Chapter 76

My finger is steady on the trigger, having done this so many times before it should not shake me this much, and yet I feel like I suddenly have no bones le in my body and that I am entirely made of goo.

The shot echoes mu led around the room, even with the mu ler on the gun it's loud, too loud. Jarring. I'm certain they now know exactly where we are, but I pray they're too busy to come right this second. I quickly lower the gun, letting it drop on the ground, forgotten, as I close the short distance between Wanda and me, my heart beating rapidly in my chest, adrenaline coursing through my veins. Wanda's eyes are round as saucers, staring at me in utter, silent shock.

"What the fuck?" She whispers, her voice quavering slightly as I near her.

"Did it work?" I match her tone, my hands coming up to examine the singed black box attached to the collar around her neck, my fingers shaking as I fumble with the contraption.

"What the fuck?" Wanda repeats again, her green eyes still staring at me, her body tense like a spring waiting to snap.

"It looks... it looks broken! Wanda, I think it worked!" I look up from the collar, my voice excited, and meet her shocked stare, a wide grin on my face.

"You think it worked!?" Wanda seems to only be stuck on repeat mode, her voice growing louder as she goggles at me. My smile nor enthusiasm do not seem to be shared by her in the slightest. "You *think* it worked?! What the actual fuck!"

"Wanda, shh!" I try but she's winding herself up and there's nothing I can do but grin apologetically.

She shakes her head, disbelieving. "What the fuck!"

She unexpectedly shoves me back, hard, her expression filled with outrage. I stumble backward, in shock. I don't know what reaction I was expecting, but it still takes me by surprise. I manage to remain standing though, the adrenaline in me working overtime. I look up at Wanda who looks absolutely infuriated.

"You *think* it worked!?" Wanda screeches, completely disregarding the fact that we are trying to hide.

"Wanda, calm -"

"If you are attempting to tell me to calm down I swear to -ugh!" Wanda slips her fingers through her disheveled hair, making it look even wilder as she turns slightly on her heels to face away from me. I silently condemn myself for admiring the way anger looks on her.

"You '*think*' it worked! Oh, I have an idea to see if it worked!" Wanda's voice drops icily as she breathily speaks, and I step back from her, raising my hands up in an attempt to show her I surrender. For heaven's sake, my hands are empty, woman. But she's a woman scorned and she's definitely the wrong woman to scorn.

Wanda seems to utterly disregard my attempt at defusing the situation, her green eyes eerily shimmering red as she glares at me, her cheeks flushed and her chest heaving rapidly. I hope it's just a reflection from one of the computers nearby. Unfortunately for me, I begin to give up on my hope of Wanda's eyes just reflecting red as she summons a crackling ball of excitedly twisting and turning scarlet tendrils by her right hand. Her eyebrows shoot up in surprise, a small break from her anger. Unfortunately for me, this state of marvel does not last too long. She takes a slow step towards me, her mouth turned upward in a small grin. She twirls her hand, the ball of scarlet eagerly following its master.

"Looks like it worked." Wanda whispers and without warning flings the magic towards me, the magic zapping through the air and hitting me straight in the chest.

With a loud gasp, I am pushed backward with the strength of being hit by a small car. My back crashes into the hard wall of computers and wires behind me. I struggle to catch my breath, my chest burning and my lungs refusing to let any air enter them. My back seems like it's exploded in a thousand tiny shards of glass as I gasp for air, my head spinning.

"Wanda-" I gasp hoarsely, but Wanda just flings another ball of scarlet towards me, not caring at all about my state of pain.

I manage to somehow barely escape it by unceremoniously throwing myself flat on my stomach on the ground with a loud dud as the scarlet magic explodes somewhere above my head. I flinch at the sound on the ground, turning my head upwards barely in time to watch Wanda twist her fingers almost lazily in the air, making a pair of unfamiliar soldiers go tumbling o in the air away from us, their ascent much more violent than the one I just experienced.

Fuck. I push myself up as Wanda looks back at me, her anger redirected.

"You fucking shot me!" She yells, angrily swinging another ball of magic over her head which hits me square in the shoulder and I tumble back onto the shelves behind me, my back screaming out in pain again.

