Into Yellow
by c0llapsing97

Summary

Giving into lust during a war wasn't ideal, and falling in love was even worse. After archaeologist Lucy Heinrich is tasked with saving missing art from the Nazi's, she finds herself falling the most infuriating man she has ever met: Bucky Barnes. Though she swore to never love again after her fiancé is killed in a death camp, Bucky is determined to win her over.

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"Didn't your mother ever teach you it's rude to stare at a lady?"

A smile formed on Bucky’s lips as a light blush rose to his cheeks, he smirked while looking down with embarrassment. Lucy welled with pride, knowing she made him nervous.

He cleared his throat and crossed his arms across his chest, "Sorry, I uhh—" He scratched the back of his neck uncomfortably as he stepped into the room, "I didn’t mean to spy. It's just that umm, I walked by and I saw you." She stood up and she felt how his gaze raked over her silk-clad form.

His eyes fell on her, and he couldn't help but drink her in as he said quietly, "Holy shit you're so goddamn beautiful," It was so quiet she could barely hear him. "Christ, you trying to break my heart or something by wearing that dress? I mean really you're killing' me here, sweetheart."

Notes

Hello! Thanks for choosing to read this story! This is my first time writing for the MCU fandom, so take it a little easy on me. Also, please forgive the copious spelling/grammatical errors. Obviously, I do my best to edit but like many writers I find it difficult edit my own work and none us are perfect. This fic has also been posted on fanfiction as well if anyone prefers to read it on a different platform.

I've tried to keep as close to the Captain America: The First Avenger movie as I could. I also had to do a lot of research on my own regarding the times as well as World War II, as a means to make it as accurate as possible. If anyone sees any errors in some of the content feel free to point it out and I will happily make revisions. I also greatly urge people to pay attention to the years and locations in which the chapters take place. There will be a lot of jumping back and forth with memories and such.

This story is rated 'M' for a reason, it will feature strong language/violence/alcoholism/addiction/sexual harassment/suicide/and light smut. There are also some underlying tones of sexism/racism/hate/and anti-semitism that was typical in Europe during the 1940's, and there are explicit details and descriptions involving the Holocaust. Before each chapter I will provide a trigger warning as a means to alert everyone of the themes the chapter contains.

Thank you again and enjoy! :))

Disclaimer: I own none of the characters/storylines from the Marvel Universe.

Trigger warning: Alcoholism, violence, and suicide.
Prologue & Chapter I

Prologue

Italy, 1943.

Lucy looked up into the mirror the moment she heard that the floorboards strain under somebody's weight. The house was old and rather rickety, and with every step, the old wood groaned with its withering age.

Her deep hazel eyes shot up to make eye contact with the handsome man who had stilled at the doorway. She had left the door open enough through a crack on purpose, hoping more than anything in the entire world he would walk by. Her heart raced in anticipation, and she felt her chest rising and falling upon sensing his body outside the room.

When their eyes met, her heart damn near stopped. Her large doe eyes were greeted with his steel blue ones, and she swallowed a lump forming in her throat as her heart rate sped up. She felt a shiver run down her spine as his unsettling stare fell upon her. The familiar ache that she had been feeling for weeks now every time he looked at her like that had returned, and this time with an insatiable need.

They had been taking cover in the old house for the night. After a gruelling day of fighting, the remaining team had found refuge in an abandoned town. Their previous residents evacuated due to the war, and several houses were empty. After completing a mission and waiting for a rendezvous, they had all stopped to rest and find a safe place to sleep.

They had found a rather comfortable looking home, just on the edge of town which provided them with a good view of their surroundings. They would rest there for the night and continue in the morning. Being the only woman, Lucy had gotten her own room. She was thankful for it, as that meant she had gotten her own bed, as well as privacy.

There had also been a bath, which upon the sight of it had made her stomach clench with excitement and a smile to form on her face. The prospect of getting clean after being covered in dirt, grime, and blood from a day of fighting was just too appealing.

The previous owners had left in a rush clearly, and the moment Lucy found herself alone she had stripped herself of her uniform, and poured soaps and scents that they had left into the water spilling in the basin. She had stripped bare, not minding the chilly wind, and sunk into the water the moment it was filled to her satisfaction.

She revelled in the warmth and tossed her hair back into it to wash it clean. Lucy felt rather bad for the other soldiers, as they had to wash outside with small basins of cold water being poured onto their heads. At that moment, she could only enjoy herself though. She cleaned herself and closed her eyes only for her thoughts to drift towards a certain soldier.

After she had finished her bath, the soldier that her thoughts kept drifting to was standing in her doorway, looking at her in the mirror. Once again, her heart pounded and her palms became sweaty.

She sat at the vanity and her hand stilled as they were brushing her long, dark brown hair. Freezing while under his gaze, Lucy's breath hitched as he leaned himself against the doorframe after he had opened the door wide enough to see her.

His hands were casually placed in his pockets, and a small smile rested on his face as he watched her
Lucy felt her stomach drop and suddenly felt as though she would tremble under the gaze of the man whom she had deep, inequitable, and no longer deniable, feelings for.

Bucky Barnes stood there, looking at her with a gaze which made her feel as though she were the most beautiful woman in the world.

Her hands stilled and then put the heavy brush down onto the vanity as their gaze remained locked. She placed the brush carefully down and then turned around from the mirror to look directly at him. With a flirtatious grin, she asked accusingly, "Didn't your mother ever teach you it's rude to stare at a lady?"

A large smile formed on his lips as a blush rose to his cheeks, he smirked as he looked down with embarrassment. Lucy felt pride well in her chest as she thought of how nervous she made him. She had made the most charming man she had ever met, of whom had more sex appeal than any other person she had known, blush and become flustered.

Bucky cleared his throat and then crossed his arms across his broad chest and looked up at her, "Sorry, I uhh—" He scratched the back of his neck uncomfortably as he stepped forward into the room, "I didn't mean to spy. It's just that umm, I walked by and I uh, I saw you…" she stood up from the chair at that moment, rising slowly as his mouth dropped open ever so slightly.

Upon arriving at the house, they found the family who deserted it left many of their belongings. As Lucy and the rest of the Howling Commandos searched for anything useful, Dum Dum Dugan, someone she now considered a close friend, pulled her aside.

He kindly explained that in the master suite's closet there were dresses that were still hung up and that she should take a look at them if she wished. Having not worn one for a very long time, and missing her femininity, Lucy decided to take a peek at them.

She only wanted to look, and remember a time from before the war where she had such luxuries. She missed feeling pretty and feeling like a woman. She missed the feeling of silk on her skin, and just for once, wearing something that wasn't a man's uniform.

Upon looking in the closet, she only found three dresses. Two everyday ones, and a silk nightgown. Lucy had touched it with her fingers and immediately knew that she had to have to rest on her skin.

Her pale skin was in contrast with the off white cream colour of the silk. Her dark hair rested down, covering the more revealing parts of the bodice. She felt herself blush at how exposed she currently was, and noticed just exactly how sultry her attire was in those moments. Although the nightdress fell to just above her calves, it clung to her curves tightly.

His eyes fell upon her, and he couldn't help but drink her in as he said quietly, "Holy shit you're so goddamn beautiful," it was so quiet she could barely hear, and she wasn't even sure if she was intended to. Suddenly, Bucky cleared his throat again and crossed his arms, trying to smile as he teased, "Christ, you trying to break my heart or something by wearing that dress? I mean really you're killin' me here, sweetheart."

Lucy found herself smiling as she stood there, laughing slightly at his nervousness. She licked her lips, feeling his eyes drawn to them, "Yeah, something like that," she smirked before shrugging, a
smug expression on her face. He only chuckled at her flirtations and then shook his head.

She smiled at him ever so slightly. Her expression suddenly made him regain his confidence and stride across the room. A small turntable rested in the corner, and she watched curiously as Bucky went forward towards it. She cocked her head, watching him intensely.

The cold wind had settled through the room now that the door was open, and Lucy found herself crossing her arms across her chest in embarrassment as she realized just revealing the nightdress truly was.

Bucky found what he was looking for, and put the vinyl into the turntable, and placed the needle onto it. Her heart dropped when she heard the song, and the memory of a warm summer night a few years prior came racing back into her mind.

The noise of trumpets filled the room, echoing in her ears as he walked forward. Her heart raced even more, and she swallowed a lump forming in her throat. The look he gave her created an ache in her lower stomach, and she felt her breath begin to quicken. Her chest rose and fell a little faster, something he noticed from the revealing state of her nightdress.

"Dance with me?" He asked her in a soft whisper as his hands gently settled on her waist.

Lucy closed her eyes and inhaled deeply as she moved forward, silently saying yes. He smelled of pine leaves, and aftershave and the wine that they had all been drinking downstairs. She felt her cheeks begin to turn pink as he drew her in flushed to his body. Although this feeling of being so close to him wasn't necessarily foreign, given to events from the last few weeks, it still dizzied her and made her mad with the need to be closer. There was no space between them, and she wrapped her arms around his neck and exhaled with a feeling of relief. She felt safe with him.

After a moment they had become more comfortable and started swaying softly to the music. Her chin rested on his shoulder, and intimately drew her lips to on his neck, almost tasting him. He pulled her in even closer, inhaling sharply in a hiss as he did so while shivering at the small grazing of her lips. Nostalgia from the one night they had spent together came flooding back, coursing over her like a wave.

He pulled away from her just slightly enough to look down at her dark hazel eyes. Their gaze was fixated on one another. Once again, it had felt like they were the only two people in the world. Bucky brushed a small piece of hair out of her face, his thumb gently trailing her cheek in the process.

Their mouths were so close that she could feel his hot breath on her skin and he held her face in his hands. Instead of their lips touching, their foreheads met instead. They rested against one another, swaying intently to the music. Not a single second went by where Lucy's heart wasn't racing for him.

The eerie sound of trumpets played, and they held each other closer. In the distance, they could hear bombs going off in another village not far from where they were. Another fight was going on, and gunfire echoed. But none of that mattered at that moment. All that mattered was each other.

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Chapter I

Queens, New York, 1932.

The cold droplets of rain ran down her cheek as she stared at the large wooden coffin being lowered
into the ground. Two men who were standing by in the cemetery had offered to help them and they accepted. Other than the three young girls and the two strange men, no other guests were there to say their final goodbyes.

She felt nothing as the caskets were placed in the hole that she and her sisters had dug by themselves. It was hard to do since the ground was wet and muddy, but for hours the three of them had been hunched over. The two oldest girls used the spades they had found lying around, and the youngest using her hands. With no money to their name, they couldn't even hire someone to dig their parents' graves. Instead, they had to do it themselves. At such young ages, none of them had ever thought they would lose their parents, especially not now.

However, it wasn't the first time they had to be put in a situation like that. At seventeen years old, Lucy Heinrich had now buried more than half her family. First, it was little Kathleen the year prior, and now Mama and Papa.

She could only stare at the two plain spots, discouraged they were not even able to afford gravestones. They would be marked by rocks Adeline and Beatrix had gathered, signifying the only markers that her parents were resting there.

She and her sisters could only stare at the two holes in the ground. Beatrix leaned against her spade, looking unemotional and stoic.

"You gals need any help fillin' those graves?" The one boy asked, looking only a few years older than herself. By the looks of it though, he was much poorer. His once white shirt had a rip in the elbow, and his trousers were patched up roughly.

The times had not been kind to anyone, and really the only reason her family was able to survive was because of Mama's job. Her father had always had a hard time finding work. Not only was he known for being the neighbourhood drunk, but he also barely spoke English. In the case of most factories, they'd rather hire a hard-working, true-blooded American than some washed up drunken German who served in the Great War.

"We got it," Lucy said, clicking her jaw, still unable to tear her eyes from the dark-colored caskets. "Thanks, fellas."

"Miss," The scrawny boy with dirt smeared over his cheeks tipped his hat to her, while the other who said nothing only tried to give the girls a small, sympathetic smile. Nothing they could say or do would make the three of them feel any better.

The three girls made no hasty movements to begin dumping the earth back into the pits. The rain continued to soak through their clothes and hair. None of them had bothered to dress fancy for the funeral. After all, no one showed up. They didn't even have a priest present. Mostly, because they couldn't afford to pay for one's service, but also because it was only their mother who was religious and their father was an atheist.

"Should we pray?" Adeline asked, seeming much older than her eleven years at that moment.

"No, nothing we could say to God will change anything," Lucy replied. "Plus, we already know Mama's up there."

"Where do you think Papa is?" Adeline asked her, staring up at the brunette as droplets of rain caught in her eyelashes. Thunder boomed behind them, shaking them to their core and Beatrix notably flinched at the sound. Lucy was about to answer her when her sharp-witted sister beat her to it.
"Where do you think?" Beatrix replied, her harsh tone cutting through the chilly air. She kicked some of the dirt into his grave as she spoke bitterly, "He deserves where he's going."

Adeline only nodded, and even though she was young, she had a fiery temper much like her sisters. Her voice grew quiet, and all she said was "Good." Lucy had never seen her sister look so dark and angry before. Usually, the eleven-year-old was always the happiest out of the three of them. She still had the carefree innocence of childhood neither Lucy or Beatrix had the luxury of having anymore. Yet, in the last twenty-four hours, Lucy had seen both girls mature well past their years.

Beatrix only sighed before speaking up, the rain only pouring heavier by the minute. The droplets pounded on Lucy's shoulders and back like tiny knives, cold and sharp, chilling her right to the bone. "Should we at least say something before we cover them? It doesn't seem right to not say anything at all."

Lucy only walked forward, and immediately she unclasped the locket around her neck and for the first time tears welled up in her eyes. Looking at it, the gold gleamed back as raindrops gathered on it. She held her hand outstretched, and then dropped it into the pit before saying "Goodbye Mama."

Her sisters muttered their goodbyes as well, and Lucy strode over to her father's grave, stared at for only a moment, before only saying "Papa," and then spit into his grave.

Her sisters followed suit, Adeline struggling only for a moment. She hacked back the most phlegm she could and coughed it out of her mouth. A small trail of spit was hanging from her lip and she brushed it off with the sleeve of her dirty coat.

The girls didn't need to say anything else. Their mother was with Kathleen now, and their father... Well, he was somewhere else. Without saying a word, they grabbed their spades and began shoveling the earth back into the holes.

"What are we gonna do now, Lucy?" Adeline asked her, scooping the dirt in her hands and tossing it on top of the wooden casket.

"I don't know, Adie, but I'm sure we'll figure something out." She lied. She didn't want to scare her little sister, but she and Beatrix were already working shifts after school to make ends meet on top of their mother's income. Although she was given a full scholarship from Columbia, Lucy was worried she wouldn't be able to attend since she would be too busy working at the canning factory she was currently employed at. Faking a smile, she looked at her little sister and assured her, "We always pull through."

Thunder boomed above, cracking into the silence that had followed. This time Lucy winced, and although she had never been fond of storms, she had never once feared them. Not until the night before…

It had been an ugly week in October in New York. The cold had finally begun to settle in, and the weather was starting to worsen. They would have an early winter, she was sure of it. Currently, they didn't even have enough money to keep their electricity running, and Lucy's mother knew that if she didn't find another job on top of her nannying that they would likely freeze and starve in the winter.

Her mother had worked herself to the point of exhaustion. Not only was she up before the crack of dawn, standing in line for food stamps to provide for her girls, but she also worked a full-time job caring for the children of a very wealthy and prominent family. The family had always treated her well and they paid her more than others would have offered, since they owned many of the building projects that Roosevelt approved. However, it was simply not enough and their mother had been attempting to take on a few shifts at the factory Lucy and Beatrix also worked at.
Lucy's father was capable of working. Physically, he was healthy and sound. But her mother tried to explain fighting in the Great War before Lucy was born had changed something in him. She said when he came back, something had broke and he had never been quite right since.

They had met while her mother was studying in Germany in 1913. She had met her father at a dance hall, and they had fallen in love almost immediately. The way her mother described him, kind and generous and full of life was not the man that Lucy knew.

The man Lucy knew would have his head in the toilet by two in the afternoon, buzzed out of his goddamn mind and vomiting his guts. He was the man that would hit her mother for no reason, and scream at his children for so much a dropping a plate or not covering their mouth when they sneezed. He was not the man her mother described, and Lucy wondered if he ever really was the person her mother once believed him to be.

He left the war early on, suffering from shell-shock and was given a dishonourable discharge for people believing he was a coward. A year later, Lucy was born and her family fled back to America where her mother had lived her whole life.

Things got more difficult for her father once they arrived in New York. As someone who only spoke German and had even fought in the trenches, he very quickly became unpopular within the community.

One of Lucy's earliest memories was her father coming home with a bloodied nose and alcohol on his breath and smelling like piss. He had been jumped again by some guys thinking they were heroes, not knowing they were attacking a man who would later go home and treat his wife with the same sort of violence.

The worst part was always the screaming between them. It was always in German, and so loud the Thompson's, the neighbours downstairs, would start screaming about bloody krauts and begging them to shut up.

The screaming became normal. It was all Lucy and her sisters ever knew, but never did it get extremely dangerous until after Kathleen died. After she was born her father had promised to try to be better, to try to get a job and stop drinking. It wasn't until Lucy came home a little too late from school and didn't get to her chores right away and he slammed her against the wall. He pressed her head into a framed picture of her mother's family so hard the glass broke and cut her left cheek and it was then that Lucy knew he could never change, regardless of what he said.

It only got worse after that. Kathleen being gone only made him drink more, and become angrier and bitter. Not to mention, people began to hate him more for than just being German. Everyone knew he was a lazy drunk who beat his family, and what they didn't realize was how they treated him would be later how he would treat his daughters when he finally stumbled home.

Shell-shock was what her mother told her was wrong with her father. He had seen things in the war that made his mind sick, and because people didn't understand it they thought he was a coward. The fact he wasn't put in a firing squad was a miracle, really. But he was never the same, and often he woke up screaming in the night from fear. He jumped at fireworks and the little bottle rockets the kids lit off on the alleys. He hated thunder the most, muttering something about shells falling. Sometimes, Lucy would find him cowering under the table at particularly loud cracks, shaking like a leaf in the wind.

It was why she hated storms in particular. Because whenever they happened, he always got out-of-his-mind drunk and became more violent than usual.
The last night was one of the worst times she had ever seen him. It had been close to one in the morning when their mother had finally gotten home from work, and the entire house felt like it was shaking from the boom of thunder. Each time it happened, Lucy was afraid that her father would come into their room and yank one of them out of bed and begin to scold them about something mundane or force one of them to have a drink with him. Recently, that had been his favorite thing to do. She recalled how two night before, it had been close to two in the morning when he pulled her from her bed. The kitchen light was on, blinding her momentarily as he forced her to sit in one of the dining room chairs.

"Here," He told her in German and passed her a rather large glass of whiskey. "Have a drink with me and let's sit and talk."

Lucy didn't want to though. All she wanted to do was go to bed, and when she protested he had yelled and struck her across the face. It was the reason as to why she still had a large yellow bruise under her eye.

After that Lucy swallowed the burning liquid in a large gulp, making her cough. Her mother had come in after Lucy had already been forced to have two drinks. She told him to stop it, and she'll get sick but he only replied 'What's so wrong with the girl having a damn drink with me?'

He then mumbled on about old war stories that didn't make any sense to Lucy. He was so drunk that he looked half-asleep and drool escaped his lips every now and then between hiccups. He kept forcing her to drink though, and after her fifth glass of straight liquor, she began to get sick.

However, when he began yelling the night before Lucy had known it would not be like how it was a few days prior. That time was different and Lucy and Beatrix had both been awake. Although all the girls shared a room, only Beatrix and Adie shared a bed since Lucy had been getting too old. The room was so small that there was only about a foot of space between the two beds. Lucy and Beatrix couldn't help but stare at one another and flinch every time they heard a string of German curse words spew from their father's drunken mouth.

Adeline was fast asleep, snoring soundly. She was used to the yelling and the ruckus of their father yet again breaking another item in their house.

Thunder boomed again overhead, following a strike of lightning that illuminated their bedroom. It cast shadows against the wall, but even as girls they weren't ever afraid of the dark.

Because monsters didn't live in dark. Monsters lived in people. And it wasn't until their mother came home that night that they realized just how terrified they should be.

As soon as the front door had closed and their mother walked in the screaming begun. Lucy pulled her pillow on top of her head to drown it out. She didn't like hearing her mother get hit, and she found she resented her father a little less when she could pretend she didn't know what exactly what was going on.

Their muffled yells were blocked out by the pillow, and she turned to her side to see Beatrix had followed her actions, also trying to get some shut-eye before they had to be up early for school the following day. Lighting struck, and thunder followed. What happened after that was a blur, but Lucy recalled hearing a crash and a particularly pained scream of her mother. Immediately she hopped up, throwing the covers back and her bare feet touching the cold floorboards.

Usually, her father locked them in for the night but that evening he had forgotten. Beatrix also sat up and whispered "Lucy? Where are you going?" Confused and concerned, the younger girl's heart pounded in her chest as her older sister approached the door.
"Stay here!" Lucy commanded with a whisper. Dressed only in a nightgown, Lucy slipped out of the door and went into the kitchen where only a few candles lit up the room in an eerie yellow hue. It cast more terrifying shadows, but what was worse was her father screaming violently at her mother in German.

Lucy's heart early leaped from her chest when she saw her mother slumped against the wall, blood pooling out of a large gash on her forehead, leaking all the way down and soaking part of her blouse. Her father's face was red from screaming, the vein above his eye looking as though it were about to burst and sweat gathered in his brow.

"Mama?" Lucy's voice shook as she stared, terrified. Her mother's eyes locked on her and they widened.

"Lucy, go to your room!" She yelled in English so her father wouldn't understand, fear reflecting on her voice. "Go to your room and lock the door! Hide with your sisters!" Lucy had never seen her mother like that before. She was terrified, Lucy realized.

As soon as she spoke her father had whipped around, now screaming at Lucy. Lucy's blood turned to ice and she knew her mother was being serious. Without even saying anything, Lucy turned on her heels and ran as fast as she could. She could hear her mother yelling behind her "Run, Lucy! Lock the door!" Her father was right on her tail. "Klaus, leave them alone! Leave them alone, you son of a bitch!" She didn't even think to switch to German, still yelling in terror in English.

Lucy got back to the room, slammed the door shut behind her and twisting the lock as quickly she could. Both Beatrix and Adeline were up in a flash, "Luce, what's happening?" Beatrix asked and tore the covers off herself as Adeline breathed heavily, clearly afraid.

More shouting commenced, and then next thing she knew a flash of lightning struck again. It illuminated the room, broadcasting the fear all present within all three young girl's eyes. Then thunder yet again made a large, echoing, bang so loud that it almost clattered her teeth. The noise echoed in her ears, and Lucy felt it deep within her body.

Another loud bang followed, and Lucy's mouth fell open in shock. She knew the noise wasn't thunder, it was different. A heavy thud was what she remembered hearing next. She stared at her sister in horror, realizing it wasn't thunder that they had just heard, and something much, much more terrifying. Tears welled up in her eyes as she knew was it was immediately. It was a gunshot.

"Lucy, no!" Beatrix screamed, her voice breaking after her older sister left the room with haste. Adeline was crying loudly, clutching her stuffed rabbit thier mother made to her chest and she was wailing "Mama!" over and over again.

Lucy has tears falling from her eyes, as she arrived in the kitchen, her father standing there with shock written on his face, and her mother was lying in a puddle of thick, crimson blood on the floor. Her hair was matted and she blankly stared up at Lucy, her eyes open and unblinking.

Without even hesitating, all Lucy could ask in a shaky but firm voice was, "Was hast du gemacht?"

What did you do?

He looked at her, not saying anything, only closing his eyes like he was in pain and the gun rattled in his weak hand. Tears were in his eyes as well. When he didn't answer immediately, Lucy screamed, her voice cracking from the pain, "Was hast du gemacht!" Her cheeks were wet from crying, and her vision was blurred from how tears were welled in her eyes.

Instead, he laid on the floor, head blown in and his face an unrecognizable mess. Brain matter was
Lucy touched her cheek, trying to clear her face of the tears, but when she brought her hand down she realized that it was coated with blood. Some had gotten on her porcelain skin, staining its paleness.

She heard a small choked sob yell from her bedroom, "Lucy? Mama?"

"D-Don't come out here! Stay in your room until the police come!" Lucy yelled at her sisters, hoping they wouldn't see the sight of both their parents lying dead on their floor. Surely one of the neighbors would have called after hearing the gunshots.

"Is—is everything okay?" Adeline called out, her voice shaking."Lucy, I'm scared. Where's Mama?"

Lucy couldn't answer, she only collapsed to her knees on the ground and let out a noise that was partially half way between a scream and a sob. Her skin on her knees was coated in the sticky warmth of one of her parent's blood, and she tried not to think of it before she was about to pass out.

The last thing she noticed before she heard the sound of police sirens was her own voice in her head telling herself 'No, everything is not okay'.

Thunder rang in her ears once more.

And that was how they got there, packing all the dirt on top of the caskets. The police had eventually come and cleared their bodies away, delivering them to the cemetery Lucy told them to bring the bodies.

The officers had tried to be as sympathetic as possible. Wrapping all the girls in blankets and trying to comfort them, but nothing they could say could change things. Their mother was dead. They were alone. Her father's parents were still in Germany, not having spoken to him since he had wed an American. And her mother's parents were long dead, succumbing to sickness when she was even younger than even Adeline.

For the first time, they were truly alone. With no family, their friends were only able to do so much since they were also having a difficult time since the recession which people were dubbing 'The Depression' struck.

The girls had to face the fact that they were orphans, and the world was going to be cruel to them and they would likely struggle their entire lives.

None of them had cried since that morning for their mother. At that point, the numbness had set in, and they knew that they would have to take care of their parent's bodies themselves since they had no money. Hell, at this point they didn't even know how they were going to get their next meal.

As Adeline packed the dirt in more with her hands, she looked up at a car that pulled up on the street. It was a slick, black Ford that still somehow managed to shine even while covered in rain.

A woman and a small child got out of it, dressed in fancy black clothes, obviously there to pay their respects. None of the girls had black clothes, so they wore that they would have worn to church, trying to look nice despite the circumstances.

Adeline frowned and she asked, "Is that Mrs. Lee?" Both Lucy and Beatrix's heads shot in that direction, and as it turned out, Adeline was right.

Carol Lee, their mother's employer, was walking toward them. Her purse on her shoulder, satin
gloves on hand, and she was trying to avoid the mud while in heels.

"I'll be damned, it is too," Lucy swore. She squinted at the lady, almost positive she was a mirage.

The beautiful woman approached them, her daughter Charlotte at her side. She tried to avoid the mud as best she could but failed in the end. She approached the girls, who were in ratty Sunday clothes that hung over their shallow forms, covered in dirt and mud. Mrs. Lee held Charlotte's hand tightly, and her lips pursed into a firm line as she said "Hello girls," In a thick Southern accent as she approached them.

The girls said nothing back. They only stared, wide-eyed and Beatrix raised an eyebrow at the strange, wealthy woman, wondering what she could possibly want. "How-how are you?" She stuttered awkwardly.

Lucy almost scoffed. She wanted to shoot back her question of how she had the gull to even ask such a stupid thing. Instead, Adeline beat her to it. From where Adeline was kneeling in the mud she said solemnly, "Mama and Papa are dead."

A wave of sadness washed over Mrs. Lee's face and it was then that Lucy realized that she wasn't just another stuck up, wealthy woman benefiting from the poverty happening around her. She genuinely cared, and suddenly all the stories her mother told them about her kindness became a reality.

"I know, honey." She said sadly, choking up. "I know." Mrs. Lee was more emotional at that moment than the girls had been in the last several hours. "I-I am so sorry, for your loss. Truly, I am. Your mother was so wonderful and kind and she..." she trailed off, blinking back tears "She will be missed by so many." A gloved hand went to her face as she wiped away a tear that fell softly down her cheek.

Although she was saying nice things, the girls looked at her like she was speaking another language. They weren't quite sure why she was there talking to them.

"My deepest condolences to you all." She composed herself within seconds and tried to smile. The little girl who held onto her hand only looked back at the man who stood by the car, umbrella in his grasp. Under any other circumstances, he would have followed them to make sure they stayed dry but Mrs. Lee had insisted on speaking to the Heinrich girls alone. "Your mother was a very dear friend of mine. I loved her so, so very much. She-she left us too soon—," She choked off a sob and raised a hand to her face and tried to wipe her tears while attempting to compose herself, "I'm so sorry. I-I don't know why I'm like this."

The girls again remained emotionless, looking at the woman as if she were from another world. They were unimpressed by both her wealth and beauty, something most people couldn't help but notice.

With the girls staring at her so intensely, looking like gutter rats that had recently survived a tsunami, Mrs. Lee couldn't help but get emotional. Not only was her best friend in the entire world murdered, but her children were left alone without anyone to care for them. Despite their mother only being a nanny that cared for Charlotte and Jeffery, Mrs. Lee formed a connection with the working class woman that she had never experienced before. And seeing her children suffering like this, it pained her heart. What was more shocking was seeing how sickly and gangly they looked from being malnourished and underfed. Had she known her best friend's children were being so badly affected by the Depression, she would have surely pressured her husband into raising her salary. But she had always assured Mrs. Lee that they were fine, not wanting to take advantage of their kindness, and never asking for more money despite the difficult times.
"I understand that you have no other family. That you're alone?" Her gaze turned to the oldest girl.

Lucy really did scoff that time, and she sassed her, saying "Thank you from the reminder."

"Oh no! It wasn't-It's not like..." Mrs. Lee sighed, "I wasn't trying to offend. I'm just... I am worried about you. I'm worried who's going to look after you. You're all so young. And Lucy, I know you got a scholarship to Columbia and you were going to attend it in the fall. I know you won't be able to both go to school and work and... Well, I was just wondering if perhaps you would come live with us? It would make things easier since you wouldn't be alone. Really, it's the least I can do. I'm just-I'm just so sorry for your loss." She burst out into sobs.

Lucy and Beatrix immediately looked at each other and silently asked if this was a good idea. Lucy opened her mouth to decline, pride getting in the way. She was about to say thanks but we're fine on our own, we don't need any charity, but Beatrix hastily answered for her.

"We would love to! That is an incredibly generous offer, Mrs. Lee. Thank you." Beatrix shot Lucy a pressing glance after she looked at her accusingly.

"Really?" The woman's face fell and her face shifted into a smile "That's wonderful! Please, come home with us! I'd love to show you where you'll be living!"

As took Adeline but the shoulder and gently drug her away, Lucy looked at Beatrix as if she were the biggest traitor, "What the hell, Bea?" She hissed as they followed the older woman to the sleek black car. Lucy turned back to look at her mother's grave once more. She never returned back, even years later. For some reason, she knew that would be the last time she would be there, and coincidentally she was okay with it.

Beatrix finally spoke up as they neared the car, following a few paces back from the others. "Listen, I know you're mad, but you would have never accepted her help. You're too proud and I know you think you can raise us by yourself but you can't... You should go to university like you always wanted and not have to worry about us."

Deep down, Lucy knew she was right and she sighed. But quietly, she admitted to her sister as they walked forward, "I'm always going to worry about you."

And once again, thunder boomed above them, the noise settling deep within her bones.
Chapter II

Chapter Notes

Here is chapter two! Enjoy! I had a hard time visualizing Egypt in the 1940's for this chapters, I did look it up but all my descriptions sucked so if I'm being honest I modelled it after a couple scenes in Indiana Jones.

There is minor violence in this chapter, but nothing to be concerned about.

Disclaimer: I own nothing from the MCU franchise ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter II

Cairo, Egypt, 1942.

*Boom*. A loud noise rang out, imitating the sound of thunder. *Boom. Boom. Boom.* Lucy always hated thunder, ever since the night her father murdered her mother. The sound had caused her not only to just to develop a serve case of anxiety, but she was also taken back to that night, again and again, each time she heard it. She hated it, every minute of it.

God, how she wished that noise was thunder, she thought as she tumbled over a low stone wall, falling clumsily. Anything was better than gunshots getting fired at her.

Hitting the ground with a thud and the air exiting her lungs, Lucy sat up hastily and looked over the wall frantically, noticing the troops were right behind her. Fear rose in her chest, and she knew she had to move or she would be shot.

"Shit!" She hissed as pieces of stone went flying as bullets hit it. Lucy clumsily took up in a run, making sure she was still clutching her dark brown messenger bag as sand went everywhere. She knew she could not lose that bag, no matter what happened.

Running as fast as she can through the alleys, her back was soaked with sweat and her heart pounded in her chest but she never once stopped. Like a gazelle, she took off with break-neck speed. She had always been one of the fastest girls in her high school in physical education, and thank God it was paying off now. Never did she think it would ever come in handy in the case she would be getting shot at though.

Running through the alleys and trying to move past merchants and locals, she yelled "Move!" in Arabic as loud as she could. More gunshot sounded and the sand in front of her went up like a wave, bullets hitting mere inches in front of her. They were on the roofs, she realized as the locals screamed and tried to take cover as she doubled back to the alley she had been on before, trying to avoid the soldiers above. They were everywhere, she realized in a panic.

She jumped over a wooden crate that was in her way, ignoring the angry man who yelled at her as he unloaded the contents from within it. Bullets continued to ricochet off the walls of the simple Egyptian homes beside her, and she instinctively put her hands up to stop any kind of debris from getting into her face.
Turning left onto a busier street, she found herself looking lost amongst a hoard of people. Women covered in head to toe with burqas and niqabs, while others wore hijab's and wandered close to their families. Men in white linen and sometimes a simple coloured tunics wandered around what she assumed was likely a market. Others wore red, brown, and orange garb, as beautiful women wore modest clothing and young children ran around in a similar dress, sometimes not wearing shoes. With all the civilians around, Lucy attempted to try not to stand out too badly, avoiding drawing attention to herself. She could see men in uniform, some of them wearing shorts past their knee in khaki and tan colours, while others were wearing pants and olive coloured military shirts that matched. Others like her looked out of place and they stuck out easily and for the sake of blending in Lucy only hoped she didn't look quite like them.

Trying to walk calmly and keep her decorum, Lucy realized she stuck out like a sore thumb. Not only was she one of the only people of European decent present, besides the few Italian soldiers manning the streets, but she was also a woman in pants. And although women wore pants there as well, she couldn't have looked more out of place if she wanted to.

Lucy brushes the hair out of her face and tried to pin it back in her updo as she walked calmly through the crowd. She straightened her brown leather jacket, which she regretted wearing but kept it on since it was a gift from her sister Adeline, since it got quite cold in the early mornings in the desert.

Clutching the messenger bag like her life depended on it, she kept it glued to her side as she tried to casually blend in. Usually, when entering a new country with a culture different from her own she tried not to seem like such a foreigner. Wearing a simple headscarf and linen garbs were usually enough to earn her fewer looks, but at the moment she couldn't have looked less out of place.

She would have done much better if she was in the more modern area of the city, complete with amenities found elsewhere. But this area was poorer and more rural, and much of the architecture and lifestyles hadn't quite caught up with the fast-paced lifestyle of the '40s that most major cities were now taking on. Clearly, the war had not been so kind to the people living in this area of the city, compared to wealthier sections that were developing at a fast rate.

The braying of donkey's echoed the square and people yelled in Arabic attempting to sell spices, fruits, and ceramics. Small children hassled her from money and approached her but she tried to shew them away, telling them no. Women stared at her, clearly wondering why she was dressed in such a manly manner, sometimes either giving her looks of disapproval or longing.

Walking through and getting behind a rather large man, attempting to get cover from the soldiers she was passing, she heard the familiar yelling of the men on the roofs above her. The soldiers near the entrance of the market suddenly became more alert, their hands on their rifles at the sound of their comrades yelling.

Her heart pounding in her chest as she tried to blend in as much as she could, Lucy wiped away the sweat on her brow. It was almost unbearably hot, and she seriously regretted that her brown leather jacket held so much sentiment to her. If it hadn't she would have ditched it in a heartbeat long ago.

It only took a few seconds more until the soldiers spotted her and the blood in her veins suddenly turned to ice. She heard yelling as they pointed to her location, and once again the constant spitting of bullets was released. People screamed in the center, and Lucy pushed some of them out of the way.

Running through a little shop, she heard the wailing of people as a few innocents were hit. A woman screamed as she saw a frazzled, sand and dirt covered woman enter into her place of living and work, and Lucy yelled in Arabic, "Where's the exit?!!" Thankfully, she knew just enough of the local
language to get her by, but it still wasn't enough to have complete conversations.

The woman dropped the bowl of dates she was carrying and pointed a shaky finger to a window in the back. Lucy rushed forward as the door behind her was kicked down and she jumped out the window just seconds before bullets hit where she was previously standing. From having jumped yet again, Lucy was on her belly in the sand from falling clumsily, and she covered her head with her arms as bullets went through the wall and hit the one behind her, exploding in a loud noise as her ears rang.

Hearing the men cursing and having to reload their weapons she stumbled to her feet, falling slightly from her balance being off from her ears ringing so badly, she realized there was nowhere else to go. The window the lady pointed to her led into an alley, and high walls of houses surrounded her on three sides. She could hear men coming from the one side that was open, but she realized she was trapped.

Looking frantically for some way to climb up the walls of the houses, Lucy's eyes bounced off of everything. She could taste the blood in her mouth from where she bit her tongue, and her mind raced a million miles a minute, not being able to focus on anything.

Finally, her hazel eyes landed on a solution. There were wooden crates piled up half way on the side of the wall that she figured she could towards them, she realized she only had a few seconds before the men perusing her were on her tail. Looking out the window from where she just jumped, two men's faces appeared and they spotted her. Yelling, they also quickly emerged from the window just as Lucy had climbed to the last crate. They wobbled underneath her, and she was worried they would break under her weight.

Trying to reach the top of the wall with her hands, she realized she couldn't. Her heart pounded in her chest as the men began piling out, yelling things at her. Lucy had one option, but it would fail terribly if it didn't work. The crates wouldn't support her weight if she jumped on them, so she had to make sure she didn't miss the ledge the first time.

She didn't look behind her, but she knew the first man had raised his gun at her as she jumped. To her surprise, her hands grasped the edge of the wall and she laughed until a bullet missed her head by a mere centimeter.

Shit shit shit shit! she thought as she pulled herself up, using strength she didn't know she had. Climb! Was all that went through her mind. Heaving herself above, another bullet missed her but she managed to pull herself to safety moments before.

Getting on top of the simple roof, she almost laughed in relief before she soon recognized she was just as much in danger up there as she was down in the alley. Men stared across from her on the opposite roof. They had their rifles raised and began firing as Lucy scrambled to her feet. What the hell did I get myself into? She shielded herself from the pieces of the stone roof that were being hurled back at her from the bullets that were striking it.

Lucy ran as fast as she could, still holding onto the messenger bag in her grasp. She didn't dare look back at the soldiers who were firing at her. Either they were the worst shots in the world or she was remarkably lucky; she realized as she jumped to another rooftop, falling slightly under the impact once she hit it.

The fact she had the physical capability to do the things she was doing shocked her. But clearly her fight or flight was kicking in and it renewed her with new energy.
She had been put in dangerous situations before. After all, it was an occupational hazard these days. But prior to the war's break out, her job had always been tame and dare she say even boring at times. Oh, how she longed for the days people weren't shooting at her.

She couldn't really complain though. Lucy knew what she was getting into when she enlisted in the military. When she had come home after getting her uniform and arrived at Beatrix's doorstep, she had never seen her sister react like that before. Even after her parents died, Beatrix had been the strong one. But showing up in those dark green olive garbs, skirt down to her knees, a dark coat over a white shirt and green tie, her sister had burst out in tears.

They had spent the night waiting for Adeline to show up. Beatrix's two children ran around and tried to get attention from their Aunt Lucy. Beatrix's husband, Jonathan, stood there against the counter and smoked a cigarette in the kitchen as the ladies sat at the simple table. He was quiet for most of the night and Beatrix scolded him saying he better not run off and join the army once the American's got involved.

That was what the problem was. It was early in 1940, before the bombing of Pearl Harbour, and her sisters couldn't understand why Lucy would want to join a war that their country was trying their damn hardest to avoid.

Lucy never intended to join the army. She loved her job, being a professor at a cushy university, but when a Lieutenant from the British Army in uniform arrived in her office hours accompanied by an American Captain and asked for a moment of her time, it took her some persuading to enlist but she eventually came around.

The sat across from her desk, looking serious as they passed her a folder or pictures. When Lucy opened it, her heart dropped, and when they asked her to consider joining she answered originally with a 'no' but changed her mind before they walked out the door. Before she knew it, she was signing paperwork and enlisting that day, having quit her job at the university. Since then, she had never had a single regret for changing her mind and telling them yes.

However, when she thought of joining the military almost a year and a half ago, she didn't think she would be so close to the action. After all, she wasn't a professional soldier. She was a professor, and not to mention, a woman.

But when duty calls you can't just ignore it.

Yet, never before had she been under this type of heavy fire though, literally having to run for her life. Lucy tried her best to jump over small obstacles in her way and she ran so fast her hair whipped across her cheeks, falling slightly out of her updo.

The heat of the sun beat against her back, and bullets continued to whizz past her. She was running out of roof she realized again, pushing some garbs out of the way on a clothing line. She ran faster, hearing the yelling behind her fall further behind, but the firing didn't stop.

She took off faster and jumped as she neared the edge, legs, and arms flailing as she flew across another alley. This time, she didn't fall as sloppily though. Instead, she was able to land in a type of roll. Although it didn't look nearly as skilled and controlled as she thought, it at least helped her get back up faster.

The men were hot on her tail again, a few choosing not to jump. But some were braver than the others and still in pursuit of her. Lucy's heart was pounding in her chest, threatening to jump out. Her lungs were burning, and she was positive she never sweat as much in her life as she had in that moment. Her combat boots fell heavily on the roof as she ran, and she pumped her arms and trying to
get the momentum she needed to make the next jump.

That was when the bullet grazed her arm, blood splattering everywhere and she fell from her leap, sliding down the building and into a canopy where there were people underneath. The impact of her fall knocked the breath out of her, and she had a moment of fear where she thought she might have broke something.

Covered in fabric and dust, Lucy coughed as she got to her feet. Men swore at her in Arabic, but above one voice she heard the distinct British tone of a man yelling "Bloody hell!"

Getting to her feet and noticing her slight cut in her jacket and feeling the blood dripping down her arm, she stumbled forward and tried to ignore the pain in her ankle from her fall and the shooting ache in her side from where she collapsed against the wall.

A man was trapped under the canopy, swearing and struggling to get out and find the light. Lucy yanked the fabric off of him, sand flying everywhere and was shocked to see a familiar face.

"Ah! Doctor Heinrich!" The man let out a cheeky smile and shot to his feet with too much energy, "Where've you been off to? I've been looking everywhere for you!"

Lucy's eyes widened and she yelled in shock "Charles?!" She stared at the chubby face of her assistant.

"I was worried sick about you, you know—," She cut him off by grabbing his shoulders and looked him in the eye. It was then he was about to ask what in God's name happened to her, as she was covered in dust and sand, her face smeared with it. Her sweaty hair clung to her face and fear was in her eyes, "Run!" She yelled at him as more bullets hit around him.

"OH MY GOD!" The man screamed in a girlish manner as he took off after her as she began escaping through a street. "Are they SHOOTING at us?!"

"Yeah, they're shooting at us!" She yelled back, "Run faster!" She noticed him falling behind her.

"Oh God, oh God, ohGodohGod!" Charles chanted over and over again, trying the best he could to keep up with her. "Who's shooting at us?!" He demanded to know.

Lucy stopped as she rounded a corner and came to a hard halt. She slammed Charles against the wall to keep him from going any further. A wave of bullets tore the stone wall to pieces where they would have stood if Lucy hadn't seen the machine gun around the corner. "The bad guys!" She yelled back, both of them shielding their faces and crouching low to take cover.

"I know that! But they're not Italian, are they? They're not speaking it!" She yelled back over the bullets, covering his ears.

"No! They're German!" She yelled back, and then grabbed him by the front of the shirt and took off running the moment the machine gun stopped spitting out bullets.

"What the hell are they doing here?!" Charles yelled as he took off after Lucy, his heart pounding in his chest as men yelled in a foreign language and began charging up their machine gun again and loaded their rifles. "Isn't Cairo under the Italian occupation?!" It wasn't odd for two allies to be in the same area, but it was when a few days previously it had only be strictly Italians present in the city.

Lucy kept running, further ahead of Charles, who was a bit pudgy and not exactly good at running long distances at a fast pace. "Who knows! But they were looking for this!" She held her messenger bag up for him to see, but didn't reveal the contents to him.
Charles didn't know what was in the bag, but he assumed it wasn't good whatever it was; and clearly, Lucy wanted to keep it out of their hands.

As they ran up a narrow street, three men appeared at the end of it, all with rifles raised.

Lucy darted right down the next street so quickly Charles couldn't even process it. He dove left, missing getting hit by a half second. Lucy kept running even though she knew they separated and Charles ran on the other side, hearing the distinct yell of her panic "Wait, Charles!"

Lucy thought to go back and chase after him, but she could only move forward.

The Nazi's would have to separate at the end of the street to go after them. She only hoped Charles would be alright. After all, he was a timid, soft-spoken man with a gentle nature and a chubby face which bore wiry glasses, and Lucy imagined this was likely the first time getting shot at. Not as many people took to it as well as she had, and she knew if they both got out of it alive, Charles would give her an ear full.

As Lucy approached a corner, a large man in a green-uniformed appeared out of nowhere and Lucy didn't have time to stop. Colliding into the solid mass, she heard a distinct German voice swear upon the impact.

The collision had sent them both flying, and Lucy's shoulder ached upon impact and her head was spinning. Clambering to her feet, feeling dizzy, she noticed the soldier also struggled to get to his feet, his gun laying in the sand next to them.

They made eye contact roughly at the same time, and both came to the realization that they needed to get to that gun first. With blood spilling from a gash on his forehead, the German soldier reached for the gun but Lucy delivered a swift, hard kick right to his face. His head jerked back from the sudden impact and he cried out in pain as she grabbed the gun, the sand falling from it as she picked it up. She shifted the gun in her hand, and with all her might, slammed the butt of the rifle into his face, hearing a sickening crack.

Blood erupted from his nose and he fell in a thud, completely unconscious. Lucy flinched from the sudden movement and her arm still being remarkably sore from where she was grazed. The blood still dripped down her arm and down her fingers, leaving droplets in the sand every few meters.

Taking a deep breath in, she tried to catch her breath until she heard more rushed guttural German voices. Rolling her eyes and taking off again, Lucy held the rifle in both hands and started off, knowing she had to find Charles.

She looked down at the automatic rifle, she wondered just exactly how it worked. After all, she had only ever used pistols. Never before had she had to use an assault rifle, let alone a German one.

Trying to figure it out, she realized it didn't matter how it worked, all she needed to know was how to fire it. Although, when it came down to it, Lucy wasn't sure if she'd be able to pull the trigger. She had gotten away with not having to use a weapon so far in the war, and she wasn't sure if she really wanted to start now.

Hearing more Germans yelling, she quickly ducked into a house, holding the gun upright and close to her. She slid in, the sweat now making a large spot on the front of her chest and there were droplets falling down her face. She breathed heavily, not realizing until that moment how hard her heart was pounding and how terribly her lungs burned.

Lucy panted, and she breathed heavily and tried to catch her breath while she could. Her entire body
shook, and the dampness of her skin was not helping her get more comfortable.

It was almost too late when she noticed another presence in the room with her. A young girl stared at her with large, opened eyes which reflected a fear Lucy recognized all too well. She must have looked like a madwoman, she realized. Her hair wild, sweat making a dark spot on her olive, button-down shirt as blood leaked down the sleeve. Not only that, but she must have looked straight out of hell with the crazy look in her eye and the assault rifle in hand.

Lucy immediately put the gun up and gently shushed before the girl could open her mouth and scream. "Shhh! Shhh!" Lucy held her finger up her mouth, and gently placed the gun on a table nearby. She held both hands up, showing she wouldn't hurt the girl, who clutched a doll tightly from where she sat in the ground, "I'm not going to hurt you," Lucy assured her, although she wasn't she'd understand her. Lucy only had to ensure she wouldn't scream, that was all.

The girl only swallowed tightly, and flashed her eyes to the rest of the house, likely looking for another member of her family to help her.

"Please," Lucy begged, still panting hard and having her arms raised, proving her non-threatening position, "Please, don't say anything. I'm not going to hurt you." Slowly putting her one hand down to go into her messenger bag, the girl scurried to a standing position, clearly scared of the strange woman in her house.

Lucy moved slowly and grabbed a small ring out of the bag. Donned in red, blue, and yellow, a gold scarab beetle ring was in her hand and she slowly extended it to the young girl, who looked terrified at her with her big brown eyes, wearing a light linen garb and a headscarf. She couldn't have been more than seven years old, Lucy realized, thinking that her own niece was likely the same age. "This is for you," She told the girl, and placed the ring in her hand. The girl couldn't have known it had come from an Egyptian tomb that Lucy had been in days ago, a short while away from Cairo which she had to ride a camel to get to. The ring was extremely expensive, and not to mention rare, but she figured after looking around in the simple home and at the young girl's dirty face and thin frame that she needed it more than the British government did.

The girl clutched the ring tightly and admired it. She only looked at Lucy and saw that she was nothing to be afraid of. She wasn't like the men who carried around the same weapons, but she was scared as well.

The young girl just held the ring, looked at Lucy, and then walked away into another room, separated by a curtain of beaded strings. "Wait!" Lucy whispered loudly, not wanting to be left alone.

The girl disappeared into the next room and Lucy was alone, heart still pounding so hard she thought it would carve its way out of her chest.

She shuffled against the wall as she heard German soldiers shouting outside the house. More sweat gathered on her brow, and she immediately reached for the gun as another figure appeared from the room the little girl had just entered.

A woman stood there and pushed the little girl behind her frame as Lucy went for the weapon, but the woman said something hastily in Arabic in a gentle tone before putting her hands up, showing she was no threat.

Lucy couldn't see what she looked like since she was shrouded by a burqa, but she held the black fabric in her one hand. Lucy didn't grab the gun as her first instinct suggested. Instead, she frowned as the woman came near her, the young girl still hiding behind her mother. The woman passed her
the black garbs and then said something gently in her own language.

Lucy looked down at what she had passed her and her eyes shot up, realizing what they were.

The woman grabbed her daughter tightly and then began to back away. Lucy touched her hand to her heart as a way to say thank you, and then the woman disappeared into the other room. Unfolding the garbs, Lucy almost laughed at her luck.

The woman had passed her a burqa so she could hide. Trying to get the garbs on, Lucy winced at the pain in her arm but was thankfully able to get on the clothing without too much difficulty. Lucy wasn't sure if she was committing some kind of sacrilege by wearing the traditional garbs, but all she knew for sure was that this woman may have just saved her life.

Making sure her messenger bag was still under the clothing, Lucy took a deep breath before heading back into the streets.

A group of soldiers ran right past her and didn't even look twice. She wanted to laugh, but instead, she kept quiet and pressed her lips firmly to keep the joyous noise from escaping.

Walking right past more soldiers and not even earning a second glance, Lucy became unbelievably grateful to the little girl and her mother.

The blood still dripped down her hand, creating a warm and sticky feeling within it. The sweat pouring into her eyes didn't help at all, and she was now at a risk for heat exhaustion due to the khaki pants she was wearing, the olive shirt, brown leather jacket and combat boots she was issued all underneath the black garbs that soaked up the midday sun.

She had never been so hot and parched in her life, she realized. Even in the hot days of her childhood where the sun would beat into the apartment, she used to live with her parents in couldn't compare to this. Lucy knew she would become dangerously dehydrated if she didn't get water and some shade soon enough.

But that was a problem for later. She needed to find Charles first. The only problem was that she didn't know where he was, or whether or not he had been captured. Or even worse than that, killed.

Lucy rounded a corner and got into a large square, crawling in Italian and German soldiers alike, and she hoped Charles was far away. This would be the last place he should be, with his clumsy composure and ability to stick out like a sore thumb, he would be in greater danger here than anywhere else.

Looking around and straining her neck, Lucy could barely see anything. Her adrenaline was easily wearing off with each passing moment and without it, she began to notice how much pain she was actually in. Her shoulders both ached and her foot hurt to walk on. Never mind the aching ribs she had or the fact her arm felt as though it were on fire from the gunshot graze.

Lucy had to find Charles quickly, especially before someone else found him. Charles would very much crack under pressure, and within a first few seconds of being tortured without doubt he would spills every little detail about their mission.

Lucy strained her neck more, trying to find the peculiar little man that she had come to call her friend. He was nowhere in sight, Lucy hoped he would at least make it to their rendezvous on time, which was dangerously coming close.

By the height of the sun, Lucy imagined they had half an hour to spare before getting to the extraction point, otherwise being stranded in the city. He would be lost without her, she realized.
Knowing that there was no chance in hell that the man would be capable of getting there on his own.

Just as Lucy was about to give up and turn around, she noticed a rather odd sight.

A woman who was dressed very similarly to her continuously tripped on her black garments. And not just once or twice, it was like the woman had never worn such a long garment before. Lucy’s brows furrowed as she looked in wonder at the out-of-place woman who stumbled about as if drunk.

Suddenly it dawned on her, and she slowly went forward to near the woman that was earning looks from others as well.

Lucy sauntered as slowly as she could as to not arouse suspicion. The odd woman was glancing over her shoulder near a small cart set up with fruits and different tea leaves. She awkwardly stood trying to gaze at something and strain her neck. Lucy appeared right to her side and gently touched her elbow.

"Please don't hurt me!" The woman wailed in shock from the physical contact in a distinctly British male accent and cowered from Lucy.

"Good God, man!" She removed the top part of her burqa to reveal her face and she scowled "It's me, you idiot!" Lucy hissed.

She couldn't see Charles' face, but she knew his eyes likely lit up upon hearing her voice and he exclaimed, "Doctor? Oh, thank heavens! I thought I lost you!"

She frowned, although he couldn't see it "You thought you lost me?" She asked ludicrously , "I've been looking all over for you! Where did you get the burqa?"

"I just stole it from someone's laundry line! I figured I needed it more than them to hide. Now, what's the plan of action to get to the extraction point?"

"I uh," She was drawing a blank, "I haven't figured out that part yet." She was grabbed Charles by the wrist and began pulling him in another direction as she glanced over her shoulder at some men who were looking at the suspiciously.

"You know that we have less than twenty minutes to get there, right?"

"Yes, Charles! I'm painfully aware! Now stop talking, people are starting to look at us!" Lucy scolded as they received many looks for not only speaking English but also because Charles had a masculine voice.

"Right, right," He agreed, speaking more and Lucy wanted to roll her eyes.

It would become increasingly difficult to escape undetected by herself. But now that she had an infant in a man's 5’7 body, which would make it nearly impossible.

Lucy tried not to think about it, and focused on just getting them out of there alive.

Chapter End Notes

Still no Bucky yet, but don't worry! He'll show up eventually. I think before integrating actual characters its important to establish the backstory for Lucy, since she will be the
main focus. Also, Im not sure if anyone caught the last name of Lucy's adopted parents last chapter but I made their last name Lee as a means to pay homage to Stan Lee! :))

Feel free to favourite, follow, and review!

- Amelia
Chapter III

Welcome back! Thank you for the few kind reviews/follows/favourites from the two previous chapters. I know this story has a very different feel from most of the MCU fics, but just stick with it for a bit and I promise you'll start to see the first Cap movie storyline come into play.

Trigger Warning: This chapter contains brief mentions of anti-Semitism. (Also, I would like to disclose I am not Jewish myself, and should anyone see any errors in the history section of this fic please let me know! I'm only including things that I have read/researched/learned about in certain classes)

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Chapter III

There have been very few times within her adult years that Lucy Heinrich did not feel in control of her life. Most of her childhood and teenage years was not controlled thanks to her abusive, alcoholic, father and the instability that came with living with him. But since she and her three younger sisters had been adopted by the Lee's the world had been her oyster.

It was quite a shock for her and her sister to leave their tiny, two-room apartment in Queen's after their parents died. They had moved to the Upper East Side of Manhattan, where all the people of extreme wealth were from. When arriving at the Lee's estate, she was shocked that people lived so comfortably during the Depression. The next thing she and her sisters knew was that they were being groomed to fit into high socialite lifestyles. They had attended cocktail parties with Rothschilds, Rockefeller's, Carnegie's, and Ford's. Nothing in life before living with the Lee's had ever given them opportunities to even meet people with such status, let alone converse with them and be apart of their world.

But all the girls had different dreams than the one Mrs. Lee had invented for them. She wanted a rag to riches story for all of them, and deep down Lucy knew she loved them like her own. But they were from different worlds, and it's the reason why only Adeline had continued on with that type of lifestyle, whereas Beatrix became a mother and a teacher, and Lucy became a professor of archaeology.

But things came easily for Lucy after that day when she was seventeen. No one ever said no to her, and everything she ever wished for was at the snap of her fingers. She wasn't a person that necessarily lacked control at any point in her later teenage and early adult life. In fact, almost everything was in her control. That's how it had been for years, and if she was being true to herself, Lucy was used to things going her way.

But, good God things were not going her way at that moment.

Where her young adult life had been easy and without anything trouble, the past few years had been the very opposite. She supposed things could only go her way for so long, and eventually, her luck would run out. She never assumed it would run out quite as much as it did though. She assumed that
because she had been so spoiled for so many years, it only made sense now that nothing wouldn't go her way.

But if someone had told a seventeen year old Lucy who had her own suite in an apartment backing onto Central Park and enough house staff to take care of her every need that almost a decade later she would one day be chased in the desert on horseback by a bunch of Nazi's while trying to catch a train, she would have laughed right in their face.

But yet there she was! On top of a small horse, whose body heat radiated into her own and made her so hot she nearly believed she was about to pass out.

The black horse had lathered sweat coating it's neck as it galloped forward, trying to carry Lucy along the best it could. It seemed as though it moved slower in the sand, as though it's fastest wasn't enough and it had to work twice as hard as it usually would.

Lucy turned back and saw Charles was right behind her. Her black garments flew in the wind, and any other circumstance she likely would have admired such an opportunity to ride a horse in the desert. But not when there were Nazi's in a jeep shooting after them.

After she had found Charles, Lucy was able to somehow in the form of a miracle get them out of the square without being recognized. They were cutting it close with the rendezvous point, and both of them knew if they missed it they would have no hope in getting out of Egypt in one piece. Leaving an occupied zone, as it turns out, was increasing complicated and already the British army was risking a lot attempting to extract them.

She and Charles had found two horses and 'borrowed' them. Apparently, the peculiar Englishman had a problem with stealing, even it when it came to escaping from attackers. They had to hurry though, since the extraction team had already begun to leave the rendezvous point.

Lucy knew how important it was to catch up to that train. Not only due to the men in pursuit of them, but also because they would be stuck there. Honestly, neither options of being captured or killed sounded too appealing to her. Lucy managed to pushed her horse harder, attempting to reach their mode of transportation faster.

"Umm, Dr. Heinrich?" Charles yelled, clumsily holding the reins of his horse as it galloped alongside Lucy's. He looked ridiculous as he rode beside her, flailing clumsily and Lucy wondered if he had ever actually ridden a horse properly before that very day. "How are we supposed to catch the train if it's already left?" He yelled above the wind that was echoing in her ear, making it hard to hear but luckily she understood what he was saying.

"We'll improvise!" She yelled back, unsure of how exactly they would do that, especially with the angry German's behind them with assault rifles.

Digging her heels into her horses' side, she urged it to go faster. Managing to get right next to the train, she had to somehow make it three more cars in front of them to get to where they would be taken into safety.

Thankfully, the train was rounding a corner, and she urged her horse on more as Charles somehow appeared beside her.

They both knew what car to get on. The only problem was actually reaching it. The Nazi's somehow were right in their tail, but besides firing the odd shot, they didn't actually aim to kill, which was surprising. Somehow, Lucy realized it was because they wanted them alive. Whether or not it was for the content she had in her messenger bag or another reason, she couldn't be sure, but she didn't
want to press her luck.

With the train turning, Lucy and Charles were able to make some progress. Gaining on the car they were aiming for, Lucy could hear her horse's heavy breathing and feel the animal quivering under her. Only a bit longer, she thought, urging it forward and praying they made it. Digging her heels in more into its belly, somehow the animal managed to go faster than it already was. Its nostrils flared and it squealed a little in the process, but the animal listened to her commands anyway.

As they neared the door of the train car, it slid open enough for a soldier in British uniform to peak his head out and yell something to the remaining members in the car.

Lucy's horse went side by side to the train, attempting to keep up. Only urging it a little faster, she dropped the reins enough to grab onto the side handle of the open door and launch herself in. Lucy fell on the wooden floor with a loud thud and groaned in pain as the men immediately engulfed her. Her stolen horse immediately separated and slowed, falling back with the view. Suddenly, guns were in her face from Allied troops and she put up her hands and yelled "Hey! Hey! Take it easy, fellas! I'm an American!" She yanked off the headdress of the burqa reveal her likely sweaty and dirt covered face.

A man with a well-kept mustache had his eyebrows raise in surprise when he saw her, but continued to frown. Their guns were all still facing her head as she laid on the ground, panting heavily.

Charles rode alongside the train, and men had to yank him in as he screamed from the Nazi's bullet's hitting the side of the metal car. The door yanked shut as soon as Charles was pulled into safety, and Lucy still laid there, her heart pounding so hard she was sure everyone could hear it. Charles groaned, and the mustache man asked sternly in an English accent, "Are you Dr. Heinrich and Charles Tenabum?"

"Yeah," She finally stood up and then yanked the rest of her garments off her body, revealing her clothes she had been wearing prior to disguising herself, "You seem shocked."

"No offense M'am, but we were expecting someone who——,"

"Had a penis? I know, I get that a lot." She shoved the black robes roughly against his chest and watched as his eyes widened at her crassness. He only looked to Charles, who also removed his headdress while still lying on the floor and panting heavily for air, looking like he was greatly in pain.

"Sorry!" He explained, wincing in pain and great discomfort, "She takes great offense to getting confused for a man."

Lucy removed her leather jacket and winced as she tossed it on the floor. "Please, Ma'am, let me——,"

The mustache man quickly went to aid her but Lucy cut him off harshly.

"It's Doctor," She snapped, "Or Lieutenant, to you." She made sure he knew she outranked him and shot him a look as she undid the buttons of her sleeves and rolled it up so she could see the damage of her arm. Luckily, the bullet had just grazed the bicep, and although it was deep it hadn't hit bone and it didn't look like it needed stitches.

"My apologies, Doctor." He pursed his lips together and passed her a roll of gauze, attempting to say sorry. She said nothing as she grabbed it, well aware of the other soldiers standing against the wall who watched with curiosity. They had probably never seen a woman quite as blunt as her before.

Charles finally sat up and looked at her like she was mad. When he finally came to and stopped
panting, he sprang up on his feet to yank off his black clothing. He could only ask one thing, suddenly recognizing all the dangerous events that took place. "What the hell is wrong with you?" Lucy had never seen her assistant so angry before. Usually, the chubby little man was polite and worshiped her every move. However, this moment was different. "Are you mad? Or do you have a death wish, is that it? Do you realize we were just shot at? Because I'm so very sorry Doctor, but I did not sign up for this! I thought I would be doing you know, lab work, and perhaps finishing up some of your reports! I never thought in a million years that this is what it would come to! I want absolutely no part in it and I quit! Honestly, this experience has been awful, and I'm not even getting paid! This is for credit only? It's shite, that's what this is! Absolute shite! And I want no part of it whatsoever! When we get back to wherever the hell we're going to I'm taking the first ship back to London because no amount of class credit is worth this madness!" Charles complained as Lucy sat back and looked at his as though he were a small child having a temper tantrum.

"Are you about done?" She asked him with a raised eyebrow.

"No! And another thing! Why the hell did you not go the direction I went back in the alley? Do you have any idea how frightened I was!? I know you get shot at all the time, but for me, this was my first! I was literally about to soil my britches at one point!"

"Well, in that case, I'm very sorry I couldn't have made your first time more enjoyable," She said smugly and heard a few men chuckling in the back, "Charles, you knew what you were getting into when I took you on! The reason why I did, was because I saw promise in you as an archaeologist! This is part of the job, and you knew it would be dangerous when I told you we were stealing artifacts for the British."

"First of all," Charles held his finger up to stop her "I never knew we were stealing artifacts. Let alone from the Nazis! Have you just completely forgot that we were being actually shot at only moments ago?! Charles complained even more. "Also, where is the archaeology in this? You're a bloody —." Charles stopped himself from saying anything too loud, and then whispered in a hiss, covering the side of his mouth so the soldiers wouldn't hear. Although Lucy was sure they wouldn't care. "Grave robber!"

"So what? I've robbed two or three —" He gave her a pressing look, "Five graves tops!" She rolled her eyes. "But they were from the Nazi's! And they have archaeologists doing excavation protocol. It's not like the context is lost! And you know how careful I am and how I follow procedure when I actually have time to do a dig!"

He stood there with his hands on his hips, looking down at her like a disapproving mother. He glared at her more, continuing with his urging stare. "Okay!" Lucy exclaimed "Seven! I've robbed seven graves!"

"Christ!" He swore and shook his head, "Dr. Heinrich this is madness! This isn't what I signed up for. And during those seven times you robbed the sites the Nazi's were excavating, how many times were you nearly killed?"

Lucy said nothing as she undid her boots as she sat on the wooden floor, allowing her feet which were swollen from the heat to get a little bit of relief. She undid the top few buttons of her olive shirt and slumped back.

"Well?" Charles asked with his eyebrows raised.

"Seven," She sighed, looking down.

"I knew it! I knew it!" He said accusingly, and she could have sworn he was fuming, "This isn't
archaeology, it's a suicide mission! And for what?"

A man quickly got her canteen on water, which she thanked him for, and downed it very quickly. Some of the water droplets trailed down the side of her mouth and she felt as though she couldn't swallow enough of the lukewarm liquid. Charles drank some water as well and was about to start complaining about something more when the mustached sergeant cut him off.

"Sorry to interrupt. I can tell this conversation is of the utmost importance, but Dr. Heinrich, Captain Marsh wishes for you to see him immediately once we reach base," The moustached sergeant said sarcastically "Shall I radio back quickly and say the mission was a success in the meantime?"

"Yes, thank you." She nodded. Although she was cold to most people, she wasn't rude unless she was prompted to be. She was still raised by her mother who taught her to be kind and polite. But on the other hand, she was also raised by Mrs. Lee, who taught her to fight for her spot in the word. As a woman in a career dominated by men, Lucy found she had to act with a sort of demeanor that wouldn't allow her to just be overlooked or cast aside. In other words, Lucy had to act like a man in order to get the respect of them.

Charles looked at her with an eyebrow raised. He sat beside her against the wall of the car train on the floor. The soldiers stuck to their own business, really paying no attention to them. "So it was a success?" He asked her, his curiosity getting the best of him.

A smile tugged at her lips, and she grabbed her messenger bag. His eyes were then drawn to it, and even though he wasn't the bravest of souls Lucy knew he had been the right choice for her assistant. His passion for his field outweighed his fear, and that was what made him stand out more than any of the others that applied. With a cheeky grin and a glimmer in her eye, Lucy answered "It was. Do you want to see it?"

Charles said nothing, only nodding quickly and swallowing a lump forming in his throat. Sweat still was forming in droplets on his forehead, but it wasn't from nervousness. He seemed remarkably calm at that moment, and Lucy reached in her bag to produce the items they had risked their lives for.

The conversation the soldiers were having died down, and they were overcome but curiosity as well. After all, they also risked their lives attempting to get Lucy and Charles and the objects. Clearly, they wanted to understand what all the fuss was about.

Lucy reached in her bag and grabbed two papyrus scrolls. They were fraying at the edges and were so fragile under her touch they felt as though they would turn to sand. The fact that organic material had survived in the archaeological record for nearly two thousand years was remarkable, and clearly, the Egyptians had brilliant preservation techniques.

Lucy gingerly passed them over, and Charles' eyes widened as she carefully unrolled the scrolls. He gasped audibly as he looked at its contents "This is... This isn't just hieroglyphics. It seems to be an early form heretic, as well as cuneiform from Mesopotamia... And is that? Is that Linear A from Crete? Dr. Heinrich, almost five hundred years separates all these forms of writing. And not to mention, all these groups, the Egyptians, Mesopotamians, and Minoans wouldn't have had contact with each other. If they did it would have been rare. And, there's about a three hundred year gap between the fall of Ancient Mesopotamia and the invention of Cretatian hieroglyphics. When do you think this is dated back to?"

Lucy shook her head, "No idea. The scripts all suggest different timelines. None of them add up, and it's almost impossible to know what they all say. We'll have to get it to someone to decipher. But the German's working on it seemed to believe it was instructions."
He frowned, turning towards her and his eyes narrowed. Charles asked suspiciously, "Do I even want to know what it's instructions for?"

Lucy sighed and dug around in her messenger bag more. Grabbed two other items, she set them on the floor of the train. Lucy wasn't sure it was possible for Charles to open his eyes wider. The man's jaw practically hit the floor, and his mouth opened and closed like a fish as he looked completely dumbfounded. "I'm guessing it has something to do with this,"

Charles licked his lips and raised his eyebrow as high as they could go before stuttering, "Is... Is that what I think it is?" He reached out carefully to touch the one object.

The mustached sergeant frowned as he tried to strain his neck to get a good look at the items. All the men were silent as they watched Lucy and Charles interact. A few hushed whispers could be heard, but beyond the constant noise of the train, the car was dead silent. So silent, in fact, you could have heard a pin drop.

"The ritual death mask of a priest of Anubis." She answered and Charles picked it up so carefully he thought it would burn him. In their field, Charles and Lucy have both seen many ritual masks. For mystery cults and other religions alike, there was nothing usually sinister about the masks. Even the regular masks used by the priests who were apart of the Anubis cult weren't quite that evil looking.

This one differed from all of them though. It had darkness around it that the others hadn't. The teeth of the jackal head ran down in sharp points as it had chipped black paint. What was most unsettling was the hieroglyphics on the forehead, showing some kind of script that even Lucy didn't recognize.

Passing it back over to Lucy, Charles looked at the other item in front of them. It was a small canopic jar, not even ten inches tall. Like the mask, it also had the head of Anubis. What was odd about it yet again were the unfamiliar markings and the darkness that surrounded it.

Charles picked it up, spun it around in his hands, and then gave it back to her, saying quickly "Alright, take it back. I don't want it anymore; it's too awful."

Lucy only smirked and tucked them back in her messenger bag carefully, not knowing how they survived all the mayhem that just happened with the high pursuit chase she was involved in. She was proud she managed to snatch them though. Really if she was being honest with herself obtaining them was the easiest part of the mission. She found she was easily ignored as a woman, and she practically walked right into the Nazi dig site without anyone even batting an eyelash. Sometimes, integrated sexism was used to her benefit when it came to wanting to be invisible. However, the only major problem she experienced was trying to escape with the artifacts. That presented a whole new set of issue, which inevitably resulted in the chase that had just happened.

She tried to ignore the scoff of mustache sergeant in the corner. Turning towards him and shooting daggers in his direction, Lucy spoke up. "Sorry Sargent, did you wish to add something?"

He pursed his lips and shook his head, "Not at all Doctor. It's just I find it unusual to risk one's life for such trivial and insignificant objects."

Lucy's blood began to boil. Her entire life she had met men like Mr. Moustache over there who chose to believe what she did was unimportant. Men had looked down on her, believing her career was nothing more than a hobby to keep her busy until some knight in shining armor swept her off her feet and whisked her to some white picket-fenced nightmare. Even men in her own profession refused to treat her seriously, and joining the army had not improved that.

The military men didn't understand what she did, and therefore believed in was insignificant and
mundane work. Not to mention, there was slightly a problem with hyper-masculinity that many men in the military had, worsening her already difficult situation.

"Sargent, I'm going to explain this slowly in a way you can understand—," Lucy's tone slowed so she mimicked the way someone spoke to either a child or a simpleton.

"Doctor, I'm not sure what exactly you're getting at, but I can assure you I don't appreciate the condescending tone." The man snapped, interrupting her and wondering what kind of audacity she had to speak to him in such a manner.

"No, Sargent. I don't appreciate the condescending tone. And now if you'd shut it I'll gladly explain why this mission, although 'trivial' and 'insignificant' is important."

Lucy knew she was a tough pill to swallow. After her parents died, she had to be tough. She had to stay strong for her sisters, and though life was good living with the Lee's it didn't always mean it was easy. Her entire life she had been given trouble for having a German last name. In school, she was often called terrible, derogatory names, and it got so bad that for a while she went by 'Lucy Henderson' in an attempt to sound more American.

Her father was known in their neighborhood for being a drunk, and neither she nor her sisters ever had proper clothes or shoes. Her family was dirt poor, and sometimes didn't even have enough to eat. Although the other kids in her neighborhood were in similar situations, her family was always picked on the most because of who her father was.

When they moved in with the Lee's things got better but only slightly. Many of the staff members looked down on them, as though they were pets that the Lee's kept around to appear like good people. Although Mr. and Mrs. Lee never once made them feel unwelcomed; Lucy often felt as though the life she was living didn't belong to her. People knew they were pretenders, and for many years Lucy knew she didn't fit in with the high social groups of New York. The young men and women were constantly the worst, and she recalled how at her first charity ball she attended with Lee's how they laughed and scoffed at Lucy and her sisters.

Never before did Lucy ever feel so out of place. She overheard how instead of the Lee's throwing a large charity event they should just put them on display instead, and it was then Lucy felt tears well up in her eyes. She recalled how she clenched her fists at their laughter and wished nothing but for the earth the swallow her whole. She also remembered Mr. Lee's kindness, and how he gently placed a hand on her shoulder and whispered to her not to listen to them.

Mr. Lee was an older, handsome man. He came from old money, his family making a fortune in the steel industry and later automobiles. He had a salt and pepper beard, a kind smile, and twinkling brown eyes. He was much older than Mrs. Lee, but it was obvious the two were very fond of each other, and possibly in love. To Lucy, he was more of a father figure to her than her actual father was. Both the Lee's treated the Heinrich children as their own, and Lucy knew there was no way she could ever repay their kindness.

Mr. Lee had been accustomed to dealing with people like Lucy's harassers his entire life. He told her that only she could determine her value, and what others thought of her didn't matter as long as she knew her worth.

Since that day, Lucy didn't put up with people trying to talk down to her. She had paid to get her spot in the world and damn it all to hell if she was given less respect than anyone else just because she had a pair of tits.

She knew that her role in this war wasn't as important as others. But it still was remarkably
significant, and she was doing the best to her ability. Hell, she was risking her life just as much as others! The fact that some refused to recognize that rubbed her the wrong way and left a sour taste in her mouth.

Lucy huffed as she sat up straighter and tried to explain to the sergeant why keeping the Nazi's away from such artifacts was important. Charles watched intently as she licked her lips and began to speak, "I don't expect you to understand the importance of all this," She began. "There are so many reasons why this job is important. This someone's culture and history, and the Germans want to eradicate it. First the Jews, then who next? They have the power to make history what they want, to shape the minds of their people. It's a form of propaganda! And these artifacts... " She grabbed her bag tightly and looked down at the leather, gently touching it, "It's a story that's thousands of years old. And not only that, but Heinrich Himmler and the other Ahnenerbe scum bags in Berlin believe that if they have them, they become the superior race. It's getting easier and easier to create a nationalistic pride and convince people that other's lives are lesser than their own. And not to mention, there are crazies out there to who actually believe these artifacts hold ancient powers."

The man narrowed his eyes and asked carefully "What kind of ancient powers?" His skeptical tone made her think he didn't believe her.

"It's all madness. But there are actually some who believe that these scrolls and masks can exchange the souls of the living with those of the dead. In my debriefing, I saw some theories of what they thought it was used for but none of it made sense. On site I overheard some of the German archaeologists exchanging theories on why the Fuhrer wants it. They think that performing this ritual can be used to exchange one's soul for immortality... There was something else they were discussing too." They had been talking about something known as the Tesseract. Lucy didn't know what it was, but clearly someone wanted it pretty badly. The moment she had access to some books, she would try to find out what it was.

The man looked at her like she had gone around the bend, "They know that is insane, right? There are no such things as the gods and immortality."

She nodded slowly, "You know that and I know that. But the people they're trying to convince won't. Imagine all they could accomplish if people believed that bastard was immortal! The destruction would never stop, and it would only get worse. You see, I'm damage control; I keep things from spiraling out of proportion. Because I truly believe that if they had these, the war would already be lost. People are so easy to convince that they're better than others. The propaganda surrounding these ideas is what's insane. The objects don't have to work, people just have to believe they do."

"What's to keep them from saying that anyway? To just find another artifact and fabricate a history saying it's true?"

Lucy shook her head, "And that is a little outside my pay grade. Better minds than I are in charge of that. My job is just to keep the real artifacts out of the hands of the bad guys."

"So why extract them? Why not just destroy it?" The man asked and the others listened. "And why not just release a counter propaganda o what the Ahnenerbe is saying and convince people otherwise?"

"It's easier said than done. And besides, on the off chance all this mumbo-jumbo magic stuff is real, do you really want to risk it falling into the hands of the worst villain the world has ever seen?"

"But it's not real. It's all fake! There's no way they could possibly make it work."
"You willing to put your money where your mouth is? Because I'm not. And neither is your or The United States' government. Call it superstition or precaution, it doesn't matter. All I have to do is keep them out of the wrong hands. What happens next doesn't matter. I know my missions, and despite your and many other beliefs, there's a lot of power in 'trivial' objects. How do you think it's possible to make an entire nation hate another group of people? Convince them, and it'll happen."

Not a lot of people spoke about the persecution the Jews were facing in Europe. Most governments turned a blind eye, even going as far as refusing refugees who thought to flee.

*Those are other people's problems,* Lucy overheard many say as the papers spoke of minor hate crimes being committed in the late '30s. The Jews being targeted weren't the Jews that one usually saw. They were from Eastern Europe, in the Pale of Settlement. Orthodox Jews had the "otherness" that people deemed strange. It wasn't until it started happening to people's' neighbors did they realize what was going on. But at that time, there were no reports on a large scale of the camps, and most manners dealing with it were shushed. The people wanted to believe Germans would never commit crimes so horrendous to 'their' Westernized Jews. Only the others who exercised a different way of life.

But Lucy knew all too well. Her life was personally affected by hate that spread through Europe like a raging fire. The fact that people were still denying the massive assault on the Jewish people angered her to no avail. She even recalled as early as 19367 of the fear that struck all those with even an ounce of Jewish blood. *We need to leave, she remembered pleading. It's not safe here anymore.*

She had read from the papers of the type of discrimination the Jews were facing. There was even talk of their businesses being destroyed during riots and having to pay for the damages that they took no part in making. Pogrom after pogrom took place, and she even heard of things as ridiculous of Jews getting murdered by Christians believing they were killing their children for blood rituals. It didn't take much for the people of Europe to turn against them. Any rumor really was enough to stir the hate that boiled inside them. As she said, convince someone of something and they won't doubt it. Convince the weak minded that the Jews were bad, and they believe it without question. Thousands of years of scapegoating lead to those very moments.

She knew to live in Europe was dangerous, but her pleas to leave fell on deaf ears. She returned to the States, not thinking for a moment of what horrors would follow. The world went to war, with Germany yet again leading the toxic moral decay. This time, with a new government regime that threatened more than just people's lives, but their very freedoms.

But with it being so early in the war, she could not imagine what terrors would befall upon them. Never in her wildest dreams did she think people could be taught to hate what she had loved so dearly.

Reaching around her neck, Lucy revealed her dog tags. The silver metal shined brightly, but it wasn't what she searched for. Attached to her chains was a small Star of David, which was given to her as a gift prior to her returning back to New York.

Charles has never noticed it before, but he knew for fact she wasn't Jewish and he frowned and wondered where she had got it from. He figured this wasn't one of the other objects she had robbed from a grave and he watched as Lucy held it in her clutch tightly. He suddenly recognized why this job was so important to her. This wasn't just a job for Lucy. This was her life, and the root of her motives was love. But her mission went beyond her love for history, culture, and artifacts. It was for a person.
Chapter IV

The Louvre, France, 1937.

Over the course of her life, Lucy found very few things took her breath away. After studying so many beautiful pieces of art throughout her university days, she thought she had seen everything there was to see.

But standing at the foot of *Winged Victory of Samothrace* in the Louvre, she could only gasp. It was like she could hardly breathe while looking at it, being so completely still that it was almost as if she were a statue herself.

Seeing pictures was one thing, but standing in Nike's wake of beauty in person was another. She stood there, in a red polka dotted dress that wrapped carefully around her waist and black high heels. Her lips were painted crimson, and her dark hair was in tight finger curls cascading down her back and pulled back from her face.

She stood there and could only stare. She wasn't sure how long she had been there, but she knew she could spend eons at that moment and it still wouldn't be enough.

The room, although bustling with people seemed empty to her. The echo of voices was drawn out, and she wondered what human feats had to have been accomplished in order to create a work as marvelous as the sight before her.

Truly, there was no greater accomplishment that building something that lasted thousands of years, and was still appreciated by people all over the globe for its beauty. For a long time, all Lucy wanted to do was make something like that. She wanted to create something that would outlive her and be a statement of the times she lived in.

But alas, she was cursed with only the ability to appreciate art and not be able to create it herself. Captivated by the statute and her fierce yet violent beauty, Lucy failed to recognize another thing of beauty approaching her.

"Amazing, isn't it?" A masculine voice asked her in French. "Victory is a woman."

Lucy turned to see one of the most gorgeous men she had ever witnessed. Towering above her already tall 5'9 frame, Lucy was almost taken back by the creature before her. He stood there in a short sleeved button down white shirt and brown slacks, a matching brown belt and shoes. He had dark sandy brown, slicked-back hair and wide-rimmed turtle glass revealing dark chocolate eyes. His strong jawline was covered by dark scruff, making him look like Adonis himself.
Lucy was taken aback for only a moment before she regained her composure, a pink blush crept to the back of her neck. She was never one to get nervous around the opposite sex, but this man before her looked as though he belonged as a piece of art himself.

Lucy replied back in French, "And Liberty and Truth are also women."

He smiled at her before answering, "As is Justice and Dignity."

She chuckled before stating, "You know your mythology, I see."

"As do you. Sorry, I wouldn't usually come up to someone so lost in themselves, but I noticed you standing here for a while."

"I couldn't help it," She breathed out and blushed at his words, looking down, "She's just so beautiful."

"Definitely one of the finest pieces to come out of the Hellenistic Age." He nodded, "I actually have to admit that I came over here to talk to you because I recognize you from one of the lectures I attend."

Her eyebrows raised, "You go to the School of Paris?" How had she never seen him before? Had she had known he was in her lecture, she no doubt would have been able to pay attention to the content.

"I'm doing a PhD. in Classical art history. I'm taking a few courses to freshen up my memory and keep my inspiration. You sit at the front of Dr. Lanier's class, right?"

She smiled wider and nodded, "I do. I'm doing my Master's in archaeology and art history."

His eyebrows raised and he laughed, "You don't say! Archaeology? That's an adventure. Not many women chose to go into that field." As she was about to shoot back at him, assuring she was more than capable to enter the profession as an archaeologist, he surprised her by gesturing to the statue in front of them, "I think our lady Victory here would approve."

Lucy grinned softly, and she watched as he placed his hands in his pockets, almost nervously. He had the kindest eyes she had ever seen, and a smile that reflected a gentle yet fun-loving nature. He was absolutely beautiful, and Lucy was determined to know more about him. Before she could retort back, he stuck his hand out to introduce himself, "Daniel Réhal,"

She took his hand in hers, and she was surprised by the softness of his skin. She shook it firmly and said back, "Lucy Heinrich."

"German?" He asked her with his eyebrows raised, "I could have sworn you were French. You speak it so well!"

She chuckled, "My father was German. We moved to New York when I was three years old."

"German and American? Interesting. What brings you to Paris?" He inquired, clearly very interested in her life. He had an attentiveness about the way he listened to her, as though he was processing each word she said and genuinely wanted to know more.

"Well, after I finished my degree at Columbia, I thought why not go study art in one of the most artistic cities in the world? I moved here a few weeks after graduation. I haven't been back to the United States since."
"And how do you find Paris so far?" His eyes locked with her, and there was only one word that Lucy could use to describe the moment that followed:

"Enchanting." Was all she answered with.

Daniel smiled again, the corners of his pink lips turning up and he asked her a simple question, "Well, Lucy Heinrich, I would love to get your take on a few more pieces if you wouldn't mind accompanying me throughout the rest of the museum?"

She couldn't help but grin even wider, absolutely charmed by him, "It would be my pleasure, Daniel Réhal."

He extended his arm for her to take it; her heart fluttered in her chest. She knew in that very moment that what they had was special, and form of connection that she had never experienced before. Before they continued on, she couldn't help but notice something around his neck. A glimmer caught her eye and resting between the top button his shirt revealed a small object.

It was a silver Star of David.


There had been a couple times where Bucky Barnes had been positive he was going to die. Once when he was twelve he had pneumonia so badly that he figured it would be the end. This is it, he remembered thinking as he laid in his small twin bed. This is how I go.

He remembered being cooped up for days, and how his mother fussed over him with a damp cloth, patting his sweaty forehead as concern reflected on her tired face. And despite his poor immune system, good ole' Steve Rogers was there by his bedside every second. That boy was more loyal than anyone else he had ever met.

Of course, the idiot caught pneumonia right after him and nearly had a run-in with death as well. But the point was that he was there for Bucky when none of his other friends were.

The second time Bucky thought he was going to die also involved Steve. There had been a couple broads at a pub they were at being heckled by their boyfriends. Bucky minded his own business, drinking a cheap beer at the bar. But Steve Rogers and his damning sense of honour was much too involved in the argument. He kept listening to what they were bickering about, stretching his skinny neck to overhear whether or not if one of the lady's needed someone to intervene.

Steve had a moral compass always pointing North. While most found it annoying, Bucky found it was one of the things he liked best about his old friend. Call it what you will, but Bucky figured keeping Steve around made him a better person in the long run. But goddamn that kid had a nose for trouble.

The moment the couple went outside, Bucky knew how the night would end up. The boyfriend backhanded his girlfriend on the street, causing her to call out in pain. Bucky remembered wanting to tell him to leave it. Don't get involved, he tried to tell him, but Steve was on his feet before he even got the words out. He ran out the door to the lady's aid like a 95 pound, 5'4, knight in shining armour.

Sighing and knowing both of them were about to get their asses handed to them, Bucky threw a couple bucks on the bar to settle his tab. He knew he'd be too busy watching imaginary birds chirping around his head afterward to pay the bartender. Chugging the rest of his drink for liquid courage as he watched the guy grab Steve by the shirt collar and wind up a punch, Bucky finished
his beer and slammed his pint down before rushing out to stick up for his pain-in-the-ass best friend.

He and Steve really had it handed to them that night. As it turned out, the guy had friends in the bar. And there were lots of them. Bucky remembered struggling to stand as he was punched over and over, reminding himself to let Steve know how much he hated him after the beating they were getting doled out finished up.

It wasn't until he shoved the guy off of him and punched him square in the jaw that Bucky knew he was in trouble. He felt a bottle break over his head, and after feeling the warmth of blood rush down his face he hit the ground like a sack of potatoes.

After that was a blur. There was only darkness and pain following that. He woke up in the hospital with stitches and a pounding headache, hardly remembering what happened the night before.

What he did know though, was the girl he and Steve rescued was by his bedside when he woke up, blushing madly and thanking him. Meanwhile, in the hospital bed one down from him, Steve was completely ignored.

He could almost hear Steve's voice at that moment, chuckling as they limped out of the hospital together all bruised and battered. "I've never felt so ignored! It's like what am I? Chopped liver?" Steve laughed as they walked out together. Bucky knew it was hard on him always being the little guy and going unthanked for all he did. And although he made wisecracks about it, Bucky knew Steve wasn't looking for thanks or recognition. He did it because it was the right thing to do.

The third time Bucky thought he was about to die was the only time Steve wasn't involved, and it was in that very moment.

Bucky wasn't sure if he could die from a hangover, but hell, it sure felt like it. He felt like death and was positive those were his final moments.

With basics finishing up the day before and two days left of being a free man before shipping out to Italy, he and a couple fellas decided to paint the town red.

And boy, was it a mistake. Reeking of whiskey, Bucky rolled over in the bed he was laying in. Feeling a wave of nausea settle over him, he groaned and covered his eyes with the crook of his arm as the sunlight leaked in from the curtained windows.

Sighing, he attempted to choke back some of the vomit rising in his throat and try to sleep a little longer. He could hear cars drive by the window and hear the hustle and bustle of the city on a Saturday morning. For a blissful moment, he thought he was back in Brooklyn. Thinking he had to get ready to wake up and go catch a Dodgers game with Steve, Bucky groaned thinking of the long day ahead of him.

Then something hit him. He wasn't in New York; He was in London.

Jolting awake, Bucky realized he wasn’t in the military barracks like he was supposed to be. Instead, he was in a small room, in a small bed, absolutely as naked as the day he was born.

Wearing only his dog tags, Bucky tried to recount just how exactly got to where he was currently, and how he got into this particular state. He sat up in the bed and looked around, only noticing at that moment that the shower was running.

And shit, it just turned off. Having absolutely no recollection of the night before, he felt uneasy with the fact he had gotten so drunk and had no idea where he was and how he got there.
Pushing the blankets back and having the cold air hit him, Bucky rushed to find his uniform. Pieces of it were strewn about the floor, and suddenly he had flashbacks of how it ended up there. He recalled arriving in that very room the night and madly kissing an attractive blonde before having his uniform ripped off rather roughly and thrown onto the floor.

He wasn't usually the type of guy to go home with random girls. Steve would always give him disapproving looks whenever he tried to leave with one. It wasn't usually his own sake but for the dames' instead. And deep down, as much as Bucky didn't want to admit it, he knew Steve was right. Steve was always going on about waiting for the right partner and all that crap that Bucky never really bought into.

But this time Steve was right. This type of behaviour was not gentlemanly, and he was sure his good Catholic mother would have given him a swift hit on the back of the head should she ever learned of his actions. But he was going off to war in a few days and knew it would be several months and possibly years before feeling the touch of a woman again. And as it turned out, the gals in London were also feeling the absence of their men. Bucky quickly discovered that girls loved a man in uniform. To put it bluntly, they were willing to do just about anything to ensure the guys were well taken care of before heading off to battle.

At least there was one good thing that would come out of this war, he thought bitterly as he found his shirt crumpled on the floor.

Throwing on his undershirt and then quickly buttoning everything up, he scrambled to find his boxers and pants. The bathroom door opened as he finished up the last button, and a petite blonde exited out of the room and made a gasped in surprise at the sight of him. Bucky was caught like a deer in headlights, standing completely still and pursing his lips together as the woman stood there in nothing but a towel. She chuckled as she looked over his body once and leaned against the door frame, saying in a sultry tone, "Well hello there, soldier."

The overwhelming urge to vomit came racing back to him. For that very brief moment of not realizing where he was and panicking Bucky almost forgot he was hungover. And goddammit, why couldn't he remember the woman's name? From where he was he could almost hear Steve's disapproving tone.

"Umm, hi." Was all he could lamely say. But what more was there to say to a woman he couldn't remember having intercourse with the night prior and being caught trying to sneak out and being dressed from only the top down?

She laughed, throwing her head back as she did so. She remembered that the melodic sound of it was what made him attracted to her in the first place the night before. "I must say," Her accent was something he had grown accustomed to hearing over the last few days, but hearing it now reminded him how far away from home he was. What he would give to be back there, heading to that Dodgers game he thought he had to make it to before coming to his senses that morning. "You were far more articulate with your words last night." She bit her lip flirtatiously, almost causing Bucky to forget what he was doing and go with the ache deep in stomach telling him to try to convince her to get back into bed. She smirked at him again before playing with a lock of her damp blonde hair, "I must say though, I've never experienced a man who was quite as good with his tongue as you were last night."

Bucky exhumed a long breath and scratched the back of his neck awkwardly, "That's quite the compliment." As he stood there and thought about it he knew the ache developing in his stomach wasn't from desire. It was from the good, old fashioned whiskey he had downed the night previously that was causing a rotting feeling to develop deep in his belly.
She only hummed before saying softly "You are most welcome." He watched as the woman bent down on the other side of the bed and grabbed his pants and boxers, handing them to him. God, he wished he could remember her name.

What was it? Marie? Mary? He was pretty sure it was Mary. "Thanks, Mar—..." he trailed off, looking at her as she began to frown and he raised an eyebrow, "Mare—,"

"Margery!" She snapped at him and Bucky quickly threw his boxers on before mentally kicking himself.

"Margery!" He quickly snapped his fingers as he said her name before she could finish so it would seem like he knew what it was all along "I was going to say Margery!" He put on his pants as fast as he possibly could.

She only rolled her eyes and shoved his socks, boots, and jacket at him as he did the belt up on his pants. "You bloody flyboys are all the same," Her tone wasn't happy, that much he could tell. But why was she calling him a flyboy? He wasn't in the Air Force... Unless...? Wanting to groan even more, he remembered how the red-haired Private from his barrack he had been with the night before had told a group of dames that they were both in the Air Force. Before meeting them, the Private (who's name was Campbell) had told Bucky a theory he had that he could get any girl to get into bed with them if they told them they were pilots. And although Bucky wasn't fond of the idea of lying to a girl to get her to sleep with him, after a few drinks he wasn't protesting.

"Hey listen, I am so so sorry—," Bucky began to explain as she pushed him out the door of her apartment and into the hallway. She was still clad in a towel, looking red in the face from anger. He had his boots and tie in hand, and he was shoved in the hall in only his socks and with the clothes he had put on sloppily.

"Yeah, yeah, save it!" She didn't want him wasting his breath on an apology he didn't mean.

Slamming the door in his face, Bucky has really only been this ashamed of his actions a few times before. This is why he needed Steve, he realized. To be his voice of reason and tell him the difference between right and wrong.

But why was he such a shit person that he couldn't even tell the difference himself? He should be able to determine these things on his own. One would think that all those years of going to Sunday school would have added up to something but really he was fooling himself.

Sighing and taking a shaky breath before closing his eyes in annoyance, Bucky tried not to think of the poor choices he made. Inhaling deeply and trying not to both physically and emotionally feel worse than he already did, he frowned when he looked down and noticed something was missing.

If he wasn't kicking himself before, he sure was now. Knocking on the door softly, Bucky presses his forehead against the wood before calling out remorsefully, "Hey uhhh, Mary? I um, I forgot my hat. Could you just throw it out here, please? Sorry again."

