. It was almost too much to bear.

"This was all for him to have her." He growled out, his vibranium fist creating a hole in the wall.

Nat flinched at his anger. "W-why would he go this far?" She asked.

Even Bucky wasn't aware at just how passionately Steve felt for Y/N, he should've seen the signs sooner. Done something to help his friend, now it was too late. Steve had gone too far.

"He's never dealt with jealousy well. Even worse since the serum. He knew I'd always come between them, so he took me off the board."

"You seem rather calm about it all."

Bucky nodded, he was calm. Hurt, but calm. Even if he was raging, shouting and out for blood he still wouldn't be Steve's biggest problem when the truth comes out.

"Because I'm not the one he needs to worry about."

Y/N had a darkness, one that Bucky knew was still simmering under the surface. It was that darkness that had brought this side of Steve out. While it was intoxicating, it was deadly too. When she found out the truth there would be nowhere on this Earth that Steve could hide. If there was one thing that Y/N wouldn't tolerate was lies. Steve had betrayed her in the worst way possible, when she found out she would be out for blood.

Nat knew Bucky was right. Her part in this selfish endeavour was not going to go unnoticed by anyone. Even Bucky wouldn't be able to stop Y/N from coming for her.

"She's going to kill me. I'm so sorry Bucky."

While Bucky was angry at Nat, he knew that Steve had manipulated this. Used her feelings towards Bucky to get his own way. He stopped his pacing, turning to Nat.

"You want to make up for it? I need you to do something for me."

"What do you need?"

"I need the Winter Soldier inside me gone for good."

He'd had the offer before, refusing to believe it was possible he hadn't followed through with it. Now he didn't have a choice, if there was a chance that he could get his girl back and not be at risk of hurting her again, he had to take it.

"What about Y/N?" Nat asked.

"He won't hurt her. He loves her too much." Of that Bucky was certain. "I can't go and find them while everything Hydra did is still in there, but I can make sure it never happens again."

"What can I do?"

Nat would do anything to help Bucky, to make up for what she did. She'd been so blinded by jealousy that she had made one of the worst decisions of her life. She owed Bucky her support in no matter what he wanted.

"Get me to Wakanda."

One Year Later

As we sat down for dinner, I finally felt happy again. Steve had been nothing short of perfect since we left the compound. He'd held me as I cried, reminded me every day that Bucky's words were not true. So tonight I had finally accepted his offer to go on a date. I dressed up, did my make up, made myself feel beautiful again. I owed him a chance, I owed myself a chance to be happy. I could have that with Steve, we'd had it before. Things were different now but it didn't mean we couldn't have something special.

Steve laid his hand on the table in front of me, his palm facing up. I placed my hand in his, squeezing slightly.

"I'm sorry it's taken me so long."

He smiled, the beard he'd grown out only making him look more handsome. His eyes sparkled back at me, the moonlight reflecting off them.

"You've been perfect this whole time."

He lifted his glass of wine with his free hand. "I told you I wasn't going to go anywhere."

"It took me so long to move past what he said."

Steve had been there through every breakdown, every time I nearly succumbed to Bucky's words. Every single time he pulled me back by reminding me of the good that I'd done too.

"How do you feel about it now?" He asked gently.

"Oh I still hate him for it." The boiling blood kind of hate. "But I don't believe him anymore."

Steve seemed happy, something that I didn't realise made me happy too. Just seeing his smile was enough to pull out my own. I loved that I was the one he was smiling at. The only thing that was ruining how content I felt was the feeling of being watched. I put it down to my paranoia, pushing it to the back of my mind as I concentrated on the amazing man in front of me.

"And now I get to take you on a date." He smirked, bringing my knuckles to his lips.

He kissed them sweetly, a stark contrast to what he really wanted. I knew he'd missed the intimacy between us, the way we could get lost in each other. I had too.

"More importantly, you get to take me home too." I flirted with him.

"Which you've wanted to for months."

"I never stopped wanting to."

I made a decision, one I had no doubt I would never regret. A date was all well and good, but suddenly I was hungry for something besides food.

"Then why are we still sitting here?"

He stood, throwing some cash on the table before walking around to me. He placed his lips against mine far too briefly before helping me to stand up. His arm wrapped around my shoulders as he led me out. The feeling of being watched intensifying as we left the small beach restaurant.

It wasn't until we made it to the car that I looked behind me. Turns out I wasn't being paranoid. I saw him clear as day even though he was trying to stay out of sight.

"Y/N? You okay?" Steve asked as he opened the car door.

I offered him a small smile. "Yeah, of course. Let's go babe." I climbed into the car, my heart pounding.

Why was he here? After all this time why come and find me now?

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