"I didn't shoot *you*!" I try, gasping in pain, not that Wanda seems to be the slightest placated, my words almost having the opposite e ect.

"Then what the fuck did you do!?" She howls, another ball of magic hitting me in the stomach and I feel like all air escapes my body as I again come crashing against the shelves behind me.

I open my mouth to answer her, which proves rather di icult in my current predicament.

"I told you no and you did it anyway!" Wanda growls, red magic flaring up around her hands but she doesn't go to shoot it at me.

"But it worked." I wheeze with a loopy smile and Wanda looks up at me, her eyes flashing, and she twists her right hand in the air and another fucking dose of scarlet smashes into my shoulder, smacking me against the shelves harder, which dig into my bruised body and I wonder for a split second if I might just become one with the computers.

"Stop it!" I yelp, tears of pain invading my vision, wondering why I thought it would be a good idea to shoot that bloody collar if this is the thanks I get.

"You fucking shot me!" Wanda, again, informs me coldly, but at least she isn't shouting this time around. *It's all about the small victories,* I sarcastically note.

In the absence of any imminent threat from her, my ears prick up to the sounds of shooting and fighting all around us. I look back at Wanda, who still twirling that magic around her fingers, just waiting for another reason to hurl it at me. I find it kind of insane finding her sort of hot right now.

Wanda hu s loudly, rolling her eyes dramatically.

"Okay, Wanda, you need to get us out of here." I groan, shaking my head, trying to clear my thoughts. I separate myself from the shelves which seem like they have become part of me.

"Us?" Wanda chortle, sco ing at me.

"Yes, us." I hiss at her and she scowls.

"No."

"Oh my god, Wanda, there's no time." I try to keep my voice steady as my annoyance mounts. She li s an eyebrow teasingly, watching me trudge towards her, as she makes zero moves to help me. At least she's not putting in more distance between us though as she just stands there twirling her magic. Small victories, eh?

"Wanda, stop being a pain in the ass." I grumble and she sco s again.

"You shot me. Pain in the ass warranted." She plainly says, tilting her head, mocking me.

"You sound like you're writing spoken word poetry." I sarcastically quip at her and her eyes sparkle in amusement.

"Seems like I didn't smack all of the sarcasm out of you." She says in a dark voice and she smiles a very much fake smile at me. "I don't know who you think you are but I will hurt you."

"Oh honey, we're way past that." I exhale, stopping right in front of her, ignoring her twirling fingers right next to me, staring una ected into her eyes. She blinks.

"You shot me." She whispers in my face, and I swear I hear her scarlet crackle excitedly.

"I'll admit it if you can show me a bullet wound." I purr and she drops the face she's making. "Exactly." I jeer and she shoots me an angry look.

"You're annoying." She narrows her eyes at me and I smile sarcastically.

"My pleasure." I jibe at her, for a moment wondering if she's about to throw me against that damned wall again.

Instead, she surprises me by closing the distance between us, her green eyes holding mine and I can't escape, the feeling not unlike that of falling straight into a black hole, I'd assume. My heart rate picks up again and I try to stay still and not show her how much her proximity startles me. I think she knows anyways, her smirk giving her away.

"Who are you?" She asks me so silently I need to read her lips to be sure I catch her words.

"Wouldn't you like to know?" I match her voice in silky sweetness and I can tell she's intrigued despite her trying her best to look bored.

"I don't think so." She lies and it's my time to smirk victoriously at her.

"You're a terrible liar, Maximo ."

"And you are pissing me o ."

"You gonna throw me against the wall again?" I grin at her and she exhales so ly, looking like she's seriously considering it.

"Might do you some good." Wanda matches my smile and I amaze myself by keeping so cool when on the inside I feel like I'm filled with lava.

"Thank you for your care, I'll remember this the next time I try to help you." I keep my voice cool, professional. Ha, cucumber baby. Wanda's eyebrows shoot up.

"By help you mean shoot?"

"Wanda honey you're stuck on a loop." I say, empathizing with her and she rolls her eyes again.

