bleeding heart

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Summary

They both knew this isn't going to end well. They just wished they had more time.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.

Steve knew that every war had casualties and he also knew that this war was not going to end well. He couldn’t dare to promise anything to anyone. Hell, he wasn’t even sure that they were going to win and this could be the end of the world.

Still, he had his duty as the leader of the Avengers. The moment strange looking spaceship appeared out of nowhere above New York City. Steve had Tony assembled the team that scattered all over the world. The first two places that got hit were New York and Edinburgh. Places where the time stone and mind stone were.

Steve received an sos call from Wanda, asking for help. Natasha and Sam followed him all the way from Syria to Scotland to rescue Wanda and apparently wounded Vision. They were just in time to save both vision and Wanda.

It was the first battle in a very long time that Steve was outmatched. These two alien warriors from outer space could easily overpowered him. If it wasn’t for Wanda, Steve probably got injured or worse. Once they forced the enemy to retreat, they got back to Sam and Natasha who barely handled their fight with the female alien warrior who called herself, Proxima Midnight.

Steve was enraged when he saw the injured Natasha. He caught Proxima’s spear and used it to pierce through Proxima’s armor, injured her and forcing her to retreat.
“Are you alright?” Steve rushed to Nat’s side. His blue eyes scanned her body. There was a nasty gush on her side.

Natasha winced when Steve touched the wound. “I’m fine.” She tried to keep her voice steady.

“No, you’re not.” Steve replied. “Sam, tell Clint to bring the jet here. We will rendezvous outside the city.”

“Got it, Cap.”

Steve picked Nat up in his arms easily and it met with her dagger glare. They looked at each other as if they were communicating with one another telepathically. Steve shook his head and held onto her tighter. Natasha pouted but let him carry her anyway.

“I can teleport us out of the city.” Wanda told.

“You can teleport now?” Sam asked.

Wanda didn’t reply and tell them to stand closer to her. She channeled the energy to create a portal underneath their feet and the next second, they were standing in the middle of the field outside the city.

“Girl, where the hell did you learn to do that?” Sam asked, looking like he was about to puke.

Wanda laughed but sent a fireball up in the sky to signal their location to Clint. Finally, the quinjet landed. Sam helped Vision up the jet while Steve rushed to get Nat inside and laid her down on the infirmary bed and quickly took care of her wound.

Wanda sat quietly with Vision. Sam was with Clint talking with low voice. The Sokovian watched Steve and Nat who didn’t say anything to each other but their eyes and gestures spoke it all.

The way Steve’s hand gently held hers or the way he kissed her forehead. The way he sat next to her without moving even after he finished patching her up.

Wanda decided to poke into their head for a bit just out of curiosity. After they parted way in Wakanda, they didn’t contact each other. There must be something going on between the two of them while they were off doing god knew what.

Once Wanda was inside their head, she was expecting to see that they were fighting terrorist cell somewhere but she didn’t expect to see the beautiful memories they shared.

A night on the beach of Seychelles, dancing in the moonlight to the slow music from the bar nearby. It was where they shared their first true kiss and of course, a night together in the safe house. Then she saw the memory of them on the rooftop of a building in Cairo, watching sunset and had a romantic dinner. Or how they sailed across the Mediterranean, just savour every minute they were with each other.

You know you can just ask, Wanda. Steve’s voice sounded in her head.

Wanda pulled her focus back and saw Steve looked at her.
I don’t want to interrupt your moment with Natasha. The Scarlet Witch excused herself. I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to pry.

It’s okay, Wanda. No worries. It’s Nat that want to keep whatever this is a secret. Steve told.

What do you mean ‘whatever this is’?

We didn’t really talk about it. Neither of us are good at talking about our feeling. But I know it was real. We never say those three little words but I know how I feel and how she feels.

You guys will say it when you are ready. Wanda reassured.

I hope so.

She loves you, Steve. And you love her. But you guys are being the stubborn pain in the ass.