He could hear distinct shuffling behind the door before it opened. She looked at him in a rage before throwing the hat down the hall. Furiously she roared, unable to keep her decorum of properness around the infuriating man any longer. "It's Margery!" The door slammed loudly in his face, causing him to wince.

"I knew that this time!" He called out, once again placing his forehead against the wood of the door. "Sorry!" Bucky yelled, ashamed.
He faced away from the door and murmured another soft sorry under his breath.

As he put on his boots and then did up his tie and fastened his jacket, he wondered just how the events of last night lead to that morning's fiasco. He wasn't the type of guy to sleep with a girl and forget her name the next morning. He was the type of guy to kiss a girl and forget her the next morning sure, but what he did that day crossed a line and lacked class.

Normally when he ended up in bed with a lady, it took at least a month or two to forget who she was. And even then that was bad by his standards, and Steve made of known just how he felt on that whole situation.

Never before had Bucky Barnes acted so abhorrently. He thought that without Steve he would be given some freedom at last, to be able to do what he wanted without getting lectured afterward. But after all this, maybe that was actually what he needed. Bucky came to the conclusion he didn't like himself very much without Steve.

But Bucky soon realized that perhaps he was acting this way because he missed home, and he felt guilty about leaving his best friend behind to collect scrap metal when all he wanted to be was in the action. If Steve were here he wouldn't even have to give a lecture. Bucky was already giving himself a much harsher one, thinking that maybe all the lessons that his mother and Steve always gave him actually was beginning to rub off on him.

Finishing up the buttons of his jacket, Bucky walked down the hall to pick his uniform hat up off the floor. Brushing it off with his hand and getting some of the dirt off the fabric, he placed it on top of his head.

Nausea returned once more when he left the building and entered into the London street. He always expected London (which was a big city) to have a similar smell to New York. It didn't though, and the entire place smelled like a mix of dirty water and factory smoke, the later clearly coming from all the places making gear for the war.

He tucked his hands in his pockets as he tried to remember how to get back to base from where he was. He barely had any recollection from the night previously except the small interaction he had with Private Campbell and then running into another man by the name of Timothy Dugan who he had met on board *The Odyssey* on the way over. Dugan, who went by 'Dum Dum' for some reason unbeknownst to Bucky at the time, had told him he would buy the next round of drinks if anyone could out drink him. Feeling up to the challenge, Bucky agreed and clearly, this morning regretted that decision.

The Boston native drank him under the table but bought him and his company the round regardless. It was then they got to talking about London and their experience so far in the barracks. As it turned out Dum Dum was apart of Bucky's infantry and was in the next barrack to him. At the pub, they had begun discussing the little differences between London and home, and what each of them had heard about it.

The Brit's has been at war for nearly four long years. Most of the men who came back were injured and defeated, while new men replaced them every day with the draft. Most of the men who couldn't serve were bitter about the American's late arrivals, and Bucky had even heard one of the bartenders call the American soldiers in the pub 'over sexed-up Yanks' at one point.

Dum Dum laughed when he heard that. And only clapped Bucky on the back before yelling "Well it's true, ain't it Sarg?"

He then proceeded to tell him how London wasn't all bad. He liked the rain, as it turns out. The fact
it was getting warm also helped. "The dames are pretty enough," Dum Dum noted, "But goddamn
the coffee is bad here."

"Try the tea!" A man said coming up behind him, also in uniform. Bucky didn't catch his name, but
he continued drinking with them for most of the night, "Much better than the shit cups of joe they
make. Doesn't wake you up as much though."

The more they spoke, the more Bucky realized how different London was compared to home. It was
clear people were fed up with the war, and the Blitz had massively impacted the city.

By the time the Americans arrived, the bombing had mostly stopped but drills still took place. Bucky
has been fortunate enough to not have had to take place in a drill yet, but when he mentioned that
Dum Dum only laughed. "Fortunate? I'd say that's unfortunate if you ask me! Do you know how
many fellas I've spoken to who've described what it's like the be in a bomb shelter with a lady they
fancy? Things can get pretty cozy in there pretty quickly if you'd ask me." He chuckled, "But not for
me. Nah, I got a real nice gal back home. She's one hell of a cook, let me tell ya! I told her we'd get
married if I get back in one piece, but that doesn't mean I can't live vicariously through others. What
about you? You got a lady?"

Bucky shook his head, "Nope," He popped the 'p' at the end. "No one special. Haven't met the right
dame to make me want to settle down yet. Brooklyn's filled with too many possibilities, it's too hard
to commit to just one person." He said before taking a sip of his drink. At that point, Bucky was well
past the point of intoxication, and in hindsight, he should have stopped drinking before he reached to
that point.

"I hear you there." Dum Dum said, "It's strange coming here and seeing so many gals desperate for
male attention. Almost makes me wish I didn't have to old ball and chain back at home... But if I
didn't, I don't know what I'd do here. It's nice having something back in the States that's home, you
know?"

Bucky didn't know the feeling. He always thought the home was a place to rest your head, not a
person. At 27, he knew he should probably start looking for a partner to shack up with. But he
wasn't ready, and if he was being honest with himself he wasn't sure if he really ever would be.

But the blonde across the pub was giving him eyes. Smirking, he turned back to his drink and
finished it quickly. He resumed his conversation with Dum Dum, "Never really gave it that much
thought." He admitted.

"Well, then let's hope for some kinda drill to happen then." The larger man chuckled, "Who knows,
guys go off to war and find ladies all the time. And even if you don't, it doesn't hurt to have some fun
once in a while, right?"

No, it did not, Bucky thought as he got another drink and turned his attention back to the woman
who continued to glance in his direction. Bucky has always found it easy to get a girl's attention. He
had never really had to peruse anyone for too long since eventually they usually reciprocated his
attraction. He had only even had one long term girlfriend, and it had ended fairly poorly. Their break
up was less than amicable, and since then Bucky had found it difficult trying to find a connection
with a woman like the one he had with Caroline.

Taking a swing of his whiskey and having the liquid burn his throat on the way down, he had a grin
on his face as he leaned against the bar and focused back on the blonde. Dum Dum's gaze fell where
Bucky's was and he laughed, "Hell, do you even need a bombing drill to get close to a lady?"

Bucky only clicked his tongue and said slyly, "No, I do not." His smirk didn't leave his face. The
blonde, although talking to her friends, kept catching his eye.

"You know, in order to get a date you actually gotta go up and talk to her." Dum Dum only watched the two, wondering why Bucky didn't make a move.

"Just wait." He told him and swallowed down more of his drink. The blonde smiled and Bucky gave her a wink. He knew she'd come to him eventually and apparently that's all it took. Private Campbell joined them and started talking a big game, and the next thing Bucky knew was the blonde was coming over and chatting him up.

After a while she made her intentions clear, shifting her weight on her heel and putting a hand in her hip before smirking, "So, you coming home with me or what?" She eventually asked.

Bucky replied with a definitely and then settled his tab. He overheard Dum Dum ask just how he managed to do that, to have a woman not only come up to him first but also invite him over to her place. Campbell only laughed, and Bucky was following the girl out after telling the guys so long.

Bucky should have never left the pub. He should have stayed where he was, drank some water, and then head straight to bed. But instead, he followed home a woman he didn't know to gain a night of action, and he was sorely paying for it that morning.

Not only did he feel bad for his behavior, but it was finally the one sunny day they had since arriving in London. He wished he had his pair of aviators on him since the brightness was only making his pounding headache worse.

Breathing deeply through his nose, he tried his best to choke down the feeling of getting sick. All the unusual smells were making his stomach turn more; he swore to himself to never drink that much again.

Although the air was cold, sweat trickled down the back of his neck as he walked. He thought to try to get a cab but wasn't sure how exactly to hail one outside of New York. He also hadn't necessarily seen one driving on the street yet either, which posed another problem.

The fresh air was probably good for him though. And although he stopped a few times by alleys when he was positive he was going to throw up. He managed to keep it down, although it would have likely been best if he did end up getting sick to rid his body of the alcohol.

Knowing he was going to ship out the following day, Bucky really wished he wasn't hungover. He typically never drank that much, since he had to end up looking after Steve after three drinks was too much for the small man. There were a few times where the roles had been reversed though, and Steve was there as Bucky's head usually ended up in a toilet. But never before had he been as hungover as he was in that moment. He wasn't sure what it was, and maybe it was just the pressure of going off the war and trying to enjoy his last night without someone shooting at him, but Bucky wished he could do it all over again. But this time he wanted to do it right.

He wouldn't have drunk so much, and he wouldn't have gone home with Margery. Instead, he would have stayed with his friends and then the next morning actually woke up without feeling ill to explore around London. It was a missed opportunity, and possibly one he may not ever have the chance to do again.

He never thought he was a bad guy. After all, he had lots of friends, and if Steve thought he was good enough to keep around then that must have counted for something. But Bucky was still ashamed and displeased with himself. And as he stumbled down the London streets, still struggling to breathe from his pounding head and twisted stomach, he swore to himself one thing. He swore he
would be better. If he survived this war and managed to keep most of his sanity, he'd go back to New York. He'd find a decent job and an even more decent girl and actually make something of himself. No more getting piss drunk and going home with strangers. It was time he grew up, he thought. It was time to grow up and get his shit together like Dum Dum and some of the other guys. No more goofing around, and no more funny business. He was in the military, and he had a job to do. It was time to give up his antics and actually make not only his family proud, but also himself.

But the thing about growing up was that it didn't just happen. Almost always it was forced, and war had a funny tendency of turning boys into men. Little did he know it at the moment, but he would end doing a lot more growing up than he wanted. Innocence would be stripped away, and there would be no going back to his old way of life.

Chapter End Notes

So Bucky finally makes his appearance and he's gone about getting himself in a bit of trouble. I'm not sure if I did a decent job writing him, but at least I tried. I tried to make him a little more mischievous than what we see in the Cap movies/Avengers.

Since I've uploaded 4 chapters in the last two days I likely won't release any more for a couple more days. I try to write a couple ahead before I publish just so I can stay ahead of the story and not leave it sitting for a long period of time.

Oh, and for those who may have had a hard time visualizing Daniel, I kinda tried to base his appearance off of Armie Hammer. Hopefully that helps a bit :) Thanks for reading! Please leave a review, and follow and favourite.

- Amelia
Chapter V

Chapter Notes

Hello again! Thank you all very much for the couple reviews, follows and favourites! They're massively appreciated! Here is the next chapter, sorry it's a little longer than my previous ones, but I had a lot to include in this one. I'll likely post another one some time this week if I get around to it.

Disclaimer: I sadly own nothing from the MCU :(

Trigger Warning: Anti-Semitism, Depressing themes regarding the Holocaust.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter V

The desert just outside of Cairo, Egypt, 1942.

When Lucy arrived at the covert desert operative base of the British Army she hardly thought for a second that she would be getting chastised for successfully completing a mission.

However, prior to getting rung out, the train had stopped off at a depot and a truck was waiting to take them to base. Charles clearly had been exhausted, since he fell asleep as soon as they started driving. Lucy would be lying if she said she wasn't dead on her feet either. As it turned out, sleeping in a tent in the desert wasn't as appealing as it sounded and she found herself tossing and turning most nights. She was also terrified of the possibility of scorpions and snakes somehow managing to get in with her under the blankets.

Beyond the exhaustion from not sleeping, she was also tired just from the day's overall events. Being shot at and running in the heat of the sun tended to drain most people, which was understandable. In those moments, all Lucy wished for was her bed back at home. Although if she was being truthful, just about anything was better than sleeping on a mat in the sand.

The drive had been short, but to Lucy, it seemed like a thousand years. Most days dragged on and on for her unless she was actively on a mission. Unless in the field, reports were her main fixation and reading all the intel provided to her for all the artifacts.

Although beyond that quite a bit of the job also included actual excavation and preservation of sites of historical significance. After all, there was a war going and how knew what would be left standing by the end of it. Therefore, recording the sites was of the utmost importance, despite Lucy usually feeling as though her talents would be better placed elsewhere such as the mission she was just on.

Prior to her placement in Cairo, Lucy had been to several other countries trying to procure rare artifacts. Most of them she was able to gain without much trouble, but recently with the Nazi's interest intensifying the job had become increasingly more dangerous. She didn't mind that much though, as the first time she had been shot at it had barely phased her. Charles was a different story, and clearly, she was taking it far too lightly and under any normal circumstances she was sure would have reacted as he did earlier if she had even a shred of instinct for self-preservation.
Upon arriving at the base, a messenger greeted them and told her that Captain Marsh was waiting for a mission report in the operations tent.

Lucy told Charles to go rest as she filled in the Captain and he hardly protested. Walking across the camp, she was now used to the looks that usually followed her. After being stationed there for a few months, most of the looks had generally stopped. The newly recruited men still stared though, since it was odd to see women in a military base besides a few agents and nurses. Lucy had a strikingly different appearance than most of the other women.

She didn't wear a uniform and typically dressed in whatever way was most practical and would allow her to blend in with whatever culture she surrounded herself with.

Arriving in the tent, she found the Captain was alone. She entered and spoke up, "Sir," She made it known she was standing there, ready to fill him in.

Looking up from his maps and letters, Captain Marsh stared at her and said, "Ah, good. Doctor Heinrich, you're here." He put down a piece of paper and then sighed. "Good of you to stop by."

"Of course," She frowned, wondering why he was acting so strange and why he thought she wouldn't stop by. "Why wouldn't I stop by, Sir?"

"Oh, I don't know Doctor. Maybe it's because you have a slight tendency of avoiding protocol. Does that ring any bells to you, Doc?" The older man leaned forward and placed his hands on his desks as he spoke to her in an annoyed fashion.

Lucy's eyes widened as confusing struck her. "Sir, I completed my mission! I did everything that was asked and executed it—,"

"You did the absolute opposite of what you were asked!" He shot back. "You were supposed to observe and report. That's it! Observe and report! You were not given any instruction to get involved, and yet you did so anyway."

Lucy was more than shocked. She was actually stunned, and her mouth dropped open and she tried to retort. "You recruited me to keep the artifacts out of the hands of the Nazis! I did that! I followed every step of protocol down to the last small detail and I saw a that a chance to get the artifacts presented itself and I took it."

"And meanwhile you were chased throughout the entire city and two locals were killed because of you. Not to mention, you put your assistant, who is a civilian, at risk!"

Her face dropped when she thought of the people who died. She knew someone got caught in the crossfire back in the marketplace, but she didn't know they were killed. "It was an accident, I didn't mean for anyone to get hurt. I was doing my job and beyond that, I had a successful mission."

"A success? We're here to save lives not add to the death toll! And now because of your carelessness, I have reports of a little girl and her mother were put in front of a goddamn firing squad!"

Lucy's heart dropped. No, scratch that; it broke. It broke into two and shattered upon hearing her Captain's words. Sadness settled over her entire body as it dawned on her he wasn't talking about the people caught in the crossfire in the market. He was talking about the young girl who had helped her.

A breath caught in her throat and never before had Lucy felt so guilty. It was all her fault, she realized. Sadness found its way into every inch of her soul, and she had to swallow a lump forming in her throat and blink back tears. "I didn't mean for anyone to get hurt." She whispered.
The man sighed and he pinched the bridge of his nose and stood up straighter. "I know you didn't. And although your mission was a success, I need to think of what's the next best course of action here. You're not a real soldier, Doctor. You have the title of Lieutenant because you are in charge of a team, and that's it. You're an archaeologist and sending you in and things like this happening isn't good news to have to report back. I like you, I really do. Your methods are effective and you have a no bullshit attitude. You're truly one of the most remarkable women I have ever met. Jesus, half the guys I talk to are terrified of you and these are all seasoned soldiers we're talking about here! But I have to do what's best for not only this operation but for the people who live here. Your methods are too unorthodox, and you're getting transferred to Italy come morning."

Her eyes widened. Lucy couldn't believe her ears upon hearing his words. Sure, her methods were different but he even said so himself that it was efficient! She had never once had a mission failure and today was the first time anything bad had happened on a large scale. Before she could open her mouth Captain Marsh held up his hand to cut her off. "Know that's it's not because you're being punished. But there's someone else who is better suited for this type of operation. He's already had a run in with the Germans and was able to keep an extremely important Hebrew artifact out of the hands of the Fritz. And as I understand, Italy is more your expertise anyway."

"Yes, Sir it is but I strongly object! I think I can be of service here! I know that I might have made a mistake but I hardly think that's enough cause to send me away!"

"As I said, it's not a punishment. You and your assistant will be less at risk there, and it's really a good thing. You'll be more successful and have more resources available to you. I'm afraid if you stay here you won't be able to accomplish any more of our missions. The guy we have coming in, he's a spy. He's also a man and doesn't attract quite as much bad press. If people found out we were sending an American woman in the thick of it without proper military training there would be too much backlash. Try to see this as a positive thing. Besides, you were personally requested by a high ranking Colonel. Think of it as a compliment."

Although Lucy didn't like it, she understood. Licking her lips, she wondered just who exactly her replacement was. "Sir, may I ask who the doctor is who's taking my job?"

Captain Marsh looked down at his letter and squinted at the name that appeared in writing. "It's uh, a fellow by the name of Jones. Dr. Jones, I believe."

Her eyes widened at the name and Lucy couldn't help but laugh. The Captain frowned and all Lucy could think of was how he must have been kidding her. After all, there's no way he could have been serious. "You're joking, right? You're getting that absolute moron to replace me? Captain, with all due respect I think you are making a massive mistake! Dr. Jones is—,"

Captain Marsh swiftly cut her off. "He's the best person for this type operation. He's just as effective as you and doesn't create such a mess. There's no fuss with him, plus he has training. And from what I understand he's managed to secure a largely important artifact. Whatever issue you have with him doesn't matter. The decision is final and you won't be able to convince me otherwise. Dr. Jones is the lead archaeologist of this project, and you are on the first ship to Italy. So I suggest you stop standing here and get your affairs in order and pack your things." The man said harshly and Lucy pursed her lips together. She only could nod at that moment and look down at her boots before answering."

"Yes Captain, I understand." That was the only thing she said before reaching out her bag and placing the objects she acquired on his desk. He looked with curiosity at them, and picked up the canopic jar into his hand and stared at it curiously.

Lucy turned around to exit the tent when he called out "Doctor Heinrich, one more thing," He said as she stopped in her tracks and spun to look at him. He stared at her and then finally said, "Good
luck. You take care of yourself in Europe. And thank you for your services here. You've made your
country proud."

Lucy only nodded but didn't bother giving him her thanks. She walked out of the tent and although
she heard his words she didn't know if she believed him. For some reason, she still felt like she was
being punished. She only hoped that he was right and Italy would be a better fit for her.

Her only regret was that she wasn't able to save that little girl and her mother. Now she had to leave
knowing there was nothing she could do there to redeem herself for what she did.

---

The University of Chicago, 1941

Lucy stood on her tippy toes while trying to reach one of her textbooks in her office. It was on the
top shelf, and she stuck out her tongue while going as high as she could in her high heels.

Wearing a black dress with small flower prints, she felt warm on the late summer day in the city.
Everything was sticky, and she had to wipe her forehead from the light coat of sweat that gathered in
her skin. She usually wouldn't have been at the university in the Summer, but she had agreed to teach
summer courses and was there for her office hours. Lucy had a few of her student's scheduled in to
see her for help, but in order to give him the resource they needed to complete their paper she needed
to first reach her textbook...

Huffing and putting her hands on her hips, she stood there wondering how on earth anyone was able
to reach the top shelf. Although she was quite tall for a woman, it was the moments like these she
missed Daniel's 6'4 frame.

Thinking back to him, she sighed and looked down at her left hand. A small, sparkling diamond ring
rested on her finger, showing the promise of a marriage that was meant to have taken place in the
next month.

At least, it had been before France was invaded. Lucy remembered waking up to the paper being
delivered to her front door on May 15th, 1940. She had moved to Chicago the year before to be a
professor at the university following completing her Ph.D. the year prior. Although she and Daniel
got engaged the month before finding out, they managed to make the long distance work. They
wrote often to one another, and although she found herself missing him constantly, reading his letters
always gave her comfort.

He would come to the United States to be with her once it was the right time, he had promised. But
now wasn't that time. With Jews being targeted by the Germans, he knew he should have left with
her. But his life was in Paris, and so was his family. He had to take care of his ill mother and his
elderly father, he explained. None of them spoke English either, which would make it harder for
Daniel to find a job and he didn't want Lucy to feel as though she had to provide for him when it
should be him doing it for her.

Lucy recalled first pleading with him in their small apartment in France to come with her to New
York for the summer and then move to Chicago afterward. She told him that the Lee's would happily
pay for his parent's medical bills and see they got the help that was needed. They would also very
likely set them up in a very comfortable apartment which they would live in while Lucy and Daniel
went off to Chicago.

But Daniel was proud, and he said he wouldn't accept charity. That had always been a touchy
subject for them. Daniel had never grown up with the money, and for the majority of Lucy's life, she
hadn't either. Yet, after she was taken in by the Lee's she had more money than she knew what to do
with. Although she originally came from poverty, she had lived with some of New York’s most wealthy families, which at the beginning of her and Daniel’s relationship had caused them problems. He felt like she could never understand what growing up was like for him, and he often saw her as a spoiled rich girl.

As things in Europe got worse, Lucy pressed him to leave. She told him it's wasn't safe and she was worried. Although he wasn't an active member in the Synagogue and hadn't been since he was a young adult, he was still a Jew. And she would be his wife, making her a target also. Her pleas had eventually turned to beg. Begging turned to arguments, and arguments turned into screaming. They screamed constantly at each other about the matter. She remembered how they would be at it for hours, the tears both streaming down both their faces. It would always lead to her telling him she would leave him if he didn’t come with her, which he told her wasn't fair because she was giving him the ultimatum between his family and keeping her.

Each time she would be ready to walk out the door. Once she even threw her engagement ring at him, telling him to go to hell.

The fighting always ended with him kissing her so hard she couldn't breathe, sometimes shoving her against the wall or whatever solid object was closest. She would tell him she hated him, and he would say 'I know'. But they would continue kissing, and eventually, her legs would wrap around his waist and he would carry her off to their bed where their passion would burn through the night like wildfire.

He had been the first man she had ever been with. He was her first and last everything. Her first serious boyfriend, her first love, and eventually the first man she had been with intimately. And although many frowned at them for living together before being they wed, Lucy and Daniel didn’t care. To them, all that mattered was each other.

After they had finished making up after their fight, Lucy would remember hearing his heartbeat in his chest as she laid her head against his soft, bare skin. She would play with his Star of David pendant as he ran his hands through her dark, thick brown hair.

The moonlight would shine through their bedroom window, and the city of love truly earned its name in those few moments.

"Je t’aime tellement que ça fait mal," She would tell him as he kissed the back of her hand and tears would prickle in her eyes. I love you so much that it hurts.

"Tu es mon monde entier. Mon tout." He would reply back with. You are my whole world. My everything.

He would then promise to go with her to America. They would then drift off to sleep, happy and in love. But when the sun would rise and the next day would come, he would go back on his word and say he couldn't go and they would fight about the exact same thing.

When she had finally left for the States she was less than happy that she was returning there alone. He swore to her that he would only stay in France for a little while later to sort things out, and she believed him.

It wasn't until May 15th, 1940, that she strolled out of her Colonial style house near the university with a mug of coffee in hand that she knew there would be no chance of Daniel coming to join her.

In nothing but her robe and slippers, Lucy opened her front door with a messy case of bed head. Yawning, she held her coffee close and then read the headline of the paper that morning. What she
then read stopped her heart. In large black letters on the first page read 'Germany Invades France'. Her cup of coffee slipped out of her hand and shattered into hundreds of tiny pieces on the ground, and at that moment she could have sworn she felt her heart so the very same thing.

At that point, it had been over a year since she read those words. After that, only three of Daniel's letters made it to her.

The first was informing her of what had happened when the Germans arrived and what it would mean for the Jews. The second described the things that had been going on, and he mentioned briefly of meeting a young man who he could not name who was apart of the French Resistance.

And the third letter she did not read. Attached to it was a small note. Daniel has found himself in a very dangerous situation, and for his own safety as well as hers he couldn't say what. But he told her he wished he had gone with her when she had offered, and it was his greatest fear that he would never see her again.

He wrote that the letter should only be read in the case of his death. And Lucy had honoured that wish, not touching it. She couldn't bear the thought of him being dead. The very idea almost drove her mad, and she had struggled for weeks afterward with even the thought of it.

She hasn't touched the letter despite not hearing from him for so, so long. She refused to even entertain the idea that he was dead. After all, he couldn't be. He had promised that he would come back to her.

Since then the letter had been kept safe in her bedside drawer, untouched and unopened.

As Lucy stared at her ring as she still stood there, trying to her that damned textbook down, she heard a faint knock on her office door.

"Come in!" She called, straightening out her casual dress and then adjusting a pin in her updo.

Lucy turned around expecting to see Darren Shapiro, a young man from the pseudoarchaeology course she taught who had an appointment with her.

To her surprise, two men in military uniforms stood there instead. Immediately her face fell and she knew this couldn't be good news.

"Dr. Lucy Heinrich?" The one asked her. He was an older man, with white hair but eyes which still reflected youth. The other man was younger, with grey in his light chestnut hair. The one that spoke up was clearly American from his accent and uniform, but the other man was English, which she found odd.

"Yes?" She asked them, curious about what they wanted.

"We were wondering if we could have a moment to discuss an important matter with you?" The Englishman spoke up and confirmed his nationality by his distinct accent.

"Yes of course, what can I help you gentlemen with?" She took a seat opposite to them; her desk created a barrier between the three of them. Her heart was pounding in her chest as they stared at her and a million possibilities ran through her mind as to why they were sitting in her office.

"My name is Captain Woodward, and this here is Lieutenant Beaty with British Army. We hear you are one of the leading experts on rare artifacts that have to do with ancient cults and religions." The American spoke up, his tone reflecting how serious he was, "Can you confirm this for us?"
Lucy was taken back. Never before had anyone ever referred to her as the 'expert' on her specialized area of study. Although her doctoral dissertation was called 'exquisite', and many had declared that they had never seen a woman in archaeology write such a fine piece, she would hardly call herself the expert.

"Well, I wouldn't quite say that," She blushed lightly, honoured at the very thought that someone believed her work deserved that much merit. "I think my colleague Dr. McKinen would be better suited to that title."

"No, Dr. Heinrich, we've read up quite a bit on you and we believe that it is, in fact, you who deserves the title. Many others in your field also agree with this, including many of the university board members."

She could hardly believe her ears at their words. Her entire life she had never particularly the best at anything. And now, to be called the leading expert in her field it was like Christmas had come early. "Well, thank you!" She swallows a lump forming in her throat as pride welled up in her chest, "I am extremely flattered."

"Before we begin," Lieutenant Beaty spoke up, "Do you believe this office is a safe space to discuss sensitive matters? Is there any reason that would you believe it to be bugged?"

Lucy could hardly contain her shock and she almost laughed at the question, "Of course not! I mean... No! Definitely not!" She answered in a flustered tone, and then she hastily asked, "Why? Did someone bug it? I don't think they would overhear anything particularly interesting..." She admitted, knowing many people found studying antiquity to be extremely boring.

"No of course not, Doctor. We just had to ask as a part of the protocol as a part of precaution. We didn't mean to alarm you." Captain Woodward assured her in a comforting tone, "But what we are about to disclose to you is highly secretive and cannot be discussed outside the confines of this room. Is that understood?"

She nodded slowly. Lucy felt her palms her sweaty and she said "Understood," far quieter than she has meant to.

"Dr. Heinrich are you familiar at all with the Nazi S.S. division known as the Ahnenerbe?"

She frowned and answered, "I've heard of it a couple times but I must admit I'm not entirely sure I know exactly what it is."

"It's apart of the Nazi's plan to develop a strong sense of nationalism. Their goal is to convince everyone that civilization began within the Germanic region, and establish themselves as the one true race. They often use pseudoscience and archaeology as a means to confirm these ideologies and create means of propaganda supporting Aryan superiority."

How awful, she thought. That anyone would be so devious and evil that they would fabricate lies to support their hateful ideas.

"I see," She nodded, "So they use archaeology as a weapon? They use it as a way to shape people's perceptions?"

"That's not quite all. There's another division known as HYDRA, they're more radical than the Ahnenerbe. They're a secret operation and we know very little about them at this time. Our governments are coming together to form a special unit, the Strategic Scientific Reserve. The SSR specializes in groups like HYDRA and their dealings, and are trying their best to stop them."
Lucy frowned and she put her hands in her lap, wondering why exactly they were telling her all this top secret information. "And what does this have to do with me, exactly?"

"Dr. Heinrich, we believe you're able to help us. Not only are you an expert in the things HYDRA is looking for, but you also speak German and French. And not to mention, you display a large passion for art and historical artifacts and I'm sure would be willing to do anything to preserve them."

"Yes, but I'm still unsure of what you're asking me to do?"

"We're asking you to join the Allied army." Lieutenant Beaty said leaned back in his chair. Lucy almost laughed at their request. Again, they had to be joking. Why on earth would they want her to join? "You want me to join the army? Me? Join the army?" She asked as if they had said the most lucrative thing. "There must be a hundred men more capable than I am!"

"But none of them are in your unique situation. Your field expertise can be in handy for the preservation of the artifacts, and your knowledge on rare cult items can help us from stopping HYDRA from using them to create weapons of mass destruction."

Her brows furrowed more as they continued speaking. She could hear the blood rushing to her head and the noise of it echoed in her ears, "How are they using them as weapons?"

"We're not sure. Call it magic, call it science? But we have intel on them searching for remarkably rare objects and harnessing their power to create chaos. We need you to be one step in front of them and keep that from happening."

She only nodded and then stood up, hearing enough of their offer, "Gentleman I hear what you're saying but I can't do what you ask of me. Now, if you would please leave, I have students who need my help." She wrapped her arms around her centre and waited for them to move. But instead they didn't, they continued to sit there. Lieutenant Beaty reached in his briefcase he had with him and brought out a manila folder.

"Dr. Heinrich if you would please look at these pictures, I think you would reconsider." Lieutenant Beaty said and passed it over to her. She took it, however reluctantly and sighed as she opened it. As she saw what they contained her face fell. Pictures showed mass destruction on a level she never once thought was capable. Placing a hand to her mouth in shock, she saw the remains of the Vienna University. "Oh my God," Was all she could say as she gasped. The ceiling panel called Philosophy done by Gustav Klimt was completely in shambles. The next picture she looked at was a church in Rome, showing the Madonna with Child by Giovani Bellini in 1430 broken in half. The next page she saw was The Amber Room in St. Petersburg barely recognizable. The Dormition Cathedral of the Kyivan Cave Monastery was next, completely decimated. Countless other buildings and sites were shown from the countryside of being destroyed, and some were famous churches and landmarks. On the back, the page was a list of all the art that had vanished, presumed to have been destroyed or stolen. Pieces by Degas, Courbet, and Van Gogh were all present, and Lucy felt saddened at the fact the world had been robbed of so much beauty.

"So to be clear, you want me to not only document and record sites before they get destroyed, but also somehow track down some very specific artifacts that an extremist Nazi group is looking for?"

"In a way, yes. You'll be in charge of a full team and be given everything you need. You won't ever see any actual combat, but this is a matter of extreme importance and we think you are the best person to handle it." Captain Woodward explained, "We'll match the salary that the university is
giving you and you'll receive a very generous bonus for your services, as well as a pension."

She only passed the pictures back and then said remorseful, "I'm sorry, but like I said I can't help you. My life is here, and I can't just pack up and leave."

The two men looked at one another and then Captain Woodward sighed. Lieutenant Beaty pulled another file out of his bag and he asked her, "Dr. Heinrich you're engaged to Dr. Daniel Réhal, correct?"

That caught her attention. She looked up in shock, wondering how they could have possibly known that or who Daniel was. She had hoped they had just done good research, and the knew of her engagement as they knew of her previous field experience. "Yes. W-why do you ask?" Fear gathered in her voice.

The two looked at each other and Captain Woodward told her she should probably sit back down. Lucy's heart pounded in her chest, almost feeling as though it would jump out of it beat any harder. She twisted around her engagement ring in on her left hand nervously as she wondered why they brought him up.

"When was the last time you heard word from him?"

She shook her head, unable to even think properly. Why were they asking? Was Daniel in some kind of trouble? "I'm not sure. Perhaps five months ago was my last letter from him."

Captain Woodward only sighed and handed her the folder, "Dr. Heinrich, we didn't want to show you these but we hope they will make you reconsider. Revenge is a good motivator. You are not only a brilliant archaeologist who would greatly help our countries… But you also have a cause to join beyond the art. You were considered for your skill but also you are in a very unique situation. But I must warn you, the picture you are about to see is a little shocking."

As soon as he spoke those words Lucy ripped open the folded as fast as she could. There were letters inside, all addressed to the British government from the French. Daniel's name popped up over and over and Lucy didn't understand why.

"Your fiancé joined the Jewish French Resistance. Although unsanctioned by the French officials they did operations of sabotage, espionage, and rescue missions." Lieutenant Beaty explained and as Lucy read through the letters, she could no longer wait to see the few pictures at the end of the file. Her heart stopped as she saw one. In black and white, she stared at Daniel's face as he posed with other men. He looked as handsome as ever, with his large glasses and standing tall. But he looked tired, and as though he had aged five years since the last time Lucy saw him. What shocked her most was that he stood with a large gun in his hand, clearly coming from a mission. All the men in his presence looked just as exhausted and beat as he did, and it was obvious they were putting up the fight for their lives.

With a quiet voice, Captain Woodward began to speak "We had reports of him saving countless lives. He's a true hero. You should be very proud." They told her as she looked up and tears welled in her eyes as she knew where this conversation was going.

"No," Was all she could say. Her heart broke and Lucy shook her head over and over. "No." She whispered as a single tear fell down her cheek. "No, please, please don't tell me..."

Captain Woodward only said with a tone of sympathy, "The last picture will give you an idea what happened."
Lucy flipped to the next one and she let out a sob and covered her mouth at the sight. Her vision blurred so much that she could hardly see the picture that was clearly taken by someone else observing the resistance's missions. In a centre of a square, amongst collapsed buildings and destruction, Lucy could make out three figures kneeling in the ground with their hands locked behind their heads in surrender. Their faces, although she could really see them, were bloodied and bruised and the Germans had their guns pointed at their heads. Lucy choked out a sob and the picture shook from her hands being so unsteady. She could make out Daniel's face as one of the men who had surrendered, and suddenly she felt as though she couldn't breathe.

"We're very sorry to be the ones delivering this message to you." Lieutenant Beaty said, "We wished we had better news."

She only looked up at them, blinking hard and trying her best to keep the tears from falling. "Is he dead? Please, just tell me. I need to know. Is Daniel dead?"

Captain Woodward looked to Lieutenant Beaty and the man only pursed his lips together. "We're... we're not sure. Those pictures were taken by one of the other resistance members who was overseeing the mission. He reported back that they weren't shot immediately as most captured partisans are. They took them away. But yes, we believe he is dead."

Lucy covered her face and let out a sob. She couldn't believe what she was hearing, her heart had never felt so broken in her life. She suddenly wanted nothing more than to die as well; unable to even fathom the idea of living in a world without Daniel.

"Although he wasn't shot immediately, he and his team were taken away." Lieutenant Beaty continued, "We believe they were placed with other Jews and rebels being transported out of the city."

"Transported where?" She sniffled, her nose running and wiping it away with the back of her hand.

"It's recently been known to us that the Nazi's are attempting the eradicate the Jews at catastrophic rates. It's not even known to the public yet, but many Jews were taken to places believing they were going to work camps."

"So... so he's at one of the work camps?" She asked and Lieutenant Beaty passed her a handkerchief and she dabbed away at her eyes and gently rubbed her nose.

The older man could only sigh and look at her in pity, "Doctor, I am so, so sorry. But no. The work camps were mostly a lie to make people more comfortable about what was happening. Most French Jews are being transported to the Drancy Internment camp, where they are then transported to Sobibor, Dachau, Majdanek, and Auschwitz. Although, there are reports for thousands of other labour camps, and he could be in any one of them."

"What are they? The names you just listed?" She asked, "If he's only in a labour camp that's good right? That means he'll be kept prisoner until the war is over and he'll be able to come home? Please, tell me that's all it is."

"Dr. Heinrich, the camps we listed are extermination camps... No one survives them. They're used in place of the mass killing sites. Some of them like Auschwitz are used for labour, but they only stay alive as long as they're useful. Beyond that, we have reports of anywhere between a couple hundred to over a thousand being gassed immediately upon arrival. Even as a labourer, the survival rates are almost nonexistent. With what we know we expect no one to be capable of surviving over a month. They're intended to completely erase the Jewish race from the race of the earth. I'm so sorry, but if Daniel is at any one of them he won't be coming back home."

Captain Woodward said as Lucy silent
shook as she cried into her hands. She felt as though she were living in a nightmare that she couldn't escape from.

"We have accounts of transportation from France carrying as many as thousands of deportees. Most end up in the death camps, but there is a small chance he could be in a camp for political prisoners. Daniel was a strong young man, and if he somehow beats the odds and is able to work until the end of the war and isn't selected randomly for gassing, he may just survive. But I would hate to give you false hope. If I were you, I would attempt to move on and regain a semblance of a life..."

"Move on?" Lucy shot in anger, "You just told me my fiancé has likely been taken to the worst hell on earth and was murdered! No, not even murdered! Slaughtered! And you think I can just move on?" She asked in shock, shaking her head as every inch of her body hurt. She had never felt a pain quite like this. Not even after Kathleen or her mother died.

She would give anything to have Daniel back at that moment. Oh, why did he not come with her when she asked? She should have pressed harder; she should have fought more. But she didn't, and now the love of her life was dead. And he had died alone, in a place filled with evil and hate. Lucy could hardly breathe she was crying so badly; she never knew it was possible to experience a heartbreak such as this.

"I know it's hard," Captain Woodward had no idea what pain she was experiencing. How dare he have the gull to pretend he knew what she was going through? How dare he even say such a thing? "But you can prevent more of this from happening. You can keep those artifacts out of HYDRA hands. The sooner the war is won the sooner we can help the victims. You have an opportunity to do that."

She only clenched her teeth before staring at them through her glossy, tear-filled, bloodshot eyes before hissing, "Get the hell out."

Woodward again pursed his lips and nodded and stood up, "We hope you will reconsider our offer."

Lieutenant Beaty followed suit and stood out of his chair, "My most sincere condolences for your loss." As if condolences would bring Daniel and all those other people back.

Nothing would bring them back. Absolutely nothing and nothing Lucy could do would help. The role she would play in the grand scheme was so unbelievably small that it wouldn't even make a difference.

She couldn't believe the news she had just heard. Not even about just Daniel, but how was it possible all the horrors were coming to light and no one knew what was really going on? How could the United States sit idly involved when there were reports of what had happened? Was no one willing to stick up for what was right?

As the men walked out of her office, Lucy looked up and only said: "Wait!" She would have given anything to have Daniel back. He fought for his people and did his share, and he would have wanted Lucy to do hers. Her role would be small, but even if she could save one person it would be enough. If she could give one person their loved one back so they wouldn't have to know that pain that she had felt in that current moment than that would be good enough for her.

Both Captain's turned around to look at her, and she said with a shaky voice. "I'll do it. I'll help you." She wanted to make Daniel proud.

Chapter End Notes
Well, that was depressing. Sorry about that! It honestly has broken my heart to have killed Daniel off. But we need to make room for Bucky in the story, who will again make an appearance next chapter :D

On a more serious note, before I finish up I have a couple things to say. I wanted to point out the facts regarding the death camps in this story is all accurate. All the matters dealing with the lost art/damages done are also true.

This is not anything I made up to benefit this story. It is a very, very real part of history and I ask my readers to enjoy my work but also be mindful that not everything is fiction. Some of the elements that are included were very real, and real people were the victims. Many have family who are alive today, and I hope for you all the keep the victims in your thoughts and that when you read something like this you remain critical of the events that led up to the genocide of the European Jews/minorities.

If any family members of victims are currently reading, please feel free to leave a review and PM me about their experience. If you have found it difficult reading this, or wish for me to change any wrongful facts, please feel free to contact me yet again. Like I said, I haven't made any of the info up regarding the Captain's talking about the camps. Please be sensitive about that and respectful. I know you are all amazing and wonderful, but I just really wanted to stress that.

That's all I wanted to say! Have a lovely rest of your week and I'll update soon. Please don't forget to follow, favourite, and review!

-Amelia
Chapter VI

Italy, July 1942.

The first thing Bucky noticed about Italy was the heat. It wasn't a heat he was used to, there had always been a breeze in New York off the Hudson, even sometimes the warmest days could be tolerable as long as there was some shade and a nice cold drink.

But Italy was different. It was so hot it made it difficult for Bucky to breathe, and his uniform and the pack he had to carry, as well as his weapons, made it all the more unpleasant. Hell, he didn't even know where they were at that point. All he had known was for five days they had been at a post; doing nothing but sitting on their asses and sweating in the heat.

It was the humidity that made it hard, he figured. Part of the problem with the dampness was the bugs it brought. Bucky smacked his hand against his neck, trying to kill another pesky mosquito who thought he'd make a great meal yet again.

Italy was swarming with them. And it wasn't even the issue so much that they were annoying. The other problem with them was that they brought disease. Although he knew he wouldn't have to worry about that as much as many some of the guys who were stationed in North Africa, he still couldn't imagine having to be sent home because of a damn mosquito.

As he stood in the heat, his mind drifted to a past memory. After he joined the army Bucky recalled standing in line to receive all his vaccinations. He had already gotten into the army and was ready to proceed with more physicals and get all the work done he needed before heading off. He remembered how Steve was still trying to enlist.

"You're gonna get cauuught," Bucky sang under his breath. They both stood in line, waiting to see the nurses and doctors doing the examinations.

Steve elbowed Bucky in the stomach. "Hey shut up!" Although Steve was small he hit Bucky hard enough to cause a cough to rise in his throat "I will if you keep bringing it up!"

"Punk," Bucky rubbed his stomach, frowning at the shooting pain that went through.

"Jerk." Steve shot back.

Like all the other men, they both were in white undershirts and white boxers. Bucky resisted the urge
to cross his arms over his chest, feeling a little chilled from the draft of the wind.

"Hey, Steve isn't this gonna be the first time a dame's ever caught you not wearing pants?" Bucky had a shit eating grin on his face as he teased him, getting even for the elbow in the gut.

"You know what—!" Steve raised his voice and turned around to argue and a nurse nearby shushed them. "Sorry Ma'am," Steve apologized respectfully. He turned to Bucky and whispered, "Not everyone can sleep with half of Brooklyn."

Bucky chuckled, "Yeah, I guess not. But hey, someone's gotta do it! It's my heavy burden to bear."

"Uh-huh yeah, and it's gonna get you in trouble one day. Almost like how it got you in trouble last night!"

"That wasn't my fault and you know it!" Bucky defended himself, thinking back to the previous night's events. Bucky wasn't one to be the cause of fights, typically. Usually, that was Steve's job, but for the first time since maybe they were kids, Bucky was almost the instigator.

"You knew she had a boyfriend and you were still trying to sweet talk her!" Steve hissed.

"Okay! It wasn't my proudest moment, I'll admit. But it's not like I was gonna do anything, I just wanted to see if she would flirt back. And for the record, she was way too good for that guy! Man, what a clown he was." Chuckling to himself, Bucky shook his head as he reminisced.

"A clown that had half a foot on you and was about to beat the living daylights out of us!" Steve protested, wondering if he forgot just how close they had both been from getting the pulp beat out of them.

"Out of me, not out of you." Bucky corrected, knowing Steve wasn't involved in the little spat that happened.

"Hey, your fights are my fights, remember?" That had always been the case for them. Again, Bucky never started fights or was usually the cause of them. It was because of Mr. Sassy Pants not keeping his mouth shut for the majority of the time. But despite never starting them himself; Bucky sure did help to finish them. It had caused a lot of problems between him and his mother over the years. He would come home sporting another black eye or bruised knuckles as she would ring him out each and every time. They would argue about him not being careful enough, and then she would go get a bag of peas to put on wherever he was black and blue. But since he had moved out, no one had chastised him had gotten him frozen veggies. He kind of missed it, he realized. It was nice having someone care about his well being, even if it was just his mom.

Bucky sighed, "Yeah I guess you're right on the money there, pal. If I had a nickel for every time I saved your punk ass I'd be living on the Upper East Side by now."

"You'd never fit in." Steve smirked, "They're too sophisticated up there. Plus, you'd never stand a chance with any of the high socialite gals. They'd give you too hard of a time and you'd have to actually work to get their attention for once."

"That doesn't seem half bad," Bucky caught the eye of a pretty red-haired nurse who had grey eyes. She gave him a soft smile and he returned it. "You know me," He told Steve, "I'm always up for the challenge."

"The challenge? When are you ever up for the challenge? When was the last time you actually had to peruse a girl instead of her just falling right into your lap?"
"Well, last night apparently!" Bucky laughed as he said smugly.

He couldn't see Steve, due to him being in front of him, but he knew he was smirking and possibly rolling his eyes. "You're really a piece of work, you know that?"

"So I have been told." Bucky only snickered, knowing he had been called that once or twice before by people. Mostly though, he had been called that by Steve.

"The army is gonna have one hell of a time keeping you in check, let me tell you that. Let's just hope I get in this time to see it. Nothing would make me happier than seeing you have to do extra laps or clean the latrines for a week for being a smart-ass."

"I know, buddy." Bucky clapped him on the shoulder as the man in front of Steve was called up next. "Maybe lucky number four will be it?" They both went to the nurses at the station taking registration. Steve took a deep breath before walking forward, straightening his posture and trying to appear taller.

As Bucky approached the nurse, he saw how Steve tried to balance on the balls of his feet and push his chest out. Pursing his lips, he turned away from his friend and silently prayed yet again that they would fail. Of course, he would never tell Steve he actively wished he wouldn't be able to achieve his lifelong dream of fighting for his country. But Steve was so small, and Bucky knew that whoever would send him to war would be putting the nail in his coffin.

Bucky heard Steve begin to register for an examination "Rogers, Steven, Grant." He told the nurse just as the one who was taking care of Bucky asked him his.

"Barnes, James, Buchanan."

"Buchanan, is that a family name?" She asked him, looking up from her start to glance at him. "It's kinda unusual. You don't hear that one often, but it's pretty."

"Unfortunately, yeah." He sighed, "Some family member's a long time ago. My mom liked the way it sounded."

"It's nice," She complimented him and began filling out forms. "So, Soldier. It looks like we're just doing a general check-up to make sure everything's still a go. You'll also be getting your shots for Yellow Fever and Smallpox. If you could go into the waiting room to my right, please take a seat and wait for the next nurse to call you."

Bucky murmured thanks and turned back to Steve, who looked back at him just as he himself was about to get his general inspection. Bucky gave him a look that said 'good luck,' and Steve disappeared into the other room. He knew it would be best if the officer failed him. There were other men more capable than Steve who could fight, and what he failed to recognize was that there were other jobs that were much safer that he was more suited for.

The little man wanted to be where the action was. He didn't like the idea of sitting idly after hearing that other people were laying down their lives. Even in their childhood, Steve has always wanted to be a soldier. Bucky recalled how they used to meet halfway between their crummy apartments and play in some of the construction sites and pretended they were in the trenches.

He remembered long ago wielding sticks and making gun noises as the two of them would run and duck from the other neighbourhood kids.

'We're surrounded!' Bucky would gasp as his breath fell short as they had their backs against a mound of dirt. His face was dirty and his hair messy, one of his suspenders had fallen off his
'We gotta take those dirty bastards!' Steve would say, his eyes wide. At nine years old, the two of them knew that if one of their mother's heard that type of language they would get their mouth washed out with soap. Talking like that and being rebellious was part of what made it so fun.

Steve's face was also dirty, and so was his shirt which would definitely earn himself a scolding when he got home. 'We'll show 'em we're not afraid!' He was right. Steve Rogers wasn't afraid of anything, it seemed. Even when it came to signing up in a war where there was a very real possibility he would be killed in. 'We'll take them together!' He insisted, knowing they worked better as a team.

'On three!' Bucky agreed.

'One.' They would say together.

'Two!' In unison yet again, they held their sticks/guns to their chest and took a deep breath.

'THREE!' They yelled and dived over the mound, surprising Tommy Susa and George Caraway who was hiding behind another mound not too far off. The boys hollered and yelled, playing until the sun went down and it started to get dark. Those were the days of innocence, free from all responsibility and worry.

But playing war and actually being apart of one were two very different things. And although Bucky wouldn't want to go to war with anyone else but his most loyal teammate, he knew this was an expedition he had to do on his own.

Walking into the waiting room, Bucky sat next to a guy who was reading the paper. The front page read about the French Resistance and the controversy on their methods, but at the same time praising them for their valor.

The guy saw Bucky trying to get a glimpse of it and he clicked his tongue, "Really makes you wonder what's going on over there, huh? Citizens getting involved and whatnot. Like doctors and teachers and even the goddamn grocery clerks. Must be bad."

Buck nodded, "It's lucky for them the U.S. finally got involved"

The man agreed as another one joined them and sat on the other side of Bucky. He was larger than the both of them, with a standard army haircut and a face that already made him dislikable. "Took them damn long enough if you ask me." The first man to his left sighed. "Only had to take half the Pacific fleet getting destroyed first."

"Was gonna sign up to be in the Navy," The newcomer explained, crossing his arms, "Good thing I didn't, after Pearl Harbour went kaboom and all."

The other man frowned at the newcomer, thinking what he had said was a little insensitive. Bucky was about to open his mouth to tell him to show some respect but the other guy beat him to it, "My girl's Pops was on the Arizona..."

The other man seemed to recognize his mistake, "Sorry, that's rotten luck. Good thing we have fellas like us signing up to beat those bastards."

Bucky just widened his eyes from the uncomfortable situation while pursing his lips together and said nothing. It wasn't until Steve walked back from his own inspection, shoulders slumped down that Bucky knew they hadn't passed him again. His stomach dropped, seeing his friend so down in the dumps, but he knew it was for the best. Steve went to go retrieve his clothing, and the other guy
spotted him through the doorway of the other and laughed, "Damn lucky they have fellas like us and not like that."

That was it. That did it for Bucky. He wanted nothing more than to be the shit out of this guy, but knew he had to keep his composure, "You know, I bet that kid has more balls than all of us!" Bucky defended him, the guy on his left nodding in agreement.

"Yeah! It takes heart to come up here and enlist, even knowing you'll be rejected!" He added.

The other man just chuckled and shook his head, clicking his tongue "I don't know, leave the fighting to the men I say and leave the other tasks to the boys and ladies."

Steve was a real man, more so than that Jackass. Bucky's fists clenched and he wanted to sock him right in the jaw, "My Ma always said that being a man had nothing to do with your size it had to do with how you treated people." If she was right Steve Rogers was a bigger man than all of them. The guy beside Bucky wasn't a man, a buffoon maybe, but definitely not a man.

"Daley, Harvey?" A gorgeous strawberry blonde nurse came out in her pristine white uniform. All three of their eyes turned to her and the man who had been reading the newspaper stood up and folded it. He looked at Bucky and told him good luck. Bucky has a feeling he wasn't talking about the war, but rather the guy beside him. Bucky was sure he'd need it in order to continue to deal with that guy.

As the nurse walked away, Jackass to Bucky's right did a low whistle, his eyes glued to her behind.

"Had I had known they all looked like this I would have enlisted sooner," He said, "If the ones in the field look like the ones here it might not make getting shot at quite so bad."

Bucky sighed and took the newspaper that Harvey had left behind and he began reading the front page, "Doesn't really matter to me what they look like. As long as they do a half decent job of patching me up over there I could care less."

"Yeah but I'm just saying; it's nice to get a nice view too." He said with a grin. "Especially since I'm not so great with medical stuff. My sister was sick a lot as a child and I never liked hospitals. Needles always terrified the hell out of me."

Bucky tried to give him some advice, "Just don't think too hard about it when she sticks you." He said it half paying attention to what they were talking about since he was too immersed in what he was reading.

"I'd like to stick her with something too if you know what I'm saying." He smirked at a shorter, brown-haired nurse with curves as she walked in.

"Don't let any of them hear you say that." Although Bucky was known for being able to get ladies, there had never ever been a time where he didn't respect them. Never would he have said anything so crass in his entire life, let alone to some strangers. "These broads mean serious business. I bet they could hold down a man with no problem."

"I'd like to see them try," The man chuckled as the pretty, brown-haired nurse came over holding a chart.

"Barnes, James?"

Bucky put the newspaper back down and he looked at the guy, "While you're in there I'd keep my comments to myself. Wouldn't wanna make them angry as your ass is exposed to them and they have
access to a lot of pointy objects." He warned. The man paled a little, clearly not have thought that the nurses actually have to perform procedures, and could decide whether or not he was gonna be sore tomorrow.

Bucky followed the nurse into a curtained examination room. She gave him a soft smile as he stood there, "When are you expected to start your training?" She asked him.

"A week and a half, Ma'am." He answered back, scratching the back of his head awkwardly.

"You can sit on the examination table," She said, and then asked, "Are you nervous?" He did as she asked, the back of his thighs cold against the metal table.

"For this? Not really; I'm sure you're very good at giving out needles. You seem like a real professional."

She giggled, her laugh soft and gentle, "I meant for going to war, Soldier."

"Oh! Umm, you know I haven't really thought about it. The day after we declared war I enlisted. My dad was a soldier too, I figured I should probably follow in his footsteps and stick up for the little guys." He had been sticking up for the little guy his entire life, might as well make a career out of it.

"A lot of guys are nervous," She said as she got a light in her hand and then told him to open his eyes wide, "I think they have reason to be. The more I hear about the war in Europe the more uneasy I feel sending guys over there." She shined the light in his pupils, making them dilate and he flinched at first at the brightness. She checked both of them, and then gave him a soft smile as she said, "That's a pretty colour."

"Funny, I was gonna say the same thing about yours." He grinned. "What's your name?"

"You can call me Nurse, if you'd like." She said with a smirk.

"What's your real name, Nurse?" He asked her, his hands folded across his chest.

She grabbed a wooden stick. "Say 'Aahhh!"

Bucky opened his mouth and stuck his tongue out, 'Aahhh!" He did as she told him and she grinned. Afterward, she wrote another note on his sheet and then finally said, "It's Connie."

"I like that, it's nice." He told her, trying his best to be charming. He saw how she blushed, causing some pride to well up in him and his ego to inflate.

"I hate it, it was my grandmother's. I think it's so boring." Connie explained with a frown, her eyebrows furrowing together.

"I think it suits you, a pretty girl deserves a pretty name."

She smirked at him and then said, "Flattery won't get this over sooner. Now, stand up!"

"Who said I wanted this to be over sooner? I'm enjoying this little bit of time with you." He chuckled and stood up.

Connie grabbed two vials that contained the vaccination and also a rather intimidating, long looking needle which would have made even Bucky pale under normal circumstances if he didn't need to keep his composure while flirting. "Ha! You really are a riot, being sweet isn't going to make this hurt less." She said and then gave him a wicked smirk, "Now, elbows on the table and drop your
shorts."

Bucky raised his eyebrows, "Geez, you're not gonna buy me dinner first before asking that?"

She only snorted, "Just do what I say, Soldier."

"Ma'am yes, Ma'am." He gave her a mocking salute which made her laugh, and he pulled the back of his boxers down so his bare skin was exposed to her. He caught her raising an eyebrow and she smirked down at him; the blush yet again turning her cheeks a shade of pink.

"You give all the fella's backside a once over like that?" He chuckled as he caught her looking. Disinfecting the skin with a cold cloth she only smirked, "Only the behind's that are especially cute."

"You think it's cute?" Bucky chuckled.

"That, and it's shockingly white. Do you ever see the sun? Or are you from Canada?"

"Haha, hell no! Those Eskimos have nothing on—Ouch! Hey!" He gave out a yelp as she stuck the needle into his flesh. "Easy there, Doll! I have to sit on that later!" He joked.

"Oops!" She only giggled and then prepared him for another one. Bucky heard the man next to his examination let out a high squeal in pain, he only hoped it was the jackass who had been sitting next to him. "I'm sure you'll manage."

"I'm not sure; I might need some kind of nurse to take care of me."

"Hmm, too bad you don't know any.." She humoured him, gently swabbing his skin to disinfect it again.

"Although I do kinda know one who owes me dinner. After all, she was just ogling my butt." He replied cockily. He flinched again as she stuck him, releasing an "Ow!" from his mouth.

"You're all done. And for the record, I was not ogling." She set the record straight. Bucky stood up and rubbed the tender spot on his backside.

"I think you stuck me with that last one a little harder on purpose."

"Hmm, that's possible. Maybe next time you won't be quiet to snide?" She suggested with a flirtatious grin.

"Got anything up your sleeves to ease the pain?" He asked her.

She sighed and then turned him around again, forcing him to get back on his elbows and Bucky laughed saying "Woah Woah, okay! I was only teasing, Doll! No need to be so rough." She grabbed a bandaid, stretched his boxers again to show his skin and placed the bandage on the spot where he had gotten the shots.

"There." She said as he got back up, returning his boxers to their rightful place."Is that alright? Or do you need me to kiss it better too?"

"I mean, if you're offering than yeah that doesn't sound half bad." Bucky laughed and she huffed with an amused smile as she scribbled something on his chart.

Connie handed it back to him, "Give this to one of the nurses at registration on your way out."
"Sure thing," Bucky was about to walk out when stopped in his tracks, "So, about the whole 'you buying me dinner thing', I'm gonna let it slide. It's my treat this time."

She put her hands on her hips and looked at him in an amused fashion, "Is that so?"

"It is. As soon as I finish basics you and I are having dinner and going dancing."

Once again showing amusement in her expression she only grinned and then tried to huff in a pretense annoyed fashion, "Well... If you insist then I suppose."

"I do insist. It's a date." He beamed and then gave her another false salute before saying "Ma'am," Proving just how it's done before walking out.

He had a large grin on his face as he met Steve outside the examination building after getting dressed.

"Did you get refused?" He asked Steve, seeing his upset expression on his face and the way he looked as though he were just kicked.

"Yup," He let the 'p' pop at the end. He had his hands deep in his pockets and he then squinted at Bucky, knowing he had something to be smug about. "Did you?" He knew he probably asked one of the nurses on a date, and wanted to know if they had finally given him a no.

"Nope!" Like Steve, he held onto the 'p' at the end. His clapped his friend on the back and said reassuringly with a laugh, "Don't worry, I'll see if she's got a pretty friend for you."

All that seemed like ages ago to Bucky. He had pretty much all forgotten about Connie until that moment. After all, they had only spent the one night of the exhibition together. Later he had dropped her off at home after Steve had disappeared somewhere and they had shared a kiss on her front doorstep. She didn't ask him to come inside, which he was alright with but also slightly disappointed. He found most girls were willing to get in a little more trouble with a guy who was leaving for the war the next day. But Bucky was fine with just leaving it at that, there hadn't been a real connection between them anyway.

Leaning against one of the tanks, Bucky had a piece of grass held between his teeth, his hand on his rifle. His helmet was on, but he didn't bother putting on his pack or his military-issued jacket from his uniform. Most of the guys were wearing their olive coloured t-shirt from underneath.

Sweat was gathered on his brow, and a private by the name of Rob Lewinski sat on-top of the tank eating one of his rations. "Man, it's a good thing I didn't sign up for the army for their food," He said, shoveling his spoon in his mouth, "Tastes like shit. Really makes me miss my mom's Sunday roast, and that tasted like shit too."

Dum Dum Dugan was also present, and it was the first time Bucky had ever seen him without his classic bowler hat. But it was too hot to pretty much wear anything besides one's helmet and even Bucky felt like his head was cooking.

"Yeah, sure makes me miss the Old Lady," Dugan replied straightening up. "When she cooked you swore you died and went to heaven. My God, was she ever talented in the kitchen."

"Hopefully not the only place she was talented, am I right?" Lewinski chuckled, being a little crass.

Dugan shot him a look, "Watch your mouth, Son. That's my lady you're talking about there!" But a grin broke out on his jolly face and he then shook his head, "But yeah she wasn't half bad in the sack.
either.” Bucky found that guys had to talk about some crassness every now and then. It kept things light, and what guy didn't mind talking about sex every now and then. Most of the guys he surrounded himself with were always tasteful; with the odd comment here and there but mostly it was always in good fun.

"I don't know about you fella's but I'd just about kill right now for a T-bone steak." Bucky sighed, thinking about when the last time he actually had one.

"Mhmm, definitely gonna be my first meal when I get back." Dugan agreed, "Nothing's better than having a steak with an ice cold beer, ready to watch a little baseball."

"That's the life," Bucky agreed, and then continued on with his food fantasy, "A steak with mashed potatoes. My mom always knew how to make the best ones. With garlic and butter and some chives. God, I miss that shit."

"Your mom seems like a decent cook, she and my lady should exchange recipes. Make the damn best 'welcome home' dinner there ever was." Dum Dum suggested. Bucky's mouth watered just thinking about it. Although he had only been in Italy for a little over two and a half weeks, the food on the ship over was brutal. Same with the food in London, and the ship going from there, and the food at basics. All around, he hadn't had a decent meal in way too long.

"She wasn't half bad, I guess." Bucky began to speak of his mom, remembering how she eventually got too busy to make dinners from the time he was eleven on, "She worked a lot, so I mostly made meals for my sisters and me."

"So you must not be so bad either?" Lewinski noted.

"Ha!" Bucky let out a laugh, "My cooking skills are limited to a few things: cereal, toast, eggs, and a real mean ham and cheese sandwich. I gotta tell you, my little sisters eventually got real sick of that stuff."

"Yeah, no that sounds like hell. I definitely wouldn't ever try to impress a broad with your cooking skills." Lewinski noted, "I think when I get back I'll take a cooking class. Ladies love a guy who can cook. Maybe I'll take one in France? Who knows?" He shrugged.

"If France is still there by the time the Kraut's are done with it. Man, what a mess they're making there." Bucky shrugged, "Lot's of it's been destroyed already. My best friend always wanted to go there. He was really into art and all that crap, said it was one of the best places in the world for that."

"Hey, that's not a bad idea! Maybe I'll take up art if Lewinski is taking up cooking. We can go there together!" Dugan smiled up at Lewinski. "Appreciate the finer things in life and turn ourselves into some respectable gents? Doesn't seem like a bad idea to me! What about you, Sarg? What would you wanna do once this is over?"

"Not a clue," Bucky shrugged. "I guess I always wanted to see the Ocean. And not like Long Island, but the real one; the Pacific. I'd like to take a nice girl down to Hawaii and go snorkeling maybe. Or go to California, Santa Monica, or something and just stand there and sit on a nice beach for once. Or, even better! Why not Australia? See the Great Reef and take a dive, maybe see a few sharks."

"Sharks? Ah, hell no, they're terrifying." Dugan protested, shaking his head.

"They're not so bad," Bucky shrugged, "I used to be really interested in marine life back in school. All the stuff about the deep seas and ocean life was interesting to me. They don't seem that aggressive unless hungry."
"I'd take a nice green plain any day over the ocean," Lewinski added, "That's what I'd like to do too. I'd like to go back to Montana and just take a ride on my ranch. Nothing beats a Montana sunset while on horseback. Really makes you wonder if whether or not there's a God after seeing a scene like that. It's like, take the most beautiful girl you know, and then visualize that feeling you got when you first saw her. That's what it feels like out there."

"Looks like we've got lots to look forward to if we survive the war," Bucky stated, throwing the grass he was chewing on to the ground and moving forward. He looked upwards on the path they were on and saw that it didn't look as though they were moving out any time soon. The 107th was apparently meant to move out and be stationed further into the countryside of Italy. Thank God for that too, Bucky thought. Never before did he think the war would be so boring. All they had done so far was patrol the surrounding woods, having large teams go out and make sure it was clear. They had been halted though for nearly five hours, just sitting in the boiling sun until one of the tanks was fixed up. It had broken down earlier that morning, and although some moved on, Bucky's infantry regiment and a few others had stayed with it.

They had a large amount with them for doing a task that seemed so mundane. At least six tanks were present, and more than enough infantrymen. And so far, they had yet to see any action.

Lewinski laughed, "If we survive? So far the only thing that's gonna kill us if boredom. I always thought serving in the military would be more exciting!" The young man laughed and Dum Dum immediately hushed him.

"Don't talk like that! Don't you know anything? It's bad luck to mention it." He criticized him.
"You've got folks around here a little superstitious."

The hatch of the tank opened just in time for another soldier to hear Lewinski speaking, "Are you fucking crazy?" He asked him, and then yelled into this crew "Hey guys! Fresh meat over here is complaining about not getting any action." The guy got out and stood up on the tank near where Lewinski was sitting. Bucky didn't hear much of the conversation going in the machine, but he knew it wasn't good.

A gruff looking man had then appeared from the hatch, "Heard some knucklehead was talking shit?" He scowled, looking the three of them and wondering who was the perpetrator. The man was large, even bigger than Dum Dum, and had a rough looking face that sported a stubble.

"Yeah, this guy here." The other guy outed Lewinski, making him swallow a lump in his throat and appear nervous. He looked over at Dum Dum and Bucky for help but they only smirked.

The man only shook his head, "You bored? You wanna start getting into the fighting? Let me tell you, compared to what fresh hell we've seen this 'boredom' is a fucking paradise. You ever saw a grown man shit himself, son?"

Lewinski shook his head sporadically, eager to avoid the conversation and have it be over.

"I have. I've seen grown ass men cry for their mothers like they were little kids. I've seen my friends get burned alive in their tanks after being hit was an M6A5 rocket. Let me tell you, that smell—the smell of burning flesh and the sound of the screams—it never leaves you. I don't sleep because of all the fucked up shit I've seen. Have you seen what your insides look like?"

"No," Lewinski said, shaking his head again.

"No, Sir!" The man yelled at him and Lewinski quickly repeated even louder, clearly a little intimidated by him.
"NO, SIR!"

"Well, you're gonna find out! And let me say, I could have gone my entire life without knowing what the hell a human body has inside of it. Don't ever, EVER let anyone hear you say again you're bored. Because when it's not boring, people are dying." He said, getting out of the tank and rejoining the other guy to go check and see what was happening with the tank at the front.

"Sheesh!" Lewinski huffed, "Who the hell pissed in his rations? That guy's intense!"

"He's right," Bucky said, looking around at the woods "We should be glad we haven't seen anything yet. I'm not looking forward to having to kill." A thought then jumped in his head "Or getting killed."

"Right, you've got the ocean to look forward to and all that," Dugan nodded, and then looked up at Lewinski, "Nice job not pissing your pants by the way! I thought you were about to, you almost shook like a leaf when he was yelling at you."

"Yeah, thanks for all the help! You both just stood there like a couple lumps on a log! Thank you for all the backup!" He criticized them, a frown on his face as he stood up on the tank and looked around, putting his hand over to shade his eyes so he could see.

"Yeah, right! As if we were gonna get involved and risk him yelling at us too!" Bucky laughed.

"He wouldn't have yelled at you, you're a Sargent too! You're the same rank!" Lewinski protested, baffled at his fellow soldier's lack of support.

"Doesn't matter! He scares the shit outta me! Would you have intervened, Dugan?"

"No Sarg, I would not have," He agreed and looked up at Lewinski and crossed his arms, "Besides," He clucked "The little shit deserved it."

"You fellas are real swell. Good to know you've got my back!" Lewinski smiled, "But whatever he says, I'm still bored. Five hours of sitting here in the sun isn't really my thing."

Bucky turned around to stretch, he looked out at the trees and saw how beautiful it could have been there under different circumstances. Rolling his shoulders and neck, he sighed, thinking it was kind of pretty. "It's really not that bad here. Before we went off I figured the landscape would kinda look like how they did back in the last war. You know, from the pictures and stuff? It's really not that bad though. What do you think it looked like thousands of years back? Like when Augustus Cesar was alive and there was the Roman Empire and all that jazz?"

Dum Dum had put a cigar in his mouth and lit it up, he mumbled, "How the hell should I know?"

Lewinski began, taking on a superior tone and showing off he was smarter than the other two. He stood up straighter as he spoke, standing proud. "Not too sure about the landscape, but I know they called Rome the marble city after Augustus was emperor. My sister taught to teach elementary school history so she's told me a thing or two. I always found—..." He stopped mid-sentence, causing Bucky to turn around and smirk.

"You gonna finish that sentence, pal? I was looking forward to hearing how much smarter you are than the—," Bucky began but was cut shot by Lewinski coughing up blood.

A large crimson circle contracted against the green of his shirt, growing larger and larger. Then the gunshots began ringing out. Bucky could hardly react, he heard someone yell "Snipers!" and "We're under attack!" The scream of men dying filled his ears, and Lewinski fell off the tank, his eyes
rolling in the back of his head and blood pouring out of his mouth. Bucky could hear Dum Dum cuss and they both grabbed their weapons and put their backs against the continuous track of the tank, taking cover.

Bucky could hear the sound of bullets hitting the metal of the tank, causing a sharp ringing to develop in his left hearing. "Fuck!" Dum Dum yelled, looking over and seeing nothing in the woods where their attackers were firing, "I can't see fuck all!"

Bucky was stunned as his heart pounded in his chest. Fear struck up in him as he gazed down at Lewinski's still, lifeless form. Blood soaked the dirt under him, gathering in a dark pool, turning the earth around his body black. His brown eyes stared up at Bucky blankly, and he felt panic rising up in him. Vomit rose in Bucky's throat at the sight and he reeeched the contents of his stomach onto the ground. Standing up straight after he recovered, he gripped his weapon tightly.

Damn him, Bucky thought. Lewinski just had to open his big, dumb mouth and wish for some action. Bucky wished for nothing more than for him to take back those words and be content with just sitting around on their asses.

As the brown orbs stared at him, a stream of blood trickling down his cheek in a thin trail, Bucky came to his senses. Taking a deep breath sharply and clutching his rifle close to his chest, Bucky pressed his side against the tank and moved his body enough so he could still fire while not completely exposing himself.

Seeing movement he inhaled deeply, focused as all he saw was red, and then pulled the trigger...

Chapter End Notes

So, another Bucky POV integrated into the story. Let me know if I did alright, and if I stayed true to his character and if you liked me including the memories he had with Steve. I'll try to update on Sunday, but it depends on if I get a couple chapter's ahead first. I usually like having a couple on reserve so I know that I'll still have content to post once I get writer's block, since I know it'll happen at some point...

Thank you to all my lovely readers!

- Amelia

Oh, and please drop me a review letting me know if you enjoyed this chapter! Make sure you follow and favourite as well.
Chapter VII

University of Chicago, 1941.

After both Captain Woodward and Lieutenant Beaty left her office, Lucy collapsed in sobs.

She had fallen to the floor, climbed in a ball as she wailed in agony from the news. Tears filled her eyes to the point where she couldn't see properly and her head pounded from all her crying.

Her chest physically ached, and she could hardly breathe from the sobs that ran through her entire being. She had never felt a pain quite like this. Nothing would ever hurt so much ever again as this would, and Lucy knew at that moment that she would never recover.

It seemed like years until she could finally pick herself up off the ground. She sat up finally, knowing her eye makeup was streaming down her face and her lipstick was no longer there, Lucy wiped her eyes with her shaky hands and then reached into her desk drawer and produced a large bottle of vodka that one of her students had given her as a joke; saying she would need it after reading their paper. She didn't even bother with a glass, and instead unscrewed the cap and took a large swig.

Grimacing as it went down; Lucy put her hand or her mouth and groaned after she swallowed, feeling physically in pain after she choked on the harsh liquid.

She took another swig for good measure and then stopped. She couldn't stay there, she knew that. She couldn't stay in Chicago; she had to go. Especially since she had now rashly agreed to join the army. Putting the bottle back where it belonged, she grabbed her bag and her keys and stood up to leave.

Not even locking her office door, she marched down the halls of the university feeling as though she were a ghost. She felt like a stranger in her body as if she didn't belong. Others stared at her as she hastily walked down the large passageway with her bloodshot eyes and her black, makeup stained, face. She didn't care though, she just had to leave.

Lucy didn't even know where she had to go, but she knew wherever it was it wasn't in Chicago. She
needed to go home, she realized. Back to New York to be with her sisters.

Lucy matched to the Dean's office of the university and barged in without even knocking. He was in the middle of a meeting with three other men, and they looked up in shock at the woman who stood in their doorway looking like she had been through hell.

"Dr. Heinrich, are you alright?" Dean Hutchins asked her, concern in his voice.

"I quit," She told him, her vision going blurry again from her tears.

"Oh, Doctor surely there is something we can do to convic—,"

Lucy only shook her head quickly and held up her hands and just said over and over "I quit," Murmuring it madly as she walked out. The Dean ran after her, yelling that there were forms she needed to fill out if she ceased her employment. Lucy kept walking though, the words he was saying not registering in her mind.

He didn't come after her and she thanked God for that. She knew that this would reflect badly on her eventually, and she knew she had put women a step back. She knew they would speak of how emotional she was, and that they knew better than to hire another female professor (after all, they already had four...) but Lucy didn't care at that moment. She didn't care about anything at all. And as she waited at the street to cross, she realized she really didn't care about even life itself. She wouldn't even care if the truck that was approaching on the street went up on the sidewalk and stuck her.

For a dark moment, Lucy wondered what would happen if she stepped out in front of it. As it approached, she stayed atomic and still, in some trace where it felt all the weight of everything collapsing on her. She didn't know how this happened. One moment she was sitting in her office, waiting for a student to come by and Daniel was alive and well. The next, two men came in and told her otherwise and her entire world came crashing down. At that moment, she understood how her father had felt. She understood his drinking and the way he had been able to pull that trigger after sticking the pistol in his mouth. She had always wondered what had happened to bring him to that state of mind, but at that moment she understood. All it took was one event happening, one tragedy, to change someone's life.

Wanting to step out, Lucy wanted to force herself to do it but her heels stayed firmly planted on the cement. The truck wisped past her, and Lucy snapped out of whatever state she had been in. Blinking a few times, she looked twice before crossing the road and walked as quickly as she could to her car. The thought of ending it all had vanished as quickly as it appeared as her sister's faces and the Lee's popped in her head. Although, the idea still lingered in the back of her mind, and she knew she was nowhere near to being finished with the dark thoughts that had begun to consume her whole.

Lucy didn't know where exactly she was going, but she knew she needed very few things. She would go home first though, not for any material items in specific because she wouldn't need them where she was going, but for one thing and one thing only. She was going back for Daniel's letter.

Close to 14 hours later, Lucy had arrived in New York. She headed to Queens, where she knew her sister Beatrix lived.

Before she left Chicago Lucy had gone to the closest enlistment placement, where she was registered and given her first physical inspections. It was odd for a woman to be there, and besides a few nurses, she knew she was the only one who would be present. But after presenting the Captain and Lieutenant's letter, she was hurried through the process. She was even given a uniform to wear,
which she changed into in one of the bathrooms and threw her dress and shoes into the trash.

For the next 12 hours, she drove to New York after she had prepared to get away from Chicago as quickly as possible. She hasn't even called Beatrix and Adeline to know that she was coming. She didn't even think about it, she just got in her car and immediately drove off.

It was almost two o'clock in the morning when she pulled up to her sister's apartment in Queens. All three sisters had lived very different lives after they had left the Lee's. Lucy, being the first, went to school at Columbia and then moved off to Paris for her Masters. She then became a seasoned archaeologist and professor, traveling for a few summers to different sites with a Daniel, who had also become a professor in art history.

Beatrix ended up going to NYU but dropped out after she fell in love and got married to an engineer named Jonathan. She eventually went back to become a teacher. She had two children, a girl named Anne, and a boy named Robert.

Adeline was the only one who kept the Lee's upper-class lifestyle. She lived in the Upper East Side in an apartment backing on Central Park, similar to the one they had lived in during their later childhood after their parents died.

She had a life of luxury, where she attended balls and galas and met famous movie stars and musicians. She was catered to perfectly and dated some of the most handsome bachelors in all of New York. She never understood why Lucy especially wanted to leave their cushy lifestyle to go dig things up in the sand in some far away country.

They had all starkly different lifestyles, but each one suited them. And despite the differences, the three of them had remained close over the years.

At 2 am, Lucy knocked on Beatrix's apartment door. She stood there in the dark, her eyes still bloodshot.

No one came to the door at first, and Lucy had to knock again. She saw a light come on in the house, and the door unlocked and her heart pounded in her chest.

The door opened and Jonathan stood there in his pajamas and with sleepy eyes. He seemed surprised to see her "Lucy what are you—Oh." His eyes widened at her uniform. "Oh, dear."

"Hi," Lucy said shakily, "I'm sorry, I know it's late but I didn't know where else to go."

He held the door opened for her and said "Come in! Of course, you can come in!" He had never seen his wife's sister so emotional before. "Please, come inside." Was all he could say, completely frazzled by the emotional woman in his doorstep.

"Thank you," She said in a small voice as she stepped in their small entrance way as he closed the door behind them. Beatrix and Jonathan both had very successful jobs, and they had an extremely nice apartment and a nice car, given to them by the Lee's. Even after the girl's had moved out, their adopted parents were constantly sending them money and writing to them. Mr. Lee had even walked Beatrix down the aisle and had tears in his eyes the entire time. Lucy had also asked him to give her away at her and Daniel's wedding, but clearly, that would no longer happen.

"Jonathan?" A small, tired, voice emerged from the house and a sleepy looking Beatrix appeared. She had her hair in rollers and was in a nightdress and slippers, rubbing her eyes. "Is everything alright?" She asked and then stopped in her tracks as she saw Lucy.

Her mouth fell open upon seeing her. She suddenly appeared more awake than she had the moments
before and she gasped at the sight of her sister in uniform. Tears welled in her eyes and she asked in a shocked tone, "What have you done?" Tears filled her eyes and she covered her mouth with her hand. She had hoped she would never see any of her family members donning a brown uniform like that, ready to go to war. Jonathan stood there awkwardly, watching the two sisters interact and he suddenly felt as if he were intruding.

Lucy had a single tear fall before looking down and shakily exhaling, "Daniel's dead, Bea."

Her face fell more, "What?" She gasped.

"Oh my God," Was all Jonathan could say, and he placed a gentle hand on Lucy's shoulder sympathetically. They had both loved Daniel also. In 1938, the two of them and their small children had flown to Paris to spend two weeks with Lucy and Daniel. As he had done with Lucy, he had simply enchanted them, and they were more than happy to welcome him into their family.

"H-how do you know?" Beatrix's voice faltered and tears also began to flow from her eyes, "Luce, I am so, so sorry." She almost flew down the stairs and engulfed her sister in a hug. Lucy almost felt her knees collapse as her sister held her tightly. Lucy let out a broken sob as she felt her sister gently caress her back, and she could hear her sniffle as well as she tried to be strong.

Johnathan, although a kind man, was not overly emotional. Regardless, he joined in the hug, gently wrapping his arms around the two girls as they all held each other.

As thankful as Lucy was for support, she suddenly felt as though she couldn't breathe. Breaking away and trying to laugh, she asked, "Do you have anything half decent to drink around here?"

Beatrix touched her face gently, trying to wipe away the tears. She and Adeline had always been lucky enough to get their father's blue eyes while Lucy inherited her mother's hazel ones. At that moment, they were glossy and red, and Beatrix was trying to hold back tears for Lucy's sake. Lucy knew that no one in Beatrix's household drank due to their father, but Lucy had never been able to form good habits like that. She has begun drinking as early as 13 with her father after he had forced her to sit and drink with him, and often she and Daniel fought about how often she would drink. One or two glasses of wine at dinner would turn to four or five, but she had managed to cut back significantly over the last two years.

Johnathan only answered, heading past them "We have some wine from that dinner party we hosted a little while back and some gin."

Lucy nodded, "I'll take it all."

Beatrix only looked at her and shook her head, again wondering if she had heard Lucy correctly when she came in. "How?" She asked in wonder, wondering how she knew Daniel had passed.

"Get me that drink and I'll tell you."

Beatrix held Lucy's arms as they walked up the stairs, making sure she didn't fall down. Jonathan already had a light on in the kitchen and he fished out the bottle of gin they had hidden in their pantry for when they had guests over. He grabbed the bottle of cabernet they also had stored away somewhere. Getting a low ball glass, he poured the gin in it as Lucy sat at the kitchen table across from her sister. She looked as if she had been through hell and back in the last 12 hours. She stared blankly at nothing, her eyes lifeless and missing the sparkle it usually had.

Although Jonathan had given her a more than generous pour, it wasn't enough for her and she reached for the bottle and added more to her glass. Beatrix gave Jonathan a look and he went to a
Lucy didn't reach for it. Instead, she took a sip of her drink, tasting the pine and other sharp flavors as it burned down her throat. Beatrix reached for the pack of smokes, and lit one up in her mouth, knowing she would need one for the stressful night. Jonathan also grabbed one, and they stood around waiting for Lucy to speak.

"I told him," She shook her head as she stared blankly at her glass, watching as she swirled the clear liquor around at the bottom of it. Her eyes filled with more tears which threatened to spill over, "I told him we should go." Her voice hitched at the end of her sentence, and she shut her eyes tightly, causing tears to spill down her cheeks.

Jonathan stayed pressed against the counter, looking at tired eyes at the scene happening in his kitchen. Beatrix tapped the end of her cigarette and ashed it into a bowl. Neither of them said anything; they just let Lucy speak.

"I told him we should go and he didn't listen," Lucy said as she bit her lip to keep from breaking down and crying even more. She took a large swig of her drink, downing it in a few gulps. She poured herself another, "Now he's dead…"

"Lucy, what happened?" Beatrix urged, needing to know as well. "Start at the beginning."

"What beginning? The beginning of today? Or in 1938 before I left?"

"Try today."

Lucy took a deep breath and then exhaled before rubbing her eyes and taking another swig. "I was holding office hours earlier, and I was expecting a student to come by to… It doesn't matter. But, two men showed up in uniform instead. They asked if they could speak to me, and-and they told me that they needed my help trying to save and record art and sites and other things. And they told me how there are Germans who are trying to use artifacts to harness their power or something?"

"Wait, what?" Jonathan asked, confused. "So they asked you to join the army to do archaeology?"

"I don't know. They laid it all out for me and it all made sense at the time but now it's such a blur. It made sense, but I didn't know why they needed me, especially since America isn't even involved in the war yet. I said no at first and then they tried to convince me and showed me these awful pictures… I said no again, and they kept pressing. I didn't want to join the war. I mean, I'm not brave. I don't even know the first thing about what to do or what I need to excavate or if there are excavations at all!" She swallowed more of her drink, cringing as it went down. "An-and I'm definitely not equipped to be doing all they ask of me, like stopping the special divisions from gaining certain artifacts. I don't know the first thing about locating them, let alone extracting them! So, I told them no." Lucy explained and got choked up again, "And then they said I was an asset for a number of reasons. That I had the most 'cause' to do it, and I was suited for it because I knew German and French."

Beatrix frowned, "Cause? What do they mean by cause?"

Lucy wiped her nose with her sleeve. She then took another large sip of her drink, feeling its effects begin to kick in. She wanted nothing more than to forget the events of that morning and wipe it clean from her memory. She wanted to go back to when she had no idea of what happened and was able to live her life and pretend nothing was right. Oh, how she longed for ignorance.

"Because of Daniel," She choked on her words. Saying his name was like a shot to the heart, and
she felt her breath hitch as she thought about him. Raising her cup to her lips, Lucy noticed the small stone on her ringer, glistening in the dim light of the kitchen. She remembered when Daniel had asked her to marry him, and how she was the happiest she had ever been.

They had already been dating for a few years when he finally popped the question. He had at last finished his schooling, he was a full-fledged professor and she had only a year and a half until she completed her own Ph.D. They were happy, not quite living together yet, since she had wanted to wait until they were married or at least engaged to avoid a scandal. The last thing Lucy wanted to be known for was harlot, even though Daniel had been the only man she had ever been with on an intimate basis.

For months he had been teasing the possibility for marriage. Every now and then he would say things like 'when we get married,' or 'our children,' and 'after we get married'. It had begun to get quite vexing for Lucy, and each time he would do some grand romantic gesture she would think that it was finally the time he would ask. But it never came, and she began to get very frustrated with him.

There was one moment where he even took her on a bike ride and bought her fresh flowers to place in her the front basket of her bike as they cruised down the side of the Canal St. Martin that she was sure he would ask. It never came though. One other time, he took her for a midnight walk where they had stopped to gaze at the Eiffel Tower, he whispered sweet words in her ear as he kissed her head as they stood there arm in arm.

That time he had dropped down to his knee, and Lucy gasped, only to roll her eyes when he began tying his shoelace. He had laughed and teased her, asking 'Did you really think I would propose? I hardly like you enough to do that!' He then pulled her in for a kiss and then promised her that it would happen soon.

Another time in the summer, they had spent the day in her favourite area of the Montmartre in Northern Paris where some of her favourite artists had loved to paint. They found the cafe in which Vincent Van Gogh had based The Night Cafe on. They had sat and drunk wine, and he stared at her as she spoke of her passions for modern artists of the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist periods such as Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, and Édouard Manet. She spoke of Marcel Jonco's Mask and Otto Dix's controversy after displaying the Great War in such a true and dark way, unlike previous artists who romanticized war. Lucy spoke with passion as she sat in a lavender coloured summer dress, sipping her chardonnay. She went on and on about Fauvism and the newly popularized Surrealism, which was just coming onto the scene, and how she would like to see some pieces in an up and coming art show her friend's were putting on. They also discussed Degenerate art at length, and how in Germany they had begun holding exhibits displaying the grotesque and horrifying pieces that they deemed was against the state. Cubism and Dada were banned, as well as certain artists for promoting an anti-Aryan ideal. Lucy and Daniel had both known it would likely be their only shot to see many of the pieces in that exhibit, but as half Jewish, Daniel wouldn't have been able to attend. Though, he urged her to go, so she could see some of the masterpieces at least once before they were destroyed. Lucy refused and said she wouldn't even want to see them if he couldn't be there with her.

Lucy then changed the subject and continued on about Matisse and Picasso, and Daniel only listened. A small smile had been on his face as he took in every word as he rested his chin on his palm. Daniel hated modern art with a passion. After all, he was an art history professor who specialized in Greco-Roman art, but he particularly loved the Renaissance's revival of classical themes that they incorporated. The two never ever agreed on their taste of art, which would make furnishing their first apartment increasingly difficult. Where she was all spunk and fire, he was set on his ways of tradition and convention. The two were polar opposites, yet they made it work.
After they left and the sun had set they walked past a small cafe terrace, which he then pulled her in close and asked her if he thought Van Gogh based *Cafe Terrace at Night* off of it and she squinted for a moment, trying to picture it. She decided no, although it looked strikingly similar. He pulled her against an alley wall and kissed her to the point she forgot her name.

Even then, Daniel did not ask her to marry him. Lucy eventually began to get impatient, especially with the increasing number of weddings they attended that summer and how people kept asking when they would finally tie the knot.

It wasn't until the had done their weekly Friday picnic in the park following the end of his lectures that she finally asked him why he hadn't proposed. It was still summer, and the sun was beating down on her in her yellow dress. Every Friday they went to the same spot under one of their favorite trees and watched as people took boat rides down the canal. Daniel would always pack sandwiches and sometimes bread and cheese as they would lay on one of their blankets. Sometimes they would read their own books, or he would mark his student's papers. Other times, they would read to each other, the heat of the sun setting in their bones, a slight breeze keeping them cool. The smell of flowers was in the air, and she would eventually doze off as they laid on the blanket and he would rest his head of her stomach and her hands would play in his hair as he read to her softly.

But that day she had not been able to keep her mind calm. A question kept itching at her, and it would drive her mad if she kept it in any longer. Bubbling and building in her chest, she sat there as a cool breeze brushed against her body. She sat up, and Daniel continued reading as he was laying on his side, being propped up by his elbow. *The Odyssey* by Homer was in his hand, and his velvet voice continued on, not even noticing that she was frowning at him.

"What?" He finally asked her with a raised eyebrow, looking at her sour expression.

She huffed and brushed a piece of hair out of her face, "Are you ever going to ask me to marry you? Or do I have to get down on one knee and ask you myself?"

He looked shocked at the question and was taken aback by surprise, he looked down at the book and closed it gently before looking back at the water which had paddle boats glide across it. "Am I ever going to ask you to marry me?" He repeated the question. "I don't know. I hadn't thought about it much. I was kind of counting on being a bachelor my whole life, you see. There are just so many beautiful women out there, I don't think I should commit myself to only one. That would just be robbing the women of Paris of a fantastic lover!"

She huffed, annoyed and rolled her eyes before she hit his chest. "You're an ass!" He laughed as he was pushed over by her. "And you give yourself far, far too much credit! You're not that good of a lover."

His hand brushed the soft skin of her thigh as he chuckled, "Funny, you seemed to think differently last night..." He kissed outside of her knee, which she had tucked under her chin as she pouted. "And this morning," Daniel smirked as he sat up from where he was laying. He took off his glasses and folded them up and sighed. He was dressed in grey slacks and a white button down shirt that was rolled to his elbows. To her, he looked like a vision and she was positive he was the most beautiful man she had ever seen.

She only huffed as he sat beside her and brought her into his arms, he kissed her cheek, which she angrily brushed off with her hand and he snickered "Are you really that angry at me?" He asked as he wrapped his arms around her center.

"Yes!" She exclaimed, "I would have liked to think I would be married by the time I received my doctorate. Besides, Camille Laurent won't stop waving her stupid ring in my face every time I see
her. I swear if she asks 'Oh, hasn't Daniel asked you yet?' I will lose my mind."

"Don't listen to a single word Camille says." He told her and brushed some of the hair in front of her face behind her ear. He stared at her features, completely immersed in them. He had thought she was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, ever since she had walked into that first lecture they had shared together.

Lucy looked back at him, her eyes catching his. She had never had a man look at her the way he had before, and each time she found butterflies rising in her stomach. "You know you're the love of my life, right?" He asked her.

She nodded and then sighed, "I know but..." She looked down, defeated "I guess it's just discouraging to be waiting and waiting for something and not have it happen,"

"Something... As in a ring?" He asked her again.

"Yes, like a ring." She told him and Daniel only hummed in agreeance and nodded, understanding how she felt.

He then removed his arm that was wrapped around her waist, reached into his pocket, "You mean like this?"

Lucy all but dropped dead in that moment. Her mouth fell open as she stared at the small, gold ring with a modest diamond. Her heart pounded in her chest and Daniel spoke up again, "Lucy Brünhilde Heinrich, will you marry me?" He asked her.

With tears in her eyes, she turned to look at him and nodded, saying frantically "Yes. Yes! Yes!" She laughed before colliding her lips with his. They were locked in a passionate kiss and he pulled her into his lap, his hands running through her hair with still managing to hang onto the ring.

"Do you want to try it on?" He asked her with a large smile.

She only bit her lip and smiled just as large as he was. She put her left hand out so he could help her put it on and she squealed in happiness. Having it on her finger felt right, and they both smiled at each other once they established it was a perfect fit. Lucy looked up and chuckled, saying "You know my middle name isn't Brünhilde, right?"

"I had to improvise!" He laughed, "You won't tell me what it is so I am only left to assume it's something German and slightly embarrassing." Daniel pressed his forehead to hers affectionately, his hands still on her waist.

"German and embarrassing, yes! But not Brünhilde." She giggled. He ran his hands in her hair again and flipped them over so he was on top of her, settling between her legs. Usually, in any other scene, it would have been inappropriate to do such a thing in public, but they were young and in Paris. It was the city of love, and they never even received a second glance from the people walking by if they kissed while on a picnic.

He held himself above her his weight on his elbows as he hovered, "Will you tell me after I make you my wife?"

She ran a hand in his sandy brown hair. Their faces were centimeters from each other, and just before they kissed she smiled and whispered "No."

He couldn't help but chuckle as she pulled him onto her, kissing him so deeply and she wanted nothing more in that moment than to drown in him.
It had been such a sweet dream they were living in, Lucy realized. It had never been meant to be, even from the beginning. And now there she was, at her sister's dining room table, only left with the memory of him.

Lucy took a shaky breath and was drawn from her thoughts and back to reality. Beatrix and Jonathan still stared at her, waiting for her to explain. Lucy's thoughts were swimming from the alcohol, drifting back to that day which seemed like a hundred lifetimes ago. She drank more and wiped a tear from her eye again. "After I told them no, they said they had some information that may make me reconsider," She touched the necklace on her neck, Daniel's Star Of David which he gave her right before he left to New York. "That I had more of a reason to join that anyone else;"

Both Beatrix and Jonathan looked at each other. "And that reason was Daniel?" She asked her in a cautious tone.

Lucy drank more, now well past the point of intoxication. She didn't slur though, a skill she managed to perfect to prove to convince Daniel she was less drunk than she actually was. Lucy nodded and put her glass down. Tears streamed down her face as she cried silently, she rubbed her face with her hands, trying to regain some feeling in it after the numbness had settled in. "He had joined a French Partisan group," Lucy explained. "He all but told me in his letters before. He said that he had put himself in a dangerous situation with things getting worse. He sent me a letter to open in case he died. He never said he joined the Resistance though and I didn't believe them until they showed me pictures. They told me he saved lots of people and foiled a lot of the German's plans…"

"But?" Beatrix asked hesitantly, not even sure if she wanted to know.

"But," Lucy let out a shaky exhale and pressed the cold glass to her forehead, trying to ease her pounding headache from having cried so much. "They had a mission failure, and he and three others were captured."

"They know that for sure?" Jonathan asked, worry present in his eyes. He hadn't moved the entire time Lucy had been talking, standing again the kitchen counter with his arms over his chest and still in his pajamas.

"I'm sure." She looked at him and sniffled, "I saw pictures. They had them on their knees with their hands above their heads and guns pointed at them. The Captain that came said it was shocking they didn't shoot them immediately."

"So what did they do with them? How do you know he's dead?"

"I just know," Lucy choked out, a sob catching in her throat again. Talking about it almost made it worse, but if she didn't tell at least someone she would go insane. "They told me as much too. They said they have places for all the Jews and the political prisoners. Remember, from the papers? That radical journal issued something a few months back reporting on it and no one took it seriously. I thought it was just a labour camp, but apparently it's worse." Lucy began to bawl, the tears racking through her entire body and making it hard for her to breathe.

Beatrix was up in a single moment, wrapped her arms around Lucy's shoulders as she shook. She only said comforting words to her and gently rubbed her back, much like how she used to watch Lucy do to Adeline years ago.

"I-I don't know what I'm supposed to do without him." Her voice cracked, and she couldn't believe she had to yet again say goodbye to someone who she loved. "I don't even know if I'll have a body to bury afterward. They told me of all the awful things that are happening there. Bea, thousands are
getting killed every day. I don't think he'll last."