"You could have missed." Wanda glares at me and I actually chuckle. "That's a callback."

"You know, you're making it really tempting to use my magic on you again." Wanda says and I grin at her words, making her look slightly confused.

"Please, you already are."

Wanda's nose crinkles slightly as she tries to keep her face from breaking out in an actual, genuine smile. Seeing that as a sign of my victory, I straighten out a little taller, ignoring the protest from my still battered body.

"Alright, now that we've settled that, we need to get going. Can you-" I begin but my next words are cut o by a searing pain in my le shoulder. Shoulderblade? Chest? Maybe ribcage?

"Olivia?" Wanda's voice has no trace of her previous mockery and is now completely sincere and she sounds confused. Worried, maybe.

"I-" I begin, confounded by the burning pain, the burning scattering all my thoughts and words like birds away from a wildfire.

"Olivia!" Wanda repeats again, her face going pale and her eyes double in size.

Her worried face swims in my view as her hands worry on me but I can't really feel her touch. I frown and look down at myself at where she is staring. *Oh, that explains it.* A dark spot is rapidly forming right below my le shoulder, the warm liquid coating my skin and my clothes.

Wanda lets out an angry exhale and I look back up at her, just catching her enveloping the person I assume wounded me in her red magic. Her face is scrunched up in anger, not like the one she wore when she looked at me. This is real anger. Hmm. She looks so beautiful, even as she's throwing someone into a wall. That's slightly concerning. That must've hurt. I should know. I feel my knees buckle slightly, making Wanda's focus snap back onto me and she steadies me against herself, her hands steady but so gentle as she tries to keep me upright without hurting me more.

"I just-" I stutter, feeling my legs shake. "I just need to sit down for a minute."

"Okay, easy." Wanda's breath grazes my ear as she helps me down to the floor.

I groan so ly as I exhale, my lungs burning. I lean back against the uneven wall. Wanda crouches down in front of me, her brows furrowed as her eyes shi   down from my face onto my chest. I li   a heavy hand and press my index finger right in the middle of her brows. Her eyes snap up at mine, her expression confused. But her brows relax. I smile so ly.

"Wanda, do you-" I slowly speak but pause, taking in a shaky, small breath, making my whole side burn and shriek in pain. I bite the inside of my cheek, waiting for the pain to dissipate slightly, afraid that if I open my mouth I might puke all over Wanda. The pain finally passes a little, leaving me woozy.

"Do - you re - remember your cabin?" I finish my sentence, my voice thick and tongue slow, each syllable a battle to pronounce.

Wanda frowns, her face is so close to mine as she kneels in front of me, her hands cupping my waist. She blinks, then her head swirls around, her red hair almost hitting me in the face and she li s up her hand, pointing it at something behind her and I hear a yelp and a crash. She slowly looks back at me, her eyes round like those of a deer's.

"A cabin?" She asks me, her voice so and warm.

"Your cabin." I smile, but it might come across as more of a pained grimace.

"My cabin." Wanda pauses, her eyes searching my face.

I watch her for a moment, the searing pain growing and expanding within me and I wish I could just escape it knowing I can't.

"Please take me there." I plead in a small voice, my voice finally breaking, and the damned tears roll back, taking center stage.

Wanda bites her lower lip, her eyes hiding so many things I wish I could uncover. I sink slightly lower, feeling something warm in my mouth. It feels coppery, tangy. Wanda's eyes flit down to my lips. She inhales so ly, then brings her thumb up to the le side of my lips where she wipes something away. She stares at my lips for a moment, deep in thought. I can see her mind working, her face always being so open to reading. I just wish I understood more of what I read.

"Hold on." She finally murmurs, placing a warm hand on my cheek.

I let my heavy eyelids close, leaning into her touch, feeling safe in the midst of the chaos around us. An odd sensation overcomes me, almost like I am suddenly drenched in an icy bath. I gasp in shock, opening my eyes, feeling Wanda's warmth leave the side of my face just as soon as the icy cold feeling disappears. I can't quite shake it, though.