Steve chuckled at Wanda’s comment. They were as she said. But he vowed to himself that he will tell her how he feel the moment he had a chance.

But that chance never came. The moment they made it back to New York, they found out that half of the city was destroy in an apparently alien invasion. Tony told them to land at Stark Tower as he already prepared medical bay for Nat.

Steve didn’t want to leave Nat’s side but he was needed elsewhere.

“Just go. I’m not go anywhere.” Nat said and let go of his hand.

But Steve tightened his hold on her hand before looking around to see if anyone was nearby and leaned down to kiss her on the lips. “I will be back. Get some rest.”

“You’re a sap, soldier”

Steve chuckled before he left the room to meet with Tony at the ops center. There was many people that he never met people but he guessed Tony trusted them in some level to bring them here.

Steve later learned that the man was Dr. Stephen Strange, a sorcerer who held one of the Infinity Stone. They were able to fend off two of the alien warriors and protect the stone. Steve theorized that they were working together to get the stone for someone.

“That person must be powerful enough to wield these powerful artifacts.” Dr. Strange said.

“This thing already got its hand on one of the Infinity Stone.” Steve said. “Its goons took Soul Stone from Vision.”

“We still don’t know if he got the remaining Infinity Stone or not.” Tony interrupted. “Right now, all we know is that the rest of them can be all across the galaxy.”

Steve sighed and shook his head. “This thing prepares for an invasion but what army do we have to fight against them?”
“We don’t.” Tony replied. “The best bet we have is that we called upon everyone that we know and tell them to come hear to devise the plan for the next attack.”

“I agree.” Dr. Strange nodded. “I will have my sorcerer station at our sanctum across the world.”

“I will contact King T’Challa.”

“I will try convincing Ross then.” Tony sighed, already feeling his migraine getting worse.

Steve went back to the infirmary to see that Wanda was sitting with Nat, keeping his spy company. Wanda got up from her seat when she saw Steve.

“She doesn’t want to go to sleep.” Wanda told. “She want to wait until you come back.”

“I will take care of her. You go get some rest.”

“I will keep my eyes on her for you while you go clean up and change out of that ragged uniform.” Wanda countered.

Steve sighed but agreed to do as Wanda said. When he came back again, Wanda left them so they could have some privacy. He found that Natasha was about to doze off but being stubborn that she was, she tried to keep her eyes open.

“You are one stubborn woman.” He said fondly as he sat down next to her.

“I can’t sleep. The wound still sting.”

He chuckled, knowing she was faking it. He didn’t know since when did he learned how to read Natasha Romanov like a book. Maybe it was because she opened up to him the way no one else could see. Not even Clint.

“What can I do to make you feel better, my love?”

“You never call me that before, Captain.”

“There is a first time for everything, ma’am.”

“Well, you can get in bed with me and make me feel better.” Her mischievous smile was misleading and it made Steve blushed from his cheeks to his neck.

She reached her arms out, trying to pull him into bed with her. Nat looked cute and all and it made Steve forgot all the bad thing they were about to face tomorrow. He took off his shoes and slipped under the blanket with her.

“Someone will walk in on us.” He warned as he pulled her petite body against him.

“I don’t care.” She murmured, finally closing her eyes and buried her face on his chest. “How was the planning going?”
Steve proceeded to tell her everything. He knew it will be hard to rally allies in this short amount of time. Tony will go to DC tomorrow and Steve will have to contact T’Challa.

“I can get Fury and Hill for you.” Nat spoke up. “They still had some good connection left. I can try and reach them out.”

“That would be great.”

“Why are you always so warm?” She asked as she slipped her cold hands under his T-shirt.

Steve chuckled but didn’t reply. His hand playing with her hair, knowing it was the fastest way to get Natasha to sleep. It didn’t take long for Nat to sleep.

At least, they were able to get the support they needed from Wakanda and the Sorcerers. Ross was the hardest to convince so Tony talked to the President, convincing him to make a full preparation for the world invasion.