Beatrix couldn't even say anything back. She couldn't give her any false hope, and tell her she was sure he would survive. "He's strong, and he has you to get back to." Was all the comfort she could give her older sister. Lucy knew that she was only saying that.

She knew that Daniel coming back to her was impossible. She knew it was better to go on with her life, and she hoped that whatever the army brought her it would at least be enough to stay distracted from all the pain that was to come.

Chapter End Notes

I promise the depressing themes of this story will eventually come to an end. Please just bear with me until then! Thank you again to all my lovely readers, and I hope to publish another chapter by next week.

ALSO, I would like to highlight that in the World Wars, the Allied and Axis Powers did actually hire archeologists and art historians to try to procure art/preserve sites like what they were doing with Lucy! :) Lawrence of Arabia was a famous one who was also a spy in WWI, and the movie Monuments Men (Matt Damon, George Clooney, Cate Blanchett + others star in it) reveals some stories! It's a great film if anyone is at all interested, and there's also a documentary called Raiders of the Lost Art which also provides some details.

Please review, follow, and favourite. They definitely inspire me to update a little faster ;)

- Amelia
Chapter VIII

Chapter Notes

Thank you to the guest who reviewed, and also all those who followed and favourited! It means a lot and it is very encouraging! Sorry for updating this a bit late, but it took me a little to decide where I wanted to go with this one. It's another filler chapter, but it's setting the stage for everything that's to come. Also, I'm using the doc manager from the FF app to upload this one! I'm trying to get used to it before I go traveling for the rest of the summer so I can still update ;) Sorry if there are some formatting problems due to that.

Disclaimer: I own nothing Marvel.

Trigger Warning: Themes of racism/racial slurs

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter VIII

Italy, 1942

Bucky wished he could go back to the times where he had been positive he was going to die only three times.

Now it was more times than he could even count. At that point, it wasn't even worth keeping score. After moving in from Sicily and doing the patrol where he had seen his first look at death, they had begun to march on Calabria.

Since Lewinski had died no one had brought up how bored they were, even if that was how they felt. He was the first to go from the bunch of guys that Bucky had gone through training with. So far, the rest of them had been lucky but Bucky knew that in war there were no guarantees.

Bucky had found settling into the role of Sergeant went over smoothly. It was something he was nervous about prior to his arrival and it gave him quite a bit of anxiety. He had been awarded the title while at basics after he had proved that not only was he skilled, but also a committed and natural born leader.

Bucky had been able to convince just about anyone of anything since the day he grew baby teeth. He was naturally likable and charismatic, something that most high ranking military officers needed in order to inspire the men below them to fight. He also had a good sense of right and wrong which was also a bonus, he supposed. Although, he didn't think anyone could ever have the moral judgment that Steve Rogers had.

Bucky recalled his earliest case of putting his silver tongue to good use was back in the fourth grade. At that point, most of the boys had begun to hit a growth spurt. Bucky had seemed to sprout up almost six inches one night, and his mother was constantly having to sew him new clothing or make him new sweaters. She said if he didn't eat so damn much she wouldn't have such a problem keeping up with all the growing. But he and the other boys in the neighborhood seemed to have a hollow leg, which all resulted in them growing around the same time. Bucky remembered his mother sitting with
George Caraway's mom one day and sipping lemonade, the both of them discussing how much their sons were growing and how they were developing into young men and would soon have to take on more responsibilities. Bucky had always had a lot of responsibilities though, even before he had grown up. His father had passed away shortly after his second sister was born, and it resulted in Bucky being the man of the house.

As he was growing, he noticed nearly all the guys in his school were going through a similar experience. Of course, Steve was the only exception. He was still tiny and skinny, and though he ate more than Bucky and a couple other guys combined, the kid still stayed small.

There had been one boy who was always a bit of a bully to Steve. He never gave Bucky a hard time, since he managed to fit in with just about everyone. But Steve struggled a little more with that kind of stuff, and he would rather go off a draw than play ball or chase the other kids around. Part of the reason was that his lungs were shit and the kid couldn't run to save his damn life, but the other half of it was because the other's had never been the nicest to him. He was made fun of a lot, and Steve had a hard time connecting with people his own age.

Bucky recalled how one day, a bully by the name of Joe Garbacky had begun teasing Steve about his small composure and tiny stature. He called him unflattering nicknames, like 'Skinny Steve' and 'Steve the Baby' and would kick his feet out underneath him so he would trip. Steve would pretend it didn't bother him, but Bucky knew deep down he was insecure about his looks and how much smaller he was than everyone else in his class.

It didn't take Bucky too long to realize he had a special talent of convincing people of things. It wasn't until they went to school one day and Joe Garbacky was suddenly hearing his name being murmured that he knew something was up.

Due to his unflattering nicknames he had given Steve, Bucky had convinced everyone that Garbacky had breastfed until he was seven. It seemed fitting, given the fact Joe had come up with something equally degrading for Steve. Bucky's rumour spread like a wildfire, and suddenly no one was making crying noises at Steve or calling him a baby. Instead, they were teasing Joe, and he had gotten exactly what he deserved.

Since then, Bucky had realized he could use his skill for other things. None of it was usually for good though, and he was sure that if he ever had the desire to he would make a pretty decent politician. Once or twice it had come in handy for getting a girl to go out with him, but never before did he think he would be using it for the military and convincing guys to do things that could cost their lives.

It wasn't until they had made some progress on taking a town that Bucky knew this job wasn't something to be taken lightly. He had known it was a large responsibility since the beginning, and if he was being honest with himself, he was scared.

There was once or twice in training Bucky had even purposely sabotaged his performance. He had never been the type of person to want people to follow him blindly, and now that there was so much at stake he wasn't sure he would be up to it.

His superior's had begun to take notice of his performance at basics while learning how to fire his weapon. Before that day, Bucky had never even held a gun. Living in Brooklyn, there hadn't been much of an opportunity to go hunting, and regardless, Bucky never liked the idea of killing an innocent animal/

Before Bucky was promoted, Lieutenant Connor's had observed much of the training, watching on with curious eyes at the men. Captain McCormick was also present, worry in his expression as he
wondered whether or not this new batch of soldiers would do well.

Bucky remembered how the sun had beat on his back as he loaded his rifle. He listened carefully to the instructions and did exactly what he was told. Most of the guys were excited to be able to finally use their guns, but Bucky wasn’t. He had never joined the war to kill people, but to protect them.

He heard some of the other's talking about all the German's they were going to kill. One man who was in his bunk particularly irked him. His name was Gilbert Whitney, and as soon as Bucky had placed his pack on his cot when he first arrived to the training barracks, the larger and cockier man had come up chuckling,

"Slow down there, cowboy." He had a distinctly Southern accent and short, slicked back, black hair, and devilish green eyes which made Bucky immediately feel uneasy. He was likely in the best physical shape than everyone else in the barrack and wasn’t shy about flaunting it, trying to prove he was tough.

"Problem?" Bucky raised his eyebrow, looking at the man who just looked like a massive piece of shit. He came from money, that much was obvious. Coming from a family that had always been on the poorer side, Bucky slightly detested the rich. He recalled seeing them in their fancy black cars as they drove down the streets in the middle of the Depression, living comfortably and lavishly despite the hard times. Bucky remembered loathing them for their wealth, especially during a time where his family could barely afford to eat and he was wearing a pair of shoes that were almost two sizes too small because his family couldn't even spare the change for an extra pair. When both he and Steve were thirteen they ended up working at a company that manufactured steel for all the building projects that were getting started. He remembered the look of the man who owned the company, and how he once pulled up in a new suit, after being chauffeured around in his fancy car. Bucky didn't know what the man's name was, only that he owned the company of "Lee's Steel and Manufacturing", and Bucky hated him for his wealth and how he had so much while everyone else had so little.

People with money always had more problems, he found. And they all looked as if the world owed them something. Which is exactly the look Gilbert Whitney had, and within the first few seconds of meeting him, Bucky already knew he hated him.

A man with glasses next to Bucky's bunk looked up and frowned, watching the interaction.

"I'd say so," Whitney began explaining after Bucky asked if there was a problem. He then gestured to Bucky's pack, "That's my cot you’ve placed your shit on."

"Well," Bucky began and pursed his lips together, annoyed at the man's sense of entitlement. "I don't see your name on it."

"Doesn't have to have my name on it! I already claimed it. So how about you just move your shit elsewhere and we won't have any problems, capisce?"

Bucky only glared at him, wanting to take him down a notch or rebuttal with something witty but the reality was that he just didn't care. He took his sweet time, causing Whitney to give a click and say "Get!" like he was a barn animal.

Bucky filled with anger but he said nothing, only walked over two bunks over and placed his things down. The man with glasses who was unloading a few books only looked at him, "Is this one claimed too?" Bucky asked, obviously annoyed.

"Free as far as my knowledge goes," He said and then extended his hand, "Simon Pym." He looked
extremely bookish and didn’t seem as though he exactly belonged.

"Bucky Barnes." He shook his hand firmly.

"Don't pay attention to Whitney, the guy's a dick." Pym explained, rolled his eyes, "Got an ego the size of Texas by the looks of it. Sounds like he's from there too. Probably sitting on a fair amount of wealth given his superiority complex." The more he learned about the guy, the more he hated him.

"Where you from, Pym?" Bucky asked, knowing not everyone at the training camp would be from New York.

"Virginia, how about you?"

"Brooklyn," Bucky answered and was about to say something else when everyone's eyes shifted when another man came walking into the barracks. He was wearing the same issued clothes as everyone else, but that wasn't what caught everyone's eye.

He was African American, and clearly nervous as to whether or not he belonged in a barrack with everyone. He shuffled awkwardly, looking around at all who had stopped in their tracks. Bucky had believed that under the Jim Crow laws that the barracks were segregated, but it made no difference to him. He never understood why someone's colour of skin, or their religion, or gender, determined their worth. His mother always told him people were born equal, and Bucky tried to treat all people the same since then.

"Ah, hell no!" Whitney laughed, "Clearly they're just taking everyone they can now! Well, I'll tell you something, I'm not sharing any barrack with a negro!"

"Hey shut your mouth before I shut it for you!" Bucky snapped and everyone looked at him. He suddenly shifted uncomfortably, noticing people were now watching him. The man in the doorway looked grateful for someone intervening, and Bucky nodded to the cot on the other side to him, "This one's empty here." Bucky hated bullies, and he especially hated when people picked on others for things that were out of their control. He had been standing up against bullies his entire life, and Gilbert Whitney was no different from the rest of them.

Whitney glared at Bucky and then pointed at him, warning, "You better watch yourself!"

Bucky paid no attention to him, he only focused on the newcomer who was looking even more out of place and nervous than the rest of them. "Thanks," He said as he put his stuff down, his eyes shifting uncomfortably.

"Bucky Barnes, and this is Simon Pym," Bucky introduced himself and shook the man's hand. He smiled back and also introduced himself.

"Gabe Jones," He said and began unpacking some of his things, he turned to Bucky and then gestured to Whitney, who was still giving them death glares, "You know you didn't have to do that. He's got it out for you now. Besides, I'm used to stuck-up rich boys yelling slurs at me."

Bucky nodded, "I know, I wanted to. No one should speak to someone like that. And besides, we're all a team now aren't we?"

Gabe smiled again and nodded, "Whitest team I've ever belonged to, but yeah." It was obvious he was already beginning to feel more comfortable, knowing at least there were a few people willing to stick up for him.

"Hey," Another man came up to them, nodding and had a big smile directed at Gabe, "We're not all
white.” He was clearly of Native American descent, with dark brown eyes and the blackest hair Bucky had ever seen. "Abraham Anderson." He said and shook all their hands.

"Anderson? Your pops white or something?" Gabe asked him curiously.

The man scratched the back of his head uncomfortably, "I did have a Native family name, but they made me change it when I joined up." He had been made to cut his long, black hair as well and the new shortness of it still surprised him.

"What your real name?" Bucky asked.

"Well everyone calls me Abe since my first name is too long. The nuns hated it at the school I went to, so they called me Abraham. But my family name is Goodluck." He explained.

"Goodluck? Get out of here! Why the hell didn't they let you keep that? That's the best name to have going into a war!" Simon Pym said excitedly.

Gabe only scoffed and then said, "They make you change that but they let this fool here walk around calling himself 'Bucky'? That's not right."

"Hey!" Bucky frowned, offended but couldn't help but crack a small smile, "It's a nickname!"

"Why would you willingly go by Bucky?" Abe asked, laughing.

"Better than James Buchanan!" He laughed, "If I went by that someone might mistake me for being some rich snob."

"Like him?" Gabe gestured over to where Gilbert Whitney was sitting, carefully clipping his nails. They were lucky he didn't overhear them.

Moments later, after they had attracted more people to their circle, Bucky had begun to get a real feel for the other guys in his barracks. A few were unimpressionable, but Simon Pym, Gabe Jones, and Abe 'Goodluck' Anderson, and Rob Lewinski all made Bucky feel more comfortable with going off to war. Realistically, he knew some of them wouldn't make it home, but he would try not to think about that.

The thought of leading so many good guys into battle and making a mistake terrified him. It's why when it came to shooting drills a week or so later, Bucky found himself holding back.

After his first shot had completely missed the bullseye board they were shooting at, Bucky adjusted his grip. No one besides Abe Anderson had managed to clip to the board, and it was due to him hunting his entire life.

Bucky remembered breathing in deeply and focusing. Squinting, he inhaled and exhaled and tried to fixate in his target. His gun was lodged into his shoulder tightly, and he thought of the song his mother used to sing him whenever he was anxious as a child. Downing out all the noise, Bucky exhaled again and released the trigger.

The bullet hit the target square in the centre. He looked up in shock, as did everyone else. Even Abe Anderson had only managed to get it a little off to the side, missing the centre target by a few inches.

"Holy shit," Simon Pym said beside him, "You just told me you've never even held a gun before."

"I haven't," Bucky promised, looking equally as confused as everyone else was.
"Can you do it again?" Simon asked, watching intently.

Bucky shrugged and placed his rifle back in its spot in his shoulder. He took another deep breath before closing one eye and pulling the trigger yet again.

He got the corner of the centre, and he was shocked he actually hit the target again. "Guess it was just beginners luck." He sighed before doing it once more. This time, he hit the centre again. Pulling away from his gun and making sure he actually got it and Bucky was shocked.

"Then you're the luckiest son of a bitch I've ever met," Simon said, amazed, "Maybe we should start calling you Goodluck instead of Abe over there?"

Bucky didn't say anything, he only fired again, and it was slightly off centre but still hit the target. Firing three more times, he didn't miss. Lieutenant Conway came up to him, "You ever fire one of those, private?"

Bucky shook his head, "No, Sir, I've never even held one before two days ago," They had to make sure they were comfortable carrying their weapon and also dismantling it and taking care of it.

"Interesting, what's your name?" He observed, looking at him curiously

Bucky stood up straight and then saluted, "Private James Barnes, Sir!"

"Well done Private Barnes, keep up the good work." Bucky could feel Whitney's eyes staring daggers into his back and Bucky smirked, a feeling of satisfaction welled up inside him.

He had overall done well in every single exercise. His problem-solving skills, physical ability, and well as his mental capability also played a role in him making sergeant. It also helped that he was now in higher rank than Gilbert Whitney, and the man couldn't speak down to him. Although, Bucky often heard him mumbling under his breath in an annoyed fashion. According to some of the other guys, Whitney liked to question his authority behind his back but Bucky didn't let it bother him too much.

Before Bucky had made Sargent it bothered him how often Gabe Jones was taken away from the exercises to go do other duties. Due to his race, he often was stuck doing the mundane tasks of having kitchen duties. There was even talk of making him a cook, but Bucky had intervened and petitioned to Lieutenant Conway that his talents were better to put to use elsewhere. Jones, although slightly annoyed that he was taken away from the safety of the kitchen duties, was happy that Bucky valued him as apart of his battalion.

He still struggled with the new authority, and after Lewinski died, Bucky wondered if the Captain had made the right choice. Too many times Bucky had questioned his leadership role and wished nothing more than for Steve to be there. Steve would have made a better leader than him, he realized. Not only was he brave and selfless, but he put others before him and prioritized other's wellbeing.

Bucky wasn't sure he could say the same. He wanted nothing more than to say that, but he wasn't the perfect soldier as Steve Rogers would have been if he had been born a little bigger.

However, when he did do something good he was proud. Capturing a small town outside of Calabria with the help of the rest of the 107th was more rewarding than he let on. No one from his barracks got injured, which he deemed a success, and now that they gained ground a camp base could be set up outside the town in order to wait for reinforcements. While there, he had managed to run into the familiar face of Dum Dum Dugan, who also helped out with the taking of the town.

After Lewinski died they hadn't seen each other much, but he found Dum Dum's usually chipper
attitude wore off on Bucky. He realized that while at war it was the little things that mattered, and even something as small as hearing one of Dum Dum's bad jokes could sometimes turn a shitty day into one that wasn't completely awful.

He knew that Dum Dum also understood what it was like to have the pressure of being a Sargent, and although it wasn't nearly as stressful as having a higher rank he appreciated he had a friend who he could talk to about those types of things.

It was nice knowing he wasn't alone, and that he wasn't the only one who was kept up at night worrying about the well being of his men. It made him at least believe that maybe, just maybe things would be alright in the end.

Italy turned out to be painfully different from Africa, Lucy realized. It was hot, much like Egypt was, but not quite as dry. Instead, it was humid. And instead of sand, it was mud. She missed how the sun was always shining in Egypt, she hated the foggy mornings in Italy. And she hated how eerie it grew at night; there were too many bushes people could hide in.

It took her over a week to get to her new station, and she had to say she wasn't looking forward to it. Taking a ship over to Italy turned out to be the easiest part, despite keeping awake from Charles' vomiting in the next bunk over. Usually, as a woman, she would stay where ever the nurses quarters were but that trip had been a little different. She and Charles got their own room; complete with two bunks, which she immediately regretted once she realized that not only did he get seasick easily, but he snored like no one else she had ever heard.

She survived the journey though, without a hitch despite hearing of another ship getting sunk by a German U-boat on the way over.

It had taken a few days for her to get to the new post. Everywhere she went, it was like the men had never seen a woman before. Eyes followed her as she road in the front seat of the Jeep with the Sargent that was escorting reinforcements.

She had exchanged her clothing she had been wearing in Egypt for a new type of uniform. When she wasn't wearing a men's standard issued uniform, she was wearing a forest green mechanical jumpsuit. She found one small enough that it fit her frame, and she usually had the sleeves rolled to her elbows. She found it impractical to wear anything else since she usually ended up muddy anyway.

Lucy hated Italy, she concluded. Not only was it somber and depressing, but she knew that however bad things were in Egypt for her, it would get worse here.

It's why when she arrived at base camp with Charles she barely said anything. The truck dropped them off at the entrance, and Lucy couldn't believe just what a mess the entire place was. It might as well been in a bog, she thought for all the mud that was around.

Men slept in foxholes and in tents, lying in the earth like animals. No doubt the trench foot was out of control, and she only hoped that she had been issued good boots.

"They keep looking at us," Charles whispered to Lucy as they walked through the camp. Men stopped and stared in their tracks. Lucy didn't reveal anything in her face, she made sure her aviators were kept on. "Why?"

"Maybe they've never seen a woman before?" She smirked, joking.
"By the way they're looking at us you'd think that was true," He raised his eyebrows in wonder.

Men stopped what they were doing to get a look at the odd sight walking through their camp. Most of them had looked like they had been through hell, and Lucy hoped they wouldn't be staying at this base for too long before moving on.

She straightened her pack on her shoulders and then kept walking to where she would find the Captain and the Colonel of this division. The truck drivers had given them instructions on how to find them and Lucy did her best to navigate around the camp.

Charles looked uneasy, and she could tell he was nervous about his new living conditions. At least in Egypt, it was always sunny and dry.

Lucy recalled how she met Charles, and how despite him seeming like the opposite of what she would need to complete her work, he had surprised her.

When she had arrived in London before deployment she had met with some officers who informed her exactly what her mission was and how to execute it. They had told her she was allowed to have one assistant to help her with matters such as research, reports, and anything else that came up.

At first, they had tried to give her someone who was already enlisted in the military. As Lucy found out, most of them were bozos who thought her work was mundane and unimportant.

She had seen dozens of soldiers, and each was as useless to her as the next. During general interviews, one had even told her that he was prepared to help her out with anything, and take care of her every need, no matter what it was. He then gave her a wink and Lucy then knew what he was getting at. She only scowled and told him to get the hell out.

After no luck, she reported to her superiors that she thought they were taking the wrong approach. She needed who knew more about her area of study than just the average person. She needed to find someone who had actually studied and knew how to record things in a context, since teaching someone new how to do it would only waste time.

That was when she and a Lieutenant had gone to Oxford University to find some other recruits. Clearly, military men weren't cutting it so they had to find someone who was more of an academic.

After the interview after interview, Lucy was all about to give up. No one was prepared to uproot their lives for the job, and the people who were weren't exactly the type of person she was looking for. It wasn't until she wandered down from the lecture hall they were conducting their interviews in need of some air that she found herself in the library.

Browsing through some of the books, Lucy's fingers ran down the spines as she touched their leather binding. She loved the smell of old books, and being in a library gave her a nostalgic feeling of being back on one when she was finishing up her Ph.D.

She had Daniel to help her with most of it, even though when it came to research for her doctoral thesis. Well, at least he tried to help. Mostly he distracted her, sitting across the table from her at the library as she tried to work. Often, he would grade his own student's papers but every now and then when he wouldn't have work to do he would just sit there and read. Other times, he would make paper airplanes and throw them at her, causing her to laugh when it crashed into her face.

Sometimes, she would attempt to get work done without him. When it was late and she hadn't come home, he would head to the library once everyone had mostly left, finding her under a single lamp with the yellow from its light shining on her work as she was completely passed out and drooling.
onto her papers.

Lost in her nostalgia and memories that were still much too painful to dwell on for long, Lucy nearly missed a young man studying due to the tears welling up in her eyes. Reading a book and copying down information on a notepad, she recognized the cover. It was on the Elgin Marbles, and she gathered by the other book titles he had sitting on the desk that he was studying archaeologist. She even recognized a book in which she had been published in, and she smirked as she sat across from him at the desk.

He didn't even look up from what he was reading when she slipped into one of the chairs. Completely immersed, he didn't notice the woman in front of him who had her hands folded together on the wooden surface. She cleared her throat and he jumped in surprise exclaiming, "Jesus!"

The librarian shushed him, but he didn't care, he only looked at Lucy in wonder as he stuttered "W-who-"

"Hi," Lucy smiled and then extended her hand, "I'm Lucy,"

"Ummm, alright?" He rose an eyebrow, still a little shaken up from the surprise of her sitting there. "Pleasure. I'm Charles Tenabum." He shook her hand and Lucy continued with her wide smile. Charles, who was a little odd looking, with wiry glasses and a face which never looked like it shed its baby fat and the little wisps of a mustache he couldn't grow, wondered why such a beautiful woman sat in front of him. By the looks of it, she was taller than him by a few inches, and she sat there with rigid posture which he had seen very few people execute before. The only people he knew who sat like that were the people hardwired to do so their entire life, and it was due to them having to keep a certain image. He figured she came from money, which made sense given the fact she wore very fashionable clothing. She had long eyelashes framing her large hazel eyes, high cheekbones, a small nose, and dark brown hair that was pinned up stylishly.

She only sat there and then asked, "So Charles, why aren't you in the war?"

Again, he was shocked. "I beg your pardon?" He didn't know who this woman was (although she was clearly American) or who she thought she was asking questions like that.

"Why aren't you fighting in the war?" She repeated.

"I never volunteered, and then when there were the conscriptions I wasn't passed due to health issues… Not that it's any of your business." He frowned and tried to redirect his focus on his book.

"So, you don't want to fight?"

"Bloody hell, of course not! Why would anyone want to?" He exclaimed.

Lucy shrugged, "Couldn't say. People have their reasons. You're becoming an archaeologist though, I'm assuming?"

"Trying to, why do you ask?" He was confused as to why this beautiful woman was talking to him, let alone about such an odd subject matter.

"Because my name is Dr. Lucy Heinrich and I'm a professor of archaeology of The University of Chicago." She specified, and Charles' mouth practically dropped.

"Oh-OH! Oh, Goodness! Dr. Heinrich! Holy shi- I mean! Wow, it is such an honour to meet you!" He grabbed her hand and shook it again, this time more vigorously and had a beaming smile on his chubby face, "I am a massive fan of your work! I've read everything you've ever published! And
may I congratulate you on your incredible works on pseudoarchaeology and rare cultic items! It was - Wow! Just magnificent! This is such an honour! And let me just say, how incredible it is to be in the presence of such an accomplished scholar, especially when you're so young! And a woman! Not-not that has anything to do with your ability to do work it's just - Goodness! You are- you are incredible!" He continued shaking her hand far longer than he needed to, making it slightly awkward.

"Why thank you!" She said, "Those are umm, all quite the compliments!"

"I am so sorry for being so cold before. It's just I didn't expect someone to sit by me and ask such personal questions. May I ask what you're doing at Oxford? Are you giving a lecture?"

She sighed and then explained, "I was actually trying to find an assistant-"

"I volunteer!" Charles said a little too eager and excited.

Lucy bit her lip and then said softly, "I don't know. It's not exactly the job that you're probably thinking of."

"Doesn't matter. I'll do anything to work with you." His earnest tone was followed an even larger smile. "You are literally everything I aspire to be when I graduate."

Lucy only sighed, "Charles, I appreciate how eager you are, and how dedicated you are to learning, but I'm not sure where I'm going is for you after what you just told me…" She watched as his facial features began to shift into disappointment and then heartbreak.

"Oh..I see. Well, where are you going?"

"To the war." She replied quickly.

"Oh." That was odd, was all he could think. Charles was a little shocked, to say the least. "Um… May I ask why?" Clearly, she was insane.

"I've been placed in charge of a mission to not only salvage art from the Nazis, but I also have to record sites before they get even more damaged, and then I also have to stop certain artifacts from getting into the wrong hands."

"I volunteer!" He said again, this time more confidently.

"After what you told me about how you didn't want to volunteer for the war in the first place I don't think that would be such a good idea. Plus, you said you failed your physicals."

"I didn't want to sign up to fight. This is different! This is something I would actually be useful at and would be able to help with." Charles tried to explain to her.

Lucy sighed once again and told him no. Over the next little while, they talked about his passion for archaeology and what had made him want to study it in the first place. He had grown up listening to the stories his father told him of Lawrence of Arabia, and all Charles wanted was to live a life as adventurous as him, only he lacked the bravery to do so. Eventually, Lucy determined that often brains were better than brawn, and she told him yes. Charles had practically leaped up in excitement, and promised her he wouldn't let her down.

When she returned back to the Lieutenant with Charles in tow, the man only raised his eyebrow. She told him she found an assistant, and he gestured to Charles and asked, "Are you sure you want to go with the chubby one?"
She told him absolutely, and since that day had not had a single regret.

Lucy was especially happy that Charles was with her as they walked through the new camp in Italy. She wasn't sure if she could manage alone, and was scared for what was next to follow. At least she had a friend, she thought. At least she wasn't completely alone in this terrifying, new adventure.

Chapter End Notes

The story is beginning to catch up with the backstory, which means we'll be getting to all the good stuff soon enough! Perhaps even the next chapter? But who knows! I might just end the build up and make them finally meet, but it depends on how generous I'm feeling... Though, I would say at 50k words already it's past overdue...

Also, I'm not sure how obvious I made it, but Bucky and Steve used to work for Mr. Lee! Which should make for an interesting conversation in the very near future between our two mains...

Don't forget to follow, favourite, and review!

-Amelia
Chapter IX

Chapter Notes

Hello, hello! Thanks for follows and favourites last chapter!

I FINALLY present to you the chapter in which our mains meet. It definitely isn't what you think it will be, but I do have a little treat for you all in the next chapter, if you all stick around to read it.

Disclaimer: Still don't own Marvel.

Warning: Slight mention of violence, nothing too terrible though.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter IX

It had taken Lucy awhile to finally find Captain McCormick's operation tent. When she arrived, Charles was right beside her and both of them were carrying all the belongings that had brought with them to the war in the packs on their back. It had taken them the better part of over half an hour to find the operations tent, and she was sure they looked a little odd when they arrived.

So odd that Captain McCormick had to do a double take when he saw a woman other than a nurse accompanied by a small, chubby, sidekick. "Are you folks lost? You are aware this is a military base, right?"

"Yes Sir, my name is Lieutenant Lucy Heinrich. I'm the doctor of archaeology that was urgently requested from Egypt. And this is... Well, he's a nothing in the military. But he's my assistant, Charles Tenabum. I was told to report here for a mission briefing."

"Oh, perfect. I'm glad you arrived safely. I was expecting... Well, someone else. Perhaps a man. With an assistant who was... I don't know. Taller, maybe? Anyway, it doesn't matter. Take a seat." He told her.

Lucy listened and handed her pack to Charles. Unlike her, he chose not to sit. Instead, he stood and listened, yanking out a yellow notepad to take notes for Lucy to go over later.

"So... This is what the army is doing to me now?" Captain McCormick sighed as he opened a folder which contained her briefing. "Apparently, the Allied governments are more concerned in saving art than lives. Fantastic. I'll be frank with you, Doctor. I didn't request you. I was told to bring you on by my superiors as someone who would document historical landmarks and save artifacts and art before it gets destroyed. If I'm being honest, I think it's a waste of resources. But, the people high up in the government who pull the string want it and there's nothing I can do about it. However, there is someone who thinks your job is of value. There's a Colonel here who belongs to the S.S.R. Division. His name is Colonel Phillips. He's brought with him a British intelligence officer named Agent Carter. They think you can help them with a highly sensitive mission. A mission so sensitive even I don't know what it is." He sighed, clearly thinking that involving her was necessary. "But while they're not working with you, I'll be your Captain. I oversee the 107th infantry, and you'll be traveling with them from town to town and doing what you do, and blah blah whatever archaeology
stuff you want. There are a lot more details in this folder." He instructed as he passed it over. "You will be staying within the women's camp with the nurses. And although I don't like it, you have access to whatever you need in order to complete your job, including a team. Now, how many people will you need in order to do your job effectively?"

Lucy liked Captain McCormick. Although he insulted her and obviously had little respect for what she did, she liked his no-bullshit attitude. "Six should do it," She said.

"You can have two." He shot back, "Now, you can go set up in the women's camp and go over your briefing. Tomorrow you meet with Colonel Phillips and Agent Carter. Have I made myself clear and are there any questions?"

"Crystal clear, Sir." She stood up.

"Good, I like that." He said, "Dismissed."

Lucy saluted him and then began to walk out of the tent with Charles, "Hold up!" She heard the man say again. She turned around and Charles gave her a look, she nodded for him to go and he exited, leaving her behind.

"Yes, Sir?"

"I know the government wants this, and it's important to them to preserve culture and history and whatever other bullshit there is. But stay out of our way, alright? Let the hero work be done by the soldiers, and you stick with academics. And whatever you do, don't interfere with their jobs."

"Understood, Sir." She nodded and then also exited, waiting for Charles at the base of the tent.

"Well," He sighed and then looked at Lucy, "He was pleasant."

"I get it," She said, "I wouldn't want me strutting into this camp either and taking up time, men, and resources for something that seems insignificant in the large scale."

"But Dr. Heinrich, I heard you on the train in Egypt discussing why our job is important." Charles tried to rationalize, frowning and wondering why Lucy was now going back on what she said.

"I know what I said," She didn't like her words being used against her, "But not everyone feels the same. We'll just do our job for McCormick and complete our mission with Colonel Phillips and keep our head down in the meantime." Lucy instructed him, "This place is different than Egypt, we just need to keep our head down and stay out of trouble let people do their jobs."

Charles raised his eyebrows and scoffed, "You stay out of trouble and keep your head down? Now I know you've lost it!"

She knew he was right. Traditionally, Lucy didn't know the meaning of the words of 'keeping out of trouble' and she never had been good at keeping her head down.

When Charles and Lucy had separated, Lucy headed to the women's camp. A signed marked the entrance, alerting men to announce themselves before entering any tent. Lucy had been given an assigned tent, and she made her way over to introduce herself to whomever her new tentmate would be.
A very tall woman emerged from the one Lucy was intended to be staying in. She was tall, even taller than Lucy, with reddish brown hair, and slight freckles gracing her cheeks. She wore a man's uniform, with a white sash around her arm with a Red Cross, showing she was a nurse.

"Hello," Lucy said and the woman smiled. "I'm Lucy Heinrich,"

"Elsa Hardy, you must be the other girl sharing my tent with me," She shook her hand.

"That would be me," She said, returning the handshake.

"Come on in and I'll give you the tour." Elsa joked, smirking. Lucy entered, and Elsa pointed out the 'bedroom' and 'living room' which backed into a lovely view of the field hospital.

"Great, I'll take it!" Lucy laughed. "Does it come with a pool too?"

"Actually, it does!" Elsa laughed and opened the tent flap in the back to reveal several very large puddles several feet away. "So, where you from Lucy? And how long have you been nursing?"

"I'm from Queens, and I'm actually not a nurse. I'm a Doctor of archaeology, I'm in charge of saving and recording some artifacts and stuff." She explained, unpacking some of her things and then placing everything back on her bed cot. "Where are you from?"

"Wow! That's... very impressive! I've never met a doctor before who was a woman! How long did you have to go to school?" She said and then quickly answered, "Oh, and I'm from Nebraska! Sorry," Elsa answered her question and giggled.

"I went for nine years," Lucy said, "It would have taken my ten but my fiancé helped me. He also had a Ph.D. Saved me from having to do a couple papers," She laughed but her smile soon faded upon mentioning Daniel. "I called it cheating but he said I was 'utilizing my resources.'"

"You're engaged? Me too!" Elsa giggled and then showed Lucy the ring she was wearing on a chain around her neck. She clearly chose not to wear it so it wouldn't hinder her ability to perform medicine, or so she wouldn't get blood on it. "He's a surgeon serving in France, they wouldn't let us be deployed together. Which... I don't know. I suppose that's alright? It keeps us from getting distracted. I had never done medicine without him before and he taught me a lot. It was scary at first, but I eventually developed enough confidence on my own. We're getting married after the war, perhaps in the summer! We haven't planned it too much though. Do you know what month you're getting married after the war?"

"I umm, I'm not getting married anymore," Lucy explained, paling a bit. Her stomach twisted in knots as she explained it to Elsa.

"Oh, I'm sorry. What happened?" She asked her, "You don't... have to answer if it's too painful. Was it the war?" She asked her.

"Yeah," Lucy exhaled shakily and grabbed some of her notebooks out of her bag and some pencils, trying to get everything ready for the report she realized would have to make after briefly glancing her briefing folder. "He was a Partisan in France. He was captured last year, so..." Lucy tried her best to explain, "He's probably dead."

"Well, you don't know that for sure! There's still hope." Elsa tried to be positive, giving Lucy a look of sympathy.

Lucy shook her head, remembering how in London she awoke in the middle of the night, unable to breathe. She sobbed until the light of morning had shown through the curtains. She didn't know why
that night had been different than the other difficult nights where she had awoken crying after learning of Daniel's capture. Something happened that night, and she couldn't explain it. But deep down she knew he was really dead. Before, she had been able to pretend, or at least be hopeful he was still alive.

After that night though, Lucy had known that there was no way he could survive all the Captain and the Lieutenant had told her. But hoping for it was too painful, and if she held out for him until the end of the war and she discovered he really was dead Lucy wouldn't be able to bear it. It was easier to try to accept it now and move on. "No," Was all she answered and then said sadly, "I know he's not."

"I'm sorry," Elsa said quietly, "That must be so awful. I can't even begin to imagine."

Lucy still hadn't been able to open his letter. She would read it when she was ready to move on from him, but that moment wasn't the time. She wasn't sure there would ever be a time, honestly. Daniel was her first and only love. She was positive she would never feel anything like what she had felt for him ever again. He was like no other man she had previously ever met. He wasn't threatened by her intelligence or her drive, he was inspired by it. Often, men found her intimidating. And although Daniel admitted he found her intimidating too and used to joke about it, he was proud to call her his partner.

Often, many of Daniel's coworkers had criticized her attempting such high academic pursuits. They had told him to keep her on a leash and questioned why she would even bother with such a process when she would only have to give it up to be a mother. Daniel would always respond the same. He didn't own her, she was her own person. He also was proud of her for driving for such goals. After all, she was his best friend. 'Why would I not want to see my best friend succeed?' He would ask. And when it came to children, neither she nor Daniel ever wanted any. To each other, they were more than enough and Daniel didn't feel it fair for either of them to give up their careers to have a family.

Many teased him for thinking this way, and they even suggested that Lucy must have kept his balls locked in a drawer and Daniel would only roll his eyes and ignore the comments. He wasn't oppressed just because his fiancé wanted to make something of herself.

Deep down, Lucy knew she would never again find a man like that. He was far, far, beyond his time. And after that night where she awoke crying, she promised herself to never fall for someone so deep and so hard ever again.

"It's fine," Lucy finally replied to Elsa after a long pause. She hoped that if she told herself everything was fine for long enough, she would begin to believe it.

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Bucky could still hear the echoing in his ears of the radio going. He could hear the static, coming in like white noise until there would be a squeal of it trying to pick up a channel.

There had been gunshots in the back, and a man's voice yelling into it saying, "We need reinforcements! We need —..." more squealing and then static. It would come back in as though it was a wave crashing, all sudden and at once, "Jesus fucking Christ! We're dying up her—," It would be drowned out with the firing of shells. He couldn't mistake a man crying in the back and the harrowing, echoing screams of a human being in agony. More static cutting into his thought process like a knife as his mind races a million miles per minute, wondering just what was happening to those boys attempting to take the edge of Rossano.
"We're fucking dying! Please! We need—," more crackling drowned out the pleading "I repeat, we need reinforce—..." Silence.

That's all Bucky could think of as they walked through the ruins of the struggle that had commenced earlier in the day. Fires still burned through the town, and as he walked into the church of San Marco, he saw that a large portion of it lay in shambles.

Dust flew in the air not only from the collapsing of the stone but also from the shell fire that had happened earlier. The smell of smoke filled his nostrils, and Bucky tried not to notice the bodies of several of his fellow soldiers in the corner.

"What a fuckin mess," Dum Dum said as he shook his head.

Bucky wiped some soot and dirt from his forehead with the back of his hand. He was sure he looked like something straight out of hell. The first initial battalion that attempted to take the outcrop of the city where the church was had been ambushed. The Germans and Italians had been waiting for them, trying to make their final stand on the very edge of the city. Hiding in homes and apartment buildings, a number of men had been cut down by the enemy they couldn't see.

When they had finally gotten the radio message through the blocked signal, they had already been too late. Heading up in trucks, the 107th had been part of the reinforcements.

When they had finally gotten to the part of town where there was the heaviest fire, Bucky had been given the command to get his men out of the trucks and walk on its sides. One by one, they had their weapons raised, sweating so hard that it ran down the back of their neck. At one point, Bucky's hand shook so hard it felt as though it would fall off.

Sounds of a firing weapon rang out, and a few men in front of him dropped to the ground, their skulls caving in as a bullet went straight through their eyes from a pair of snipers hiding on the top floor of a house. Its windows were open, dents in its sides from the heavy fire it fell under from attempts to take out the snipers who hid inside. It's red clay roof tiles missing pieces here and there. It looked to be straight out of a painting. One that was horrible, and evil, and vile.

It had been a struggle, and only bodies piled up were already too high to count. However, they had finally taken the outcrop of the town. Yet it was at such a high price it hardly seemed like a victory to Bucky.

Kicking some stones, he looked out of a broken stained glass window and saw how the smoke had made everything grey. Red flames danced, and a horse ran through a wreckage without a rider. Flames licked the sides of the buildings, and he could hear a woman's wail. The smoke was so dark that it made the day appear like the dawn. His surroundings looked like a scene right out of hell, and Bucky knew that this imaging would haunt his nightmares for years.

It wasn't until he heard another truck parked right outside the church doors that his attention finally focused on something other than the horror surrounding him.

He could hear a commotion outside, and new voices suddenly filled the church halls. Readying his weapon, he knew they were allies but he was still on edge from earlier. One didn't just stop being paranoid following scenes such as that.

Immediately, something caught Bucky's attention as a team of people burst through the doors.

A woman rushed forward, nearly at a run, desperate to find something. She was clad in a forest green jumpsuit which despite being in rough shape still looked surprisingly put together. She had a
smudge of dirt on her cheek and deep colored eyes.

Her dark brown hair was twisted in a low, knotted updo, and she wore a pistol on her hip. There was something beautiful and brave about her. For a moment, Bucky almost thought he knew her, but quickly shook the idea out of his thoughts.

She let out a sigh of relief when she saw the ceiling was still partially intact, displaying a mosaic scene. "Oh, thank God," She breathed out a deep exhale and placed her hand on her heart. "It's still there." And then she smiled.

Bucky hadn't seen a smile display so much alleviation before. His eyes immediately drew to her, and she turned to a small man who was following behind closely, saying something he couldn't hear.

"Excuse me, Ma'am." Dum Dum went forward to talk to her, "This a war zone, you can't be here. Citizens are strictly expected to stay clear."

"It's alright Sargent, I'm a Lieutenant." She said quickly before looking back up at the ceiling. She was airted in it, not even giving Dugan a second glance as her neck was stretched so she could look up easily. "Clear your men out and take your belongs, I'm taking over this location." She looked over at the bodies in the corner as she said that, leaving a sour taste in Bucky's mouth and causing rage to well inside of him. Anger filled up inside him, and suddenly the illusion she presented was shattered.

"What was that? Clear our men out?" Bucky intervened, wondering who the hell this woman thought she was. Did she not notice they were exhausted? And not to mention, that would mean they would have to move the bodies out too, which his men weren't ready for. But, of course, she didn't think of that either.

The woman's eyes shot to him, taking notice of him for the first time since she entered the church. "Under Colonel Phillips and Captain McCormick's orders." She presented him a piece of paper, clearly it read what her mission was.

Bucky snatched it out of her hand, grabbed the sheet and his eyes skimming over immediately. A frown appeared on his brow and Dum Dum saw his expression and immediately muttered under his breath "Oh, boy."

"Bullshit." Bucky ripped the piece of paper in two, the pieces of if floating toward the ground lightly.

"I beg your pardon?" The woman gasped, fire suddenly igniting in her eyes.

"I had men—good men die trying to secure this church! We're not just going to abandon it! And for what? So you can... Do art or some shit?" He hadn't read the full letter, he'll admit. He had skimmed it at best. But what she was asking them to do was ludicrous and he refused.

"For your information, Sargent, I'm saving the art! And I'm ordering you your men to stand down! I'm your superior officer—," She began and Bucky cut her off again.

"No no no, no you don't. How did you even get that title of Lieutenant, huh? You sure as hell didn't earn it like the rest of us! My guess is that you're some fancy high up lady who's pulling the strings of some government official and that's how you go it." It was a cheap shot, he already knew that. But he didn't like how she stormed in there and suddenly started demanding things. Especially after so many of his men had died, she hardly seemed to care what it cost to gain this location.

"Umm, Buck?" Dugan began, looking a little uneasy at the situation. "I think we best do what the lady says."
Her eyes narrowed more and then she suddenly dropped her cold facade. She did something surprising and smiled. Bucky had to admit, she was a complete knockout even with her pompous attitude superiority complex. "Sargent, what did your name was?"

He frowned and only scowled before answering "Barnes."

"Perfect, okay. Good to know, Sergeant Barnes, Charles," She turned to the chubby man who was standing behind her and watching their interaction with wide eyes and looking slightly concerned for Bucky. "Can you please get Private Green to grab the radio from the truck? Also, bring out a few boxes with Foster, will you? We need to move some of this shit out." She told him, cursing. He didn't expect her to be so crass, and each moment she surprised Bucky more and more.

The little man, who Bucky was assuming was Charles, moved so quickly he could have sworn the place was on fire. In the meantime, Lucy turned her attention to both Bucky and Dum Dum before saying with a sickeningly sweet tone, "Gentleman, I understand you had issues with giving up this church. You fought hard to gain it, and I respect that. You did your job wonderfully, and I'm sure you're very proud. However," He tone dropped and so did her facial expression, turning serious and scowling, "Let me do mine, and stay the hell out of my way."

Bucky scoffed, "Listen doll, I don't know who the hell you think you are—,"

"It's Doctor or Lieutenant to you!" She snapped, slinging the brown messenger bag she had on her shoulder around to her front, grabbing a camera out of it.

So he had been right. She was clearly some higher up lady who didn't know fuck all about war, and probably had every high ranking officer around this place wrapped around her finger. Not Bucky though. No Sir, there was one officer she wouldn't be able to control.

"Doctor, whatever." He rolled his eyes, "You can't just march up in here all high and mighty and start bossing me around like you own the place. We have dead here that need to be taken care of first before you do whatever the hell you do," That was mostly what angered Bucky. That they paid for those grounds with their very lives. And there she was, showing up after all the heavy lifting took place and bossing him around. Meanwhile, she didn't give two shits about the bodies in the corner, and she expected them to 'move out' and gather their belongings? Their belongs were what exactly? His dead comrades? "I don't care who gave you your commands or what the hell they had to say!"

"Well," She rose a quick eyebrow and gave a quick smirk, "Let's find out what they have to say, shall we?" She said as another man came running over with a large radio set.

"Doctor, you requested me?" The man panted. Bucky noticed another man carrying in a large wooden box with the small man he had seen behind the woman earlier. They looked like cargo boxes, ready to be packed away with something.

"Ah, yes. Private Green. Please radio me Colonel Phillips."

"Right away," He nodded, putting in headphone and began turning knobs and dials.

"Sarge, I really think this is a bad idea," Dum Dum grabbed his arm and said lowly, under his breath. "I know you don't like it but we have orders."

"I don't give a shit!" Bucky hissed, the woman stared at him and rocked on her heels as if this were a game. She had a smug look on her face that angered him to his very core, "Move our men out and take our 'belongings' away? You have got to be fucking kidding me! Those men—" He pointed to the bodies, the metallic smell of their blood was still fresh in the air. "Gave their lives to secure this
"Colonel Phillips," The Private, whose name was Green, said into the device used to speak in, promptly interrupting what Bucky was about to say. Private Green looked at the woman, unplugged the headset after a moment of listening to Colonel Phillips and then told her "Go,"

"Colonel Phillips this is Doctor Lucy Heinrich, the Lieutenant in charge of the art and site preservation tasks. We met earlier today regarding my mission?"

She was German, he realized from her last name. As he thought she couldn't surprise him anymore, and there she was; a fucking Jerry.

"I hear you, Doctor. Talk to me." The Colonel replied, his voice filling the church and echoing loud off its stone walls.

"Sir, permission to strip a Sergeant Barnes of his rank?"

Bucky's eyes widened, "Are you fucking kidding me? You can't do that!"

"Shit!" Dum Dum hissed quietly, watching with big eyes.

Even the Colonel sounded surprised, "Due to what cause?"

"Blatant insubordination, questioning of authority, refusing to take a direct order and getting in the way of my mission, a gross display of sexism, and for being a grade-A asshole."

"Sir, Sergeant Barnes here requesting to also strip Dr. Heinrich of her rank as Lieutenant as well!" Bucky interjected, making eye contact with her as they both glared at one another.

"Good God, you two! I don't have time for this level of childish bullshit!" Colonel Phillips "Barnes, give the lady whatever the hell she wants or you will be written up. Dr. Heinrich, I expect a higher level of professionalism. Don't make me regret taking you on." The radio went dead.

The four of them only stood around after static from the radio echoed in the church's hall. Lucy only smugly rose her eyebrows at Bucky, clearly overly pleased about her slight victory. "I told you," Dum Dum hissed at Bucky. He didn't want to be reminded.

"While you're at it, I'm going to need some of your help." Lucy revelled in her win, if she could really call it that. "Full cooperation would be appreciated. Now, I have a job to do." She said and then focused back on the roof. Bucky was shocked to see her change in focus, and he watched as she grabbed the camera she took out of her bag and began snapping pictures immediately, clearly not wasting time. She turned to her assistant, "Charles you can begin the diagrams and drawings. I saw old plans of the church and I think there might be a few halls and catacombs underneath. We'll take a look at it, so we'll need some lights set up. Green and Foster, take whatever art you can find and place it in boxes. And you..." She turned to Bucky, looked at him. "You just gonna stand there looking pretty? Or are you going help unload the truck?"

Bucky wanted to tell her to forget it, but he couldn't. He only scoffed and head over to where the truck was in the front, scowling the entire time.

She was infuriating, absolutely pig-headed and stubborn. He had never met a woman such as her before, and he hoped he never would again. He knew in those very moments that Lucy Heinrich would be the bane of his existence, and he was not looking forward to it.
Ugh, honestly I wasn't huge on this chapter. But, you will soon understand why I have to make them hate one another, and I also wanted to establish Lucy's friendships with people other than Charles and Daniel. Hence, the intro of Elsa Hardy! Who, by the way, is a nice change of pace to write considering Lucy is a little dark and damaged.

The despite the crumminess of this chapter, the next chapter is one of my favs and I promise none of you will hate me as much once you read it. We're finally getting into the good stuff and I am LIVING for it.

Thanks again lovelies, and please REVIEW, FOLLOW, and FAV because you definitely don't want to miss the next chapter.

- Amelia
Chapter X

Chapter Notes

If you've read up to this point in this story: CONGRATS! Because we have finally reached the good stuff and all you lovelies have earned it. I hope you enjoy reading this chapter and I enjoyed writing it. Thank you for the follows/favourites, and thanks to MommaWolf18 for the kind review!

Disclaimer: As much as I want to own the MCU, I sadly still don't.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter X

When Lucy had woken up that morning at the crack of dawn to relieve herself, she noticed she had likely only gotten a few hours of sleep. Her new friend Elsa told her that was typical, living in a military camp was noisy, and you had to drown it out.

That wasn't the problem for Lucy. She had already been in a military camp. Only, it was in the desert and was much warmer. Italy was something different. She had laid awake for hours, fear coursing through her from what was to come.

Italy was different from what she was used to. This was 'The War'. At least in Egypt, she was from removed from everything, and she didn't have to watch as the counts of the dead rose higher and higher.

She had almost gotten sick earlier that day from seeing a group of the injured ride in on medic vehicles. Men wailed in agony, clutching gauzes to their gaping head wounds which profusely poured out blood. Others screamed from their missing limbs, the only remnants that there had been anything there was left a bloody, severed, stump where the small veins and arteries were exposed, and the pearl-white of a bone sticking through.

It was dawn by the time Lucy had finally risen from her cot. Elsa had come back in the night at some point, not even able to change out of her blood-soaked uniform. She fell asleep in the middle of taking off her boots, one was half on and the other off. The poor woman had passed out from exhaustion, and Lucy could tell many of the other nurses and doctors were in the same boat.

When Lucy had finally woke and got dressed, she washed her face with water from a basin and then head to the Mess Area where she had a cup of coffee. Even the coffee was worse there, she found. And of course, there was no milk or sugar, which Charles struggled with and finally decided to take his tea black.

Lucy only had the coffee, unable to stomach anything after everything she had seen earlier. She explained to Charles how she had to meet Colonel Phillips, and there was a mission briefing after that.

When she had met Colonel Phillips she had expected him to be exactly as he was. A gruff, older man who had obviously seen his fair share of war decided to take a gamble on the science and technology element of it all.
A striking woman was also present, wearing a uniform similar to the one Lucy bore before getting caught in the action and decided it was more practical to wear other items. Agent Peggy Carter was more put together than Lucy had ever been even before the war. Her dark brown hair cascaded into victory curls, and her lips were painted red. She had deep brown eyes and a soft smile. When Lucy entered the tent, both women made eye contact immediately. Clearly, they were two women who respected other women of strong stature, and there was a clear admiration present in the room.

The two discussed Lucy's mission at length, which she could complete until gaining more intel on what it was exactly they were looking for. Her ears picked up when they mentioned the Tesseract, the object of power the German archaeologists were discussing as Lucy snuck into their excavation site in Egypt. As it turned out, it was a Norse relic, said to holds mystic power. Although Lucy didn't believe in such a thing, she still agreed to help find and research said artifact and made a list of books she would need to be sent to her. She spent the entire morning writing other professionals in her field who knew more about Norse Mythology.

Her main focus would be that artifact, as well as a few others that seemed just as peculiar. If she could track down said artifacts before the Nazi's did, her missions would be a success. And if she couldn't, well, then she hoped they weren't able to find them either.

The rest of the morning Lucy had been planning out her teams. She had been assigned two young men by the names of Roger Green and Caleb Foster. At first, they both seemed less than pleased to be on her services. However, their attitudes seemed to change as they realized they likely wouldn't have to be fighting while apart of Lucy's team; meaning they would survive longer. Suddenly, they were two young men who actively did whatever Lucy ordered, and she was glad to have been given men who didn't question her because she was a woman. If they saw her mission as insignificant, they didn't show it as she bossed them around, and she was glad for it.

The rest of the day had been informing them of what to do and how to handle things. Lucy knew she and Charles would be doing most of the excavation protocol, while they did the heavy lifting. Many things would go unfinished, but it was the best she could do without a fully trained team. They would have their work cut out for them, that was sure.

However, she didn't know just how much once they arrived at San Marco Church. She knew there would be resistance from some of the soldiers, but she didn't quite expect there to be as much trouble as Sergeant Barnes had been giving her.

Lucy hated him, she decided. The man was non-compliant and hindering her doing her job, which she shouldn't stand. He was arrogant and snide and was clearly much like many of the others who disregarded her work as mundane and useless.

Lucy found herself growing irritated just thinking about it as she continued snapping more pictures of the church, recording every little angle for her records in the case that more destruction followed.

Her eyes followed the irritating Sargent that had the audacity to refuse her orders and she couldn't help but feel anger rise in her.

When she had first entered the church, of course, she immediately noticed him. After all, she wasn't blind.

She had walked in, really only having one concern, and that was for the ceiling she had already seen had been half destroyed from the outside. She practically leaped from the truck before it was even parked, and she burst through the doors of the church, the anxiety coursing through her. She was worried most of the building had been destroyed, and she was mainly concerned about the ceiling
However, when she noticed him off to the right, she immediately became a little sidetracked. He was gorgeous, and easily one of the most attractive men she had ever seen. He had dark hair, piercing blue eyes and a sharp jawline with a light stubble lining it. His chest was broad, the way he stood just commanded notice to be on him. He was confident, that much was clear. And he gave off some kind of aura that made her gravitate towards him. For a brief moment, she almost felt as though she knew him...

And then he had to open his damn mouth. After that, the illusion was shattered, and Lucy could hardly even look at him. There was nothing she hated more than someone who stood in the way of her job, let alone someone who didn't treat her seriously. Not to mention, she even had direct orders! Which he promptly tore up and it caused a shiver to roll down her spine and hate to well in her belly. She became irritated even thinking about it. Something about Sergeant Barnes had rubbed her the wrong way, and she knew at that moment she would never be able to tolerate the man.

After their intense interaction, she began snapping pictures of the roof and Charles approached her. The man had lit up while in the church, a smile wide upon realizing the destruction wasn't as serious as they had theorized it to be.

He had immediately begun diagrams and taking notes of the church. And as he approached her, his confidence grew and something about him made him seem ten times taller. At one point, she even caught him yelling at a soldier for sitting on a fallen piece of the roofing that had collapsed. Lucy laughed and knew once again Charles had been the right choice for her assistant. His usually timid nature and flustered personality were replaced with seriousness and confidence while he was working and she found pride welling in her chest. She thought of how parents felt as they saw their children develop and grow, and she imagined it was something like that. "So? Anything you noticed right off the base?" He asked her with a grin.

"Well, it's obviously Byzantine." She looked around, staring at the mosaic pieces, "Just look at the frescoes. Some of the ornamentations definitely reflect Turkish influence, not a whole lot of Italian though which is weird. Look at the crosses and the metal work. I'd date it back to the 10th century. I think I read a journal a few years back saying it was built for some monks who lived in grottos nearby, it would be nice to find those as well, or at least what's left of them. We might not have time though, but we'll document all we can here. Get Green and Foster to start moving out any religious items that aren't apart of the foundation."

"Should I start drawings?"

"Please, and don't bother with accurate measurements. This has to be a quick process, we don't have a whole lot of time." She said as she snapped more pictures.

Charles only nodded and rushed away, ready to give her team orders and promptly start his own instructions.

Lucy was preoccupied with taking pictures around the church to notice someone come up to her.

She frowned as she looked away from her camera as she noticed something odd about the floor stones. There were a few irregularities, and she smirked as she realized what it was.

A man cleared his throat behind her and she turned around, being ripped out of her thought.

"Sorry about that, Lieutenant. Hope I didn't startle you." A burly man with a red mustache and a
bowler cap smiled at her. His face fell as he quickly corrected himself "Or um—Doctor? Which one do you prefer?"

"Either is fine, thanks." She said, "And you didn't startle me."

"Good, good." He nodded and then only adjusted the strap of his rifle on his shoulder and then rocked on his feet.

Lucy looked at him, waiting for him to say something and she pursed her lips before raising an eyebrow. "Sorry, do you need something...?" She couldn't recall his name.

"It's Dugan, Sargent Dugan. Most of the fellas call me Dum Dun though." He said happily and outreached his hand, she shook it firmly and gave him a small smile. She didn't know Sargent Dugan well, but something about him made her sure they would get along. He had a glimmer in his eye that reflected something kind, but also revealed a little mischief as well.

"What can I help you with, Sargent Dugan?" She asked him, looking back down at the floor and standing in a particular spot.

"I uhhh, I just wanted to apologize on Sargent Barnes' behalf earlier. It wasn't right of him to undermine your authority like that."

She was surprised, she rose an eyebrow and only nodded before saying, "Thank you, I appreciate that." Although he should have been man enough to apologize himself, she realized.

"He's a tough pill to swallow, but his heart is in the right place. He's a good guy, and we've just seen way too damn much. The chaos and all that death? It can change a man. But he's really not all that bad."

She only shook her head, "It doesn't give him the excuse to be an ass. Or to question his superior officer. He may honestly be the most infuriating man I have ever met." Lucy said and reflected her gaze back down to the floor, where she started stopping on the stone panels.

"That... might be true." Dugan looked at her curiously as she did so, the heel of her boots cracking some of the stones. He looked at her like she had slightly gone mad. "But all due respect, you asked him to clear out his men who were exhausted and to disregard the dead like it was nothing. It's not nothing."

A stone cracked and Lucy smiled, picking it up and revealing a tiny opening in the floor. Dugan watched her, and she tossed the broken stone away and lifted more to reveal a hidden gold rosary that some monks must have stored away centuries ago for safe keeping. Dugan frowned as she peeled away more of the floor, revealing other religious trinkets and items of value. "How did you know that was there?"

She wiped her hands on her pants as she stood up, and assured him, "I'm very good at my job, Sargent. And I know you and Barnes are too. I didn't mean to come off as insensitive. But right now I'm not in the total wrong, what he did was completely inappropriate and I won't be forgiving him any time soon."

Dugan only nodded and then pursed his lips together firmly, "Understood. But just don't take it off the table, alright? He might just surprise you."

As he spoke, Lucy's gaze was then redirected back at Sargent Barnes, who once again walked in. She doubted she would ever change or opinion on him, or would forgive him.
Their eyes met from across the room, and although she was filled with fury there was something else. Something about those eyes made her feel uneasy. And for the second time, Lucy felt as though she had seen them before. A glimmer of recognition struck her, but it faded almost as quickly as it appeared. The tightness in her belly also faded as their looks redirected, and Lucy only shook her head as she pushed the idea back that they may have somehow known each other. That was impossible though, she realized and quickly dismissed the feeling. But still, somehow in the back of her mind, she was sure she had seen them before.

Brooklyn, New York, 1940.

Lucy slammed her head back and winced at the feeling of the liquor burning her throat. Shuttering and trying to keep herself composed, she squealed as Adeline coughed beside her, "Holy hell!" She gagged, "What is this stuff?"

Lucy also coughed into her hand, the taste of it still on her tongue. "No idea!" Her eyes remained closed as she fought the wave of nausea that filled her entire body. "Horse piss, maybe?"

"It's awful!" Adeline laughed at her older sister as they both regained their composure, "Let's get another one!"

Lucy had arrived in New York three days prior from France. She had a contract with the University of Chicago and would be moving there in five days. But first, she had wanted to spend some time with her family.

Especially since she had been struggling with arriving in the United States alone, without her fiancé. She had arrived at the Lee's apartment overlooking Central Park to be greeted with many hugs and kisses.

Mrs. Lee nearly cried as she held her tightly, tears welling in her eyes and she held her face in her hand and kept exclaiming how beautiful she looked. Wrinkles around her eyes reflected her age, but to Lucy, she still looked youthful and beautiful.

Mr. Lee had only held her close, placed a kiss on her forehead and whispered: "We missed you, kid."

The butlers and maids were also ecstatic to see Lucy. But likely the happiest was Adeline and Beatrix. Beatrix had taken her children to see her, along with Jonathan. She hugged her so hard she thought she was going to have the life squeezed from her.

No one told Adeline Lucy was coming home though. They wanted it to be a surprise. As she walked in, looking like a million dollars arriving for their monthly family dinner, it was obvious the high socialite lifestyle suited her well.

She walked in poised, collected, and elegant. She wore fine clothing as Mrs. Lee had ever since Lucy had known her. She was the epitome of grace and luxury, and Lucy almost was taken aback when she saw her walk in. Surely this couldn't have been her little sister? The one who she used to have to help wipe her dirty face before bed, and brush knots out of her hair?

Adeline looked like a movie star and had the composure of one as well until she spotted Lucy sitting at the table. At first, Lucy wasn't sure how she would react. Would she give her a gentle hug and keep her composure while asking her how she was, or would their reunion be different?

But there was no way in hell she ever expected the young woman of stellar stature and grace to react as she did. She practically tackled Lucy to the floor, hugging her hard and kissing her cheek so many
times Lucy nearly had to push her off as her entire family (which of course, included the Lee's) laughed at the reunion.

The next few days Lucy had been dead asleep due to being jet lagged. She had stayed in her old room at the Lee's, which they had always kept ready for her in the case of her return.

But while she wasn't asleep, she was shopping with Adeline and Charlotte (Mr. and Mrs. Lee's daughter) and then visiting her niece and nephew.

Mrs. Lee had at one point come into her room as she was eating breakfast that the cooks had made her and sitting in her large, canopy bed as the sun shown in from the large windows and she could hear the birds chirping in her Central Park. How Lucy had lived away from this luxurious life in Paris was beyond her. She was served breakfast on a silver platter, and Mrs. Lee came in and showed her pictures which she had found of her mother.

If Lucy was being honest, there wasn't a day where she didn't miss her mother. But she could hardly remember her face at that point. When she thought of her, she found her face shifting into Mrs. Lee's. She could never replace Mama, but it was close enough.

Mr. Lee, however, was a different story. She hated her real father, so Mr. Lee was the closest thing she had.

A few nights after arriving, Lucy had padded out of her room to sneak a glass of milk and a cookie from the kitchen. She stumbled past their large living room, where the grand fireplace with large gold ornamentation roared alive. Already there had been two plates of cookies set out and another glass of milk that Mr. Lee had readied for her.

She had found after her parents died that she could never sleep. She and Mr. Lee often had a ritual of staying up late and reading beside one another as they snacked on baked goods and drink a cold glass of milk. It was a refreshing change to her compared to how her father also used to make her stay up late with him. Only instead, they were drinking vodka.

This night was different though and there had been no reading. She had curled up beside Mr. Lee on their couch, her knees tucked under her and his arm was wrapped around her as they held one another close.

He looked at the ring on her left finger and told her how proud he was of her. And how glad he was that she had made something of herself and also found love. They spoke for hours, and Lucy had ended up crying at his kind words. Love was clear in his voice as he spoke of the wonderful young woman she became and how honored he was to have watched her grow up.

Lucy asked him if he would walk her down the aisle and Mr. Lee had to take a moment to settle from the tears. He had already walked Beatrix down the aisle, but Lucy had always been a different case. When she had come into their lives she was much older, and he worried she would never truly accept them as their family.

But the Lee's and her sister's was the family she had always dreamed of. Of course, her mother would have always been another part of the family she wanted, but Lucy's childhood was not filled with good memories beyond that.

Mr. Lee patted her hand and said with a shaky breath, his voice crackling "I know I'm not your father, but you have always been one of the best daughters I could ever ask for. I am so happy you and your sisters came into my life." The older man could only smile. He had aged much since the last time she saw him, his hair white and fraying and wrinkles in his skin, but his eyes still reflected
happiness that Lucy had always associated with comfort and home. The Lee's loved their own children, and the Heinrich girl's, more than anything and Lucy could honestly say that they had been her saving grace.

Her time bonding with her family had not stopped there, though. After she had been moping the previous day about missing Daniel, Adeline had attempted to take her out and cheer her up. Come on it'll be fun! She tried to tempt her. However, Adeline's version of fun differed greatly from Lucy's, and what she wanted to do was go to the opening night of the opera and then go to a gala in Manhattan.

Lucy had been to enough gala's and operas to last a lifetime. She thought it was incredibly boring, and her sister had somehow forgotten what was fun.

When Adeline then suggested going to some other high-class member of New York's social scene's party, Lucy got an idea. She wanted to stay clear of Manhattan, where there were rich snobs and fake people.

She wanted to go somewhere real, and somewhere where she knew Adeline wouldn't care about being the fancy high-class lady she became. She could just be her.

And that's how they ended up in a crummy bar in Brooklyn, taking shots of cheap tequila and acting like less than respectable women. They had both appeared at the bar looking out of place. Lucy had her hair cascading down in victory curls and a red button-down dress with matching lips. Adeline was dressed far more different than Lucy and had her hair pinned up and black gloves and white pearls around her neck. As always, she looked like a million bucks and the people in the bar noticed immediately.

They were more than cold to them they first arrived, but then Lucy had the stroke of genius to by everyone in the place a round of drinks and suddenly they were the most popular people in there.

"Champagne!" Adeline giggled, her voice drunk and happy "I want Champagne!"

"Oh, no you don't!" Lucy corrected her and turned to the bartender, "Two more shots of tequila!"

"Is this how you drink in France, Luce?" Adeline continued giggling.

"Pffft!" Lucy exclaimed and burst out laughing, "Are you kidding? All Daniel and I drink is wine with the occasional port! If he saw me like this right now — Oh God, I'd be in so much trouble!" She hadn't been that drunk since... She couldn't even remember the last time she was that drunk. Perhaps once she had gotten that drunk, and Daniel had to carry her to their room over his shoulder like a sack of flour.

Beatrix refused to go out with them. Not only did she have children to look after, but also she was strongly against drinking after seeing the way their father behaved. Lucy and Adeline never really learned that lesson. Daniel always criticized Lucy for following in his footsteps, and always going a little overboard with the drinks she had. Very rarely when she was home she would be free of having a glass of wine in her hand. But never before had she been quite so out-of-her-mind obliterated.

The people in Brooklyn were much livelier than the people in Manhattan. They were less concerned about what others thought of them and were more focused on being happy.

Irish music played in the background, and laughter rang through the entire building. Lucy and Adeline had made friends quickly and went under the guise of fake names since Adeline had very much made a name for herself within some of the papers by associating with very influential people.
Plus, almost everyone knew who the Lee's were, and after Adie turned 20 she had taken their last name since the name Heinrich had only ever brought her sorrow and misery.

That night they weren't Lucy Heinrich and Adeline Lee. They were Emma Réhal and Sadie Walker. Although, whilst getting more and more intoxicated they began to call each other by their real names.

Lucy was in a fit of laughter at one of the jokes one of the men made in their company when the door of the bar opened. She took no notice of who walked in, but immediately they noticed her.

Bucky didn't want to go out that night. He had wanted a quiet night in, possibly just listen to the news on his family's radio, and then head to bed early so he wouldn't be tired for work the next morning.

But when George Caraway came pounding on his door with Tommy Susa in tow and a more than reluctant Steve Rogers, he couldn't exactly say no.

That's how they ended up at their typical spot they usually spent Saturday nights at. But something about the places seemed different this time, and as soon as they walked in Steve seemed taken aback "Sheesh, did we make a wrong turn somewhere?" He asked as he saw the two dames sitting at the bar. One with black hair pinned up, a killer smile, and a very expensive long string of pearls and a much too fancy dress. She was gorgeous, and as she held the bottle of champagne in her hand and laughed. Bucky had the urge to go talk to her. "Why the fancy crowd?" Steve questioned upon looking at them.

Bucky wanted to talk to the woman. That is until the one beside her turned around from the bar into his direction as she pounded back a shot of tequila. Her face contorted in pain and displeasure, and Bucky's heart dropped in his chest.

She had dark brown hair that fell in soft curls. She had a slim face and a small nose, which high elegant cheekbones. Her lips were painted red, but it looked as though it had smudged a bit from the way it had met with the liquor glasses she had been undoubtedly been brushing them against the entire night.

She cringed as the liquor went down and she shuttered before recovering and then laughing at something the black haired-girl next to her said. Joy reflected on her face, and suddenly Bucky had tunnel vision. Everything in time moved slower, and all he could see was her laughter as a large smile was spread across her face. Immediately, he was caught in her web and was drawn in.

"Holy shit," Bucky let out a low whistle as he gazed at her, unable to tear his eyes away, "Steve, do you see that girl?"

"The fancy dame? Yeah, what about her?" Steve asked, looking at the black haired one with blue eyes. Typically, that would have been the one Bucky would have went for. But the other woman was so unbelievably bewitching that he couldn't even look away. Her dark eyes had ensnared him, and her smile literally almost stopped his heart.

"No, no." Bucky corrected, shaking his head. "The one beside her."

"Umm, yeah?" Steve frowned, "The one that looks like she wouldn't give you the time of day?"

"Yeah, that one." He said without a beat and then nodded to himself. Bucky still couldn't bear to look away from her, she was just so mesmerizing. "I'm gonna marry her."

Steve's face fell in shock and he was about the ask what the hell had gotten into him when George
Caraway laughed,

"Wait which one? Brown hair, red dress, killer legs that any man wouldn't mind having wrapped around him?" George snickered.

"Hey!" Bucky shot back and then replied back in a heated fashion. Despite his harsh tone, a small snicker rose in his throat as he teased his friend. "That's my future wife right there, watch your mouth Caraway!"

George only laughed and then smacked both Steve and Bucky on the shoulders before shaking his head and heading to the bar.

"Do you see her smile? Oh my God." Bucky said, "I'm in love, Steve."

Steve only looked at him and sighed, knowing how Bucky was with girls. He had expected him to want to chat up a girl that night, but never before had he ever acted that way, "You should go talk to her! Don't just stand around here!"

"You know what," Bucky said and licked his lips, not really listening to him. He pat Steve on the back as George did a few seconds before, "I'm gonna go talk to her."

"Wow, what a swell idea." Steve only snorted, knowing he hadn't listened to a single word he said.

Bucky walked forward and it was like as though he was trapped in a dream. Moving slowly, his limbs felt like molasses and his palms were sweaty. He couldn't even remember the last time he had felt nervous approaching a girl. What would he even say as he went up to her? He couldn't just very well flash her and smile and introduce himself. No, he had to be bolder than that.

He approached her, and as he walked up their eyes caught on one another. Again, his heart felt as though it had dropped and Bucky had perhaps only felt that feeling once before in his life.

Her deep hazel eyes looked back at him, and he moved slowly as he approached the people who surrounded her and neither one of them dropped their gaze.

When he made it in front of her, he asked her "Do you wanna dance?" His hands in his pockets, it was the first time he worried a girl would say no. He didn't even say his name or hello. He got straight to the point, figuring it would be easier for her to reject him sooner rather than later and he could avoid getting his hopes up.

The black haired girl next to her only snorted and looked him up and down, "With you? I don't think so."

Bucky rose his eyebrows and he said quickly, "I umm, I actually wasn't talking to you." He wasn't sure he liked how she just assumed she was the one he was asking, as if the other woman wasn't even present.

The woman in red only rose her eyebrows and then looked at her friend, she looked a little surprised that he asked her, her mouth fell slightly open, "Oh!" She looked surprised and then inhaled deeply, "I'm sorry, but I'm engaged."

Lucy was shocked that someone was paying her notice when Adeline was directly next to her. Usually, she didn't even get a sex glance from the opposite sex when her younger sister was around.

Bucky's heart dropped, but then he nodded and smirked, "I asked you to dance, not to go out on a date." If he could even dance with her, that would be enough for him.
She only smirked and then nodded, "Well then I'll give you a tentative maybe. It depends."

"On?" He asked her, curious at what she had to say.

"On how long it takes me to finish this drink." She said, smirking as she held the beer she was nursing. She had finished up with the shots and was now onto something that tasted a little better going down.

"I'll hold you to that then," Bucky continued to grin at her as he backed away, still unable to draw his eyes from her.

As soon as the mysterious man walked away, Adeline gave Lucy a glare and then gripped her wrist tightly. Lucy's eyes couldn't help but follow the handsome stranger as he walked away. "What?" Lucy hissed at her critical sister, "He was charming!"

"He's trouble, and you're engaged."

"Oh, please." Lucy snorted and raised a cocky eyebrow, "You're just jealous he asked me and not you." She said with a smug tone.

Adeline looked across the bar at him, and he chuckled before shaking her head, "He's good looking, I'll give you that. But not my type."

"Oh, right. I forgot you were an elitist snob." Lucy teased, which earned her a swift, teasing punch to the shoulder. Although, to a degree, they both knew she wasn't joking. After all, Adeline did have a reputation to maintain and she didn't want to be associated with people of a lower social class. She had always been slightly vain, and it was the one thing Lucy and Adie had never seen eye to eye on.

Lucy rose her pint glass to her lips and took a sip before looking up once more and her eyes meeting the stranger's once again and he gave her another smile and raised his glass in cheers from across the bar. Lucy couldn't help but chuckle "My God, he is handsome though."

"Uh huh, stop making eyes at him. You're a woman to be wed, remember?" As if Adeline had to remind her. Lucy was well aware, and obviously, she would never do anything to jeopardize her and Daniel's relationship. But that didn't mean she couldn't have a little fun though, right?

"I can look but not touch." She giggled "Now stop being so sour that I'm getting attention for once and drink your beer." Lucy scolded only to have Adeline roll her eyes at her and do exactly what she was told by her older sister without hesitation.

Chapter End Notes

SO. Lucy and Bucky HAVE met before. Unfortunately, alcohol hinder's one's memory and that could be why they seem to not recognize each other other. My, this is getting interesting... And it's only going to be getting better.

Thank you all for reading. I would love a couple reviews, follows, and favourites to help inspire another update... Perhaps one that might even include another fluffy flashback?
-Amelia
Chapter XI

Chapter Summary

Oh my God, I cannot WAIT to share this chapter with you. I'm actually so obsessed and proud of it, and I hope it makes you all as happy as it made me. It's the perfect amount of cute/funny/embarrassing/ and heartbreaking. Thank you to my reviewers, and all who followed and favourited!

Enjoy this fluffy little piece!

Disclaimer: Still haven't figured out a way to own Marvel.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Chapter XI

Brooklyn, New York, 1940.

Lucy stumbled out of the bar, desperately in need for air. Her head was spinning, and she knew she should have stopped drinking a long time ago. Adeline was still inside, having men swoon over her and women wishing to be her. The looks of longing were also matched with looks of hatred and jealousy. Since after all, the United States was coming out of a long recession and many people had suffered. Lucy was never one to flaunt her wealth as her sister did, but that was Adeline's own business.

Eventually, though, Lucy had become increasingly uncomfortable from all the looks of attention earlier in that night and felt nearly unable to breathe. Not to mention, she felt as though the entire room was spinning and if she stayed in there a moment longer she would lose her mind.

It really was unladylike to be as drunk as she and Adeline currently were, but Lucy didn't care. She had never really been one to follow social normatives or do what was expected of her. Although, she knew she would regret being that drunk in the morning when her head was in the toilet.

At that moment she didn't care though. And Lucy found herself stumbling into the streets of New York and immediately finding peace. Of course, she missed Paris. But this was home, and it would always be home. If it hadn't been night time, she would have hopped on the first subway to Queens and walked around her old neighbourhood just to see what became of it. New York had a different feel from Paris, and it filled her with happiness to be back in the place she once loved so much.

A light breeze picked up and Lucy exhaled deeply only to be met with the familiar smell of stale cigarette smoke. She had picked the habit up in France since everyone did it there. She hadn't really craved one until that moment though, and she turned around to see the man from inside the bar quietly smoking off the side, not even noticing he had company on the quiet street.

"Do you happen to have another one of those?" She asked him, getting his attention.

Bucky turned around with raised eyebrows and his face reflected a smile when he saw her. He was shocked to see her outside with him. "You followin' me or something?" He teased her, walking up
slowly with the cigarette hanging from his bottom lip and he reached into his pockets to pull out the carton.

Lucy didn't really know of anyone who smoked outside. Everyone was allowed to do it indoors, and she figured he was out there to escape as well.

"Clearly," Lucy smirked as he passed one over to her and she took it, their fingers brushing against one another ever so lightly that she almost wanted to jerk her hand back at the contact.

"And here I was thinking you were playing hard to get by saying you were engaged. Turns out you were just waiting to get me alone." Bucky teased her.

Lucy put the cigarette in her mouth and then waved around her left hand, wiggling her fingers, "Not playing hard to get, it's the truth."

The man took her left hand and then stared at the ring on her finger. Lucy yet again wanted to yank her hand away at the physical contact. The electricity she felt shouldn't have been coursing through her veins at his touch, and she told herself she was just drunk.

He looked at her ring, and then only raised an eyebrow and let out a low whistle. He had rarely ever seen an actual diamond ring, almost everyone he had known to get married only had a simple band. It only confirmed his theory that she was wealthy, much like the other woman who she was with in the bar. "He's a lucky fella," was all he said.

"Do you maybe have a light?" Lucy asked him, and he quickly reached in his pocket to produce a small zippo. He flicked it open and held it to the bottom of her cigarette. Trying to get it to ignite, he continuously attempted to get a spark but by some faithful trick played on them by God, it just wouldn't catch.

"Here," He sighed and then moved closer so that the ends of their cigarettes were touching. His mouth was near to hers, their faces so close that he could see the little flecks of green in her brown eyes and the light dusting of freckles on her cheeks. She was barely able to tear her eyes away from his, seeing how they were an ocean of blue she wished for nothing more than to drown in. The tension was so obvious that it could be cut with a knife.

"You shouldn't look at me like that." Lucy pulled away the second her cigarette was lit, reacting almost like he had burned her, taking a few steps back.

"Like what?" He chuckled lightly, exhaling smoke as she stepped away.

Lucy pulled her cigarette from her mouth to also exhale, immediately feeling calmer than she did a second ago prior to filling her lungs with the harsh feeling of nicotine. "Like you were wishing I wasn't engaged."

"Nah," He shook his head and looked down at his shoes before kicking a small stone into the street, "I'm happy for you. But..." He looked back at her before saying candidly, "I would be fooling myself if I didn't think you were the most goddamn gorgeous woman I had ever seen."

She blushed madly, and then turned away from him, inhaling deeply as she brought the cigarette to her mouth yet again. Lucy was shocked at him saying such things, and she only shook her head. She had known she had attractive features but never really believed she was that beautiful. "Seriously," He said, and chuckled at her reaction, "Your smile is like nothing I've ever seen." Lucy couldn't help but smile at that moment and he pointed and laughed "See! That's what I'm talking about! That smile!"
She made a point by not smiling and purposefully frowning and he only chuckled and faked disappointment, "So what's your name?"

Lucy had to think for a second, "Um… Emma."

"Um, Emma? Okay, well that's definitely a fake name so I see how it is. You had to think about that for way too long." He joked.

"That's my name!" She laughed, defending herself "It is! It's Emma!"

"You're lying but that's alright. We'll just use fake names then. I'm Steve."

"Is that a fake name too?" She asked, shifting her weight to her one foot and putting her hand on her hip as she tilted her head. Bucky was absolutely charmed by her, and he couldn't help but chuckle.

"It could be, I guess you'll never know." He gave her a smug smirk, "So, Emma." Bucky gave her a skeptical look as he said her fake name. "Where you from?"

"Here. But I just arrived from France a few days ago. And what about you, Steve? Where are you from?"

"Brooklyn born and raised, sweetheart." He flicked the last of his cigarette onto the street, but Lucy still was working on hers. She inhale deeply and allowed it to fill her lungs, along with the nighttime air. "What were you doing in France?"

"Studying," She sighed, "I missed home though. It's good to be back." She really didn't realize how much she missed New York and her family until she was back. In France, she was too busy with Daniel and her studies to be homesick.

"Yeah," He looked at the quiet street and then nodded in agreement "Nothing really compares to good old New York." He said the city's name with the typical Brooklyn accent and it caused her to laugh and he chuckled at her reaction. "So, how about that dance now?"

"What dance?" She asked in curiosity and frowned at him.

"The one we discussed. You gave a tentative maybe to it back in the bar once you finished your beer? It looks like to me that you're not drinking it anymore. And now that we now know each other and are on a more or less first name basis I figure it's more appropriate."

She chuckled and only shook her head "You can't be serious! You really want to dance? Now? There's no music and you know I'm engaged!" Lucy exclaimed, bewildered by the strange man in front of her. She wondered what he could hope to gain from it.

"Engaged or not, I'd still like a dance with the most beautiful dame I've ever seen." He said and Lucy threw the rest of her cigarette into the street once she had reached its end. "I promise I'll be a perfect gentleman."

She snorted and then only looked at him, "You wanna dance in the middle of the street? With a woman you have no chance with? To no music?" Lucy questioned again, confused at his motives.

He only looked out into the Brooklyn roads as a few stray cars raced by, breathed deeply, and then confidently said "Yeah, I can't imagine a better way to spend the rest of the night." Really, he just wanted to get to know her more. She intrigued him. And very rarely did a dame ever intrigue Bucky Barnes in such a short span of time speaking to her as this women did.
"Perhaps it would be better spent with a woman who would actually reciprocate your feelings back?" She asked and he took a step forward towards her, his hands still in his pockets. Normally, Lucy would have felt slightly uncomfortable and threatened with a man so blatantly flirting with her in the dead of night while it was just the two of them alone. But there was something about him which made her feel calm. Something about him which made Lucy feel as though she had known him her entire life. She had never felt so comfortable and connected with a stranger before.

"Please," Bucky only scoffed and pursed his lips together in a grin and joked, "I bet you any money that you'll be falling in love with me at the end of this."

"You talk a big game, Sir." Lucy joked back.

"Yes I do, Ma'am." He then bowed and then reached his hand out, "May I have this dance, my lady?"

She only sighed and figured what the hell would be wrong in humoring him for a bit. It couldn't hurt. And as she told Adie, she could look but not touch. Although, she figured this was just teetering on the edge of inappropriate. However, she went against her better judgment, as she had an overwhelming urge to be drawn to him and she answered with a simple, "You may."

Bucky took a step forward and gently placed his hand on an appropriate spot on her waist, immediately making his breath hitch at the contact and he could feel her stiffen. Her one hand went on his shoulder and her other one was taken into his. He took a small step forward to bring them closer together, and she shot him a pressing look, almost telling him to back off and he laughed, "Don't worry, doll. I'll leave room for Jesus." He promised as they began swaying to no particular tune and Lucy laughed at his joke.

"I'm sure he will appreciate that." She smiled, "As will my fiancé."

"Tell me about him?"

"About Jesus? I don't think I'm really the most qualified—,"

"Not him!" Bucky exclaimed, laughing at her humour. "Trust me, I went to Sunday School long enough to get the whole spiel. Me and the Big Guy aren't really on the best terms at the moment."

"Been committing too many sins, Steve?"

"Believe me, I have a couple in mind right now I'd like to be committing." Thou shall not commit adultery, and thou shall not covet another man's wife rang in his head over and over. God, he was going to hell for sure for thinking the things about her that he was in that moment. He had never been attracted to a woman this much before, and the fact he couldn't have her only made him want her more.

She only pursed her lips together and then looked down, refusing to meet his eyes. She then chuckled before shooting back, "My, you really are quite the flirt, aren't you? Do women usually fawn all over you?"

"Sometimes," He shrugged, a grin also his lips, "I wouldn't say fawn though. Falling heads over heels? I'd say that was more accurate." Bucky teased.

"And you're modest, I see! Really just the whole package, aren't you?"

Bucky only snorted and then continued joking with her, "Exactly! Another reason to leave your fiancé for me! I'm pretty much the perfect man!"
Her gaze met his and he looked down at her honest, doe eyes before sighing, "I gotta be honest with you though, sweetheart. I think I use cockiness and flirtation as a form of overcompensation." He wasn't sure what happened to get him to admit to that. Something about her eyes, and how honest and caring they looked compelled him to justify his actions and behaviour.

"Overcompensation?" She backed away almost suddenly and couldn't help but look down at below his waist, an eyebrow raised teasingly.

"Not for that! Jesus Christ!" Bucky couldn't help but burst out in laughter at her dirty mind, "I think I'm doing alright in that department, actually." He had never met a woman so bold before, and so nonchalant about joking about such matters.

"Oh," She let out a breath of relief, "That's good then. I mean, not for me. But for you! And your next endeavors!" Lucy tried to shift the uncomfortable tone.

"I was really trying to have a deep moment with you, and you completely sabotaged it by just assuming I was compensating for having a small peni—,"

"Okay!" She cut off and then laughed, her cheeks turning pink, "I'm sorry! I just assumed that was what you were talking about! Usually, when people overcompensate for something it's because of that!"

"No! That would be the opposite of impressive!" Bucky laughed back. "And people can overcompensate for other insecurities. I'm trying to get you to fall in love with me, and that would just be tragic if that were the case."

"Indeed it would. Also, can't say you're doing so hot on the 'getting me to fall in love with you' part. But, I would like to know what you were about to say before I interrupted you though." Lucy said softly as she pursed her lips together.

"Nope, it's ruined now." Bucky chuckled and placed his head on the top of hers, his chin resting there. Holding her felt more natural to him than anything else in the world, for some reason. It could have been because he was drunk, but then again, it could have been for a different reason entirely. "Missed your shot. I was going to tell you something deep and that scared me but that's not happening." They continued swaying casually, still at an appropriate distance. For some reason though, it started to begin to feel inappropriate to him. Bucky was sure he would have gotten the hell beat out of him if her fiancé had been there. Although, she likely thought nothing of what was happening, but to him, every area she touched ignited him with a burning desire.

"Fine, I'll tell you something then that scares me then." She attempted to make it up to him, "Since, after all, we are strangers and it's not like you're gonna go run your mouth to anyone I know."

"How would you know? I could know someone that you know. After all, we are neighbours, I'm from Brooklyn and you're from Queens. It wouldn't be completely impossible? And, you did just humiliate me by just assuming my manhood was small so now I have a reason to get back at you."

"I highly doubt that you know the same people I do," She looked him up and down and giggled, knowing they were from two entirely different worlds.

"Alright, you got me there. You clearly are of a much different social standing." Bucky chuckled and placed his hand on a more comfortable area on the small of her back.

"Not that that's a bad thing!" She told him as he spun her around gently, causing Lucy to grin wider and her heart to pump in her chest a little harder, "I'm envious of you, actually."
"You? Envious of me? I seriously doubt that." Bucky scoffed in disbelief. He didn't need to see what she was wearing or how she styled herself and see her big engagement ring to know she was wealthy. From the very way she composed herself it was obvious. "Trust me, sweetheart. There's nothing really to be envious of. I'd much rather have your life."

"Because you think it's so great? Believe me, it's not all it's made out to be." She whispered under her breath, almost so he couldn't hear. She wondered if he would think of her as another spoiled little rich girl who thought life was hard. If that was actually what he thought, he didn't let her know that. Instead, he only inhaled deeply and rested his chin back on her head.

"Tell me that thing that you were going to say about what scared you." He said gently. Lucy wished he didn't say that. She wished that he was an ass or went back to his original, cocky demeanour. It would be easier to ignore the tingling in the spots where his hands were touching and try to ignore the obvious connection that they had.

"It's silly." Was all Lucy said back, "You'll make fun of me for it."

"No, I won't," He promised and pulled back so he could look down at her. She looked nervous, and he wasn't sure if it was because she didn't want to say what she was about to, or if it was him that made her nervous. Bucky didn't want her to feel uncomfortable around him. He didn't want her to think that he was the type of guy to place another move on her even though she had mentioned several times already she was engaged. He would never attempt to go further with her than dancing since he promised her he would be a complete gentleman and it also wasn't in his style. When a girl said no, Bucky knew to respect that and not to put any pressure on her.

"I don't know if I'm ready to get married," For the first time, Lucy released her anxieties out loud. She had been so afraid of her thoughts before that she had told no one. Not a single living soul, especially Daniel, ever knew how she really felt. Tears welled up in her eyes as she thought of how she could tell a complete stranger about her fears, but not even her own fiancé since she was scared of how he would react. "I thought I was, but not I'm not sure."

Bucky frowned as he heard her voice choke up and her eyes become glossy, "Is it because you don't love him?" He felt oddly protective of her, and he didn't want to leave things between them not knowing if she would be alright.

"No! I love him, I love him so, so much. I'm not scared to spend the rest of my life with him." She was quick to assure both him and herself of her feelings.

"Okay, that's good. Why are you scared then?" He asked, frowning. He watched as his expression shifted and her lower lip ended up trembling just a bit.

"Because I guess I'm afraid of losing myself." She explained with a deep exhale. "I'm worried that if I become someone's wife or mother I won't be me anymore. I won't have an identity, I'll just become an extension of someone else. Someone's property, even. With their name replacing my own and no freedom to do what I want after I've worked so hard to get it. I just... I'm scared of becoming someone's arm candy and expected to fit into this moulded normative of what's expected of me and what isn't. I don't want to lose a part of me."

Bucky wasn't sure what he was expecting but it sure as hell wasn't that. The conversation turned from flirtatious to downright deep, and he wasn't sure he was the best person to be offering advice on something like that. After all, he was a man and didn't really understand what it was like for women after marriage to only be reduced to someone's wife. Really, Bucky wasn't even sure if it had even crossed his mind what exactly women had to give up.
"I've just worked so hard" She continued, closing her eyes and breathing in deep, her expression reflecting pain and confusion, "I don't want to become someone's everything and lose myself in the process. I'm just so, so scared.

Bucky only swallowed a lump in his throat, "And you haven't told him this?"

She shook her head, "No! Of course not. Because he would hear it as though I didn't want to be with him. Which I do. It's the marriage that I'm unsure about."

"Then don't get married," Bucky offered, "Why do you feel like you have to?"

"Because it's different for a woman. I mean, I live with Daniel now and people are already treating me as if I'm some kind of loose harlot. If I didn't have a ring on my finger and some prospect of marriage, it would be even worse. I'd forever be marked as some kind of whore and I'd never get respect, or a chance to practice my area of study."

"Guess I didn't think about that one," Bucky admitting, realizing that she was right and he should have never assumed that her life was easy because she had money. Clearly, there were certain limitations in her life, and she felt trapped regardless of all her wealth. "But can I just say something? Tell me to beat it if you don't like what I say."

Lucy nodded and said quietly, "Okay. Go ahead."

"Look, Emma- or whatever your real name is. I don't know you very well. But I can tell from the last ten minutes of talking to you that you're not just someone's arm decoration. You deserve a life where you're not overshadowed, and where you don't feel pressure to fit into some kind of mould that's been placed on you. You are absolutely stunning, and clearly way smarter than I am. And I think that if I were your fiancé, I would realize that. You aren't the kind of person to be put in a corner. You're one hell of a woman. And anyone who doesn't recognize that or expects you to give up part of your life doesn't deserve you. Don't ever, ever let any man— or hell, any person, tell you who you are or who you should be. You're incredible, and any idiot could see that. And if I'm being honest, you should tell your fiancé how you're feeling."

Lucy only looked at him at that moment as he spoke. She couldn't believe the amount of faith this stranger had in her. He didn't even know her, but was giving her advice and trying to comfort her. She was a little more than hesitant when she first met him, but she was more than glad she stuck around. "Thank you." She swallowed and then readjusted her grip on his shoulders as they continued to dance. Really, they did little more than just sway side to side to the music that the city gave them. "I really mean that. I'm glad I met you, Steve."

"I'm glad I met you too, Emma."

"Now," She exhaled and felt as though she could finally breathe again. "I told you something. It's your turn to tell me."

"So that's how it's going now?" He grinned down at her.

"Oh, that's how it's going." She rose a cocky eyebrow and then snuggly stated, "You owe me."

"I take back all I said, you're terrible."

"Hey!" She giggled before lightly punching his shoulder, causing him to laugh and rub it after pretending it hurt, "That's rude!"

"You've got a mean left hook there, doll." Bucky chuckled and put his hands back on her body
where they were previously, feeling as though it was the most natural thing in the world.

"Thanks, my father taught me." It wasn't a lie, really. Her father did teach her for to punch. Only, she learned it from watching him hitting her mother. She could still remember the way his knuckles would curl, leaving the thumb outside so he wouldn't break it. She remembered countless times watching it happen, and promising herself to never, ever let a man ever treat her the way her father did to her mother.

"Did he know he was raising a boxer?"

"Don't avoid telling me! You can't get around it!"

"I was going to tell you! And then you emasculated me!" If Bucky was truthful, he had a moment of vulnerability with her before. He should have continued feeling like that, especially after all she just told him, but he often struggled opening up to other people. Really, the only person he had even remotely opened up to was Steve, and he had known him for years. He only just met this woman, and although he was compelled to tell her everything moments before, compared to her issues his seemed small and petty.

"And I just told you my biggest secret, so now you have to be honest!" She insisted,

"You can't use the fact you opened up to me as a weapon! That's manipulative!" Bucky chuckled.

"Fine! Then I guess I'll just be on my way…" She began to walk away and Bucky stopped her. He grabbed her waist and pulled her back into him, causing her breath to hitch just a little bit. Flushed against him, they both seemed to realize their close position and a light blush appeared on their cheeks.

The tips of his ears turning a little pink, Bucky couldn't remember the last time a girl actually made him feel this nervous. "Okay, I'll tell you! Jesus, you're a handful."

"Don't criticize me!" She giggled, trying not to grin and fake being frustrated.

"Oh, that wasn't criticism. That was admiration. I love a headstrong woman."

"I would drive you insane." She promised him, stating confidently, "I don't think you could handle me." As soon as the words left her lips, she wanted to take them back. This was wrong, she was blatantly flirting with another man and she did nothing to stop it. But God, it felt good. And Lucy felt an excitement coursing through her veins that she was sure she had never felt before. If Lucy was truthful, she didn't feel nearly as bad about flirting as she thought she would. She was a little resentful towards Daniel for letting her go to the United States all by herself, and she figured she deserved some fun.

