don't fix me

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don't fix me

by AnneKatherine

Summary

Toni's dealt with loss before, in fact she was an expert at it. Or so she thought.

She had this one thing out of the whole shit storm, one chance, one baby. And now... nothing.

She's really really fucking tired of people telling her what's 'fair' and what's not, and she's come to the conclusion that nothing is.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes
The last time Toni was speeding down a highway, she was high, drunk, and fucked up in seven other ways. Now she was just situationally fucked.

She wound down the middle of the road, three black cars behind her, and she could only look forward and hope they’d run out of gas before she did but this was a long ass highway.

Suddenly she saw another car in the distance, waiting for her.

“Fuck,” she cursed to herself, debating whether or not to try and run over the highway barrier, coast through the reinforcement or just surrender. Lord knows she had a few reasons to surrender.

But at what cost? Prolonging her death? She’d be tortured, maybe spill some information, she couldn’t decide, because she didn’t even know their organization.

While she’d been thinking, one of the cars behind her had pulled up, and was getting dangerously close, she unthinkingly bent down to dodge bullets, right as she crashed into the car blocking her.

They must’ve had some sort of gas or weapons in their backseat, because the explosion mostly went backwards. She could see the flames above her and behind her, but her car was mostly untouched by the fire. The metal and glass however, was bent and sprayed all around her, she could barely reach for the back pocket of her jeans.

“Stark.” She looked up, the drivers’ seat door was mostly ripped off, so she could see a man in black, covered in glass and blood standing above her. “This is for Captain America. Long live the revolution, let the Accords die!” he yelled, and Toni took his hesitation to rip her pistol from her jeans. She squeezed her eyes shut and jammed the trigger just a few times, but the silence between shots felt like years. He fell face first onto the glass surrounding her.

She groaned, there was metal and glass in her arms, and moving made her bones ache. She saw no other exit besides the door, that wasn’t layered in glass shards. She’d already ripped the seatbelt in the crash, so she crawled over the terrorist’s body, and out of the flipped over car.

She looked around the deserted highway, no one else was there, and she didn’t dare look over the other cars. They might still be alive. She checked her heavy jacket for her phone, praying it hadn’t been destroyed in the crash. The screen was badly cracked, but she managed to pull it out of her pocket without it falling apart.

911. She kept repeating the number in her head, but she was tempted to call Pepper or Rhodey or… Steve. He should know about this. But she settled on 911, hoping they’d find her before any living terrorist’s finished her off.

The dialing tone rang for what seemed like hours, and Toni couldn’t breath so well anymore. She couldn’t choose a side to lay on because they were all lathered in glass.

“911, what’s your emergency?” A polite clipped voice said finally. Toni couldn’t talk, so she just gasped into the phone hoping the operator would hear her.

“Are you injured? Do you need help?” The woman said, slightly more concerned, she didn’t wait for a response, “Your phone is being tracked help is on the way. Stay on the line, try and talk if you can.”
Toni wheezed, and rolled off her back so she could look down the road for the emergency response trucks, but a big shard of glass dug into her hip when she did so and she finally yelped a little. The corners of her vision were going dark, she could hear the operator asking for a response, but she still couldn’t say a word.

She faded finally, dropping her phone and her head limply on the highway.

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“Oh my gosh, Stark!” Steve yelled from the kitchen, Toni rolled her eyes and traipsed in to watch the show begin, “You do realize people other than you live here?”

She sat down at the counter, opposite him, “I do realize, but it’s still my name of the lease and on the bills so...” she said poking the mess she’d left on the counter. It wasn’t that big a deal, and she’d actually meant to clean it up before they got home, but there was this huge explosion in the lab and motor oil is a bitch to wash off so she’d gotten distracted.

“Well, it’s our name on the side of the building,” Steve countered, “So try not to be so inconsiderate.” She hated when he did that.

It was the equivalent of her parents telling her they weren’t angry, just disappointed. She looked over at the other Avengers, minus Thor, who usually dropped in, literally, every other week for a fight and some lunch and then went back to his galactic ass kicking.

They all sat in the family room, pretending to watch some home improvement show. Clint glanced over and awkwardly met her eyes for just a second, before looking away. Some spy.

“Will do Cap, I’ll just stay in my little corner and never dare to do stuff in my own home ever again.” She said, meaning it sarcastically, but she felt it come off just a little too sad.