After he saw the destruction in New York, the President agreed to make the preparation and also disclosed the President’s book of secret to Tony. There were many superpower human being across the world and some already for the US. The President sent Tony to Area 51 to meet with someone.

He met with Colonel Carol Danvers who turned out to be a superhero named Captain Marvel. Tony asked her to go back to New York with him. They very much needed her help to defend the world from the invaders.

Tony came back to find that Steve and Dr. Strange managed to assemble as much allies as they could. T’Challa arrived with Okoye, Everett Ross, and M’Baku. Spider Man, Scott Lang, Hope Van Dyne, and Hank Pym were waiting for them. Natasha managed to get a hold of Fury and Maria who found ex-SHIELD agents and weapons to equip them with.

As they expected, another wave of invasion occured in a couple of days later. Steve and his team were sent to Wakanda to defend the country. A horde of alien creature struck them in the heart of Wakanda. It was a hard fight but they won. Steve was happy with the result until he found out the someone was missing.

“Where’s Nat?” Steve asked as he and Bucky reached the throne room at T’Challa’s palace, looking around the room to find her.

The king was in the middle of heated talk with Okoye, Shuri, and Ross. They all went quiet when they saw Steve walked in.

“Where’s Nat?” He asked again. This time his voice demanded answer.

“She got captured by the alien.” T’Challa replied. “Along with several Avengers including Sam and Colonel Rhodes and my Dora Milaje.”
“Then what are we waiting for? Let’s go rescue them now!” Steve felt his blood boiled.

“Captain, we just take a massive lost.” Okoye said. “We needed to prepare for the next wave of attack.”

“We should wait until the next attack to go rescue her when our enemy is focus on Earth, rather than their own ship.”

Steve reluctantly agreed to this even his mind already came up with thousand plan to rescue Natasha and one of those plan was to steal one of T’Challa’s jet. Bucky could see that Steve was relentless. Bucky knew Steve will not wait and he will go rescue Natasha.

Steve snuck out of the room before breaking into the hanger to only meet with Clint and Bucky. They offered to go with him. Their first flight out of space took then out of their element. As if Thanos knew that the Captain would make such an attack, his whole army was waiting for the three of them. They didn’t even start and got capture.

They got threw in the same cell as Sam and Rhodey.

“Where is Nat?” Steve asked.

“She got separate since we got capture. They got her somewhere else.”

“Did they try to make any offer or torture you guys?”

Sam shook his head. “No, they just throw us in here. I don’t know where they took Nat. I’m sorry, Cap.”

“It’s alright, Sam.” Steve said, even on the inside, he felt like dying. “We will get out of here and find her.”

“How are you going to do that?” Rhodey asked. “We got no suit, no weapon, no back up.”

Before Steve could reply, they heard the door to the prison area open. Steve looked out the door and his heart almost jumped out of his chest.

“Nat!” He called her.

But when she approached their cell, he could clearly see that her eyes was blank. There was no feeling left in her eyes. What did they do to her?

“Natasha, my love, are you alright?” He asked again, hoping to get some answer from her.

“Take them to the Throne Room. Lord Thanos will have a word with them.” She ordered the guard.

The alien soldier took the prisoners out of their cell, putting on a manacle. Steve tried to talk to Natasha again but there was no answer. She slapped him and demanded him to keep his mouth shut or she will cut off his tongue.

The soldiers forced them to kneel down in front of a purple alien who just laid waste on Earth. The others was visibly fear at the sight of the Mad Titan but not Steve who just stared at Thanos.

“You are more courageous than the other.” Thanks spoke up. “Strong will I doubt you will even surrender.”

“You already know the answer.”
“Oh yes, I know, Captain Rogers.” Thanos got up from his throne and walked down to their level. He placed his hand on Natasha’s shoulders. “But you will surrender to me because I have your heart.”

“Don’t you dare hurt her.” Steve said through gritted teeth.