"I think I'd be up to the task," He promised her, "It would be a pleasure to go insane because of you."

As they looked at one another in those few seconds of silence, they only could stare in to each other's eyes. His deep blue orbs as he looked into the hazel brown one's of hers. Lucy had to turn away, feeling as if the moment was too intimate. Guilt began to settle into her stomach. Although it was only a look, it held more power than either of them could realize.

Neither one of them could know what would happen in those next moments. Whatever higher power was out there had to have been playing a cruel joke. Because at that moment, the apartment above the bar's open window echoed the sound of music.
Margret Whiting's "My Ideal" began to fill the street of which they stood as if fate had something to do with it. The soft sound of trumpets echoed in their ears, and clearly, they had someone in the apartment above watching over and trying to help them out. They must have believed they were making the situation more romantic, but the reality was that they only added to Lucy's guilty feeling.

They both looked at each other and smiled, Lucy giggling softly, choosing to ignore whatever bad feeling was welling up inside her. "I think we fixed the 'no music' problem."

"Yeah, I'd say so," Bucky chuckled and gazed down at her, lightly brushing a small stand of hair from her face. He swallowed a lump in his throat before saying, "Okay, my turn… You wanted to know, so here it goes. I think I used cockiness and flirtation to overcompensate for the fact I have absolutely no clue what I'm doing with my life. And that terrifies me,"

She sighed softly, looking at him sympathetically. His heart fluttered at her small, reassuring grin. "It's okay to not know what you want yet." She promised him, and Lucy's fingers on the back of his shoulder seemed to have a mind of its own at that moment. Gently, she began tracing small, invisible patterns on his skin. It was something that she did without thinking, and it was an incredibly intimate gesture despite her not noticing. But Bucky noticed, and a shiver ran down his spine as he felt her gentle fingers trace against him lightly. His heart pounded even faster.

"No, it's not just that." He told her, "My dad, he was was this incredible war hero. And here I am, doing absolutely nothing with my life. I've been working the same job since I finished high school, and I could have gone to college but… I don't know. I couldn't afford it at that time, and I just haven't really even found anything I wanted to do. I'm scared I'm not going to be good at anything, and that I won't be able to live up to his legacy. He always thought I would go on to do great things, and I just haven't. I haven't done anything, and that's the problem. I feel like I'm wasting my life away, and it scares me that I might be missing out on some opportunity, or if I do try something I'll fail at it." He admitted to her something he had not even fully admitted to himself. He was terrified, all the time of missing out on life or being stuck in the same mundane streak that he already was on. It was strange that he felt so comfortable around her, as if he could tell her anything and everything.

"Your father would be proud of you either way. Not knowing what to do is okay." She whispered gently, "You have lots of time to figure it out." Her voice was like velvet to him, and he was positive a woman had never effected him as much as she did.

"I don't know about that," He scoffed, "I mean, as I kid I always thought I would be like him. And I'm not. I have nothing going for me, and nothing to look forward to. And I think that's why I am how I am. I feel like I have to overcompensate for something missing, and the only way I can do that is by talking a big game even though I don't really mean it."

Her eyes softened and she sighed again, her hand lightly going to the front of his chest, "Again, I don't know you very well. But you seem incredibly kind, and intelligent, despite what you may think. You told me I don't have to fit into a mould of what other people expect of me, and you don't have to either. Just do what makes you happy. Either way, I'm sure your father would be proud of you for at least that. You don't have to live some extraordinary, incredible life to make an impact on people. What matters is your own happiness, and at the end of the day, it doesn't matter if someone else is proud of you. You only need to be proud of yourself."

"God, you're smart." He said and she laughed at his answer. She smiled softly, and pink spread across her cheeks at his complements.

Once the trumpets had stopped, the voice of Margaret Whiting filled the air and put them in a trance. They didn't notice the cars driving by, or the drunk people that stumbled out of the bar. At that moment they were the only two people in the world.
Will I ever find the boy in my mind
The one who is my ideal?
Maybe he's a dream and yet he might be
Just around the corner waiting for me

All Lucy could think of as the lyrics played in her head was what a cruel entity fate was.
"I really mean that," Bucky told her, "You really are somethin else."
"You are too, although you have yet to realize that." She breathed out softly, and Bucky had to resist every urge in his body not to kiss her. There was nothing that felt more right and more natural about the thought of him pushing his lips to hers. He had an overwhelming need for her, but he put that need somewhere deep inside of him, hiding it away.

Will I recognize the light in his eyes
That no other eyes reveal
Or will I pass him by and never even know
That he was my ideal?

Lucy wanted nothing more at that moment to forget she was engaged. She had connected more with this man in ten minutes than she had with anyone else, and she felt he knew her on a level perhaps no one else would. Her heart pounded against her chest, and she hated herself for thinking such things, but she couldn't deny it.

The song ended, and the crackling of the vinyl filled the air as it ceased playing. Once again, the noisy streets of New York came alive, but to them, they were still the only people in the entire city. Her hand gently fell to his chest, where she could feel his heart beat erratically. Her eyes flashed to his, and their gaze met, and she almost looked surprised at how hard his heart was beating from being so close to her. It was almost a more intimate reveal that the secret he had shared, and Bucky found himself exposed.

Bucky exhaled a deep breath before admitting, "It is becoming increasingly difficult to keep my promise of being a total gentleman right now." He looked at her soft, pink lips, and knew in that moment he had never wanted to kiss something so badly.

She was about to reply when the two of them were ripped out of the sweet daydream they had been trapped in as the bar doors opened up. "Excuse me? What the hell do you think you're doing?" The sharp tone of Adeline cracked through the night and suddenly Lucy pushed him away hard, the tone of her sister forcing her back to reality.

Bucky's eyebrows raised at her suddenly animosity, and Lucy looked back to Adeline. Her chest rising and falling hard as she felt panic set in. What the hell was she doing? She thought to herself. "I'll be there in a second!" She promised Adeline with a shaky voice, realizing what she had done.

Her sister understood and slowly nodded before disappearing back into the bar, skeptical if whether or not she should leave her sister alone with the strange man. They were too close for comfort, and Adeline didn't want Lucy to do something she could regret just because she was drunk.

They were once again by themselves, and Lucy had tears welling up in her eyes from the guilt she
was suddenly feeling.

Bucky stared at her with a slightly hurt expression, and he wanted nothing more than for her to stay with him at that moment. But he knew she couldn't, and that she had to go.

"I think the song has ended," She could only say softly as a lump formed in her throat. Bucky and Lucy knew there was no music playing anymore, but they knew what she meant. Their time was up.

Bucky gave her a small, half smile before saying gently, "Guess so." All he wanted was for things to be different. For them to maybe live another life, where she wasn't engaged and was free to maybe be with him. He had never felt a connection like he had with her with any other woman, and it scared him because he wasn't sure he would ever find that ever again.

All Bucky could do at that moment was take her hand and bring it to his lips delicately, placing the softest of kissing on her skin and causing Lucy's heart to flutter in her chest.

She wanted to kick herself for the things she was feeling. "Ma'am," Was all he said respectfully before giving her one last slightly broken grin. From where his lips touched her skin, she could still feel it burning, as though it had been scorched by the sun.

She knew she had to walk away before she did something she would regret.

Lucy turned away, her mind racing with 'what ifs', and she wondered if there was ever a time with Daniel things had felt quite so right and electric, almost as though it meant to be. She began walking slowly back into the bar, she almost wished he would call out her name —knowing it miraculously and confirming to her that there was such a thing as fate and it had brought them both there that night.

"Hey, doll?" He called back to her and Lucy whipped around, desperately to hear what he had to say. He stood there looking like an absolute vision, and Lucy breath caught in her throat. "So what's the verdict on you falling in love with me?"

Lucy could only give him the smallest smile and reply back, "Perhaps in another life…"

Before she walked into the bar, she turned back one last time and gazed at as she walked away. "Whatever you end up doing," She began and then met his eyes, causing his heart to break because he knew this would be the last time he ever saw her, "You'll be extraordinary."

They exchanged one last smile, and she walked back into the bar and out of his life forever.

Bucky was left alone in the New York night on the side of the street. He wondered if what had just happened was real or not, and he could only put his hands in his pockets and try not to think of the sadness creeping in.

A voice suddenly rang out, and he looked up to the window above the bar, where an old woman sat in a nightgown. She was the one who had put the music on, attempting to create the moment between them.

"You should have kissed her, dummy." She said in a bitter voice, the sadness also affecting her from the two young people who were clearly meant to be but met at the wrong time.

Bucky wanted to, but he knew he couldn't be the type of person who would jeopardize her relationship, "She would be happier with someone else." He tried to convince herself.

"That's not the look of a woman who's happy in her life." The old lady shot back. Bucky wasn't sure
that was the case or not. She said she was in love with her fiancé, and although that didn't guarantee whether or not she was happy, he wouldn't be the reason a relationship fell apart.

Bucky only sighed and walked back into the bar, heading to get another drink after the rough night he had. He didn't want to think about her, or how he might have met the perfect partner but in the wrong time.

He didn't look around the bar as he walked in, not trusting himself to rush over to her and grab her face and kiss the hell out of her if he saw her. So he head towards Steve, who was sitting quietly on a bar stool next to a rowdy Tommy Susa and George Caraway.

He appeared next to his old friend, who knew something was immediately up when he ordered a whiskey and downed it in a moment while also looking like a kicked puppy.

"So, it didn't go well with your future wife?" Steve could only ask, noticing the sadness present on Bucky's usual cheery demeanour.

"She's someone else's future wife," Bucky explained and Steve frowned, waiting for him to expand on what he meant. Rolling his eyes, Bucky spoke the next words as if it pained him, "She's engaged."

Steve pursed his lips together and only nodded in understanding, he pat his friend on the shoulder sympathetically and could only say, "Sorry, Buck."

"Yeah, well." Bucky only sipped his drink, and then repeated what she said to him back to Steve, convinced that if he said it back out loud it would happen, "Maybe in another life."

Chapter End Notes

Margaret Whiting's "My Ideal" wasn't actually released until the 50's, but I thought the lyrics made sense. And if you listen to it as you read, it's seriously cute following the Bucky/Lucy interaction.

This little bit of fluff has been short lived, and won't appear in the story again for a couple more chapters, but at least we'll begin see more of mains together now and progress a little more in their relationship.

Please show your love/support if you enjoyed this chapter as much as I did. Review, Follow, Favourite. You know the drill.

-Amelia
Chapter XII

Chapter Notes

Hello friends! Sorry for the little delay on this update. I originally didn't have this chapter written. I had thought to skip back to present time in the storyline of 1943, where Lucy and Bucky had just met, which will be chapter 13 now. But the feedback from the last chapter was lovely, and I loved writing 1940 pre-war Lucy and Bucky and giving you more backstory on their history. Plus, this allows me to share more of Lucy's past, as well as her relationship with Adeline. Plus, Steve's first POV in the story! Which I'm super excited about :)

I apologize for how long this one is!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter XII

Brooklyn, 1940

What the hell just happened? Lucy wondered to herself as she grabbed her handbag and left the bar. Her hands shook, almost as though she was cold. Her nerves were on edge, and her heart race grew with each passing moment.

Adeline followed close on her heels, and Lucy needed a moment in the fresh air. As soon as Lucy drunkenly stumbled close to the vehicle that Adeline and her had arrived in, she knew she would be in for an earful.

She took a deep breath in the night time air and closed her eyes and tried to calm herself. Her heart started pounding as hard, and she could feel herself begin to relax.

Lucy could smell the stale cigarette smoke. She almost found herself looking for the man she had just met, Steve. Although she knew it was wrong, she wished she could just see him one last time. Her heart quickened again, not because of anxiety or nerves. But because of excitement, and possibly a slight bit of infatuation. She felt like a schoolgirl with a crush, and perhaps that was why she was feeling so anxious and guilty. On one hand, Lucy only wished to see him once more, to look at those steel-blue eyes, and feel her heart pound a little bit faster from excitement instead of anxiety.

On the other hand, she dreaded it. Because she knew if she saw him once more, she would do something very, very foolish.

But there was no one. Only an elderly woman from an apartment above, smoking out her window in her nightgown.

Lucy looked up and figured she must have been the one to turn on the music for them while they were dancing. The older woman gave her a small, sad, smile. Lucy couldn't return it, she only looked down at the pavement and swallowed a lump in her throat.

The driver opened the door for Adeline, who was impatient to get home. "Lucy!" She snapped harshly. She was pissed, Lucy realized. Her sister, who was usually gentle-hearted and calm, was the
very opposite in those moments. But Lucy wasn't sure as to why, though. After all, it wasn't any of
Adeline's damn business of what Lucy did.

Lucy shut her eyes tightly again, trying to stop the spinning sensation she was experiencing from
drinking too much. "Coming!" She replied. Her breath became more labored, and anxiety rose in her
chest once more. This night, Lucy realized, was too much. It was too much, and she had had too
many drinks, and nothing was making sense. She also felt the sudden urge to vomit, and her palms
few sweaty.

Lucy shut her eyes tightly once more and inhaled deeply. She tried to gain as much fresh air as she
could before she had to get inside the car and feel as though she would suffocate.

With a heaviness in her heart, she went to the car. She wasn't sure why she was so sad, but all she
knew was that it was welling up in her body and growing with each passing moment. It almost felt as
though she was walking away from something….

She realized for the first time in months she was truly and genuinely happy in those few fleeting
moments while dancing with Steve.

That's what it was that she was walking away from. Happiness.

It broke her heart all over again because in those moments she realized that perhaps she and Daniel
weren't as happy as they could have been. They had their happy moments, of course. Sometimes, she
was happier with him than she had ever been perhaps in her entire life. But then again, Lucy wasn't
sure she had ever really been happy. Maybe she didn't know what true happiness felt. That is, until
that moment.

Though she didn't have time to think about that since as soon as both she and Adeline sat in the car,
her sister turned to her with anger in her eyes. Lucy suddenly felt a pit grow in her stomach, and the
guilt returned with a vengeance.

"What the hell is wrong with you!" Adeline demanded, clearly frustrated. Her brows were
furrowed, her expression almost enraged. Lucy could smell the fresh leather of the seats in the car,
and she made eye contact with their driver through their rearview mirror. He politely rolled up the
partition with a hand crank, giving the two sisters their privacy.

"Jesus Christ," Lucy rolled her eyes, slurring slightly, "Would you relax!" Adeline was being too
nosey and should have minded her own business. She was younger, and what the hell did she even
know about the situation, anyway?

"No! What the hell were you doing with that man?" Adeline crossed her arms as she scolded Lucy
like a child. In those moments one wouldn't be able to tell that Lucy was six years older than her.
The way she was being reprimanded made shame settle deeper into her bones and it put her teeth on
edge.

"Nothing!" Lucy exclaimed frustratedly, "And it's none of your business, regardless!"

"You remember you're engaged, right? To Daniel! Just because he's an ocean away, it doesn't mean
you can fool around with any man who thinks you're pretty." Adeline's tone was meant to cut
deeply, and it worked. Lucy was revolted at her accusations.

"What the actual hell is wrong with you!?" Lucy demanded to know instead, looking at her younger
sister in shock," You're being a little brat! And how fucking dare you even suggest that I would
cheat on Daniel!"
"What the hell is wrong with me? What's wrong with you! You were pouting and crying about how much you missed him and the first opportunity you get you're flirting with a stranger!" They wouldn't be having this fight if they weren't drunk.

Beatrix never drank, because she knew how detrimental it was to their relationship when they were all together and drinking. Too often, the parts of them that were similar to their father came out while drinking, and it always ended with them yelling and fighting.

At Beatrix's wedding, Lucy and Beatrix got into a fight. What it was about, none of them could remember, but it resulted in Beatrix crying in her wedding dress and Adeline having to interfere. Beatrix hadn't drunk since, but Lucy and Adeline kept up the habit.

And each time it resulted in disaster unless Mr. or Mrs. Lee was to intervene. Once, at a dinner party before Lucy leaving for France, she and Adeline got into it, and it resulted in Mr. Lee sending both adult women to their rooms like reprimanded children.

That's not to say they never had fun when they drank, or that never got along while under the influence. Usually, they did. But when they fought, oh, they fought badly.

Lucy wanted to pull her hair out and scream at her little sister, "Oh my God! It was only a stupid dance!" It hadn't been though, and Lucy knew she was lying to herself if she believed that. Adeline saw straight through her.

"No," Adeline said harshly and insisted, "It wasn't! I saw what I saw, you can't lie to me! If I didn't walk in and intervene when I did, you would have kissed him and don't try to deny it!"

Anger rose inside her and Lucy's eyes narrowed, "Even if I did, it's none of your fucking business!" Lucy would have never. Although, the thought did cross her mind once when he looked at her lips. She could see his eyes trail there, resting on them. Hers drifted to his as well, and for a brief moment, she wondered what he tasted like. Their lips meeting almost seemed destined and meant to happen. It felt like the most natural thing in the world to Lucy, as though it was something as simple as nature.

Like waves crashing on a shore, like a heart-pumping fast with anticipation, like lightning striking. Every instinct she had made her want to kiss him. It was nature, and chemistry, and every driving force in the universe like a gravitational pull which made her feel the need to have his lips against her own.

But the weight of her ring on her finger was heavy, as was the Star of David necklace that rested on her collarbone.

She loved Daniel. She loved him more than anything. But the last few months, with the constant fighting and the yelling and the screaming and the going to bed angry, it was wearing her thin. She wasn't happy in those few months.

And Daniel broke her heart. He refused to come with her to America. He chose his life, his home, and his family over her. Even though it wasn't safe, and all she wanted was them to be together and to not live in fear.

But he was prideful and made excuses. He said he wouldn't get a job since he didn't speak English, and he didn't want her to feel as though she had to provide for him. In those moments when he spoke that, it made Lucy feel as though everything he told her about how they were equal partners, and how he wasn't intimidated by her career and drive, and how she wasn't his seemed like a lie. Daniel always claimed he was on her side, on the women's side. Daniel liked to claim that he was what scholars and theorists were now calling a feminist, which was something in a rising social movement.
Lucy had never known that there was a name for someone who supported women. She had always had those thoughts and beliefs, she didn't need a word to describe it. But Daniel liked to fit into categories, and he swore to her that he would never think of her as anything less than equal. But when it came down to it, he couldn't stand the thought of her being the sole provider. He was the man, that was his job. And Lucy hated that idea.

He was too prideful to allow his partner to provide for them. He was worried about how it would look, and what people would think. It was that very pride that kept them apart.

He made more excuses, saying his parents needed him and they were sick. She offered to move them to New York and the Lee's would see that they got better medical care than they would have gotten in France. He still said no.

She didn't realize how selfish he was being until that moment. And all the fighting and the arguing had finally broken her.

It was starting to become evident while she was in Paris. Her happiness began to dim.

She recalled one particular fight, worse than all the others. An unforgivable one, which played in her head over and over that as she danced with that stranger. She shouldn't have felt guilty for flirting, she shouldn't have felt guilty for dancing. And she shouldn't have felt guilty for just once, wondering what possibilities lay ahead beyond her future with Daniel.

The idea of a marriage suffocated her. She didn't want to be the ideal wife, who catered to their husbands every need. Who took their last name, and left her own identity behind. The one who had dinner on the table every night, and who gave up her career to have children. The one who made all the sacrifices, as her husband thrived.

She couldn't be like that. She wouldn't be like that. She was too spirited, and Daniel knew that. That's why he said they wouldn't have children if they could help it. He didn't want her to give up what she had worked so hard for. But if she became pregnant by accident, then what? She would be forced into the life that she didn't want, and that terrified her.

In a way, he was supportive. But he wouldn't ever understand what she went through.

She was ripped out of her thoughts as Adeline snapped back, "It is my fucking business! Because you're being a whore—,"

"A whore!? You better watch your fucking mouth." Lucy growled. She hated that term. Too often since she began living with Daniel after they were engaged, too many people treated her like a harlot. He, of course, suffered no repercussions.

But at University she was an assistant professor at (the same one Daniel was a professor at as well) had called her in to talk about her ethics. Rumors were going around that she had been living with Dr. Rehal, and sleeping in the same bed before marriage. It looked too scandalous, and the men on the panel were concerned about how it would look on them if one of the very few women employees they had was whoring herself to other facility members.

She recalled how they had found out in the first place. Lucy and Daniel didn't at first disclose their relationship since he had become a professor before her getting her Ph.D. He was helping her with her doctoral thesis and was her professor at one point as well.

After she became staff though, it was obvious they were dating. And no one cared if a professor chose to spend his time with the archaeologist who was part-time staff.
Until she visited his office one day, and they were the only ones in the room. He had pressed her against his desk, his lips grazing up and down her neck, and her leg was against his hip, his hand went into her dress, trailing up the soft skin of her thigh.

When suddenly the door opened and a student walked in.

Daniel quickly followed the student out and trusted that he would be discreet against what he saw. He agreed, but as it turned out, Lucy had given him a bad mark in one of her classes. Word got around and made it to the university panel. And although Lucy and Daniel were engaged, they wanted to avoid a scandal. They had told her to keep her whorish ways to herself and threatened her job.

There she was, almost losing her job. As Daniel, who was there for support, was not even addressed once even though he was an active participant.

Lucy hated that even though he was the only man she had ever been with, she was too often accused of being a whore. She stood there, reprimanded and degraded and humiliated in front of a panel of men, who would never understand what it felt like to lose their dignity like that. And now, her little sister was accusing her of being one as well.

"Well if you don't want to be called one than don't act like one," Adeline shot back, her fiery expression reflecting their mothers. She had always been the pretty one. Beatrix was the caring one, and the kind one. Lucy was the smart one, with the spirited temper. Things came easier for Adeline than it did for Lucy and Beatrix. Although everyone knew the Heinrich girls had been blessed with looks, and pretty was a price that they paid to be validated in the world. And Adeline was given everything she had always wanted. She barely remembered what it was like to come from nothing and live in constant fear. Lucy and Beatrix did though, and it had affected them well into their adult lives, whereas Adeline could live in bliss and pretend she had always had the life the Lee's had given her.

"When did you become such a little shit!?" Lucy demanded to know. She remembered when Adeline was a sweet, young girl. Before her father murdered their mother, and back when she was timid. Although Lucy liked her spirit now, it wasn't exactly ideal when she was arguing with her. "And I'm your older sister! It's not up to you to look out for what I do or monitor my behaviour! So watch your mouth, and mind your own goddamn business!"

"When did I become such a shit?" Adeline laughed, "You mean, when did I grow a spine? Is that what you're asking? It was when I realized you didn't fucking have one!" She said resentfully and crossed her arms, looking at the front window. The driver thankfully minded his own business if he heard anything through the partition. Lucy could only imagine how awkward it was for him. She tried not to think about that though and focused on the fact that her sister just called her spineless, which was something she had never been accused of before. If anything, she was always the opposite.

She figured Adeline must have been more wasted than she realized, and Lucy shook her head, "What are you even talking about? God, you're just drunk!"

"What do you mean what am I talking about! I'm talking about how before the Lee's took us in you were different! You were soft, and weak! You weren't like how you were now, and because of that mom is dead!"

Lucy's heart dropped when Adeline spoke those words. She saw how tears pricked in her eyes, threatening to spill over. Lucy could only ask, shocked and confused, "You think I killed mom?" Her disbelief was audible, and her heart began to pound once again in her chest as Adeline's words
ripped through her brain. This, of course, was something that had haunted Lucy since the very day it had happened. It was something she never voiced out loud since it was of course ridiculous. There was nothing she could have done. But still, there had to have been something, anything, she could have done to save their mother. She didn't, though, and she had stood there like a frightened child, weak and helpless and spineless. Just as Adeline had said.

"If you stood up to him more, as you would now, maybe she would still be here." The venom was obvious in Adeline's voice, as was the resentment. She spat her words out, and it wasn't meant to just hurt. It was meant to burn, and sting, and cause Lucy pain.

Anger rose in her chest, and suddenly Lucy knew she couldn't take this shit from a child. Adeline didn't remember what it was like. She would never know the fear that Beatrix and Lucy had felt. "I was sixteen! I was beaten around! If I was late for school, I got hit! I missed doing a chore, I got hit! I spoke back, I got hit! You think it's easy developing a spine when you're getting the shit kicked out of you?" Lucy couldn't believe Adeline was blaming her. The resentment she held for years was just emerging, and she had a feeling that it had nothing to do with the fact that she had been dancing with Steve. "You think it's easy being confident when you know what happens if you do?!

"If you had just pretended to be like how you are now and stood up to our father, mom would be alive."

"I'm failing to see how you being a brat has to do with me not standing up to our father." Lucy wanted nothing more than for the car ride to be over or for the conversation to change. She felt as though if she stayed there any longer she would scream. Adeline was too young to remember the constant fear of living under their parent's roof. She couldn't have remembered how their father had once broken Lucy's arm because she was walking home one day by a boy from school.

"I'm not being a brat! I'm standing up to you! And you think I'm being childish." "You called me a whore, and then proceeded to go on some stupid bullshit how I killed mom! I was a victim too, Adeline! As was Beatrix, as were you! If I stood up to him more, I probably would be dead too! You are being childish. And learn to hold your liquor, goddamn it!" She sneered and turned away from her; unable to even look at her. Adeline kept quiet, she only bit her lip and refused to look at Lucy, clearly fuming. "Anything else you wanna get off your chest?" Lucy scowled and asked bitterly, her voice spewing harshness.

Adeline, like a spoiled kid, only rolled her eyes, "You don't get it. My entire life, I looked up to you. I thought you were the greatest. And then I grew up and realized that you weren't all that was made out to be. And then you act as though your life is so great now you've finally got some spunk, and the next you thing you do is fall all over the first guy to show you some attention. You're not the hero I thought you were back then, and you certainly aren't now."

Lucy understood now how it all related. Perhaps she was a little slow, due to the alcohol. Adeline looked up to her, and when she realized she wasn't as strong back then as she was now, she felt deceived and cheated. Now, she realized she was never all that she thought Lucy to be.

Before she could open her mouth to something back, Adeline snorted, "Can you even imagine how hurt he would be if he found out? Daniel would have never done what you did."

Her heart dropped again, and Lucy found herself raising her voice "But he did!" She snapped back and her voice broke at the memory. Tears welled in her eyes, and she felt her stomach turn. "So don't sit there and pretend you know me, or us, or anything about our relationship."

Adeline's headshot back at Lucy's words, her eyes reflecting confusion. Her mouth dropped as she looked at her in shock. Since Lucy and Daniel had gotten together, Adeline had believed they were
perfect. She would visit them in France, or read what Lucy told her in letters and think there was no better couple. After all, she had never seen a real couple in a loving, functional relationship before. So she had idolized them. Of course, they had Mr. and Mrs. Lee, who loved each other in some particular way. But it was more or less an arranged marriage set up by two successful families, and there was a significant age difference. There was fondness and some love, but Adeline didn't want that. She had always been envious of Lucy and Daniel, and to her, they were everything she could have hoped for in a relationship.

To hear that something happened shattered the illusion.

Lucy thought back to the day that had caused their biggest fight. Daniel had come home, his head down and looking ashamed. Lucy had been reading by their little window nook. It was raining, and she liked to watch the droplets run down the glass, and see how their window plants collected water in their small leaves. She loved the smell of the city after the streets had been soaked. Her book was about something that she couldn't remember, perhaps Hellenistic pottery, or Roman fortifications. Either way, it hadn't caught her interest, but what did make her perk up was the guilty look on her fiance's face.

When she asked him what was wrong, he only shook his head and refused to even look at her. That set Lucy off, immediately she knew something had happened. Her heart dropped from her chest into her stomach.

She had gone after him into the kitchen, leaving her little comfy spot by the window. Her book lay on the floor, disregarded and strewn about in a disorderly manner.

Lucy had followed him into the kitchen. As she thought back to her memories, all she saw was a haze. It was like she was reliving all of it, but as she watched, everything was underwater and distorted. She figured it was the alcohol doing that, making it so she couldn't remember everything properly.

She had asked him what was wrong. He just stood there, refusing to meet her gaze. His hands gripped the counter tightly as he hunched over ever so slightly. Lucy asked again, and he turned around with a guilty expression and could only whisper that he was sorry.

Worry struck Lucy like a bolt of lightning. It slammed into her body and gripped her until she couldn't breathe. She asked what he had done with a shaky breath. Her eyes were wide and fearful, thinking of the worst possible outcome.

He had begun to explain that it was an accident, and he hadn't meant for it to happen. There was a secretary for the professors at the university; one that Lucy knew well. Her name was Emile, and she had long, thick, curly red hair. She had pale blue eyes and a small disposition. She was the first friend that Lucy had made at the university, and they had gone out for drinks once or twice.

Daniel explained that they were in his office alone, and she had begun kissing him. He was shocked and surprised when it happened, and he didn't know how to react.

As he spoke, Lucy recoiled back in shock as he tried to touch her at that moment, to comfort her as he assured her it meant nothing and was a mistake. His eyes seemed so sincere and sorry, and he promised she was the only one he wanted to be with.

Did you kiss her back? Lucy had asked, her voice dripping with venom.

He looked down and swallowed a lump forming in the back of his throat. Shame welled inside him, and he could only say one quiet word. Yes.
She refused to know anymore. He tried to justify it, and tell her what happened, and how far it went. Lucy screamed at him to stop while covering her ears, angry tears flowing down her cheeks.

With her hands pressed to her ears, she shook her head as she refused to listen to him. He tried to explain it meant nothing. It was a mistake. You are the only person I ever wanted. She used to believe him when he said that, but afterward she had her doubts.

He had hurt her. In more ways than one, she realized. He was the one person who promised to never do so, but in the end, that promise had been broken. That was the first night they had ever spent alone from one another. She had left him to return to her flat, and she cried herself to sleep that night from his betrayal.

She and Daniel had never really recovered. They fought more, and Lucy was constantly paranoid. Emile had tried to go to her and explain what happened himself. Lucy told her to stay the fuck away from her and stay away from Daniel. She told her if she ever got between them again, she would be sorry, and she wasn't someone she wanted for an enemy.

Emile had quit in the next few weeks. It was obvious Daniel was beating himself up over the situation, and she had eventually forgiven him to the best of her abilities. Lucy became less paranoid, and it was almost as though they were back to normal. Almost.

She still had felt that she couldn't fully trust him. Something had happened between them, and it never was right again after. They still loved each other and wanted to be with one another. But it wasn't the same, and eventually, Lucy was consumed with this feeling that perhaps he wasn't the one after all. After all, how could she marry someone who she didn't fully trust?

Even laying in the same bed, mere inches apart, she felt worlds away from him. The spark they had was gone and replaced with mistrust and doubt. Daniel carried on like nothing was wrong over time, and it could have been that he didn't feel what she felt. He still felt as though they belonged together. She was indifferent.

Perhaps that was the reason as to why she had been so attracted to that stranger? Steve, Lucy played his name in her head. She could be transparent with him, and he had been the most trustworthy person she had ever met. And she had hardly even known him...

She trusted him more than her goddamn fiance, she realized with a sadness in her heart.

Lucy didn't expand further on the topic with Adeline. She owned her no explanation. Instead, she looked out the window, the same way she did all those months before on the day that everything changed.

"I'm sorry," Adeline said in a small voice. She refused to still look Lucy in the eye. The fight they had was too bad, and neither of them was ready to talk and make up.

By then, it had begun to rain as they sat in the car. Lucy watched as rain droplets ran down the window, creating small streams. She sat there in silence and gazed at the small veins that the water cut through on the glass, and felt as though the clouds were pouring out. She bit her lip hard enough to draw blood in her mouth to keep tears from welling in her eyes.

She would not cry, despite the fact that she had never felt so empty and alone.

Brooklyn, 1940. Three days later.

It was rare when Steve Rogers was the one worrying about Bucky Barnes. Usually, it went the other
way around. Since they were kids and met in the schoolyard, Bucky had always been looking out for him. Steve never had many friends and he struggled with fitting in.

For Bucky, all that stuff was easy. He made it look so effortless and so simple. Although he would never admit it out loud, Steve was always jealous of him for it.

He wished just for once, he knew what it was like to live in his friends' shoes. To be noticed, and not just go through life as though and be overlooked, as though he weren't even there. He wanted for once, someone to notice him, and pay attention. Not as the sidekick, or Bucky's little friend, but his own person.

He wanted to know for once what it was like to raise his hand in class and not be disregarded. He wanted his employers coming up and mentioning his performance and saying how they thought he deserved a promotion. He wanted to know what it felt like to gaze upon a room and his eyes meet with a gal's and have the connection be so instant that they would be drawn together.

Those were the things Steve was always envious of Bucky for. For being noticed, and having things come so easy for him.

But following few days after Steve and Bucky had gone to the pub, it was the first time Steve had not only felt bad for his friend but was also happy he didn't have his life.

Steve recalled how Bucky's eyes had befallen upon woman across the room. It was like something he had never seen. At first, there was nothing as he gazed out and saw a room filled with boring, uninteresting people.

The next moment, he watched almost as it was in slow motion. Bucky's mouth fell open slightly, and his eye reflected something that Steve could only imagine as awe.

Steve gazed at what had captured Bucky's attention. His eyes fell on a woman, sitting at the bar a little way off. She had long brown hair, and was laughing wildly after having just throwing her head back and taking a shot. She had grimaced first, which Steve could only describe her expression as less than flattering as she cringed, but then her smile that followed was something else.

Bucky had fallen under her spell, and he turned to Steve at that moment and could only say, *Do you see that girl?*

He said yes, and cracked a joke. But what surprised Steve the most was the words that followed, *I'm gonna marry her.*

Throughout all the years that Steve had known Bucky, he had never ever mentioned marriage. Not even in passing, or feigning the smallest amount of interest in it.

Steve, on the other hand, always wanted to get married. He wanted to find a girl he connected to, one who understood him. He wanted to fall in love, and get married and start a family. Bucky never seemed to want any of that until that moment.

Until he saw a dame across a bar and fell head over heels for her in what seemed like a span of fifteen minutes.

Apparently, that's all it took for Bucky Barnes to realize that she—that woman— was what was missing from his life.

But it wasn't meant to be. She had a fiancé, and Bucky was left feeling as though the thing he didn't even know he had wanted until that moment had slipped through his fingers.
And in the three days that had passed since he had met her and had his heartbroken, his mood could only be described, in a nice way, as irritable. Actually, no. Steve changed his mind. Bucky wasn't just being irritable. He was being a dick. A flat out, straight up, dick.

Steve understood it was difficult, and if he was being honest, he wasn't sure he had ever seen Bucky in such a mood before. Especially about a dame, no less.

But it had been enough for Steve to recognize, that it was rough having your heartbroken. And for once, he wasn't envious of Bucky. Not after seeing what a sour mood he was in, and how saddened he was by the whole situation.

It had made Steve concerned, and a little careless at work. Especially when Bucky was moody, and taking it out on others. He had snapped at their floor manager, and was in that moment, getting a stern talking to in his office.

Steve could see from the office windows how the manager was notably frustrated, and Bucky was arguing back. Trying to figure out what was being said, Steve accidentally continued running the machine he was operating and caused an accident.

Three of his co-workers, who he could only describe the relationship between them all as strained, suddenly were pushing him around. They were saying how they were gonna smash him to a pulp after they finished for ruining Carmichael's hand (who, in Steve's defence, didn't know existed — and how was he supposed to know he had a football scholarship? Where did this guy even come from? And what was their issue with him?) the accident had caused the young man to break his hand, and now Steve had to pay for it.

Which he assumed would involve getting his face punched in.

And he was right.

He stood there in a back alley at work. A scene he was no that all unfamiliar with. Back alleys seemed to be his natural habitat, and they all involved him getting beat up. Usually, though, Bucky was there to have his back. But not this time and Steve was there looking guilty and slightly stressed all on his own. He had tried to apologize for the accident, saying he didn't do it on purpose. But the three guys were insistent on him needing to pay, so Steve sighed as he stared at them.

It would be hard working with them all afterward. Especially if Bucky found out and went after them. He was walking on thin ice already, and although they had been at Lee's Steel Company since high school, it didn't necessarily mean that he wouldn't get in trouble. Bucky was already getting chewed out enough for his attitude. He didn't need fighting and causing a commotion to be on his file either. So Steve was prepared to take the three guys all on his own.

He raised his fists, preparing to punch first. Steve was sure that if his opponents got the first blow, he would likely hit the ground immediately. After all, they all had several inches to nearly a foot on him.

Just as Steve threw the first one and it was quickly dodged, he was grabbed by the shirt and prepared for a fist to fall upon him.

But the blow never came. A woman's voice called out "Wait!"

And when he opened his eyes from squinting in preparation for that pain, she stood there like a vision.

Steve couldn't believe his eyes, a woman stood there with a driver. Her car door was open, and she had just gotten out of it. She looked almost like the woman from the bar a few nights ago, the one
Bucky was enthralled with.

Only she wasn't. This woman was very, very different.

"What's going on here?" She asked sternly. Her eyes shifting to the four of them, and noticed how he was about to get a beating despite being much smaller than them.

Steve couldn't believe the woman. If she looked anything like a goddess the other night, she looked other-worldly now. Her hair was in loose curls, her makeup done differently. She wore the nicest gown he had ever seen, clearly going to some fancy, high-class event. It was scandalous for the times, yes. But she made it tasteful, and it looked as though her skin was coated in diamonds. It had a low cut front, and an even lower back, which draped down past her waist. It clung to her curves, and if Bucky was there he might have just dropped dead.

What the hell was she doing there? At a steel factory in Brooklyn? On the poor side of town, looking like a million bucks?

The man about to beat the hell out of Steve had to collect his jaw from the floor and shoot back "No offence lady, but this doesn't concern you." His gruff tone was meant to threaten her. Steve saw how his eyes raked down her body, and he felt another urge to punch the man.

But this lady was tough, that much was obvious. She stuck her chin up and then answered in a cool tone. Her driver looked amused as she spoke and he chuckled ever so slightly, "Actually, it does concern me." She said and then gestures to the factory, "Do you know who owns this place?"

"I work here, of course, I know who owns it. The Lee family owns it." The man scowled and dropped Steve, who stumbled back. Although he still had a strong grip on his arm, to ensure he wouldn't run.

Steve was still surprised as hell that she was there. He wondered if she knew Bucky worked there, and why she was in the area. Surely, it couldn't have been for him. Not dressed like that, at least.

Steve was still unsure if she was in fact, the same woman from the other night. She looked like her, but nothing about that woman had suggested she was quiet that rich.

"Mr. Lee raised me. This is his company. My sister will inherit it, and therefore this is my business. Now, you will let that man go. Otherwise, you will never work in this city again." Her voice was as cold as ice, and something told Steve that she meant business, "Here at Lee's Steel Company, we don't tolerate violence. No matter the reason behind it."

The man released Steve's arm reluctantly, and turned to him, "You better watch it, punk." He threatened. Steve knew he was safe for at least a little while, but this dame wouldn't be around forever to keep an eye on him. Steve's heart raced a little bit, and he was still prepared for the man to get in at least one hit. His adrenaline was racing, and he wondered how long he would be safe for.

Carmicheal gripped his injured hand tightly and scowled at Steve as he walked away. Steve tried to murmur another apology, but he didn't want to hear it. The man who was about to hit Steve brushed the lady's shoulder with his harshly as he passed her by and his posse all followed as they walked away. She rolled her eyes, and smirked slightly at their wounded egos.

Soon it was just her and Steve in the alleyway. "Are you alright?" She asked kindly, noticing his flustered state. She had a worried look in her eye, clearly concerned for his well being.

"Why did you do that?" He asked her, curiously. Steve wanted to know why exactly she had stepped in.
"As I said, this is my family's company. We don't like violence happening between our employees. Plus," She offered him a kind smile, "I don't like bullies."

"Well," Steve said and adjusted his shirt collar, which had gotten messed up after the other man had grabbed it, "Thank you, Miss...—,

"Ah, Lucy." She interjected her name after he had trailed off. "Lucy Heinrich."

Steve knew for sure that the lady at the bar hadn't told Bucky her name was Lucy Heinrich. Lucy and her sisters were in the news several years ago. Apparently, her father had killed their mother and the Lee's were kind enough to take the poor orphan girls in. They were high socialites now, and the youngest one of them, Adeline, was often in the papers. Steve remembered reading about it, and later when he worked at the Lee's Steel Company, people would talk about the Heinrich girls, and how the Lee's taking them in turned their lives around.

Clearly, she seemed to be doing well for herself. Considering she literally was wearing a dress which looked like it was made of crystals.

"Miss Lucy," Steve said and nodded in thanks, "Thank you again."

He noticed the ring on her finger, it was hard to miss considering its size. He wondered if her fiancé was as rich as her, and he knew that regardless of who it was, the guy could offer her a whole lot more than Bucky ever could.

She frowned as she looked at him, a glimmer in her eye. She smiled ever so slightly, the corner of her lips lifting. "Have we ever met before?"

"No, we haven't." He suddenly felt nervous, a dame like that had never really talked to him for so long. Usually, they just brushed past him, and never noticed him, let alone recognized him from somewhere.

"No umm, we haven't met." He said, and she nodded, putting her mind at ease. Steve didn't know why he did it, but he couldn't help himself in that next moment. "But, I think you met my friend the other night. At the pub, in downtown Brooklyn. You were with another dame. You said your name was Emma."

Her mouth dropped in surprise, and she seemed flustered. Suddenly, her calmness disappeared and Steve wondered if he should have brought it up. Her breath caught and her gaze fell on anything but him. She turned around suddenly and looked at her driver. He seemed to understand that she wanted him to wait in the car, and he turned around and left the two of them alone. Steve suddenly wished they weren't alone, especially when her deep eyes finally settled on him, "You're Steve's friend?" she asked.

"Yeah," Steve said. He didn't tell her that he was Steve. He mentioned nothing of Bucky's real name, or who he was. "He umm... He's a little hung up on you. You left quite the impression, I guess."

Her face dropped, an expression of sadness prevalent on her face. Her brows furrowed together, and she admitted sadly, "Is he alright?"

"He'll live." Steve crossed his arms defensively. He didn't know what kind of person she was, but all he knew was that she led his best friend on that it had broken his heart. "Although, leading a guy on while engaged to another isn't a nice thing to do."

She licked her lips and looked at Steve seriously, a guilty expression struck her features, "I didn't intend for that night to go that way. I wish things had gone differently. And I wish..." She pauses for
a moment, and sadness and pain washed upon her. Steve had never thought he had seen someone so sad, and it caused an uneasy feeling to settle within him, "I wish we had more time."

He didn't know what to reply with. All it seemed to him, was that she really shouldn't have been marrying the guy she was engaged to. Not after forming such attachments to a literal stranger.

"You must think I'm terrible," She tried to give a soft smile, to hide the fact that her eyes began to shimmer with tears, "Some kind of..." She sighed deeply and shook her head before whispering as though the words hurt her, "Some kind of a whore, or something."

Steve's eyes widened at that moment. He quickly answered, "No, of course not!" He had thought her a lot of things, but a whore wasn't one of them. "I would never!"

"If it's any consolation," She continued, "I'm a little hung up on him too."

Steve was surprised to hear that. He would have thought that she would have gone home to her fiancé and forgot all about Bucky. He figured she wouldn't have given him another thought, but it appeared Bucky's feelings towards her was mutual.

"I'm sorry for maybe overstepping," Steve began hesitantly, "But if you feel this strongly about a literal stranger, why are you getting married?"

She sighed once more, and refused to look him in the eye again, "It's complicated. My fiancé and I have been going through some difficult times, and he's in another country. We've been fighting a lot, and now I'm not even sure I want to be married..." She blinked back tears but somehow found that strength to look at Steve, "I love him, and I want things to work out. But sometimes distance is difficult."

Steve nodded, looking at her once more. She looked out of place in that alley, and he noticed how people walking by looked at her with wide eyes. He was still questioning why exactly she was there. Let alone talking to him for so long, and why she felt the need to intervene upon seeing him about to get pummeled.

"I understand," Steve said, although he wasn't sure he ever could. He wasn't sure if he could ever understand what was going on in her life, or how truly sad she was. She had a hard life, and he didn't need to know about her tragic family history to have figured that out. Her expression said it all. "I don't think I should tell Buc—Erm, Steve, about this meeting." He caught himself almost using Bucky's real name. Steve knew it would be best to keep it from his best friend, despite it hurting him. But he knew if Bucky found out she was there, that he would take it as a sign and go after her.

She looked even sadder, and her eyes dropped before she said quietly, "I suppose you're right. It's for the best." Steve was positive he had never seen anyone quite so sad looking, and also beautiful.

She looked back to him and tried to give him her best smile, when all of a sudden they were interrupted, "There you are!" A man's voice said behind them, and Steve's eyes almost widened to see Mr. Lee standing there, "I saw the car over here and got worried!"

Mr. Lee made visits to the factory every few months, but Steve had never seen him before. Never before had he been in the presence of a billionaire; except maybe Lucy, if her fortune was as large as her adopted fathers.

He had just come from the factory but was wearing a tuxedo, which seemed odd to Steve. "Crisis has been averted! We can go to the antiquities auction now!" Steve wasn't sure what crisis had forced Mr. Lee to come all the way to the factory, but clearly, that was the reason as to why they
were both there.

"Perfect," Lucy had to have been the most talented actress in the world, to put on a smile so fake that even her adopted father couldn't tell anything was wrong. "What a relief!"

"Yes, we're very lucky." He smiled back, and his gaze then fell onto Steve. "Ah, hello! I'm Mr. Lee, I own this fine establishment. And you are Mr. —?"

"Ugh, Rogers." Steve's eyes widened as Mr. Lee outstretched his hand to shake his. He couldn't help but smile, especially at his genuine interest.

"Ah, Mr. Rogers. Thank you very much for keeping my Lucy company... There was an issue I had to deal with on our way to auction."

"My pleasure," Suddenly Steve felt very shy. He couldn't look Mr. Lee in the eye, and he directed his gaze downwards.

The older man turned to Lucy and sighed before putting his hands in his pockets, "While my dear, shall we be off?" He said. "I believe Howard Stark said he would hold us our seats, so we shouldn't keep him waiting."

Jesus Christ, Steve thought. This woman was literally in the company of billionaires but somehow managed to be attracted to Bucky Barnes, of all people. From one of the poorest families of Brooklyn, who didn't even have two dimes to rub together.

"Of course," She smiled at Mr. Lee, who then went off to the car, although skeptical to leave her alone with Steve in a strange alley.

She turned back to Steve, and once again her smile fell, "Take care of yourself." Lucy told him and then added before she turned away, "And ummm... Please make sure he's alright." Her voice was quiet, and the words almost looked as though it hurt her to say.

"I will. It was nice meeting you, Miss Heinrich."

"You as well, Mr. Rogers." She said once more, before turning around and gathering her dress before she walked to where the Rolls Royce was parked.

She didn't look back, and Steve was sure if she did she would have burst out crying judging by how heartbroken she looked.

She got in the car after the driver held the door open for her. They drove away not long after that, clearly off to whatever auction they were going to.

Steve stood there with his hands in his pockets, knowing he could never tell Bucky about their meeting. He would have never heard the end of it, and he was positive by the way Bucky had been acting the last couple days, that we would search the entire city for her if he had known there was even the smallest possibility of her reciprocating the feelings he had.

Steve was left along with her thoughts for only a moment as he had an internal debate with himself on what the right thing to do was. A voice rang out happily as Steve looked up, "There you are! Been lookin' all over for ya, punk!" Bucky said a little too happily, considering he had been chewed out by their floor manager, and also pouting around the last couple days. "You'll never believe who's hand I just shook!" Steve was distracted watching the black car drive off, seeing how it disappeared from the view. It would have killed Bucky to know how close she was.
"Mr. Lee?" Steve guessed as Bucky started saying his name.

"Yeah! How'd you guess?" He smiled, his face covered in grime from the long day's work.

"Just saw him." Steve shrugged and said nothing more, "Any idea why he was here?"

"No idea! Some urgent business with stocks or who the hell knows. Just came barging in dressed in full out tux while Mackmalley was chewin' me out! Said he was on his way to an auction with his daughter to meet THE Howard Stark, but they had to make a quick stop! He shook my hand and everything," Bucky's smile was wide as could be, that it almost made Steve forget about the sad interaction he and Lucy Heinrich had just shared.

"That's great, Buck!" He was happy that this was the first time in days that Bucky had seemed more lively. At least he wasn't moping anymore, and he seemed in a better mood than before. He hadn't seen Lucy. Which was what Steve was afraid of.

"Yeah, how about that though, huh? I think things are gonna start to turn around for me. I promise I'll try to stop being so sour in the next couple days," Bucky began to apologize, realizing he hadn't exactly been easy to deal with since the whole 'Emma' fiasco. "Sorry I've been acting like such a goddamn jerk."

Steve pursed his lips together, and gently pat his friends back, "It's all good, Buck."

No, Steve decided finally. He wouldn't tell Bucky about him meeting Lucy.

Bucky began speaking as they started walking together and put his hands in his pockets. "What are you doing in this sketchy alley, anyway? And no one is tryna hand your ass to you? That seems unusual. I'm beginning to just think you like alleys."

Steve couldn't help but chuckle, despite the uneasy feeling he still had. Although he knew it would be for the best, he knew Bucky would likely be hung up on her for a while... But it would be better than him knowing her real identity, and knowing he never really had a real chance with her.

Chapter End Notes

I apologize again for the length of the chapter. Usually, they average about 6-7k words but this one around 9,000 (oops!). I would have split them up, but it felt more natural to have them together. If you all would prefer shorter chapters, as opposed to these long ones, drop me a review or a PM.

Thank you all again, and I hope you enjoyed this chapter.

Please review, favourite, and follow. They really do inspire me to keep going, plus it might just encourage me or add some more fluff ;)

-Amelia
Chapter XIII

Chapter Notes

Hello friends! I am back with another update. I'll be trying to update a little faster now since we're getting to the good stuff in just a few chapters.

Speaking of the good stuff! With the super great reaction that I've been getting chapter 11 because of the fluff, I feel kinda bad for making this such an unbelievably slow burn. I wrote a little exert that I'm excited about, only it won't fit in until much, much later into the story. So, in a means to make it up to you, I have made the prologue put into the first chapter just to include a future look at events that will transpire between Bucky and Lucy! I have been feeling as if going straight into such a dark prologue with pretty depressing themes for the remainder of the story was a little too strong, and this is my way of attempting to make it lighter so first-time readers know it won't be so completely hopeless in later chapters.

So check it out if you want to read some more very saucy, as well as moderately fluffy moments between Lucy and Bucky. :))

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter XIII

Italy, 1943.

It was decided. Bucky absolutely hated Lucy Heinrich. He hated her more than he had ever hated anyone. Something about her rubbed him completely wrong, and he hated her stuck-up, superior attitude. He had only known her for half a day, but that he was sure of.

And as he followed her with a flashlight into the dark cavern of tunnels underneath the church, he thought of how he wanted nothing more than to just leave her there on her own. He could have just left her to fend for herself, abandoning her completely. But he had orders directly from the Colonel of the S.S.R. to do whatever Dr. Heinrich wanted. And why they were in some dingy caves under an old building, he wasn't quite sure. All he was sure of though, was that what they were doing was an absolute complete and utter waste of time.

She looked at a map, shining her light onto it and squinting, trying to see better, Bucky found himself glaring at her. She was immersed into it, and he was sure if he were to leave she wouldn't even notice. A voice in the back of his head (sounding suspiciously like Steve) scolded him and told him to be the bigger man, and forgive her for the insensitive comment she made earlier. But every time he thought of it, anger rose in his stomach.

He looked at her and watched as her mouth moved as she read the map, reading silently to herself. She was undeniably beautiful, that much was sure. But the fact she was clearly the worst person he had ever met kind of ruined it for him. Any other time, he would have found himself likely fawning over her, trying to charm her. She, after all, reminded him of someone, although he couldn't quite remember who. She was unlike the women he would have flirted with back at home. She had messy, long, brown hair, which wasn't pinned in any organized fashion. Instead, it was just thrown up into whatever she placed it in. She didn't wear a stitch of makeup, but was a natural beauty regardless;
although perhaps a little tired looking.

"Could you please come over here and shine a little more light on this?" She asked him, clearly unable to see what was on the map. She ripped him from his thoughts, and he was suddenly pulled back to reality. The reality being that he couldn't stand to be within five feet of her without wanting to gag.

Bucky sighed and sauntered over, the evidence of his unwillingness all in his expression. She frowned at him and shot back quickly, "Try not to act so enthused." She hated when people were tasked with a project and then threw a fit when they didn't want to be there. She had experienced that often while in Egypt, and many of the soldiers would rather have been doing other things than helping her with her assignments.

"How can I act enthused when this is literally the last place I would rather be?" He shot back quickly. He was well aware he was being rude, but after their debacle earlier he didn't care.

"Okay, listen." She huffed and put the map down, clearly getting frustrated, "I don't care if you're miserable. I really, really don't. But do not try to undermine me, and don't ever question my orders. Now, do as I say and please shine the light on the map." She had just about enough of his bad attitude. She getting sick of him constantly fighting her on matters.

"Ma'am yes Ma'am," he mocked again and put his flashlight back up so she could hold the map. Lucy ignored his tone and sighed and she looked at what the paper revealed. It looked like gibberish to him, but she clearly understood it.

"That's not English," He noted, and Lucy wanted to point out what a brilliant detective he was for recognizing that. Instead, she kept her mouth shut. Bickering wouldn't help them, and she only had a few more hours of recording the church before they had to move on. She had to get everything done as quickly as she possibly could. Otherwise, it could be destroyed even further and the records would be lost.

"It's Latin." She replied back, looking at closely.

"Did you learn how to read that while you were in Germany?" He scowled, wondering if beyond learning to read dead languages while she was there she also learned how to impersonate an American and infiltrate their ranks.

She realized he didn't like the fact she was obviously German, and he didn't trust her for it. She always had a hard time when people found out her last name and was often treated differently for it. Not many men were willing to help her due to it, and it was constantly proving to cause her pain. Yet again, it was another reason to hate her father.

Lucy placed the map down again and turned to him, flashing her light in his direction and momentarily blinding him, "So, that's why you won't respect me? Because I'm German?" It was the typical reason as to why many disliked her, and she didn't think that this time would be any different.

"Partially." He replied back shortly, "I also just don't respect you for the sake of not respecting you." His smug expression made her want to slap him. Lucy ignored the urge to do so and suppressed the feeling. She was positive she had never met a man that irritated her more than Sergeant Barnes did.

She huffed and turned her light back in her map, "I've lived in the United States since I was three. I don't even remember Germany, and I'm an American citizen. Trust me, if you think I'm a spy I have no loyalty to them." People always thought she was a spy, but she couldn't blame them necessarily. She was sure she would be suspicious of a German as well if she were in someone else's shoes.
"Oh, that's not what I'm worried about. I don't think you're crafty enough to be a spy." He scoffed. He had never been that rude to a woman his entire life, but he hated her probably more than he hated anyone else.

"Well, that's moderately insulting. I'll have you know I was very crafty in Egypt. I could have been a spy. After all, I speak the language."

"So do I. And so do a bunch of guys here. It's not that big of an accomplishment."

It was now her time to scoff, she rose an eyebrow and looked at him, "You speak German?" She couldn't imagine him taking the time to learn another language, given his obvious stupidity and ignorance.

"Ja, überrascht?" Yeah, surprised?

"Überrascht, dass du genug Gehirnzellendifferenzierung hast" Surprised you have enough brain cells, she shot back.

"See! That's why I don't like you or respect you. It's not because you're German, but because you walk around here all high and mighty with a superior attitude. You don't give two shits about all the guys doing the heavy lifting. Guys who are literally dying so you can do your goddamn pointless job. And you act as if that doesn't even matter! As if we owe you something instead!"

"I do not have a superior attitude!" She snarled, her blood pressure rising and wondering who the hell this guy thought he was.

"Oh, trust me, doll. You definitely do."

"It's Doctor," She murmured again, grimacing at the pet name he gave her.

He scoffed and then laughed, "There it is again! The superior attitude! You come in as this fancy, educated broad, and start giving us orders. I don't think so. That's not how it's gonna go for us."

"It's not a superiority complex to want respect, Sergeant!" Her tone was icy and harsh.

"You want my respect, then you better earn it, princess. But so far you aren't doing so hot in that area."

"So, it's not because I'm German, apparently. Is it because I'm a woman then?" She asked him, "Because, like it or not, we have to work together. And those are two things that won't be changing anytime soon."

Bucky was shocked she would ask. If he was being honest, he never once thought the reason he didn't respect her had something to do with what gender she was. It had to do with the fact that she was an awful goddamn person.

"It's not that," He scoffed.

Lucy only huffed and then said, "Fine, I give up. But just so you know, respect is a two-way street. And you're not doing so hot in that area either." She mimicked him, repeating what he said. Her eyes squinting as she glared at him and neither of them wanted to break away from the angry stare first.

Eventually, She turned her attention back to the map and then began walking down the dark cavern. The eerie sound of water droplets dripping from the ceiling and hitting the rocky ground echoed in the darkness.
Lucy continued walking on fearlessly, not even worried in the slightest of what laid ahead. Bucky at least admired her for her dedication, and he followed her quickly as she walked on. He was positive the cave wasn't safe and could tumble down on them at any minute. She didn't seem to care though, and he thought of how stubborn she was and how annoyingly into her job she seemed to be.

"So where did you learn how to read that shit?" He asked her, gesturing to the map. He was genuinely curious about how she came about learning a dead language.

"My fiancé was a doctor of Greco-Roman history. He taught me how to read Latin shortly after we met."

"So you speak English and German, you read Latin, is that it?"

"And French and Russian, and I picked up a little Arabic back in Egypt." She replied back quickly and then flashed her light to an area of the ceiling which had rough markings on it. She looked at the man-made markings in wonder and quickly took out her camera to take a picture and the jotted some notes down in a field book.

Although she was clearly intelligent, Bucky still was under the opinion that she thought she was smarter than she actually was. He wasn't asking her these questions to get to know her better, but he was suspicious of her role and what exactly she was doing in the army.

"So, how does a fancy, educated, multiple language-speaking broad end up working to the American army?" He asked her. Although he didn't suspect as a spy, he couldn't 100% rule it out. Especially since she was clearly awful, and he didn't doubt she had ulterior motives.

"I got recruited. A Captain and Lieutenant came to the university I taught at and asked for my help. Said I was the best in my field and twenty-four later I was shipped out to Egypt."

"You teach at a university?" Okay, so maybe she was pretty smart. Bucky had never heard a woman being a professor before or being considered the best in her field. She was impressive, but that didn't make her any more appealing to him.

"University of Chicago," She seemed mildly distracted, as she studied the ceiling markings, trying to figure out what they were. She took her camera and snapped another picture, the white flash of it momentarily blinding him.

"How was Egypt?" He asked her, "I haven't heard much news regarding it. A lot of the operations are kept secret and we don't always get the Sunday papers."

"It was hot," Was all she said back, still distracted, "And there were lots of snakes. I don't know though, it's nice to not have people shooting at me over here." She didn't even look at him as they made conversation.

"You were in the action over there?" He frowned, still confused exactly what the hell she was doing for the army. Her role confused him, and he thought all she did was academics. Apparently, though, she was more involved than he previously thought.

"I wasn't supposed to be. But ummm, I found myself in some sticky situations while trying to procure some of the artifacts. Nazi's typically don't like it when you steal from them." She was surprised they were actually being civil. They were almost able to have a conversation, and Lucy thought perhaps he wasn't as bad as she originally thought.

"Jesus, I really am having a hard time understanding your role in all this," Bucky admitted, confused. Scratching the back of his neck, he watched as she moved forward.
"It's not that complicated." She huffed and then continued moving forward. "I'm just securing art and artifacts and keeping them out of the wrong hands."

It seemed like a slight waste of resources to Bucky, although he would never admit that to her in the fear of being yelled at. She took off in a hurry, suddenly making a breakthrough with the map. He huffed with frustration as she moved like a bat out of hell.

"Would you hold up for a second?!" He was intended to guard her, that's all he knew. Dugan was originally supposed to be keeping watch on her, making sure she was alright as she did her job and wasn't attacked by any lone German soldiers hiding out in the cave. But he passed it off to Bucky after he got other orders, smirking at him with a shit-eating grin as he told him good luck. "I can't necessarily guard you if you're off running around somewhere."

"I don't need you to guard me, I need you to be quiet. And in case you haven't noticed, we're short on time. So, keep up Sergent!" She shot back, and then whipped her pistol out of her holster "Plus, I have this!" She waved it around and Bucky quickly grabbed it in her hand, not trusting her while she was pointing it at him.

"Easy, doll!" He cringed at her carelessness with her weapon. "You can't just wave that thing around! Do you even know how to fire it?"

She hated his condescending tone, the way he spoke her made her feel not only incapable but also inferior and small. Lucy hated feeling like that, and just at the moment she thought they could possibly work together he had to open his big, stupid mouth.

"I don't need you to protect me!" She scowled, raising her voice and clearly offended. "I'm fully capable of doing that on my own! I've been doing it my entire life—,"

Bucky scoffed, "Oh, your entire life? Your entire life where you clearly had everything catered to your every need? You're not fooling anyone, sweetheart! Just by looking at you, everyone here can tell you come from money and have lived a very privileged and cushy life."

"Don't pretend you know anything about me!" She was absolutely disgusted at his accusations. He didn't know a single thing about what she had gone through, but there he was making predictions and pretending he knew what it was like for her.

"I know you think you're better than everyone else here! I know you walk around like the world owes you something. And that you don't give two shits about the rest of us as long as you get to do your job and get credit for it at the end of the day!" He knew that soldiers were rarely mentioned in the textbooks and given credit. But broads like her who come from fancy backgrounds and manipulate the high government officials always did.

"Like I said, you know nothing about me." She only replied quietly and then took her pistol back, she licked her lips, "And I can take care of myself." Lucy insisted harshly one more time.

"Well, you're not killing any Nazi's with that thing on safety." Bucky pointed out to her and she scowled before fixing it.

"I don't need your help." She only snapped back, quickly plugging the gun in his holster. "In fact, why don't I spare you, and send you off so I can do this on my own!"

"As much as I'd love nothing more, I have orders."

"I wouldn't count on you to save me," She only shook her head and kept walking, he followed hot on her tail.
"Great observation. Usually, I wouldn't. But like I said, I have orders." He was aware that it was a
dick move to say that. And if it really came down to it, of course, he would save her. He was just
being rude to her because she was being rude back.

"Great!" She turned back around to face him, her cheeks red from anger, "And just so you know, if
the roles are ever reversed don't count on me ever saving you either."

"Great!" His eyes squinted as he replied back, mimicking her snobbish tone. "Though I doubt there's
a world where that will ever happen, given the fact you don't even know how to turn your gun off
safety."

She only rolled her eyes in annoyance and then frustratedly breathed out and tried not to scream at
him. Instead, she turned to him and then said, "I want you to leave."

"Can't do that, I'm guarding you." He quipped back stubbornly.

"I don't care. At this point, I'd rather be run down or have this entire cave fall in on me than spend
another second with your condescending and patronizing attitude and blatant hostility. Go back, get
someone else."

"Both you and I know that's not happening, sweetheart." He only said back and then smirked,
knowing it drove her crazy to be called a pet name. "You're stuck with me."

As she walked forward, her shoulder knocked harshly into his as he didn't move out of the way. It
was an act of open aggression on her behalf, and all she could say through gritted teeth was "Then
shut the fuck up and stay the hell out of my way. Or I will make sure you are not only written up, but
I will personally talk to Colonel Phillips about how your attitude is hindering my ability to complete
my mission, and I will have you transferred from this location in a quick second. Don't test me,
Barnes."

She meant business this time, that much was clear to Bucky. He only pursed his lips and wanted to
say something back, but he noticed something in her eyes that made him stop. For one, he had no
doubt she was serious. And two, he noticed how her eyes once again held something familiar. It also
held anger, fear, and sadness, which all three Bucky was no stranger to.

He didn't like her, but he realized she was likely the same age as him, just trying to do her mission
and stay alive in the process. He only nodded, suddenly slightly ashamed of the way he was being so
horrible to her. He still believed she deserved it. But as she said, like it or not they had to work
together.

"Understood," He swallowed his pride, along with a lump in his throat. The words coming out of his
mouth tasted like poison, and although he didn't like saying it, he knew he needed to in order to
appease her.

Lucy began walking forward again, deeper down the cavern until she stopped once more. She
looked at him and spoke. "Oh, and Barnes? Don't ever talk to me like that again. Or I swear to God,
you'll be sorry."

Something in her expression told him she meant it.

When Lucy returned back to base. She wanted to cry. Not only did she miss Daniel, but she hated
Italy, she hated what she was doing there, she hated her job, and she hated James Barnes.

The fact that she needed a goddamn drink, was the only thing went through her mind as she walked
to the mess quarters where she could finally scrounge up some coffee and something warm to eat. Unfortunately, she had to settle on something other than vodka. She wondered how the hell she would make it through the next few months sober while having to deal with the bullshit she's put up within the last few days.

As she arrived, the cook smiled at her and it was the first time that day where she genuinely didn't feel hated or attacked somehow.

She saw Charles, Roger Green, and a few other guys sitting at one large wooden table. Charles looked up to her and waved for her to go over but Lucy needed a moment to be by herself. She was worried that if she was around people they would see the tears welling in her eyes.

Slumping down on a table alone, Lucy inhaled deeply and put her palm to her forehead as she tried to resist the urge to scream as she looked down at her tin coffee cup. Her heart pounded in her chest and she realized that despite never feeling a sense of welcome in anything she perused, this was by far the worst.

When she had first begun living with the Lee's, she had much to learn. She had been used to living a life where there were no rules and nothing was expected of her. She had to unlearn it all, and suddenly be groomed into a well-respected woman, and undergo constant lessons on how to present herself. People at their charity auctions and galas and events knew she didn't belong, and too often she heard whispering and laughing from them as they gossiped about her and her sisters.

In university, she was often met with resentful stares from her male peers. They constantly undermined her and treated her as though she didn't know anything. She was overlooked by male professors and when she raised her hand in the lectures to answer a question; a man always ended up being picked instead.

If she answered something wrong in the off chance time where she was called on to answer a question, she was criticized and told she didn't belong there.

When she became a professor, she was met with animosity from her coworkers. There was a noticeable boys club present. She and the three other female professors were rarely invited to meetings and were often left out on facility decision making processes. They were treated as jokes, and not taken seriously. They believed they were less capable of teaching due to their gender, and the only reason they were hired wasn't that they were the best, but because there was a push for more diversity with the advancing times.

The only time Lucy has ever felt as though she belonged and was good enough for someone was when Captain Woodward and Lieutenant Beaty showed up and asked for her help. That was the one time Lucy knew for certain that she was considered first for a position, and didn't come second place to a man.

But there in Italy, it was more of the same treatment she received everywhere else. She was sick of it, and was tired of being disregarded everywhere she went due to her femininity. She knew deep down that if she had been born a man, no one would have ever questioned her right to be there, or her authority without cause.

As much as she wanted to cry at that moment though, she choked it down. She couldn't appear weak in front of all these people and give them more of a reason to prove why she didn't belong and why women weren't capable of a job she had been given.

Blinking a few tears back, she ended up looking up as someone slid into the seat in front of her, startling her slightly.
Agent Carter, with her soft brown eyes, sat there and asked gently, "Is this seat taken?" She was just being polite, obviously. Clearly, Lucy had the table to herself.

Lucy cleared her throat, "No, by all means," She said to woman opposite to her as she got comfy.

Agent Carter gave her a small smile and then said, "I hope you don't mind me intruding. You look like you want to be alone, but also like you need a friend."

Lucy chuckled and then blinked back again more tears, thankful for the woman's kindness, "Yeah, I do. Thank you, it's been a tough day."

"I know what you mean. I'm having a similar day as well." The Agent sighed, her accent made everything sound so proper. And the fact she was dressed in her uniform in pristine condition, and her hair and makeup seeming perfect despite the fact there was a slight drizzle of rain made Lucy think that she wasn't human. "It's not easy for us girls, is it?"

Breathing out a shaky breath, Lucy couldn't help but chuckle before saying "No, it isn't."

The woman's crimson lips only rose up as she offered a small smile before raising a tin cup of coffee to them, "It's why we have to stick together." Lucy's heart suddenly filled with warmth, and she was touched by her kindness.

They had briefly only met while she was in the tactical tent of the S.S.R Division. They hadn't said much, only had a brief introduction, but there was a mutual respect there between the two of them. They had both known what it was like to be a woman of success in a man's world, and what it cost to earn respect.

Lucy never thought she and the woman would converse again though, but yet there she was, possibly making friends with her.

"I'm Peggy," She said with a smile, and then offered her hand for Lucy to shake.

"Lucy," She smiled back, warmth spreading through her as she realized that maybe she wasn't as alone as she had thought. She had Charles, her tentmate Elsa (despite not really seeing her for the last two days) and now Peggy.

"There, that's a little bit better than Agent Carter and Lieutenant Heinrich, don't you think? Or, do you prefer Doctor?" She asked curiously.

"Honestly," Lucy sighed and then took a sip of her coffee, which was slightly watered down and not as hot as she liked from the slight drizzle of rain. "I don't care anymore. Neither title seems to matter here, anyway." She huffed in an annoyed manner.

"No," Agent Carter sighed also and looked around, "Men don't have much of an appreciation for accomplished women here, do they?"

"No, they do not." Lucy only emphasized and the two of their eyes met and they both ended up laughing for some unknown reason.

"I mean honestly!" Peggy exclaimed through her light giggle, "They see a woman of authority and you'd just think they'd combust!"

"I had one Sergent question my authority so hard today, I thought he would just lose it on me! Really, I had no idea if it was being of my family background or if I was a woman but I don't care. And they think we're too emotional!"
Peggy only scoffed and rolled her eyes, "As if. Have you ever seen anyone give as many tantrums as a grown man? Pathetic."

"I guarantee if we were in charge there wouldn't be a war at all in the first place."

"Of course not! Women have more sense than that! But men have egos, and power complexes." She said as she looked out at the men that surrounded them. Lucy did the same and they both felt bad for speaking ill. "They're not all so awful," Peggy explained, ending their joking. "There are a few with some admirable traits, I suppose. One or two at least comes to mind."

"No, you're right." Lucy nodded, "But there are a few who's neck I would like to wring."

"Oh, well we all have those." Peggy smiled, "I know for a fact that I have more than a few I'd like to do that to."

"Mind if I sit here?" Another feminine voice came into the mix, and Lucy looked up to see a smiling Elsa Hardy.

"Of course not! Elsa, this is Peggy. Peggy, this is my tentmate, Elsa." Elsa still looked beautiful despite her knotted hair, dirty face, and obviously exhausted nature. The woman looked like she hadn't slept in days, but there she was putting on a smile regardless.

The two ladies shook hands and Peggy expressed how it was a pleasure to meet her. "What are we gossiping about?" Elsa smirked.

"Nothing much, only mentioning our for certain men with less than admirable complexes," Peggy explained.

"Ugh, you can say that again!" Elsa rolled her eyes and shoveled some food in her mouth, "A bunch of jackasses, the lot of them let me tell you. But I love them regardless," She groaned in annoyance at her own voice.

"Can't live with them and can't live without them." Lucy agreed, knowing that despite her destain for the men she had worked with and the ones who treated her with a lack of respect, not all of them were like that. Daniel never was, and neither was Mr. Lee. She also had one professor who believed in her during her time in university. He wanted nothing more than for her to succeed and show them all what she was capable of.

"What about you, Peggy? You got a fella?" Elsa asked her, clearly a little dazed by boys. Lucy figured it had something to do with being engaged and happy. Neither she nor Peggy could relate to the bliss that she had.

"No, not at the moment," Peggy admitted, "There's... there's someone, but I don't know." She looked lost in her thoughts, but as she spoke Lucy could see a faint light of happiness in her eyes, and her mouth twitched into a small grin. "He's not like the rest of them, that's for sure." She looked lost in herself as she spoke at that moment, and Lucy couldn't help but feel envious. She would give anything to be in either Peggy or Elsa's situation and just have Daniel back. Although they had their differences and fought often, she still loved him more than anything. And now that he was gone, Lucy found that her heart ached for him.

"That's sweet," Elsa smiled before taking a large gulp of coffee. Clearly, she was desperate for the caffeine to keep her awake, "You should tell him how you feel."

"Perhaps. It's not an ideal time, though." Peggy argued and then shrugged the idea off, thinking it was preposterous. She blushed a little as a light colour of pink graced her cheeks.
"You should definitely tell him! Before it's too late. It might not be an ideal time but when is it ever?"
The three of them were an odd group of ladies, Lucy realized. She was the cynical serious one who
didn't put up with bullshit. Peggy was the calm and collected one, who thought more about being
rational and logical than anything else. Elsa was the hopeful, lighthearted one with a positive outlook
on life. They were odd, Lucy realized. As the conversation carried out and morphed into something
less serious she watched as both Peggy and Elsa laughed.

She didn't have to be welcomed by a lot of people to feel less lonely and scared. Only a few would
do, and at that moment she was positive she had found them.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading. I'm so glad I've finally had the chance to really put
Peggy more into the story, as well as highlight Lucy's female friendships.

Make sure you remember to go back to the first chapter and read my lil prologue section
I snuck in there! ;)

Leave me a review with your thoughts, and don't forget to follow and favorite.

Amelia
Chapter XIV

Chapter Notes

I wanted to hold back on posting another chapter for a little while, but I literally couldn't. We are very, very close to our mains finally having some prime interaction (no juicy stuff just yet, but we're getting there!)

I loved writing this chapter. Honestly, Bucky + the gang are just my favs. And Dum Dum is such a loveable character. I hope you love their little interaction as much as I do!

Trigger Warning: Some slight* sexual harassment.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter XIV

Following the more than irksome day of taking orders from Dr. Heinrich, Bucky sat at a table with some of the guys in his infantry. Abe Anderson was joking around with Simon Pym about something or another, and the two were howling with laughter.

Bucky wasn't in a mood to be happy with them though. He had a long couple of days, and he hadn't been sleeping well. The thoughts of the fighting from earlier had been burned in his brain, and every time he thought of it anxiety rose in his chest. He had lost his appetite as well, and the fact he had been forced to be under the services of the Wicked Witch of the West didn't help his mood.

He tried to be involved and laugh with his friends, but every time he did, he felt guilty. Guilty that he was there while so many people weren't.

He tried to distract himself, since he found it wasn't so bad when he was occupied. He guessed that was one benefit to working with Dr. Heinrich. He had been so focused on disliking her that he didn't have time to think about all the trauma he had seen in the few hours before then.

But now he wasn't busy, the darkness seemed to creep in. He tried to distract himself any way possible, thinking of anything but the horrors and focusing on his friends. But even though he was there and present, it was like he couldn't hear what they said. Nothing registered, and although their voices rang in his ears it was like it was muffled, almost like he was hearing them from underwater.

Bucky tried to think of anything. He concentrated in his mother's face, trying to remember her soft smile. For some reason, he couldn't though. He tried to think of his sisters on Christmas, pouncing on him in the early morning and dragging him to go with them to open presents.

He tried to think of Steve and their time on Coney Island, and how they had eaten enough hot dogs to make them sick and played more games than they could afford. He was desperate just to get out of his own head, and the more he tried not to focus on all the bad, it just seemed to get worse.

He wasn't ripped out of his thoughts until Gilbert Whitney let out a loud whistle a couple of seats down from him. That seemed to rip Bucky of whatever trance he was in and bring him back to reality.

He had to focus on the fact he was there, alive, and not still stuck in battle. It was over, for now. He
couldn't dwell on it and he had to remain in the present.

His eyes directed back to where Whitney was looking, and the man yelled at two women who walked by, trying to get their attention.

Bucky's gaze intensified as he saw Lucy Heinrich walking with another woman. The other woman was equally as attractive as she was, but it a different way, given her uniform was in a well-kept condition and she had her hair and makeup done. Lucy didn't though, her hair was in a messy updo, and she didn't wear a stitch of makeup. She wore the same uniform from earlier in the day, not bothering to change out of it. Bucky guessed the reasons for the other woman's appearance was due to her being an agent.

The women only glared at Whitney as he wolf-whistled and invited them over to chat with them all while he had a smug look on his face. Bucky snapped, "Knock it off!" He said a little too harshly. But one, he knew women didn't appreciate the harassment. And two, the last person he wanted to talk to at that moment was Lucy Heinrich.

"What's your deal, Sarg?" The man scoffed, "You don't want to chat up a couple dame's?"

"Not those ones," He shook his head, knowing that Lucy was the last person in the world he would ever be attracted to. And not to mention, the women were there to do a job and were military officers, they didn't need guys talking them up and annoying them.

As Lucy walked past, their eyes met. Once again, the sense of familiarity struck him and his heart tugged a little bit. He felt as though he had to have known her from somewhere, although he knew it was impossible.

"What you have against them? They're good lookin' gals!" Whitney only asked, absolutely in shock that Bucky didn't want to converse with them, "I'll take one of each, please."

"Before now I barely remember what a woman looked like." Abe sighed as his eyes followed the women as they walked away. He noticed how Lucy had made eye contact with Bucky, "Did you know that one? She was giving you eyes."

"I was under her service earlier today. Dr. Lucy Heinrich is her name. And she's the bane of my existence." Even saying her name stirred feelings of animosity in him.

"A Doctor? I love me an educated woman! Who's the other one though?" He asked, curiously.

"Don't know." Bucky shrugged, "Don't care either." If she was friends with Lucy, chances are they wouldn't get along.

"I miss how nice they always smelled," Simon reminisced, "How is it possible dame's hair always smelled like flowers? And ever notice how their houses were always clean? Women, I tell ya. They're magic."

Bucky chuckled, "I think you're romanticizing. You're just doll dizzy, that's all."

"No, I've just been surrounded by you animals too long, I think." He insisted with a slight scowl. His bitter tone reflected how he likely would be rather elsewhere than in their company.

"Forget the way they smell, or how clean they are." Whitney's annoying voice rang in Bucky's ears. Every time the man opened his mouth he was irritated, "I just miss one being in my bed."

"That too!" Abe laughed before shoveling another spoonful of food into his mouth.
"What are you old hen's gossipin' about?" Dum Dum slid in on the end of the table, looking a little rough from the events of the day as well. He and Bucky had been through mostly the same ordeal, and they were equally as exhausted.

"Dames, that's all." Simon still seemed in a dreamy state, clearly fantasizing about something.

"Ah, any in mind? Saw a cute nurse earlier today in the field." He said, "Or maybe a particular Doctor?" His attention turned to Bucky and he wanted to laugh.

Suddenly everyone's eyes were on him and Bucky scoffed, "You've definitely got it wrong."

"Really? Because from what I saw from earlier it seemed like there was some tension there." Dugan had a shit-eating grin on his face.

"You just lied to our faces, didn't you Sarg!" Simon asked, absolutely scandalized that Bucky would do such a thing. "You're sweet on her!"

Bucky's eyes widened at the accusations and he quickly responded, "I think that woman would be the last person I'd ever want to be with!"

"Don't have to like her to have a quick tousle," Whitney said smugly, his eyes following the ladies' backsides as they walked away. Bucky wanted to tell him to be more respectful. It bothered him he was so blatant and crass about women.

"I'd rather rip my fingernails off." He shot back. It would be less painful than spending time with her.

"Cut the shit, Barnes." Dum Dum suddenly turned serious, "Your eyes were all over her when she walked in. There was tension."

Bucky will couldn't shake the feeling as though they had met before. He only shrugged, "Thought I knew her, that's all. She reminds me of someone…" Although he couldn't remember who, exactly. There was something about her dark eyes that was familiar though… "And as for tension? Yeah, you hit the nail right on the head for that one, Dugan." He said. "The type of tension where I'd like to wring her neck."

Dum Dum only pursed his lips, "I was talking more of the sexual nature kinda tension…"

Bucky could only scoff, nearly turning red even at the mere suggestion. "What?" What did he mean by sexual tension? "There's no… Sexual tension." He was suddenly flustered and didn't know why. "Oh, trust me. There's sexual tension."

Bucky felt bile rising in his throat. No matter how beautiful she was, he held no feelings of sexual attraction to her. Well, perhaps he did. There had been one moment back in the cave where he had... No. He wasn't going to think about that. "Please," He scoffed once more, absolutely baffled by his observation. "Whitney, she's all yours." To prove he didn't want her, Bucky told the man he detested to go for it. "But I gotta warn you, she's a heinous, malicious, untamable bitch." It was crossing a line to say that. Immediately Bucky felt bad, but he had to prove that he held no kind of feelings towards her.

Dum Dum rose his eyebrows and Whitney smirked and reveled in his victory. He only patted Bucky on the shoulder as he stood up, glowing as though he had won the lottery, "Was gonna go her regardless of your permission. And maybe the reason why she's such a malicious, untamable bitch is that she's too much woman for ya, huh?" There was still animosity between the two men, but after meeting Lucy Heinrich he figured why not pair the worst two people he knew together? They could
get married and have demon children, for all he cared. "But thanks for your blessing, Sarg. I'll let you know if I'm able to tame the beast, alright?" He gave him a wink and a cocky smile as he strode away and suddenly Bucky felt sick.

_Wait_. Maybe Bucky had made a mistake. No matter how awful Lucy Heinrich was, he was pretty positive Gilbert Whitney was worse. He didn't think any dame should be subjected to that type of torment, no matter who she was.

Whitney walked away, heading in whatever direction the women were heading. Bucky's eyes followed him. Suddenly, regret pinged in his stomach and he thought perhaps he was being too cruel by siccing Whitney on her. No one deserved that.

Bucky almost didn't notice Dum Dum's shit-eating grin. When he turned back, he must have looked a little lost in through because the larger man only laughed and then said, "Like I said, sexual tension."

"Where are you even getting that from?" Bucky demanded to know, his eyes narrowing just slightly as he rose his chin up. "We were both there, earlier, right? You saw how _awful_ she was."

"Listen, I know what I know. And you sending Whitney to her to just prove that you don't like her speaks volumes, my friend." He only chuckled and then lit a cigar "And you better change that good for nothin' attitude of yours if you wanna woo her."

"Woo her? _Woo_? Is this 1700's England? Shall I buy a parasol for my betrothed as we walk around the river canal?" Bucky asked sarcastically in a bad English accent, making Abe chuckle. "Maybe I should ask for her father's permission before I hold her hand?"

"Okay, I don't appreciate your tone here. I'm just tryna' lay down some good, old fashioned, advice on love."

"You are delusional! That woman and I will — No. You know what? I'm not even entertaining the idea of it anymore." Bucky rolled his eyes, wondering how the man could be so wrong. He could create a situation out of nothing, and pretend there was something there when the reality was that it was the furthest thing from.

"I'm just observant. Christ, no reason to get so sore." Dum Dum insisted, but had a smirk on his face at Bucky's reaction and how adamant he was. Simon only sat and listened intently. He was more of a quiet man, who preferred to sit quietly and observe than interject. Abe Anderson only snorted at Dum Dum's statement, "In my experience, a gal and a guy only hate each other that much if there's an attraction."

Bucky raised his eyebrows and then interjected, "Because one of them is a self-righteous, elitist who doesn't care about anyone but herself, and also processes a superiority complex and a bad attitude?"

"Oh, look who learned how to use big boy words!" Dugan laughed, "See, she's already wearin' off on ya, Sarg!"

"Jesus, tell us how you really feel about her." Anderson chuckled, unaware that Bucky was capable of feeling so hostile towards someone.

Dum Dum ignored him, and then said smugly, "Two complete strangers only hate each other that much if there's an attraction."

Bucky was about to disagree, but then Dugan quickly beat him to it. "Come on, Sarg! You have to admit she's a beautiful woman."
Frowning more, Bucky thought about his answer for a second. "Yeah, I've got two eyes and I'm not stupid. But she's... just, the worst." He needed to stress just how bad she was. And yeah, she was drop-dead gorgeous. And not to mention, ridiculously smart. But Bucky was dead set on disliking her, and nothing was about to change that. No matter how pretty she was when she smiled, or how her mouth twitched every time she got excited about a new find. He certainly didn't notice the way her eyes sparkled, or how her brows creased with frustration.

He was not attracted to her. Even if his groin slightly tightened when she ordered him around, and even if he kind of liked it when she was bossy, it did not mean that he, Bucky Barnes, was attracted to Lucy Heinrich. So what if he just liked powerful women? It didn't necessarily mean that he liked her. Dugan had it wrong, Bucky tried to convince himself.

Dum Dum smirked. "Just you wait," Bucky didn't appreciate his snarky grin. He wanted nothing more at that moment than to smack it off his face, "I've got a knack for these types of things."

"Not ever gonna happen. She's the most infuriating person I've ever met." Bucky rubbed his knuckles as he scowled, his hands absentmindedly having a mind of their own as he tried not to think of Lucy. He realized after a moment that it was a nervous habit, and he remembered how when he was younger he used to rub the skin raw. He didn't realize until now he was actually uncomfortable about talking about her to the other guys.

"Funny," Dum Dum paused, missing a beat and watching Bucky's reaction. "She said the exact same thing about you."

Bucky realized he had been just as nasty to her as she had been to him and a sour taste formed in his mouth. "Still," He swallowed, "Not gonna happen." He didn't like the way he had been treating Dr. Heinrich. If his mother was there she would have hit him on the back of the head for speaking to a dame in such a matter.

And Steve.

Oh God, Steve. Steve would be so disappointed.

"Why not?" Abe asked, a grin slightly building, "Yeah, she's irritating. But if that's the same broad that walked this way I'd be on her in a second. A guy starts missing the feel of a woman while he's at war." He took a moment to laugh, as he teased him, "You're not a virgin are you?"

Before Bucky could even answer that he definitely wasn't, Simon interrupted. "I am!" Simon piped up, frowning slightly at their tones. It was obvious he didn't understand why they were saying it as if it were a negative thing.

"Good for you, son. You a holy man or something?" Dum Dum inquired, pretending interest.

"Actually yes, I am. I also think you should be in love—,"

"That was sarcasm. No one wants to hear about your chastity vows to God. It's boring."

Bucky couldn't help but chuckle at the interaction between them. Despite the easy setting though, he still felt nervousness and anxiety from the mornings' violence that he had witnessed. Pushing it from his mind, Bucky tried to live in the moment as it crept back up.

"Anyway, " Dum Dum focused back on Bucky, sighed, and then said "Moving on past Pym's stupidity—,"

"Hey!" Simon shot back, offended, "It's not stupid to—,"
"Moving on!" Dugan stressed again, rolling his eyes, "I think you should give her a chance. She doesn't seem half bad. And, it would save your ass from trouble if she ever tried to report back to Phillips."

Bucky thought about it for a moment, "We'll see." He replied, "Though I don't see me warming up to her anytime soon. The broad is frigid as hell. Plus, I don't like the way she walks around thinking she's smarter than everyone else."

As he spoke, Bucky didn't even notice a man approach them. He had seen him sitting at the edge of the table, but he was quiet in contrast to all the ruckus they were making. Apparently, the last sentence Bucky has said angered him, a pissed expression on his face. The man stood up after getting up rather aggressively, clearly more than angry about what they were saying.

Bucky's stomach dropped as he recognized the man as Dr. Heinrich's assistant. And he heard all they had said about her… And apparently, what Bucky had last remarked was the final straw.

"For the record, Doctor Lucy Heinrich deserves more respect than the lot of you twats talking about her in that nature. She's brilliant, and despite the world doling her out a shite hand, she's made something of herself. Can you all say the same?" the man was angered by the way they were speaking. And with good reason, since they had truly been awful. Not only was Bucky being insulting, but they had all been moderately crass. Shame welled in his chest as he remembered passing her off to Gilbert Whitney, as though she were an object and not a person.

"Oh! And another thing! The reason why she acts like she's smarter than everyone else, is because she is smarter than everyone else." He stormed away, red in the face.

Bucky had to admit he royally fucked up by saying such things about her within ear distance of her assistant. He looked at Dugan, dumbstruck and not sure exactly how to react from the smaller man's outburst.

"Shit." Dugan only said before Bucky huffed. Bucky realized that if her assistant relayed what he had said and it looked like he was undermining her again, he could be in major trouble.

He ran a hand through his hair and then only sighed. "I gotta go fix this."

After they had gotten some food in their bellies and caffeine in their bloodstream, the company at Lucy's table felt rejuvenated.

She no longer felt as anxious as she previously did, and she all but forgot about Sergeant Barnes and the debacle they had earlier. Almost.

It wasn't until they had finished up and Lucy and Peggy said farewell to Elsa, who cheerily waved goodbye that Lucy began to feel the dread well back up inside of her. She felt anxious as she thought of how she would have to be ripped away from the few people who were friendly to her and go back to being treated as a burden.

Lucy attempted to stay clear of negative thoughts as she walked on with Peggy, who rambled on about the amount of work she had to finish and the supplies they were short on.

Lucy listened intensely until they walked past a group of men at the mess hall. Both she and Peggy had become very much used to the constant stares by the men, and even the wolf-whistling and catcalling.

Stares she could deal with. When they were from random men, Lucy could find herself unable to
care less. But stares from Sargent Barnes was another thing. She shouldn't have been so affected by him, but she was.

And as his gaze fell on her Lucy's cheeks turned pink as she walked by. Partially, from how goddamned gorgeous he was. The other half was how she was still angered by him. And the last reason was that she had never had to deal with someone so frustrating before.

Lucy redirected her gaze and suddenly was annoyed with herself for acting like such a coward. If it were any other person, she likely would have stared at them right back, or even in a defiant manner asked 'what the hell are you looking at?. But the feeling of incompetence was still fresh, as was the feeling of her work being regarded as unimportant. Lucy was frustrated that she felt such things, since never before had she been disregarded on such a monumental level.

She fixed her gaze anywhere else, refusing to even look at his comrades, even though one yelled something that she can only assume was something he thought was a 'compliment'.

She could feel Peggy notably tense at his words. It was clear neither one of them appreciated what he was saying. "There's one looking at you," She stated plainly, but kept her eyes forward after briefly looking over.

"Probably," Lucy sighed, "The pretty one with dark hair?"

Peggy curiously looked back with a raised eyebrow, "Yes, he is quite pretty, I suppose. You know him?"

She nodded, noting it took everything she had not to turn back and look at him also. Although she could feel his gaze staring daggers into her back as she walked away. Lucy chose to ignore it. Usually, in a situation such as this, she would put her chin up and stand taller, walking with purpose. Mrs. Lee always told her to act as though people were lesser than her should they ever make her feel insignificant or small. But something told Lucy that acting superior wasn't the answer in this situation, given the fact he was under the false belief that she had an ego problem and a superiority complex.

"Worked with him this morning," Lucy replied, "He had a complete disregard of my authority, and was purposefully refusing some of my orders and being difficult."

Peggy only scowled further, "I hate that. I'm sorry that happened to you. If you would like, I'd be happy to put in a word with a superior officer?"

Lucy was a superior officer already. But Sargent Barnes didn't seem to care so much about that.

"No," She said hastily. Lucy thought of the words that Sargent Dugan had said, and how Barnes only disliked her for her attitude that she appeared insensitive earlier that morning. Of course, Lucy felt bad for that. And she would have apologized under normal circumstances, but nothing about this situation was normal. "That's not necessary," She figured he was partially right in his hostility towards her. But Lucy would never act that way to someone if they ever offended her. But then again, she was also raised differently and with different manners.

"Are you sure? You can't work with defiant officers." Peggy's tone ensured her it was more a professionalism issue than a personal one. Lucy understood that, but despite her trying to demote him earlier that morning she believed it was a little too drastic.

"I'm sure," She sighed and pushed some hair out of her face, "It's just frustrating, but I've dealt with frustrating men my entire life. One more won't make a difference." She promised her.
"Alright, well," Peggy licked her lips and touched Lucy's elbow lightly, "If you need anything don't be a stranger. This is my stop here," She gestured to a large operations tent. Lucy nodded and assured her she would.

The two new friends parted their ways and Lucy head towards her own operations tent to begin labeling the artifacts they had acquired earlier.

Heading over, her boots sloshed in the mud and she couldn't help but hide the destain on her face. She never thought she would miss Egypt, but she did. She missed the warmth, and she missed the sun shining on her skin. She missed the way a fire in the cold desert nights. She missed the way the locals would sing to them in deep guttural sounds, playing a stringed instrument as they drank sweet wine and sat below palm trees.

She never felt particularly welcomed in Egypt either. But at least it was better than this hell hole.

As Lucy remembered earlier times with a fond sense of nostalgia, she almost didn't remember to watch where she stepped and she found herself tripping. A strong hand caught her quickly, and she found herself turning to her savior.

"Woah, Woah! Easy there!" The man chuckled, his southern accent thick. "You alright there, sweetheart?"

She had been called sweetheart countless times before, but never before had it sounded quite so demeaning as it did leaving his lips.

"Fine, thank you." Lucy straightened herself out and then nodded to him, "I must have not been looking where I was walking. Thanks again,"

"Oh, it was my pleasure," He said smoothly, giving her a smile which she assumed would have made most women melt. He was in fact, a very attractive man. Towering over her 5'9 frame, he must have easily been 6'4. He had broad muscles and a well-shaved face, with slicked-back black hair which looked too clean for a military man to have. "Gilbert Whitney." Lucy recognized him as one of the men who had been sitting with Sergeant Barnes at his table. She wondered if they were friends and just thinking about it made her want to roll her eyes.

"Dr. Lucy Heinrich." She nodded to him,

"Ah, right! You're the archaeologist!" He smiled, "And here I was thinking you were a movie star."

Lucy wanted to frown and gag and roll her eyes all at the same time but instead, she kept her facial expression neutral. "No, perhaps you had me confused for someone else."

"Definitely not, but that's alright." He flashed her one of the whitest smiles she had ever seen.

Lucy only pursed her lips as she began to walk away, saying "I should go, thank you again."

"Hey, Dr. Heinrich? Sorry, I don't mean to intrude but you wouldn't happen to need any help or anything at all with your work, do you? I'd love to volunteer."

Usually, Lucy would jump at the opportunity to gain some extra help. But she figured perhaps Gilbert Whitney wouldn't be the best fit.

"Ah, no. That's alright though. Thank you again!" This time she managed to walk away, even turning around before he caught up to her, quickly getting in her way and standing in front of her. Lucy scowled at his relentlessness,
"You sure, sweetheart? You look like you could use the help."

Her eyes narrowed and she assured him with a short reply, "I'm good. And it's Doctor, not sweetheart." She gave him the typical answer she gave anyone who overlooked her or said anything moderately insulting by insisting she was just a silly little girl. She patted his shoulder lightly and maneuvered around him.

"My apologies." He was an annoying lost dog, she realized as he kept following on her heels, moving quickly to keep up with her. "I just thought I'd extend my services but if you don't want them —."

"I don't want them." She snapped and wished to be left alone. "You would just slow me down and be a distraction."