“That’s not what I meant.” Steve said, turning around for a second he looked understanding and empathetic, but then he glanced at the Avengers conspicuously watching from the living room, “So don’t you try and twist my words! Ok, you’re not the victim here!” He yelled

“Victim?” Toni said, “It’s half a mug of spilled coffee and some bread crumbs! There isn’t a victim here! This literally does not matter!”

“Ok, ok, ok.” Bruce said from behind Toni, putting her hands on her shoulders. He knew that calmed her down. When Bruce Banner was telling you to chill out, it was a bad sign. She never meant to get so heated, but what could she say, she was a great actor.

“Let’s all go to sleep, maybe we’ll try again in the morning.” Bruce said, turning her away from Steve, but she turned around to see Clint and Natasha are taking the elevator up their respective floors, and Steve turns around to look at her.

Bruce dropped her off at her room and confirmed their plans to work in the lab tomorrow, “At noon ok? And don’t drop by my room to find me, I sleep in the nude. I’ll find you.”

Bruce chuckled, “Alright Toni. And I know it’s not completely your fault, but lay off Cap. I think you guys would really like each other if you gave each other a chance.”
Toni just grinned, “Yeah, maybe.” Bruce went off down the hallway, and Toni counted his steps till she couldn’t hear them anymore.

“JARVIS?” She said,

The kind robotic voice replied, “All the Avengers are on their floors, with the exception of Captain Rogers who’s down the hall. Should I give him the go ahead?”

“Yes.” She said, looking around her room to tidy and mess. She’d just managed to close her closet when she heard a knock on the door. “Come in!” She said.

“I have to admit, that was probably the best performance I’ve ever seen.” She turned around, and Steve stood there leaning on the door frame smiling.

“Thank you, one of my talents is finding stupid things to be angry about.” She grinned, and walked up to him,

“You? Oh no, there’s been a misunderstanding. I meant my performance. I think I really sold it. You were alright too, though.” He said, leaning down for a kiss.

“I beg to disagree, you almost apologized to me for a second there.” She said,

“I guess I forgot how mad I was supposed to be when I saw how beautiful you are.” Steve grinned, “Ok, you’re forgiven.” Toni replied happily, “But we’re both wearing way too much clothing if you wanted to continue.”

“Well, I have a fantastic solution to that.” Steve gently pulled off Toni’s shirt, before his own, while she worked on her jeans. “Isn’t Bruce dropping by tomorrow?” Steve said suddenly, “So maybe I shouldn’t sleep over.”

“I told him to come by noon and not to barge in, so we should be fine.”

Steve smiled, “Alright then, let’s make up for our argument.”

“Yeah, I’ll try not to make a mess.”
Toni couldn’t see anything, but she heard everything.

“22 year old female, blood work and scans aren’t in yet, but she’s bleeding!”

She felt herself be picked up and put down over and over. She was being rolled over, looked over, poked and prodded.

“Doctor, blood’s back, she’s not drunk or high, but she’s pregnant.” she could hear a far away voice say, then a door slammed shut. The person closest to her curses under his breath.

Shit, now they knew. Now everyone would know.

“Do we have an update on family? Or her name?” The doctor said, “I don’t know how much more we can do without consent.”

“She’s stable currently, but there’s internal hemorrhaging, if we don’t act now she and the baby won’t make it.”

What? She managed to move her arm a little, trying to touch her stomach. She thinks she was able to feel it earlier. Alex. She couldn’t move her hand far enough, it just laid limply at her side.

“Find me her next of kin.” He said, and once again she heard a door open and close, this time she could see a spot of light near the sound. Her vision was coming back.

“Alex,” she muttered, and for a moment she was afraid no one was there to hear it, she didn’t know if she could wait for someone to show up and do it again, but then she heard the shuffle of sneakers next to her, “What was that? What’d you say?”

She had to make her next breath count, if she wanted to be found, “Stark.” She murmured, “Toni.”

Once again silence ate at her for a few seconds, she worried she’d been talking in her head.

“Toni Stark? Oh my god!” The nurse ran out of the room, moments later more people arrived, Toni blinked and the blackness faded. She made out a doctor peeking at her with a flashlight.

“I knew she was familiar. All the cuts and bruises made it harder to see, but that’s Toni Stark. Call her offices, look for that Potts woman she’s always running around with.”

It was quiet, but Toni could see again, she felt her hand tremble a little, but it still wouldn’t move for her, “Her eyesight is coming back, pupils are equal and responsive.”

“We’ve gotten through to someone, he says he’s her emergency contact. James Rhodes.”