“Oh, do not mistaken me, Captain.” Thanos laughed. “She will be the one who do all the hurting.”

Thanos snapped his fingers and Nat picked Sam for the first one that she will torture every information out of him. Steve could hear Sam’s scream and it only angered him even more. It went on for hours until the scream stopped. Steve thought that would be the end of it but somehow, Nat resumed her task and Steve didn’t know how long Sam could take it.

“What did you do to her?” Steve asked.

“You know that she has one hell of a troubled past. My daughter and my son over here. Supergiant and Ebony Maw, they can read mind, control mind.” Thanos said. “And with a past like hers, it is really easy for them in control her.”

While Natasha was torturing Sam, Thanos went on and on about his mission to reshape the universe, bringing balance to it. The Titan made Steve watched as he rained down another attack on earth.

_God, please keep his friends down there safe._ Steve closed his eyes and prayed. The face of his friends appeared before his eyes as he thought about everyone of them.

Then Nat brought Sam out and took Bucky in. Sam was heavily injured and he laid down on the floor. Blood was everywhere and Steve rushed to his friend’s side.

“Sam, hang in there, buddy. Don’t die on me.” Steve said.

“Cap, remember the time when I say it will be all too much?” Sam asked before coughing off blood. “I think this is it.”

Steve chuckled. “You are not going to die today, Sam. Save your strength. I will get you out of this.”

“Did she betray us, Cap?” Rhodey asked.

Steve could understand why Rhodey would think that. Natasha betrayed him once during the whole Sokovian accord ordeal. Steve didn’t believe it one bit. Natasha would never betray her family she worked so hard to protect.

“She’s not going to betray us.” Steve said.

Clint and Bucky went through the same process as Sam. But Bucky had the super soldier serum running through his body, he could withstand more pain and made Nat had to torture him longer. It felt like a day before Nat dragged the unconscious Bucky out of the torture room.

Nat motioned for the soldier to take Rhodey but Steve stepped in front of his friend.

“He’d been through enough.” The Captain said.

“Take him.” Natasha ordered.

Steve went inside the torture room with Natasha and Thanos’ guards. They strapped him down.
There was no way for Steve to break away from such a strong metal. His only hope now was Natasha.

Once they guards saw that Steve was safely secured on the bed, they left the room. Natasha circled around Steve, gauging whether what weapons she was going to use to torture him.

“Natasha, you can break away from this. This is not you to hurt your friends. Remember yourself, Natasha.” He said. “This is not you—ARGH!!”

Steve screamed when Natasha used her widow bite to taser him. Normally it would knock normal human out with such a high voltage. But for a supersoldier like Steve, he could endure more. She continued to bring down pain upon him. Steve endured but he never gave up.

“Natasha…” He called her again, using his loving voice, hoping that it would bring her out of whatever mind control she was in. It got her attention and she met his eyes. “If it is down to me to save your life, would you trust me to do it?” Steve whispered.

That did something to her. Natasha shook her head as if she was trying to fight the voices in her head. She walked toward him. Her hands cupped his face.

“I would now.” She replied with a smile. “And I’m always honest.”

Steve returned a smile as Natasha unlocked the restrain for him. The Captain pulled her into a kiss. Once they pulled away, his hands cupped her face and pressed their forehead together.

“I thought I lost you.” He whispered. “I thought I will never get you back.”

“I’m not going anywhere.” She replied.

“I love you.” He blurted out. “I just realized I never it to you before.”

Nat smiled fondly. “I love you too. But we have to get out of here.”

“Do you have any plan?”

“We can escape through escape pod or one of the fighter. Go get help from our friend. Then we come back and help Sam, Barnes, and Rhodey.” She explained. “Follow me.”

Nat led them out of the room through another door. Natasha used her cover to get them blasters and they put on a cloak, pulled up the hood to blend in with the people who lived on this ship. She led him to the level where most of Thanos’ slave lived. They had the lowest chance that someone might find them here.