"A distraction?" He gave her a big toothy grin, "Because of my good looks?" Lucy wanted to scream in frustration. Why was it some men had selective hearing? It seemed he had only heard half her sentence and chose to ignore the part he didn't want to hear. "Also, has anyone ever told you that you have a great smile? You should smile more."

Lucy's stomach flipped and a shiver ran down her back. It took everything she had not to roll her eyes at his comment, which she assumed he thought was a compliment. "Because you're annoying!" She scowled, wanting only to be left alone to do her work without constant harassment.

"Hey now," He grabbed her arm, stopping her from walking further and pulling her back. It was meant only to keep her from moving, but Lucy recognized it as a power move, and she felt the sting of his fingers digging their way into her tender flesh, "That's not a very nice thing to say after I just offered to help you."

Lucy knew better than that. He was shifting the blame to her, attempting to make her feel bad for being rude and using social normatives against her. He was not only pestering her and not taking no for an answer but also not understanding she expected a certain level of professionalism and knowledge if he wanted to work on her project. She and Charles had spent most of the day instructing Foster and Green on what to do, and she didn't need to go over it a third time to some eager newbie who only wanted to help due to his attraction to her.

"Take your hand off my arm, Private." She said harshly, not backing down for even a second despite his threatening stance and how he towered over her.

His jaw locked and he reluctantly took his hand off her, a sour look on his face. The only thing she said was "Like I said, I appreciate the offer. But I said no, and I would like it as your superior officer if you respected that and didn't continue pestering me with questions." She continued trying to be polite, believing there was no reason for more hostility.

"Barnes had it completely right, you really are a heinous bitch."

Her blood turned to ice and she stopped in her tracks. She felt hurt by his words, but it was nothing compared to the rage she felt. Once again, no one would ever speak to their superior officer like that if she was a man. Anger boiled up inside her and just as she was about to wring him out when another voice made itself known.

"Whitney!" Sergeant Barnes stood there with an angered look on his face as he walked up. The stance he had was rigid, and he moved closer to Lucy. "Lay off her and report back to Sargent Dugan. He has chores for you due to your inappropriate behaviour of disrespecting a superior officer."
Lucy could barely hide her shock. Barnes was actually sticking up for her and she shouldn't believe it. Her heart pounded in her chest from the adrenaline and also from the surprise of Sergeant Barnes possibly taking her side.

The man only chuckled and before staring at him with disdain, "Are you shitting me right now? You fucking hypocrite."

"Get," He clicked at him like an animal. A smug look appeared on his face, knowing he won this round, his arms were crossed against his chest. Lucy wanted to add something smug as well as Whitney walked away but she bit her tongue, figuring his ego was hurt enough already.

He turned away with a scowl, and something suggested to Lucy that whatever rivalry they had it was far from over.

When it was only her and Barnes, he ran a hand through his hair and then breathed out, "Sorry about him—,

"A heinous bitch?" Was all she was able to spit out. His words still stung a little. It wasn't the first time she had been called a bitch, but for some reason, this time hurt a little more. Especially since he was spreading around his opinion of her and making it easier for more of the men to dislike her and disrespect her.

"I know," Was all he could say shamefully as he exhaled deeply, "That was crossing a line. I'm sorry. And you're right, I should have never undermined your authority like that. I'll be talking in some chores as well for punishment."

Lucy was shocked he would punish himself for his behaviour. But she supposed if he wanted to be respected by his men he had to be held at the same standard.

"Thank you," She told him, genuinely. "I appreciate that, Sergeant. And I apologize as well for my insensitive comment earlier. I wasn't aware of how I came across, and I am truly sorry if I offended you or any of your men."

He swallowed a lump in his throat and looked down. He became tense, suddenly remembering all she said earlier, "Yeah well, my mom always told me to do what was right. And how I treated you earlier with disrespect wasn't becoming of my character or how I want to be as a leader here. So… This doesn't change anything between us, doll."

She wanted to roll her eyes again. But Lucy couldn't help but grin at their bickering. "I'd be disappointed if it did, Sergeant." She was going to have to come up with a nickname for him if he insisted on calling her 'doll' all the time.

He only smirked and then turned around, clearly amused by her fiery reaction. "Good," He chuckled and started off in the other direction.

Once again, in that small smile, Lucy felt the feeling of familiarity and lost feelings. The more she interacted with him, the more she felt as though she knew him.

Lucy shook the feeling away, knowing it was impossible. She began walking, she didn't expect him to call out to her again.

"Hey, Doc?" He called out to her. She turned around, a few stray pieces of hair falling into her face. "You ever been to Brooklyn?"

"Two or three times," She shrugged, "Why do you ask?"
He only pursed his lips and then also shrugged, "No reason, don't worry about it."

But Lucy did, and the wheels of her head began spinning. She couldn't shake the feeling that she knew him. As she turned around to glance back at him, she caught him doing the same thing, and as they made eye contact and she knew in that moment that her feelings weren't one-sided.

Chapter End Notes

WELL. PROGRESS PEOPLE. If you liked that you should just wait until the next one. Because honestly, besides Chapter 11, the next one has to be favourite. It's just so... Ugh fluffy and funny and heartbreaking all at the same time. I can't wait to share it with you!

Please review, follow, and favourite. Every time you do, it fuels the inspiration I need to get into the good stuff with Lucy and Bucky ;)

Thanks again,

Amelia
Chapter XV

Each day usually started the same way for Bucky. Wake up, eat breakfast, and try to stay alive.

It was that simple really, and he found his schedule rarely deviated. The fighting was more intense than he had ever anticipated, and slowly the number of men he made friends with began to dwindle. Each time it happened, Bucky found it a little more difficult to recover from it all. He wondered what exactly was the point of making friends when most of them would just die off anyway.

Abe 'Goodluck' Anderson's dog tags weighed heavy in his pocket from that morning. It was supposed to be a fairly simple mission, but it had turned into a bloodbath within a few short minutes. Abe paid the price for Bucky's mistake, and he felt a gut-wrenching amount of guilt on his conscious.

They had been attempting to gain a small Italian town, which they assumed had all been abandoned by the Italian and German forces. It wasn't, as it turned out.

As Bucky had led a team from the 107th infantry around a corner road, he was blissfully unaware of any enemy that was remaining. He noticed a church off to the side which looked like a significant landmark. For a moment he debated on whether or not to bother Dr. Heinrich with it but then figured she'd be happy either way to go run amuck in some old church ruins.

Her small grin appeared in the back of his mind, and the image Lucy Heinrich's infuriating yet beautiful expression was all he could see. Figuring having to put up with her annoying presence for a little while was worth it to see her smile; Bucky decided to do the right thing and call her in.

He stopped for only a moment to talk to the Private in charge of the radio to contact Dr. Heinrich to alert her of the old-looking church in the town she might like to play around with.

He did it partially due to the fact he was obligated to. But also so he could see that very expression he was thinking about moments earlier. For some reason, even though it vaguely irked him, her smile also enchanted him. However, her pretty smile didn't make him dislike her any less. And even though they were now treating one another more civilly, he still wasn't a fan of hers.

Although, if he was being honest with himself, Bucky had been amused by their conversation the other day. For a moment, he considered taking Dum Dum's advice and giving her a chance to prove that she wasn't as bad as he originally thought. Besides, if he had to be around her, it would be much nicer to see her smiling than scowling at him.
It was rare to see people smiling these days. And although they had very little interaction and she never seemed to see him around the base, he saw her. Often, it was at the mess area, and her nose was in a book and she was oblivious to the rest of the world. She was so occupied by her book that he would watch as her coffee became cold. She would grimace when she finally brought the metal tin cup her lips and then throw it out due to its cold temperature.

Bucky caught himself too often just staring at her. Dum Dum's voice rang in his head, and he thought for only a second he may have been right. Perhaps he was attracted to her? Or, maybe it was that he was so desperate for the touch of a woman that he was fantasizing about Satan's Mistress herself.

Bucky was able to clear the idea out his head rather quickly though, much to his relief. He knew the woman would drive him mad.

But still…. She was surprisingly charming. In an irritating, vexing, stuck-up, and know-it-all kind of way.

Bucky's stomach lurched at the memory of how radioing her in was the reason why Abe Anderson was gunned down instead of him. He had stopped only for that brief moment to tell the Private to radio her. Abe walked past him, taking the front. As soon as he rounded the corner of the building sounds of gunshots rang through the morning air and agonizing screams filled Bucky's ears.

Where Abe had stood laid a body too disfigured and too damaged to even recognize. Instead of a human, it looked like a mass of meat, cut through by the wave of bullets from the heavy artillery gun that sliced him into small pieces. His body was pulverized into a bloody pulp, and the thought of it alone caused bile to rise in Bucky's throat.

The only remnants suggesting Abe had once stood there was a bloodied, chunk of a leg with only one standard boot attached. What Bucky assumed was a clavicle and half of his chest was also obvious. His uniform that remained was blackened with blood. He almost got sick going back for the dog tags after the fighting had ended.

Trying to choke back his vomit, his fingers became coated in the blood of his dead friend as he tried to fish out the silver metal tags. He was scared to look at the remains but knew this was something he had to do. He owed it to Abe to send back the little remaining thing left him to his tribe.

Bucky had spent the rest of the fight in a haze. He didn't know what happened, only that he ended up where Abe had stood.

He had survived by sheer luck, and his friend had paid the price of his carelessness. He should have been more careful and listened beyond the spies' reports that the town had been emptied.

He should have sent his scouting crew and a few men forward, instead of blindly trusting one man. Bucky blamed himself for what happened, and he wanted nothing more at that moment than to shrivel up in a corner and sob.

He wanted to go home. Back to Brooklyn, to his apartment, or his childhood home with his sisters and mother. Back to Steve, and their boring-ass job where he never once had to wake up and wonder if that day was going to be his last.

Bucky felt as though a cloud of regret, remorse, and pain, hung over his head. It followed him, casting its shadows and its darkness and he couldn't help but feel it trying to swallow him up. The darkness it brought often filled his days and nights, and Bucky usually woke up in a cold sweat and clutching his chest, worried his heart would find a way to carve its way out given how fast it was
He found himself grasping at any happy memories he had. All he had to do was distract himself from the present. Due to the desperation of blocking out the horrors, he found himself reminiscing often. Lost in the feeling of nostalgia, his mind sometimes drifted to happier, simpler times.

He recalled how he and Steve went skating in Central Park. It had taken them a while to maneuver their way in Manhattan, but once they got there it was worth it. The park was transformed in Winter, and although they usually avoided the busier parts of the city at all costs, that time they went it was nice. They had probably been about fourteen years old, and Bucky remembered falling on the ice and breaking his wrist. Usually, it was Steve who was the clumsy one. But due to his small figure, he had a better sense of balance and skated with greater ease than Bucky did.

Bucky longed for New York and Brooklyn again. He missed sleeping in his bed, and doing the same mundane tasks at work. At least there no one was shooting at him.

He recalled one day while on the bus in 1940 heading back home from work. He and Steve sat in their seats, exhausted from the long day. Summer had just begun, and the heat was getting to them. It was the Summer before the bombing of Pearl Harbour and before the U.S. joined the war efforts. He still remembered the way his sweat dripped down the back of his neck on that hot day. He wanted nothing more than a cold beer and to get out of the heat.

A pregnant woman got on with them, a small child holding her hand. Immediately, despite the long day, Steve offered his seat to them. Bucky got up as well, opting to stand and hang onto one of the overhanging rails instead. He didn't mind giving up his seat, but after a long day of work, he couldn't wait to get home and rest.

"Game's on tonight," Steve mentioned as they stood there quietly.

"Oh yeah?" Bucky rose an eyebrow and nodded, "You heading over to the stadium to watch it?"

"I don't think so." The man sighed, his eyes drifting to the posters staring back at them as they came to a stop. They advertised war bonds and buying certain products to help the Allies. They were hanging in the bulletin boards, and Bucky could sense Steve's desire to help; the posters only reminding him of his inadequacy and failure if the United States did end up joining the war. "Think I might just stay at home."

Bucky shrugged, "I'll listen to it on the radio. It's been a long day, I don't feel like going out much."

As he stood there, an attractive redhead walked onto the bus. She didn't look up as she sauntered on at first, but when she did, she noticed Bucky. She gave him a soft smile, which he half-heartedly returned.

Steve noticed, and also recognized how Bucky hadn't been his usual self when it came to women. It had all started a few weeks back after he met a woman in a bar who he connected with on a level he had never felt with anyone else before.

"You gotta get out of this funk," Steve noted, "It's been really depressing."

Shrugging again, Bucky only exhaled deeply. He didn't want to talk about it or focus on girls. Lately, he had been searching in every dame he met since that night for something that he wasn't even sure of. "I know, but I just don't want to. I think I want to take some time to figure out what I want. You hear Tommy's thinking of proposing to Betty?"

Steve chuckled and nodded, "Yeah, I heard. I'm happy for them. When do you think he's gonna pop
the question? Any day now?"

Bucky pursed his lips and confirmed, "Any day now." His hand went into his pocket as he continued speaking. "You know Steve, I think maybe you were onto something about that whole 'right partner' thing."

This was one of the first times Bucky ever admitted Steve was right about anything that had to do with women. Steve's eyebrow rose curiously and he asked with a small smile, although he was trying to hide it, "What or who changed your mind?"

"Emma." Was all Bucky said, "Or, whatever the hell her name is."

Steve groaned. He couldn't believe Bucky was going on about her again. Never before had he been that hung up on a girl.

"You have got to stop going on about her! Seriously, it's not healthy!" He tried to convince him, "You said she was engaged. You know nothing about her— not even her real name, apparently! Plus, we were all drinking that night. Are you sure you even remember what she looks like?"

If Bucky was being honest with himself, most of that night was a blur. He wasn't sure if he could pick her face out in a crowd if he saw her again. But the things he did remember was her long, dark, brown hair. He remembered how it smelled like lemongrass as he rested his chin against her head. He remembered how soft it was against his skin, and how her hand felt against his.

He remembered her small smile, and how it seemed to make his heart race just a little faster, he also recalled the deep brown of her hazel eyes, and how they had a honey colour that lined them.

Her laugh also stood out, ringing through his brain as he remembered being charmed by it. To Bucky, that's really all he needed to remember. Nothing else mattered, and he'd likely hold on to that memory for a long time afterward. It didn't matter what she looked like, only how she made him feel.

And he was scared he would never feel that way again.

"No, but it doesn't matter!" He explained to Steve, "I knew she was the one."

"You were drunk. You could have been with anyone that night and thought she was 'the one'. Besides, I saw the way she looked, dressed, and moved. A dame like that would never go for a couple fellas like us. She comes from money." It was the hard truth, but Steve needed Bucky to hear it. He couldn't be longing for an idea of a woman he could never be with.

"You're right," Bucky admitted, defeatedly. "Even if I could find her again, she's engaged. Plus, she deserves a life way better than the one I could give her. She deserves a hell of a lot better than me." The words felt weird exiting his mouth. He had never considered himself to be the most successful, but he liked to think he would be worthy of whomever he ended up with. And he was definitely not worthy of her. He wasn't sure what kind of a man deserved her, but he imagined he had to be a pretty stellar kind of guy.

Bucky had asked about her fiancé that night, but she never went into detail. He only hoped that he would be the kinda guy who aimed to make her happy every single day. Bucky knew if he were so lucky to be the man she went home to, he wouldn't let a day go by without making her smile.

"She's better off with her fiancé. You'll find someone better suited for you, and you'll forget all about her one day."

"God, I hope you're right." He agreed. "This feeling is awful! What's it even called?"
"Uh, having emotions?"

Bucky only pursed his lips together as he replied deadpanned "Oh, yeah."

"You'll move on. Don't worry. You're just doll dizzy for the moment because you can't have her. And you've usually tended to gravitate towards what you can't have." Steve was right. Bucky usually did love a challenge. It was a toxic behaviour or unhealthy habit he needed to break.

"You're right." Agreeing again, he began to see the logic in his friend's words and understand that's what it had to be. "I'm just being an idiot, that's all."

"Damn right you are." The little man replied in a snippy tone. Bucky couldn't help but chuckle.

He was right. He was being an idiot, and he hated the way he was acting. Never before had he acted this way, and he would have never even thought of pursuing an engaged woman. Usually, when he found out a girl wasn't available the attraction faded. But not that time; that time was different. Perhaps it was because he felt she knew him even better than he knew himself? Or even more than that, she believed in him.

He was ashamed of how he felt, and also annoyed that he wasn't able to get her out of his head. She shouldn't have affected him so much, especially since the entire interaction lasted only fifteen minutes. But to him, it seemed like a lifetime. Somehow, he knew she felt the things he did too, even if she didn't say it.

Regardless though, it didn't matter. He didn't even know her real name, let alone where she lived or how to reach her. Their time had gone as fast as it had come, and Bucky knew Steve was right. He had to get over her, and the best way to do that was with someone else.

Bucky was about to talk to the redhead who had smiled at him when all of a sudden something caught his eye outside. A woman walked by on the street, with long brown hair and a familiar face. Emma.

At that moment, Bucky's heart dropped into his stomach and his palms got sweaty. His mouth fell open for a split second before he regained his composure from the initial shock of seeing her.

"Hey, can you stop the bus!" He yelled at the driver, moving to the front, trying to act quickly.

"Next stop is a couple blocks up, pal!" The bus driver called back, looking in the rearview mirror at the flustered young man.

"Buck, what the hell? This isn't our stop!" Steve yelled out as Bucky raced forward, his heart pounding fast.

"I'll meet you at your apartment!" He said hastily before forcefully pulling the lever for the doors open as the bus stopped at an intersection.

Bucky jumped down the steps as the driver yelled obscenities at him. He dived in front of a cab that just missed him so he could get across the street. The driver honked at him and swore out his window but Bucky chose to ignore it, adrenaline rushing through his veins.

He ran forward, searching for the woman he had seen from the windows. He saw her in front, walking leisurely. Her dark brown hair was down, blowing slightly from the wind. He raced towards her.

Bucky didn't even know what he would say to her once he caught up. His feet moved on their own,
and his mind raced with words he didn't quite know how to put into a sentence.

In his head, he began to run through different scenarios. He couldn't believe he found her, and as he went forward he tried to think of what he wanted to say.

He would explain to her that he knew that they didn't know each other. They were complete strangers, who met during a drunken stupor at a crummy bar in Brooklyn. He would tell her how in those few moments with her, he had felt more alive than he probably ever had.

Laughing with her as they danced in the streets flashed through his brain again. He would tell her he knew that she felt the same way he did at that moment. They had been in some other place together. An entirely different dimension where they were the only two people in the entire world for those few moments. He would say he never needed anyone as he did her. She was engaged but that didn't matter because she wasn't sure if she wanted to get married anyway. Everything that evening happened for a reason, and she was supposed to meet him that night. They were supposed to meet, dance, laugh about nothing, and form a connection unlike any other.

He would beg her to give him a shot if she didn't begin telling him off first. And he would say how they owed it to one another to try, and that he was positive that there was some driving force in the universe calling them together. It felt more natural than any other experience, and Bucky knew deep down in his gut that she was the woman he was supposed to be with.

If he was able to convince her of that, as well as admit to her own feelings he knew she had, everything would finally feel as though the pieces in his life had fallen into place. This is how it was meant to be, and he was more sure of that than anything else in his entire life.

Bucky's mind raced with the words that came from the very deepest parts of him. His heart pounded more, and he slowed his pace as he approached her. Reaching out to touch her arm gently and get attention, he couldn't believe she was there. That had to have been a sign, right?

Tapping her on the shoulder, the woman turned around with wide, curious eyes.

He was met with a face he had never seen before. His stomach sunk, and the woman's eyebrows raised as she asked if she could help him.

Looking down, defeated, Bucky's spirits sank as he answered with a quiet, "Uhh, no...Sorry, I thought you were someone else."

The woman kept walking, not giving him a second glance. He stood there in the street as people passed by him. He stood there for what felt like too long, feeling the disappointment and sadness that welled up inside him. He put his hands in his pockets and decided to walk back to Steve's, feeling both defeat and misery.

He took his time walking back, not ready to face his friend in his shame. He tried not to think about Emma, and also the embarrassing situation that had just happened. He was in way over his head, and he was losing his mind obsessing over some girl.

Steve was right, he had to get over her.

When he made it back to Steve's, it was already dark. Steve was waiting for him on the little porch he shared with his neighbouring unit. An extra beer was waiting there for Bucky on the table, Steve had already figured he would need it.

Steve only sighed and Bucky walked up to the stairs slowly approaching him. "You thought it was her?"
Bucky clicked his teeth before he nodded deeply, crossed his arms, and leaned against the rail of the porch. "Yup. Like a fuckin' shmuck."

"Sorry, pal." Steve could only purse his lips and say sincerely. "There's more beer in the fridge if you need it once you finish that one."

"Thanks," Bucky said slowly and then looked up to Steve, "You're right. I need to get over her. This crossed a line."

"You think? You nearly killed yourself trying to get across the street to chase after a random woman!" He teased him, a lighthearted smirk on his face. "I'd say that definitely crossed a line. That crossed all the lines."

Bucky chuckled, "Yeah, yeah, I don't want to hear it, punk." He had lost it over her. Bucky swore to never be like that again over a dame.

After a few drinks, he decided it was best to forget her and move on. And that was what he did. He attempted to expel her from his brain, and not think of her again.

For the most part, he was successful. That is, until that very moment three years later. He was feeling more broken and empty than he ever had in Italy. He had just lost a friend, and death sometimes caused people to have some silly reactions.

Emma's name popped into his head with the memory he had been reminiscing about. Suddenly he recalled what happened in 1940, being in Brooklyn and absolutely out of his goddamn mind for a stranger he had met literally only once.

He forgot not being able to get her out of his head. All it took was that memory and suddenly there she was again, out of the blue, and making him feel all things he was sure he had forgotten.

What once was a happy memory he wished he could forget his sorrows with was now tainted by the fact that three years later he had completely forgotten all that he felt for her. It was like she had ceased to exist after he told himself to get over her. Because he knew if he dwelt on her longer he would go mad.

For the first time in years, he thought about her due to that distant memory of a warm Summer's day. He wished he had that feeling again; to feel alive and like something mattered. She had made him feel that way, and Bucky had completely forgotten all about that.

As he thought about her, Bucky's gaze shifted to a truck that arrived near the church where the fighting took place. It came to a stop, and the door swung open.

He watched as Lucy Heinrich hopped out of the truck. His mind raced from the memory that he had relived. He had completely forgotten all about the mysterious woman he went crazy for and the way she made him feel. He had forgotten what she looked like, her voice, the smell of lemongrass on her skin, and the way her smile could make his heartbeat all that much faster.

Getting out of the truck, Dr. Heinrich walked to church and looked up. A smile appeared on her face from excitement as she stood in front of it.

Bucky's heart dropped, and immediately it began to race. No, he thought. That can't be possible. It wasn't possible.

He suddenly knew why she was so familiar, and why he didn't recognize her before. After spending so long attempting to get her out of his head, of course he wouldn't recognize her.
Fate really was a cruel entity, to throw them together again.

Lucy found herself slowly fitting into an unusual routine in Italy. She found she still didn't like it very much, and beyond the landscape and the surrounding area, there were very few things she enjoyed about it.

However, there was a plus side to being in Italy. And their names were Charles, Peggy, and Elsa.

She found that with the taxing work of attempting to organize the artifacts they had saved, as well as the reports and research she had to do, Charles was a God-send. She found he often gave up nights of sleep so she could have a full night's rest or even a few quiet moments to herself as he did her work for her.

He ate, slept, and breathed his job and Lucy loved him for that more than anything. Since they had been there, she found herself getting closer with him and confiding in his friendship.

She found herself often falling asleep while finishing reports or labeling objects. Lucy usually awoke to a blanket draped around her shoulders. Charles would always be a few feet beside her, emerged in his work.

Elsa, like Charles, had become a close companion. As someone who never had many close girlfriends growing up, Lucy found it a new experience to be in such close quarters with one and be excited to see them at the end of the day to discuss what happened.

When Elsa wasn't at the hospital or in the field and the two of them weren't too exhausted they would lie in their opposite cots and talk. Both of them would look up at the dark ceiling of their tent, sometimes laughing and one time in particular, crying.

Lucy had never had a relationship like that with anyone except her sisters. She welcomed it, and it made the new transition to Italy far easier.

Peggy was a different story. While the two of them were usually remarkably busy, they almost found time every morning to sit and have breakfast and coffee. Although their friendship was not as deep and her and Elsa's, Lucy still cherished it with her entire heart.

She and Peggy didn't usually discuss such emotional matters as she and Elsa did. Mostly, they discussed work issues and problems they had with their fields. Peggy was always interested to hear about Lucy's work and vise versa. Of course, Peggy couldn't give her all the information since most details were classified, but she told Lucy what she could. On some occasions, she even told her a little more than what was allowed. Lucy liked that since it showed she trusted her and proved the strength of their friendship.

Lucy was ripped out of her thoughts as the trucks she was riding in pulled to a stop. She hopped out quickly and immediately started getting to work after happily gazing on the church she was supposed to work on.

When she had received a call from the 107th, telling her about what they found, she and Charles had been close to discovering where the Tesseract was located. They had spent hours pouring over the books sent to her by many of her various colleagues. One in particular about the cult of Odin that was written in ancient Scandinavian looked very promising. Unfortunately, although Charles was an expert in ancient languages, he was finding it difficult to understand.

They had been so close to discovering the location when she had been ripped from her work to complete another project.
Lucy wasn't at all disappointed though, and she found herself happy to be gazing at the church that the 107th had informed her about. She looked forward to her new project and although it was just another thing being added to an already long list of things to do, she was excited about it.

When she had gotten out of the truck, she found herself stopping to admire it.

Lucy brought her hand above her eyes to block the sun out and she smiled as she looked up.

Work was one of the few things that made her truly happy. She loved her job, and she loved her career. Daniel often said she was married to it, and would teasingly ask if she would ever love him like that one day.

Lucy watched as Charles eagerly went into the church to survey it. She noticed how he went in with a little bit more of a hop in his step. She grinned at his excitement, proud of her little prodigy.

Her smile stayed on her face until she turned and saw Sergeant Barnes. Her facial expression fell, noting how she had successfully avoided him for a few weeks only to be once again thrown together with him. She knew better this time than to request him to join her services though.

She had not seen Sergeant Barnes since he had defended her from Gilbert Whitney's harassment. That had been several weeks before, and she was confused about whether or not they were, in fact, on better terms after he had stuck up for her.

As they looked at each other from across the town square, Lucy noticed how his facial expression fell when he saw her. He paled, looking as though he had seen a ghost. A twinge pulled at her belly and suddenly she felt uncomfortable.

She had thought after their last interaction they decided to remain civil. At one point, their bickering had even seemed to turn from hostile to playful. Lucy had hoped that even if they never ended up liking each other (which she was perfectly fine with— she still wasn't his biggest fan) that at least they would be able to get along.

Feeling suddenly self-conscious and nervous; Lucy turned away as he made his way towards her, looking vaguely uncomfortable as well.

She was about to turn to the back of the truck to grab something when all of a sudden she heard a slight buzz. She cocked her ear and then frowned. The buzzing grew louder, into a hum.

She looked up to the sky and saw nothing but clouds in the area she was. But she knew something was wrong still, the noise was too constant and too irritating.

She thought nothing of it and returned to unloading the excavation equipment. Looking up, Barnes was still on his way over to her and Lucy felt her stomach do a small flip under his intimidating stare.

Lucy wondered what the hell he wanted, and if it would end up in a fight again. She found herself hoping that it wouldn't.

The irritating buzz continued in her ears. Looking around, she realized it wasn't just her noticing it. She paled as it got louder, suddenly recognizing what it was.

It was too late that she realized they were airplanes.

An explosion of yellow, orange, and red light flashed, and flames roared loudly as it erupted from a bomb being dropped. Sputtering bullets rang out, and the humming grew closer still as the soldiers in the square raced to take cover.
Their Air Force was nowhere in sight to fight back, so the two lone German Luftwaffes continued their assault.

Another explosion erupted, a large bang sounded, but Lucy could hardly hear it from the ringing in her ears. One more spectacular and terrifying blinding light flashed forward, the flames erupting looked like something straight out of hell.

Then, all of a sudden, Lucy couldn't see anything at all. There was only darkness, and she struggled not to be consumed by it.

When she came to, a haze had settled over her. Lucy didn't realize she was laying on her back on the ground until she felt pain in the back of her head.

She was lying on the cold, hard dirt, her vision coming and going. Blackness threatened to swallow her again, but Lucy fought to keep her eyes open.

For a second, she wondered what exactly happened. How did she end up on the ground? What was going on?

She could hear the muffled screams around her and was able to sit up only enough to see the world around her set ablaze with fire. She was lying several feet away from where she had been previously standing. The truck she had gotten out of was flipped over, flames licking its metal skin as it lay in ruins.

Lucy didn't know what happened. Only that she was on the ground, and the sticky warmth of blood-soaked the street where her head was. She had hit it, that much was obvious. Everything was fuzzy, and it seemed as though things were moving slower than normal.

Trying to sit up, she yelled in agony. What was once a sunny day had changed to darkness from the smoke rising from the wreckage. The church was crumpled in heaps, and panic rose inside of her as she looked at it thought her blurred vision.

Trying to sit up more, something stopped her beyond the pain in her head. She yelled again, although she could barely hear herself. Lucy attempted to look down to where the pain was coming from. She let out a frustrated groan since she lacked the strength to hold herself up enough to assess the wounds and figure out where the hell that god awful shooting sensation was coming from.

Lucy could barely stay conscious, and all her movements were drawn out as though she were trapped in a dream.

Having trouble breathing, she noticed how she was suddenly leaning against something that was keeping her upright. Her wide, panicked eyes met the concerned, worried ones of Sergeant James Barnes.

She couldn't hear what he said at first, due to the ringing in her ears. She could see his lips moving, and feel his strong arm propping her up so she was able to slump over enough to sit upright without falling.

*Are you okay?* His lips moved.

Lucy couldn't respond. She figured she was dying as blackness began to settle over her and pain ran through her entire body.

At that moment, Lucy only had one instinct. She had to be rid of whatever was hurting her.
Her hand moved on its own and went to where she was in the most pain. Her ears still rang, causing her head to pound and there was an ache coursing through her entire being that was horrific enough to make her want it all just to end right there and then.

Her vision was still blurry, and she began to have every single one of her senses fade when she felt something in her body that shouldn't have been there.

Something was protruding out of her side. She gripped it tightly in her fist and pulled out, a scream ripping through her body as she clutched it tightly.

Suddenly, all her senses came rushing back to her, and she stared down at what was in her hand and saw a piece of jagged, black shrapnel. Blood began pouring out of her wound and she suddenly felt as though she was going to be sick.

"Fuck! Fuck! Oh, holy fuck! Why did you do that, huh? Jesus Christ! " Sergeant Barnes said in a panicked, fast-paced tone as he pressed his hand urgently to her gaping wound. The pressure felt good, but she nearly felt everything go black again on her once more. "You have to be the dumbest genius I've ever met!" She could hear the laughter in his voice as he tried not to panic too much. Blood rushed over his fingers, "Aren't you supposed to be a doctor or something'?" He teased.

She tried to smile, but it hurt too badly. He laid her down on the ground, and she stared up at him. He looked panicked as he watched her blood flow over his hand and onto the ground. He yelled desperately for a medic. "Not that kind of doctor." She coughed, the iron taste of blood filling up her mouth.

"Fuck, you're gonna be alright, okay doll? You can't die on me, you got that?" He said as his voice shook. Lucy wasn't concentrating on his words, she was focusing on the way his face looked. It was dirty from the explosion, but his deep eyes still were shining through. He looked scared and nervous for her; his lip trembled. A trail of blood was running down his nose and Lucy figured he had to have fallen and hit his head as well before he made his way over to her.

"Why? You worried?" She teased him, and he scoffed, but his grin showed through.

"Yeah, who else will be a pain in my ass if you're not around?"

"I'm sure there's no shortage of people who dislike you." She quipped back.

He chuckled again and pushed harder on her wound to keep the bleeding manageable. She hissed in pain and he flinched at the noise and said quickly "Sorry, sorry! Shit, I'm sorry, doll."

"Doctor," She coughed, still giving him grief even when bleeding out.

"Whatever you say, Doc. How the hell are you still this annoying when you've just yanked a piece of shrapnel out of your ribs?" His eyes couldn't focus on her. They went everywhere from her face to her wound, to their surroundings. He was alert for more bombings, but also keeping an eye for a medical truck.

"Someone's gotta—," She coughed again, the pain settling more but also fading at the same time. She figured her body was going into shock, "put you in your place."

"God, you're fucking annoying." The words he said were harsh and insulting in any other circumstances, but Lucy could tell he was joking. He tried to offer her a small smile, and Lucy felt as though she was calmer in his presence.

A thought flashed in her mind, and suddenly she was up in a second but the pain kept her back
down. She winced as he quickly urged her back to her place on the ground, worry in his voice. "Charles? Where's Charles?" Lucy had never been so scared in her life. She looked to the remains of the church as her tears blurred her vision as dread filled her very soul.

"He's—he's alright, I think," Barnes said as she looked around. People were stumbling out of the church as it kept collapsing, and although he didn't see the little man, the number of people exiting looked promising.

"I have to find Charles!" She said again with her voice breaking, the heartbreak notable in her tone.

He looked down at her and saw how worried she was her friend's well-being, he licked his lips and put more pressure on her wound, "Don't worry about him. Just worry about yourself, Doc. He'll be fine." He tried to comfort her. He had never heard her so concerned about someone before, and the feeling of worry she had for her assistant reminded him of his own concern for his men.

She only nodded, too weak to argue. There was nothing she could do for Charles at that moment anyway. Lucy only put her head back down as he kept looking down at her, his expression unreadable but he looked flustered and scared.

He looked around, unable to gaze at her. He hated seeing her like that, and there was something uneasy in his stomach beginning to build. Focusing on anything but her wounds, he kept his hand still pressed to her sticky, blood-soaked garbs. Her eyes kept fluttering open and closed, with each passing moment she became too weak to stay awake.

"Hey, look at me." He urged her, "Keep your eyes open." His voice slightly shook. He wasn't sure if he could handle any more death around him.

"I'm just so tired," She said barely above a whisper, "So tired," Lucy's eyes continued to flutter. She felt her hand grasp for her Star of David pendant as she always did whenever she was scared.

"I know, but don't go to sleep. You have a bad bump on your head and you can't sleep. Just keep talking to me." Lucy was shocked at the effort he was going through to make sure she got through this.

She recalled one of their interactions a few weeks before, trying to give him a weak smile, she said "Thought you said that if it came down to it you wouldn't save me," He had said as much in the cavern below the church. She would have figured he would have left her for dead.

Bucky gave her a defeated smile, he felt himself grow a little woozy at all the blood she was losing, and he tried to keep it together with the best he could, "I lied," He said with a soft reply, his brows furrowed with worry.

She tried to return a weak smile, and he brushed a piece of hair out of her face, "I knew you were full of shit, Barnes."

"Yeah, all bark and no bite." He then pursed his lips before deciding that he didn't want things to end on bad terms with her if this was going to be their final moment, "And it's Bucky." He added for good measure, growing serious to mock her for the way she had demanded to be called by the proper titles, "To you."

"Bucky?" She asked curiously for a moment and then coughed, "God, that's the dumbest nickname I've ever heard."

He only clicked his teeth, "Yeah, so I've been told." He didn't take her insult to heart, knowing by her expression that she was joking.
"I like it." She added. *Bucky*, she thought as it repeated in her head. She liked the way it sounded.

"I like Lucy too." It suited her more than Emma, he thought. He had never believed that Emma was her real name, and he was right. Bucky was only angry that it had taken him so long for him to realize who she was, and now that he found her, he was worried she would be taken away. Not to mention, he had wasted so much time quarreling with Lucy that he never even took the time to get to know her.

She only snorted, "Don't get too familiar with it," He rolled his eyes at her, "It's still Doctor or Lieutenant when this is done." Lucy tried to frown to prove that she insisted on it, but she found herself unable to.

"Anyone ever tell you that you talk too much?" He shook his head as he looked down at her.

"Once or twice. I've been known to be quite vexing."

"No! You?"

Lucy tried to laugh but ended up choking. She cringed as her body stung more and she hissed. She closed her eyes, trying to block out the pain, "You sure are putting in a lot of effort to keep someone you hate alive;"

Bucky frowned at her words, his heart dropping in his chest and his eyes growing sad, "I don't hate you."

She smirked, egging him on, "Not even a little?" She could feel the ground below her getting more and more soaked with her blood.

Trying not to grin too much, he chuckled before admitting, "Yeah, okay. Maybe a little." He looked down at her wound again and his smile disappeared, he got a serious look in his eyes. He swallowed a lump forming in his throat, causing his Adam's apple to bob up and down. She looked at him and saw the expression of concern on his face. Shock filled her entire being as she realized he actually cared if she lived or died.

"Relax," She hissed again in pain. Her eyes began to flutter closed. It was getting more difficult for Lucy to stay awake with each passing moment. "Don't look so nervous. You're not the one dying here;"

"You are not going to die." He grit his teeth as he insisted. He put more pressure on where she was bleeding with his hand, "You have to live, okay doll? So that way, I can kill you the next time you irritatingly insist on being called Doctor."

"Ah-HA!" She nearly cried as she exclaimed, whimpering as pain ripped through her again. Bucky hissed with frustration as he couldn't stop the bleeding. "I knew you had an alternative motive! Couldn't let that lousy Luffewafe steal your glory."

He chuckled before shaking his head, "No Ma'am." His voice was quiet and smooth. It reminded her of whiskey or velvet and she closed her eyes remembering the echo of it.

Her eyes fluttered open again briefly for only a moment as they looked at each other. Bucky felt his heart break while she laid on the ground, little streams of blood trickling down both her nostrils on the side of her face. More blood slowly fell out of the corner of her mouth. He didn't even want to look down at the hole in her side either, knowing there would be more blood than he could stomach. The crimson of it was a stark contrast compared to her porcelain skin, and he was shocked that she still looked so beautiful. It was horrific and terrifying, and Bucky knew he would remember this sight
for the rest of his days and it would haunt his dreams.

"You're not allowed to die." He whispered again, "Do you hear me? That's an order."

Lucy's eyes closed again, and at that time she didn't have the strength to open them. She gripped the little pendant around her neck even tighter, not letting go for even a second. "Bucky?" She said weakly.

"Yeah, doll?"

"If I tell you a secret, will you hold it against me?" Her voice was barely above a whisper and Bucky wanted to scream at how frustrated he was knowing that he was completely useless in saving her.

Bucky let out a pained chuckle, almost as though he was trying to keep it together, even though he was completely unhinged, "Probably. But I might let this one slide, all things considered." He was trying to stay positive for her. He figured if he could at least get her to joke around with him again everything would be alright.

"I'm really scared." Was all she admitted, her voice barely audible.

With those words, Bucky's heart damn near broke. He whispered back, clutching her opposite hand that wasn't holding her necklace in his free one tightly, "Me too."

Lucy didn't recall what happened after that. Her vision faded in and out into black as she was lifted onto a wooden board that was found from the wreckage of the church and carried to the medical truck. As she was moved, Bucky's hand continued to grip her own as he walked alongside her.

When she finally felt his release, her eyes opened just enough to watch him as he waited there while she was lifted in the back of the truck. The engine started, and Bucky continued to stand there, his brows furrowed with worry and a sickening, gut-wrenching, feeling in his stomach.

As the truck began to move and drive away, she kept her eyes on him. His face was the last thing Lucy remembered seeing before being sucked into a void of darkness.

Chapter End Notes

100,000 words and FINALLY Bucky remembers who Lucy is! Geez, talk about a slow burn. I won't apologize for it though, because I love torturing you all. Trust me when I say the wait is worth it once things finally get a little spicier. ;)

I know I said this chapter is my second favorite, but I've been writing like a madwoman the last couple days, and the next two chapters I have planned out are really, really good. They're the perfect amount of fluffy, sad, funny, and just ughh! There is some exciting stuff comin, let me tell you.

If you love me and wish for updates to come in faster, please leave a review. And don't forget to follow and favourite!

-Amelia
Hello to my beautiful readers! Thank you to all my reviewers who left such kind words regarding the last chapter. You all inspire me to write so much more. This chapter is dedicated to you! Please enjoy! :) And forgive the bad spelling/grammar, as I was feeling a little lazy again today regarding the rereads.

Bucky was confused, to say the least. Possibly, because digging up a ghost from his past during a war wasn't necessarily ideal.

It had taken him far too long to realize who exactly Lucy Heinrich was and how he had known her. There had always been the tingling sense of familiarity that had pricked at the back of his brain since the moment he first saw her. However, he had just thought that it was always a migraine from how annoying she was.

Never in a million years would he guess that that demanding, bossy, maniacal, and menacing woman was the same person he had met three years prior.

Lucy had been so sweet and kind that night a couple of summers ago. She had not acted even close to how she treated him in the last couple of weeks. But in the moments where she wasn't making his life a living hell, he saw flashes of the woman he had known.

Her small smile when she giggled was the same. And as they joked as she lay on the ground, bleeding out, there wasn't a doubt in his mind that she was the girl that he had obsessed over for so long.

Bucky had a never-ending rush of emotions for the last two days. After she had been taken to the medical ward, he could only sit down with his head in his hands as he tried to make sense of it all. The shock had hit him, hard. He could only think of how he had no idea who she was for so long.

The thing that bothered him the most was after all those years of trying to find her in every woman he had been with, she was right in front of him and he hadn't even noticed. Not only that, but they hated one another. He was so driven by his blinding distaste for her, that if he looked at her and had a real conversation, he would have been able to tell who she was.

But he didn't, and he was set on disliking her. His dislike and their bickering had wasted the few moments of precious time that they had. And instead of fighting, he could have been trying to get to know her. The real her— Lucy Heinrich, not Emma, which she told him was her name when they first met. He smirked as he thought back to the memory of their meeting. He had suspected that she had used a fake name, given the fact it had taken her so long to tell him what it was. He never knew why she used a fake name, and never cared to ask after she told it to him. He figured it was her own business, and he wouldn't pressure her to reveal it to him.
He thought of the way she looked while she stood on the sidewalk with him, a cigarette between her red, perfect lips. Bucky recalled how she told him her name and he had called her out on it immediately, telling her he knew it was fake, making her laugh.

That laugh and giggle, the memory of it plucking his brain were embedding into it now. And when he had seen Lucy for the first time again, he saw the remnants of the beautiful woman back in New York. Sure, her face was a little dirty, and she had done nothing with her hair, and she didn't have any makeup on and she was wearing a man's uniform. But from the moment she exited the truck, Bucky was still struck by her beauty.

He remembered gazing at her across the bar all those years ago and telling Steve "See that girl?" And then, the quick few beats of his heart raced when he saw her laugh, "I'm gonna marry her."

Boy, how wrong he had been. And Bucky would have kicked himself three years ago had he known how they had treated one another since they had seen each other again. Granted, all the hostility had been well deserved. She had been a bitch, and he had been an ass.

But after seeing her lying on the ground, bleeding out, Bucky was struck with fear. He didn't know why, since it was clear he did not know her at all. But if she had died without him even attempting to patch things up between them, he would have gone insane.

Since seeing her, the infatuation he had once felt for her had long faded. Especially since he was struck with the notion that she was indeed, very different than what he pictured in his head. But for some reason, despite their bickering and fighting, he had - no, he needed to know she was alright. And, there was still a shroud of hope still left in him, that perhaps she was the same woman that he had met on that summer night all those years ago. Who had danced with him in the street, and revealed intimate parts of herself to him. She had been the woman who he wanted more than anything, and now that she was in his grasp… Bucky couldn't let her go.

He felt a connection to her that drew him in. And even though they still weren't on the best of terms, he had to see her. He may not have still been an infatuated young man who had feelings for her, but that didn't mean that he wasn't at least concerned about her well being.

Bucky ran a hand through his slightly messy hair as he had approached the medical ward. He had tried to clean himself up to the best he could in case she was awake. He wasn't sure why he cared so much. After all, he wasn't there to win her affections. He didn't have any leftover feelings for her, did he? No, he knew deep down that his romanticized notions of what could have been weighed over what was, and he knew the answer to the question before it even popped into his brain.

And besides, he continued to rationalize that she had been engaged the last time they had met. That had been three years ago. The reality was that she was probably married now. And for some reason, that thought caused a knot to form in Bucky's stomach and he couldn't even explain why.

Once he had got to the infirmary tent, he gently approached, almost skeptical of whether or not he should be there. No one asked him what he was looking for, and no one paid him any attention. Except for a pretty nurse, who stood over Lucy's bed, looking concerned. They made eye contact as he approached her beside. Immediately, seeing Lucy lying there, Bucky's heart clenched.

She looked peaceful, despite the fact she had IV's hooked up to her, and various scratches and bruises on her face. Blood bags were also attached to her, pumping back in what she lost several days before.

"How's she holding up?" Bucky asked the nurse, scared of what he would hear. He wanted to roll his eyes at himself for feeling that way. It shouldn't have mattered that much to him whether or not
she was okay. But for some reason, it just did.

The nurse smiled at him, "She'll be fine, thankfully." Upon hearing those words, Bucky felt like he could finally breathe. Relief flooded over him, and he only nodded as he took in what she said, "Are you a friend of hers?"

"Umm, not really." He answered honestly, "I just ah, - I was just…" What was he doing there, exactly? "I just wanted to check on her." He finally settled on, "You know, make sure she was alright and stuff."

The nurse nodded, and she smirked ever so slightly at how the soldiers’ eyes kept glancing to where Lucy was laying on the bed. He was much more than just concerned, that was for sure. With a playful grin as she saw what was happening, the nurse finally spoke. "Well, if you need anything, my name is Elsa. I'll leave you two alone for a bit." A glimmer of mischief sparkled in her eyes, and Bucky found himself confused by her tone. He never would fully understand dames, that was for sure.

Bucky muttered a thank you, as he suddenly was left as alone as he could be with Lucy. There was, of course, a bunch of other patients. Some were screaming in pain, and nurses rushing all over the place, but it was as good as it was going to get to being private.

He noticed how there was a chair already placed by Lucy's cot. Obviously, she had other visitors coming and going as well. Bucky felt a twinge of jealousy in his stomach at the thought of that. Although, again, he rationalized there was no reason to be.

When he rounded her cot and finally was there closer to her, he wasn't positive she could even hear him as she was lying there sleeping. He decided to speak to her anyway, saying with a small smile as he sank into the chair "Hey, doll." Bucky said, almost hoping she would snap awake from the pet name he knew she hated so much. "Or, I guess Doctor." He sighed, giving in to her stubborn nature of always wanting to be addressed by her proper title.

He looked at her and crossed his arms over his chest. Her hair was greasy and matted, her skin sunken in and pale. A light coat of sweat rested on her brow, and a small yellow bruise laid under her eye. Another scratch lined the side of her other cheek, and Bucky couldn't help but sigh as he stared at her with concern. He felt something ache inside him at seeing her in such a state. "I'm not gonna lie to you, sweetheart." He began, "You look like shit."

But as he stared at Lucy, he felt unable to rip his gaze away from her. He never noticed she had some small freckles on her cheekbones, and how her long eyelashes touched her pale skin as she laid there sleeping. Bucky exhale deeply and moved forward, unable to tear his eyes off her for even a moment.

He brushed some hair out of her face, the tips of his fingers trailing over her skin ever so lightly. Her skin was damp with a light sheen of sweat, but Bucky didn't mind. "Alright, you caught me." He huffed as he sat back down, frustrated he couldn't even keep thinking there was one small moment where she wasn't attractive in his eyes. "You're always pretty. It's getting to be annoying."

More silence from her. Which Bucky figured he should be grateful for. Mainly, because she was slightly vexing. But also if she heard him calling her pretty, she would get that stupid, smug smile on her face which would irritate him to his core.

He hoped she couldn't hear him. But regardless, Bucky continued talking to her. Much like the night they had first met, he found it so easy just to talk to her. Especially now, when she wasn't awake to make any smart-ass comments.
"Thought I'd come visit you because it's been several days since I've had anyone really bark any orders at me." He told her as he leaned forward again, trying to detect any trace that she could hear him. Nothing reflected on her face, only stillness and blankness was present in her expression. "I mean, I get orders all the time but nothing like from the infamous Dr. Heinrich." He chuckled, thinking of when she used to boss him around.

At first, he had been annoyed at her insistent barking of orders. But after a while, he realized, in the male part of his brain which never made much sense, that he was more attracted to her when she was domineering. Nothing both annoyed him and turned him on more than when she told him to shut the fuck up. At that moment, he almost started to want her to make him.

Though he snapped out of that thought process almost immediately as it ran through his head back in the cavern.

The fact that his attraction was so irrational annoyed him. Then again, if he was thinking with his 'other head' when was it ever rational? It didn't make much sense that he still thought her attractive when she was mean to him, but Bucky didn't dwell on that. He figured it had just been so long that he had been in the company of a female that any type of attention, regardless of good or bad, was enough for him.

Swallowing thickly and trying to distract himself, he started talking again, "I've been trying to make sure your reputation precedes you as being scary. Figured you'd appreciate it. That way no other fellas like me give you a hard time." He rubbed his knuckles, guilt racking through him at the thought of more people undermining her due to his part that he had played.

The fact that Gilbert Whitney repeated to Lucy that Bucky called her a heinous bitch also didn't sit right with him. He felt awful that he had said such terrible things, especially since she was now injured and unawake. Her assistant had also heard the negative things Bucky had said, and although he had meant them at the time; perhaps he was a little harsh on her.

After all, even though she was bleeding out their last interaction, she had managed to tease him. They laughed even, and as he looked down at her it became pretty clear that she was the same woman as he had met before. More grown-up and cynical, but the same regardless.

"Although," he said skeptically, "I'm pretty sure if anyone tried to mess with you you'd chew them out." He chuckled as he thought about their last interaction before the bombing and how he had punished Whitney for disrespecting her. Whitney had scowled and whined the entire time he had cleaned the latrines. Bucky had joined him as well, taking his share of the punishment that he doled out.

"You shoulda seen Whitney. He was cursing the both of us under his breath. I was actually worried for a second that he'd try to drown me in there" Bucky cringed just thinking about it. "But you told him what was what. Heard all about that later with some other fellas'. Apparently, most of them are scared shitless of you now, so I don't think you'll be bothered too much from here on out."

Bucky swallowed again and leaned forward so he could peacefully speak to her. "I uhh, I know I gave you a hard time too. And I just wanted to say that I'm sorry again for the way I acted. I honestly don't even really know what came over me, but I was just so mad at you." He licked his lips and continued explaining. "I had just finished fighting, and I could still smell the blood in the air that had been split. And here you come barreling in and ordering me around. I was just a little sore about it all," He scratched the back of his neck awkwardly. He felt more like he was talking to himself than to her at that point.

"And believe me, if it were any other circumstances, I would have been much more pleasant. You
just got me at a bad time. But I mean, you're still kinda a pain in the ass. But you're smart and pretty, like I already mentioned. And you don't take bullshit, which I respect. And you… You seem good to talk to. To be honest, I haven't been feeling like myself lately. This war is just... " He trailed off and looked at her before leaning down, his voice faltering. He could feel himself take in a shaky intake of breath, as nerves and anxiety began to form in his chest. "If I tell you this you better not hold it against me..." He repeated what she said to him the other day.

Thinking of Abe Anderson, and how he had died a few days ago finally dawned on him. Bucky felt himself began to well up with tears for the first time since he joined the war. He coughed to try to stop himself, but his vision began to seem like it was swimming. Lucy had mentioned how scared she was when she was bleeding out. Bucky said he also was, but he had thought he only was scared at the moment. Now, he realized it was constant. "I'm just really scared too. All the time. I feel like I'm losing little pieces of myself every single goddamn day." Was all that Bucky could whisper. He licked his lips and tried to regain his composure a little more, shifting awkwardly in his seat and hoping that no one around him saw his brief moment of weakness.

"But anyway," He clapped his hands on his knees as he tried to distract himself from the vulnerability he had just shown her; even though she wasn't awake to see it. "How much longer are you gonna be asleep, huh Sleeping Beauty? You're missing all the action, you know. I'm sure there's some dirt around here you'd love to play in or some art you'd want to steal eventually. Maybe I could erm," He coughed, clearing his throat as he couldn't believe the next words that came out of his mouth, "Maybe I could even help you? I'll try not to be as much of a dick, but there are no promises. But, if you boss me around too much I'm going to deny that I ever offered." He warned her, pointing an accusing finger at her despite the fact she didn't know what was going on.

Bucky sat there for a moment, saying nothing. He just kept watching her sleep, now feeling an overwhelming need to protect her. Seeing her in the dirt, blood seeping out of her wound as she screamed in agony was nothing he ever wanted to see. When he had first gotten to her after the bomb fell he thought Lucy's injury was much worse than it was. After all, he had seen men with everything that was supposed to be inside of them on the outside, their guts spilling out of the empty cavities that were their bodies.

When he realized it was only shrapnel his relief washed over him. That was until she yanked the damn thing right out of her side. It caused her blood to flow out at a very rapid rate and made Bucky madly panic. He should have yelled at her for doing something so stupid, but he couldn't bring himself to do it even if he tried.

"You could have died." He said almost accusingly, crossing his arms over his chest. Bucky then pursed his lips together, still looking at her before changing his tone to something softer, "Except I think we both know you're way too stubborn to die."

He had the urge to brush more hair out of her face. Instead, he kept his arms crossed against his chest, no matter how much he wanted to reach out and touch her. He couldn't believe that after three years, he had finally found her. And he hated himself for hating her.

Bucky leaned forward more so his elbows were resting on the side of her bed. One of his hands could feel the stubble growing back on his cheeks as he rubbed his skin nervously.

"You might not believe this or remember," He started telling her, "But you and I have actually met before all this. It was in New York, about three years ago. I walked into a bar, looked across it and saw this dame who… Holy shit. I can't even describe the way you made me feel. You took my goddamn breath away." He chuckled ever so slightly at the faint memory, "You were taking shots or something and laughing. I just thought 'oh, here we go' because I knew you were gonna knock me
right off my feet." Bucky looked down and snorted at how ironic and insane the whole situation that they were in was. "I asked you to dance and you said maybe. All while my heart was pounding in my chest harder than it probably ever had. To you, it was probably nothing. But to a guy who didn't know what life had in store for him, and was unsure of himself… I don't know. You were just there when I needed you." He finally admitted all the things to her that he had wanted to say over the years. Some of the things he hadn't even admitted to himself until that moment.

Out of instinct, he grasped her hand gently. His thumb ran over her slightly clammy skin. At the brief moment of physical contact, he saw her eyelids twitch as if she were trying to wake up but physically couldn't. His stomach dropped just a little after seeing her like that.

He ran his thumb gently over her palm, remembering how it felt when she had drawn little patterns on the back of his neck as they danced.

Bucky's heart raced more just thinking about it. Thinking how they danced together and how it felt to hold her tightly in his arms. How badly he wanted to touch his lips to hers, and how long it had taken him to get her out of his head. He recalled how she smiled as he made bad jokes, and how she didn't seem to mind just swaying there with no music. Everything felt so right in those previous few moments. And for the last three years, Bucky had been searching for that same feeling in every girl he had gone out with.

"You were a tough one to get over, I'll tell ya that much." He exhaled deeply as he sat back, removing his hand from her as a thought came rushing back to him. Sadness etched inside him for some reason that he couldn't comprehend, and Bucky spoke lowly, "I tried looking for you in every single girl I saw. For years, I was searching for the same feeling that you gave me in fifteen minutes. And my guess is that you went home that night to your fiancé and didn't give me a single thought after that." The words hurt as they left. Bucky knew it was undeniably true. "Meanwhile, the stupid shmuck that I am, was pining for you all along. Hoping that someday we'll run into each other somewhere and everything would just work out."

He had hoped that for so long. But now that it happened, they had bickered and hated one another. He chuckled at the thought, "Who would have known that there'd have to be a war just for me see you again."

His eyes flashed down to the hand he had just been holding. Bucky noticed she was no longer wearing the diamond ring that he had seen that night. He wondered if she had taken it off for safekeeping. "Anyway, you're probably married now. So even if things were different and we weren't at each other's throats, I still wouldn't have a shot with you." As reality set in, Bucky felt even more heartbroken than before. They were never meant to be, and he almost found himself wishing that he had never met her that night.

As he was about to open his mouth to say something else, a strange voice erupted behind him, "What are you doing?" It asked accusingly.

Bucky turned around to see Lucy's assistant standing there. His jaw was clenched and his fists balled tightly. He looked on edge by his presence, and Bucky stood up as Charles moved forward. His eyes glanced from the bed back to him, watching the scene skeptically. His nostrils flared in anger, his eyes blazing with rage.

Feeling shame and knowing that Charles had overheard his conversation with his comrades a few days earlier, Bucky answered "I just came to see how she was doing," Charles looked at him blankly, "I just feel bad that she got hurt after how things were between us."

"Cut the bullshit," The man spat out hatefully, anger reflecting even deeper in his eyes.
Bucky wasn't intimidated by the smaller man. Given the fact that he had several inches on him, Charles looked to me more of an academic than the athletic type. He had a very unthreatening presence, but something about the way he spoke made Bucky know that he meant business. "I heard you speaking about her a couple of weeks ago. You don't give a damn about what happens to her."

Closing his eyes in frustration, Bucky almost groaned in annoyance with himself, "That was before. You're wrong now because I do care about what happens to her."

Charles' expression still reflected anger and he scoffed. His nostrils flared in and out, and it was obvious to Bucky that he didn't believe him for even one second, "You think that I don't see what's going on?"

Bucky looked at the man in pointed confusion, waiting for him to explain. There was silence for a little while, and Bucky was expecting Charles to continue. Pursing his lips and giving him another pressing look to urge him onto what he was going to say, Bucky could see the man still didn't get his drift.

"What's—what's going on?" Bucky finally had to ask, seeing the man didn't seem to understand his confusion.

"That you're trying to win that bet with your arsehole friends!" Charles stated as if it should have been obvious. Bucky still had no idea what he was talking about. He cocked an eyebrow, looking at the man as if he had grown another head.

Charles huffed in frustration and rolled his eyes, almost emitting a small growl, "Really? You're going to play dumb? You're really going to try that?"

Bucky couldn't help but chuckle as he ran a hand through his hair and confidently said, "I don't know what to tell you, pal! I have no idea what you're talking about." His cocky expression slowly changed as Charles scowled and came forward, poking a finger into his chest.

"You listen to me. You self-absorbed, despicable, low-life, little prick—,"

Bucky immediately frowned and interrupted him, smacking his hand from poking him, "Alright buddy, let's just take it easy!" The little man was fuming at Bucky's nonchalant attitude.

"If you come near Dr. Heinrich... If you look at her, if you speak to her, if you do much as breathe in her general direction, I will see it as my duty to make your life miserable." He sneered as he poked him in the chest again.

"Wait, who are you again?" Was all Bucky could stupidly say, frowning and rubbing his chest where Charle's had poked him, "You're her guard dog or something?"

"I'm her assistant!" The man exclaimed loudly, baffled that he wasn't already aware of the fact. "And I will not let you compromise our mission here! And I won't let you or your abhorrent friends make wagers on who can get into her knickers first!"

Confusion flashed across Bucky's face when all of a sudden it dawned on him. He brought a hand to his face and pinched the bridge of his nose as he let out a frustrated breath, "What?" Bucky still didn't know what he was talking about, but he'd bet any money that Gilbert Whitney was behind it all.

"I said I overheard the bet that you and your comrades made, and you're not fooling anyone. So get out now, and leave both of us alone." Charles said seriously, his tone even and cold.
Bucky only nodded, his jaw clenched as he realized he'd have to have a little chat with Whitney later on.

Charles's eyes followed him out of the infirmary, he could feel him glaring daggers into his back as he left. Before he completely exited, Bucky turned back before asked, "What are the chances of you letting her know I stopped by?"

Charles had his arms crossed, "Slim to none."

Bucky sighed finally, his voice low and harsh before looking back at Lucy one more time, "I figured as much."

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Lucy wasn't positive if she dreamt of anyone or anything in particular.

 Mostly, she drifted in and out of consciousness, feeling as though she were a wave on the ocean. Her body hurt, and her throat felt as though she gargled with glass. Everything was raw, and it felt as though she hadn't had water in a year.

The one thing she did dream of slightly was the desert. In her morphine stupor, she dreamt that she had been back on a camel. It wasn't a memory, but rather something her mind cooked up.

She had only seen a camel once before working in Egypt. Daniel has taken her to the zoo in Paris, and they had eaten peanuts and cotton candy as they walked around. There was a small camel there, and Lucy looked at it with joy, thinking perhaps she would get the chance to ride one day.

Daniel told her of course and kissed her head. He didn't believe she actually would though, and Lucy knew it at the time. But they continued walking anyway, their sticky fingers intertwined.

She had ridden a camel. She had ridden one as she was shot at, after stealing an artifact. It was one of the first times she had stolen straight from the Nazis. And if Daniel could have seen her, he wouldn't have even recognized her. She wore men's cargo pants, with a white long-sleeved shirt, a pistol on her hip, and a red and white headscarf, a kaffiyeh, to keep her hair away from her face and her head cool.

She had come a long way from pearls, diamonds, dresses, and red lipstick.

Lucy barely remembered what it was like to dress and feel like a woman. She always loved being feminine and taking the time to look pretty. She was proud of her womanhood, but that didn't mean she wanted to be a woman all the time. Especially since she realized just how hard it was for women to make in professional fields.

She had never been believed in. But she had proved them all wrong.

She had gone across the desert on a camel for days. Running out of water, and eating crickets to stay alive the sun had burnt her skin until it was red, angry, and peeling. But she survived, and she would do it again.

Lucy wasn't afraid of what awaited her. Not really. Not until that moment as she slept in a bed in the infirmary, hearing muffled voices and men crying out in pain.

She dreamt of the desert, of it swallowing her. She dreamt of the sand moving through time and space and all matter and consuming her. She thought of it burying her alive, and her body decaying and rotting, and being feasted on by the bugs and creatures that lived and thrived off of her flesh.
She thought of dryness and how nothing could grow, or live, or prosper. As she slept, her mind drifted to those few things, and those few things only. There were no pleasant memories of the way her mother braided her hair and kissed her forehead goodnight. She remembered nothing of sleeping in a small bed with her sisters. She didn't remember Mr. Lee's warm smile or the way Mrs. Lee cried at her graduation.

She didn't remember the feel of Daniel's lips. Or the way his hand used to find hers as they slept. She remembered nothing of Margaret Whiting's *My Ideal*, as the music filled her ears from a turntable off in the distance. There was no flutter in her chest, as there was the last time she heard it.

There was only darkness. And the feeling of which follows after she looked at the desert for the first time, and saw nothing and heard nothing for miles, and miles, and miles, on end.

It was emptiness.

And it terrified her more than death itself.

Because what came after? Was there any form of an afterlife? Or was it that empty void, that she had peered out of, and saw continue on and on, having no end.

*Oblivion.*

But there was something, she realized as she slept.

The gentle coolness of wet cloth on her forehead, a womanly whisper. A careful touch of someone who time and time again, had done those very actions.

There was the heavy breathing, of a male companion who spoke in a soft English accent.

Then, a foreign feeling. Of someone resting beside her, and grasping her hand as she slept. She didn't know who, but she could feel the calluses of their overworked hands. She felt comfort, knowing she wasn't alone. Her heartbeat a little faster in her chest in those few moments. She liked it, as it proved she was alive.

Perhaps that void Lucy was drifting off in wasn't so big and terrifying and all-consuming as had she thought.

When she awoke, she almost thought she was in a hospital back at home. Not Paris, and certainly not Chicago; but New York, her real home.

But there wasn't any white walls and nurses walking around in all-white outfits. She was in an infirmary tent, and the nurse's uniforms were stained with blood.

Lucy felt herself almost go back asleep, but her throat was so dry and so sore that she didn't think she could sleep even if she wanted to.

A beautiful but tired face appeared in her vision. Elsa Hardy, her tentmate and friend, looked pissed.

"You idiot!" She hissed as tears welled in her eyes, "Do you know how worried I was about you?!

Lucy couldn't help but crack a smile. As someone who never had many female friends, or really any friends in general, the feeling of one caring for her and being concerned was odd.

"Nice to see you too," She chuckled, and her throat hurt as she tried to speak. She croaked like a frog, her voice deep and scratchy.
"Don't ever worry me like that again! Seriously, I don't think I've slept for three days since it happened!" She exclaimed and gently pat her head with a cloth.

**Three days? Lucy thought. Was she out for that long?**

Quickly, Elsa got her a glass of water. The woman looked like she hadn't slept for days. Her beautiful hair was matted, and her eyes had dulled over, while dark bags hung underneath them.

Lucy took big sips of her water and nearly coughed it up. But she kept it down, desperate for it. "You should have slept," Lucy scowled her, feeling very motherly as she lectured her from her bed.

"How could I have?" Elsa asked with a shrug, her soft voice getting even meeker and quieter, "You're my only friend."

Lucy looked at the young woman and exchanged a soft smile with her. Elsa grabbed her hand and held it tightly. She looked relieved but also dead on her feet. She had been worried that her only friend would die after she was hauled in, a gaping hole in her side from a piece of shrapnel.

The wound wasn't anywhere near-fatal, as it turned out. It missed all the essential organs and wasn't as deep as it appeared to be. But she had lost a lot of blood, and it hurt like a bitch. Especially since she also hit her head quite badly after she fell. But she would be fine in the long run, and she was one of the doctors' and nurses' less pressing patients. But to keep her brain from swelling they kept her asleep for a couple of days, so her stitches could heal and also so her head injury wouldn't get any worse.

As Lucy laid there, slowly drinking water as not to choke on it again, a thought popped into her head. She gasped, terror filling her entire body. "Charles?! Where's Charles? Where is he?"

Elsa quickly answered, "He's alright! He's completely fine as well. He just got knocked unconscious in the explosion and had a little lump on the head. He has been here every day since, barely leaving your side except to eat. I finally sent him off to sleep and have a proper meal. He's devoted to you, that's for sure." Elsa laughed, and quickly walked around Lucy's side and grabbed a thermometer to take her temperature. "He's like a loyal lapdog."

So Charles was alright. Thank God, Lucy thought silently in relief. If anything happened to him, she would have never forgiven herself.

"Peggy was here also. When Charles was sleeping, she sat here with you and got work done." Elsa smiled, "She was quite worried as well. I don't think she has many friends either. We chatted quite a bit in between me having to care for my patients. You two are a lot alike." Elsa smiled as she wiped a bead of sweat off her brow.

She went around to another patient of her's a few beds over from Lucy and set the man's pillow up so he was more comfortable.

Lucy still found it difficult to speak, even after drinking water. She would have to continue listening to Elsa's cherry chatter. How that woman stayed so chipper after not sleeping for three days was beyond Lucy.

If Lucy had even a full night's sleep but missed her morning coffee, she was a nightmare still.

"Oh," Elsa perked up suddenly and had a mischievous smile on her face, "And," She added with a smirk, "A very handsome Sergeant was here visiting you."

Lucy frowned in confusion and she was about to ask who, when a thought popped into her head.
Bucky. He had told her to call him that.

She had thought he hated her. After all, she still partially hated him too. But he had been so concerned after she had been hit, and so sweet. He had tried to stop her bleeding, and had his voice faltering from… Perhaps fear?

That, of course, didn't make them friends or make like each other. But he was probably sick of seeing the people he knew around him die.

Lucy thought it impossible to have been him who visited her. "What did he look like?" God, her voice still sounded awful. It was hoarse and raspy from not using it for so many days.

Elsa sighed romantically, as though caught up in a ridiculous notion, "Like a daydream. He is very, very, handsome."

Lucy couldn't help but smile at the thought. She was almost in disbelief, not even thinking for a second that Sergeant Barnes—or Bucky, had been there to visit her.

"And he seemed very worried," Elsa's smirk grew even more, "Almost like he was sweet on you or something." Her girlish giggle was bright and happy. Once again, Lucy envied her cheeriness and the energy she had after working so long.

Lucy knew then she was lying. Bucky was not sweet on her. If anything, he was only worried because he felt responsible for her after everything had happened.

"It's a funny thought," Lucy sighed and didn't even really know how to react. All she knew was for the first time in a very long time, her heart fluttered hearing those words. "But he's not sweet on me." He's just a friend, she wanted to say,

But the truth was, Lucy wasn't even sure he was that. After all, it was only a few days ago that the two of them hated each other's guts.

However, something had changed. He had been so worried over top of her, flustered and frantic as he tried to stop the bleeding. They had teased one another, even as she was in pain and wounded.

Perhaps, they would get along better than she thought. But she didn't want to get her hopes up. After all, the man was still an ass.

But the kind of ass that was slightly charming. And well, he was undeniably handsome, that was for sure. And when he wasn't being a total jerk, he seemed smart and funny.

No. Lucy told herself, dead set on wanting to hate him. He was terrible and rude, and one of the worst people she had ever met.

But, he did save her… And their last few interactions, they had almost seemed to get along. He promised he would never rescue her, that he would leave her for dead. He didn't though, and he had stayed at her side and helped get her through her injury. He ever came to visit her in her sleep. To Lucy, it seemed like a bad man wouldn't do that.

She was conflicted, as it turned out, torn between disliking him and perhaps even being fond of him. However, Lucy didn't have time for that. A male figure walked in, and immediately his face lit up upon seeing her.

"Oh thank heavens and God almighty!" Charles exclaimed, his face reflecting a large smile. Lucy couldn't help but laugh at his theatrics as he raced over. It hurt her to laugh, but she couldn't help it.
"I was so worried about you! I don't even know what I'd do if you died! Do you think anyone around here wants an archaeologist's fat sidekick wandering around? God, no. I'd be thrown to the wolves." It was Charles way of saying he missed her, and that he had been concerned. She chuckled, and Elsa giggled at the amusing duo.

"I missed you as well." Lucy croaked, her voice still hurting. She drank another sip of water.

"Missed you?" Charles frowned, "Hardly, it was nice not having someone breathing down my neck every second of the day." The corners of his lips twisted in a smirk as he teased her. "While you were out I got a day off, believe it or not! Remember what those are, hmm, Doctor?"

"Days off? Days off are for weaklings and amateurs." She teased back.

"Nonsense," Elsa came over and handed Lucy another cup of water when she realized her's was empty. "Not too fast," She scolded her as Lucy began to chug. "The only day off he had was while he was here. Even while he was visiting, he was still filling out paperwork and doing research."

Charles had a guilty look on his face, and Lucy smiled softly. "You should have rested more." She told him, "You were hurt too."

"Just a teeny bump on the head is all." His hand went to where he received stitches just three days before. A small patch of hair was removed on the back of his head. He blushed at both Lucy and Elsa's concern. "Besides, I had to do what I could about that church…" He sighed and looked down tragically.

"Was it…?" Lucy didn't want to think about the lost context they could have gained and the hidden art and artifacts that could have rested there. She didn't want to think of how the Crusader church was gone, and possibly destroyed beyond repair.

Charles kept his eyes down, he only gave a sad nod, "It's gone, unfortunately. Nothing remained, and even if it did it's out of context and not worth recording."

"Damn it," Lucy hissed, and then closed her eyes. Not only had she not been fast enough to save the artifacts in the church, but she also hadn't gotten much further with Colonel Phillips mission regarding the Tesseract.

She had been at a standstill since she didn't have access to the ancient texts out where she was. However, she had written to a colleague, since she recalled seeing some information in a book once about one of the artifacts they were looking for. Information of the cult of Odin was in a Nordic book. If Lucy could have the pages sent to her and translated, she was sure she could likely find the location of which the strange mysterious Tesseract was found. The only problem was that it was in code. But, she knew a decryptor, who happened to be the best in the biz of figuring out ancient texts.

His name just so happened to be Charles Tennabum.

Lucy would have to wait patiently until the pages arrived, and then inform Charles of what was at hand when the time was right.

"At least they informed us of that one. There's been a couple of sites passed by that the men didn't think worth mentioning." She rolled her eyes in annoyance. Lucy bit her lip, and then tested the waters by casually switching the subject in a way she hoped Charles wouldn't notice too much. "At least Sergeant Barnes was kind enough to radio in the church. He seems to be coming around,"

Charles jaw tightened, and she saw how his face reflected anger upon hearing the man's name. "Hardly," He said in a bitter tone.
A few beds away, Elsa listened with open ears at the gossip that her two friends were discussing. She didn't mean to pry, but the last few days had been boring, and meddling was something she was known for. If there was one thing she was especially exceptional at, it was playing matchmaker.

"I doubt that man thinks of anyone or anything but himself." The way Charles spoke of him, Lucy realized that he might have disliked him just as much as she did a few days ago. "And I'm sure helping us is very low on his list of properties." Charles crossed his arms over his chest defensively. A permanent scowl was on his face as he spoke of Sergeant Barnes.

Lucy didn't know why she needed Charles' validation on the subject of Bucky. She had hoped he changed his mind about him and therefore would confirm it was okay for her to change her mind as well. "You know," She began tentatively, "He was the one that saved me." Charles seemed taken off guard by her statement. He fidgeted in his seat, almost uncomfortably, "I'm sure it was somehow for his own benefit. Though, I couldn't say what for. As I said, he's a despicable man and I don't think he thinks about anyone but himself."

Lucy pursed her lips together. Across the infirmary, she made eye contact with Elsa. They exchanged a look, and it was clear that her friend was interested in the interaction happening. Lucy was suddenly confused, torn between what her two friends were telling her. She wanted to believe that perhaps she had misunderstood Sergeant Barnes — Bucky. But on the other hand, she also still believed in what Charles said. "Elsa said he was here," She swallowed a lump in her throat as she spoke. She wasn't sure why that sentence terrified her or held some power over her. It did, and for some reason unknown to her, She hoped Elsa was right and Charles wasn't. "That he came to visit me."

Charles stiffened again, and snapped quickly, scoffing, "He stopped by for a moment. He was here to see another one of the men in his division who had also gotten injured. He may have wandered by the see if you were alright, but believe me when I say he made no special trips. I was here the entire time."

Across the tent, Elsa remained quiet, although all she wanted to do was speak up.

Lucy's heart sank ever so slightly, which confused her even more, "Oh," Was the only thing she breathed out.

"Lucy, I know you want to see the best in people," Charles said, and for the first time perhaps ever, he used her name instead of her professional title. It meant he was talking to her as a friend, not as his boss. Although, Lucy would have argued with that statement. She didn't often search out and expect the best of people. In her experiences, people were usually pretty shitty. "And thinking he can be anything but selfish is likely what you would like… But I don't think it's true. It's best if we don't intermix. You and I stick to what we know, and we let everyone else keep to themselves. Especially the ones who hinder our work, and don't give two shits about what we're doing." Charles urged. Lucy couldn't help but notice the destain in his voice and how he spoke with a tone of sharpness behind his words.

"You're right." She couldn't help but admit.

Elsa had to bite her cheek to keep from intervening. She did so hard enough to draw blood, but she wouldn't say anything. At least, she thought, not yet...
Oh my, I wonder what Elsa plans on talking to Lucy about? Also, what little chat Bucky plans on having with Gilbert...? The next chapters is very, very well done if I do say so myself. I'm so unbelievably excited to share what I have in store for you. Now that Bucky recognizes Lucy, it's about to get a whole lot better ;) 

I've recently added this story to Archive of Our Own if anyone prefers to read this pic on another platform. Likely, I'll be updating this one first, but I just thought I should let you all know regardless.

Thank you again. Please leave a review if you liked this chapter. And don't forget to follow and favourite for faster updates ;) 

-Amelia
Chapter XVII

Chapter Notes

I decided to share this chapter early because I LOOOVED writing it. Elsa is such a breath of fresh air, especially since most of the themes in this story are rather depressing. This chapter provides a little relief from that, while also giving a cute little look at the friendship Lucy and Elsa are forming. Let's give a big round of applause for close female friendships everyone!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter XVII

After Charles left Lucy lay in her cot more confused than ever. It was almost time for her to be discharged since she was fine and the bed needed to be freed up for soldiers who needed it more. As she laid there staring into nothing, her hand kept grasping the Star of David pendant around her neck. Biting her lip so hard until she could taste blood, she was frustrated at the way she was feeling.

Lucy could barely describe it. When Elsa had told her of the handsome Sergeant who had come to visit her, Lucy felt— dare she say hopeful? Yes, she felt hopeful.

Not because of the attraction she had for him, which there was no point in denying anymore. But because she didn't like unnecessarily fighting with anyone. She would much rather have a friend than an enemy.

Plus, she liked the way he looked. If she was being honest, she wouldn't mind just having him around just to stare at once in a while.

He was remarkably good looking, and Lucy found herself blushing just thinking about the way he had smirked at her the other day. As he did it, there had been a deep sinking feeling that landed in her lower stomach, and she felt herself become flushed under his gaze. His deep voice mesmerized her, and Lucy felt a pit well inside of her as she thought of its husky tone with a distinctly New York drawl.

Lucy felt the unmistakable feeling of desire. Which she found silly, as he was a stranger. And, he was a total ass, if she was being honest.

She hadn't felt that way about a man since… Well, she couldn't necessarily remember exactly when she last felt that way. She was a little hazy on the specifics, but Lucy remembered the voice of Margaret Whiting playing in the background. Her heart pounded the same way as when Bucky looked at her. She remembered the warmth of a stranger, the stickiness of a New York summer, and the rushing of cars driving by. A drunken haze clouded her memory though, and Lucy felt robbed of a night she was sure she would have wished she could remember.

As she tried to angle herself upright in the cot, she flinched at the shooting pain in her side. It felt as though someone had stuck her with a hot iron rod, and her body burned as though she had caught a fever.
Elsa, the ever busy-bee she was, rushed around taking care of her other patients. She chatted with the other nurses and flirted with the soldiers to keep them in high spirits. Lucy found she liked watching her work and was surprised by just how much effort the nurses put in. Lucy believed they didn't get nearly as much credit for what they did, but none of them seemed to mind anyway.

As another nurse said something into Elsa's ear and she nodded in understanding. She looked to Lucy and flashed a smile before coming over to her bedside. She looked exhausted and worn out, but that didn't keep her from being her normal, cheery self.

"I just was relieved of duty. Which is good because we need to talk," She sat on the side of the bed and then yawned, "Scoot," She giggled before Lucy looked at her with a cocked eyebrow. Elsa only gave her a pressing look before ordering again, "Scoot!"

Lucy winced as she moved over on the bed as far as she could. Elsa laid down beside her, "Thank you, my back was killing me and I was on my feet for a minute longer I think I might have just collapsed," Elsa turned her face so she was looking directly at Lucy. Their faces were so close that she could feel her breath on skin and Lucy widened her eyes at how near they were to one another. Clearly, Elsa had never heard of such a thing as boundaries. "Comfy?" She asked as she snuggled closer to Lucy. Lucy found herself moving her face further back, feeling as though they were close enough to kiss and getting slightly uncomfortable.

"Not really," Lucy admitted hesitantly, raising an eyebrow.

"Huh, well too bad!" Elsa just brushed it off before laughing. She was slightly crazy, Lucy realized. But having someone who was so upbeat even when dead tired and happy was a welcomed change considering they were in a war and happiness was not a luxury most people were entitled to.

"What are you even doing?" Lucy asked her, still a little uncomfortable with their proximity.

"We're having girl talk! It's just like a sleepover!" Elsa giggled before yawning one more time and pulling the pillow Lucy was using a little closer to her.

Lucy had never had a sleepover before, and if she was being honest, she wasn't sure she ever wanted one after that moment. "Umm… about ?"

Elsa frowned as Lucy spoke and wrinkled her nose "Don't take this the wrong way," She said hesitantly, wondering how she could put her next words in the most delicate way possible, "But I really think you need to brush your teeth."

Lucy frowned again and then asked, "Is that what you wanted to talk about?" She was sure Elsa was right. After all, she had been in that bed for three days and her breath likely smelled as though something had died in her mouth.

"No, that was just a friendly suggestion." Elsa shrugged happily before growing quieter, "What I wanted to talk to you about was your assistant."

"Charles? What about him?" Lucy asked skeptically, wondering what could have possibly happened. What was so important about Charles that Elsa needed to speak to her?

Elsa pursed her lips and hesitated before finally opening her mouth, "I believe he genuinely cares for you. That much was obvious by the fact he barely left your side as you slept. I think that he has your best interest at heart. But, that being said, he wasn't being totally truthful to you. And, I feel as your best friend—,"

"You're not my best—,"
"Oh hush, don't ruin this." Elsa snapped and Lucy shut her mouth immediately, a little intimidated by the nurse. "As I was saying," She continued, licking her lips before she began talking again, "He wasn't being completely honest with you about that very handsome Sergeant."

Lucy blinked a couple of times before her heart began to race a little faster, "Wait, what? About Bucky?"

"Awee," Elsa sighed heavily, practically cooing, "His name is Bucky? That's so cute!" Elsa squealed again before giggling softly.

The girl absolutely bonkers, as it turned out. But Lucy found herself enjoying the whole situation, smiling slightly at Elsa's excitement. Lucy cracked a smile and blushed, and Elsa smirked,

"See, you're enjoying girl talk," She chuckled, "I knew this would lift your spirits!" Her expression then turned serious before she began with a no-nonsense tone, "But getting back to Sergent Handsome." Lucy was shocked by Elsa's insistence on discussing the matter, she had never seen the girl serious about anything. Apparently, the topic of boys was a no joking matter when it came to the ever-baffling Elsa Hardy.

Lucy wanted to roll her eyes at her ridiculous behaviour, but instead, she found herself grinning ever so slightly. A lightly blush appeared on her cheeks as Elsa mentioned Bucky again, and the familiar sensation of excitement that Lucy had felt when Elsa first informed her that he had come to visit returned.

"Charles wasn't being very honest with you when he told you about how he was only here for a brief moment. He came specifically to see you. And he sat with you for quite some time, talking to you and even once I saw him brush some hair out of your face."

"He did not!" That got Lucy's attention. She shot back in an accusing tone, not believing Elsa for even a second. "Alright, now I know we are not talking about the same person!"

Elsa held both hands up and quickly spoke, "Cross my heart!" She swore, "And he had dark brown hair, light blue eyes, was fairly tall, nicely built. And I could just tell he has a body underneath that uniform that almost makes me wish I wasn't engaged. I mean honestly, I'd be having to confess at church for all the things I'd want to do to him because he is positively sinfully good-looking." Elsa said crassly, making Lucy blush even more.

Lucy sighed, her mind naughtily understanding exactly what Elsa was talking about. Even as they were bickering in the caverns under the church, Lucy hadn't failed to notice the broadness of his shoulders and the way his uniform snugly fit along his chest. "Sounds like him," She admitted. Although she was still in disbelief that he would do something so sweet and intimate as to gently brush hair out of her face. Elsa must have just been so exhausted that she was seeing things.

"It was! And he's definitely sweet on you. Never mind anything that Charles said to you. They got into a little spat right before Sergeant Handsome left and I think Charles' nose was just out of joint. I know what I saw, and believe me when I say that he was very sweet, and dotting, and he was looking like he was about to be worried sick that you wouldn't get better! It was very romantic." Elsa grasped Lucy's hand tightly as she grinned widely.

"Okay! Now I know you're lying because Sergeant Handsome isn't interested in me. And if there are two things he is not, it's 'sweet' and 'dotting'. Last week the man couldn't even be in the area general area as me, let alone be 'brushing my hair romantically' and watching over me as I slept!"

"Lucy, Lucy Lucy," Elsa chanted and tsked as she shook her head disapprovingly, "Do you know
"why little boys pull little girl's pigtails in the schoolyard?"

Lucy rolled her eyes and Elsa's tone, knowing where the conversation "Because they're little pricks?"

"No! Err, well... yes. That too. But it's because they like them!" Elsa pinched Lucy's side, making her wince in pain. "And because men's brains are small and tiny and they have caveman mentalities, they continue to treat women they're fond of poorly because they're just too stupid to express themselves in any other way!" Elsa explained as though it were the most simple thing in the entire world.

"You are absolutely delusional!" Lucy exclaimed, but still blushed at the mere thought of Bucky harboring some sort of secret feelings for her. She could feel heat gather in her cheeks, and her pale skin turned a light shade of pink. "Bucky isn't sweet on me."

"But you wish he was," Elsa wiggled her eyebrows suggestively, biting her lip to stifle a laugh, "I mean just look at you, you're blushing like a tomato!"

I—" Lucy stuttered and blushed more before stubbornly insisting, "I am not!" She could feel her face growing redder by the minute. "Besides," She began to argue; "Even if by some chance he didn't still hate me and was..." She rolled her eyes, forcing herself to spit out the world, "Fond of me, there's no way I could act on it."

Elsa's mouth dropped open in shock, "Well why not? If you don't want him I'll take him!" She was flabbergasted by the fact that Lucy would pass up such an opportunity, "You have looked at the man, right?"

"I just lost Daniel," Lucy explained quietly, her heart dropping into her stomach as she said his name. Elsa's face fell and she gave her a sympathetic squeeze, "I don't think I'm ever going to be capable of feeling that way for someone ever again. And this? It's stupid because we're in a war. And the reality that lies in that is that people die. I just don't think I can go through that again."

Elsa pursed her lips and said gently, "I don't think he'd want you to be alone forever. Obviously, you don't have to act on any of this. I just thought I'd tell you these things so you'd know the truth. But Lucy, you have to move on eventually. Loving ghosts is too painful."

Quietly, just above a whisper, Lucy replied, "I know." She felt tears prick her eyes at the thought. She wasn't ready to move on from Daniel. In fact, Lucy was already positive that she would never love anyone like that ever again. Even though they had problems, he was still the person she was planning on spending the rest of her life with. Lucy barely even had any time to grieve over him, since immediately after finding out she joined the army. Deep down, she knew it was too soon to move on. Let alone with Bucky Barnes.

"Just promise me you won't deny yourself happiness," Elsa asked her.

Lucy nodded and quietly murmured that she promised. That seemed to appease Elsa, who once again gained another huge smile on her face, "This has been so fun! We should do this more often!" Elsa squealed happily before snuggling closer to Lucy, who stiffened more at the close physical contact.

Their faces were way too close, and Lucy stared with her with nervous, largely open eyes. Elsa didn't seem to mind the proximity though. Both of them looked up as a soldier approached the tent.

The two women looked up at the newcomer with a start. Both parties stared at one another,
eyebrows raised.

The soldier looked at them curiously, then his eyes widened at the sight of the two women on the bed. Their faces were close together and practically on top of one another. A large smile appeared on his face as he beamed happily, exclaiming, "Alright! Now that's what I'm talkin' 'bout!"

Elsa only giggled as Lucy rolled her eyes. She'd never understand the workings of men's brains.

Bucky didn't realize how mad he was until he reached the rest of his infantry.

The conversation he had with Lucy's assistant was fresh in his brain, and just thinking about it made him clench his fists. He was more than angry at the events that went down earlier that day, and the more he thought about it, the worse it got. He tried to cool down, to let it slide, but Bucky couldn't.

It took him a while to find the particular members of the 107th he was looking for. But when he found them, they were ducked in a foxhole, playing cards with some other guys from the 104th to pass the time.

Gilbert Whitney, the smug bastard, was there laughing as though everything was just peachy.

"Ah, hey there Sarg!" Simon Pym smiled up at him. The odd man seemed to be cleaning everyone out in their game of poker, reveling in his winnings. Bucky had to remember to never play a game with him unless he wanted to be out a couple of bucks. "How was the visit to the medical tent? You were gone for a long while."

"Swell," Bucky replied shortly, his jaw clenched. It was obvious he was pissed, which got just about everyone's attention.

Simon sank in his spot a little more and cringed, making a face that reflected worry for the person who was about the be on the other end of Bucky's tongue lashing.

Dum Dum puffed some smoke from a cigar that was hanging out of his mouth, watching quietly at the scene that was about to take place.

With an amused expression on his face, Gilbert Whitney sucked on the end of his cigarette, waiting to see what exactly Bucky was there for.

"Whitney, can I have a word?" Bucky asked, trying to keep his composure. He wasn't even sure exactly why he was so mad. After all, he had even Whitney the okay to go for Lucy a few weeks ago. But something about making a bet out of her didn't sit right with him.

"What about?" Whitney asked, his expression taunting him even more.

Bucky just gestured with his head to get up and leave so they could speak in private. He was too angry to use his words, and the more Whitney smirked the more Bucky's blood boiled.

"Anything you have to say to me you can say to all of us, ain't that right fellas?" Whitney taunted him, taking another drag from his cigarette.

Bucky's teeth clenched together, and there was nothing he wanted to do more than knock that stupid grin right off of Whitney's smug face.

"Alright then," If he wanted to play dirty, Bucky could play dirty, "Remember how Dr. Lucy Heinrich rejected your sorry ass and you acted like a blubbering baby about it?"
Whitney's eyes reflected anger as the other men laughed. Simon stifled a chuckle and Dum Dum just shook his head and smirked, covering his expression with his hand so Whitney couldn't see his amusement.

"I recall it going a little differently. You sure your memory is alright there, Sarg?" Bucky could practically see the vein in his forehead about to burst. The man was angered by the fact Bucky had called out his inability to get her attention in front of his comrades.

"My memory's perfectly fine, thanks for the concern. Yours seems to be pretty shit though considering I explicitly gave your orders afterward that you weren't to continue harassing her." Bucky remembered when they were cleaning the latrines how he had ordered Whitney not to bother her anymore.

Bucky had originally told him to go for it, so Whitney did. She said no, and Bucky expected the harassment to stop. Not only was she a superior officer, but she was also a professional and being hounded on by guys just trying to get a little action was likely hindering her for getting more work done.

Whitney only raised his hands and shrugged, that stupid smirk still on his face. "Don't know what you're talking about, haven't even seen the broad since then."

"Then why did her assistant just give me shit for hearing my men discussing a bet that was taking place involving her?" Bucky demanded with a harsh tone,

Whitney onto rose his eyebrows, puffed a cloud of smoke, and then casually stated, "Couldn't tell ya."

Meanwhile, Simon looked like he was about to burst with something he had to say. The men from the 104th looked around, confused as to what exactly was going on.

Bucky's eyes narrowed at Simon, who looked flustered and uncomfortable, "Spit it out, Pym."

"Okay, there is a bet!" He said hastily, unable to keep the secret any longer. He looked at Whitney with a sorry expression. Bucky knew he would crack though since the man had often stated his crippling fear of authoritative figures.

"Goddamn it, Pym!" Whitney yelled frustratedly and threw his cards down, "What was the one thing I said not to do if you took place in the bet?!"

Simon looked down shamefully; "Not to tell Sergeant Barn—"

"Not to tell Sergeant Barnes, exactly!" Whitney exclaimed, cutting the young man off. "You had one thing you had to do, Pym!"

Bucky was practically fuming, and he looked at Dum Dum accusingly, "Did you know about this?" He couldn't believe the blatant disrespect going on regarding Lucy. It angered him to his very core, and it made his blood boil with rage. She deserved better than to be discussed in such a manner.

Smoking some more of his cigar, he stated, "Don't look at me." Dum Dum shrugged casually, "I ain't know nothing about some bet." He clicked his teeth before asking curiously, "What kind of bet are we takin' here?"

"Well," Whitney explained with a sideways, a devilish grin, "The volatile Dr. Heinrich seems to be immune to my charms. Which, if I'm being honest, is a first for me-"
"Doubtful," Bucky scoffed under his breath and crossed his arms. The man was a menace, and every time Bucky interacted with him he ended up hating him even more.

"—So, we decided to make a game out of it. Whichever one of us manages to get the furthest with the bitch wins. Certain amounts of money are given out for each action. $20 if anyone who manages to get under that dress of her's— err, pants? I guess?" He frowned, unable to remember if he had ever even seen her in anything but a man's uniform. "Either way," Whitney said with a cocked eyebrow, looking directly at Bucky, "Whoever gets between those pretty little thighs wins."

Bucky had never heard anything so despicable in his life. And the fact that Charles had thought he was the one to organize it disgusted him to his core. Although, he really hadn't treated Lucy kindly enough to make anyone think he wouldn't be taking part.

"And you're in on this too?" Bucky shot a threatening look to Simon, who cringed, "Why? You're a virgin!"

"She's pretty." He said meekly before shrugging, but then quickly defended himself "And, technically," Simon rose a finger up to explain hastily. He noticed the angered look in Bucky's eyes and justified his actions to avoid his wrath, "I am apart of said bet, but I will not be an active participant."

Bucky shook his head in disbelief, giving Simon a disapproving look, "How many others are involved in this bet?"

"Six, and I'm sure more are interested." Whitney assured with an evil grin, "Hey, who knows? Maybe you want a shot too, Sarg?" He sucked on his cigarette as he had a look in his eye which made Bucky want to punch his lights out. "You can't tell me you've never looked at that fine broad and wondered how she tastes. Or what that pretty mouth sounds like moaning."

Bucky's fists clenched more and anger bubbled in his stomach. His jaw clenched, and he never wanted to hit anyone more than he wanted to hit Gilbert Whitney at that moment. "I won't condone anymore of this behaviour. If I hear anything more of this bet, even the slightest whisper, everyone involved will be punished. She is a superior officer, and you will treat her as such."

Whitney just raised his eyebrows and gave a look to Simon, "Told ya he was sweet on her. He wants her for himself." Simon looked as though he would really rather not be involved.

"Not sweet on her," Bucky answered quickly, "I just have more respect for her after I found out she told you off."

Dum Dum laughed again at Bucky comment, which also earned a few chuckles from the other men gathered around. Whitney looked irritated at that fact Bucky kept bringing up the fact that Lucy had rejected him.

"With all due respect, Sarg." Whitney tosses his finished cigarette into the ground, extinguishing its light. "And to be frank, there's very little respect to be due… You can't tell me shit about what to do on my own free time. And I'm gonna do what I want. And what I want, is Lucy Heinrich."

Bucky only pursed his lips together, and then gave a short nod. "We'll see about that," He stated confidently before beginning to walk away.

He felt the man glare daggers into his back. Bucky smirked as he felt he gained the upper hand yet again while facing off with Whitney. Although, he was sure he would likely be sorry for it later. However, today he was pretty confident in his victory.
"And just for the record," Bucky added, turning around to Whitney again to state one more smart-ass comment. "It's Doctor Lucy Heinrich to you."

Chapter End Notes

Woo Hooo! Go Bucky! Ugh, I know Whitney is a prick but I just love writing him. Why is it the worst characters are always the most fun?

Anyway, this chapter was shorter than most of the other ones, but I promise the next one will be longer. Plus, it includes some *PRIME* Lucy/Bucky interaction which I am very excited to share with you all ;)

If you review, follow and favourite, I'll try to post the chapter faster.

Thanks for reading!