“Tell him the situation, it’ll be too late when she wakes up.” The doctor says, they return quickly,

“He gives consent to any surgery to save her life. We need to move more quickly.”

Toni’s heart is racing, she can’t sit up and she can’t talk but she doesn’t want this, she needs this baby to live.
“No,” She manages to raspily say, “Save my baby.” Her vocal cords burn, she can’t cough, her mouth is so weak. They must have already started the anesthesia.

“The baby could be injured, and it won’t survive delivery at this point, without this surgery, you’ll both die.” She looks up to see a young man in a white coat. It’s the first time she’s seen the doctor. He’s blonde and his blue are are all too familiar. “No.” She tries, but it comes out as a wheeze, “You’re not of sound mind and your emergency contact gave consent.”

Her eyes burn along with her throat, and tears line her eyes. Slowly they fall down her face and she struggles against the gurney. No. no. no. no. She can’t let Alex die, not like this.

The operating room is cold and clean, she’s ignored for the most part, the nurses are busy and the doctors are washing their hands. She wants to run, and scream and yell at all of them, because if she loses this baby, she loses herself.

They place a mask over her nose and now she can’t see or feel anything again.

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Staring out the window is getting old fast, Steve lies beside her fast asleep, and she’s got a pit in her gut waiting for him to wake. He stirred slowly, just as the light from outside hits his face.

“Toni?” He says, turning over towards her, “You awake?”

She hums in response, and before she loses the nerve she says, “I want to tell people.”

He sits up and starts getting dressed, “Tell people what?”

“About us.” She says shortly, she sits up and wraps the sheets around her, before leaning back on the headboard to see his reaction, when he doesn’t reply, she continues, “Us dating.”

“I don’t think the world would ever leave us alone after that.” He says, pulling a shirt over his head, “We don’t need to, why can’t we keep it to ourselves a while longer?”

She subconsciously brushes her stomach, but plays it off as an itch before he notices. She’d not going to trap him with her because of this baby. She wants him to want to be with her.

“We don’t have to tell everyone. I mean I wasn’t thinking a press conference.” She looks down at her hands, “Just our friends. The Avengers.”

“I don’t think it’s a good idea.” Steve says, “We’re doing so good in our little bubble. Aren’t we?”

She nodded, “Yeah, we are, but I’ve done secret relationships before, it’s all hot and heavy till it isn’t. This kind of thing is easy to walk away from and-” she stops short. She doesn’t want him to walk away. She doesn’t think she’d survive it.

“And?” Steve asks

“I don’t want to. Walk away.”

“Then don’t.” Steve says, “Keeping things as they are isn’t hard. All you have to do is not leave, so there’s no reason to make everything more difficult.”
“There is a reason.” She mumbles, her hand firmly planted on her stomach

“What reason?” He says

“It’s because.. I’m-”

“Excuse me, Miss and Captain Rogers. There’s an Avengers call.” Jarvis says suddenly

Steve’s head snapped upwards, “Where?”

“Sokovia.” The AI responds

Toni curses, “I can’t.” She stands up suddenly and starts putting her clothes back on,

“Really?” Steve said, “You’re letting this stupid argument get in the way?”

“No.” She snaps back, “I have to give a commencement speech at Harvard.”

“This is a little more important than a commencement speech.” Steve says

“Thor’ll be back by now, you don’t need me.” She said

“You can’t be serious.”

“As a heart attack.”

Steve throws his jacket on the bed, “God damnit Toni this is why I don’t want to go public.”

She stops putting her jeans on suddenly, of course that’s why. He wanted an out. “Ok. I understand.”

“Don’t do that!” He says, she gets her jeans on and starts out the door, “I’m not the bad guy here! I just liked what we have, and you can’t commit to being Iron Maiden or Toni Stark, how can you commit to a relationship?” He catches her arm on her way out the door, turning her back to him.

“I’ve committed years to being Iron Maiden. Blood, sweat, friends, family. I’ve got ten places to be everyday, you have one. So why don’t you let me go do my job.” He releases her arm, but the grimace is stuck on his face, she continues, “Don’t fucking touch me again.”

It’s fine, she’s fine. Being with him was getting old anyways. She’ll do it by herself.

Chapter End Notes

Almost cried at all the comments I got all of a sudden. There's a special place in heaven for y'all. I don't know when I'm getting 3 done, haven't even started editing yet, but I'll do my best. I'm going camping this weekend, and seeing Endgame tomorrow so probably mid next week.
Chapter 3

Toni wakes up with a shudder, it’s way too cold in the room. Too white and too cold. She tried to sit up, but her stomach burned. Her face shattered as she laid her hand on her stomach through the thin hospital gown.