I'm sitting on the ground, but this ground is made out of grass. There is something hard but steady against my back, looking out over something that makes me let out a small, relieved laugh. The movement makes the pain flare up again and I struggle to catch my breath, feeling warm liquid instead of air. I cough, slightly panicked, feeling my head spin and the warm liquid trickles past my lips again.

"You remembered." I sigh heavily as the warm liquid slips past my lips and down my chin. Wanda turns her head to look at the meadow stretching out behind her, the dark little cabin sitting there, perfect and untouched. Just like I remembered it.

"I do." She turns back to me, her eyes not missing the life trickling down my chin slowly.

"You couldn't magic me on the couch?" I drawl, my lungs burning and I feel cold in my bones. I try to smile again, but this time I can't even convince myself that whatever appeared on my face was a smile.

"Shut up." Wanda cracks a little smile. "Don't move."

She looks down at my shoulder, or chest, or whatever, and places a hand right over the center of the pain. Her eyes quickly meet mine, almost for confirmation, before she looks right back down and her eyebrows knit together and then I feel a rush through my body. The rush of relief pushes away the pain and before I know it, it is but a faint phantom ache in my chest. The feeling is so familiar it's eery. I know exactly what Wanda just did for me.

She exhales tiredly and sits back, dropping her hand from my chest. She blinks slowly, then her round eyes meet mine. She gives me a small, uncertain smile.

"Better?"

"Better." Her smile is contagious and I take in a deep breath, the clean mountain air burning my throat and lungs in its clarity, a feeling which I revel in.

Wanda smiles, then she breaks eye contact as though she feels self-conscious. She looks down at her hands which rest on her thighs. I wipe the side of my mouth with my sleeve, probably more smearing the blood than I am cleaning it. I watch Wanda for a moment, then I let my gaze fall back on the cabin behind her.

"It's deja vu." I whisper to myself.

"What?" Wanda looks up at me.

"You don't remember, but this isn't the first time you've fixed me here." I say, ignoring the true meaning behind my words, hoping she'll focus on their literal transcription instead. I peek at her, slightly worried, and her lips draw back in a little downcast, forlorn smile.

"You know..." She begins wearily, her voice catching in the back of her throat. "I don't really understand my... my feelings."

Wanda pauses, blinking rapidly and looking away from me. "I'm trying to understand, though, but I... I don't want you to... to get your hopes up."

I open my mouth to reply, but I lose track of whatever I was about to say. I watch her pained expression and I just wish I could do something, anything for her. If I could I would do everything she did for me and more, but I can't. What hope do I have? Do I think she's just going to snap back to where she was, where we were? Did I ever snap back to where I was, before?

"This happened because of you." Wanda whispers and I meet her eyes, trying to decipher her emotions. She doesn't break away this time. It's almost like if she looks deep enough into my eyes she'll figure something out, like she'll find the truth, whatever truth it is that she is trying to find, right there, in my gaze. She doesn't sound accusatory. It's a simple statement. It hurts just as bad, or maybe worse, because of that. I drop her gaze and look down at her hands just like she did a minute ago, now me being the one not able to look at her face.

"The cause of this is you." Wanda repeats and I hu , looking back up at her, ready to defend myself somehow despite her truthful words, but she shakes her head slightly, and I quiet, waiting for her next train of thought.

"Just as I know that, I also know the cure must be you." Wanda slowly says, as though she's working through the thought as she speaks. She frowns, biting her lip and she looks at me like she is looking upon something never seen before by mankind and is trying to figure out the true nature of the object she is beholding.

"The cause and the cure is you, Olivia."

A/N: Eeek I am FEEDING you guys!!!! I'm really happy with this chapter :) Sometimes they're a struggle to write, and as much as I love my action I much prefer the quiet moments between these two dumbasses, lol...

Anyway, hope you liked this one and still like the direction this fic is / has taken cause I'm not going to lie, I have not really planned very far ahead as I have been writing this, and I bet if I had, the pacing might be a bit better, but oh well! (Dw though I haven't forgotten about all my lil unsolved nuggets 😉)Here's to the next unplanned twist! x

(also if you guys have any suggestions and things you'd like to have happen, let me know, now is the time to voice your truth haha!)