-A
Chapter XVIII

Chapter Notes

Hello hello, my lovelies. Thank you for all the follows and favourites, as well as your very encouraging words. You all are very dear to me, and without you, this story would not have progressed as far as it has.

I hope you enjoy this new chapter, as well as the cute Bucky/Lucy interaction that I promised.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter XVIII

Lucy had been discharged from the medical tent shortly after she and Elsa finished their talk. Thankfully, Elsa was off duty and able to help her with whatever was needed, since she was still in a vast amount of pain.

It had taken a couple of days to get back on her feet. Considering she had splitting headaches, and with the pain in her side from her stitches pulling, it made her irritable to say that least. Elsa has made sure she stayed in bed for at least a couple more days, and whenever she tried to get up Lucy was reprimanded like a child. She began to actually fear the nurse during those few days while she was on bed rest. Elsa reminded her of a mother bear protecting her young. Lucy was thankful for it though, and even more thankful to have a friend who was looking out for her.

Luckily, she seemed to be on the mend following the week after her injury.

She was able to pour herself into her work. And with Charles help, they were nearly able to discover the location of where the Tesseract was.

The location didn't look promising though, and Lucy feared that the Nazi's had already occupied the area which it rested. To extract the Tesseract, they would have to go deep within enemy lines on a potentially very dangerous mission. Lucy wondered what would happen if that was the case.

Even if they survived, - and that was a very big 'if' - there was no way to tell if whether or not the Nazi's had already found its resting spot before her. She realized that they could be risking their lives only to come back empty-handed.

But unfortunately, it was a risk that she knew they would have to take. Whether or not she would be granted permission to go was another problem, and Colonel Phillips would have the deciding vote on whether or not to put the effort in. She didn't like their options, and the closer she and Charles came to discovering where it was, the more pessimistic she became. Lucy felt anxiety grip her chest each moment they were hunched overlooking that those books. She didn't like it. Not one bit.

After looking at the same manuscripts for days, Lucy had begun to get delusional from the ancient Scandinavian script. She rubbed the temples frustratedly as she watched Charles go over the religious documents from the Cult of Odin for the millionth time that week. It was becoming increasingly
frustrating when it didn't seem like they were making any progress.

It was past sundown, and for the entire day, Charles had been working on translating one line. Lucy stared at the book in the light of the lantern as she watched the shadows of the flames dance across the yellowing pages of the book.

Tiredness washed over her, and Lucy felt her eyes grow heavy. Her eyelids began to droop, and she stifled a yawn. She hadn't slept well since she had been injured. Every night she woke up in a cold sweat, dreaming of yanking the piece of shrapnel out of herself again as pain ripped through her.

Just as she rested her hand on her palm and felt her eyes begin to close, Charles shot up, "I got it!" He exclaimed with a laugh in disbelief.

Lucy's eyes ripped open as her mouth dropped, "What?" She demanded, slightly in shock. She couldn't believe they got it!

"I got it! I have the translations! I think it's—" Charles rummaged through some maps on her desk, and eagerly pointed to a spot in Norway, "It's here! It's called Tønsberg!" His face reflected the biggest grin Lucy had ever seen.

She let out a breath of disbelief, smiling widely as well until she realized what it meant to have the Tesseract resting there. "Right in the heart of Nazi-occupied territory," She scowled, her brow creasing with her frown. Her heart fell in her chest, and she wondered what would happen now it was confirmed where the Tesseract was.

Charles looked at her confused and then asked in a skeptical tone, "So what does that mean for us?"

She sighed and stood up, huffing as she did so. She straightened out her uniform and then ran a hand through her messy hair, "It means I have to go have a chat with Colonel Phillips and Agent Carter to discuss what our next plan of action is." Whatever they decided to do, Lucy knew it was a lose-lose situation either way.

Charles nodded in understanding, he pursed his lips together, "I'll be here waiting to hear what he decides." Worry reflected on his face, and he gave Lucy a sympathetic look.

She gave a curt nod and walked out of their tent across the base. The remnants of light from sundown still painted the sky, and Lucy felt eerily uneasy. Pink and orange dashed along the horizon, and Lucy would have usually found herself taking in the sight but at that moment she didn't care to. She was too disappointed in their discovery and too worried about what that meant for them.

She didn't know what would happen now they knew for sure that the one object she had been tasked to find above all else was deep in Nazi territory. She did not doubt in her mind that those thugs were also searching around for her artifact, and she had no idea if they had found it already.

She swallowed nervously as she walked across the base, worried about Colonel Phillips decision. Lucy knew that if he did send a team, they wouldn't have the slightest idea of where to go or how to even get the Tesseract.

It wouldn't be as simple as just having it in the open. But thankfully, Lucy knew all the tricks of the trade and was positive she would be able to locate it eventually. However, that would most definitely require her going with the team... Something she wasn't eager for.

When she arrived at Phillips tent, she was shocked to see the tent was surprisingly full.

"Colonel Phillips?" She made her presence known, "A word please?"
The older man looked up from where he was hunched over a map. Exhaustion was notable on his face and he didn't look like he slept for days. The three other men present looked up as well, and Lucy felt her heart drop at the sight of who was there.

The Captain present gave her no notice, but Sergeant Dugan offered her a kind smile. Lucy felt herself stiffen under the gaze of Sergeant Barnes, who was also there.

His blue eyes met hers, and she blushed at the memory of the conversation she had with Elsa the week prior regarding him. Where there was once hostility in his stare, there was no emotion at all detectable now. Lucy felt almost disappointed at the fact. She figured their relationship would be slightly better following him not only helping her after the bomb but also because he checked on her as she slept.

"Can it wait, Doctor? I'm a bit preoccupied at the moment," Colonel Philips answered dead-panned. He looked unimpressed at whatever topic they had been previously discussing and was in a bit of a sour mood. He looked as though he had aged five years since the last time she had seen him.

Out of the corner of her eye, Lucy saw Peggy in the back, looking at her with curiosity and wondering what matters she was there to discuss. She looked as presentable as always, and Lucy found her wondering if there was a moment where the woman didn't look less than perfect.

"Uhh-yes, I suppose." Lucy finally agreed, wondering if the matter he was speaking to Dum Dum, Bucky, and their Captain was more important than her discovering the location of the Tesseract, "But Colonel, it's urgent." She figured she would at least hint what it was about.

He stood up straighter, and there was a tension in the room present. Bucky's eyes watched back and forth between the two involved parties, wondering exactly what was going on and why Lucy was there. Clearly, he had no idea what was going on or the task that had been assigned to her.

Colonel Phillips, only sighed heavily before asking a simple question: "Did you find it?"

With a small, pursed smile, Lucy nodded, "I did."

He let out an agitated breath before motioning her forward, "Well it certainly took you long enough." He gestured with his head for her to move towards the map, "Come on in."

Lucy came into the tent, once more meeting the glance of Bucky. She felt her stomach flip ever so slightly and she scolded herself for acting so ridiculous. Trying to stand straighter and pretend they didn't just share a look, she moved forward to where the map was placed.

"It's here," She pointed and noticed how Agent Carter came in closer to get a good look. The Captain looked around confused at what was happening, clearly unaware of what they were discussing. Lucy did not doubt that both Dum Dum and Bucky were in the dark as well about the operation if their Captain didn't know, and so they remained quiet as Colonel Phillips ran a hand over his face out of stress and frustration.

"You've got to be shitting me right now. Right smack in the middle of Norway? How positive are you that it's still there, Doctor?" He asked her; realizing the issues that it presented.

She shook her head, sighing, "There's no way to know if it's still at the location that we discovered from the manuscripts. Over the last 1500 years, it could have been moved multiple times, but we won't know for sure until we go there and look."

"And even if we get there, Tønsberg has been torn apart by the Nazi's. Who's to say that someone else didn't get there first?" He said more out loud to himself than everyone else.
"Well, have you had any reports of the Nazi's coming in contact with an artifact such as that? For something as important, you would think our intelligence would inform us if they were in possession of it."

He shook his head, his hand stroking his stubble on his cheek, "Who's to say. I'm going to be honest with you, Dr. Heinrich. I don't like our options."

Lucy licked her lips before speaking up. She tried to ignore Bucky presence, but each time she thought of it her heart raced just a little more. "If I may Colonel," She interjected, "I think we really only have one option."

He looked her seriously, not breaking eye contact before asking, "If it is there and the Nazi's haven't gotten to it first, how sure are you that you'll be able to find it?"

"I've never been more sure about anything in my life." Lucy would find that artifact if it was the last thing she did.

"Well then," He said gruffly before looking back at the map and placing a pin on Tønsberg, "Pack your bags, Doctor. Because in 14 hours you're going to be on your way to Nazi-occupied Norway." He then looked at the Captain, "McCormick, think you can spare any men from the 107th to accompany her?" Bucky stiffened at the request, his eyes shooting up to the Colonel and making Lucy's heart drop slightly from how unhappy he looked at the request.

The Captain pursed his lips and then slowly nodded, "I think that could be arranged. How many would be necessary?"

"Seven should do it. We don't want to attract too much attention, and they'll have to fly in since it's too risky to travel any other way."

"Captain, Sergeant Barnes and I volunteer." Dum Dum Dugan said with a smirk, making Bucky shoot him an annoyed look. Once again, it made Lucy sad again for some unexplained reason. She knew she was stupid for feeling that way, but she just did."We'd be more than happy to accompany the good doctor on her mission."

"Perfect, problem solved." Colonel Phillips replied, "This mission is an on a need-to-know basis, Dr. Heinrich will determine what information you're entitled to. Agent Carter will also deliver you briefings on what to expect. If I were you, gentlemen, I'd get your affairs in order." He warned, "Because it's going to be one hell of a trip." He then looked back at the map, which he was hunched over yet again, "Dismissed."

Only Agent Carter and Captain McCormick remained. Dum Dum, Bucky, and Lucy all exited together, not saying a word until they left the tent.

Dum Dum still had a jovial smile on his face, which only grew as he looked at between the two. "I uhh, have some business to take care of." He grinned as he turned on his heels and walked away. "And I have a feeling the both of you have some shit to discuss."

Lucy and Bucky were left there alone, outside Colonel Phillips tent. There was an awkward tension between them that was notable. Lucy felt her stomach bubble with nervousness and she suddenly became flustered.

Bucky only looked at her and pursed his lips, about to turn around as well and walk away without even saying a word to her. Lucy spoke up and got his attention, "I never got the chance to say thank you for what you did after the bombing." Her heart raced just a little more as she spoke.
"Don't mention it, doll." He said simply and Lucy noted how they began walking in the same direction together. She didn't bother correcting him on the whole 'doll' thing. She knew he wouldn't listen to her anyway.

He put his hands in his pockets as the tension between them only grew. As they walked, the two glanced at each other again, causing butterflies to well in her belly. Lucy sighed, "And umm, Elsa told me that you came to visit me in the infirmary." She didn't know why he made her so uncomfortable and so unsure of herself. She had never felt that way with a man before, and she wasn't entirely sure what that meant.

"She did?" Bucky asked curiously. He had been positive that Lucy would never know that he visited since Charles had told him as much. "I didn't think you'd ever find out I was there. So, umm..." He licked his lips, and asked in a tone that seemed unsure, "Did you hear anything I said to you?"

Lucy offered him a small smile, and then asked skeptically, "Why? Were making threats at me in my sleep?" Once again, butterflies fluttered inside of her. Lucy felt her cheeks turn pink at the thought of him talking to her as she was unconscious. Elsa was right, there was something oddly romantic about it.

Bucky chuckled and looked down at his boots, "Nah," He then looked over to her, and Lucy looked back, their eyes meeting. She had to pull her gaze away out of shyness and worry we would catch her blushing. "Wouldn't be right to still be so sore at you after seeing you bleeding out in my arms like that." She wasn't sure why she was so uncomfortable around him, but she needed to test the waters to figure out whether or not he still hated her. She found herself hoping that he didn't.

"Come on now," She smirked as she teased him, elbowing him in the ribs, "You're going to let a little shrapnel wound stand in the way of an epic rivalry such as this?"

Bucky laughed at her teasing and rubbed his ribs where she had hit him. He finally shrugged with a grin on his face, "I think I just finally figured out there's no way to win with you."

"Took you long enough to smarten up," She chuckled playfully.

"Certainly did," He cocked his head and they continued walking.

There was an uncomfortable silence for a brief few moments, and Lucy felt as though she had to say something.

"I'm sorry you didn't have much of a choice in going to Norway," She spoke almost quietly.

Bucky scoffed and then shrugged. "It's alright. It's my job, I do as I'm told. Whether or not I want to go doesn't matter." There was a beat before he nudged her, "Besides someone has to look out for your crazy ass."

"My crazy ass?" Her mouth dropped open as she asked flabbergasted, "I'll have you know sir, that my ass is perfectly sane!"

"You realize that this is a suicide mission, don't you? That you volunteered for!"

She had known that there was a large chance that she might not come back. But a suicide mission was another thing. Bucky confirmed that their odds were worse than she realized, and she found herself feeling guilty that he was forced to come along.

"Dugan volunteered too." Was all she could say. She had practically put the nail in their coffin, she realized. Lucy suddenly wished to God that Bucky hadn't been told to go. She didn't know if she
could live with herself if he got hurt. After all, he had saved her during the bombing. Lucy felt as though she now owed him something for all that he did for her.

Bucky shrugged, "Yeah but that's different. I already know the man is nuts. You, I'm just finding out, are just as insane."

She only shook her head and answered, "Well, it wouldn't be the first time I had gotten out of some sticky situations." She had been in some difficult positions, and each time she got out alive. Of course, sometimes it was just barely... But she didn't have to tell him that.

"You're referring to Egypt?" He asked curiously. He seemed genuinely interested in what stories she had to tell. Bucky looked at her with an intriguing expression and urged her on.

She pursed her lips and nodded, "One time I had to run across rooftops to avoid being caught. I got shot in the arm, and had to wear a disguise to get to the extraction point."

"Holy shit," He looked at her weirdly, causing Lucy to frown. Bucky looked at her in disbelief, unsure if he was speaking to the same woman who liked to keep her nose in a book and play around in the dirt looking for rare artifacts.

A slight smile peaking thought, she asked, "What?" Lucy's voice was a little unsure.

"Maybe I had you all wrong. Maybe you are kinda the spunky dame who's always getting into all sorts of trouble? And here I was thinking you were just some high-class, bookish, broad who was just good at ordering people around." She figured that was as close to a compliment that she had ever gotten from him.

She frowned, "I'm not good at ordering people around. I'm great at ordering people around. There's a difference, Barnes. Get it right." Lucy teased him once again.

He clicked his teeth and then cocked his head, "You could say that again." Bucky then looked at her "So, now you have a bullet wound and shrapnel scar under your belt?" It seemed like he was purposefully making conversation beyond small talk.

"Yeah," She nodded, "It's all for the ladies." Lucy joked, a smug smirk on her face. She was finding it easier to relax with him and become more comfortable. With each passing moment, she found she wasn't so guarded and tense around Bucky.

Bucky snorted, "Was that a joke? Was the infamous Dr. Heinrich actually making a joke?" He asked in disbelief.

"Oh, hush now! I can make jokes!" Lucy scolded, a frown settling on her face. "I'll have you know that I'm very funny!"

"You don't uhh, really strike me as the joking type though, if I'm being honest. You strike me more as the no-nonsense kinda lady. The kinda lady that'll smite a guy down for cracking a wise one."

"Excuse me, I can make jokes! I can be funny!" She defended herself with a laugh.

"Alright, right now you're being funny." He teased her.

She only huffed and rolled her eyes. Lucy then was curious to ask, "What about you? Any war scars so far?"

"Oh, yeah." He nodded before getting dark expression on his face. " Barely got out alive with this
one. Still gives me nightmares when I think back to it." Her face dropped, but Bucky cracked a grin and she huffed once again in frustration when she realized he was teasing her. "This one right here," He pointed to a small scar above his right eyebrow which was barely noticeable.

"Oh my! How did you ever make it out alive?" Lucy laughed as she gently trailed her finger along it gently. She didn't know why she felt the need to touch his skin, but he didn't flinch away at the contact.

"It was difficult, but I made it. I relied on my unyielding strength, superior smarts, and sheer force of will to stay alive." Bucky's joked again, causing her to roll her eyes at his stupid remark. "I barely got through it. Going through something like that, it does things to a man." He kept his voice dark and low, creating an odd sensation deep in Lucy's belly.

"Oh? But I bet the women just go crazy for it."

"Damn right they do," He smirked and Lucy now knew it was obvious how charming he was. She had no doubt in her mind that he was a ladies man. She found herself slightly jealous of the women he had been with and wondering what it would feel like to have him flirt with her.

"So, what? You just go up to any gal you see and say, 'Hey doll,'" Lucy impersonated Bucky's voice mockingly, low and rough, making him laugh, "I'm a big tough soldier in the army. I have scars to prove it, wanna come back to my place so I can show you?" Her low voice was awful, causing her to break character and giggle halfway through.

"First of all," He chuckled and shook his head, pointing an accusing finger at her, "My voice does not sound like that! And secondly, my mom raised me right. I'd never invite a dame to my place without at least taking her on a couple of dates. I'm sure I'd get a right smack from most broads if I propositioned them like that."

"My, my, what a gentleman." She clicked her tongue, crossing her arms, "How noble of you." She mocked.

They walked a little in silence once again. Lucy felt her heart pounding the entire time. She still was unsure why he affected her the way he did. She had never been the type of woman to get nervous around men, but he was just a completely different breed.

She gently moved a piece of hair behind her ear and then blushed before speaking, "So how would you do it?"

He looked at her confused before asking, "Do what?"

"Charm a dame?" She shrugged like it was obvious. She bit her lip nervously as she watched his expression.

He only scoffed before shaking his head as if she was asking the most ludicrous thing in the entire world. "Ohhh no, I'm not doing that with you," Bucky explained as he looked around them distractedly. He then refused to meet her gaze, making Lucy's stomach drop a little bit.

"Doing what?" She asked innocently, not understanding what he was getting at.

"This!" He gestured between them with his finger, "I'm not giving away my secrets!"

"Oh, come on!" She laughed, teasing him more. "You scared I'll make fun of you?"

He moved forward in front of her, walking backward so they were facing one another. Bucky
smirked before leaning forward, his hands still in his pocket and a devious smile on his face "I'm scared you wouldn't be able to resist me afterward." A light blush once again graced her cheeks and she found heat pooling between her legs simply from his husky voice.

Lucy's eyes narrowed and she confidently stated, "I think I could manage," She cocked an eyebrow and assured him, brushing his shoulder as she passed by. Her heart was pounding so hard in her chest she was sure it would pop out.

"Are you sure? Because most dame's just swoon after I lay on the moves." He raced to catch up with her, trailing behind her like a lost puppy.

"I really don't think you're as charming as you think you are." She tried hard not to crack a smile. Lucy found the entire interaction she had with him she had mostly been smiling and she was confused at that.

"Hey," He held up his hands in protest, "Believe what you want but I have been known to be quite appealing to the finer sex. Most of the dames can't keep their hands off me." He was being cocky, but given his expression, Lucy figured he was still joking and not being a complete ass.

"Oh, and were most of your conquests blind as well as stupid?" Lucy quipped.

"No!" He exclaimed while frowning before shaking his head, his lips tilting up in an amused manner "I mean, at least half of them weren't."

Lucy chuckled before gestured with her hand, urging him on. She gave him a pressing look, "Well," She liked watching the way he nervously squirmed under her gaze, "I'm waiting. Lay on the charm."

He smiled widely before shaking his head. A light blush appeared on his cheeks and he suddenly was flustered. A pit formed in Lucy's stomach as she watched him kick up some dirt nervously before looking back at her and slightly stuttering. "Nuh-uh, doll! I'm not doing that!" He scoffed in disbelief that she would even ask, his expression still amused as he refused to meet her gaze.

"Hmm, suit yourself. Guess I'll just have to take your word for it then," Her sarcasm made it seem like she didn't believe him very much. "I'll just assume you're not as much of a ladies man as you say." She cocked an eyebrow at him.

He only sighed as they kept walking, "Y'know, I would think that a near-death experience might make you a little nicer to me."

Nearing her tent, Lucy placed her hands in her pockets, "Now where's the fun in that?"

She arrived at the base of her tent, where Charles worked eagerly inside. He looked up as they approached and scowled when he saw Bucky. Lucy wondered what exactly had happened between them to make Charles hate him so much.

Bucky looked at him and scratched the back of his neck awkward, avoiding direct eye contact with the little man. "Well, this is my stop. Where are you heading to?" Lucy asked, realizing he was uncomfortable.

"Oh, I um… I thought I was just walking you to your tent." He frowned, "My stop is the other direction. I just wasn't sure if you'd be comfortable or not walking in the dark."

Lucy was shocked. He had walked the very opposite direction just to have a conversation and make sure she was alright. "Oh? I uhh, thank you." She figured he was walking the same direction because he had somewhere he had to be on her side of camp. It hadn't even occurred to her that he was
"Don't mention it," Bucky nodded at her and began to walk away. Lucy felt as sadness at seeing him turn and go.

"Barnes?" She called out and he turned quickly. He waited for her to say what she needed to. Lucy licked her lips to moisten them as she quickly stuttered, "I don't know about you… But I prefer this over fighting. What do you say?" She was scared of how he would react to her statement. "Friends?" She extended her hand for him to shake it.

He gave her a soft smile and took her hand, "Friends," He agreed. He pointed at her and pulled her in closer, making Lucy's breath hitch ever so slightly. "Only on one condition," He licked his lips and leaned into her so he could speak quietly, "Only if you call me Bucky."

She smiled and then looked down bashful after the close physical contact, "I think I can manage to do that." Her hand burned in his and they were still connected. When he finally let go, Lucy felt an emptiness.

"You still gonna have me call you Dr. Heinrich even if we're friends and on a first name basis now?" Bucky asked her with a curious eyebrow raised, a grin on his lips.

With a smirk, Lucy walked backwards into her tent and bit her lip. She gave him a flirtatious wink and then suggestively said, "We'll just have to see, won't we?" She turned around before he could say some witty retort.

She didn't look back to see if he was still standing there. Because she knew there would be that familiar tug in her stomach she had for accustomed to having whenever he was around. Instead, Lucy focused on Charles. He stood there looking shocked. She figured Bucky had turned to walk away since Charles immediately began with his chatter.

"Were you…. flirting with him?" Charles asked, disgustedly. His repulsion was shown on his face and Lucy felt her expression drop. She had no idea why he hated Bucky, but she figured whatever the reason why could be forgotten since they were now friends.

"What? I— No! Of course not!" Lucy felt her cheeks become hot from embarrassment. Was her flirting that bad?

"You were!" Charles pointed at her accusingly as Lucy hissed and looked up at the ceiling of the tent, trying to keep her composure. "You were! And you're blushing, which makes things worse."

Lucy groaned in aggravation before letting out a stomp like a small child, "Okay fine! I was! Now leave me alone about it!" She scolded as she began to pack some things away.

"Have you lost your mind? Have you forgotten how awful he was?" Charles jaw practically dropped to the floor when she admitted to her actions.

"I know, okay!" She inhaled deeply and tried to keep calm as she started filling her pack. "I don't know… Just, something changed." Lucy didn't know why she felt the attraction to him that she did. But she felt physically drawn to him, and she was practically consumed with thoughts of him since the bombing had happened.

"Lucy, why?!" Charles demanded, "That man — he's… He's an absolute wanker!" He closed his eyes in frustration, "He's horrible and is — wait, what are you doing? Why are you packing?" His tone changed when he realized what was going on. His eyes few on all the items she was grabbing when he gasped, "Ah, shite. Phillips gave you the go-ahead?"
She nodded, "He did. We're wheels up in 14 hours. I need you to stay here and take care of the excavations and anything that's found."

Charles let out a sound of disbelief and looked at her as though she had grown another head, "You want me in charge of the project while you're away? Dr. Heinrich, I don't think I'm ready for something this big. I—,"

"Charles," Lucy grabbed his shoulders and held them tightly. She looked him in the eye and took a deep breath, "You'll be fine. I believe in you, and you are more than capable." She had seen him grow so much since they had first started working together. He still had lots to learn, but she believed in him.

He swallowed a lump forming in his throat and said quietly, "Thank you, Doctor. I won't let you down." Charles looked as though he had tears in his eyes from getting Lucy's approval. It was something he had been seeking for the entire time he had been working for her, and now he finally had it.

Lucy only grabbed her bag, knowing she had to go to her other tent to grab more of her things. She also needed to get some shut-eye before the mission, though she knew she likely wouldn't be getting much sleep due to her nerves. "But, just know if you screw up I will come after you," She added before heading out, threatening him lightly.

"I expect nothing less!" Charles called after her, his voice trailing in the wind.

Chapter End Notes

Oh my, oh my! Lucy and Bucky flirting? They're a little awkward with each other still but just you wait. Things are heating up for sure, especially since they're going on a secret mission together. If you enjoyed their little interaction in this chapter just wait until the next one.

As always, thank you for reading!

Please don't forget to follow and favourite. And, if I get enough reviews, I'll make Bucky take off his shirt in the next chapter ;)

Until next time!

-A
Chapter IXX

Chapter Summary

Thank you, thank you to my readers for their amazing reviews. You have no idea how much they inspire me, and since reading them I've been writing like a madwoman the last couple days. The next couple of chapters are a treat, let me tell you. The fluff is absolutely disgusting, and since you were all so patient with the awful slow burn you deserve it.

Enjoy this chapter. It goes out to all my Bucky/Lucy fans ('Lucky' - how cute is that couple name?!), and I hope it does not disappoint.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter XIX

"So you're tryin' to tell me," Dum Dum Dugan paused to take a sip of his morning coffee, interrupting his sentence, "That you're not the least bit sore at me for getting us on that mission?" His eyes were squinting, looking at Bucky with a skeptical expression. He didn't believe him for even one second when Bucky swore to him that he wasn't mad. Especially since he was being forced to go on a mission with a woman he supposedly hated.

Bucky threw his head back and groaned, "Christ, for the last time! No!" He frustratedly mixed shaving cream in the metal cup he had in his hand. He sat on a tree stump as Simon was opposite to him, holding a mirror up.

There was a pause. Bucky figured that it was the end of the discussion and he could begin shaving in peace.

"Are you sure, cause—" Dugan's Boston accent cut through the silence.

"Dugan, I swear to God if you ask me one more time..." Bucky continued, threatening him with a pointed look.

"Alright, alright," Dum Dum held his hands up in surrender, "Sheesh, you're tense. I don't think I like this side of you, Sarg."

Bucky only rose his eyebrows and worked the shaving brush into the cream. He figured that since they were going on a highly dangerous mission he wouldn't have the time to shave while he was over there. And since his last interaction with Lucy went rather well, he had some strange need to make himself look good for her.

But looking good for Lucy didn't matter. Since he wasn't interested in her anymore, it shouldn't be a
big deal. Right? At least, that's what Bucky tried to tell himself.

"But how are you fine with this? That's what I want to know." Simon remarked curiously.

"Yeah, I mean you're oddly calm about spending a lot of time with someone you hate," Gabe Jones said as he sat nearby, eating his morning rations and sipping on a steaming cup of joe.

"I dunno." Bucky shrugged as he looked down at the cup. He gestured to Simon who held a small broken piece of mirror up. "Just am." He stated as he moved the brush on his jaw, covering his skin with the thick cream. "Plus, I don't hate her."

"Yes you do," Simon gave a small laugh, "You've been complaining about her for days. You've even stated that you hated her multiple times. Which is why I'm confused that last week you were getting mad at Whitney for making that bet."

"Oh yeah, thanks for reminding me. Still haven't forgotten you were taking part in that, Pym." Bucky shot him an accusing glare and the smaller man shrunk down in his seat, ashamed. He had never been so mad at his men for making such a disgusting bet. Bucky was determined to make them feel bad about it at every chance he got.

"Seriously Sarg, what changed?" Dugan asked as he crossed his arms over his chest, "Did you finally realize you were sweet on her when you went to go visit her in the hospital?" He wiggled his eyebrows suggestively.

Bucky continued looking down at his tin full of shaving cream. He added more on his brush, "No, nothing like that." He assured him and then continued with his routine, "I uhh... I just remembered that I know her." He looked up at him and Dugan was taken back.

"Sorry, what?" Dugan asked confused.

"You know her?" Jones questioned with a frown on his face, not understanding, "I don't think we follow."

"Turns out," Bucky wiped his hands on his pants and grabbed his razor. He opened it and began to slide it down his skin carefully. He paused only for a moment to keep them in suspense, "We met one summer about three years ago in Brooklyn."

Dugan's eyes widened as he heard Bucky's words and he blinked a couple of times in surprise, "Well, that is a juicy bout of news if I've ever heard any. What the hell happened?"

Bucky paused, continuing on shaving. Trying not to knick himself on the crummy razor, he slid it down slowly. He was sitting there in only his trousers, deciding he didn't want to get his uniform shirt dirty before they left. Although, he suspected they would be given other clothes since they were trying to be as undetectable as possible. "I took one look at her and thought that I found my future wife." Bucky exhaled deeply as he refused to meet the gaze of his infantry members.

Dugan burst out laughing, nearly doubling over in hysterics, "You're kidding me! You thought — No! Oh my God! You thought— Holy shit!" He laughed harder, slapping his knee as Jones and Pym both got a kick out of it as well. Bucky only rolled his eyes in annoyance. He should have known better and held his tongue regarding his true feelings for her.

"Yeah, yeah. Laugh it up, shit bags." He mocked them, scowling as he continued trying to shave.

"I have literally heard you refer to her as 'Satan's Mistress'" Gabe pointed out, "And your first thought when you saw the broad was that you wanted to marry her?" No one believed what Bucky
was saying. After all, he had complained about her numerous times.

"Yeah, I mean you have seen the woman right?" He tried to defend his actions. He knew that no one would fault him for being attracted to her based on her looks.

"Practically sex on legs," Jones crassly quipped.

"Watch it!" Bucky snarled at him, ready to reach over and grab him by the shirt collar.

"Yeah, Jones!" Dugan tried to pretend to be angry and frown. He burst out laughing in only a moment, "Have some respect, that's future Mrs. Barnes!"

"Alright, so this is officially the last time I ever tell any of you morons anything." Bucky held up his hands defeatedly and shrugged as though he didn't care.

"Awwe c’ mon don't be like that," Dugan chuckled, "We all wanna know more! Right, fellas? What in God's name happened?"

Bucky shrugged, "Classic boy meets girl. The girl is engaged. Girl tells boy that, but boy doesn't care. Girl and boy dance in the middle of the street. And then he's left feeling like an idiot after she leaves because he can't get her out of his head," He sighed, trying not to focus on what happened. Bucky hissed as he accidentally nicked himself on the chin. He held his thumb against the small cut and attempted to stop the light bleeding.

"Oh, that's just tragic," Pym's face lowered after hearing Bucky's story.

"See! Thank you!" Bucky exclaimed, happy that at least one person understood how he felt.

"No, that she's in engaged!" Pym frowned, "I needed that 20 bucks! My sister-in-law just had a baby! I need to send them money for a gift from Uncle Simon."

"Oh, congratulations!" Gabe said happily, getting sidetracked, "What's the little tyke's name?"

"Hank." Simon smiled widely, looking proud as could be. "He's perfect from what my brother wrote describing him."

Bucky cringed as he realized what Simon was saying before he began speaking about his nephew. "Wait, you didn't think you could win the bet, did you?"

"No," Simon shrugged, "But I figured if I got a kiss or maybe even a handshake that would count towards something', right?"

"Hey, Pym? Remember when I said that under no circumstances was anyone allowed to take part in that bet?" Bucky angrily pursed his lips together.

"I vaguely recall you saying that, yes." Simon nodded eerily, "You know that won't stop Whitney, right?"

Bucky rolled his eyes at the name of his nemesis. Gabe had a similar reaction to the name of the horrible man, clearly unhappy about him as well, "Just let me worry about Gilbert Whitney," He knew that Lucy was engaged or married, but Whitney didn't and Bucky was looking forward to the man making an ass of himself in front of her again.

"So, it took you how long to remember that you met her and fell head over heels for her?" Jones asked.
Bucky paused shaving the side of his face, "Hold up, never said I fell head over heels for her. Let's not get confused, alright fellas? It was infatuation of the idea of her at best. And I didn't recognize her because I was drunk at the time. Plus, she lied and said her name was Emma."

"Well, yeah that makes sense. Because if she told you her name was Lucy Heinrich you could have blown a gasket over her," Simon only replied with. "I'm sure she gets it all the time."

Bucky paused, blinking a couple of times slowly, trying to get what Simon was talking about, "What? What do you mean? Why would I have blown a gasket?"

Simon's mouth dropped and then he chuckled, "Seriously? You don't know who Lucy Heinrich is? The Heinrich sisters don't ring any bells?"

Bucky face contorted with confusion as he asked, "Should it?"

"Christ, Barnes!" Gabe sighed, "She's practically New York royalty! Everyone knows who Lucy Heinrich is!" His stomach dropped a little as he explained that. Bucky was right in assuming that they were from two separate worlds.

Bucky looked at Dum Dum, who was looking just as confused. The man only shrugged, "This is the first I'm hearing of this too."

Simon only sighed and looked down, still holding the mirror for Bucky as he was finishing up shaving. "A couple of years ago, she and her sisters were in the paper. After the youngest sister died their father went a little off the rails. Started beating them all around and all that, and then one day he lost it. Killed both their mother and himself. Then, these girls who were orphans get adopted by the Lee family. Talk about a rags to riches story! These gals didn't even have two pennies to rub together and now they're spending time with Rockefeller's and Rothchild's!"

"Even I knew who she was! I remember my ma bringing it up when she got engaged. She read in the paper that allegedly there was this huge fuss going on because she was marrying some French professor instead of someone else from old money." Gabe added.

Bucky felt his hand drop his razor, his mouth opening slightly in shock. He needed a moment to process what was happening. Running his hand through his hair, he wondered how he could have been so stupid. He had always known she had come from money. But he had no idea just how much money and how influential her family was. Not only that, but he had always assumed she was born into a cushy life. Now that he knew her struggle, he felt like an ass for assuming that he knew what her life had been like. Although, she was still filthy rich in the end.

"Well, I would say that the most hilarious part of the story is that good old Buck here actually thought he had a shot with her!" Dugan burst out laughing and the other guys joined. Bucky scowled more before twirling his razor in a cup full of water.

He only sighed, and continued, trying to ignore them while also trying to process the information he discovered.

"Aww, come on Buck. I'm sure if you said you guys had a connection, then it happened." What Dugan said sounded nice but his tone was mocking. He attempted to be comforting anyway.

"Listen, I know what happened that night. I don't have to prove shit all to you guys." Bucky justified.

"But she doesn't recognize you at all?" Jones asked, frowning.
Bucky shook his head, finishing the last couple spots he needed on his upper lip as he shaved, "Nope. Hasn't mentioned anything if she did."

"Bummer," Was all Dugan said before hesitantly saying, "I guess it didn't mean as much to her as it did to you."

Bucky only sighed, "I guess." For some reason, as he thought about that, his heart began hurting.

He thought of the way they danced that night and how she had rested her head on his chest and how close they held one another. He also thought of the way they laughed the day before, and how she had teased him. They had agreed to be friends, and that had once again filled him with something he hadn't had in a while. He felt happy when he thought about it, and hopeful.

Even though she was engaged, or possibly married even; Bucky was still thankful that he at least got to possibly befriend his dream girl. At least it was better than nothing.

"Are you gonna tell her?" Simon questioned, unsure of how to approach the situation. He frowned as he thought about it.

"Don't see the point in it." Bucky shrugged, "Either she remembers or she doesn't. Why waste my time if it meant more to me than to her?"

"So, what?" Jones sat off to the side. Bucky finished the last little bit of shaving his face, putting his razor in the water to clean it again, "You're friends now?"

Bucky shrugged, "Yeah, I'd say we're at least civil." He didn't know what they were. They shook on being friends the night before, but it was a lot more complicated than that. All he knew though was that he wanted to be friends. And he was willing to try to make it work out.

"Good. That's good that you're friends now." Dugan said smugly before getting a mischievous grin on his face. His eye caught on something behind Bucky, making him raise a smug eyebrow. "Cause she's heading in this direction."

Bucky scrambled to his feet clumsily, "Shit!" He hissed, looking flustered and quickly grabbing a rag to wipe the remnants of shaving cream off his face. Bucky didn't know why his heart was pounding so hard when Dugan said she was walking over. He also didn't know why he was acting so nervously, but apparently, his tension was obvious to those around him.

Everyone present laughed at his awkward state as Lucy Heinrich walked over calmly. Bucky paused and threw the rag away, trying to look as casual as possible without her noticing.

"Dr. Heinrich, to what do we owe the pleasure?" Dugan still was laughing from what just happened. Lucy pursed her lips and tried not to smile at the scene she just witnessed as she came forward. She was positive Bucky didn't quite understand the meaning of being subtle. She looked at him with an amused twinkle in her eye, "Actually, I'm here for Bucky."

"Oh?" Dugan's eyebrows raised and he gave Bucky a suggestive look which he was sure Lucy had noticed. "Hear that Buck? She's here visiting you." A couple more snickers were heard from Bucky's friends and all he wanted to do was bury his head in the sand.

"Thank you, I heard her. I'm standing right here." Bucky gave him an accusing look and came forward to Lucy. He wiped his hands on his pants and approached her, crossing his arms over his bare chest.
He noticed how she suddenly blushed as he walked forward. He didn't miss the way her eyes glanced down his body and her breathing suddenly became more sporadic. He knew he usually had the same effect on most dames, but he never figured Lucy Heinrich to be one of them.

"What can I do for you, Doc?" He asked smugly, knowing that she was uncomfortable by his half-naked body.

"I umm," She cleared her throat and refused to meet his gaze "I was hoping you could — Umm... Would you mind putting a shirt on?" Lucy stuttered, turning to look at anything but him. She refused to look at his bare chest, no matter how impressive of a sight it was.

Bucky decided now was a good time to play around with her. He wanted to see how far he could make her squirm, and the fact that he was making her so uncharacteristically bashful caused pride to well inside him, "Why?" Bucky smirked with a shit-eating grin, his eyes sparkling, "Am I making you uncomfortable, Doc?"

"Hardly," She scoffed before smirking, "This isn't the first time I've seen a half-naked man."

"Well," Bucky stretched casually, knowing exactly what he was doing to her as he was exposed to her. Her cheeks turned a gorgeous shade of pink and she crossed her arms over her chest. Her eyes couldn't help but rake down him one last time, taking him all in as she exhaled deeply. "By the way you're ogling me, I would say different."

"I am not ogling," She squirmed more and her cheeks got redder, making Bucky's grin grow even bigger, "And it's not nearly as impressive as the last half-naked body I saw," Lucy replied shrugging.

Some more snickers were heard from the peanut gallery and Bucky winced at her comment. "Alright, ouch. Point taken," Bucky's expression fell as he reached to grab a shirt and pull it over his head. He approached her again, noticing how she had regained her composure after the little stunt he pulled. "So what can I do you for, doll?"

Lucy gave him an accusing, disapproving look and Bucky sighed and rolled his eyes, "Doctor." He corrected himself.

A small smile appeared in the corner of her lips at his correction. Bucky heart pounded a little faster in his chest as he saw her small, bashful grin, "I was wondering if you could help me out with something? Considering we've now reached an agreement to be friendly towards one another, I wasn't sure who else to ask."

"You could have asked me!" Simon Pym volunteered and shot up, he eagerly approached her and stuck his hand out, "Simon Pym, a pleasure to meet you!" He shook her hand so hard Bucky was sure it was about to fall off. He looked at Lucy with awe, and Bucky could have sworn the man was in love.

"The pleasure is all mine, Simon." She replied sweetly, even though he continued to still shake her hand aggressively.

"Alright. Slow down, tiger." Bucky pat his shoulder and ushered him away, "Go take a breather before you burst a vein or somethin'."

Lucy only chuckled as Simon stocked away, looking a little sore. He kept staring dreamily at her, stuck in a gaze.

"As you were saying," Bucky had the biggest smile on his face that she had ever seen. She figured it had something to do with her to coming to him to ask for something, "I believe you were asking for
my help?"

"Well, if you're going to be so smug about it...I could always ask Simon?" Two could play that game, she realized.

"No, I don't mind!" Bucky stuttered hastily corrected his attitude, causing Lucy to revel in her win. "What do you need?" He smiled genuinely at her. Bucky was flattered that she was able to put her pride aside and ask for his help. He knew it likely wasn't easy for her.

"Remember how in the cavern below the church the day we first met," She breathed out painfully and closed her eyes. It was getting periodically more difficult for her to admit she needed help, "And we had that moment in there and afterward I whipped out my pistol?"

Bucky frowned, looking confused, "What moment?" He asked hesitantly.

"Yeah, what moment?" Dum Dum interjected and sat there smugly as he rested his chin in his palm, clearly assuming something naughty had gone down.

Lucy looked around and saw all the men eagerly listening. A devilish idea popped into her head. If Bucky thought he was the only one who could tease, he had another thing coming.

"You know," She came forward with a flirtatious grin, causing Bucky to swallow a lump in his throat. Lucy let out a playful, slight giggle. Lucy leaned forward to whisper in his ear and causing him to notably shiver, "That special moment between us."

Bucky's breathing grew a little deeper and Lucy took the opportunity to gently trail her finger along his jaw and cleared some remaining shaving cream off of it. "Guess you missed a spot," She whispered seductively before biting her lip. The tension in the air was so palpable one could almost taste it. Bucky could feel himself stir in his trousers and couldn't remember the last time he had been so turned on by just a dame whispering something to him.

He shivered again and looked down at her, trying to focus on anything other than her lips that he wanted to capture in his own. Bucky blinked a couple of times dumbly before clearing his throat and nervously admitting, "I uhh—I'm not sure I'm following you there, sweetheart."

"Holy shit," Dum Dum whispered under his breath, wondering what she was alluding at. He watched the back and forth between Bucky and Lucy with confusion.

"Holy shit," Dum Dum whispered under his breath, wondering what she was alluding at. He watched the back and forth between Bucky and Lucy with confusion.

Lucy then backed away, a winning look on her face. Bucky was still confusing himself and trying to control his arousal. "The special moment where I realized you were an ass and you realized I was... Well, something unflattering I'm assuming."

"Oh, yeah." Bucky deadpanned, "I am familiar with that moment." He was still a little shaken about what the hell just happened. He was confused, to say the least. However much he thought he affected her was nothing compared to how she affected him. Perhaps teasing her wasn't so smart after all? She could play the game as well as he could.

"I whipped out my gun and you said I didn't know how to use it. And you were right. I've never shot one, and I think I should learn. We're going to a very dangerous place and if things get ugly I want to be ready."

"Umm, hard no to that one, doll face." He told her, shaking his head, "I'm not gonna give you the opportunity to shoot me."

"I'm not going to shoot you!"
"Sure, you say that now. But then I put a gun in your hand and then you shoot me."

"Ugh, fine. I'll find someone else." She groaned in annoyance.

"I'll help—!" Simon stood up from his place and raised his hand as though he were volunteering in a classroom.

"Sit down!" Bucky pushed Simon's shoulder down, forcing him back into his seat. He quizzically turned to Lucy, "What's in it for me?"

She pursed her lips and shrugged, "I help out when we get into trouble instead of just cowering and hiding?"

Bucky sighed and gave a small shrug, "Alright, good enough for me. As long as you're useful and not crying I'll count that as a win."

"Good," She nodded and then turned, "I'll see you at target practice,"

His eyes couldn't help but be drawn to her swaying hips. It almost looked as though she were sashaying away as his eyes gave her backside a once over. As soon as she was out of ear's distance all the guys around him burst out into laughter.

"Knock it off!" Bucky hissed lowly, his jaw clenched as he scolded them like misbehaving children. "Or else there's gonna be some friendly fire mishaps going on around here."

"What the hell just happened?" Jones laughed out loud, "You alright, Sarg? You're looking a little pale."

"Christ, she is going to kill me." Bucky groaned and ran a hand through his hair, "Did you see that?"


Bucky shook his head in disbelief, "That's not what that was. That was just friends being... friends?"

"Well if that's just friends being friends that you better befri..." Dugan laughed.

"You are one lucky son of a bitch, you know that?" Simon scowled, "You get to help that shoot a gun! You get to go up behind her and hold her against you and everything. I haven't been that close to a woman in months!"

"Have you ever been that close to a woman at all?" Jones teased him, causing Simon to roll his eyes and shove him playfully.

"Oh, Christ." Bucky never thought of what helping her shoot a gun meant. He closed his eyes in frustration and pinched the bridge of his nose as he wondered why he agreed to such a thing.

"You better keep those thoughts pure as a saint," Dugan laughed even harder, "Because she'll know if you're thinking something dirty!" The laughter only grew.

Bucky only clicked his teeth and shook his head again, "Oh yeah? And you think that's gonna be easy with that pressed against me?"

"Never said it was gonna be. That's a minx of a woman," Dugan snickered before lighting a cigar, "Just think of things to kill the mood. Your grandma, a dead dog and things like that, you know? Do
not let yourself think about her in that kinda way."

Bucky grabbed his gun and some extra ammo. He sighed and then began to head off, "Wish me luck,"

"Oh, you're gonna need it, alright." Gabe Jones stated and as Bucky walked away he could hear them all roaring in laughter.

Lucy had almost lost it. When she approached she hardly expected Bucky to be shirtless, let alone that unbelievably gorgeous.

She tried not to look at his broad shoulders or the fact he had the most incredible six-pack she had ever seen. Or the way he had a dark patch of hair leading from his navel to inside his trousers. Lucy felt her breathing grow more sporadic as she stared at him and she developed an aching feeling between her legs which she hadn't felt for a while.

Above his belt, a perfect "V" highlighted his pelvis and Lucy let her mind drift for only a few seconds to think of how he would look underneath her. Immediately she shook the thought off, more embarrassed than anything that it had popped into her head.

She was both ashamed and annoyed that such a thing had even occurred to her. But the way he stretched out, highlighting each muscle and divot of his body almost drove her mad. She wasn't sure if at that moment she wanted to grab him by the belt and pull him into her or smack him across the face for being so smug.

Lucy wasn't sure when her feelings of a sexual nature developed for Bucky. Perhaps it had been back when they were still fighting? She imagined what it would feel like to work all that aggression out in a more proactive way. Or was it when he had stuck up for her against Gilbert Whitney? Lucy wasn't quite sure.

All she knew was that good girls didn't have thoughts like that. So she expelled them from her head and promised herself not to dwell on it.

She found she only had to wait for Bucky for a few moments since he wasn't far beheld her. Lucy stood in the middle of a field that many people used for target practice. They bordered a forest, which most people avoided lest they wanted to get shot.

As Bucky approached her through the relatively tall grass, he gave her a soft smile. "So, you wanna know how to shoot?"

"I would like to, yes." She placed her hands on her hips, trying to make herself look confident and like she was in control of the situation.

His eyes narrowed, "And you've never fired a gun before today? So you were just pulling my leg in the cavern then when you said you could take care of yourself?"

Lucy scoffed and put her weight on one hip, staring up at him, "I didn't lie about that! I can take care of myself. And I believe your retort when I said that was that I've never had to do anything for myself in my entire life;"

Bucky cringed as he heard his words come from her mouth. He couldn't believe he had been such an absolute ass to her. Especially over something that seemed like a big deal at the time, but Bucky could see was just a mistake now.
"Sorry about that, I just assumed you were a spoiled rich girl. I didn't know your family history." He took his rifle off his shoulder as Lucy unclasped her pistol on her hip. Her eyes shot up at him and she stiffened. Bucky suddenly wished he kept his mouth shut when he noticed Lucy suddenly become uncomfortable. Apparently, the topic of her family was off-limits.

"Who told you?" She asked quietly as she passed him her gun. Bucky opened it to see if it was loaded and noticed all the bullets were present.

"Some of the other guys were talking about it." His voice was quiet, and he wondered if he was stepping on eggshells by discussing the topic.

She gave her eyebrows a quick raise and stuck her hands in her pockets as she rocked nervously on her back heels, "Well, it's true. I didn't come from wealth. My dad was an immigrant from Germany, and people's unkindness towards him was the reason he started drinking. And then he started hitting us. And then one day he had enough and killed my mother right in front of me. Then himself."

Lucy's voice was low and she refused to meet Bucky's stare.

"Lucy," Bucky said her name for the first time. Not doll, sweetheart, or any other pet names. Her actual name and Lucy's eyes shot up. She noticed how her heart pounded that much faster as he spoke her name. He saw how her eyes were welled with tears, she blinked back trying to fight them. "I'm sorry," He whispered to her. "I was wrong to judge you."

She smirked and then nudged him, her tears disappearing in what seemed like a moment. "Well, you weren't totally wrong. My adoptive family is so rich they don't even know what to do with all of it. Very materialistic though, I figured I had to get out of there before I ended up a spoiled brat like my little sister."

"Oh no, you're still a spoiled brat," Bucky emptied his rifle of the ammunition so he could teach her to put it in. "You're just not as bad as I thought you were."

She shrugged, "That I can't argue with. Imagine how bad I'd be if I was raised in that environment," He passed her the gun, which she slightly dropped given its weight, "My sister practically grew up with the Lee's. She doesn't remember our actual parents. She'll inherit all their companies afterward, I turned it all down to pursue this."

"Your adoptive family are the Lee's?" Bucky frowned, asking quizzically. He had heard people say that multiple times but only then did he process it.

"Yeah, I've lived with them since I was sixteen."

He laughed and tossed his head back, not believing how ironic it all was, "You're kidding. I used to work at your family's steel mill. If you inherited it you could have been my boss!"

"I didn't know you were from Brooklyn," Lucy smiled, "We were practically neighbours. I grew up in Queens before living in Manhattan."

"You couldn't tell from the Yankee accent that I was from Brooklyn?" He asked with a smirk, pushing her feet apart "Show me your stance,"

Lucy raised the gun and looked at him hesitantly, "I figured it had to be somewhere in New York," She shrugged and then put the gun up so it was pointed at the woods, "Like this?" She looked back at him curiously.

"Not bad, spread your legs a little more." He said and caught Lucy's gaze as he spoke. A blush appeared on her cheeks at his suggestive statement. She felt her stomach tighten a little more and her
heart began to nervously flutter once again.

Perhaps Elsa was right about her feelings towards him? No one else had affected her in that kind of way in a very long time.

"Even more, like this," Bucky used his foot to move her heel out so she was standing a little more than hip-width apart.

"Also, about me potentially having been your boss?" She turned around to look at him with a smug smile. Bucky winced as he saw her carelessly waving around the gun towards him, "Technically I am your boss since I'm in charge of this mission,"

"Uh-huh, not right now, doll." He pointed the gun away from him and came behind her, smirking as he went close enough to whisper, "Right now I'm the boss." His voice was low and a shooting sensation fell into Lucy's lower belly.

She shivered slightly, and he raised her arms and stuck the gun more into her shoulder, "A little more like this," He told her.

"Sir yes sir," She said mockingly before nodding and keeping the gun positioned there.

He backed away just slightly so he could look at her position at a better angle. He swallowed a lump forming in his throat. Bucky looked at her with her gun raised, determination on her face, her body rigid withholding its heavyweight upright.

"Looks good," Was the biggest lie he ever said. The fact she just 'looked good' was an understatement, to say the least. "We can probably load it now that your stance has been worked on,"

She put the gun down with a relieved exhale, clearly not used to the weight. Lucy smiled at him widely and Bucky felt his chest clench a little bit as she looked at him like that, "So, answer me this," He took the gun from her as she passed it back to him. "Watch me," He added as he pulled the chamber back and began placing bullets inside it. Lucy watched with eagerness, "How does a dame who's about to inherit a fortune end up working for the army as an archaeologist? How did you get into all of this?"

Lucy watched eagerly as he began pressing bullets in, she smiled fondly at a memory. Bucky cleared the chamber for her, forcing her to do it again. He was drawn in on her soft expression and he found himself unable to tear himself away from looking at her stunning face.

"My mom used to make me read a lot," Her nimble fingers took the bullets and began to place them inside much slower than he had done. "And she got me a picture book once of Greco-Roman art, and I just fell in love with it. I went to the MET on a school trip, and art and artifacts just became my obsession," She spoke fondly,

"Art, huh?" He nodded and had to keep himself from smiling at her from seeing how happy she was, "I never really developed an appreciation for it. My best friend wanted to be an artist though. He spent a lot of time sick when he was younger, so he stayed in bed and drew quite a bit. We went to the MET as well in 6th grade and just like you he loved it. I mostly goofed around with the other boys as he just took everything in," Bucky smiled fondly, remembering how he, Tommy, and George had giggled immaturely at the nude paintings as Steve told them to knock it off, "I only remember one painting, I liked it because it was of sunflowers. It was my mom's favourite flower, and I just remember being intrigued by it. It was done by a fellow named Van Gogh, do you know it?"
Lucy smiled, "Van Gogh," She corrected his pronunciation, saying it like 'Goff,' "It's Dutch,"

"Whatever," He rolled his eyes, "Show off. You just need to prove you're smarter than me, don't you?"

She chuckled and then nodded, finishing putting the bullet into the gun, "I know the painting you're referring to. I love it. I remember seeing it at the MET as well and being captivated by it. It was so yellow and... hopeful. I don't know. It's ironic because he was melancholic, and he used to eat yellow paint." Lucy let out a snort and looked back at Bucky, "He thought by doing so it would make him happy. As if the colour would somehow change his manically depressive state. And I remember how I saw it right after my parents died. It was so uplifting and beautiful, and happy." She paused briefly, "I wished I could jump right into that painting. Into the yellow and feel like just once my life wasn't a horrible prison I was trapped in."

Bucky couldn't say anything. He only looked at her and gently patted her shoulder, unknowing how to comfort her. She looked so sad and heartbroken as she spoke while reminiscing. Bucky figured that even though she gained a happy life afterward, she still suffered from the loss of her mother and struggled with it daily. "That's much more of a poetic reason than why I liked it," Bucky admitted, "I just thought it was kinda pretty,"

Lucy laughed, her attention focusing up to him, "Yes it's quite pretty." She stood up straighter and held the gun into her shoulder as he showed her. "How's this?" She asked him, a little unsure of herself.

"Good, tuck it in just a little bit more," He told her and pulled her shoulders back a little more to help her, his hands coming in contact with her skin. She inhaled sharply as he did so and she stiffened, "Better," Bucky watched. His lips upturned ever so slightly, "You recall where the safety is, right?"

Lucy chuckled, "That I do remember," She switched it off, and raised the gun back to where he placed it.

"Now, close one eye to aim and make sure it's lined up with that tree over there," He pointed to where the forest bordered. There was one tree larger than all the others, looking a little rough. It had been used to target practice one too many times.

Lucy took a deep breath and closed one of her eyes like he instructed, "Why did you agree to help me?" She asked him, preparing to shoot. "I thought you'd say no."

Bucky scratched the back of his neck awkwardly, "You made a compelling argument that you didn't know how and would be only a pain if we got into the thick of it. Why would you ask if you didn't think I'd say yes?" He crossed his arms over his chest and then gestured to her, "There's gonna be a recoil when you pull the trigger."

Lucy wasn't prepared for the loud bang or the way the gun launched back into her chest as it fired. Her ears rang, and her rotator cuff stung from the gun leaping back and she nearly dropped it on impact. "Shit," She hissed as she tried to shake it off. Looking back at the tree, she saw that the bullet didn't even go anywhere near her target.

Scowling, Lucy huffed, "That's okay, it's your first try," Bucky sensed her frustration.

She lowered the gun with a heavy sigh and then answered his previous question, "I don't know why I asked if I thought you'd say no. I just hoped you'd say yes, I guess." Lucy shrugged and lined the gun up again. He swallowed thickly as he heard her words, wondering just what exactly she meant by them as they raced through his mind.
Struggling yet again with the weight, Bucky noticed how she was favoring her shoulder. He cleared his throat and took a tentative step towards her, "Can I help?" He asked her, not wanting to touch her without her permission.

She nodded, and Bucky took a deep breath before approaching her. Coming up behind her, he placed his hands on her waist, "Angle yourself a little more to the side," When his hands gently touched her, they lingered a little too long and he could feel her hold her breath. Lucy wanted to shiver as he touched her, and she wondered how a gesture so small could be so intimate.

Bucky recalled how it felt to rest his hands on her waist the night they met. It had felt so completely natural, and the way her warmth felt under her clothing made him want to draw her into him even more.

He felt a similar sensation as he had his hands there yet again. He wanted nothing more than to rest them there, to pull her into him, and place his lips on the little piece of exposed skin on her neck.

He swallowed a lump on his throat as he thought of it, and wondered what kind of spell the woman had on him to make her so goddamn appealing. Never before had he ever been such a mess around a dame. But there was something about her that drew him in, that made him need her.

It was clear that whatever affection he had held her for all those years ago had recently resurfaced with her being there. No matter how much he tried to convince himself he harboured no romantic thoughts about her, Bucky knew he was fooling no one but himself.

Lucy's breath felt more shallow than normal. She didn't think she would have missed the physical touch of a man so badly until that moment. It had been over three years since she had left France, and in those three years she had waited out for Daniel as best as she could.

Of course, that made for some restless, frustrating nights. Especially when she was used to having him there in bed with her, which she could just rouse him up despite his tired grumbling whenever she was feeling desperate for affection.

Daniel was gone now. And she hadn't properly been with a man in so long. And as Bucky placed his hands on her waist tenderly, Lucy's breath practically hitched. She had forgotten how it felt to have her framed grasped in the large hands of the opposite sex. With such a little gesture; all those naughty thoughts she had about Bucky came flooding back.

He raised her arms more with the gun, and enveloped her in his own, his chest pressed against her back. Like a gentleman, he was trying to give her as much room as possible so their bodies weren't too close. Lucy could feel his breath on her neck and she wanted nothing more than to press herself into his warmth even more. "Is that alright?" His velvet, deep voice made her curious to know what he sounded like when he woke up in the morning.

Lucy closed her eyes and breathed in deeply, "Fine," She muttered, lying.

God, she was going to hell for thinking such things about a man she was not involved with. She figured she'd have to spend a lot of time in confession after this interaction, and wondered how much penance she would have to do for imagining how his light facial hair would feel as it scratched between the softness of her thighs.

Where the hell did that come from? Lucy couldn't help but wonder. She figured if years of sexual frustration seemed to be rising in that particular moment and she hated herself for thinking of another man in such ways. Especially about Bucky Barnes.
After all, they had hated each other right up until the last week when she had gotten hurt. Not to mention, they had only just agreed to put their quarrels aside and become friends the night before. She wondered if Elsa had been right the entire time. She had said hate could often be the result of the attraction of someone she couldn't have. Lucy didn't want to even entertain the idea of that being possible. All she wanted was to do was get through their mission alive and forget about the whole situation.

Bucky cleared his throat, "Close one eye and aim," He seemed to be as uncomfortable as she was, and she wondered if it was because he didn't want to be in such close proximity to her.

Lucy wondered if he had a girl waiting for him back at home and she suddenly felt guilty for all the thoughts she had about him. Not to mention the fact she had only just lost her fiancé a year before.

Lucy felt herself release the gun's trigger as he continued to help her position it. The bullet hit the edge of the tree, shattering it's bark and causing it to scatter. She gasped in happiness and smiled widely, causing Bucky to smile too.

"I hit it!" She laughed joyfully, squealing a little.

Bucky never would have guessed Lucy Heinrich was the type of dame to squeal in excitement. But she continued to surprise him, and show him more sides to her than just the all-work-and-no-play attitude he had become accustomed to, "You're a natural." He told her, watching Lucy's expression shift and confidence to well back up inside her.

"Only because I had a great teacher," She brazenly flirted. Once again kicking herself and wondering why all this was coming to light now.

"Nah." He blushed ever so slightly, taking a step back from her and giving her room, although he loathed to.

"You are. I would know." She nodded and set the gun up again, this time by herself, "I'm a professor. I teach for a living,"

"Sheesh," Every time Bucky found out more about her and her accomplishments, he found himself becoming more intimidated and more attracted to her. "Is there anything you aren't good at?" He paid her a compliment and she blushed ever so slightly.

The mood between them from the last week had painful and drastically changed, and went from one extreme to the other. But Bucky knew what he was doing. He wasn't new to charming dames, and he figured Lucy wasn't any more immune than any other gal.

She fired another shot, hissing as it dug in her shoulder again and the bullet missed the tree by a long shot. With a sigh, she only admitted, "Well, shooting apparently. And I've been told I need to work on my 'making new friends' skill." Her tone was light and playful,

"Really? I wonder why that could be?" The sarcasm was evident in his voice, "You were such a ray of sunshine when we met."

"Back atcha," She stated before firing again, this time once again grazing the tree. Lucy smirked back at Bucky, a look of pride on her face, "See? You're a good teacher."

He wondered just how far he could push her. Yesterday she even wanted him to try to charm her, egging him on. Bucky wanted to know if he could make her flustered again. He didn't know why teasing her and seeing her unhinged caused such a reaction in him; he felt an all-consuming need to do it again, "I'm sure you'd be better."
"Probably," Lucy shrugged, not even denying it as she let out a chuckle.

Giving her a handsome smirk, Bucky toyed with her, "If you were my teacher back in the day I would have enjoyed school that much more."

Lucy readied her gun again, "I don't know." She returned his smirk with one of her own, "I rule my lecture halls with an iron fist. I don't know if you could have handled me."

"Not sure about that," Bucky came up behind her again, placed his arms under hers, steadying her. Lucy's heart began to race and could feel the front of his trousers against her backside, driving her almost insane. "All I know is I would have liked history class a lot more with a pretty dame like you for a teacher."

She snorted and then looked back at Bucky thinking he was joking but he stayed serious. Her mouth twisted into a big grin, causing his heart to shutter a little, "You're doing it, aren't you?"

"Doing what?" He asked her, a farce of innocence in his tone. Bucky then pointed at the tree, "Focus."

Lucy unloaded the shot and with his help, it hit close to the middle. She let out a pleased hum, a feeling of satisfaction washed over her. "Trying to use a line on me, like how I asked yesterday."

Shooting again, she hit the tree once more. She looked shocked she was able to get it on her own without his help but Bucky remained unsurprised, knowing she'd pick up easily.

"That's not what I'm doing," Bucky scoffed, shaking his head, "If I was pulling a move you'd know,"

Lucy's mischievous glimmer in her eye was unmistakable as she taint him, "Wouldn't affect me anyway,"

Bucky's blue eyes narrowed as he looked at her. He gained a mischievous expression on his face, "Is that so?"

She raised her eyebrows playfully and gave him a curious look, "Pretty sure,"

"We'll see about that, doll." He told her, the corner of his mouth twisting up. Bucky always loved a challenge, and he was sure that Lucy would be affected, regardless of whatever she thought.

She fired the gun a couple more times, pleased with herself that she hit the tree each time. Bucky was impressed that she managed to get the hang of it so quickly, and he was confident enough that if she had to then she would be able to protect herself.

Switching to the pistol, Bucky showed her how to load the bullets into the chamber. He explained that it would be easier for her to shoot, but likely less accurate than with the military issued rifle that they had been practicing on.

Bucky yet again showed her the proper stance. She held the gun with one hand outstretched and he quickly told her to grab it with two hands.

Lucy listened, and Bucky came behind her, a smug grin on his lips and began helping her adjust ever so slightly.

Taking the time to tease her, he looked at her as she concentrated, her brows furrowed and a look of determination of her face. "God," He breathed out as he held their position. He looked at her side
profile, and gently said with his smooth Brooklyn accent, "You are so gorgeous."

Lucy burst out laughing so hard that she doubled over. She dropped her position so she could rest her hands on her knees as she continued giggling. Bucky snickered and put his hand over his mouth to keep himself from laughing at her reaction, "What?" He demanded, "I'm not kidding!"

"I know!" She continued, coming upright and red in the face. Bucky would have never guessed that she would be the type to laugh so hard until she could hardly breathe, "But you can't tell me that that works! Is that your best line?"

"Hey," Bucky cocked his head, trying to keep himself from smirking, "It's successful four times out of five."

"Oh, and the fifth one must be the only girl with a brain." She replied with a snarky and teasing tone.

"Usually, yeah," He admitted, scratching the back of his neck uncomfortably.

Lucy raised her pistol and got into the position he had shown her. After firing a bullet as it missing the trunk of the tree by a long shot she hissed in annoyance. She was curious about him and wanted to know more. Raising a single brow, Lucy asked, "So is that line how you got Mrs. Barnes?"

Bucky scoffed, "The only Mrs. Barnes is my mother."

Looking back at him for only a brief second, she tried not to show the hopefulness in her voice, "So you don't have a girl waiting for you back at home then?"

Bucky sighed, crossing his arms after gently rubbing the stubble on his face, "None that I'm aware of. What about you? You gotta fella waiting for you?" Bucky's heart raced, scared that she would tell him that yes and that she was married.

Shaking her head and swallowing deeply, Lucy's expression dropped, "No… Not anymore. I was engaged for two years though. He was the reason I joined the army." Her jaw clenched as she spoke.

Bucky tried not to be too happy at her answer. His gut twisted with the hopeful feeling he had that perhaps once again, he had a chance with her. But as he thought harder about it, he noticed how she seemed saddened by the topic and his stomach dropped.

"What happened?" He wasn't sure he wanted to know the answer.

Lucy swallowed thickly, "He died."

Bucky suddenly felt an overwhelming sense of guilt at the thought that he had been so envious of the dead man. He felt bad for having been relieved to discover that Lucy was no longer engaged and brazenly flirting with her and fantasizing about having his lips over her body.

"I'm sorry." Was all Bucky could answer with, looking down and refusing to meet her gaze from the shame he felt. He wondered if the reason why she was so cold and unforgiving had to do with suffering from the loss of her fiancé.

"Not your fault," She answered gruffly, trying to brush it off, "He chose to stay in France instead of coming with me to America. He joined a partisan group that was resisting against Nazi occupation." Lucy began firing off at the tree, her anger obvious in the way she unloaded the clip. Bullets hit the trunk and Bucky watched as each shot became more accurate. She stopped only to unload the magazine and then replace it, remembering how Bucky had shown her how to do it "Before I joined the army, two captains showed up at my office hours. They showed me pictures gathered by an
intelligence agent who witnessed Daniel being captured,"

Locking the magazine into the gun, Lucy didn't even look at Bucky as she spoke. She raised the gun up once again as she aimed, her one eye closing shut, "They took him to one of their death camps. The average lifespan, once they're in there, is a month... And that was almost a year ago." Lucy fired the gun in a type of blind rage. She hit the trunk every time until the gun clicked, signaling that the chamber was empty. The fact that she had just been flirting with another man made guilt well up in Lucy so much she soon became heartbroken.

Taking a deep, shaky breath, she put the weapon down and turned to Bucky, "I'm sorry." She trembled and then shook her head, putting the pistol into her holster on her hip, "I just need a moment." She had to get away from him.

As she began to walk away, Bucky reached out and grabbed her arm "Lucy!" He stopped her and she looked back at him defensively, tears welling up in her hazel orbs, "I'm sorry," Bucky mumbled quietly, a pain shooting in his chest as he saw how broken she was, "I wasn't trying to upset you by asking."

She nodded, swallowing another lump in her throat, "I know." Lucy spoke in barely a whisper, "But I just need a moment. Thank you for your help. I'll see you on the plane."

Lucy walked away without another word, leaving Bucky confused and even a larger feeling of guilt in the pit of his stomach. He cursed at himself for being such an idiot. He hated he made her upset, and he hated he nearly made her cry.

Bucky watched her as she walked away, convinced he had to find some way to make it up to her.

Chapter End Notes

Man, maybe Dum Dum was right? Talk about sexual tension. They're so awkward about it, I just love it.

I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! I can't wait to share the next one with you and begin writing the main climax of the story, which is their mission. There are some exciting, sexy, fluffy, funny, and cute moments in the next couple chapters to come.

If you want my inspiration to keep on flowing, please drop me a review. And don't forget to follow and favourite so you're notified when I next update!

-A
Chapter XX

Chapter Notes

Oh my Lord! Chapter 20! To be honest I never thought this story would get this far. I figured I would have abandoned it somewhere around the 12th chapter or so but all your reviews were so encouraging that I just had to keep writing. When I say your reviews make a difference, they really do. So please keep telling me nice things lol.

I left a little surprise for you all at the end of the chapter. It's my way of saying thank you.

Trigger Warning: There is one racial slur in the chapter. And also some delicious sexual tension. You have been warned…

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter XX

Lucy hated that she allowed herself to look weak in front of Bucky. He had been kind enough to show he didn't mind and even offered her his sympathies. But Lucy didn't want him thinking she was emotional. There was no room to be emotional while going on a mission such as the one they were about to partake in, and she didn't want him to think of her as unreliable.

What's more, she also hated how she had lost her composure in front of him and ran away. But she felt like she couldn't breathe in those moments as she spoke of Daniel. She missed him so goddamn much, and she felt an overwhelming sense of guilt from thinking of Bucky in such an inappropriate manner. It almost felt as though Lucy was betraying Daniel's memory by doing so.

She gripped the necklace he gave her the entire way she walked back to her tent. Lucy decided to distract herself by finishing up packing. After all, they were departing in only two hours, and she needed to make sure she had everything she needed.

Lucy hated planes. She hated them with a passion and tried to avoid them at all costs. The first time she had gone up in one had been with Howard Stark.

She was young, and it had been before she left to study in France. They had met several times before at the Lee's galas but she never paid any attention to him, thinking he was just a playboy.

He turned out to be charming, and he had even asked her on a date. Of course, she couldn't turn down having a date with Howard Stark and so she said yes.

Thinking they would do something traditional, Lucy realized that wasn't his style as they arrived in an airport hanger after being picked up by Jarvis, his driver.

Howard has taken her up in his private plane, and Lucy had felt on the verge of an anxiety attack the entire time. She remembered how she had gripped the seat so tightly her nails left an imprint in the leather. She had no idea she was afraid of heights until that moment, and almost the entire time she had her eyes glued shut.
When they had landed. Howard hadn't even noticed how terrified Lucy was, as she tried to keep calm and not show him how much she was panicking.

Once he had helped her down, he exclaimed, "How was that? Best date ever, right?" He took no note of how she was shaking.

"No!" Lucy exclaimed back, furious, "It's been the worst date ever! Why couldn't we have gone to the picture shows or something?" She hated that he had to go over the top and try to impress her by doing something terrifying like that.

Needless to say, she and Howard never went out again. Which, she was fine with, as he was a cocky son of a bitch who Lucy was positive would never be tied down to a woman.

But they remained good friends, and whenever they saw each other at events they would laugh at the one time they attempted to be anything more. Howard had even stopped by to see her when he was last in Paris. He had met Daniel, and they had both gotten along splendidly despite Howard flirting with her the entire time.

She had only been on four planes her entire life, and she had hoped to keep it that way. As Lucy felt a little more anxious about the up and coming flight that she knew was approaching (through a war zone— no less) she felt more worked up and less prepared for the mission.

As she grabbed her pack she had set aside, she noticed how she accidentally sent a stack of books tumbling to the ground after she knocked into them.

Groaning in frustration, Lucy began to pick them up, settling to her knees on the ground.

She noticed a letter amongst the scattered papers and strewn about books. Frowning, she picked it up and saw that it was addressed to her from France.

Her heart dropped into her stomach as she recognized it as Daniel's last letter. It was the one she was only supposed to open if he died. Tears welled in her eyes again, and she wondered when would be the best time to read it. For almost a year, she hadn't been ready. But now was as likely as good of a time as any. Especially with her growing feelings she was experiencing with Bucky.

Lucy ripped the envelope open, angry with Daniel for staying in France when he could have come with her. She yanked the pages out, not being half as gentle with them as she should have been.

Lucy opened its contents and began reading. Her angry tears began to fall from her eyes as she recognized his familiar handwriting. When they had first moved in together after their engagement, Daniel used to leave little notes for Lucy around the house. She felt herself choke up even more as she thought about it.

As Lucy began to read, she could hardly make out the words from the way her eyes had blurred from filling up with tears.

To my whole heart, my dearest Lucy,

If you are reading this, it must mean that something awful has happened to me...

Lucy had to stop reading as her eyes began to blur even more. She choked out a sob and pulled her eyes away from the pages. She couldn't continue reading it, even if she wanted to at that moment. She wasn't ready; that much was certain.

Instead, Lucy took a shaky, deep breath and tried to calm herself. Closing her eyes tightly and
inhaling until her lungs were filled with oxygen, Lucy tried her best to control her thoughts. Getting so emotional again before going to a mission wasn't wise, and she had to remain in control.

Lucy crinkled up the paper, still too mad to even think clearly. She hated Daniel for choosing to stay there instead of following her to America. If he had just swallowed up his pride, she would still have him.

Lucy didn't have the strength to read his letter at that moment. She sighed deeply before taking the crinkled letter and then folding it back together gently. She tucked it in her pack, unsure if she'd ever return to the base.

She took some time for herself as the next hour passed. Lucy packed slowly, and double and triple checked she had everything. When she had finally done that, Lucy attempted to read a book. However, she found herself distracted. It almost took her twenty minutes to read a single paragraph because her mind kept drifting to other manners.

First, it was Daniel, but that made Lucy far too sad so she forced herself to think of someone else. Her mind drifted to Bucky and all that had happened that morning. Although she knew she shouldn't her thoughts fell to what he looked like shirtless.

He had been so beautiful, and all Lucy wanted more than anything in the world was to know what his abs felt like as she drug her tongue across them. She bit her lip as she thought of what his body looked like hovering over a woman, and how he would feel if he rested his face in the crook of her neck and kissing it softly.

She had nearly lost it when he had held her against him during target practice. She wanted to know what it would have felt like to have turned in his arms and then kissed him madly. There was something about the man that made her think bad things. She had never had the reaction of thinking of what it would be like to crawl into a man's lap and feel him hard pressed against her. But for some reason, she had those thoughts about Bucky.

Once again feeling guilty for thinking about someone in such a way after just dwelling on her dead fiance, Lucy began feeling uncomfortable. She didn't know what had come over her lately, but she wasn't sure she liked it. It was uncharacteristic and also frustrating. With a sigh, Lucy closed her book and looked at her watch.

She figured she could be early and head to the airstrip. Standing up from where she was reading on her cot, Lucy wanted to go to airfield to make sure they had everything. She grabbed her pack and began to walk out of her tent to only be stopped by a familiar face.

Elsa Hardy stood there looking pissed. Her hands were on her hips, and she was tapping her foot. "You best not be leaving without saying goodbye!" She scolded her.

"Good," Elsa breathed out shakily, tears welling in her eyes, "Because I would have never forgiven you if you died. And I would have risen you back up just to kill you myself."

Lucy had never felt the sadness of leaving a friend like that before. But hearing the emotion in Elsa's voice and seeing the tears in her eyes made something inside Lucy break.

She enveloped Elsa in a tight hug. The two girls stayed there for a while, unable to move as Elsa took in shaky breaths, "You better come back," She whispered, "What if they assign me a tentmate
"Who snores if you die?"

"Stuff cotton balls in your ears," Lucy smirked, "And is that the only reason you want me to stay alive?"

"Well," Elsa pulled away and wiped a tear that fell from her face, "That, and also I'm not sure anyone else could put up with my cheery attitude without finding me annoying."

"Oh no," Lucy assured her, "I still find you remarkably annoying."

"Ugh!" Elsa rolled her eyes again and shoved her, "Shut up!" She exclaimed teasingly and both girls giggled. Elsa's face dropped again and she gently rubbed Lucy's shoulders, "You take care of yourself, please. And come back in one piece. I'm gonna need a maid of honour when Micheal and I finally get married after the war, you know." She said mischievously.

Lucy laughed, "Is this you asking me to be your maid of honour?"

"No, it's not!" She smirked mischievously, "It's an incentive! If you come back alive, then I'll ask you." Elsa said smugly,

Lucy chuckled, "You have this all figured out, don't you?"

The girl only shrugged, a playful smile on her lips. Turning serious, she told Lucy sternly, "I'm not playing now. You better come back."

Lucy pursed her lips before sighing. It hurt to say goodbye to one of the only friends she ever had. Perhaps that was the reason why she chose to spend most of her time by herself and never form close relationships with anyone. "I'll try my best." She promised, "You better take care of yourself also."

Elsa only grinned and then flipped her hair, "Oh, you know me. I definitely will." She then gripped her hand once more before heading to their tent, "And Lucy?" Lucy turned around to see what Elsa wanted. Her eyebrows were raised curiously.

"Try not to have too much fun with Sergent Handsome." She winked mischievously.

Lucy only snorted and then rolled her eyes. She didn't let Elsa see the smile she had as she walked away, knowing that Lucy would never hear the end of it.

After she and Elsa separated, Lucy had thought she would be walking to the airstrip where they were meeting on her own. She was fine with that, as she liked being alone with her thoughts. Especially since she was still struggling with the lingering thoughts of Daniel's passing and the conversation she had with Bucky.

Lucy was so lost in thought that she didn't even notice someone approach her. She turned as someone touched her elbow, and smiled deeply when she saw Charles there.

"Dr. Heinrich," He smiled as he walked with her, "Thought I'd come to see you off and wish you luck."

"Thank you, Charles." She looked at her sidekick fondly, "I appreciate it."

"I uhh-," He scratched the back of his neck, "I'm scared I'm going to have some large shoes to fill around here. Any tips?"

Lucy smirked as they continued, striding together in unison, "Make sure you scare them all into
"submission," She joked, "And don't take any shit from Roger and Green."

"Sir yes sir," Charles chuckled teasingly. His face fell, "You'll be careful, won't you?" All joking aside, he was concerned for his mentor's well being. "I'm afraid I'll be out of a job if you die."

"I'll be as careful as I can." It seemed she was promising that a lot in the last few minutes, "And please, you'll find a job in no time."

"I'm afraid not without your recommendation letter." He sighed and stuck his hands deep into his pockets. He nudged her teasingly as they walked. Lucy noticed how he seemed more confident after the conversation they had the night previously; the one where she told him she believed in him. "So you better stay alive. For purely selfish reasoning."

"Will do." She shook her head at his teasing. Lucy would miss him greatly, and all his little sarcastic comments and the way he was constantly looking out for her.

"And no robbing any graves. I know you won't be able to resist but try your hardest for my sake, please."

"Oh Charles, you ask so much of me." She said over dramatically and then let out a large sigh, "Though I seriously doubt Bucky will let me rob any graves if we happen to see them."

"Bucky?" Charles frowned, "Who in God's name is Bucky?"

Lucy looked at him with upturned eyebrows, "Sergeant Barnes, that's his name." She was surprised she had never used his actual name around Charles before.

Charles scoffed, "Strange. And here I thought his name was Arsehole."

"Charles," Lucy said in scolding tone, "Be nice." There was one question she had that had been itching in the back of her brain. She felt as though if she didn't know it, it would drive her mad. "Why do you hate him so much, anyway?"

Charles shook his head, "Now is not the time to say." He said as they approached the airstrip and he noticed how a figure stood up off from sitting on one of the cargo boxes they were packing up. Bucky was the only one there and Charles scowled as he mentioned something about speaking of the devil.

Lucy and Bucky's eyes met as they approached and he gave her a small smile. He was wearing different clothing than he had earlier. Instead of his standard uniform, he wore civilian clothes while attempting to blend in. He looked like a vision in a dark blue jacket with bronze buttons, brown trousers, and his standard combat boots. It looked as though he had combed his hair since she had seen him too, making him look more put together than the rugged and disheveled handsome that he usually was.

"Hey doll," He offered her a small smile as they came closer. "You feeling better?" Bucky asked, concerned.

Upon seeing how he reacted and the look of worry in his eye and the soft sigh he gave as he asked and the bashful way he stuck his hands in his pockets, Lucy knew he had been concerned for her. Her stomach gave a small flip as she realized that he actually cared.

"Much better," Was all she could say. She was sure things would be better. As long as she knew he would be nearby, Lucy would be alright.
Bucky had arrived at the airstrip earlier than everyone else. He had expected that Lucy would be there, thinking she was the type to get somewhere before the allotted time.

He had been right. And his spirits uplifted as he saw her approaching. He eagerly got up from where he was sitting to greet her. He noticed that she looked more exhausted and drained than before. Lucy's eyes were a little red from shedding tears, but Bucky didn't mind. She didn't have to put up a front of being strong with him all the time. Not anymore, at least.

He was surprised that she had revealed as much to him as she did. Not only did she discuss her family history and what had happened in her childhood, but also she shared an intimate story of how she fell in love with *Sunflowers* by Van Gogh. Lucy also told him about her fiancé, and how he passed. Bucky would have never, ever expected her to disclose such sensitive information to him a couple of weeks prior.

He figured the fact she had done so made her think of them as friends. And since she said as much when she asked him to help her with her shooting, Bucky was over the moon about the possibility of getting to know her more. There was no point in him denying that he was attracted to her. He had known that since the moment he met her three years ago. And since seeing her again, he physically was drawn to her even more.

But never before did he think he real feelings. Not until earlier, when he had seen her nearly in tears and all he wanted to do was brush them away with his thumb and kiss her cheeks. He was smitten by her, and denying it anymore would be useless.

"You'll be alright," He told her and clutched her shoulder, giving it a friendly squeeze, "You're a little spitfire, Dr. Heinrich. Don't forget it."

She scoffed, "You think that even after seeing me run away like a little girl with tears in my eyes?"

"Please," he scoffed as well, "If anything you're even more so of one now. Shows you're capable of human emotion, and not some heartless tin man." Bucky winked at her.

"Thought I was the Wicked Witch of the West?" She caught on with his Wizard of Oz reference and cocked a teasing eyebrow at him.

Bucky shrugged with a smirk as he teased her, "That too."

Lucy rolled her eyes, and pushed past him, heading to where the plane was being loaded, "Look at you, ever the comedian."

Bucky watched as she continued walking away. His eyes trailed after her longingly, and he wondered if she really was alright or if she was only lying to him. He felt his chest welling with emotion as she continued walking. His eyes couldn't help but drift downwards again to her very rounded behind in an ungentlemanly fashion. He wanted nothing more than to see what it looked like dawned in some silky lingerie, the porcelain skin reddened from his hand spanning her.

Bucky swallowed at the thought, almost rolling his eyes at his perversion. He had no idea what she caused within him to think like that, but he wasn't sure he wanted it to stop.

Bucky was lost in his fantasy for a moment that when he turned back he hadn't even noticed he was left alone with Charles.

"If you let anything happen to her…" Charles scowled deeply, his tone sharp and cutting.

"Yeah, yeah," Bucky rolled his eyes, "I know. You'll make my life a living hell." Although
understandable, Charles' insistence of thinking Bucky was the bad guy was getting annoying.

"Worse than that," Charles pointed a finger at him accusingly, "Don't test me, Barnes. If one hair is harmed on her head—,

"I'll protect her with my life," Bucky assured him seriously, cutting him off.

Bucky knew that he would. He didn't have to have romantic feelings for her to know that he would protect her at all costs. She was his friend, and he didn't want to lose her after finally getting a chance to get to know the real her. Bucky had never been so scared as he was when he held Lucy after she had been impaled with shrapnel. Losing her and seeing her hurt again was something he never wanted to experience.

"You better," The man snarled, "And If I hear anything more about that bet—,

"You'll make my life worse than a living hell." Bucky interrupted him and rolled his eyes again, "I got it, pal."

Charles straightened his uniform, "Damn right," He said confidently before straightening out his jacket even more.

The man seemed to be a little more sure of himself since Bucky last saw him, and he wasn't sure he liked it. After all, he didn't particularly like being accused of a sleazy bastard by anyone. Was he one? Yes, absolutely. He wanted to do very, very bad things to her.

But Bucky cared about Lucy and had real feelings for her at the same time. What Charles' accused him of couldn't have been further from the truth. Bucky was crazy about her.

Just as he was just about to turn and follow Lucy into the plane when something caught his eye. Dum Dum and Gabe Jones were approaching, looking ready to leave. A few other fellas were also in tow, and Bucky's eyes narrowed as he saw Gilbert Whitney's smug face.

"Ah, hell no." Bucky groaned his jaw clenching and looking up at the sky as a means to ask God why he decided to punish him. "What is he doing here?" Bucky grabbed Dum Dum by the shoulder as he passed by, gripping a little too tightly from his anger.

"I'm comin' with you!" Whitney said with all too big of a grin on his face.

"Like hell you are!" Bucky grumbled, his frown setting in deeper.

"Believe me, I tried to talk him out of it," Dum Dum only shrugged and kept walking.

"Couldn't let ya spend all that quality time with Dr. Heinrich by yourself," Whitney winked at Bucky as he walked on by, turning around with his hands outstretched, "I gotta win me that 20 bucks, Sarg! Can't fault a guy for that!"

Bucky's face distorted with sheer anger. He shook his head as his jaw clenched even tighter and his fists were balled at this sides, "I hate him. I absolutely hate him." He chanted.

"Join the club," Jones nodded to him and then rolled his eyes, "I honestly would have forgotten that I was black if he didn't keep calling me a 'negro' as much as he has been." He joked, and then pat Bucky on the shoulder. "Don't let him get to you, Sarg. And if there's one person you don't have to worry about with him, it's Lucy Heinrich."

Bucky knew Gabe was right, but it didn't make him feel any better that Whitney would be in such
close proximity to her after he had harassed her and made her feel uncomfortable. With a still tense jaw, Bucky kept his fists closed tightly, "She's not who I'm worried about." Every interaction Bucky had with the man the urge to punch him in the face grew even more.

"Just don't think about it," Dum Dum told him and led Bucky to the plane. The engines had already been started and everything was already loaded.

Whitney had taken a seat next to several other gentlemen, his eyes set on Lucy as was talking to Charles in a hushed voice. The two embraced and everyone got ready, and Bucky did a check with his weapons one last time before heading to a seat along the wall of the plane. Dum Dum sat beside him, leaving only one last seat open.

Charles whispered Lucy a goodbye, and the pilot turned back to her as Charles left the plane. "Lieutenant, everything is good to go?" He asked her.

Another soldier put the last box of ammunition in the plane and nodded to Lucy. She turned back to the pilot, "All good," She turned back to where she had placed her stuff and noticed that someone's occupied her original seat.

Frowning, Lucy saw an empty seat next to Bucky and moved her pack. "This one taken?" She asked him.

"Reserved for a pretty dame, sorry." He shrugged, and Lucy almost cracked a smile.

"Christ," Dum Dum only muttered under his breath, rolling his eyes, "Should I move so you two can have some privacy? Perhaps we can arrange some champagne for you or somethin'."

"Oh," Lucy blushed red as she took a seat, strapping herself in and clearing her throat, "That umm, that won't be necessary Sergent Dugan."

Bucky wanted to punch him in the shoulder at that moment. But instead, he only clicked his teeth and gave Dugan an accusing look.

"And is 'reserved for a pretty dame' the best you got? Good Lord, no wonder why you're not married." Dugan continued to tease Bucky, making the tips of his ears go pink and he rubbed the bridge of his nose.

Lucy only laughed as the plane began to make its way up the tarmac. Bucky felt his stomach flip as it began to move, and he suddenly realized that he was about to fly for the very first time.

Closing his eyes, he frustratedly breathed out, "Oh yeah, Dugan? And you think you could do better?" He placed his head against the wall, trying to control his breathing. Anxiety began to well inside him, but he tried not to show how scared he was.

"Son, I got a fine woman back at home who'd just about do anything to marry me. I practically invented romance. And let me tell ya, a creature like the good doctor here, deserves a whole lot better than a 'pretty dame.'" Dugan licked his lips and turned to Lucy, leaning over ever so slightly. "For example,"

Bucky's stomach flipped as the plane began to gain more speed, but he watched with intent as Dugan tried to charm Lucy. "You have the most gorgeous set of doe eyes that I've ever seen. That little sparkle... and that smile? I'd walk a hundred miles just to see that. You are the most beautiful thing I've ever had the privilege of setting my eyes on."

Lucy laughed as Dugan spoke, she blushed ever so slightly, especially when he grasped her hand.
and laid a gentle kiss on it. "Maybe you should be taking pointers from him." She chuckled to Bucky as her ears turned a shade of pink.

"See, Buck? what did I tell ya?" Dugan had a smug look on his face as he leaned back in his seat.

Bucky barked out a laugh, "Yeah, yeah, alright you two. I'll have you know that I do just fine on my own, thanks." His leg bounced up and down as the plane started gaining even more speed than he thought was possible. He wished he had taken his jacket off before getting in his seat since he immediately became sweaty. He had to clench his eyes shut and try not to vomit as he felt the plane going to an unthinkable speed.

"Bucky? Are you alright?" Lucy's voice was like a light in the darkness. He felt comforted knowing she was there, and he could hear the notable concern in her voice.

Scoffing, Bucky put his head back further and bit his lip so hard he nearly bled, "I'm fine, doll." He barely breathed out. He felt his chest tighten with fear, and his palms grew even more sweaty.

"You sure? You look a little pale there, pal. You gonna heave?" Dugan asked as well, moving over ever so slightly in case Bucky got sick.

"Nope! I just need silence for a second." Bucky answered quickly and felt a droplet of sweat run down the back of his neck. His breathing fell faster, and he felt as though someone was sitting on his chest.

Suddenly, a soft, feminine hand grabbed his own and Bucky's eyes shot open. Lucy looked at him with concern in her large eyes, and gave him a soft smile, "It's gonna be okay," She gently told him, "I'm scared too. I hate flying. Is this your first time?"

Bucky could only nod, and Lucy gave another reassuring smile to him and squeezed his hand. He swallowed tightly, and with his other free hand, he clutched his seat belt as though his life depended on it. "The first time I went in a plane it was on a date," Lucy scoffed, trying to distract him.

Bucky's eyes widened and he shot out, "What kinda sadistic guy would do that?" He shook his head, "I'd murder him once we had landed."

Lucy barked out a laugh and looked down as she shook her head, "Howard Stark thought it would be romantic. I thought he was stupid."

"Howard Stark?" Bucky's eyes almost popped out of his head as Lucy spoke his name, "You went out on a date with the Howard Stark?" How the hell was he supposed to compete with Howard Stark? Bucky's stomach sunk as he thought about it. Lucy would never feel the same way for him as he did for her, she realized. But as she held his hand tightly in her own, he could at least pretend that she did.

She rolled her eyes, "It was highly uneventful. And I thought I was going to be sick in the cockpit the entire time." Lucy admitted a bit embarrassed and then looked out the window with a small grin, "But I must admit you're doing much better than me for your first time. We've already taken off." The ground was low beneath them and Bucky hadn't even noticed. His eyebrows rose as he realized they were in the air.

"H-holy shit! Holy shit, we're flying!" Bucky stuttered in amazement and laughed, almost forgetting for a moment that they were thousands of feet up in the air, "Oh my god! We're flying right now!" He said in amazement. How was it even possible for humans to accomplish such a feat. As he realized there was nothing to be scared of and the worst part was over, he was about to let go of
Lucy's hand.

"No!" She gripped it tightly, her voice shaking a little bit and he raised his eyebrows in surprise. "Sorry," she breathed out and looked at him scared eyes. Bucky was so scared himself that he didn't even notice that she had been too. Although her first instinct was to comfort him, "I-I just haven't had my nerves settled yet." She admitted with a shaky grin.

"Yeah, no problem." Bucky gripped her hand a little harder, just as she had done. He looked at her and gave her a reassuring glance, "It's gonna be a piece of cake, alright?"

She nodded in understanding, trying to convince herself he was right. He never took Lucy to be scared of anything, but he guessed even she had to have one thing that caused her anxiety. However, he was shocked that she had put her fears aside to help him. Bucky swallowed a lump forming in his throat and his stomach flipped as he thought about it.

Dum Dum looked at the scene that was taking place with curiosity. He glanced down at Bucky and Lucy's intertwined hands and cocked an eyebrow at him. Bucky only winked, causing Dum Dum to chuckle and shake his head in disbelief.

She was unbelievably gorgeous.

Bucky could hardly tear his eyes away from her as she slept on his shoulder. He had noticed about after half an hour in the air she had begun to relax and started yawning. Not before too long, her head was drooping and Lucy's eyes began to grow heavy.

She fell asleep, her mouth open ever so slightly. A small snore emitted from her mouth and Bucky couldn't help but chuckle. When her head dropped and rested on his shoulder, he tensed. He felt the heat of her face against the fabric of his jacket, the heaviness of her head again him.

Bucky smiled ever so slightly as he smelled the familiar scent of lemongrass on her. He pressed a gentle kiss on her forehead, hoping she wouldn't wake up.

"That was real slick," Dum Dum whispered as he chuckled.

"What was?" Bucky asked, frowning.

"Pretending to be scared of flying."

"Oh," Bucky frowned and then nodded, "Yeah, I was pretending." He wasn't, but Dum Dum didn't have to know that. "It was all apart of the plan."

"Maybe you do have some moves, kid. Otherwise, she wouldn't be curled up beside ya like that." He then let out a small bark of a laugh, "Especially after the two of you both swore you hated each other's guts."

"She's still a pain in my ass," Bucky smirked, looking back down at her, brushing some hair out of her face. He couldn't help but notice how peaceful she looked as she slept. She looked completely relaxed, and Bucky found himself wanting to count the little freckles on her cheeks near her nose.

"I give it until the year is up," Dugan sighed, shaking his head.

"You give what until the year is up?"

He let out a soft chuckle and looked at Bucky with mischief in his eyes, "Until you two are
Bucky's eyes widened and he then gave him an accusing look, hoping to God Lucy didn't hear what he said, "What the hell, Dugan?" He hissed, looking back at Lucy to make sure she was fast asleep, "I like her, doesn't mean I wanna marry the broad!" He was irritated that Dugan would make such a big deal over a little crush. Once again, he found himself wanting to prove he didn't like her in some way.

Dugan only scoffed, "Alright, yeah that might work on someone else, but not me, pal. I distinctly remember you saying that when you first met her that you were positive she was gonna be Mrs. Barnes."

Bucky looked down and shook his head, "That was a long time ago," He had been a different man back then. And Lucy had been different too. Perhaps if they had the timing right then it could have happened but it didn't.

"You two," Dugan only trailed off and sighed, "Are just too stubborn and pig-headed to see you're crazy about each other. I stand by what I said…Year is up and you'll be engaged. I got a knack for this kind of shit, remember?"

"You are," Bucky sighed and closed his eyes, shaking his head frustratedly, "absolutely bat-shit insane!" He noticed how Lucy stirred ever so slightly and he had to remind himself to keep his voice down.

"Uh-huh, what's bat-shit insane if you two doing that little dance around each other. You'll realize it one day. And then next thing ya know you're getting hitched and she's mothering your children. I'm never wrong about this stuff."