“Ms. Stark.” She looks up, the mirror across the room, she sees her reflection. Her hair is matted to the sides of her head, and little white strips of paper cover cuts across her cheeks. Her eyes are bloodshot, and wild.

Rhodey follows the doctor into her room, and she lays back down on the bed.

“Your surgery was successful, you’ll make a full recovery.”

“It’s dead.” She says, turning her head from them, hot tears bunch up under her eyes and the bridge of her nose stings, “My baby is dead.”

“We couldn’t save both of you, you were losing so much blood, and there was already damage to the fetus.”

She hadn’t even started to show yet. Just under 4 months, the pregnancy books she bought said she’d start showing any day now.

“Is it.. still in me?” She says slowly,

The doctor pauses, “We had to remove her to operate on you. There was extensive damage, I’m afraid the car crash ruptured part of the uterus, we only would’ve been able to save her if you had no injuries, but that wasn’t the case.”

Toni’s voice cracked, “Her?”

The doctor looked down at his shoes, and said nothing. Rhodey walked slowly towards the bed she laid on, and touched her shoulder, “Toni.” She said nothing, finally letting her face crumble. The tears finally slide down her far as she turned to Rhodey and pulled him in for a hug. She still couldn’t sit up so he knelt down beside her and laid his head of her arms as she sobbed with him silently.

It was a while before they stopped, the doctor had gone without a word. She slowly rose from the bed, the pain in her stomach was just a faint burning.

“How long did you know?” Rhodey said once she was standing

“Three months, maybe a little longer.”

“You didn’t tell me?” Rhodey exclaimed, “Did you tell the father?”

“You weren’t exactly on call.” She tapped her fingers together, “He knew. He didn’t want to be involved I guess. Or maybe he didn’t want to be involved with me. It doesn’t really matter now Alex is dead.”

“Alex?”
Toni looked up at him, “That was her name. It was between Alex, Riley, and Charlie. Alex Stark sounded better so...”

“Who was it?” He said finally as a pause, “Did you have some secret relationship no one knows about or was it-”

“It wasn’t a booty call if that’s what your asking.” Toni said suddenly, pulling away from him, “I’m not 19 anymore.”

“That’s not fair.” Rhodey starters,

“Yeah actually it is. What’s not fair is a group of psycho terrorists murdering my baby!” She cried, and took a deep breath, “And I’m getting pretty fucking fucking tired of people telling how to feel!”

Rhodey stared at her a moment, “You’re right. I’m sorry.”

She grabbed the change of clothes laying at on the dresser to the right of the bed, “Tones, you shouldn’t go now.”

“I’m fine, doc didn’t say I had to stay and the Towers medical facility is state of the art.”

“I meant you shouldn’t alone.” Rhodey started towards her,

She turned to him, her gaze piercing his eyes, “Why change things up now?”

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She knew it wouldn’t go well. She knew he’d overreact. But she couldn’t keep coddling him, he was an adult.

“Have you even read these?” Steve wildly shook the thick packet of paper in the air, “Have you seen this stuff?”

“Yes Steve. I read them before I showed them to you.” She replied, she’d read them six time, annotated it three times, reorganized it once, and burned it twice. Because she knew what this would do to them.

“Well, maybe you should take another look, because this is ridiculous.” He finally set the paper on the table, “It’s taking away our freedom, our rights!”

“We don’t have rights!” She cried, “We lost them when we got careless, reckless. When people got hurt, we lost them.”

“You mean when you hurt them.” Steve said,

Toni flinched, “I’ve made mistakes. We all have. I’m doing my best to right wrongs, there’s no shame in that.”

“You’re guilty.” Steve continued, as if she’d said nothing, “You created Ultron, and you skipped out on fighting him, because you were mad I wouldn’t tell everyone I liked you. Are you really so insecure?”
Toni scrunched her eyes brows, she considered turning away, but that would only show how much his words hurt, how deep they cut. “I didn’t choose not to go to Sokovia because of you and our shitty relationship.”

“Oh, I’m sure that Harvard thing was much more important.”

“I didn’t go because I’m pregnant.”

Finally he was silent. She couldn’t help but take satisfaction in the look of pure shock on his face, it was refreshing.

He ruined the moment, “Who’s the father?”

“You jackass.” She said, snatching the papers from the table and stuffing it into the folder, and strode down the hall.