“Nat, slowly down or we will get separate.” But it was too late as they were being pulled apart by the wave of crowd in the main area. Steve managed to make it to the escape pod but there was no sign of Natasha. “Damn it, Nat, where are you?”

Steve was worried, pacing himself back and forth in the empty corridor until he heard multiple footsteps coming his way. He thought the guards already found them but it was Natasha who jumped into his arms the moment she saw him.

“I thought I lose you again.”

“We have to go now. They already know—”

Nat didn’t even finish the sentence when there was laser shot firing at them. It just missed Steve’s
left arm by and inch. Proxima Midnight herself appeared behind the guards that circled around them. The couple had no choice but to surrender again.

“My master has a suitable punishment waiting for you.” Proxima said as she forced both of them to walk back into the throne room.

Thanos smiled when he saw the Captain and the Spy. With a snap of his fingers, chains came up from the floor and bound Steve’s wrists and ankles. The Mad Titan walked toward Natasha who stood still, meeting eyes with the Titan.

“Don’t you dare touch her.” Steve said through his gritted teeth. “If you want to hurt anyone, hurt me instead.”

Thanos’ smile widened. “That is exactly what I am going to do, Captain.”

Before Steve could react, Thanos ripped Nat’s head off before Steve’s eyes. The captain was shock, couldn’t get a word out of his mouth. He could hear Sam and Rhodey screamed her name.

“Nat…” That was all Steve could get out of his throat. “Nat!!!!!”

Thanos dropped her head at Steve’s feet and watched as the Captain’s tear fell from his blue eyes.

“No, no, NOOO!!!” His shout echoed through the throne room as Steve struggled to get out of his restrain.

Thanos laughed when he saw Steve trying everything he could to get to Natasha’s dead body. The mighty Captain was crying, calling out his lover’s name even he knew he couldn’t get her back.

And with another snap of his fingers, Steve opened his watered eyes to see that Natasha was still alive, as if the moment ago didn’t happen at all.

“Nat…” He called her.

“Steve…” That was all she could say before Proxima Midnight stabbed Natasha in the stomach. Steve screamed her name again as he watched her die for the second time.

“No, no, my dear Proxima. Stab her and make her slowly bleed out.” Thanos spoke up and snapped his fingers again. The time gems on his gauntlet lid up and Natasha was alive again. “We have to make the Captain watch her die.”

“Enough of this.” Steve grunted. “You leave her alone. No!!!!”

This time, Thanos made him watched her bleed out like he wanted. He saw Natasha struggled, groaned in pain, trying her hardest to stop the bleeding. When she realized it was no use, the spy crawled her way toward Steve, trying to get to him.

“Nat, don’t move.” Rhodey shouted. Clint was screaming her name.

“Natasha, stay still. You will bleed out.” Steve told her but Natasha kept on crawling until she finally reached Steve and bled out, dying just a few inch from her lover. “No! NOOO!!! Don’t leave me.”

It appears that Steve and the rest of his friends remembered everything, except for Natasha who died so many time and brought back to life by time gem. Thanos kept killing her in every way imaginable and each time Steve would scream from the top of his lungs, struggling to free himself
and save her. But he couldn’t even how hard he try, it was completely useless.

It made him feel weak and helpless like when he was just the scrawny, sickly kid. Steve closed his eyes in hope that he didn’t have to watch her die again.

“Oh, don’t close your eyes.” A sinister voice whispered in his eyes. And Steve felt like someone was forcing him to open his eyes. Ebony Maw was now standing in front of him and used sharp crystal bars to hold back Steve’s eyelids. “This could stop if you yield.”

“No way.”

Steve was forced to watch the love of his life died for countless time he could count. But every death of her burn in to his mind. Thanos kept repeating it until he could see the Captain started to break. There was no will to fight left in his eyes

“Tell the human down there to surrender. They will listen to you. They trust you.” Thanos demanded. “Give me the world and she will be safe. She will be your queen as you rule Earth for me. I will bring her back for you. I can give you the happiness you are seeking from her.”