Bucky rolled his eyes and hissed, trying to make sure she didn't hear, "Even if there was any chance she would ever go for a guy like me, how could I ever make her happy? She's been out with Howard Stark! Howard Stark! I have nothing on Howard Stark, or a professor, or anyone! She deserves to be with someone who will give her the whole world."

Dum Dum only tsked and then let out a low chuckle, "And that is the reason why you two will be together. Because you know she deserves that. And trust me, when I say that that dame does not give a flying fuck about materialistic things or something as insignificant as a family name. She's the real deal. And you better make your move before someone else does." Dugan offered his best advice.

Bucky still thought he was insane, and he refused to even entertain the idea of them happening. Let alone getting engaged! He had only realized he had real feelings for her the day before! The plane shook suddenly with turbulence, making Bucky's stomach flip. Dugan then looked at him and patted his shoulder and said with a seriousness in his eye, "Or before we all die!"

He brought up a good point. Bucky looked to the sleeping beauty that laid on his shoulder and he couldn't help but feel his stomach flutter ever so slightly. Lucy made him feel all sorts of things. She made him feel like a young boy with a crush and butterflies in his belly. She made him feel as though his heart would pound out of his chest. As though he was nervous and scared all at the same time. But she also made him feel sure of himself, and for his blood to turn hot and boil. She made him want to press her up against the nearest surface and kiss the hell out of her. While also wanting to see the way she looked as she woke up in the morning, or how she looked on a rainy day with her nose in a book.

God, he had it bad. Bucky liked her so much it was insane.

He couldn't help but feel a smile on his face as she nuzzled into him more. His chest felt full of a
feeling he wasn't sure he had ever really had before. But it made him want to make her happy, and see her smile. He wanted to kiss her nose while also wanting to hear how his name sounded on her lips as she was screaming it. She was the gal he wanted to spend all his nights with, but also go to church the next morning and bring her over to his mom's for a Sunday brunch.

He just wanted her. And Bucky was positive he had never felt so strongly about a dame in such a little amount of time. But he was being serious when he told Dugan he didn't deserve her. A better man than him deserved to have her, and Bucky never wanted to be the reason she was unhappy.

He wished he could make her happy though. Like how she was when they were shooting in the field earlier that day and how proud and excited she was when she finally hit her mark.

Bucky would do anything to see her smile like that again. But just seeing her sleep, her mouth that he wanted to capture so badly in his own was slightly open. Her eyelashes fluttered from a dream she was having. Her eyebrows twitched, and he could feel her hot breath on his shoulder.

For now, that would do. Bucky didn't know what came over him, but he felt a need to get closer to her. Gently, testing the waters, he lifted his arm to put it around her. She moved into him more as he did it, and he heard a soft little sigh emitted from her lips.

Bucky couldn't help but smile. As he looked up, he made eye contact with Gilbert Whitney. The man had a deep scowl as he watched Lucy snuggled up to Bucky.

Bucky couldn't help but feel pride in his belly. A smug look appeared on his face. He would never, ever let an incredible dame such as her ever fall into the hands of Gilbert Whitney.

The look of annoyance was cemented onto Whitney's face. He shook his head with a clenched jaw and a fire in his eyes. He looked to Bucky and mouthed 'fuck you', clear enough to there would be no mistaking what he was saying.

At that moment, Bucky could only smile. The arm that wasn't holding Lucy shot out. He placed his hand out, and his third finger shot up as he gestured obscenely to Whitney who looked on with shock. He couldn't hide to smug smile he had, and he was sure he was grinning like the devil.

No, Bucky didn't deserve her. But at least that selfish prick didn't either.

After Lucy's nerves had settled, she found herself fatigued from the amount of stress she endured. Eventually, she succumbed to sleep after only being in the air for about an hour.

She rested against Bucky's shoulder with her head, and she revealed his warmth as he allowed her to sleep. It barely felt as though he moved at all as she rested against him, and she wondered if he was at all uncomfortable with her doing so. She heard him whispering to Dugan beside her, but she was too deep into her sleep to realize what they were saying.

With him as a pillow and an arm around her for warmth, Lucy had one of the best naps she had since joining the army. It was so good that she didn't even notice the turbulence that they passed by.

The plane shook ever so slightly, but Lucy barely stirred. Until Bucky began grabbing her shoulders "Hey, doll? Lucy? Lucy, wake up!" Her eyes shot open as she groggily looked around.

"Huh? What's wrong?" She looked around in fear as the window outside the plane was dark. However, she realized that the darkness outside the window wasn't the sky. It was smoke. They had been hit, and their engine was on fire.
"We're not gonna make it to Tønsberg. We're under fire!" Bucky explained as he gripped her shoulders tightly.

"What—what does that mean?" She asked as everyone was getting up out of their seats, she undid her seat belt and was on her feet in a moment. "What's going on?" She asked the pilot who was dodging bullets in the air, she could hear the pitter-patter of them hitting the plane and Lucy stomach suddenly flipped and she paled.

"We're not going to make it all the way to the destination! If we go any further we'll be shot straight out of the sky!" The pilot yelled back, barely looking at her and keeping his hands tightly gripped on the handles of the stirring. "We're about half an hour off course! But this is as far as we can take you!"

More pitter-patters hit the plane and suddenly it sounded like it was stalling. Still groggy from sleeping and not processing what was happening Lucy's mouth opened and closed like a fish.

"What does that mean?" She asked again, feeling as though she would vomit if the pilot did another sharp lean to avoid being shot. She nearly fell to her feet as the other soldiers stumbled in the plane, grabbing what they needed.

"It means," Bucky came up to her in a rush, handing her something heavy, "That we're gonna have to jump." She realized it was a parachute that he had given her. She had no idea how he was being so calm with everything going on.

"What?!" Lucy screamed as the rest of her crew got their parachutes and Gabe Jones yanked the door open. A gust of wind hit Lucy in the face and with the door exposed she could hear the bullets even more, "Are you crazy?!" She demanded. The wind wiped her in the face, and Lucy felt her stomach drop as she began to realize the situation they were in.

"We have to! Otherwise, we'll be shot down!" Bucky yelled over the bustling wind. Lucy moved some of her wild hair out of her face and shook her head vigorously in refusal.

"I-I can't!" Her voice shook as she huddled to the far side of the plane, gripping it tightly. The guns sounded like thunder, and the wind whipped so violently. The lights overhead them in the plane crashed and Lucy closed her eyes shut in crippling fear. She felt as though she couldn't breathe she was so scared.

"You don't have a choice!" Bucky yelled again and helped her get her parachute on, making sure all the straps were done tightly. Lucy could hardly process what was happening and Bucky hastily did up all the clips and double and triple checked everything was on properly.

She had just been sleeping, and now suddenly the plane was going down? She was beyond confused and absolutely paralyzed with fear. She shook her head again, looking widely at Bucky with large, scared eyes.

"You pull this one to release the chutes! Don't pull until you see anyone else do it!" He grasped the one she was supposed to pull tightly, showing her.

Lucy's sensory was in overdrive. She couldn't take in any information and she was completely in shock. The only thing she could do was continue shaking her head, tears welling in her eyes from fear.

"Lucy, do you understand?" Bucky yelled, "Which one do you pull?"

She couldn't speak, due to fear. But she pointed at the strap, "Good girl," He grabbed her face,
forcing her to look at him, "We have to go now! You're going to come with me!" Her blue eyes met
his, and she wasn't even embarrassed for a second at him seeing tears trailing down her face. She
trembled like a leaf as she shook from the sheer terror she was experiencing.

"I don't think I can jump. I'm just gonna stay right here if that's okay." She held onto a seat tightly,
her nails digging into the material so hard that it hurt.

"Yes, you can!" Bucky assured her. The plane shook and Lucy cowered into his arms, holding him
tightly as Bucky pressed her into a comforting hug, "You can do this!"

"I can't!" She yelled back and her lips trembled, "Bucky, I'm so scared! I can't do this!"

Dugan was one of the only remaining one left. Lucy didn't even notice that everyone else had
jumped and the pilot was screaming at them to go before they were too far ahead or before they took
on more fire. "Buck!" Dugan's voice was no longer jovial, "Let's get a fucking move on before this
thing takes a dive!"

"Lucy, I know you're scared. But we have to do this." Bucky urged her and Lucy shook her head
again, choking out a sob. He held her head tightly in his and forced him to look at him, "We have to
do this! You can do this! I know you can! Now we have to go!" He had fear in his blue eyes as well,
but he knew he needed Lucy to jump.

"I can't!" She only yelled again, her voice breaking this time, "If we do this, we are going to die."
She insisted, her voice going low and fear welling into her belly.

Bucky physically grabbed her and hauled her to the side of the plane where the door remained open.
Her stomach flipped as he held her chute tightly.

"Then I'll see you in another life, sweetheart!" Bucky yelled, and for a split second, Lucy had a flash
of realization from the words that he said.

Bucky hesitated for a moment as her mouth dropped in shock and awe. Something had come over
her. A memory flashed before her eyes and Lucy's mouth open and closed from disbelief as she
stared at him.

Worried that it might be the last time Bucky ever saw her he decided to do something bad in a split-
second decision. Bucky hastily pressed his lips to hers in a chaste and hurried kiss. His mouth
smashed against hers roughly, and Lucy's eyes remained wide open with shock as he did so. She
didn't even have time to revel in the kiss, as immediately he yanked away. Lucy's mouth hung open
and more disbelief and shock set in, freezing her entire body.

Lucy didn't even realize what was going on until Bucky pushed her hard out the door and suddenly
she was falling.

Chapter End Notes

Bucky: *Kisses Lucy then promptly throws her out an airplane* That's the ladies man
we know and love! Also, DID I ACTUALLY JUST MAKE THEIR FIRST KISS
HAPPEN? Yes, yes I did. Was in torturous and mean? Yes, you are right again. What a
garbage first kiss. But, never fear… Because I have some very, very saucy goodness for you in the next chapter. :)  

Please review and fuel my ever-growing need for validation. Follow and favourite to be alerted when I post the next update!

-A
Chapter XXI

Wow! I am so blown away by all your kind reviews! Once again, you have inspired me to once again write a chapter which I am so, so excited to share with you. I don't know what you're all saying to get me to write this well, but it's certainly working!

Thank you! And please enjoy this chapter which I loved writing due to the fact I know all the tension will torture you all. ;) It's even driving me crazy, honestly.

Chapter XXI

Bucky was shaking by the time he had landed safely. There was a moment where he was positive his parachute was about to be shot down but he barely had time to think about that.

He had never imagined himself jumping out of an airplane. Especially given how terrified he was when they took off. But as soon as it came down to it, his instincts took over and he knew he had to get Lucy off that plane. Adrenaline had coursed through his body, and he had kissed her in a split second decision.

He didn't even plan or think about it. Like a memory or an instinct, he felt like he needed to do it. He figured if they were going to die, he had to at least do it once.

The reaction she had afterward was almost worth it. Her jaw was practically on the floor, and he could hear her screaming "Barnes!" angrily after he pushed her out of the plane. The relief Bucky felt when he saw her chute finally go up was unlike anything he had ever felt. And as she drifted along in the wind, he allowed himself to think of their kiss.

Her hair had been wild in her face, and her tears streamed down her cheeks. Fear was present in her eyes, and Bucky was scared that would be the last time he ever saw her. He moved forward and harshly captured her lips, feeling her shock as he did so. When he pulled away he saw her red face as he continued grasping her shoulders.

He didn't even know he pushed her until he heard her angrily screaming his last name. Dugan was the only one left on the plane besides the pilots and he only chuckled before yelling over the blistering, violent, wind, "You know she's gonna kill you, right?"

Bucky laughed and then yelled, "I know!" Before swallowing his fear and jumping out of the plane himself. His adrenaline was pumping so hard he didn't even notice that he jumped out of a goddamn plane. In any other circumstances, he would have been losing his mind in a panic, but he was so concerned for Lucy's safety that he didn't even have time for it.

Instead, Bucky drifted peacefully once he deployed his parachute and allowed the wind to carry him where he saw the rest of his crew was landing. When he finally got into the thick trees, his chute snagged on a branch and Bucky had to cut himself loose while somehow trying not to fall.
He climbed down the tree, only then realizing his fear of heights. Bucky breathed deeply in and out the entire time through his nose and realized his adrenaline must have been fading. He hung onto the tree like a cat, clawing at it for dear life. His heart pounded and somehow he managed to get himself down, his rifle still around his back and a small backpack also strapped to him.

He immediately found Dugan, who wasn't far behind him. They were quiet as they wandered through the woods, knowing that the enemy could likely be lurking had taken almost half an hour to find the remaining men from their plane. Gabe Jones had been hiding, on the lookout for them, and pulled his gun on Dugan when he didn't recognize him.

"Hold your fire! It's me, you idiot!" Dugan hissed with his hands up, "When was the last time you saw a Fritz this handsome?"

"Oh, thank Christ!" Gabe exclaimed, relief flooding him. He had a large scratch on his cheek, but nothing to worry about.

"You find everyone else?" Bucky asked, looking around and seeing how many of his men began to pop out from their hiding spots. He looked at each one and counted them in his head.

One. Two. Three. Four. Wait… Why was there only four? There should have been five not including him and Dugan.

Panic settled into Bucky's soul, "Where's Lucy?" He looked around doing a full 360 and madly searching for her.

"Thought she was with you." Was all Gabe said, looking concerned and also searching.

"Shit!" Bucky hissed as fear raced through him. He felt terror grip him, and the familiar feeling of what he experienced as she laid in her arms with a piece of shrapnel impaled into her ribs returned.

"Lucy!" He couldn't help but yell as he took off in a run through the bushes.

His men yelled at him to shut up, shushing him, and even cursing at him, but Bucky didn't care. Let the Germans find him. He had to find her, no matter what. He couldn't stand the idea of her being hurt, or scared, or alone.

Bucky ran as fast as he could to where he assumed he had seen her drop. He had lost sight of her near the end, but he knew she couldn't have been far.

Deep down he knew she could take care of herself. She wasn't a damsel in distress, but after seeing her in the plane with so much fear, and after seeing her bleeding out after the bombing; Bucky knew he had to find her.

"Lucy!" He yelled again, crashing through the thick brush. Branches hit him in the face and he nearly tripped on a couple of roots but he didn't care. All he cared about was finding her. "Lucy!" Bucky yelled again, not caring if anyone heard him.

Not only did he worry about her because he cared for her. But their main objective was to keep her safe so she could find the object that she was after. She still hadn't informed them just what they were looking for, but Bucky assured she was likely the only person who would know where it was and how to get it.

"Lucy!" He yelled once more, now desperate. His eyes flashed everywhere at once, searching for any sign of her.
"I'm here!" He heard a distinctly female voice yell and he closed his eyes and took a deep breath. It felt like he had been underwater the entire time, and just then could finally breathe.

Bucky ran to where he heard her yell, and he was the first one to burst out of the thicket.

He reached a clearing in which he found a lake. Lucy was coming forward, soaked as could be and still dragging her heavy, wet, parachute behind her. Her uniform was soaked, and her hair plastered all over her face, she looked on the verge of collapse and was panting heavily as she came forward in the water.

"Oh, thank God!" He breathed out relief as he rushed to her, not even caring that he was getting his boots and the bottom of his pants wet. He saw how badly she was shaking from the cold water, which he had to admit was a shock to his system as well.

Lucy's teeth chattered and he saw how her lips were blue. He ran forward to her, breaking past the heavy water as fast as he could, "Are you alright? Are you hurt?" He needed to know she was alright.

"Am I alright?!" Rage reflected in her eyes and Bucky knew he was in for it. "Am I alright?!" She yelled again and Bucky had to shush her, cringing and holding a finger up to his mouth.

Rage unlike he had ever seen built inside her and Lucy was about to scream at him when he put his hand over her mouth and she struggled to get him off her.

"You have to be quiet!" Bucky exclaimed with a hushed tone, feeling the coolness of her skin under his hand and growing more concerned.

Lucy shoved him off of her and stumbled a little in the water. She huffed, her eyes ablaze with Bucky could only assume was loathing, "You asshole!" Lucy yelled and pushed him, looking at him in bewilderment as her mouth dropped open. "You absolute, fucking asshole!" She pounded against his chest. And Bucky took a step back and tried to block the bruising fists she was swinging at him.

"Jesus Christ, doll! What the hell? Take it easy! It was just a stupid kiss!"

"You said nothing!" She snarled, "You said absolutely nothing this entire time! And then you pulled this shit! UGH!" She yelled frustratedly, wanting to tear her hair out. "And you pushed me out of an airplane!"

"I said — what?" Bucky shook his head. He wondered why him throwing her out of an airplane was the last thing she was worried about. Confusion struck him and Lucy smacked his chest again.

"You knew! You knew that we had met! And you lied to me and said your name was Steve!" She hissed, pushing him once more and making him almost fall into the water.

Bucky's face paled and he realized that she remembered that night three years ago. He scoffed and then pointed accusingly to her, "You lied and said your name was Emma!" He couldn't believe she remembered. He thought she would never clue into it.

That confirmed it for Lucy. Her face fell and she shook her head, her skin turning ghostly white. She swallowed a lump forming in her throat, "You said your name was Steve!" She could only reply with, again.

Bucky looked at her in confusion and realized how cold his feet were. Lucy continued shaking and then he realized she had to have been in shock from the water, as well as the realization. "Shit, okay doll. Let's get you loose from this chute." He rushed forward to her, pulling a knife from his belt.
He approached her carefully, seeing how she shook and how she watched him with wide eyes like a frightened animal. "Y-you should have told me." She stuttered as her teeth chattered.

Bucky cut the first strap of the chute attached to her between her legs. He sighed and looked down at her as he helped with the shoulder straps, "Why? So we could both reminisce about a night that meant something different to both of us? You forgot about me. Clearly, it didn't mean as much to you as it did to me."

"T-that's not true." Lucy shook her head again. She seemed only capable of doing that one action, just like on the plane. "For a year I-I had to wrestle with the guilt of feeling more for a stranger than I did for my own g-goddamn fiancé."

Bucky stilled as he heard her say that, his hands stopping from cutting the last of the holds that confined her. Lucy looked up with him with wide eyes and then shifted her gaze down as she let out a small shaky breath, "Forgetting you was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do." Lucy trembled as she spoke, partially from cold and partially from the fear of being honest.

Bucky licked his lips, trying to come up with anything to say as Gabe Jones came around the clearing "Found them!" He said at a tone quiet enough that the rest of them could hear but not too loud that it would alert any nearby patrols.

"Come on," Bucky patted her shoulder as he finally got her loose from her parachute. Lucy struggled to make it to shore, tripping several times from how cold she was and the exhaustion from having to swim with her chute on. Bucky held her upright the best he could, not leaving her side.

Dum Dum stood there looking at the scene as they stumbled to shore and he let out a frustrated breath, "Christ, what a mess this is."

Lucy immediately collapsed as soon as they got to dry land. She sat with her legs curled up to her chest as she shivered, her wet hair a mop on her head and her entire body shaking.

Bucky was about to give her his blanket from his pack when Gabe rushes to her and wrapped his around her shoulders. He got Lucy's blanket around her and doubled up, hoping to preserve her warmth.

Dum Dum looked and huffed, "Any idea where we are?"

"Pilot said we were about half an hour out flying. I don't know what that is on foot." Another man by the name of Jim Miller answered. Dugan only nodded and did a look around their surroundings.

"Well, we need to figure out how far we are from Tønsberg. Might as well camp here until the morning and let Dr. Heinrich warm up."

It was like Lucy didn't even process what he was saying. She didn't look up or give any sign that she could hear what Dugan said. She only wiped her nose and continued shaking. Bucky didn't like seeing her like that, and he knew they were going to have to light a small fire to keep her from getting hypothermia. He wouldn't protest about it since his feet and legs were also freezing from rushing in after her. "We need to get into more cover," Gilbert Whitney agreed and nodded, doing a quick sweep of their surroundings.

Bucky nodded in agreement as well and crouched down to speak to Lucy. She didn't even look at him as she shook and Bucky didn't like how her skin was beginning to turn blue. "Hey doll, we have to move. Can you stand?"

Lucy's teeth continued chattering as she only stared blankly at the ground. Bucky sighed and gently
touched her knee. Lucy didn't even react to the physical contact, and Bucky suddenly was scared. "Lucy? Lucy, we need to go."

"Today would be nice," Whitney snarkily replied.

Bucky shot him a resentful look and turned back to Lucy. She still took no notice that he was in front of her. Bucky only brushed some hair out of her face and then sighed with the realization of what he needed to do. "We have to move. So I'm gonna pick you up. Is that alright?"

No answer again. She was in shock and coming down with a case of hypothermia. Bucky's one arm went under her wet knees and he felt for freezing she was. His other arm went behind her back and he lifted her bridal style. She was heavier than she looked, but Bucky would never admit that out loud in case she suddenly escaped from her frozen trace and shot him for a comment like that.

He struggled to get his footing for a second, but once he was up on his feet he found it easier to carry her as her arms wrapped around his shoulders.

"Would the bride and groom like to lead the way?" Whitney gestured, sneering at the two of them.

Bucky only narrowed his eyes at him, "What are you? A comedian or somethin' now?" He wasn't in the mood for his jabs. Right now, Bucky's only focus was making sure Lucy was alright.

"Ladies!" Dugan stressed with an irritated tone, "Can we set aside our bickering for a moment and focus?" He led the way, covering for Bucky and Lucy since clearly, he was in no position to protect both of them.

They walked for only a couple minutes, but to Bucky, it felt like forever. Lucy seemed to shake even more, and he felt her become more and more fatigued.

"Just hang on, doll," Bucky said gently to her as her teeth continued to chatter. He could hear them grinding from how much she was shivering, and all he wanted to do was somehow get her warm.

"I'm j-just so c-cold." She squeaked out. Her voice was hoarse, and Bucky was at least a little relieved to hear her finally speak.

"I know, we're gonna get you all fixed up." He told her as Dugan finally stopped after walking about ten more minutes.

Dugan stated they would stop in the thicket of the bushes that night. They would build a small fire to keep Lucy warm, but that was all.

Bucky put her down as gently as he could manage. As soon as he did so, he shrugged his jacket off of himself and wrapped it around her shoulders. Lucy looked at him with a look of thanks.

Gabe worked on lighting the fire as the rest of the guys began to set up where they would be sleeping. Small sparks erupted into a bed of branches where he was lighting it, and suddenly a warm yellow glow washed over them.

Bucky could then see Lucy clearer, and see her pale skin and how her lips were still blue as she continued to tremble.

"Hypothermia," Dugan walked up to Bucky, who had a permanent loon of worth on his face.

Bucky didn't think that it was cold enough yet in the late October air to be getting hypothermia, but clearly, Lucy was dangerously close to doing so.
Bucky pursed his lips as he asked in a hushed tone, "What do we do?" He didn't want to worry Lucy as she lay down on the blankets facing the fire.

Some of the guys began to eat some rations, while most of them also took out their blankets to sleep. Gabe volunteered to take the first watch with Dugan, and Whitney said he would go next with another man by the name of Frank Wells.

Dugan only pursed his lips and said lowly to Bucky, "When I was a kid back in Boston, my brother fell through a sheet of ice. There was only one way to get his body warmth back. I know what to do but...," Dugan clicked his teeth and looked skeptically at Lucy as she lay there, looking weak and shaking, "She ain't gonna like it."

"What do we do?" Bucky could hear Lucy whimpering ever so slightly as the fire warmed up her cold fingers. Her eyes fluttered open and close, and Bucky figured that wasn't a good sign.

"Best way to heat someone up is skin on skin," Dugan gave a suggestive look to him.

Bucky closed his eyes and took a deep breath, inhaling sharply and trying to control his temper. "Are you kidding me?"

"Nope. It's survival 101. So get over there and let her know what's happening, Romeo." As Dugan spoke, Bucky could feel heat gather in his cheeks.

Bucky shakily approached Lucy, his face red. He sunk to his knees and gently shook her, trying to wake her up. "Doll, umm... I umm, I'm gonna get you warm, okay? But we need to get you out of those wet clothes first."

"What?" Lucy asked, her voice weak and shaky.

"I'm not gonna hurt you. But the clothes are making it worse. You just need to trust me. Can you do that?" He asked her softly, hoping she wouldn't think he was just trying to get her naked.

Lucy sat up with the help of Gabe Jones. The man quickly grabbed one of their blankets to hold up as a curtain to block Lucy out of everyone's view. No one besides Whitney, of course, was looking. But after Dum Dum shot him an accusing and dangerous look, the man averted his eyes.

Lucy was slumped into Bucky's shoulder as he stayed on the ground kneeling in front of her. She continued to shake, and couldn't even undo the buttons of her jacket. Bucky's fingers undid them instead. He tried not to peer down as he slid her jacket from her shoulders.

He leaned her up enough to help her out of her shirt. Underneath was a soft pink, pointed brassiere. The light from the fire flickered orange on her skin, giving her a warm, unearthly glow. The swells of her breasts spilled out of the satin fabric and Bucky felt himself thinking of how it would feel to attach his mouth to them.

Bucky swallowed as he tried not to stare, but he couldn't help himself. Lucy didn't seem to care, as she was too weak to notice. "I got you," He whispered as he undid the buttons of her pants and helped her shimmy out of them.

Plain, high waisted, panties was the sight that greeted him. Bucky averted his eyes, attempting to be a gentleman. But he noticed the way they contrasted with the light skin of her thighs and Bucky wanted nothing more than to touch her delicate flesh at that moment.

He helped her get her pants, sliding them to her ankles. He then removed her boots and then her socks. Bucky found a pair of dry ones in his pack and placed them on her feet carefully. When she
was undressed, he practically saw her eyes roll to the back of her head and he had to keep her from collapsing backward.

Gabe wrapped his blanket around her to preserve her decency, and Bucky was thankful he did. A moment longer and he would have snuck another gaze at the beautiful sight that laid before him. But he didn't want to, not like that at least.

He felt his skin crawl at the thought she laid there only a few feet only in her undergarments. Bucky hated himself for feeling himself harden in his trousers, but he couldn't help it.

She looked like stardust, a light in the dark, a pale porcelain vessel in which he wanted to admire every curve and every dip in her frame. Bucky had never seen anything as beautiful as Lucy laying there, flames flickering across her ivory skin as though a dancer blazed across it. A pale shoulder popped out of the blanket, and all he wanted to do was tenderly press his lips down to the skin that rested there.

Bucky scuffled to his feet as he swallowed deeply. He had a vision of how she looked that night as they danced in the noisy bustling streets of Brooklyn. He had been positive there was nothing as beautiful as the radiance of her smile that night.

He was wrong. Truly, he had never beheld such a sight before until seeing her with tangled swath or wet hair resting on the blanket like a halo. The oranges, reds, and yellows of the flames shadowed her facial features, and her deep eyes fluttered open and close.

"You better be the one to undress, son," Dugan said quietly to Bucky, knowing that he was the one that Lucy trusted the most.

It suddenly dawned on Bucky that he would have to undress too. He looked up at Dum Dum with a shock and half-opened mouth. It was possibly the first time he didn't want to get naked with a dame and it was because he wanted it to happen a different way.

"Well," Dugan gave him a pressing look, "Get a move on! The poor girl's freezing'! You better strip down to your britches before I do!"

Bucky realized he had to put his selfish wants aside and do what needed to happen. Hastily, he tore his jumper over his head and then began undoing his belt. Bucky scrambled to get undressed and Dum Dum looked to the other men, "No wisecracks now. Come morning we don't talk about this." Thank God he said something. Bucky did not want to deal with the teasing or the smart-ass comments of him getting partially naked with Lucy under the covers.

Bucky stripped down to only his undershirt and white boxer shorts. He took his damp socks off and put them near the fire with his pants and his boots.

Quickly, he kneeled back on the ground with Lucy. He tried to control the fact his heart was pounding harder in his chest than it ever had. His face was red, and he felt he couldn't just get under the blankets with her. He didn't want her to be scared, or for her to feel as though he was going to try to take advantage of her.

"Luce?" He gently said her nickname, wondering if it was alright to use, "I'm coming under the blankets to keep you warm." She said nothing, and he took her silence as an allowance to have him slip under.

Bucky gently lifted the blankets and crawled beside her. His arms wrapped tightly around her center and he shivered from how frigid her body was. "Christ," He gasped as her skin was like ice.
Whitney gave out a snicker from across their camp and Bucky shot him a glaring look. Anger burned in his eyes as bright as the fire that was halfway between them and somehow Whitney knew that it was no joking matter. His smirk disappeared as he laid down in his blankets.

Bucky's hands trailed up her tender arms gently as he tried to generate heat on them. He rubbed them quickly, hoping she would regain some feeling in them.

She was freezing, and he was shivering as well while pressed against her. But that didn't matter, what mattered was that he was transferring his body heat to her. He hoped she wouldn't get pneumonia or anything type of slickness from being so cold.

Bucky found himself worrying about her constantly. Ever since he saw her on the ground, blood around her from hitting her head, a jagged piece of shrapnel protruding out of her body, Bucky only wanted to protect her. He never wanted to see her hurt like that again.

And when she had tears in her eyes from explaining what happened to her fiancé, he hated that she was hurting because of something he brought up.

And after she cried from fear of jumping out of the plane, Bucky felt an overwhelming need to make sure she was safe. She was his. His responsibility; his to care for.

He wrapped his arms around her tighter and it felt like the most natural thing in the world. Lucy moved further into him, and he felt how she seemed to melt into his body. Bucky placed his chin on top of her head, and his hand gently, as though it had a mind of its own, trailed down her spine.

There was silence beyond the hooting of an owl. Crickets sang their nighttime songs, and the wind would pick up and rustled the branches of the trees. The wood in the fire snapped and sometimes made a popping sound as spark emitted, drifting up into the dark sky. There were no stars that night since it was too cloudy. But Bucky wouldn't have been able to focus on them anyway since he was positive there was nothing more beautiful than the woman who rested in his embrace.

He could hear her steady breathing. Her eyes were closed, and her eyelids twitched now and then. Bucky wasn't sure how long he stayed up, watching her shoulders rise and fall and monitoring her breathing. Each time it seemed a little slower his stomach seemed to flip and anxiety rose in his chest. All he cared about was whether or not she was alright.

Lucy nuzzled her face into his neck, and Bucky felt her warm breath against his sensitive skin. He wrapped his arms around her even more and tucked his leg over hers to provide more warmth. He wondered if she could feel his abs tighten when her hand graced over them, or how he flinched every time she moved ever so slightly.

He had never felt so flustered resting next to a woman, and each time she shifted Bucky had to close his eyes and try to control his breathing as his body nearly betrayed him.

Long after everyone but those taking watch had fallen asleep, Bucky felt himself almost drift off. The fire popped again, and Lucy inhaled sharply. She was warmer, but still chilly and Bucky found himself running his hands up and down her arms again trying to create more warmth.

He didn't realize he must have woken her up, as her eyes sleepily opened, only to close again. "Thank you," Lucy whispered in the dark. He knew it was hard for her to admit when she needed help. He only heard her say thank you to him a few times, but each time it was always genuine.

Bucky brushed some hair out of her face so he could peer down at her. Her head rested on his chest and their eyes met. Shadows flickered across her skin and his heart was full of how much he cared
for her. She was so beautiful in that moment, and Bucky was positive nothing ever felt so right than her being in his arms.

"Don't mention it, sweetheart." He whispered back, their tones hushed so they wouldn't wake anyone up.

She scoffed, but still shifted closer to him, "We need to do something about those pet names you insist on calling me,"

Bucky smiled into the night as he heard her hoarse voice cut through. He chuckled lightly, "Maybe I'll have to make one for you that's more original."

He could feel her grinning against him. "I'd rather you didn't,"

Bucky continued in his train of thought and breathed deeply as she shifted. His arms wrapped around her shoulders, and as it did so he saw the strap of her light pink brassiere, causing a shooting feeling to go straight to his groin. "Let's see…." He whispered against her hair, breathing her in. "You were like a bird flying out of that plane earlier. Maybe we can work with that."

"Please no," She was amused even though she was asking him to stop. "I hate birds."

"What about dove? Or pelican?" He teased her, still keeping his voice quiet. He was conscious of the other members of his team sleeping a couple of feet away and he didn't want to wake them.

"Don't be ridiculous," She scoffed, "Those are stupid." Her voice was scratchy and low.

"You don't like dove? What's wrong with it?" He continued, "Or parrot? You certain squawk at me like one."

"You can do better," She criticized.

"How about…." He thought for a minute until an idea popped in his head, "Pigeon?"

"Pigeon's are ugly. And if you're going to call me anything, it's 'Doctor Heinrich'." She was still stuck on that, so it seemed. Bucky rolled his eyes and gently pinched her, making her jump slightly.

"C'mon pige, don't be like that." He heard how it sounded and nodded to himself, "I kinda like that. Plus, are you really gonna make me call you Dr. Heinrich after all we've been through? I think we're a little past that, don't you think? After all, we're in bed naked together."

"Half-naked." She corrected and shivered ever so slightly and huddled into him a little bit more. "And bed is a strong word. And you're going to have all these nicknames for me and I only have one for you. Don't you think that's a little unfair?"

Bucky's eyebrows perked up, "You have a nickname for me?"

"Yes. It's 'moron'." She giggled ever so slightly.

Bucky let out a fake laugh and then rolled his eyes. He tucked his chin back on the top of her head again, and there was silence.

Bucky wondered if she fell back asleep but her breathing didn't seem as deep as it had been. He figured she was still awake, and as she began to trail her finger up and down his chest his suspicions were confirmed.

Bucky felt a shiver run down his spine at the feeling of her gently tracing over his clothed skin. He
wondered if she knew how much it affected him. He figured she didn't since Lucy continued doing it, and Bucky had to angle his hips away from her as he felt his lower body begin to stiffen at the sensations.

In taking a sharp breath and trying to think of anything but the gorgeous woman on top of him in her undergarments, Bucky struggled to control his thoughts.

It especially didn't help when Lucy broke the silence. She whispered into the dark, "That was some first kiss,"

He wondered when she was going to bring it up. He figured she had been too scared and shocked to even notice it, but he shouldn't have known better.

"Not my best work, I'll admit." He said, chuckling lowly. He thought back to how her lips had felt for that brief second. All he wanted was to prolong it and make it last, to take her in and have their lips mold into one another. He wanted to kiss her slowly and gently, and then carefully trail it down to the soft flesh of her neck.

What had happened was not how he wanted their first kiss to have gone. But Bucky reacted on instinct, and every single one nerve in his body told him to grab her at that moment and slam his mouth into hers. So that's what he did.

"Why did you do it?" Lucy's voice was so low that he could barely even hear her.

Bucky swallowed a lump in his throat as he thought about his answer. He peered up to the clouds that covered the black sheet of the sky, making it appear a dark grey. The moon lit just enough through to provide a little bit of light.

"Because," He licked his lips and replied so only she could hear. "I've wanted to do that for three years. And I wasn't sure if I'd ever get the chance. I thought we were gonna die, so…"

Lucy nodded, saying nothing. He felt he needed to add something, something that had been on his chest for a long time, "I just had to know how it felt to kiss you. It's all I wanted to do that night in Brooklyn so long ago. It took everything I had not to pull you back as you walked away and just kiss the hell out of you. But I had to let you go."

Lucy only took a deep inhale and then spoke softly, "You should have told me that you remembered us." She didn't address the fact that he had just admitting to wanting to kiss her the entire time.

"I didn't even fully remember until the bombing. I worked so hard to get you out of my brain and so much has changed since then." He had been enchanted by her and awestruck by their meeting that she plagued his every thought. When he realized that was unhealthy, it took everything to cast her out of his brain.

"Would you have ever told me if I never found out?" She was scared to know his answer.

"No," Bucky admitted, "There's no point in living in the past. Plus, we can't change it. And even if you did know, would things be different between us?"

"Well," Lucy chuckled, "I probably would have been a little nicer to you, that's for sure."

"I'd sure hope so. Can't break a guy's heart and then stomp all over him afterward," Bucky chuckled and breathed in the scent of her hair which had mostly dried.

Lucy didn't say anything again. She was mostly quiet, and then Bucky licked his lips and then closed
his eyes. He knew what he was going to say was risky, and he wasn't sure how she would react. Especially since she was bare against him, "If umm..." He cleared his throat, "If we ever kiss again it'll be much better than the last one."

Lucy looked up at him, her big, brown eyes gleaming. Bucky's heart pounded just a little bit more and he moved his arm wasn't pressing her down. The blanket slipped ever so slightly off of her. Bucky saw how her breasts were pressed against him, her cleavage apparent and extremely noticeable. "If we ever kiss again?" Lucy asked skeptically, "You planning on kissing me anytime soon, Barnes?"

"I don't know but I was kinda hoping for it." He whispered barely audible enough for her to hear. Lucy looked down at his lips for a second and his breath hitched, almost thinking that she would lean in.

But it wasn't the place. Or the proper time and Bucky didn't want their first real kiss to be mere feet away from five other men.

"Do you think about it often?" Her voice was timid and shaky. She was going into territory where she wasn't sure she'd want to know the answer.

Bucky chuckled and leaned his head back so he wouldn't be tempted to kiss her with her mouth so close to his. "More often than I'd care to admit."

"You're showing me all your cards right now, Barnes. You realize that, right?"

"Pige, I waited three years for you to know how badly I want you. I don't care about cards or who's winning or who's losing."

Lucy leaned back beside him, so they were both looking up at the sky. Her hands clasped his and Bucky drew in a sharp breath, "I'm worried that in this scenario you're going to lose though..." She didn't want him to. She felt deeply for him, but Lucy was scared of forming attachments again.

"I'm okay with that." Bucky said back, swallowing his nerves, "I can live with it," he turned his face to the side to see her as she looked up at the sky.

"But I don't know if I can," She turned to face him, and their noses practically touching. He could feel her breath on his skin and see every little detail in her delicate face. "I don't know if I could hurt you again."

Once again tempted to capture her lips, Bucky turned his face so he was looking up. "Why is it that we never get the right timing?" He couldn't even look at her. He knew if he did that he would once again slam his mouth to hers in a passionate joining.

She smirked, "We're cursed I guess."

"Looks like." He had to keep himself from saying anything more that he would regret or wouldn't be able to take back.

Lucy scoffed, "I almost liked it more when we were fighting."

"Yeah," Bucky smirked, "I think I did too. It was easier to pretend I didn't like you back then."

Their hands were still clasped together, and Lucy shivered once more and turned on her side, pulling his hand with her so her back was resting against his chest. He kissed her head lightly as he heard her sigh.
"Could you say something to make me stop liking you?" She whispered, smiling, "Something like from before we were friends?"

"Ummm..." Bucky squinted as he thought, wondering what he could say. A pink blush rose in his cheeks as he licked his lips before saying, "You have the most incredible set of breasts that I've ever seen."

Lucy only laughed into his shoulder, trying to stifle the sound in his neck. Bucky let out a small, embarrassed laugh, "I'm not kidding! They're...They're somethin' else."

Lucy laughed more before finally quieting down and only softly smiling at him.

"Did it work?" Bucky asked, trying to see if he had succeeded in making her like him a little less by saying something crass.

Lucy only shook her head. "We'll have to see, I guess." She chuckled, then gently kissed his cheek. "Goodnight, Bucky," Lucy whispered, and Bucky's eyes trailed on her lips as she pulled away. His skin burned where she had gently pressed her mouth to it. "Try not to dream about my breasts," Lucy teased.

He chuckled from her comment, "Goodnight, Lucy." Bucky allowed fatigue to overcome him. With a pause, he took in that moment. He never wanted to forget how it felt to have her rest in his arms, their bodies pressed against one another. And with that thought, Bucky settled into the most peaceful sleep that he had in a long time.

Chapter End Notes

KILL ME. Was that just not just the cutest? Ugh, I love them. Also, before anyone asks... YES, the nickname 'Pigeon' does come from Lady and the Tramp. I was watching the movie last week and saw some parallels between Lady/Tramp and Lucy/Bucky. Especially since Lucy's the educated, good girl from an upper-class family and he's more the bad boy/working class. The nickname was just too sweet to not include.

The next chapter is FULL of action, sexy times, and hilariously cute Bucky and Lucy moments. I'm so excited to share it with you all.

If you love me please, please review. Also, follow and favourite to get alerts when the next update comes out. Trust me when I saw you won't wanna miss it. :)

-A
Chapter XXII

Lucy awoke to feel the unfamiliar sensation of a man's heavy arm wrapped around her. It was wrapped around her center, keeping her pinned against whatever body she was beside and pressed against her. For a moment, panic ran through her veins and turned her blood to ice. She nearly sat up and pushed the being off of her until she got a good look of where she was.

She was lying on the ground of a forest floor, the sun just peeking out above the trees. The fire had long since been extinguished, and sleeping men laid in their blankets around her.

Lucy had twigs in her hair, and was fairly certain that she wasn't wearing clothes under the two heavy blankets she had on but she wasn't positive.

Rolling over only a little bit, Lucy turned to see Bucky sleeping peacefully. He snored lightly, his mouth open ever so slightly. It wasn't loud enough to be obnoxious, but still notable enough to remind her that he was there.

She found herself snuggling into his warmth a little more. He was beautiful as he slept. For once, he looked peaceful and was boyishly handsome and carefree. He almost looked the same way he did on that night three years ago when they had first met. Before the war, and before anything else that had happened.

She felt safe in his arms, and she revelled in the feeling of once again being held by a man. Usually, she would be flooded with guilt from the close contact, but for some reason she wasn't. She wanted to be closer to him, to feel his warm body flushed against hers. She wanted to be consumed by his warmth, every morning waking up to the sensation of being of being wrapped up in him.

Her eyes trailed to his lips. They were slightly open as he let out another small snore. Lucy blushed as she thought about the conversation that they had the previous night. She thought back to the brief kiss that they had shared, and the heat rose to her cheeks even more. The way he had slammed his mouth on hers and taken a forceful kiss was almost enough to drive her insane. In a way, she was upset that their first kiss hadn't happened differently. But nonetheless, she was glad she still got to

See the end of the chapter for more notes.
experience what it was like. Despite it being nothing like how she imagined in her head; she hoped there would be many more opportunities to rectify the issue and get the kiss she knew both of them deserved.

She couldn't believe that it had taken her so long to discover who he was. She had tried so hard to forget that night, as she felt guilty because she knew how it would make Daniel feel. It was almost like she didn't want to realize who he was. Since Lucy knew the moment she found out, all her old feelings resurfaced and collided with her new ones.

Deep down Lucy knew she shouldn't dwell on what could have been. She chose to forget Bucky and move on. But now that they were thrown together, what did that mean? She looked at him and felt at peace. She scoffed at what she would have thought a month ago if she could have seen herself. She hated him so much, but things over the last two weeks changed.

She couldn't hate him if she tried at that point. Elsa had been completely right when she noted Lucy likely had feelings for him. To her shame, she knew deep down she did. But the loss of Daniel was still fresh in her brain, and she knew she wasn't ready to move on.

But that kiss… Oh God, that kiss. And the way he said he thought about kissing her again more often than he cared to admit. It hit Lucy right in the stomach, and she felt an ache between her thighs when she thought about kissing him again.

Their kiss had been brief, but it still counted. Sure, it wasn't exactly how she pictured a first kiss with a man. But given the fact they might have both died, it had to do.

Lucy bit her lip as she stared down at his again. She wondered what it would feel like pressed against the hollow of her throat, or trialing down to the mounds of her breasts. She shook the idea of our her head, a blush yet again raising in her cheeks.

Bucky stirred ever so slightly, and his arm pulled her back into him. Her back was pressed again his chest, flushed together. Her behind was against…

Lucy felt shock well in her as she felt the hardness of his groin against her. For a moment she thought to panic, and to push him away when she realized it wasn't as though he was purposefully doing it. He wasn't making any moves so make her do anything with it either, and she should have known Bucky would never be the type of man to make her feel uncomfortable on purpose.

She relaxed a little more, another deep ache settling in her body. Lucy hadn't felt a man's desire for her in so long. And the fact that she could feel his hard body pressed against her, she knew she should move… But she wanted to feel him a little bit longer. To wonder what it would have felt like three years ago if she wasn't held back to her commitment to Daniel.

If she kissed him that night, she knew she wouldn't be able to resist. She wanted to know what it would feel like to have woken up with him the next morning and had his body wrapped around her. Another life flashed before her eyes, and Lucy sighed. Her life could have been so different if she had chosen him. But she didn't.

Lucy got up, trying to ignore the deep need in between her legs and her stomach flipping. Looking around, she discovered that no one was up as she began slipping on her clothes.

She was exposed to the cool air with her half naked body, and she was trying to be as quiet as possible so none of the men would wake up and get an eyeful.

Lucy slipped her socks on first, then her pants. She did her belt up and shivered as the morning air
settled into her bones. Looking around, there didn't seem to be anyone awake. She was left in her brassiere and Lucy thought she was in the clear until the man she had slept beside all night turned and his eyes opened sleepily.

Lucy finished doing up her belt as his eyes fell on her and then widened, he leaned back and put his face into the crook of his elbow to give her privacy, "I think I died last night and woke up in heaven," He chuckled under his arm as he mumbled.

A blush appeared on Lucy's face, she smiled down at him. She felt her stomach flip ever so slightly yet again, and she yanked her shirt over her head. "You can look now."

Bucky huffed and then sat up, rubbing his tired face with his hands. Lucy pulled a jumper over, and then afterwards her uniform coat. She tossed Bucky his clothes, which he caught and grumbled a thanks. It appeared he wasn't much of a morning person.

Lucy noticed how the others were waking up, and Lee Miller returned from his watch to get a bit of shut eye before they moved out. She went to her pack and noticed how it was still damp from the night before. Huffing in frustration, she tried to take out the ruined maps and her books.

"Mornin' Doc, feeling better?" Dum Dum asked curiously, worried how she was since the night before caused her to be in some rough shape.

"Much better, thank you for your help last night." He had been the only other man besides Bucky concerned about her well being. Which was odd, given the fact that only she knew how to find the Tesseract and without her the mission would be a failure.

Dugan shrugged, "Don't thank me. It was all Buck." Lucy turned back to the man who she had begun to grow very fond of.

Bucky stood up, a blanket draped over his shoulders as his hair was tousled and messy. Bags were under his eyes and Lucy wondered if he ended up getting more sleep after they talked a little bit. His silver dog tags hung over his white undershirt. Lucy tried not to blush at the sight of him in his boxers, so she averted her eyes and focused back on her ruined manuscripts and maps.

"Yeah, Sarg really had to take one for the team sleepin' next to a half-naked dame like that." Gabe Jones teased, and Lucy found herself blushing even more. An uncomfortable feeling settled in her belly and suddenly she wanted nothing more than to bury her head in the sand from embarrassment.

"She kicks in her sleep. Wasn't as pleasant as you'd think," Bucky joked. He didn't comment any more on her being only half-dressed, which Lucy was thankful for. As Bucky pulled his navy coat over the top of his jumper he noticed how she squirmed from a feeling of being uncomfortable. He gave her a wink, as though only she and him knew a secret.

"And you snore," Lucy replied.

He looked at her and cocked an eyebrow, "You're a blanket hog." He retorted back.

"Alright, alright. Jesus Christ, you two. You're like an old married couple." Dugan shook his head, "It's too early for this shit."

"Yeah and keep the sex eyes to a minimum, alright?" Whitney grumbled as he looked at how Lucy and Bucky interacted with one another. Immediately Lucy felt a blush appear on her cheeks again.

"Keep the smart ass comments to a minimum, alright?" Bucky shot back, mimicking Whitney's tone and looking at the man with a fire burning in his eyes.
He took a seat next to Lucy, who was looking up at him shocked. She couldn't believe how protective he was being around her. Ever since Whitney first said something to her at the base camp Bucky had been eager to stand up to him when it came to harassment. But Lucy never noticed the open hostility between the two men.

She continued watching him as he sat beside her and pursed his lips, "Sorry, pige." Bucky's voice was low as he apologized for Whitney's comment.

She only shook her head and explained it was alright. Dugan came up to her and gave her a can of rations. She thanked him for it instantly, not knowing how hungry she was until that moment and her stomach let out a soft growl.

"So, Doc you're the only one who's not in the dark in this situation. You're gonna tell us why we're in the middle of nowhere in Norway?" Dugan asked her, suddenly getting everyone's attention as soon as he began talking about the mission.

Lucy bit into the rations of sausage and beans and immediately wanted to spit them back out. But she was so hungry that she would have eaten anything. So she took another bite and chewed as she formulated her answer.

"How much do you fella's know about my work?" She'd start with the basics since she wasn't sure how informed they all were.

"You're an archaeologist. That's all I know so far." Dugan answered for everyone.

"I specialize in rare cult items, and things with supernatural significance. I've studied cultures for years and how they interact with religious material and how they affected society. Artifacts, art, literature is all my focus. And the army took me on because a S.S. division called the Ahnenerbe uses said objects to support and cement their superiority claims of aryans being the master race. I figured that's all the job was... keep them out of the hands of the bad guys so they couldn't make propaganda. Then I joined the S.S.R., and they seem to believe there's one object that's more important than the rest. It holds some kind of supernatural power and if it falls into the wrong hands it's not gonna be good."

"Supernatural power?" Whitney scoffed and crossed his arms, "So we're talking about magic here? What's next? The boogeyman?"

"Listen, it's not up to me to determine whether or not this thing is actually a big deal. I'm the only one who can find it. Yeah, maybe it's all complete bullshit but that doesn't matter. We just have to find it before they do so they can't spread their hateful lies even more."

"And what did I say about smart-ass comments?" Bucky shot back to Whitney, making the man scowl even deeper.

"So what exactly are we after?" Dugan clicked his teeth and asked curiously.

Lucy held up her finger to gesture for him to wait one moment as she madly went through her bag while looking for a particular book. As she was rifling through, she noticed how Daniel's letter was soaked and immediately her heart dropped. She placed it carefully against some of her other books and prayed silently that she would still be able to read it once it dried.

Ignoring the pain in her heart and the tears welling in her eyes, Lucy focused on the task at hand. She found the book she was looking for, and although it was damp she still opened it to the page she knew where she would find the description of the Tesseract, "It's this." She passed the book to
Dugan, "It's known as the Tesseract. The Norse used to believe it was an energy source made by their gods."

Dugan scoffed and passed the book along, "So we're risking our lives for this small cube thing? Which may or may not be bullshit?"

Lucy sighed, "Unfortunately, I think so."

The man exhaled deeply and then slapped his knees and stood up, "Well, we don't have much of a choice about it now. On to Tønsberg, I suppose."

Lucy didn't like nature. She was an indoor kinda gal. One who preferred to read her books and write her reports and do everything with a roof over her head. Of course, that proved to be a problem as she was in the field. But she figured she could sacrifice a couple months to live outdoors to practice her area of study.

The desert was more pleasant than the forests. Mostly, because there wasn't as many bugs.

As she slapped another one on her neck, she huffed. It seemed like they had been walking around for hours, and she was positive they were lost.

However, Gabe Jones was insistent on the fact that they were going the right way. They kept quiet as they walked, not wanting to attract any type of unwanted attention.

Luckily, there had been no run-ins with any Germans, but who's to say that they wouldn't still have one. She didn't want to think of what would happen if they were to see any. Lucy just hoped that they'd be able to get out of there as quickly as possible.

"Are you sure you know where we're going?" She asked Gabe as she caught up to him at the front.

"Pretty sure," He replied with a map in his hand and a compass.

Lucy wondered how much longer they would have to walk to get there. Despite it being cold in the autumn air, they had been walking for so long that Lucy found herself beginning to get sweaty. Her cheeks were flushed from over exertion and already she wanted to drink all the water she had in her canteen. Lucy huffed as she realized that them going on like this wouldn't be possible. Not to mention, it looked eerily suspicious that seven individuals all dressed like civilians were all carrying heavy assault weapons and survival supplies.

"Alright," Lucy stopped and put her hands on her hips, trying to catch her breath. The sweat was running down her neck, and she knew everyone else was feeling the heat as well since all their coats were unbuttoned, "We can't keep going on like this. It's not efficient enough."

"In case you haven't noticed, genius" Whitney took a puff of his cigarette as he mocked her, "We don't necessarily have any other options,"

"Dugan rolled his eyes at Whitney's attitude, "He's right. We gotta keep going." He looked downright pissed that for once Whitney was the one who made the most sense.

"There looks to me a small village just south of here," Lucy glanced at Gabe's map, noting a little town's name, "I say we go there and commandeer a vehicle. It'll be useful if we need to make a quick escape, and plus it'll be easier to transport all our equipment."

"I like that idea," Gabe nodded, and since he was in charge of the map most people seemed to agree
that he was right. Lucy was happy that they were following her advice and not just disregarding what she said because she was a woman. A small grin was on her face as she continued walking.

"Hold up," Whitney stopped, outstretching his arms, "How the hell are we gonna steal a vehicle without someone noticing us? Don't we look a little suspicious?"

"I'll do it," Lucy shrugged, "No one pays too much attention to a woman. I probably won't even get a second glance."

"Aha," Whitney scoffed, "And I don't suppose you know how to hotwire a vehicle, do you? Or, did your brilliant idea only entail them just handing the keys over to you after you bat your eyelashes at them? Forgive me Doctor, but I don't think you've thought this through." There it was. Suddenly she was being doubted and her idea was yet again being disregarded.

"Hey," Bucky's jaw tightened at Whitney comment as he walked by him, staring him down. "She knows what she's doing," He looked at Lucy as he walked by her, flashing her a small smile and Lucy's heart fluttered and she couldn't help but feel butterflies in her stomach.

It's odd how in such a short amount of time he went from hating her to supporting and defending her. It made her feelings for him even more apparent, since Lucy had only been supported by Daniel like that before.

"Well I'm sorry I don't have as much confidence in your girlfriend as you do! I'm just tryna think rationally here," Whitney sneered, making Bucky shoot him a look. His comment made Lucy blush, but Bucky paid no attention to it; he just kept walking.

"If Dr. Heinrich says she can do it, let's give her the chance," Dugan spoke up. Whitney shut his mouth at the comment, and Lucy pursed her lips, feeling a little crushed in her spirits that some of her teammates didn't think she was capable.

"Lucy," Dugan whistled to her, getting her attention, "Come walk back here with me." He had been taking the back of the rank, providing cover. He noticed she seemed down after the comment Whitney made.

Lucy fell behind with him and sighed as the older man looked at her, "You alright, Doc?"

"Fine," She shook her head, "I'm fine. Just… irritated." If Lucy was being honest with herself she was much more than just irritated. She hated the idea that someone didn't take her seriously.

"Pay no mind to him," Dugan gestured with his chin to Whitney, who was walking up from and scowling. Lucy figured many women would find him attractive. After all, he had slicked back black hair, green eyes, and a well trimmed short mustache. His muscles were prominent under his uniform, and Lucy knew that he was aware of how he looked. But she couldn't stand the man, and his personality made him remarkably unattractive. "He's just an asshole."

"He's a bully," Lucy huffed, looking at him resentfully. Her eyes glared daggers in the back of his skull.

"He is. And unfortunately I've got news for you darlin'. You're gonna have to deal with a lot worse than Gilbert Whitney in your lifetime." It was a sad truth, but Lucy was more than aware of that.

She scoffed and closed her eyes, "I've been dealing with men like Whitney my entire life."

"And that's why you are truly one of the most impressive dames I've ever had the pleasure of meeting," Dugan said kindly and Lucy felt a smile creep onto her face.
"Stop it," She smacked his arm lightly, "You're making me blush."

"It's the truth," Dugan clicked his teeth and gave her a soft smile, before sighing. "I don't suppose Buck over there ever told you about the bet?"

"Bet?" Lucy frowned, "What bet?"

"After you turned down Whitney he was pretty sore about it. I guess he and some other fellas, had a little 'bet', to see who could go the furthest with you."

Lucy paled as disgust filled her stomach. She had never felt so revolted in her life. And to know that the man responsible was had slept a mere few feet away from her created an uncomfortable pit to well in Lucy's chest.

Anger twinged in her brain and she asked, "And Bucky? He was taking part—?" Her voice began to break just thinking about.

"No, no." Dugan quickly started, cutting her off, "Don't you worry about that. He had no idea. But when he found out let me tell ya," Dugan let out a low chuckle as he shook his head, "I was worried he was gonna sock him right in the jaw," He smiled at her, reassuring Lucy and dissipating her fears.

More warmth flooded her being as she looked at the man who had defended her time and time again as he walked ahead of the group. "Make no mistake, he's in your corner now."

Lucy chuckled as she continued watching him, "Funny, a few weeks ago and I would have thought he would have been the one to start some horrendous bet like that."

"Told ya he'd grow on you," He grinned wider, "He'd fond of you, you know."

She smiled even wider, "Is that so?" Lucy's eyes continued to follow Bucky as he trekked through the forest. Her heart pounded in her chest as he watched him. He had to have been one of the most gorgeous men that she had ever seen, and each time she thought of him an ache developed inside her which nearly consumed her entirety.

She thought of how he held her the night before. And how he pressed his lips tenderly to her forehead before they fell asleep,

"One could even say that's he's sweet on ya. But uhhh, don't tell him I told you that." He spoke like a mischievous child, doing something he knew he shouldn't have been.

She scoffed and rolled her eyes as a blush appeared on her cheeks, "People keep telling me that."

Dugan chuckled, "I'm assuming that pretty red-headed nurse friend of yours is one of them?"

Lucy's eyes widened and her mouth dropped, "You know Elsa?" She asked in shock.

"Oh yeah, I know her." He nodded, "She sought me out before we all went on the mission. Told me of the little dance you two have goin' on and how everyone but you can see that you're mad for each other. Now I'm not one to meddle too much and play matchmaker, but the nurse was very convincing." He chuckled.

Lucy huffed and then crossed her arms, "What did she promise you?"

"Nothing! I'm just doing it out of the goodness of my own heart! How dare you assume there's some selfish reasoning behind it all?" He joked.
Lucy gave him a pressing look and cocked her eyebrow, "Spit it out."

"Alright, fine," He huffed with a grin, "Not only is she gonna pay my tab at the pub when we are finally able to take leave, but she also explained her fiancé has a ranch out in Nebraska which me and my lady can use anytime we want for a romantic getaway… That is, if we get out of this mess alive, of course." Dum Dum added with a skeptical tone.

"Elsa Hardy damn you." Lucy couldn't help but shake her head and smile as she thought about her friend. She couldn't believe that she was still intervening in her business when she wasn't even there.

"But even without the other incentives, I'd do it anyway because I'm a romantic." Dum Dum explained, and then tilted his head and clicked his teeth again, "And also Sarg has become considerably less irritating since you two have been getting along,"

That made Lucy laugh. She blushed again as she looked back at Bucky. She was just about to say something when he held up his hand in a fist, signalling everyone to stop and get down.

Lucy paled and they crouched over to where Gabe and Bucky had stopped. She rested on the ground over a mound as she and Dugan appeared next to them to see what was happening.

Lucy was shocked to see on a path through the forest, which obviously was functioning as a road, a black car was stopped on the side of it. She was shocked to see the blazing red and white swastika on the side of it, and men arguing in German as steam came from the engine.

Lucy noticed how the men donned grey uniforms. They were obviously high commanding officers and their driver, stopped by the side of the road due to vehicle trouble.

Two gunmen stood alert, guarding whoever was still sitting inside. From the angry yelling he was doing out the window he was clearly frustrated.

"Well, Doctor Heinrich," Whitney lowly whispered, "There's the car you wished for."

"Sarg, what do we do?" Gabe asked. It would save them a lot of time if they were able to take that vehicle instead of walking all the way to the town. But they had no idea if backup was arriving or another car would be coming along to help them.

The driver yelled for one of the gunmen to help, and Lucy watched as he set down his weapon against the front of the car to assist.

"I have an idea," Lucy whispered to Bucky, who looked back at her as they crouched away. "You have to trust me though," That was the only thing she requested.

"Oh no," Whitney rolled his eyes as they all stood up. Lucy wiped her dirt covered hands on her pants as she got to her feet, "Not another one of your brilliant ideas. Sarg, I say we take them by surprise. They'll never what hit them."

Bucky looked at Lucy and how she stared at him eagerly. He ignored Whitney completely, "Alright, pig."

"Great!" She licked her lips while still keeping her voice low. "I need your jacket and a knife," Lucy requested and began to take the braid out of her hair that she had put in that morning.

She ran her fingers through her curly locks and flipped her head down so it would have more
volume. Bucky looked a little stunned at her appearance and muttered "Err... Why?" He asked a little stupidly, still a little struck by her appearance and the way her hair looked as though it had been created by Aphrodite herself.

"You'll see." Lucy took her pack off her shoulders and searched through it until she found what she was looking for, placing it on the ground as she continued kneeling.

She began to unbutton her jacket as Bucky passed her his. Lucy took it, muttering a thanks before undoing her shirt buttons ever so slightly. She pushed it open just so the beginning of her brasserie could be seen.

"Ummm..." Bucky's eyes glanced over the swells of her breasts and her cleavage hungrily. He licked his lips as she blushed as he tried to tear his gaze away, "Whatcha doin' there, doll?"

"Christ," Whitney looked on and rolled his eyes again and huffed frustratedly as he noticed that what she pulled out of her bag was a tube of lipstick. Lucy opened the cap and began putting some on her lips and smudging it ever so slightly, "Don't tell me you're gonna try to seduce them."

"I'm not going to seduce them." Lucy had a mischievous twinkle in her eye, and Bucky knew she was up to no good. He couldn't keep his eyes off of her, absolutely entranced by her appearance. "But men become distracted when a pretty woman is involved."

"Yes, they do." Bucky deadpanned as he looked at her, knowing he could relate to her statement.

She stood up after putting on his jacket over her shirt. She left it open, exposing still just a little bit of her chest.

"How do I look?" Lucy asked him, and Bucky suddenly wish she hadn't.

"Err, umm, yeah. Swell. You look swell." Bucky stuttered nervously, trying to formulate words as he looked over her. He cleared his throat nervously and refused to meet her gaze, "You look swell. Just swell." He repeated, wanting to kick himself from losing all sense of intelligence to moment her breasts were exposed.

"Say swell one more time." Dugan teased as he chuckled and Bucky shot him a pressing, frustrated look.

Lucy smirked like the devil as he passed her his knife. He tried not to think of how damn gorgeous she looked wearing his clothes or the fact she had messy hair and slightly smudged lipstick and her shirt a little unbuttoned. He felt himself once again becoming hard in his trousers as he thought of how she might look similar to that after being taken to bed. Bucky began kicking himself for having such thoughts and tried to clear his mind.

"Perfect," Was all she said before taking the knife in her palm. She slit it across her skin, crimson blood pouring out in her fist. She hissed from the sting but other than that the cut wasn't too bad, but she made sure it bled a lot.

"Oh-Oh my God!" Bucky exclaimed as quietly as he could while he watched blood pour out of Lucy's hand, "What the hell are you doing? Have you lost your goddamn mind?" The red liquid in her hand began dripping into the dirt. She cringed from the bite of the knife, but ignored it. Bucky's men watched in shock and was worried about what she was doing, "This isn't some type of prayer to Satan or anything right? No hebejebe magic stuff you learned in Egypt?"

She rolled her eyes, hissing slightly again from the sting, "Relax!" She took her bloody palm and streaked it across her face. It looked like a type of war paint or as though she had been in a terrible
"Watch and learn, boys." Lucy made sure to smear some blood across her chest as well. She roughed her hair up a little bit more. It looked like she had been through a traumatic, awful event and was badly bleeding from it. She took a deep breath and closed her eyes for a moment. She concentrated hard, and took another deep breath.

"Doll?" Bucky asked curiously, a little frightened by what was going on, "You okay there?"

"Just getting into character." She replied back, taking another deep breath and forcing tears to well in her eyes.

"Alright, I am officially terrified. The lady has lost her damn mind. I don't know what cult shit you studied but I want no part in this!" Whitney shook his head vigorously and began backing away while crossing over himself. "We're doing the surprise attack, and that's final."

Lucy opened her eyes and released all the tears that had been built up. It's wasn't hard to make herself cry. All she had to think about was Daniel and immediately the water works began. They trailed down her cheeks like waterfalls and Bucky was once again taken aback. Because even though she was crying, she had a smile on her face, "Like I said," Her expression turned from happy to devastated, looking as though something horrible had happened to her, "Watch and learn, boys."

Before anyone could say anything Lucy began wailing madly. She was like a banshee, crying at the top of her lungs and huffing and puffing. She shook from fear, and yelled dramatically as toppled over the hill to be seen by the men fixing the car.

She continued acting, as though something of the most awful degree had just befallen her. Meanwhile, her teammates watched in absolute shock from their hiding places as they looked on at the peculiar sight.

As soon as Lucy stumbled over the hill, hanging onto trees for dramatic effect and throwing herself down, the guard with the gun had his sights trained on her. He had his weapon pointed straight at her head as everyone else was alerted.

Lucy wailed agonizingly, the tears pouring down her face, "Hilf mir!" Help me! Lucy pleaded in German. She made her way down, the men looking at her with shock and wondering where the hell the madwoman came from.

"Bitte!" Pleaseee! She cried more as guns became trained on her. They looked at the beautiful and injured woman with bewilderment "Bitte helft mir!" Please help me! Lucy screamed again, looking heartbroken and scared. "Ich bin ein Deutsche!" I am a German citizen!

"Halt oder wir schießen!" Stop or we will shoot you! The guard called out, his gun raised. "Halt!" Stop! He yelled again, his finger on the trigger. Bucky had to do all he could to keep himself from racing out after her. He kept his gun pointed at the man who was aiming at her, staring at him through his scope and ready to put a bullet in his skull should it look like he was about to fire. Bucky's heart pounded in his chest at the thought of watching her get hurt again. He didn't know if he could stand it to watch her die.

Convincingly, Lucy stuck her hands up, shaking from fear, "Bitte!" Please! She cried even more, snot dripping down her nose. "Bitte, mein Ehemann - er ist ein General in der Armee! Ich war auf dem Weg meine Cousine hier zu besuchen als wir von den Alliierten entführt wurden! Mein Name ist Hanna Kirchhein . Bitte, funken sie meinen Mann an, er wird Ihnen alles erklären!" Please, my husband — He is a general in your army! I was on my way to visit my cousin here when we were
kidnapped by allied forces! My name is Fraline Hanna Kirchhein. Please, just radio my husband and he will explain everything! She begged, crying more as she timidly cowered from the guns.

"Was ist hier draußen los? Und woher kommt dieses schreckliche Geräusch?" *What is going on out there? What is that horrendous sound?* The man still in the backseat of the car complained, unaware of what was happening. "Wir haben nicht den ganzen Tag!" *We don't have all day!*

"Da ist eine Frau draußen die verletzt ist. Sie sagt sie ist Deutsche und, dass ihr Mann ein General ist. Sie hat gesagt, dass sie entführt wurde." *There is a woman out there who is hurt. She says she's a German citizen and her husband is a general. She said she was kidnapped.* The unarmed guard who had been helping with the engine called out from the front of the vehicle.

"Dann schauen wir mal was wir für dich tun können, Kirchhein. Aber wir müssen dich zuerst nach Waffen abtasten. Wo bist du verletzt?" *Let us see what we can do for you, Fraline. But first we must pat you down for weapons. Where are you injured?* The driver asked her, taking in her appearance and noticing she was quite beautiful, but also that she needed help.

"Natürlich, natürlich" *Of course, of course.* She sniffled, crying, "Dankeschön" *Thank you.* More tears fell down her cheeks as she approached and she continued the dramatic sobbing.

Lucy's eyes shifted to the gun that was set up against the car. The guard whose aim was pointed at her began to relax more as he saw Lucy begin to get patted down. "Ich hab bloß so große Angst." *I'm just so scared.* Her entire body shook as she looked at the driver. He was a middle aged man who clearly felt bad for her, but also didn't care whether or not he accidentally grazed her behind or cupped a little too closely to her breasts.

"Bitte, ich würde alles tun um zu meinem Mann zurückzukommen." *Please, I will do anything to get back to my husband.* She added for good measure, her face looking broken and her attitude desperate. She clutched the man's arm and then, with a shaky voice she reiterated, "Alles." *Anything.* Lucy's voice cracked as she whispered, stressing how important it was for her.

He sneered, looking at her broken face, "Mach dir keine Sorgen, Kirchhein. Wir werden dir helfen." *Don't worry, Fraline. We will help you.* His helpful attitude soon turned sleazy as he realized what she was implying.

Lucy's face turned to a hopeful smile, her expression no longer agonized and tortured. "Ja," *Yes.* She grinned sweetly, "Das wirst du tun." *You will.*

It was then she kneed him in the groin. The man doubled over in pain, yelling out from the hard contact. She knew that her team was emerging from their hiding spots, their weapons facing the Germans.

In a second, the guard's gun was trained on her but Lucy was just as fast. With her foot she kicked the gun that was resting against the car up so she could grab it. As soon as it was in her hands Lucycocked it back, the echo of it's sound loud enough for all to hear, the bullet prepped and ready in its chamber.

"Drop it!" She yelled at the guard who was pointing his gun at her. She voice shook slightly, but she swallowed her fear. The man ignored her, keeping his aim focused on her head.

"Oh I wouldn't do that if I were you!" Dugan called out seriously, emerging from the bushes with his gun on the man. The driver who she had kneed was groaning in pain on the ground, and the other soldier was looking around terrified and confused, wondering what was happening.
"schlechte Idee. Verstehst du mich" Bad idea. Do you understand? Dugan asked in German to the guard who still had his gun pointed at Lucy. "We have you surrounded."

With a clenched jaw, the guard eventually saw what was happening as the other six members of Lucy's team came out with their gun's ready.

Lucy placed her gun down, lowering it as Bucky grabbed the driver off the ground and began tying him up. His gaze looked to Lucy, who still held the gun her hand and was watching the German's getting forced on their knees.

"That was—," Bucky looked at her in bewilderment, his mouth slightly agape in shock, "Wow. Terrifying for sure. But… Wow." He said as he pushed the German down, causing him to call out in pain as he still clenched his legs together from the damage that Lucy did. Bucky paid no mind to him though, he was too focused on the woman before him.

Lucy shrugged as though it were no big deal, wiping her tears with the back of her sleeve, "Thanks, the Lee's thought I should be well versed in the world of theatre." She was composed as ever, completely out of the break down that she had put on for dramatic effect.

"And well versed I would say you are." He complimented her again, giving a little sideways grin which caused the butterflies in her stomach to stir yet again.

"How did you know what would even work and they wouldn't shoot you?" Bucky questioned, realizing Lucy had no idea that her plan would go that way.

She onto shrugged, "Men love a damsel in distress. It makes them feel all big and powerful."

Bucky nodded, licking his lips, "Rightt… Damsel in distress." He was still in disbelief. If there was one thing Lucy Heinrich was not, and that was a damsel in distress. The fact that she had managed to kick the man in the groin and react fast enough to get to the gun before she was shot proved that.

Lucy smiled back at Bucky, pointing back at the car. The air between them was awkward and uncomfortable, and the tension so evident one could cut it with a knife. "I should go see who's in the back of the car," Lucy cleared her throat, hoping to regain some of her confidence.

"Oh yeah, you should… Considering you speak German and all and this is your mission." Bucky nodded, still in a daze. What was wrong with him? Why was he suddenly acting like a nervous school boy? It had to have been because he realized in that moment how genuinely impressive she was. Not only was she smart, and beautiful, but she could hold her own in a fight. Compared to her, Bucky didn't hold a candle to a flame.

She smirked and then gave a little giggle as she backed away. Bucky watched her as she went, absolutely in awe of the woman before him. He let out a low whistle as she walked away as he admired her from behind.

She was one hell of a woman. Bucky still couldn't believe what just happened, and he had to rub his face to make sure he wasn't in a dream.

Oh god," Bucky groaned and threw his head back in frustration after watching her walk away, "I wanna kiss you." He said to no one but himself quietly. He didn't even realize he said it out loud until it was too late.

Lucy's ears picked up and she suddenly turned around, "What was that?"

Bucky scrambled, "Oh uhh—," He cringed and put his hands in his pockets and made a half turn,
yelling "I said if you died I wouldn't miss you!"

Lucy only frowned and shook her head, "Christ," her brows were pressed together, "Did I say something to make you sore at me again? Why don't you tell me how you really feel."

She grabbed her gun from where she had placed it and continued walking around the passenger side of the car. Lucy turned back and shot Bucky another frown, wondering where his sudden hostility came from.

She watched as her team tied the men up, making sure their bounds were secure.

Dugan came up to Bucky with a small, evil, smile. "Nice." Was the only comment he made, making Bucky roll his eyes.

"Shut up," He growled angrily, hoping the man would keep his mouth shut for once.

"That was pathetic," The German driver sneered in English, chuckling as he watched the two from where he was bound up on the ground.

"You know what?" Bucky smiled widely down at him, "I don't like your attitude, Fritz. And because of that, it looks like you're about to be gagged." He went to go get something to keep the man from talking which he then forced in his mouth, "I like you more when you're not talking." Bucky sneered at him as the man protested about having a rope in his mouth.

Meanwhile, Lucy went to the car side by side with Gabe Jones. She tapped on the window with her gun. She watched it slowly roll down from the hand pump as Jones had his aim pointed at the man who rested inside.

Lucy smiled sweetly before saying, "Guttentag, asshole!" She smirked as she trained her gun on the man, watching him swallow nervously in fear.

**Chapter End Notes**

Well, there it was! I'm hoping you were all as amused with this chapter as I was. I had so much fun writing it and I can't wait to update again soon. The next chapter is ~steam~ to say the least. There's some more sexual tension I know you all hate me for. But I love it, it's so easy to torture you all. Plus, the build up is one of the best parts! Maybe I'll just be nice and have some of that tension resolved though... Hmm...

Decisions, decisions.

As usual, I crave validation and compliments. Please leave a review if you love me and want me to update the next chapter sooner. Don't forget to follow and favourite, also!

Thanks for reading,

-A
Chapter XXIII

Oh wow, I'm so glad you all enjoyed the last chapter! Thank you all for your kind words. I'm glad you're all as amused as I am about the comedic relief I decided to include in the chapters in an attempt to lighten things up. Forgive me for the poor editing job today. I was feeling a little lazy.

Big thanks again to the wonderful 0peneyeZ, who once again did the German translations. Thank you, thank you again, Kat! :) And to darkwolf76, who is a dear friend and finally checked out this story despite her very busy schedule! Good to see you again in my reviews lol.

Trigger Warning: Racism and Anti-Semitism.

Chapter XXIII

Lucy got in the backseat of the car through one door as Dum Dum went in from the other. Inside they were greeted with the sight of a man of regal posture, a cold expression, and a stoic aura around him which showed he meant business. He had no emotion behind his eyes, and an empty look that Lucy could figure was contributed to his lack of soul.

He was clean-shaven and likely in his fifties. He had a light blue eye colour that unnerved Lucy. His salt and pepper grey hair was notable even though he was wearing his uniform hat. Not a single stitch was out of place in his uniform, and it was very clear that he was a person of importance.

"Jetzt da wir es alle gemütlich haben." Now that we're all comfortable, Dugan smiled at the man. "warum stellen wir uns nicht vor? Ich bin Sergent Dugan, und meine liebliche aber überraschend wilde Kollegin hier ist Dr. Heinrich." Why don't we make introductions? I'm Sergent Dugan, and my lovely and yet surprisingly fierce colleague here is Dr. Heinrich.

To Lucy's surprise, the man started laughing. Her face fell and she cocked her head. Dugan then asked, "Macht es Ihnen etwas aus uns mitzuteilen, was sie so zum Schreien komisch finden?" Do you mind informing us what you find so hilarious? There was something about his laugh that caused a pit to form in her stomach.

"If you prefer, Sergent I would be happy to speak English. To be frank with you, your German is slightly embarrassing. I'm worried that you will not be able to keep up with Dr. Heinrich and me," He looked at her with a smile as he said her name, as though they shared a secret inside joke.

Dugan smirked and pointed a finger at him, "You're funny, you know that?" He clicked his teeth, "But you better learn some manners real quick son, because I've been known to have a temper."

The man laughed and then waved them off, "I was only laughing because I was wondering what tactic you were taking by bringing a woman in here to question me. Now I know why. She's the
famous Lucy Heinrich." He smirked, looking her up and down and seeing if her appearance matched
her reputation, "I am honoured to be in your presence."

Lucy's face fell again, "You know me but I'm afraid I don't know you. How's that possible?"

"My dear," He laughed, "Your work is famous amongst my inner circle. You must know that
Heinrich Himmler especially is a fan of your work. In fact, I believe he even attempted to recruit
you…After all, you are German." He cocked an eyebrow, looking her up and down.

Lucy's expression dropped again and she was sure that no one had ever known of what happened
when a man had snuck into her tent while in Egypt and tried to get her to join their excavations for a
large sum of money. "I see they were unsuccessful… Unless you are a spy. In which case, you are
very convincing. And if you are not? Well then I am afraid you are a traitor and you will eventually
get what is coming to you." Lucy scowled at his words, about to ask who the hell he was. When he
cut her off, "We talk about you quite a bit in Berlin, Himmler and I. Unlike you and him I do not
have a passion for history. But I do love spinning propaganda and seeing vermin be extinguished."

"That's a nice little story you got there." Dugan nodded, "Are you gonna get to the part where your
daddy abandoned you and you mama never loved you and you didn't pop your cherry until you in
your 40's? Or can we skip those parts and just get to the basics starting with — oh yeah! Your name,
asshole! Before I blow your goddamn brains all over the nice leather interior of this Cadillac."

Lucy sighed as she realized who he was. "His name is Otto Sauer." It took her only a few moments
to recognize him after he mentioned Hans Himmler.

"Very good. Perhaps you are just as clever as Himmler believed." He smirked at her. Lucy didn't
know what sick game he was playing, but she wanted to find out. She hated how calm and brazenly
confident he was. One would have thought that he was the one in control of the situation, not the
other way around.

"Am I supposed to know who this is?" Dugan asked Lucy, looking over to her.

"This scum is Heinrich Himmler's right-hand man," Lucy had to explain, rolling her eyes. She sighed
as she looked at him, "He's practically in charge of weaving together all those lies I talked about.
Himmler gets the artifacts, and Otto here does his dirty work involving the propaganda." She
clenched her fists together when she thought of the hate he spread and all the damage he had done.
She felt her blood begin to boil, and she knew at that moment that the world would be a better place
without him in it.

"No, no. Not lies." He shook his head and defended himself. "It is the truth. We the German
people are the superior race. Surely, as a German you must know that, Doctor. After all, look at
you… Practically perfection. If only you didn't have that less appealing colouring. You would be a
vision with lighter hair and blue eyes." He smiled at her sickeningly. It was intended to be an insult,
not a compliment.

"Well y'know what?" Dugan looked at her and looked back at Otto and then once again back at
Lucy, "I happen to like her darker colouring, thank you very much. And I'd think these non-fascist
American boys would agree. Hey, Buck?" Dugan yelled out the window of the car for dramatic
effect.

"Yeah?" Lucy couldn't see Bucky, but she could tell from his voice that he was probably looking
perplexed and wondering what Dugan wanted. Lucy couldn't help but smile as she heard his voice.

"Would you prefer Dr. Heinrich as she is or looking like a good German girl with blue eyes and
blonde hair?"

"I like her how she is. It's real American." He must have heard the conversation that they had, and Lucy had to stop herself from chuckling.

"You're goddamm right it is." Dugan looked back at Wolfgang and said deathly serious, "And if you ever try to hint of this true-blooded American woman being a spy again, I'll rip that tongue right out of your mouth."

The man chuckled, "I like how you stand up for her. It is admirable. But unfortunately, useless. She will see who is the losing side and who is the winning one, and it will all change."

"Wanna put some money on that?" Lucy's jaw clenched again as she asked him.

He only pursed his lips together and smirked, "You will see. There is something that we have that you will want."

Lucy looked to Dugan who met her gaze. She knew that he was thinking the same thing as her. She wondered if they had the Tesseract, "So," She leaned back in her seat, "What I want to know is why the hell you're in the middle of fucking nowhere in Norway and not in your precious Berlin."

He cocked his head, "Are all women in America as crass as you?" Otto asked curiously.

"No," Lucy smiled, "I'm one of a kind. Now answer the question," She demanded.

"Or we're gonna start going through each of your men and offing them one by one until someone speaks up. And we'll be starting with you." Dugan threatened, cracking his knuckles menacingly as a threat.

The man only smiled and looked to Lucy, "I am surprised you did not receive an invitation, Doctor. After all, I'm sure it was sent. The host is also rather a large fan of yours."

"Invitation to what?"

"Sigegarsson Castle. Johann Schmidt hosting an auction of rare artifacts. And he's providing a demonstration of some type for a new project he's been working on."

"Am I supposed to know who Johann Schmidt is?" Dum Dum asked her, "He an S.S.?"

Lucy pursed her lips. She had heard of Johann Schmidt during her days as a professor in Paris. She had read some of his articles and heard only rumours of his radicalism and the madness he spread. He was one of the main perpetrators for finding cultivating artifacts and trying to find their power. He hired dozens of pseudo archaeologists, and even attempted to have one meet up with Daniel on a particular topic.

Daniel, of course, refused to meet with the shunned archaeologist, hearing rumours that he was contracted in my Schmidt. Lucy didn't know much about his work, but she did know that Colonel Phillips has mentioned him being the head of a different Nazi regime called HYDRA.

"He's a radical collector." Was the best Lucy could simply explain, "I've read his work before but he was ostracized from the community for taking more a pseudo and supernatural approach rather than scientific. He's practically a mad man, and he's head of a new Nazi organization."

"Sounds like a real swell guy," Dugan's eyebrows raised as he spoke sarcastically.
"And you were invited to an auction that he's hosting?"

"Himmler was, as was the Führer. However, they are both remarkably busy men and they sent me in their stead to report back on the new project Schmidt has birthed."

Lucy shook her head, wondering what the new project could be and what evil it would introduce to them.

She didn't even notice how as she turned to Dugan, preparing to say something, her Star of David necklace emerged from the place in which it rested between her breasts.

Otto's eyes caught on it. A smile spread across his face "Oh! I now see why you chose to betray your country." He chuckled deeply, thinking he had the upper hand and his next sentence was witty. He leaned forward, an evil glint in his eye, "You lie with dogs."

Lucy's eyes flashed up, "Pardon me?" She wondered what the hell he was implying. Anger began to rise in her, and Lucy could feel her fist clenched tightly.

"That necklace around your neck. You taint your precious German bloodlines by wearing it and you spit on the graves of your ancestors. Whose was it? A lover's? You are a whore who prefers the company of vermin than her own kind." He was trying to get under her skin.

"And you're a fucking asshole who's going to hell." She leaned forward, anger coursing through her veins. She bit her cheek so hard she could take the iron flavour of blood burst in her mouth.

"I would rather be that than Jewish filth." He spat, sneering with disgust at her. He looked at Lucy suddenly like she was nothing more than a diseased creature. His disdain dripped from his voice, reflecting the deep hate in his heart.

That did it. Rage appeared in Lucy's eyes. She looked at him with her jaw clenched, "Say that again," She growled through gritted teeth.

The man had a sickening smirk on his face. He leaned in, saying sickeningly slowly "Jewish… Flit —," He didn't get to finish. Lucy's fist shot out and a sickening crunch could be heard. The man yelled in agony, blood gushing from his nose. His hands went to stop the flood of red flowing down, and Lucy hissed from the pain in her knuckles.

"You cunt!" He screamed, "You broke my nose!" His voice was muffled by his attempt to stop the blood that was now gushing out of his nostrils.

"Be grateful it was only a fist and not a bullet!" She snarled as Dugan pulled her back.

"Alright, alright tiger, take it easy!" Dugan coaxed her, urging her to calm down, "Take a breather, I'll finish up with this scum bag."

Lucy huffed, filled with pride at the satisfying sight of blood pouring out of the man's face before she exited the car.

She slammed the door, her anger obvious and apparent. Bucky stood with Gabe Jones, looking at what had just happened. He had a cigarette hanging from his mouth as he stood there casually while all the other Germans were tied up behind them on the ground.

Lucy shook her fist out feeling its sting from the punch. She felt anger still coursing through her body, and she looked down at her bruised knuckle and bloody palm from where she cut it earlier.
Bucky taped the end of his cigarette and walked over to her with a concerned look on his face after seeing her shaking her knuckles like that.

He had heard the conversation that had been going on in the car but he didn't want to bring it up. She was upset, but Bucky didn't want to focus on that. Instead, he wanted to make her feel better and get her mind off the hurtful things that had been said.

"Where'd you learn how to hit like that, doll? You've got a mean right hook." Bucky laughed, thinking back to their conversation one summer night, "You training to be a boxer or somethin'?" He remembered saying the same thing to her after she had playfully punched him the first night that they had met in Brooklyn.

Upon remembering, immediately a small smile graced Lucy's face. Bucky was pleased to know that he had succeeded in getting her mind off of what had just happened. "Oh, these guys?" Lucy smirked as she held her fists up, "Nah, they're not for boxing. They're for kicking some Nazi ass." She blew on them like they were smoking guns and Bucky chuckled as he came up to her, "Atta girl," He winked at her and then took her hand in his own, he noticed how her fist was bruised and her palm was bloodied. He flicked his cigarette away and looked at both her hands. He sighed, "Come on," He brought her over to a log not that far off the road, "Let's get you fixed up."

They walked close to one another, and no one in their team paid them any mind as they drifted away from the group. Lucy was shaken up from what happened, although she was trying not to show it. Bucky was attempting to comfort her the best he could, although he wasn't sure how successful he was. All he knew was that she likely needed a friend at that moment.

Lucy plopped herself down on the log, looking distractedly at the car Dugan was still sitting in. She drained her neck trying to get a good look as she was wondering what he was asking Otto.

"Alright, let's assess the damage," Bucky said heavily, looking at the purple bruising that was already beginning to form on the bones of her knuckles.

Lucy shook her head, trying to make light of the situation, "Really, I'm fine. It doesn't hurt that badly."

"Of course you're fine. But, that's a nasty cut. And I'd hate for it to get infected and then you lose that pretty hand of yours."

Lucy only sighed and then extended her hand, Bucky took out an alcohol rub from his bag, "I don't think they're that pretty," She looked down at her small fingers.

"Are you kidding?" Bucky laughed, holding them up, "They're tiny and elegant. They'd look good gripping a paintbrush." He tried not to imagine how they would feel running through his hair. He recalled how her graceful hands the night prior had rested on the skin of his stomach and how it had caused dirty thoughts to form in his head. He wanted to know what they felt like as they clawed into shoulders, or how exactly they would look while gripping his cock.

Bucky's stomach flipped as he thought about it. Once again, he felt shame and disgust for thinking about her in such a sexual nature. But he couldn't help it. He wanted the whole deal with her. He wanted to see Lucy cooking breakfast in the morning in a nightgown and curling rolls in her hair, her sleepy eyes having bags under them and yawning.

He wanted to see her stark naked and moaning for him. Her mouth peppering kisses down his neck and her tongue darting out to lightly grace his skin. Her back arching under him, desperate to be
consumed by him.

He wanted to see her crying as she read a sad book, or see the way she looked as she was ready to go out into the city on a Friday night with her girl friends.

Bucky just wanted her. Emotionally and physically, and it was driving him insane. He more than liked her at that point, and each minute he spent with Lucy, his feelings grew deeper and deeper.

"I can't paint to save my life," She scoffed, rolling her eyes as Bucky opened the alcohol. "I always wished that I could but unfortunately I could only study art, not practice it."

"This is going to sting a bit," Bucky felt a twinge in his stomach as he thought about consciously doing something to hurt her. He poured a little into her palm and Lucy shut her eyes and hissed with pain. Bucky applied quick pressure, hoping it would lessen the sting. He tried to distract her by continuing talking to her, "My best friend, Steve, was a really good painter. He used to teach classes. " Bucky scratched the back of his neck uncomfortably, "Maybe uhh… " Bucky scratched the back of his neck uncomfortably, "Maybe when we get back home you could swing by Brooklyn and he could give you some lessons?"

Lucy smiled as Bucky pulled some gauze out of his bag and began unwrapping it, "I'd really like that," his words echoed in her head again and suddenly her face dropped as she realized something, "Wait a minute. Steve is your best friend? That was the name you gave me when we first met!"

Bucky shrugged, "Yeah, but you told me your name was Emma, so...Can't fault me for using a fake name there, sweetheart."

Lucy thought back to when she and Mr. Lee had stopped at the Steel mill three days after she had met Bucky for the first time. They had been on their way to an antiquity auction with Howard Stark when there was a quick emergency and Mr. Lee had to make a quick appearance to smooth things over. It was then that Lucy had met a small man in an alley about to be beaten up and she had intervened.

"Is he a small blonde man? Who has a non threatening stature and sweet blue eyes?" She hadn't thought about the man in quite some time, but she knew he had been Bucky's friend.

Bucky frowned as she spoke, "I mean… I wouldn't describe them as 'sweet' blue eyes, but yeah. How did you know that?" He questioned. His mind went a million miles an hour as he wondered how she could have possibly known what Steve looked like.

Lucy said a little in disbelief, "I met him!"

"What?" Bucky frowned even more, "When? The night that we met?"

"No!" She laughed as Bucky began to gently wrap her hand in the gauze. He took his time so he wouldn't hurt her. "Three days after we met, Mr. Lee and I went to the steel mill to sort out a problem and I intervened before he could get beat up in an alleyway."

"Did he know who you were?" Bucky almost couldn't believe it. He couldn't believe that she had been so close to him at that time and he had no idea. Let alone that Steve had talked to her and she had saved him from getting the daylight knocked out of him.

"I told him not to tell you who I was," Lucy sighed and looked down, ashamed.

Bucky couldn't be mad at her. But Steve was an entirely different story, "Christ," He shook his head in disbelief. They had been so close, and things could have turned out so different for them if Steve hadn't been so damn honourable and kept his promise to her. "That son of a bitch," Bucky shook his
head again, "I'm gonna kick that kid's skinny punk ass so hard when I get back home."

Lucy laughed as he continued wrapping her hand. He gently held it as carefully like he was holding a wounded animal. "You can't blame him for something that I asked him to do."

"Oh, yes I can." Bucky disagreed, "And that kid is gonna get it big time the moment I get back. No sappy greeting, just a good punch in the face."

"Come on now," Lucy reasoned with him, "He's your best friend!" She hoped he wasn't too sore at him.

Bucky noticed the way she still had the blood smeared over her face and her chest. Although she looked as though she had just escaped near death, she was still beautiful, "I suppose I can't be too mad at him." Bucky agreed, and then reached down to get a cloth out of his bag after he finished wrapped Lucy's hand, "We ended up meeting eventually again anyway." Bucky began to take out his canteen and pour some water into the cloth to soak it. He rang it out so it was damp, and Lucy watched curiously as he did so.

"And he can't teach me how to paint if he's mad at me because I was the one who ratted him out to you." Lucy convincingly told him, "And then I'd have no reason to come to Brooklyn." She had an unmistakable troublesome glimmer flickering in her dark eyes.

"No reason, huh?" Bucky questioned with a raised eyebrow as he gestured to her to come forward. Lucy realized what he was doing, and a pit formed in her stomach as she realized how he was taking care of her so gently.

Her heart fluttered as he began to wipe the blood off her face. It was something she could have easily done herself, but he did it instead. The act, although innocent, was all forms of intimate. Lucy couldn't help but look up into his steel-blue eyes as he softly trailed the cloth down her cheek, staining it pink. "Not even to see little old me?"

Lucy smirked, her heart fluttering ever so slightly and her blood rushing to her face and creating a soft flush. He made her so nervous and she didn't even know why that was. Around him she felt all sorts of things, and every time he dragged the cloth down her skin it felt as though she was burning, "Why? You going to make it worth my while?"

"Oh, pige." He let out a low chuckle, his voice getting deeper and making heat pool between her legs. "I'd definitely make it worth your while." The way he used the nickname he created specifically reserved for her made Lucy want to do nothing more than to pull him down by his jacket collar and slam her mouth against his. Her belly ached with a need for him, and Lucy almost shuttered from her wanton desire.

"You gonna enlighten me on that, soldier?" She flirted back, biting her lip, causing Bucky's eyes to drift downwards towards them.

"Nuh-uh, doll. You're gonna have to agree first to go on a date with me before I tell you what I'd have planned."

Lucy couldn't believe it. Her heart pounded hard in her chest and her mouth opened and closed in shock as she realized what he had said. Bucky Barnes actually asked her out on a date and she was speechless.

She could almost picture Elsa squealing at the top of her lungs and jumping around in excitement. Hell, Lucy had to stop herself from doing that exact thing.
He made her feel like a schoolgirl with a crush, and Lucy was suddenly disbelieving that he would even consider going out with her.

"You have yourself a deal. But," She emphasized, "If I don't like what you're thinking I'm gonna back out." Lucy warned, giving him a wink, "So it best be better than going out to dinner and dancing."

"Oh, it's dinner and dancing. But," Bucky stopped her protest by holding out his finger, "Because I like you, you get the one of a kind Bucky Barnes experience." Lucy tried to ignore the fact he just admitted to liking her.

"Oh? Which is what?"

Bucky smiled before licking his lips. Lucy's eyes fell on the way it darted out ever so quickly, a simple act of moistening them. She wondered what it would feel like sliding into her mouth. Shifting uncomfortably, she tried to keep her thoughts off of how sexually appealing she found him and listened.

"So picture this," Bucky began, his hands still idly working to get the blood of her face, "It's summer in New York, like the night we first met. I'm wearing a suit, and you're wearing that pretty red dress like you were back then. Red lipstick, curls in your hair, the whole shebang. I show up in a rented car and come knock on your door. You think that we're heading to a restaurant, y'know cause that's what most fellas you've gone out with have done. But, the Bucky Barnes experience is different. We go to the marina, where there's a sailboat waiting for us. It has little lights decorating it, and a stereo playing Margaret Whiting." Lucy's heart raced as she listened to him. Her chest was swelled with emotion, and she couldn't help but picture another life in which they were able to do exactly what he was describing.

"Sounds like you're quite the romantic, Barnes. It's a shock no dames have stuck around." Lucy smirked. She used his last name, because saying his first name felt too intimate at that moment. His fingers gently wiped the dry blood off her cheek, allowing the pink of her blush to show through.

"Maybe I just hadn't found the right partner yet." Bucky retorted, sounding like Steve for a moment. He couldn't believe what a sap he was turning into. But for some reason, Bucky didn't mind. "That's not all though." He continued, "There's a table with dinner already set up for us. It's filled with fancy silver trays and candlelight making everything look good. We lift off the trays, and you might think it's something like caviar or… I don't know. Whatever fancy people eat. But it's Don's pizza, from the best pizza place in Brooklyn." Lucy began laughing, "And then we have a captain take us around the Statue of Liberty after we finish. And then we dance, and it's just the two of us." Bucky couldn't believe the lengths he would go for that woman. Never before did he think he would pull off a scheme like that. He was never one to try hard on dates, but for Lucy, he would go the extra mile.