“It’s a fair question!” He called after her down the hallway, “The timeline barely adds up, and your not exactly known for being faithful, so excuse me for making sure-”

“No.” She said, stopping suddenly, “I’m done making excuses for you. You’re a big boy, and if you don’t like the accords feel free to protest.”

“You can’t control everyone.” He says, “You can’t micromanage life.”

“You can’t refuse responsibility for your actions Captain.” She said, “You’ve been clinging to things to keep afloat. Me, the past, the team. Time to swim.”

She stood there a moment silently, before he said, “I lost Peggy! The last person left in my life. You don’t know what that’s like.”

She smiled, “She was my aunt.”

“What?”

“Aunt Peggy. Visited me at MIT, came to all my dance recitals, brought me presents on Christmas. I knew her for nearly twenty years. I researched Alzheimer’s for five of them. How long did you know her again?”

He blinked, “She never talked about you. I didn’t know.”

“She didn’t remember much by the time you came around. There’s a lot you didn’t know.”

“So it’s mine?” He says finally

“Yes.”

“What are you going to do?” He asks

“Whatever I want.”

Chapter End Notes

I did this instead of my project, so I hope you enjoy while my grades suffer
It took months before she managed to pull herself together again. She’d stared at a bottle of booze for what felt like years, before she found every bottle in the tower and poured them down the drain one by one. She was tired of moving backwards.

Steve called most days, he did that before the accident, and he did it after. She had to give him points for dedication.

No one knew about the crash. She paid the news to keep it quiet and remain anonymous. All the offenders died in the crash.

She lived in a different world from everyone else. They all seemed so naive, and carefree. All she could do most days was count down till her due date.

July 12th came and went with no fuss at all. She allowed herself ten minutes to look at the small box in her attic filled with tiny toys, onesies, and ultrasounds.

The Avengers call was unexpected, she didn’t think there was much of a team left. Most of them were missing or on the run. But a little message gave her coordinates for an abandoned building in New York, and one word: Assemble.

She went alone, though she probably shouldn’t have. If it was a trap, she would have been screwed.

But it wasn’t. Steve was waiting on the first floor of the building, in civilian clothes with a beard.

“Toni.” He said nothing else, but his eyes were questioning everything. She realized he had absolutely no idea what had happened. He didn’t even know if he was a father. She wanted to cry, imagining going through what happened again. Would he blame her for killing their baby?

“Steve.” She replied, “Is it just you?”

“No.” He said, “They’re all upstairs, I’m the front door greeter.”

They stood there in silence, the air thick with anger, resentment, and most of all confusion.

Finally Steve broke the quiet, “You aren’t pregnant.”

She blinked, “I’m not.”

“You had the baby?” He says,

She takes a deep breath, “No.”

With a single word his whole demeanor changed.
“You aborted it?” He said, “You killed our baby?”

She stared at him silently, he took her lack of response as confirmation.

“You can’t just-” he started, “You can’t just decide something like that! I was ready!”

“Ready for what?” she said,

“To be a father!”

She blinked, “You’re on the run from almost every government on Earth. You don’t have a job, or a home.”

“I have a heart. A soul. More than you can say.”

“It was four months.” She said

“Is that even legal?” He replied,

“It was four months.” She repeated, “I was being chased by three SUVs, and a fourth hit me head on. There were no survivors. Not the drivers of the other cars, not our daughter. And certainly not me.”

He stared a moment, “You were in an accident?”

“Yes.”

“Why didn’t I hear anything about it on the news?”

“I paid off the doctors and the press. If someone dug into my records, they’d find out about the pregnancy.”

He stepped a little closer, “I’m sorry. Do you know why you were being chased?”

She looked up at him, ‘This is for Captain America. Long live the revolution, let the Accords die!’ rang in her head.

“No. They were all killed in the crash, and police found no ties to known terror groups. They were just crazy. Probably weren’t even targeting me.”

“I know you’ve lost a lot. I can see that now.” He said, “But you’ve still got stuff left. The team, Iron Maiden, me.”

“I know. Trust me, I’ll do anything to protect the people I love. So let’s go in there, assemble and what not.”

He takes her hand, and they walk up the stairs.

The room is shabby, and crowded with friends. She greets Bruce happily, till he tells her what’s coming. Who’s coming.

In the end they make a plan. She looks to Steve, “For the people we love?”

He nods.

“Whatever it takes.”
End Notes

If y'all want more, you're gonna have to comment cause I need some serious motivation right now.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!