“Go fuck yourself.” Steve replied.

This time Thanos ripped her heart out from behind and Steve watched her eyes widened and she coughed off blood and spatted on his face and her last word was his name. She fell toward him but he couldn’t catch her. Steve looked up to see Thanos was holding her still beating heart and crushed it before his eyes.

Steve cried out and Thanos knew he successfully broke the captain. Steve was about to give up after he saw her died one too many times. Thanos brought Natasha back to life again and prepared to kill her once more.

But the explosion diverted his attention away from the Captain and his spy. Natasha immediately went to Steve’s side. She could notice trail of tears on his face and how distraught he look. He called out her name repeatedly as if he wanted to make sure that she was there. Like he didn’t believe that it was really her, alive and well.

Thor busted through the window, along with Iron Man and Captain Marvel. Vision already took Corvus Glaive into another room. Outside of the spaceship, Nova Corp and the ravagers were fighting off Thanos’ fighter.

Thor and Captain Marvel were engaging with Thanos, keeping him busy while Wanda and Dr. Strange appeared from the portal. Wanda helped free Steve who immediately pulled Natasha into his arms.

“Doctor, we can teleport them back to the quinjet now.” Wanda said.

“You take them back. I will try to separate the infinity stone from his gauntlet.”

Wanda nodded and took all everyone back to the Quinjet. Inside the quinjet, Maria Hill and Nick Fury were there and to help with the injured. Wanda went back into battle to help her friends.

“You guys are safe now.” Fury said as he patched Sam up while Maria was taking care of Bucky’s wounds.

“How long did we get taken prisoner?” Steve asked.
“It was only four days, Steve.” Maria replied.

The Captain dropped his eyes to the floor. “It does feel like a month has passed.”

The Avengers all out attack turned out to be a successful one. Tony reported that Doctor Strange and Captain Marvel were able to separate two infinity stones from the gauntlet and Thanos was now retreating. The Nova Corp, the Ravagers, and the Guardians of the Galaxy will chase Thanos down and the Avengers will return home.

As they travelled back to Earth, Steve was quiet the whole way back to earth. He didn’t even talk to Nat or looked at her. Natasha who sat opposite from him, watched her lover closely and she could see through him.

“Steve, what’s going on?” She asked. The spy wasn’t sure what could make her Captain look this shaken.

Steve refused to talk to her. Even Sam, Bucky, Rhodey, and Clint kept quiet as well. Natasha got up from her seat and sat down on Steve’s lap. He avoided her eyes but his hands held hers. His thumb gently rubbing on her skin.

“Steve, love, talk to me.”

He shook his head and leaned into her neck. Nat held him as he quietly sobbed in her arms.

“I saw you die. Hundred times.” He finally admitted to her but still didn’t meet her eyes. “Every time it was a different way. Every time it was worse than the last. My heart almost give out. I almost gave him what he want just to save you. I don’t care if that means I’m going to enslave humanity to this tyrant.”

She was shock to hear it. She didn’t have any memory of what happened but it must've been terrifying to make Steve cried like this.

_He saw her die._

“I’m here, Steve.” She whispered and kissed his forehead. “What Thanos showed you isn’t real.”

“It’s real, Nat. You died and he brought you back to life by using time stone. I feel your blood splashed on my face. I feel your lifeless body against mine. I lost you for hundreds time, Nat.”

“After all of this, after we defeated Thanos, we will leave this life behind, okay? We don’t have to do this anymore.”

She knew this already took everything Steve had. He already gave this world and humanity everything but she will not let them take his sanity as well.

He finally looked up at her, blue eyes teary. “Okay…” he replied.

“We will retire. Living our own life now.”

He nodded and holding on to Natasha for the rest of the flight back to earth.
NO beta. Any mistake is all mine. Sorry for the bad grammar.

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