Lucy couldn't help but smile. She tried not to show her happiness too much though, and instead forced herself to tease him, "Meh, I've been on better dates." She shrugged.

"Oh, right. Like being taken up in an airplane?" Bucky teased, remembering what she said about it being awful. "But that's not all. I didn't tell you about the end of the night. And how we go to a little diner in my neighbourhood. We get milkshakes and race to see who can finish it the fastest. We both get brain freezes," Lucy laughed as he spoke, Bucky gently continued rubbing the blood off her face. He was going to stop describing the date at a point but he couldn't help himself from continuing as his gentle touch went over her lips.

Bucky became transfixed on the soft pink of her mouth. Her lips were the most goddamn appealing thing he had ever seen. All he wanted to do was take her pouty bottom lip and bite it ever so slightly,
capturing it in his teeth while hearing her gasp.

"Then I drop you back off at your place." Bucky's eyes still couldn't look away from her lips, "I walk you to the door. And I ask you if I can kiss you. Properly." His thumb gently brushed her lip and Lucy's breath hitched.

"I would say yes," She whispered meekly. Her stomach was doing flips and her panties were beginning to get slightly soaked. She pictured the mental image of Bucky's mouth hungrily capturing hers. She wondered if he would push her against the wall of her house, or sweetly hold her in his grasp as their mouths collided in a fit of passion.

"And then I would lean in," His thumb still lingered on her bottom lip, gently trailing along it. "And take that lip in mine and show you how a real, proper first kiss is supposed to be. Slow, heated, teasing and torturing. I'd pull away, and then tell you goodnight as I walked back. Smilin' because I'd be thinking about that kiss all damn night." The way he spoke drove a knife of need into Lucy's belly. The implications of his words left her almost a stuttering mess. She had to control her breathing and keep herself from jumping him at that moment. All she wanted was to feel his body against hers and have him completely ravish her.

"Do you do that for all your dates?" Lucy whispered, not tearing her eyes away from his for even a single moment. She felt her breathing become more sporadic, and she wanted nothing more in the world than to press her lips against the perfect, soft pink of his.

"No, pigeon. Just you." He said with a smile and then pulled his thumb away from her mouth.

Lucy was about to say something, anything if she could muster it. Her mouth opened to say his name and tell him she wanted more than anything in the whole world when the irritating voice of Gilbert Whiney called out.

"Could you two for just five minutes maybe quit fondling each other and dry humping long enough to help us out with this?" Whitney screeched, looking bitter and resentful.

Bucky let out an annoyed breath, trying not to snap at the man. He looked at Lucy and gave her a brief and small smile, "Let's go."

Lucy stood up and walked over to the car with Bucky. Her legs were slightly shaky from the sensual moment she had just experienced. She noticed how Dum Dum was now standing outside the car.

Dugan sighed as they approached, "Tønsberg is about a forty-five-minute drive from here still. I say a team of us goes there while the others stay hidden here with the prisoners. We tie good old Otto up and throw him in the back of the trunk in case we need to question him further. If things go south, at least then we have some people still here that can help us out if the going gets tough." He looked to Lucy as he spoke since it was her mission and she was the highest-ranking among them.

She nodded, "Good idea. If we're not back in two days then something's happened."

"I couldn't get him to squeal on whether or not they had the Tesseract. The moron didn't even seem to know what it was," Dugan scowled.

Lucy said nothing. She knew that even if he did know anything about it, Otto wouldn't reveal any information. Lucy could only look at the car and focus on the task again. She noticed how it could only seat five. "Who's coming with us?"
"I was thinking Sarg, Jones, and Miller could come."

Whitney let out a laugh and throw his head back, "If you're going in, don't you think someone with a wider range of skill sets should be there? I'll go and Miller stays."

Dugan looked to Bucky. As much as he hated him and his jaw clenched while he thought of it, Bucky knew Whitney was one of the better men that they had. He let out a nod, and Whitney had a twisted grin appear on his face.

"Alright then," Lucy sighed and then looked to the Germans who were tied up and suddenly got an idea, "Off to Tønsberg we go."

Stealing the uniforms from their German prisoners was one of Lucy's better ideas. While Bucky, Gabe, And Gilbert all sat in the back seats of the stolen car, Dum Dum and Lucy were in the front.

Dum Dum donned the clothing of Otto, who was tied up in the trunk in nothing but his britches and socks. Lucy took the smaller German's uniform and tucked her hair into his hat. Of course, she still looked unbelievably feminine. Something that Whitney pointed out, saying there was no way people wouldn't notice she was a woman. But at least Lucy blended in a little more.

Bucky also wore a uniform, his clothing in the back alongside the others. The grey outfits looked foreign and strange on the three of them, but it didn't matter.

All that mattered to Lucy as they arrived in front of the building that used to be the place of worship for those who followed the Cult of Odin.

Lucy's breath hitched as she saw the walls of it caved in. The town of Tønsberg was in rubble. People were on the streets, faces dirty and clothes torn. Their dirt-covered faces had stains where their tears flowed, and they attempted to clean the streets where the most damage was done.

They looked at their vehicle with disdain, and Lucy found herself near to tears while observing their suffering.

"How could anyone do this to someone else?" She whispered, looking on as people pulled bodies from the wreckage.

No one could say anything to Lucy. But she could feel Bucky’s eyes looking at her. She hoped he was thinking about comforting her, their eyes met as Lucy looked back. She knew Bucky would make no moves to assure her that everything would be fine. Especially since they were in front of everyone else.

Much to Lucy's shock. He reached forward, and gently touched her arm, giving her a light squeeze. It was simple, but the gesture made her heart flutter all the more and she had never been so happy that he had come on the mission with them.

He looked at Lucy with sympathy and pursed his lips. Lucy had to tear herself away from him, looking around once again to blink the tears away that were welling in her eyes.

Dum Dum parked the car in front of the temple. Lucy looked at it as worry settled over her. She inhaled a sharp breath and undid her seat belt as she stared at the mess which the Nazis made.

"I don't like the look of this," Dum Dum eerily stated.

Lucy couldn't say anything. She just recited a silent prayer in her head and hoped that the Tesseract
was still there.

Dum Dum, Lucy, and Bucky got out of the car. In their disguises they walked up to the entrance. Lucy swallows a thick lump forming in her throat due to her nerves.

Since Whitney and Gabe didn't have disguises they stayed in the car. They had to make sure their friend in the trunk also stayed silent. It would look remarkably suspicious if someone started yelling and banging around in the back of the trunk.

Bucky and Dum Dum tried to look as unsuspecting as possible, so they left their guns behind as well. They were only armed with pistols and knives; Lucy's weapon heavy on the holster of her hip.

As they entered the temple, Lucy's breath hitched. The destruction on the inside was worse than she could have predicted, and immediately as soon as they walked in, a few men in robes were frozen in fear.

"Don't be afraid," Lucy told them, looking at how their eyes flashed to each of them. She hoped they spoke either German, English, or French since she didn't speak Norwegian.

Bucky's hand was on the handle of his pistol, ready to grab it if the occasion called for it. His eyes glanced around the room to determine if there were any threats. He remained on alert as Lucy approached the robed monks who stared at her with shaky expressions.

"We're not going to hurt you," Lucy coaxed them, an older man approaching after seeing she wasn't a woman and hearing her American accent.

"What are you doing here?" The man asked in broken English, looking around at Lucy's accomplices, "You are not one of them, are you?"

She pursed her lips and looked forward, her feet carrying her to the crypt that was broken open in the center of the room. The monks looked on curiously. Lucy's heart pounded as she looked down, and saw an aged corpse of a crusader.

"You're right, we're not the bad guys." She stated as she looked down at the inscription of the shield. She scoffed, realizing that the body was a decoy that intended to imitate the hiding place of the Tesseract.

However, it wasn't fooling anyone; especially Lucy. She looked at it and then turned to the other men, who stared curiously at her, "We're looking for something."

Her eyes caught on Yggdrasill, the tree of life. In the wall depiction, the bark almost looked as though it was moving. She walked forward, her eyes were drawn into the sight of the beautiful relief.

"What you seek is no longer here." The man said with a shaky voice.

"What do you mean?" Bucky asked quickly. Lucy's eyes shot to the man, wondering if there was any chance the monk was lying.

His defeated expression stated he was telling the truth, "They took it. And then destroyed the temple, the building, and murdered some of our own."

Lucy was skeptical. She looked at the man and then asked, "Why should we believe you?"

The man with a broken expression only sighed. He approached Lucy, Bucky was suddenly even in higher alert as the strange men went forward.
The man walked past her to the tree of Yggdrasil and then went to the snake at the base of it. Lucy watched curiously as the man pushed its eye which ended up being a button.

The tree opened to reveal a hidden compartment. It was empty, much to her disappointment and Lucy felt her heart her crushed. With a shaky breath, realizing her mission was a failure, Lucy turned to Bucky.

He looked at her with a concerned expression. She again felt herself well up from tears, but that time is was from anger.

"They have to be stopped," The man explained to her. Lucy's eyes shifted back to him, trying not to scream in frustration or rip her hair out. She couldn't believe her mission had failed. She was so sure that she would have found the Tesseract before they did, but clearly, she was wrong. "The destruction it could bring can wipe out nearly all of humanity. It was made by the gods, it is not from our world." The man stated darkly.

"How is that possible?" Lucy questioned quietly, worry only sinking further into her gut.

The man shrugged, "It is not for us to question why things are the way they are. But we must protect the innocent. As it is now yours. You may not believe the stories of its power, but do you want to risk it if it's true?"

Lucy knew the answer. She knew she couldn't just stand by and let those bastards have the Tesseract. The risk was too great.

Bucky only sighed as Lucy tried to formulate a plan and determine what the next course of action was. "Looks like we're going after it," Was all Bucky could say. He knew that it was what she wanted to do, and they were running out of options.

Lucy nodded, and simply said, "Looks like it."

Chapter End Notes

GAHHH. A mission INSIDE a mission? Where do I come up with these things? I gotta warn y'all for the next chapter. It is far, far too spicy (spicier than the one I just posted ? What?) and you're gonna all hate me for it (or love me?) Either way, I can't wait to share it with you. If this chapter gets a good reaction I'll update as soon as I can!

Review for sexy times! And follow and favourite to get the update of when those sexy times are released ;)

Thank you,

-A
Chapter XXIV

Chapter Notes

Hello, my loves! I decided to update again this week! I loved this chapter (though I have a feeling some of you might wanna come after me for it) and I thought I'd share it because your kind reviews were so encouraging. Like I have said many times, they make such a difference and definitely inspire me.

Trigger Warning: Some slight gore, and mentions of alcoholism. Also like some of the other previous chapters, this one is beginning to get some serious adult themes. It 100% has begun to earn its "M" rating. I'll try to keep it classy though.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter XXIV

After Lucy, Bucky, and Dugan drove back from Tønsberg, everyone could tell Lucy was pissed from the moment she got out of the car. Her mission had been a failure. She had put people's lives in danger, and for what?

"What happened?" Lee Miller demanded to know, watching as Lucy slammed the car door and went to the trunk to grab Otto, who was tied up in the back.

"Rise and shine!" She angrily hissed after she popped the trunk open and grabbed Otto by the collar of his shirt and yanked him out of the back and onto the ground.

"Lucy, I think we need to figure out what we're going to do first." Bucky tried to reason with her as he looked at the man who was on the dirty ground, tied up and cowering. He saw the rage behind her eyes and knew that she wasn't herself anymore.

"I know what we're going to do first," She sneered and then whipped her gun out, making Bucky quickly react.

"Woah, woah, slow down pigeon! We shouldn't shoot him just yet!" Bucky quickly intervened.

Lucy shot him a look which suggested she knew what she was doing. Bucky quickly backed off, realizing Lucy wasn't going to kill him. He didn't want to test her in that moment either, not knowing how she would react.

"You're going to tell me what I want to know now," Lucy stuck the head of her gun to Otto's knee, "Or I'm going to put a bullet in your kneecap. When and where is Schmidt holding the auction?"

The man smirked, "This is a cute charade. But you don't have the guts to do what you need to."

She gave him a small smile, almost to suggest that he was right. When suddenly she aimed her gun and pulled the trigger. Otto began to scream after Lucy shot him directly in the knee. The echoing bang of the shot fired cracked through the forest and Bucky's mouth dropped open when he saw the blood flowing out of the man's leg. It gushed out like a stream, following onto the dirt in thick red
She actually did it. Otto continued to scream and roll around on the ground in agony but Lucy didn't even flinch. Bucky was positive she would have thrown up or screamed in any other circumstances; given the fact that's what he wanted to do. But instead, she stayed serious. Flecks of blood sprayed her cheek in little red dots He couldn't believe she shot a man. Something in her from before had changed, and Bucky knew that there was something in all of them that was brought out from suffering too much in the war. Every person he knew had experienced it at some point. He only wished he had been able to protect Lucy from that.

"I'm not gonna ask again!" She yelled. Something in her snapped. Seeing the destruction of the town and the way people suffered instilled hate deep into Lucy. And she would do everything in her power to keep them from winning the war. "Where the hell is Schmidt going to be?"

"H-he he's going to be in South Norway, the-Sigegarsson Castle. It has a very strict guest list. You won't be able to get in!" The driver stuttered from fear after seeing that Otto had gotten a bullet in his kneecap for merely only sassing Lucy.

"There," Lucy smiled sweetly, "Was that so hard, asshole?" She kicked his other leg, making him scream even more as he tried to stop the bleeding. "When is it happening?" She then demanded.

"In two days!" The man yelled through gritted teeth. Blood continued to profusely spill out of his wound. Lucy nodded and then looked at Dugan and Bucky, both of them still in shock from her anger and her aggression.

"We need to be there," She only stated simply.

Dugan could only nod and Lucy wiped away from blood that had splattered onto her cheek from when she had shot Otto. It left a smeared a light pink stain on her porcelain skin.

"Someone umm…" Lucy looked down at the mess she caused and felt her stomach flip in horror, "Help him. I-I need a minute." Lucy breathed out shakily and then turned to go walking off-road and into the forest to be alone.

Dugan and Bucky only looked at each other in shock as Gabe Jones rushed to help the man who was bleeding on the ground.

"You best go after her," Dugan only spoke to Bucky.

Bucky frowned and looked back at the man. He wondered why Dugan continuously told Bucky that he had to be the one to help her.

"Why me?" If Bucky was being honest, he was still scared that at any minute everything would end. That the feelings they had for one another was an illusion and he would cross a line with her, and just like that, they would go back to hating each other again.

"Because she trusts you the most," Dugan said as though it was obvious. And he looked at Bucky with a crooked expression, "And because you're her friend."

Bucky looked up at Dugan in surprise, he didn't know that it was obvious they had become that close in the last little while that people could see that they were friends. It made him happy to think of how far they had come from where they were three years ago. As he thought about it, he realized that besides Steve, she was the closest friend he'd ever had.

Bucky wasn't sure how to comfort her in those moments though. He had never been good with
emotions, and the experience of Lucy Heinrich was new for him. He knew that she didn't always like being perceived as needing help, and Bucky kept worrying about stepping over a line he couldn't come back from.

He nodded when Dugan said that. But as Lucy walked further and further away Bucky didn't go after her. He figured she needed a while to take some space and be alone.

He wished she didn't have to be alone though. After they realized that the mission was a failure, something seemed different in Lucy. And the fact she just blew out a man's kneecap proved that she wasn't being herself.

Typically Bucky would have been horrified at what she had done. But he had seen worse, and often Bucky had to try to block out the memories from seeing the brutal deaths, torture, and suffering.

The man shouldn't have taunted Lucy. She had just experienced a loss, and anger was present in the fact she had people risking their lives for no purpose. As someone who was in control of the mission, it would have been completely devastating.

Bucky didn't want to think about her alone, upset, and feeling guilty about what she did. But he also knew that dames liked their space sometimes when things turned south.

He would be there for her, but he wouldn't treat her like a child and force her to talk about all that was bothering her. Bucky wanted to be there for her so badly though. In more ways than one.

He wanted to be there for her emotionally, and see her with a smile on her face after coming in from a good day at work. He also wanted to be there for her when she was sad, and hold her and press gentle kisses to her forehead.

He wanted to be there for her physically. God, that's all he wanted. For when she came to him stressed out and worried about another issue at the university she taught at, Bucky wanted to distract her. He wanted to spend so much time between her thighs that the only thing Lucy could think about wasn't work, but rather his name, as he brought her to her peak again and again. Nothing would sound sweeter to him than her moaning his name as he brought her endless pleasure.

Bucky suddenly had another life flash before his eyes as he realized Lucy Heinrich was the girl he had been wanting all along. Of course, he had realized as much three years before, but he had never had such deep feelings for a dame.

He wanted to be there for her emotionally, physically, and in any other way she needed him.

Because there was nothing more that he wanted than to see her standing in his kitchen on a Saturday morning trying to cook breakfast. Her hair would be messy, evidence from the tousle that they had the night before. Her lips swollen from how much he was kissing them, claiming them as his own. She would have little bite marks on her shoulder and down her elegant neck. Dark bruises of love bites proving that she was his and only his.

As she was cooking breakfast, Bucky would notice how she only had an apron on and nothing else underneath it. The pale skin of her backside exposed as she frustratedly stood over a pan with eggs in it.

Bucky didn't need to know Lucy well to figure out she wasn't the type of gal to cook. But he didn't mind, not one bit. Because in his fantasy, he would join her as the sun from the window leaked in on them. Painting them with yellow hues, he wanted to take her in his arms and press kisses all over her pale shoulders. The sun's warmth would envelop them and Lucy would hum in satisfaction from the
simple gesture of his affection.

Her breasts would be covered by the front of her apron, but it would leave very little for the rest of his imagination, as the opposite side of her was completely bare except the little ribbon tie in the back.

Bucky would go over to her as she was cooking, laughing because she could burn water if it was possible. He'd come up behind her and engulf her in his embrace, feeling how their bodies molded together. He'd kiss all down her neck as she softly giggled. The food she was making would be forgotten about as he carried her to the bedroom with her legs wrapped around his waist. His hands would grace over her backside, giving it a small swat the moment she said something sassy. They would collapse on his bed, and he would crawl on top of her as he kissed her madly.

The life of their domestic bliss was something he never knew he wanted until that moment. He wanted to fall asleep listening to her breathing, just as he did the night before. He wanted to wake up with her and bring her a good morning coffee. And he wanted to watch as she carefully did her makeup as she got ready for work. His eyes transfixed on the way she did her lipstick, knowing later that night she would come home and her lips would paint his body with the colour.

Bucky, of course, was confused by all these new feelings and realizations. He knew that Dugan was right and that he was possibly falling for Lucy, but he didn't even realize how much until the thought back to the scene he was just picturing in his head.

Sure, Lucy had gorgeous sex hair and was completely bare beyond an apron in his vision. But there was something else about her ensemble that Bucky fixated on in his fantasy.

A small gold band that rested on the fourth finger of her left hand. The glimmer of it had noticeable because the sun's shining rays leaked in from the kitchen window.

And if Bucky were to look down at his own left hand in his fantasy, he would notice he was wearing one too.

Lucy felt as though she had lost her mind. She had been in the forest for hours after they had gotten back. She knew she needed to return and that people were likely worried about her but at that moment she didn't care.

She needed to be alone because she didn't want people to see as she became a blubbering, sobbing mess. Not only was the weight of her failure too much and she was scared for the lives of her comrades, but also because she had shot a man.

Never before had she enacted such violence on someone. And the thought of doing it and taking a gun and aiming it reminded her of the night her father had shot her mother.

Lucy's memory burned as she thought of how she had gripped the gun and threw it aside after her father had put a bullet in his brain. Her pistol that she had used to shoot Otto burned heavily on her leg as it rested in her holster.

She gripped a tree tightly as she closed her eyes and tried to block out the memory of her father. Would he be proud of her and what she had done to that man? Probably.

She could still feel the pain as he had shoved her head against the wall. A picture frame had been hanging there and the glass had shattered upon impact and a cut above her eyebrow began to bleed out.
"You're just like me," She could picture him saying again and again as he shoved her face further into the glass as she screamed. "Just like your old man. Not caring about anyone or anything as long as you accomplish what you set out to do."

Lucy could still see slivers of him within herself. She had been cruel to Bucky when they had first met, and she didn't care as long as she accomplished her job. Lucy was the type of ambitious that would do whatever it took to prove she was on top and didn't usually care about who she ended up hurting in the process.

Even the way she had drunk became like him. Lucy remembered too often sipping on one glass of wine at dinner, and how one glass would turn to two, then three, then four, until the whole bottle was gone.

She would be drinking vodka, water, and lime while grading papers, and sometimes a gin and tonic just for the sake of it.

Her drinking had begun as early as thirteen after her father had often forced her to have drinks with him until she became sick. It was the one piece of Lucy's childhood she couldn't break away from, and she often found herself missing constantly having access to alcohol.

It had been a bit of a drought since joining the army. Of course, she realized what was for the best. Men often had moonshine and beers from what they found abandoned where they had gained ground, but it wasn't like anyone was going to waste the precious supply on a woman.

Lucy found herself missing it often, and wished that she could just for a second forget all the horrible things that were going on. Like at that moment. She could have very, very, much used a drink. Several, in fact. She wanted to forget what she did, and forget that she had put six other people behind herself at risk for a pointless goddamn mission.

It didn't help that the fact the of those six other people, she cared for one in particular very deeply. It was getting to be past the point of an innocent crush. And after their conversation earlier that day, Lucy knew she had real feelings for Bucky.

But Daniel was still holding her back. She felt as though it was too soon to move on with someone else. Lucy also didn't know what she would do if she had ended up falling for Bucky and he then left her once the fighting was over for someone better. Lucy often wondered if he was attracted to her simply because of the lack of options around.

However, she figured that wasn't the case as she thought back to their interaction they had three years prior. At that point, she had already been doubting her and Daniel's relationship.

And after she had those thoughts about Bucky, the doubt grew even more.

But she still loved Daniel and was willing to be with him. It wasn't until he had gotten captured though when she realized what she had been missing.

But now it was too late. Though Lucy still struggled with moving on, since she had been guilty with the idea of flirting with Bucky when she knew she was engaged. There was also the possibility that he was still alive.

Although Lucy knew it was unlikely, she still wanted to believe it. But then again, how awful would it be for him to survive all those horrors only to return home and see his fiancé with another man?

Lucy would never forgive herself for hurting Daniel. And she would never forgive herself for
leaving Bucky if it turned out that Daniel was, in fact, alive. Because even if she felt more for Bucky, she couldn't choose between him and Daniel after all Daniel had gone through.

But even with those thoughts, Lucy knew Daniel wasn't coming back. He was dead, and it was time for her to accept that. After Lucy had cried out her eyes and tried to compose herself before returning to her men, she decided to finally read Daniel's letter.

She had to get herself together though, knowing that if she had shot a man and then cried about it, she would be seen as either weak or emotional. Either way, Lucy didn't want to show any of her cards. Especially since she knew that it was hard for her to get respect.

But she was thankful that most of the men she was with respected her authority. Dum Dum Dugan has always been kind to her, and never treated her any differently because of her gender.

She and Bucky, of course, started a little rocky. But she knew that he had grown to respect her. After all, Dugan had even stated that he was in her corner. And she knew he cared for her. Just as she cared for him.

Lucy didn't have much of an opinion of Gabe Jones. He was nice enough and was respectful in the way he helped her the night before by preserving her modesty with a blanket. She also felt connected with him, since as a minority, he also struggled to gain respect in other's eyes.

Gilbert Whitney though was an absolute menace. And Lucy knew that he would never change. He had grown up privileged and entitled. Everything about him, including his body language, drove her crazy. And the fact he had made such a disgusting bet revolted her.

But regardless, she didn't want to let anyone down. And she had done exactly that. Everyone knew she would fail, and she did. The thought drove her insane.

As Lucy tried to wipe her tears away, she noticed it was almost sundown. She had to head back because it wasn't safe and they also had to figure out what the hell they were going to do next.

Lucy knew what she wanted to do. She just wasn't sure if everyone else would be on board. She didn't care what everyone thought of her plan though. Just one person she cared about. She didn't want Bucky to see her as a failure. She had to rectify all of this.

As Lucy walked back to where they had been camped out, she noticed how everyone's eyes were on her.

Bucky stood up from where he was sitting at the fire, looking concerned. His hands were in his pockets and he was looking at Lucy with wide eyes.

"I want to go after Schmidt." Was all she said, "We know where he's going to be and I want to go after him. We might not get another chance like this."

"Okay," Bucky nodded in understanding. "I think you're right."

Whitney scoffed and Lucy gave him a dangerous look, threatening him with her gaze.

Dugan only clicked his teeth, "Sounds like another suicide mission. Count me in."

"It's going to be dangerous. I don't expect anyone to come with me." She was looking at Bucky. Praying silently that he would back out. If something happened to him, Lucy knew she would never forgive herself.
"Doc," Bucky only gave her a small, reassuring smile, "You know we're all with you."

"Speak for yourself," Whitney snorted, looking sour at the fact he was roped into another mission.

"Okay fine, I will." Bucky looked at Lucy and licked his lips. The light from the fire blazed against him. It shadowed his face more and it nearly took Lucy's damn breath away, "I'm with you. Until the end of the line."

The words he spoke felt too intimate. Her heart fluttered, and she looked at him as though he told her he loved her. Lucy was speechless as his declaration of loyalty. And suddenly, she had to back away. There was something she needed to do before she allowed herself to feel even more for Bucky.

"Good. We stay here the night, come up with a plan for tomorrow." She decided, getting nods of agreement from everyone else.

Lucy said nothing as she went for her pack and rummaged through it so she could find Daniel's letter. She grabbed it and then asked anyone if they had matches.

Dugan gave her his since her own was damaged when she crashed into the lake. She thanked him and then walked off to read the letter by herself again.

Lucy continued walking until she found a clearing with long grass. It looked peaceful, so she sat down and looked at the way the wind moved through the blades and created a movement that resembled waves in the ocean.

Lucy sighed heavily as she opened the letter. She took a deep breath and knew that no matter what was inside, Daniel had loved her. As she opened it, she struck a match to create light. The white pages were illuminated with the light, the pale yellow of the fire illuminating it.

And then Lucy's heart broke. She saw how the words bled through, making it illegible. She let out a sob, only being able to read a few of the words. Her entire body felt as though it was choking and all Lucy could do was cry.

The few words she could make out seemed like gibberish, and suddenly Lucy hated herself for not reading the letter sooner. She couldn't believe that the last remaining piece she had of Daniel was gone. Lucy felt herself let out more tears as they fell down her face, only the white paper that was unreadable.

She choked out another sob and wiped her eyes as the match began to go out. Perhaps she was never intended to read the letter, and this was for the best. She wanted to let out a frustrated scream. The way her heart hurt was too much. It was like she was being told he was gone all over again.

Lucy struggled to catch her breath as she convinced herself it was okay. It didn't matter if she had read the letter. She knew he loved her. Either way, Daniel was gone and it was time for her to move on. With a heavy heart, Lucy took the match to the piece of paper.

She watched as it caught, the fire licking the pages and consuming it. She watched it until there was nothing left and when the smallest remnants were still pinched between her two fingers, Lucy blew out the flames.

She took a shaky, deep breath as she looked around. Crickets could be heard as they sang. The wind rustling the grass was a chorus, and the owl nearby made its noises as it waited for prey.

It was peaceful. And Lucy noticed how as soon as the letter was gone, she felt free.
She took the moment in and inhaled the cool nighttime air into her lungs. She exhaled and didn't even realize that someone had come up behind her.

"What's with the long face?" She turned around to see Bucky standing there. His face still had that concerned expression he had earlier when she rejoined the men.

"Bad day," Lucy sighed, wiping tears away before he could see them.

"I figured as much. I thought I'd give you your space so you could be alone but I don't know… Maybe I should have gone after you? I'm not really good with emotional stuff when it comes to dames." He took a seat right next to her, watching carefully as her tears dried on her skin.

"No? Really? And here I thought you were the expert." Lucy teased and nudged his shoulder. Trying to laugh despite her broken expression.

"You would think that, wouldn't you? I give quite the impression of being a ladies man," He smiled at her and then his expression changed, "I've never been the most emotional guy. I never knew how to comfort the girls I went out with."

Lucy said nothing, only took a shaky breath and tried not to look at Bucky. She wished she was still alone, but she didn't necessarily want him to leave either.

"If you need anything," He began in a quiet voice, looking over at her, "I'm here." He then looked up at the sky and took a shaky breath, "I know we got off to a rocky start and I'm never going to forgive myself for that. But I'm here now. And," He chuckled interrupting himself and looking down almost bashfully, "And I like you a lot. So if you ever want to talk… I mean, like I said I'm not good with emotional stuff. But I can try. For you."

Lucy looked at him with emotion deep in her eyes. Something was different now. The air between them was clearer, and Lucy felt inhibited when it came to having feelings for him. She no longer felt shame, and she knew she didn't have to deny them any longer.

"Thank you, Bucky." She said back and then reached over to grab his hand. Their fingers intertwined, all while her heartfelt as though it was skipping a beat.

Joining hands with him felt like the most natural thing in the world. His large ones held her much smaller, feminine ones with such softness. And Lucy was positive nothing so simple ever made her heart pound that quickly.

"It means a lot." She said and gave his hand a tight, loving squeeze.

Bucky only returned the squeeze and said with a small smile, "Anytime." His thumb gently brushed over the skin of her knuckle.

There was silence between them again, and Lucy looked out and wiped her tears away with her sleeve. It would be the last time she allowed herself to cry about Daniel.

"So are you going to tell me why you were out here all by your lonesome?" Bucky asked curiously. He didn't ask why she had been crying. Lucy wasn't the type of girl to talk about too emotional issues or show weakness.

Lucy took a shaky inhale and tried to control her breathing. She wondered if she should even say anything to Bucky, or if it would be best kept to herself. She decided that since he made the gesture to let her know it was okay to talk about things with him, that she could trust him with this.
"Before Daniel was captured," She tried to keep her voice from shaking too much, "He wrote me a letter that I was supposed to read after he died. I never read it because I wasn't ready. And I brought it with me because I wasn't sure if I'd ever get back to base," Lucy licked her lips as she struggled to explain what happened. "It was ruined when I fell into the water. And now I'll never know what it said," She said shakily, trying to keep her voice as even as possible. She choked out a small sob and her voice hitched.

"Oh, pigeon." He used her nickname and Lucy's heart sped up even more. "I'm sorry, I had no idea." He gently wiped away one of her tears and Lucy was touched by his sweet gesture.

"It's fine," She shrugged, "It's time I let go of him. Because he's not coming back. I just wish I knew what it said." Tears welled up in her eyes again and Lucy tried her best to control them. She didn't allow anymore to fall though. She knew this was for the best in the end.

"I don't know your fiancé so I don't know what he would say. But if I was writing my fiancé for the last time, and telling her I died, then I would make damn sure she knew how much she meant to me." Bucky answered softly. Lucy looked up to him with wide eyes and listened to every word as he spoke. Even in the dark, his light blue eyes sparkled, "I'd tell her how I felt one last time. And I'd say I'm sorry for not making it back home. I'd write about the life we wanted together, and how I was sorry I could never give it to her. And I'd say how even though I'm gone, I'd want her to be happy." Bucky spoke and Lucy listened more intently than she ever had in her life. "And I'd tell her once more that she was the love of my life."

"Thank you, Bucky." She whispered and then they both settled down in the grass. Lying side by side, their hands were still intertwined. It was time. Time to move on. After all, with him looking at her like that, how could Lucy have the strength to say no again?

There was silence as they looked up at the stars. The sky was clear of clouds, unlike the night before. The white little lights cemented in the dark black of the night shone down on them and sparkled. Lucy felt Bucky's thumb gently rub her knuckles again. He settled with one arm under his head as they stared up.

"It's so peaceful," Lucy noticed looking up. Bucky continued to move his thumb up her knuckles. He then took her hand and drew it towards his mouth, placing a gentle kiss on it and making Lucy's breath hitched.

"It is. You could almost forget we were in the middle of a war out here."

"Goddamn war," Lucy inhaled sharply and rolled her eyes. She hated everyone responsible for the war. She wished that there was a way to escape it, but knew it wasn't possible.

"I know it's bad," Bucky whispered, licking his lips tentatively, "And I know we're in a war but the last three days with you have been so incredible that it almost has me forgetting all the awful stuff happening. I've been way too happy about it all."

Lucy only moved her head to his chest, his arm going over her to enwrap her in his embrace. She felt her head against his chest as his hands went into her hair, gently pushing it back out of her face.

He looked at her eyes and Lucy licked her lips before admitting, "The last few days with you have been some of my happiest as well."

As she spoke Bucky could only exhale deeply and admire breathlessly, "I'm so goddamn happy I met you."
"I am too." She admitted with a smile.

He ran his hands through her hair as she shifted her gaze to look at him, he stared at her and knew there was no one else in the entire world who he would ever feel this way for.

"Don't play games with me," Bucky told her. "Because I want you, and if you can't do this because of your fiancé, then you need to tell me." His hands brushed out her hair again, seeing her face more clearly.

"I'm ready to let him go," Lucy licked her lips, drawing his gaze in. "I have been for a while. Ever since I met you." She breathed out softly and then admitted with a shaky breath, "You're the one I want, Bucky."

Bucky's heart jumped a beat and he couldn't believe the words coming out of her mouth. She wanted him. She wanted him as much as he wanted her and Bucky could help but smile widely.

Lucy put her head back on his chest. As Bucky was still in disbelief. His mouth opened and closed like a fish, and he couldn't believe she returned his feelings.

"Sorry I umm," Bucky cleared his throat as Lucy continued to lie on his chest. He blushed ever so slightly. "I should say something I guess but umm… My heart is beating really fast right now." Lucy's hand went to his chest where she felt it race. Much like the night they first met, feeling his heart beating was the most intimate thing that could happen at that moment. There wasn't anything left to be said, since Bucky's betraying heart was telling her all of it.

She looked up at him and their eyes met. Bucky pushes more hair out of her face and Lucy felt herself fall more into his embrace. Her eyes fluttered shut as his hand touched her face and she held herself against him. His touch drove her mad. Each second that passed she seemed to need him more and more.

Bucky only let out a low chuckle as she stared at her, "Lucy Heinrich, you are," His voice dripped with awe and admiration, "One hell of a woman."

She only giggled as he looked up at her lips, "I'm serious!" He defended, "You're the smartest, bravest, craziest dame I know."

"You forgot beautiful," She teased Bucky, making him bark out a small laugh.

"You're the most gorgeous woman in the entire world. I want you so badly to be mine." Was all he said, his thumb trailing over her lip like it did earlier that day. "I didn't think it was possible to like someone this much in such a short amount of time." His voice dropped lowly.

Lucy didn't realize it either. But nothing was holding her back now from being with the man she wanted to be with.

So, with a shaky breath, and feeling as though if she didn't make a move now she never would.

"Bucky?" She whispered into the night. She didn't want to waste any more time. Lucy had waited almost four years to know what being with him was like. She would be damned if she went another day without knowing.

"Yeah, pige?"

"I want you to kiss me. Properly this time." She said as they looked at each other in the dark.
Bucky's breath hitched and he flipped them so he was on top of her. It made Lucy gasp and a deep want to settle in her belly, stabbing at it like a burning iron. Between her legs was immediately soaked at his dominating gesture, and all Lucy wanted at that moment was to have him pressed against her.

Bucky rested between her legs, their pelvis on top of one another and Lucy could feel the stir of his member in his trousers and she shivered.

"I thought you'd never ask," Bucky nuzzled into her neck and made her breath hitch again.

She wanted this. She wanted it more than anything. Feeling his mouth nuzzle into her neck was intoxicating. His hand went from her waist and trailed up her body, making her gasp until it reached the side of her face.

They looked into each other's eyes for a moment and Lucy brushed a stray piece of hair away from his eyes. The intimate gesture was noted by him, and his thumb gently brushed her bottom lip.

There was another moment of silence and Lucy found herself wondering what exactly he was waiting on.

Her hips gently rocked against his and immediately he stiffened and tried to focus on keeping his thoughts from becoming dirty. But it wasn't easy as the front of his trousers was pushed between her legs.

Their lips brushed against one another, like the light dusting of snow settling on skin. The touch was so light she wasn't even sure that their mouths even touched. Yet, he still didn't claim hers as his own. "Are you waiting for an invitation?" Lucy whispered into the night, the feeling of his bottom lip brushing hers was enough to drive her insane.

Bucky pulled away, looking down at her, and her haloed hair and her light pink blush and the way she shifted her body so he was pressed harder between her legs. He whispered back, memorizing every little freckle on her face, the way her lips were open slightly in anticipation, her neck slightly thrown back as she hoped he would press his lips against the alcove of her throat. "I'm just trying to take it all in." Was all he said back. He never wanted to forget her in that moment.

A light pink blush graced her cheeks once more. He saw how her long eyelashes fluttered each time she blinked. Everything about her drove him crazy. "You are so unbelievably beautiful,"

Lucy's hands went to cup his face and his own cupped hers. The intimate connection was suddenly too much and Lucy thought if he didn't kiss her at that moment she would become completely unhinged.

Bucky leaned down after what was the build-up of the century. Lucy almost shook with anticipation, as though she waited an eternity to know what kissing him, truly kissing him, was like. A kiss that was measured, passionate, desperate, needy, and heated.

Just as Bucky was about to press his lips to her and Lucy was about to eagerly return his affection, a voice called out.

"Hey guys, sorry to interrupt. But something has happened," Dugan called out from the entrance of the forest. Bucky groaned with annoyance from the unwelcome presence making himself known. Lucy felt her stomach stir upon hearing the groan escaped his lips. She wondered what he would sound like in bed. Would he make those same sounds as she hovered above him, on top of his manhood, sliding herself down it a torturously slow fashion and taking him all in.
Good lord, she needed to cool down. This was all too much. Bucky's face was pressed against her neck and Lucy tried her very hardest to expel such awful, sinful, thoughts. She wasn't like this. She didn't do things like that or think of such sexual matters. But for some reason, he had transformed her. From innocence and shyness to a vixen who wanted nothing more than for him to claim her entirely.

Lucy had always been good and well behaved, but she wanted to do bad things with him. She wanted to know what he would taste like. Lucy wanted to trail her mouth down from his lips to his neck, shoulders, his pectoral muscles, and down his abs. She wanted to continue going further once she reached them, her lips following the trail of dark hair into his trousers. Lucy wanted to go to where his bulge was, and strip him down and take him all in her mouth. Never before had she ever experienced such a feeling. But he had transformed her, and Lucy found she was constantly wondering about how his body would feel joined with hers.

Her thoughts were rudely interrupted by Dugan continuing, "I think you best come take a look,"

"We'll be finished in a second," Bucky called back out, the annoyance in his tone obvious.

"That's uhhh, not something to boast about son." Dugan teased, and although he couldn't see the two lovers, he knew they were up to no good.

Bucky laughed sarcastically, "Ha ha ha! You're hilarious! Now, can we get a minute, please?" It was all incredibly awkward since Bucky was still hovering over Lucy. She looked up at him with pursed lips, her eyes catching on his jawline that she wanted to pepper with kisses so desperately.

The moment was gone. And as Bucky looked down at her he let out a sigh. "I'd last more than a couple of seconds." He felt the need to assure her that.

Lucy let out a small, uncomfortable giggle, "I should hope so." Her hand played with the tiny hairs on the back of his neck.

Bucky groaned again in frustration, once again send shocks to Lucy's lower belly. He rolled off her after placing a small kiss on her cheek and making her softly giggle.

"Duty calls," He sighed as he stood up, his hand outstretched and helping her off the ground.

"Duty calls," She repeated, trying not to pay attention to the way he fixed his trousers and tried to hide the slight erection he had.

Her eyes burned as she tried not to look at the way he adjusted himself. She felt heat pooling between her thighs as she thought of how he had intimately been resting between her legs just moments ago. Suddenly blushing from the situation, Lucy began to turn away when suddenly Bucky grabbed her.

She thought he was going to pull her into him and kiss her suddenly in a large dramatic gesture. But he didn't.

"I want to do right by you." Was all he said as he swallowed a lump in his throat. "I want our first real kiss to be something incredible."

With his sweet words, Lucy's expression softened and she moved towards him. Her fingers gently graced his cheek and she gave him a soft smile.

Getting on her tippy toes, she lightly pressed her lips to his stubbled face, "It will be." She said softly and then her thumb brushed his cheek again, "I can wait."
He gave her a soft smile as they headed towards the forest. Bucky's hand took Lucy's and she felt her breath hitching once more. It felt so right with their hands intertwined.

As they walked, Lucy stopped out on the outskirts of the forest. She looked back at the little clearing they had been in. The place where she had burned Daniel's letter. She looked out and in her mind, whispered a soft goodbye to Daniel. She was ready to let go. She had to let go.

Because Elsa was right. Loving ghosts was too painful.

And as she turned and saw Bucky waited for her, his hand still in hers and a slight smile on his lips as he watched her. Lucy knew she was making the right call. He was there and waiting to kiss her and call her his own. He was flesh and blood and all sorts of warm, which Lucy knew she would revel in as they slept together at night. He was present and real. He made her feel things as a woman she didn't even know she was capable of feeling. A need so great was coursing through her body for the man who walked beside her that Lucy felt a frustration that she hadn't known in years. It was like fire settling in her veins, and she wanted nothing more for the flames to consume her.

His thumb brushed against her knuckles once more. And Lucy looked over to him, and knew at that moment she had made the right choice in moving on past Daniel and allowing herself to finally feel everything she could with Bucky.

They walked in a comfortable silence until they reached the campsite. Lucy and Bucky released their grasps on each other, although they both loathed to.

Lucy huffed in frustration, wondering what exactly was so important that Dugan had to interrupt them and soil a perfect kiss.

"What happened?" She asked a little coldly.

Dugan looked at her with pursed lips. He gestured with his head to a body on the ground. Lucy rounded the corner and saw what it was. Her mouth dropped open.

Otto was lying on the ground, eyes open wide and lifeless. He was dead, killed from his wounds. Suddenly, Lucy felt sick, knowing she was responsible for his death.

"Shit." Was all she whispered. Of course, she should have suspected her happiness wouldn't last.

Chapter End Notes

Don't hate me please lol. I know what I did was mean. BUT I HAVE SOMETHING SO SPECIAL PLANNED FOR THEIR FIRST "REAL" KISS! It will 100% be worth the wait, I promise. Isn't the sexual tension just like spot on though? It makes me want to just grab the two of them and be like *now kiss!*

I know I'm mean for the tease. But on the other hand... Bucky wants to marry Lucy! Bucky wants to marry Lucy! I repeat, Bucky wants to marry Lucy! We'll see what I've got planned for the future though... There is still the whole Azzano thing we have to get past, plus the train part (yikes).

ALSO, how do we all feel if I were to rename all the chapters with actual titles instead
of Roman numerals? Is that something you all would like to see? Let me know.

Review for some more tooth-rotting fluff from "Lucky" (Lucy/Bucky). And follow and favourite! Let's get those numbers up, people!

Thanks,

-A
Chapter XXV

Chapter Notes

Chapter 25! A quarter of the way to 100 (please, please, God don't let this story have 100 chapters.) thank you all again for your support. Truly this story would be nothing without my lovely readers and their unbelievably kind words. It's a serious boost to my ego though and I feel like I'm starting to believe I'm actually a capable writer, lol imagine that!

This chapter yet again is dedicated to 0peneyeZ! She did the translations and did a wonderful job at it once again! Thank you so much Kat, for working so far and giving up your time to help me out! 3

Oh, and Happy Thanksgiving weekend to my fellow Canucks!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter XXV

When Bucky awoke he was aware of a small, feminine hand grasping his own. He looked up and noticed how everyone was asleep except for Dugan. Bucky observed how the fire had mostly died out and all that was left were a few red embers. The logs had collapsed into themselves, and very little heat was still given off.

The crisp fall air made him shiver as it settled deep into his bones. Birds were chirping and singing their happy little songs. Sun was shining through the reddening leaves of the trees. Frost had settled over everything as they slept, coating the ground in a thin layer.

Bucky turned and saw Lucy sleeping about only a foot away from him. She had settled her blankets next to him the night prior, a smug smile on her face as she did so. Her evil twinkle in her eye caused his stomach to flip, and his groin to tighten ever so slightly.

Bucky knew he wouldn't get a wink of sleep knowing she was so close by. There was nothing more he wanted to do than take her in his arms and hold her pressed against him like he had the night before. It was torture to be so close to her yet so far, having to act appropriately since they were more public.

Yet, it didn't stop the two of them from getting under their individual blankets and facing one another before falling asleep. Lucy gave him a small smile as she rested her head against her arm. Bucky eagerly returned her grin, remembering what it felt like to be resting on top of her and between her legs in the field they had been in.

Their hands had found each other in the dark as they laid apart. Bucky wanted nothing more than to go beside her and wrap himself around her again but he knew he couldn't.

He settled with holding her hand in his. The two didn't separate the entire night, and when Bucky awoke he saw how she still slept. Her hair was strewn about, looking messy. Small twigs were in it
and he couldn't help but chuckle as some drool trailed down from her mouth.

Dugan noticed how Bucky was awake and smirked when he saw how he and Lucy held hands. He gave him a suggestive wink and Bucky rolled his eyes. He released her hand and got up, stretching out his back after sleeping on the hard ground.

His joints popped and his body hurt in places he didn't even know could be hurting. He walked over to Dugan with sleepy eyes, where he saw he had been cooking over the last remaining heat of the dying flames.

"I still go by what I said on the plane," Dugan chuckled as he hovered over the fire he was attempting to rejuvenate. In a small pan that Bucky assumed had been in his pack, Dugan was cooking small bird eggs. Bucky hadn't seen eggs in months and his mouth practically dropped at the sight of them. Clearly, he had gone out early and found them as everyone slept.

"Which was?" He noticed how his stomach growled at the sight of the food.

"That you two will be engaged by the end of the year," The man spoke with a smug grin, looking up at Bucky with a cocked eyebrow.

Bucky rolled his eyes and shoved him lightly but he said nothing. Although he would never admit it, he liked it when Dugan would comment on his and Lucy's relationship. It proved to Bucky that it wasn't just obvious to him and others could see it too.

"What? No comment from the peanut gallery?" Dugan barked out another chuckle.

Bucky pursed his lips and shrugged, "I guess we'll see," He stared over to where Lucy slept. He knew he wanted to wake up with her like he had the last two days for the rest of his life.

"Are you actually entertaining the idea of it? What happened to always wanting to be a bachelor?"

Bucky had never wanted to get married. To him, it was too permanent. He could never imagine being with one woman forever. After all, only almost a year prior he was bedding a random woman in London. What was her name, again? Oh, that was right. It was Mary. Or Margery. Whatever it was, it didn't matter. Because at that time Bucky had never considered anything but the single life. Except for one brief moment three years prior when he first saw Lucy.

Now, he didn't mind the idea. Not one bit. In fact, after his fantasy his mind had played out the day earlier that focused on them being married, Bucky even enjoyed the idea of it.

In fact, it was what he wanted. More than anything, he just wanted her. He would be so lucky to be the man she called her own.

He only smirked as he sat down on a log that had been placed by the fire the night before. "I think I'm falling for her," Was all Bucky could respond with. His eyes flashed over to her once more, making sure she was asleep. Love was something he never really thought about. But when he looked at Lucy, he knew that she was who he had been waiting for his entire life.

He wasn't sure what love was exactly. He didn't think he had ever really been in love. Although he told an ex-girlfriend one time he loved her simply because she said it first. But it was nothing like how he felt for Lucy. Lucy made him miss her when she was in the same room. He wanted to spend all his time with her. And he wanted nothing more than to see her laugh and smile and to make her happy. And he constantly was worried something would happen to her. Bucky knew that if the occasion called for it, he wouldn't hesitate to protect her over himself. He figured that's what love was. And he was well on his way for falling for her.
"Oh yeah, I mean who could resist that?" Dugan teased as he gestured to Lucy as drool continued to lightly trail out of her mouth.

"It's adorable and you know it." The fact he found it endearing and sweet was another sign that he had it bad. Most fellas would take one look and run the other direction, but not Bucky. No, he wasn't going anywhere. He was in it for the long haul. "That's my future wife right there," He said with a large smile on his face.

"It's disgusting but that's what love will do to you." Dugan continued teasing, shaking his head and the two of them.

"Hey take it easy with the whole 'love' stuff, alright? I'm not there just yet." Although Bucky knew he would undoubtedly fall in love with her. It was only a matter of time. He was still in disbelief that someone could love someone else so quickly. To him, it seemed like they needed more time. But he was very, very close to getting there.

"Whatever you say. But uhh, say if you two do get married… Make sure you get me an invite," Dugan smiled up at him.

Bucky only clapped him on the shoulder with a grin. They said nothing more about it, but there wasn't much else that needed to be said.

As people began to wake up, Lucy remained asleep. Something told Bucky that she needed the rest after the long day they had. She had a hard time after the two of them returned from the clearing as she found out she was responsible for Otto's death. She had never killed anyone before, and Lucy had taken it pretty hard despite the man being the worst scum of the earth.

As people began to eat their breakfast, Dugan mentioned how he had only been able to find six bird eggs. Meaning, someone would be left out. With Lucy being asleep, she would be the one to not get any.

But Bucky had another idea. With him being the last one left, he grabbed the pan and walked over to where Lucy was sleeping.

He shook her awake gently and she opened her sleepy eyes and yawned.

"Mornin' sleeping beauty." Bucky smiled down at her. She sleepily stretched and then yawned. Her tired eyes looked dull and lacking the usual brightness they had. But despite her still not feeling like herself, she was still able to give him a small grin.

Lucy smiled and stretched again, her eyes catching on the pan, "Whatcha got there?"

"Breakfast in bed," Bucky showed her the contents in the pan and she gasped. It was a little different than the breakfast in bed he really wanted to give her. What he wanted was to make her pancakes and bacon and drink their morning coffee together. And then spend the rest of the morning in bed kissing, and later him on top of Lucy and having her calling out his name. But this would have to do for the time being.

"Oh my God!" She smiled, "I haven't had a fresh egg in months!" She sat up with her blanket draped around her shoulders.

Bucky passed her a fork and Lucy began to dig in. Everyone else was looking at Bucky with curiosity, wondering just why he would give up his breakfast like that.

She groaned in pleasure as she took the first bite and Bucky chuckled as he opened up his rations.
Lucy looked at him mid-chew and then frowned.

"Did you not have any?"

"Nah, I wanted to make sure you had some. Plus I'm not that hungry." He lied, trying to sound as casual as possible.

Lucy smiled and then continued eating. She danced happily as she savored the flavour, despite it missing a little salt and pepper.

She stopped eating when she finished half the egg and passed the pan over to Bucky, "I'm not that hungry either." She smiled as she shared.

Bucky couldn't help but feel his heart well up from her generosity. He wanted to make sure she was getting taken care of, and Lucy wanted to do the same thing for him.

He happily accepted and sunk his teeth into the first bite. They said nothing as they continued eating. But Lucy was touched by his gesture of kindness, and also bringing her breakfast in bed. The thought of it instilled something in her as she thought about laying in bed on a Sunday morning and having him bring her food so they could eat together and spend the day under the covers wrapped up in one another.

It was a nice thought, and she smiled as her mind drifted to it. But her happiness was soon cut off when she realized that there was business to take care of.

After Lucy finished eating she stood up and brushed her hands on her pants. She looked around at the men and then spoke, "I decided to go to Sigegarsson Castle."

"And how do you suppose you do that?" Whitney replied snarkily, "You think they're just gonna let you waltz in there?"

"We only have to get past the guards at the front. We can pretend to be high ranking German officials and we take Otto's invitation. After that, we somehow get inside."

"And you think no one is gonna be suspicious of the obvious woman who is a high ranking German officer?" Whitney scoffed, "It's a nice thought but it's not gonna work, darlin'."

"It will, because I won't be the officer. Someone else will be, and I'll pretend to be a guest." Her plan required Bucky to come along. She would rather he was out of danger, but there wasn't much of a choice since she couldn't very well pretend to be a high commanding officer given the fact she was a woman.

"And you're gonna do that how?" Dugan asked her skeptically, thinking there might be a few holes in her plan.

Lucy shrugged, "I'll improvise I guess." She saw the looks of uncertainty flash in all of their eyes. Lucy watched them as their hope deflated, "Look, I know it's not a good plan but it's all I've got. So unless someone else has something better, this is what we're doing. And I can't force any of you to come. So, if I have to I'll do it on my own." Lucy explained. She knew she had to complete her mission. Failure wasn't an option for her anymore, and she knew she had to do this. Even if she was doing it by herself.

"Hard pass on this one, compadre." Whitney quickly said, opting out of not going.

Bucky nodded, "I'll do it." He said and Lucy gave him a small smile. She didn't expect him to
volunteer, but she was thankful he was coming anyway.

"I will too," Dugan replied, giving Lucy a reassuring grin.

"Well, then that settles it!" Lucy noticed how no one else, not even Gabe Jones volunteered. "Bucky will pose as a high ranking officer and talk to the guards until we manage to get in. Then I'll get dressed and try to find out what Schmidt has done with the Tesseract." Lucy explained. She would have told Dugan to take Bucky's role, but he looked too Irish and no one would ever believe that he was a German officer. After all, she had heard his accent and it could use some work, to say the least.

Bucky cringed as Lucy spoke, "See, there might be a small problem when it comes to the whole me 'pretending to be a German' thing."

"What do you mean there's a slight problem?" She demanded, "You told me you spoke German!" She recalled back in the cavern under the church where they had first met Bucky told her speaking German wasn't a big accomplishment because he spoke it too.

He winced and then scratched the back of his neck awkwardly, "Here's the problem, doll." He looked at her, giving her a sorry look, "I may have exaggerated my abilities a bit,"

"I'm sure that's not the only abilities thing you've exaggerated about." Dum Dum found it the appropriate moment to make a joke. Bucky turned to him with an unamused expression, giving him a look that simply asked 'why'.

Dum Dum only put his hands up in surrender, "Sheesh, tough crowd." He said as no one reacted.

"Gentlemen, can we focus?" Lucy snapped. She realized they were going to have to go back to square one with her being the German officer.

"Hey, pidge look I'm sorry. But I think you better do it." Bucky replied although he didn't like the idea of her going alone to try to convince guards of who she was.

She shot him a look and huffed, rolling her eyes, "I can't believe you lied to me about speaking German!" It was obvious she was pissed at him. Bucky had almost forgotten what it was like being on the other end of her wrath. He didn't like it. Not one bit.

"You were intimidatingly smart! I had to come up with something! And I wasn't lying when I said I spoke it. I just don't speak it well."

"Ugh, I still can't believe you!" Lucy replied frustratedly, rubbing her hands through her messy hair. She was frustrated at the fact he had lied. Now, they were going to be in a much more compromising position.

"Wow, they really are like a married couple." Gilbert Whitney made the smart ass reply to Lee Miller who was sitting beside him.

Lucy gave Whitney a look that told him to cut it out. He stopped immediately, especially after what happened yesterday when she shot Otto in the leg. Everyone knew better than to push Lucy's buttons when she was pissed off.

"We can still pull this off," Bucky nervously rubbed his knuckles and said reluctantly. He hated the idea of Lucy so it alone, but he knew she was capable.

"Yeah," Lucy nodded, trying to convince herself, "I can do this."
"I can't do this." Was all that ran through Lucy's head as they pulled up to the gates in front of the very heavily guarded castle the day after they had that conversation.

Bucky drove the stolen car in which they were traveling in. Lucy sat in the back, as any high ranking officer could. She knew that German women weren't high ranking officers in the army, but she hoped to God that the guards were too dumb to question her.

As they approached the gates with caution, waiting as another car was checked and the guest presented their invitation, Lucy swallowed her nerves thickly.

Bucky turned to Lucy as he drove, he looked at her and they made eye contact. He didn't speak, but she knew what he intended to say through just by the look he gave her.

"I'll be okay," Lucy whispered. It was so odd seeing him in a muted grey Nazi uniform. She hated it and wished to see him in his blue jacket again. The one that brought out his eyes and made them sparkle.

"Should I turn away so you guys can kiss or somethin'?" Dugan asked.

Bucky turned to him with an annoyed look and exhaled frustratedly.

"Ah, sorry," Dugan replied with a smirk, "I forgot that's not your style, Sarg. If you kissed her you'd have to throw her out of this moving vehicle." He was referring back to the plane.

Bucky looked even more annoyed at his comment but Lucy had on a large smile. She chuckled, but her expression soon changed as soon as the automobile in front of them moved and suddenly it was time for her to get into character.

"Remember if anything goes south get yourself out of there." Bucky reminded her. He still couldn't believe that he was allowing the one person he was meant to protect in one of the most dangerous places possible.

Lucy nodded in understanding. Once more, their eyes met as Bucky glanced back at her through the rearview mirror. She gave him a reassuring smile just as they pulled up.

Bucky rolled down the window crank as the guard looked at him with an odd look. Dugan had his hand on his pistol in case things took a turn for the worst. He swallowed a lump in his throat and then gave a small smile to the guard who was staring down at him.

"Guten Abend" Good evening. He said with a pursed smile and in the best German he could muster.

"Name und Einladung, bitte" Name and invitation, was all the gruff guard could say as he looked on in suspicion at everyone in the car. He had a deep frown that creased his brows together and Lucy could feel her heart racing in her chest.

"Es gibt ein Problem." There is a problem, Bucky cringed as he spoke timidly, something Lucy had never seen before, "Jemand hat einen kleinen Fehler bei den Einladungen gemacht. An sich kein großes Problem... Aber jemand wird definitiv gefeuert weden." Someone made a slight error on my employers invite. It's not that big of a deal... But someone will definitely be getting fired. Bucky presented the invite, and then added for good measure, "Oder erschossen." Or shot.

The two guards looked at one another with a look of worry and then stared down at the invite. "der Name?" The name? They checked the list they had as they cross reference invitation.
"Hanna Sauer. Wie Sie sehen können, gab es ein Problem mit der Einladungsliste. Mein Otto steht
nicht drauf. Bestimmt ein einfacher Fehler, aber eine sehr sehr große Beleidigung. Ich stelle mir vor,
dass eine Kündigung der Verantwortlichen nicht zu viel verlangt wäre? Hanna Sauer. As you can
see, there was a problem with the invitation list. Otto is on it. Surely a simple mistake, but a very
very large insult. I'm sure that firing the one responsible isn't too much to ask for? Bucky then
swallowed thickly before adding once more, "Or that somebody could be beheaded.

The man realized that the name was feminine looked at his comrade and said something in a hushed
tone. Bucky's threat did nothing to worry them. Since they returned the invite to him and then
answer, "Wir werden Sie nicht reinlassen, wenn Ihre Einladung nicht zu Ihrem Namen passt." We
will not be letting you in if your invite does not match the name.

Bucky was about to answer when suddenly Lucy made a move and got out of the vehicle.

"Jetzt haben Sie mich dazu gebracht, aus dem Austo auszusteigen. Sie haben mich dazu gebracht,
auszusteigen! Schauen Sie was Sie angerichtet haben!" Now you made me get out of the car! You
made me get out of the car! Look what you did! Lucy exclaimed, pulling all her acting skills out as
the men looked confused. "Sind Sie so dumm wie Sie hässlich sind?" Are you as stupid as you are
ugly?

"Es gibt ein Problem mit Ihrer Einladung, Fräulein" There is a problem with your invitation,
Fräulein. They looked at her with an odd expression, never having seen a woman in such a
masculine uniform before. Let alone a woman who would dare question them or yell at them in such
da degrading manner.

"Fräulein? Fräulein?" She demanded angrily. The blatant disrespect of them calling her simply 'miss'
when she was clearly an officer irked her even though she was only in character.

"Jetzt haben Sie es getan!" Now you've done it! Bucky exclaimed and worriedly pinched the bridge
of his nose, looking stressed. "Wegen Ihnen ist sie ausgestiegen!" You've made her get out of the
car! He was trying his best to be a sidekick, attempting to channel his finest impression of Charles.

"Diese Verwirrung und das Level des Unprofessionalismus hier ist unglaublich! Wie haben Sie es in
die Armee unseres Vaterlandes geschafft? Muss doch schwer gewesen sein, so ganz ohne Hirn!"
This confusion and the level of unprofessionalism is unbelievable! How did you make it into the
army of our Vaterland? Must have been difficult, without any brains! Lucy demanded, and then
grabbed the list of names right out of the soldier's hand. They were in shock at the way she was
speaking to them, and looking as though they didn't know what to do. "Ein trainierter Affe könnte
Ihren Job erledigen! Wussten Sie das? Ein Affe ist schlauer als Sie! Und er sieht auch besser aus." A
trained monkey could do your job! Did you know that? A monkey is smarter than you! And they're
better looking as well.

They looked on at her in shock. Their mouths open and closed like a fish's in disbelief. Flustered,
they looked on at her uncomfortably, like children being scolded.

"Wie sind Sie an die Position gekommen, hmm? Stand in der Stellenbeschreibung, dass ein Trottel
gesucht wird?! Könnten Sie nicht lesen? Mein Name ist genau hier, aber es muss einen Fehler
gegeben haben, weil da ein anderer Vornahme steht!" How did you get these positions, hmm? Was
the description under the job showing that they needed a moron!? Can you not read? My name is
right here but there is a mistake since it was made out to another first name. She pointed to Otto's
name on the chart.

"Aber die Namen stimmen können Sie nicht reinlassen." But the names don't match. We can't let you
Lucy only cocked her head while she had exceptional posture, put her hands behind her back and stood up straight, "Vielleicht wollen Sie dem Führer erklären, dass seine Representanten am Tor aufgehalten wurden?" Well, perhaps you would like to be the one to tell the Führer as to why his representative wasn't allowed past the gates?

The man paled and he looked at his comrade, and then skeptically back at Lucy. She raised an eyebrow and then they looked shaken as they finally nodded.

"In Ordnung, Sie können rein." Alright, you can go in. They finally spoke and Lucy felt relief wash over her. She could have immediately let her shoulders drop and released a satisfied sigh but instead, she kept herself together. Muttering something about why morons shouldn't be allowed in the army, Lucy got back in the car and let out a shaky breath.

"We're good," Bucky said more to himself than to anyone else. His heart had been pounding in his chest as Lucy conversed with the guards.

He made sure to check back on her through the rearview mirror as he drove into the incredibly large castle entrance. The place was built a very long time ago but had since transformed into an incredibly lucrative home. Lucy looked up as they went up the drive to see the large stonework as well as all the intricate details in the architecture.

As Bucky looked back and saw her flustered Dugan made sure to compliment her performance. Bucky had been sure that it wouldn't work, but he should have known at that point Lucy knew what she was doing.

Lucy directed him not to pull up to the front, but rather the back where the valets had been parking the other automobiles. Bucky listened eagerly, not wanting to have to deal with any more Nazi's than what was necessary.

After they parked and got out of the car, Bucky looked to Lucy who was deep in thought and forming a plan. "Now what, Doc?" He asked her as she looked up and the castle and bit her lip.

"Not sure yet. I haven't planned that far," Was all she answered with. Lucy had no idea how she was going to sneak in without warranting suspicion as to why a woman was a military officer. Thankfully, the guards were too dumb and threatened by her, but higher officials wouldn't be and she likely would be apprehended on sight.

Lucy looked up to the castle and noticed how a window was open a couple of stories above. A drain pipe was right beside it, and suddenly Lucy got a flashback from her time in Egypt. She remembered having to climb to escape, and Lucy knew she would likely be able to do that again if she didn't have any more options.

Granted, this was much higher up than the simple one-story house in Egypt, but Lucy knew she might not have a choice.

Looking to Bucky, she sighed and then began taking off her jacket and hat. "What are you doing?" He asked her as she unbuttoned her shirt a bit to give her more flexibility and began rolling up the sleeves to her elbow.

"I'm gonna climb up there," She gestured to the window and Bucky immediately had his hit the ground.

"No, no way. That's not happening. I'm not watching you fall to your death." He insisted, getting
nauseous just looking at the height of the window. He hated heights, and he wasn't about to let the woman he had feelings for climb that high up.

"Relax," Lucy shoved her jacket at him and winked. Bucky rolled his eyes at her nonchalant attitude and how she didn't seem worried. Meanwhile, he was worried sick at even the mere suggestion.

"Hard to do that when you're about to be climbing forty feet in the air," Bucky mumbled as Lucy stretched and then began her climb.

"Why?" She called back down with a smirk, "You worried?"

"I just don't wanna have to catch you if you fall." Bucky swallowed a lump in his throat as he saw the woman he wanted to protect more than anything start moving up the drain pipe.

He was shocked to see her doing it with remarkable ease, and Dum Dum chuckled as Bucky watched in minor surprise at seeing the nimble way she moved. "I guess you have nothing to worry about," He looked up and clicked his teeth, saying with a devilish tone, "Don't be so tense, she'll be fine."

Bucky hadn't even noticed how his fists were clenched and his jaw was locked. He felt like he could barely breathe as he watched Lucy climb higher and higher, her boots being carefully placed on the edge as she inched her body upward.

"Just enjoy the view," Dugan noted crassy, his eyebrows going up as they both realized they were at the perfect angle below to ogle Lucy's behind.

Bucky looked at the man, surprised by his inappropriate comment and scolding, "Knock it off!"

"Hey, I know you're into her and all that and that's good for you, pal. But the rest of us fellas don't have a lady in our bed to keep us warm at night. That ass is the highlight of my week," Dugan chuckled again as Lucy kept climbing.

Bucky sighed and rolled his eyes before admitting as he looked up, "Yeah, mine too."

He tried not to think of the way it was pressed against his groin the other night. Or how she felt as he rested between her legs as he was over top of her. Controlling his sexual thoughts about her was getting harder and harder with each day. And Bucky even found himself embracing them instead of trying to push them away like he had been doing since the moment he realized he had feelings for her.

They continued watching, Bucky cringing as Lucy lost her footing for a second but then regaining it. His heart was pounding in his chest, and he felt his adrenaline racing for her.

"She's like a spider monkey!" Bucky looked up in awe, his eyes squinting as she moved further and further up. The way she moved was so fluid and with such ease, Bucky would have guessed that she had done it before.

"That's one hell of a woman." Dugan spoke in admiration and look his head in disbelief as he watched her.

"Boy, don't I know it." Bucky looked up and suddenly felt pride well up as he watched her. He felt giddy as he turned to Dugan and with a big smile "I am definitely gonna marry her." He said it with the same confidence he told Steve when they had first met three years prior. This time though, he was determined to make it work. His mind flashed back to how she had told him she wanted him the night before and suddenly Bucky's stomach flipped. He couldn't believe that she reciprocated his
feelings.

Dugan looked at him with a cocked an eyebrow, "Yeah I thought so too. Until now. She's too good for you."

Bucky just looked annoyed and gave him a questioning look, as a means to ask why he would say such a thing.

Dugan only shrugged and then replied with a smirk, "It's true!" He defended himself.

"I know, but don't say it." He rolled his eyes with a sigh at the man as he scowled.

Dugan patted him on the shoulder reassuringly, "Yeah, yeah don't worry. That dame's crazy about you. You've got a good one. Let's hope if you do end up getting hitched that your kids take after her; because no offense, but she is far more impressive than you."

Bucky smirked as he watched Lucy safely fall safety through the window a little clumsily. "God, I hope so. We're gonna make some damn cute babies one day."

"Not too soon I hope," Dugan cocked an eyebrow and watched as Lucy's feet disappeared inside as she fell into the castle and a loud banging noise was heard as she landed on the floor, "Hate to lose that one due to you not putting on a jimmy hat."

"She's not going anywhere." Bucky couldn't imagine having to be separated due to carelessness or the army finding out they were romantically involved. He finally just got Lucy back, he didn't need to lose her again. "Plus, we're gonna need years of practice of making kids before finally gettin' it right." Bucky added just for good measure, sounding like the smuggest bastard in the world as he thought of all the times they could 'practice'.

Dugan only looked at him as Bucky spoke and shook his head, "You're one lucky son of a bitch, you know that?"

Bucky shrugged, once again thinking back to how Lucy had asked him to kiss her the night before. "Yeah, I know."

Lucy's muscles were shaking by the time she climbed through the window. She clumsily fell as soon as she got in, smacking against the hard floor and feeling something topple over her as she laid on the ground breathlessly for only a moment.

The boys were both still waiting for her to get to safety, and she figured that they would figure out on their own how to get into the castle.

As Lucy looked around, she noticed she was in some sort of powder room. It was nicely decorated, with a mix of furnishing from the turn of the century but also some more modern inclusions. She stood up and noticed the large vase with an intricate bouquet in it and Lucy looked at it in shock. She never expected Nazi's too be too concerned with flora and making things look pretty and full of life.

As Lucy stood up and tried to catch her breath she soon realized she wasn't alone in the powder room. A woman emerged in shock at Lucy looking disheveled and in a uniform.

She squealed in surprise and was about to head out of the room when Lucy had her eyes catch on

"Wait!" She requested. The woman was suddenly curious and Lucy looked down her dress in
surprise. They looked roughly the same size, and Lucy realized what she had to do and sighed. Closing the door with her hand and standing in the way so the woman couldn't leave, Lucy looked at the red satin dress she was wearing up and down.

She sighed, before apologizing, "I am so sorry to do this,"

It took only a whack in the head with the vase Lucy had just been admiring for the woman to hit the ground like a sack of flour. The vase was shattered all over the ground, the flowers scattered. Lucy looked again with pity at the woman's unconscious figure but she knew that it was necessary to carry out her mission.

As Lucy began to strip down, the only thought that ran through her head was: here goes nothing. It wasn't necessarily easy to be calm while about to partake in a suicide mission but Lucy knew it was just something she had to do.

It took her only a few moments to get the woman out of her dress and place Lucy's uniform on her to preserve her decency. Lucy shimmed in the dress, realizing it was a little snuggler than she was used to due to her curves.

She jumped around a bit trying to get the zipper all the way up. Once she finally got it on, Lucy had to take a moment to look at herself in the mirror.

The red silk brought out all the dark hues in her hair and eyes. She hadn't seen herself in a dress in nearly a year. As she stared at herself Lucy didn't even recognize the woman looking back at her in the mirror.

Trying to do something with her hair, Lucy did a simple updo, stealing some of the woman's bobby pins and placing them in her dark locks.

Finally, she rummaged through the small clutch the woman had brought and fished out a red lipstick. Lucy painted it on her lips, smearing the crimson tones over it. She had to blink a couple of times as she realized that this was the most beautiful she had been in so long. Lucy hadn't felt that way in a while, and only until recently with Bucky did she know she was still desirable.

Looking at the strangers' reflection in the mirror and staring herself in the eye, Lucy convinced herself one thing. The opposite of what she was thinking when she first began the mission … *I can do this.*

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Chapter End Notes

So sorry this chapter was slightly uneventful. The next one will have a toonnn of action! Plus some fluff for all my romantics out there. :) I'll try to update as soon as I can (hopefully within the next 24 hours!) Because I'm very excited to share what I've been cooking up!

Please review! They inspire me so much and are so lovely and touching to know you are all enjoying the story so far. And don't forget to follow/favourite.

-A
Hello, hello, my beautiful readers! I know I promised my last update that I would be posting in 24 hours but I unfortunately got a little busy. I also wanted to allow you all some more time to let me know what you thought of the last chapter through your reviews!

This one is a little more exciting than the other one's I've posted. And I have to apologize ahead of time for its crazy length. I also have been writing a couple more chapters ahead and I think this will at least be going well past 35/40 chapters! Which is just crazy to me. But hey, I need a satisfying ending after all the work I put in.

Trigger Warning: Some violence. Extreme fluff ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter XXVI

By the time Bucky and Dugan had finally managed to get into the castle a sickening feeling in his stomach began to rise. He wondered if Lucy had been discovered, and if she managed to somehow get into the ballroom without being detected. Worry coursed through him as he thought about the possibility of things going horribly wrong.

Bucky stood near Dugan in the ballroom with a glass of champagne in his hand, something he hadn't had in what seemed like eons. The bubbling, sickly sweet, French wine tasted sour on his tongue and he wondered if there was a stronger drink he could get.

Bucky tried to remain quiet as much as possible, knowing his poor German would likely be the reason as to why he would be caught. But thankfully, many people were there and he heard several other languages in the mix. Dugan stood beside him with a glass in his own hand, happily chatting away with some kind of duchess who had taken a fancy to him.

The longer they waited the more anxious Bucky became that Lucy was compromised. It was taking far too long for him to reconvene with her, and he wondered just what would happen if she got caught.

One thing he did know, was that he'd stop at nothing to make sure that that woman was safe. She meant more to him than she could possibly ever know, and if anything turned south Bucky would lose his mind. She was the woman he wanted to spend the rest of his life with; the woman he could see himself raising a family with.

And the more he thought of it, and the more he dwelt in his and Dugan's conversation they had outside, Bucky realized that it was the only thing he was sure of.

He didn't just want her with him at nighttime, in bed together as he moved inside of her. He wanted her mornings, and all the things in between. He wanted to see her sipping a cup of coffee as she read
the paper. He wanted to see her stomach swell with the life he put inside of her and be there for her every day after that. Bucky wanted to grow old with her. Watching as their grandchildren would run through their halls and how Lucy would smile and be just as gorgeous as the day he first met her.

As he thought of that he realized how much he truly felt more for her than any other woman in his entire life. Bucky knew that he was a goner. To him, nothing ever made more sense than them being together. And if they made it out of that castle alive, he would make damn sure that she knew just how he felt.

The moment that Bucky was about to lift his glass to his lips and take another sip his eye caught on something. He stopped what he was doing mid-action and felt his jaw hit the ground ever so slightly as he tried to remain composed.

What stood before him was a vision in red, a goddess of a woman. An inhuman, undeniable beauty who resembled Aphrodite herself. She was dressed in the deepest shape of crimson, her lips matching it. The short sleeves and draping back revelled more of her body than he had seen since the night he had to undress her.

Bucky was speechless. His eye caught on her and he didn't think he could tear away his gaze even if he wanted to. The colour of red stood out amongst every other shade. It was sensuous, serious, angry, and violent. But it was also soft and calming. The woman's gentle frame that it rested on was something that should have been a museum. Each dip, curve, and angle was something he wanted to admire. She was an ethereal, unbelievable beauty that had no equal.

As Bucky looked at her, all he could softly mutter was a gentle "Holy shit," under his breath.

Dugan's eyes caught on her as well and he chuckled at seeing Bucky's floored reaction. He swallowed a lump in his throat, and wondered when exactly he died and if she was what heaven looks like.

Lucy then smiled at Bucky and his heart nearly stopped beating. Especially when the realization came toppling over him that wanting a future with her, a family, and grow old together only meant one thing...

He was undeniably, inexplicably, and uncontrollably in love with her.

And he was more than happy with the idea of that. Because she was the woman he would call his own, the woman he would marry. The woman who would mother his children. And the woman that he wanted to make smile every single day for the rest of his life.

Bucky couldn't stop himself as he moved forward through the crowd. He grabbed two champagne glasses from a server who walked around with them on a large tray.

It was like his feet had a mind of their own. He just kept walking, unable to keep himself away from her for even a second longer.

Lucy smiled at him as he approached, she said hello to him in German, acting as though they were strangers.

"You look," Bucky couldn't keep himself from telling her how gorgeous she was. He knew he should speak in German but he didn't know the words to properly convey how he felt. "Absolutely stunning," Was all he could say as he passed her a glass of champagne.

"Dankeschön," Thank you, Lucy said formally and gave him a pressingly look when he began speaking English. Luckily, no one paid any attention to them as they slipped away to the side.
Because of her nerves, Lucy drank the champagne he got her in what seemed like seconds.

"Did you find anything out yet?" She whispered close to his ear, causing a shiver to roll down the base of his spine. He imagined just briefly what it would be like for her to trail her mouth up the skin of his neck, tenderly pressing kisses to it and sucking on it. He wondered what it would feel like to hold her flushed against him, their bodies conjoined as he felt her breath on him just as he did a few seconds ago. But instead, it was to whisper dirty things in his ear of what she wanted him to do to her before taking his earlobe in her mouth and biting it.

"Nothing so far," He whispered back and then gave her a look as to ask if she had.

"I haven't seen Schmidt yet," She finished the last little bit of champagne and disposed of her glass on a tray a server was walking around collecting empties with. She took another one eagerly, trying to calm her nerves. "But I keep hearing things how this auction is intended to fund something. A project. I recognize quite a few people here, scientists, archaeologists, philtrophists and weapons dealers."

Bucky had no idea that so many people would have been invited to this thing. Whatever Schmidt was planning, he clearly needed to money for it since it wasn't being funded by the German government.

"What do you think it is?" Bucky asked.

"I don't know, but it seems like they're hoping to do a demonstration later today." Was all she answered with before Bucky finished his glass and then grabbed her hand. He took her champagne glass away from her, although she heavily protested.

"Dance with me," Was all he said in a comment of confidence and pulled her out to the ballroom floor. He knew they were on a mission and they should be focusing, but he also knew they likely weren't going to make it out alive. The least he could do was hold her one last time.

Lucy protested while hissing his name but allowed herself to get pulled on the dance floor and into his arms anyway. A new song began, and Bucky twirled her around and her skirt billowed. He held her closer than he should have when Lucy came back in from the twirl.

Her breath hitched for only a moment as his hand rested lowly on the small of her back. It didn't dip any further though, as he remained a gentleman.

"I almost forget what we're doing here while we're dancing like this." She whispered against his ear again. Her fingers played with the small hairs on the back of his neck. Bucky felt a deep feeling settle in his stomach as he felt her touch him. It was funny how even the most innocent physical contact could build such a desperate need for her.

"Doll, you make me feel some kinda way." Was all he said, exasperated as Lucy quietly shushed him, worried people might hear his Yankee accent.

He only looked at her as he pulled her flush against him so they were even closer. "It's true." He told her again and couldn't help but take in all her beauty, "You look incredible."

She only smiled softly, but Bucky noticed how her face fell as her eyes caught of something behind him. Her mouth fell open slightly and she whispered to him with her eyes still on what caused her to react that way, "Schmidt is here now."

Bucky knew better than to turn around and gaze at their target. He swallowed a lump in his throat as Lucy looked over his shoulder. She then fixated her gaze back in Bucky, trying not to be too
obvious.

"What should we do?" Bucky asked lowly.

"Wait," Was all she answered and then tried to look back at him. She sighed and gave him a small smile, "And try to enjoy dancing."

"Well, I don't know about you but I'm certainly enjoying myself." Bucky whispered back to her and gently kissed the top of her head.

Lucy revelled in the small touch of his lips. Her eyes fluttered closed at the contact of his mouth on her skin. She wanted to capture his lips in hers and kiss him hungrily, but she knew she couldn't. But God, she wanted to so badly.

"I am too," Lucy whispered back gripping his shoulder tightly. She didn't tell him that any time he held her like that she enjoyed it. She smiled as she rested her head against him.

"God, we better make it out of here alive." Bucky chuckled lowly. The feeling of her against him was something he felt like he would never get used to. "We still haven't had a proper kiss."

Lucy smirked and licked her lips as she looked up at him, "You planning on finally kissing me after this?" She blatantly flirted.

"Pige," He moved some hair out of her face and his hand graced her cheek ever so slightly. He put his mouth close to hers, gently pressing his lips to the corner or hers in a soft peck and whispered, "I'm gonna kiss you so good that you're not going to remember your own name after I'm finished."

Lucy shivered and a deep, burning ache settled in the pit of her lower belly. The man had so much sex appeal that she didn't know it was even possible to feel the way she did. How was it that she wanted him to whisper sweet nothings in her ear before kissing her gently, but also to pin her down on a bed and ravish her?

Lucy was lost in her own thoughts for only a moment until she noticed Schmidt slip out of the room. He was alone, and unfollowed by any of his staff or guests. Lucy quickly looked back at Bucky and said hasily, "Schmidt just left the room. Do we follow him?"

"Right," Dugan straightened his jacket and his expression changed into something more serious, "The auction is just about to start. I'll stay here and scope it out, we rendezvous back at the car if things go sideways."

"Got it," Bucky nodded and grabbed Lucy by the hand as they began to head towards the exit that
Schmidt took.

Lucy was so preoccupied with her tunnel vision on Schmidt that she hardly noticed when her shoulder collided with another lady. Lucy frantically apologized and tried her best to be as casual as possible so people wouldn't notice what was going on. The lady told her it was perfectly alright and to stop fussing since it was an accident. She fixed some of the creases in her skirt and then her eye caught on Lucy.

"I'm sorry, I don't believe we've met." The woman extended her hand to Lucy after just having accidently bumped into her. She had been watching Lucy and Bucky dance and was curious about them. The woman had a strong French accent, which Lucy was happy to hear. It meant she wouldn't have to converse in German any longer.

"Hanna Sauer" Lucy shook her hand and introduced herself. She didn't mean to be short but she had to get to Shmidt before their widow closed.

"Pleasure. And this is? I don't recall us meeting either." She raised her eyebrows at Bucky, turning her attention to him.

"This is my husband," Lucy answered in French and although Bucky didn't speak much of it he understood enough. She ran her hand up his arm intimately, a small gesture but one that made his stomach flip. He never knew that Lucy introducing him as her husband was something that he not only wanted, but needed to hear. For a moment, he caught a glimpse of the future that he wanted with her yet again.

The woman smiled as her suspicions were confirmed, "I thought so. I'm sorry to intrude but I was watching you on the dance floor and you looked very in love."

Lucy looked at Bucky and smiled fondly at him. Once again, the way she looked at him made him nearly want to jump for joy. "We're newlyweds," She gently grasped his hand, squeezing it tightly. And then winked before saying, "I can barely keep my hands off of him."

"I don't blame you," The lady smirked as she looked Bucky up and down. Lucy found herself getting twinge of jealousy in her stomach but also pride. She couldn't believe that a man so desirable wanted to be with her as much as she wanted to be with him.

"Pardon me as we head off to somewhere more private," Lucy implied lewdly and the woman blushed at the suggestive statement.

She hurried off without even saying goodbye. She knew they couldn't afford to lose their target, and it would soon turn into a disaster if Lucy wasted any more time.

Lucy kept holding Bucky's hand as they disappeared into the room that Schmidt had snuck into. They burst through the doors, only to see that the room was empty. Lucy looked around the grand room, taking in all the extraordinary designs and details.

Lucy turned to Bucky in confusion, after realizing that there was no other exit beyond the one they came from.

"Think he could have slipped out?" Lucy asked, wondering if that woman distracting them could have made them lose focus.

"Unlikely." Bucky answered skeptically.

Lucy immediately had an idea and she quickly ordered, "Look for anything that could open up a
Bucky only nodded and they hastily rushed to the fireplace mantel. In all of Lucy's previous experiences, the secret room was always by the fireplace. They started lifting objects and trying to find something that could trigger the door's mechanism.

"So, husband huh?" Bucky teased her, bringing up what she had told that woman. He looked over at Lucy with a smirk as he continued rifling around things in the room.

"Thought you couldn't speak French." Lucy quipped back smugly.

"Oh, I speak enough to understand what you were saying." He winked, "And I gotta say, you were a little too excited to be sayin' we were hitched."

"Well, can you blame me?" Lucy winked, "That woman couldn't keep her eyes off of you." She felt odd whenever she thought of how other women perceived Bucky. Lucy hadn't really seen how others interacted with him, considering at base camp they were always surrounded by men. Of course, she knew he was a ladies man. But she never noticed how much until there were other women around. She felt jealousy well inside her again.

"Too bad for her I only have my eyes set on one dame." He told her as he continued looking around, trying his hardest to figure out where the hell Schmidt could have disappeared to. He was quiet for a moment until he brought up, clearing his throat, "You told me once that you were scared of getting married. Back in Brooklyn you mentioned that..."

Lucy paused and then looked to Bucky. She had loved Daniel, yes. But something was always missing. Something she felt when she was with Bucky. "It does scare me. But for some reason with the right person it doesn't seem so terrifying."

Bucky wanted to say something. Anything, really. And anything would have been better than just standing there dumbfounded and speechless. He loved her, and the fact that she had just revealed so much to him left him a little in shock.

"Lucy, I umm..." Bucky cleared his throat and moved forward to her, "I think I should tell you something before we possibly die." He wanted to tell her he loved her. He had to, knowing it might be their last moments together.

"Okay, what is it?" She frowned and asked skeptically. She was worried he would tell her some big secret like he had a kid back in New York, or that he wasn't as available as he had implied.

"I just want you to know how I really feel about you. This isn't some stupid fling, or something I'm going to get over in a few weeks. You're the real deal. I don't know. I guess I'm just tryna say... And I know you've been out with Howard Stark, and I don't have much to offer you and you're clearly very out of my league, but I like you. A lot. Too much actually and it's terrifying. And staying away from you is getting harder and harder for me to do and I don't think it's something I want anymore." He swallowed a lump in his throat and said genuinely said, "I want you. Possibly more than anything in my entire life."

She was speechless, unable to process what he said. She couldn't believe that this was a conversation they were having at that moment. But like he said, they might not even make it out alive.

Lucy looked at him with soft eyes and he began speaking again, rambling nervously, "And I know the idea of marriage and spending the rest of your life with someone scares you. But I don't... uhh, what I'm trying to say..." he stuttered and scratched the back of his neck awkwardly, "I was always
scared of it too. But in that moment where you introduced me as your husband it didn't terrify me that much. In fact, I even liked it. Probably because you're all I can think about and I feel like I can tell you things I've never told anyone. And I have this strange urge to protect you always even though I know you can take care of yourself since you're the toughest broad I know." He chuckled at the thought. "But I miss you when you're not around. And seeing you is the best part of my day." He sighed and then continued softly. His hands going into his pockets as he said almost shly, "What can I say, doll? You're my best friend."

It was the first time besides Steve that Bucky ever told someone they were his best friend. And obviously, Lucy wasn't as close to him as Steve was, given they had known each other for years and grown up together. But Bucky felt something with her that he didn't with anyone else. Not only did he love her, but he knew their connection was something not everyone got to experience in life. They had a relationship like no other, and he was positive the universe was driving them towards each other. They were meant to be together; destined and fated to be. And there wasn't a doubt in Bucky Barnes' mind that Lucy Heinrich was his soulmate.

"Bucky," Lucy said breathlessly and he turned to her, expecting her to rush over to him and slam her mouth onto his. It was the perfect moment for them to do so. He had just admitted his feelings, and they were all alone and surrounded by a bunch of Nazis.

She moved forward and his heart nearly stopped beating. He took her face in his hands and was about to lean down and capture her mouth in a hot, desperate, passionate kiss. It would have reflected every ounce of desire, yearning, longing, lust, and love. A kiss that would have rivaled every other kiss in existence. One that not even famous lovers could have achieved. Romeo and Juliet, Cleopatra and Marc Antony, Paris and Helen, and Lancelot and Guinevere had nothing on them.

Bucky was finally moved downwards to take her in the most unbelievable kiss when Lucy reached forward and moved a book on the fireplace mantel.

He paused when he saw how the fireplace seemed to turn into itself and reveal a passageway. He looked at Lucy in shock and couldn't believe she had found it with such ease. Truly, she was the most incredible woman to ever walk the face of the earth.

She licked her lips before awkwardly saying with his hands still on her face, "I found the secret entrance." It was the only thing she could mutter and Lucy kicked herself for not waiting until after the kiss to reveal her find.

"God, you're so smart." Bucky breathed out in amazement, baffled by her. Once again, Bucky was realizing she was completely out of his league. He kissed her cheek lightly and with a smirk praised her, "Good job, sweetheart."

She smiled at his compliment and blushed ever so slightly. Lucy wanted to dwell and analyze everything he had just admitted to her but she knew she didn't have to time. So as they went into the secret passage way, Lucy noticed how they both drew their guns as they carefully walked in.

She whispered quietly back to Bucky with a grin, "Also," She licked her lips, "You're my best friend too." Lucy admitted without a doubt in her mind. She had never had a close friend before except Daniel, Charles, and Elsa. So the fact that she felt so close to Bucky after such a small amount of time was something new for her. She was oddly comfortable with him though, and trusted him more than anyone.

Bucky couldn't help but smile as Lucy admitted she felt the same. He didn't have much time to enjoy the feeling though, as immediately he was put on edge.
The contrast of Lucy having a gun in her hand while also in her beautiful gown was odd. Bucky also realized that besides the first night they met, he had never even seen her in a dress. He had become accustomed to seeing her in men's uniforms and jumpsuits.

Lucy's heart raced ever so slightly as they walked down the corridor. Her gun was at the ready and the safety was off. She suddenly felt as though it had been a very bad idea coming the castle and snooping around for something they weren't even sure was there.

Her blood turned cold when they heard someone rounded the corner and immediately Bucky pulled Lucy into an alcove. He pressed his body against hers to keep her hidden and once the person passed by they immediately relaxed.

"I'm starting to think this was a bad idea." Was all Bucky said.

"Yeah," Lucy agreed, in complete disbelief she had allowed him to come along like this. If anything happened to Bucky she would never forgive herself.

They walked in silence for awhile, not seeing another person. It wasn't until they reached a fork in the cavern that Lucy suddenly was confused. She looked at Bucky, and he seemed to understand what she was about to say.

Immediately, he shot back, answering, "No. Not gonna happen. We're not splitting up."

She knew splitting up would have been the best thing to do, but also Bucky was right. Splitting up would be more dangerous. "We stick together," He insisted as Lucy nodded.

They took the tunnel on the right, descending into it as her heart raced faster and faster.

Going right turned out to be a very large mistake. A very, very, large mistake. Because it led exactly to what Lucy was hoping for. As it turned out, the demonstration that Shmidt was hoping to show was a little behind schedule.

They were trying to still find a way to make whatever evil they were cooking up work.

And as Lucy and Bucky stood above in an overhanging room, they watched in horror.

A man was strapped to a table, large bindings keeping his arms and legs pinned down. He was shirtless, and only wearing a pair of pants. It looked as though he was almost ready for an operation, only he was fully conscious and looking as though he wasn't even a tad nervous.

"What do you mean you haven't made it work yet?" Shmidt demanded of a stubby little man with glasses in a lab coat. "I have donors upstairs waiting to see what we've done!"

"I'm sorry, but we haven't figured out a way to successfully pass the consciousness over." The man said nervously, taking off his glasses and cleaning them on his pristine white coat.

"Must I do everything myself!? All you have to do is read from the bloody scrolls!" The man lost his temper. But as he spoke Lucy's ears picked up, her jaw dropped open and suddenly her worst fear was realized.

"Oh my God," She whispered under her breath and hastily began looking around. Her eyes darted to several corners of the room, wondering and praying her suspicions on what they were doing was wrong.
"What?" Bucky asked quickly, worried about Lucy's tone.

"I think I know what—," Lucy was stopped short as her jaw dropped open. Fear raced through her body and she was immediately hit with the need to go down there guns blazing.

Being drug in at gunpoint was Dum Dum Dugan. His hands were up in surrender, and he had a bloody nose from where he was hit by a butt of a gun.

"Oh no," Bucky could only say, fear dripping from his voice. Seeing his friend taken prisoner made his blood boil. Suddenly, all he saw was red, and all he wanted was to help. But he knew he had a mission to do first, and his first priority was to keep Lucy safe.

The door behind them burst open and men were yelling in German. Lucy and Bucky both places their hands up in surrender, dropping their guns on the floor. Bucky's face was twisted in a scowl and his jaw was clenched. He wanted nothing more than to fight his way out of it but he knew the chances of them getting out alive were slim.

"Shit," Lucy whispered under her breath as the men's guns were trained on them. She flashed Bucky a look and suddenly he wished he had kissed her when he had the chance. They were going to die there, and he would never know what it felt like to really be with her.

He would never be able to tell her he loved her. That broke Bucky's heart more than anything. He would never be able to kiss her, to be with her, to have a family.

He flashed her a look as they began walking with the guards. Lucy looked back at him, her eyes wide with fear. He wanted to tell her everything would be okay. But Bucky already knew they were going to die.

"It'll be alright, Luce." He told her, trying to comfort her as they walked down. He wanted to grab her hand. To touch her, even just gently grazing her skin would have been enough. Bucky knew he was lying to her, and Lucy knew it too from the look that she gave him.

One of the German's yelled something at him that he didn't understand for speaking out of turn. He immediately tried to retort with a smart-ass comment which backfired instantly.

He was punched in the stomach, causing him to double over and groan in pain. Lucy yelled to stop, he heard the desperation in her voice as she screamed.

The man who punched him grabbed Lucy by the chin, and sneered at her. "Don't fucking touch her!" Bucky yelled before doubling over again and coughing. He was punched again, causing him to groan in pain once more.

"You would be wise to keep quite as well, Fräulein." He gripped her chin harshly, forcing her to look up at him as his fingers pressing hard enough to bruise her skin.

Lucy only spit in his face, getting it right in his eye. The man recoiled in disgust, and Bucky couldn't help but smile at her fiery temper.

"Go to hell!" Lucy hissed at him as he quickly wiped his eyes with his sleeve.

The man only sneered again before backhanding her harshly across the face. She gasped as her hand went to her stinging cheek. Her hair strewn about and falling out of the updo she had done. Meanwhile, the man had a sickening grin on his face. She said nothing though, only bit her cheek to keep herself from speaking again and getting hit once more.
"Oh, boy," Bucky could only cough more, trying to catch his breath from the heavy fist that had landed in his stomach, "I am so going to kill you for that." He looked at the man with despise. No one, and he meant no one, should ever hit a woman. Let alone his woman.

"Take them away," Was all the angry man commanded, looking at his two American prisoners in spite. Lucy was grabbed by the tops of her arms. They pulled her away from Bucky despite his protests. She was so much smaller than them that it didn't take much to yank her around and force her to go anywhere. Especially since she was clumsy in her heels.

Bucky swallowed as he saw how she was manhandled and pulled down to where Dugan was. All he wanted to do was hold her tightly to him and kiss her forehead and tell her everything was going to be okay.

He wanted to go back to them lying in the grass a few nights ago. He wanted to kiss her and claim her as his. He wanted to take her lips in the most hungry, passionate kiss of all time and show her what exactly she meant to him.

And as he looked over to the woman he wanted to spend the rest of his life with, Bucky was speechless. Fire burned in her eyes, and her jaw was clenched from the anger that was coursing through her.

But he was trying to memorize what she looked like. To see the little freckles on her nose, and the little flecks of green in her hazel eyes. He wanted to remember the way she had one stubborn curl that would always fall in front of her face.

He wanted to remember her laugh, and what her hand felt like while his was wrapped around it. He wanted to remember how it felt as she breathed softly next to him as she slept and what her body felt like enveloped by his own.

They were pulled out to the floor of the experimentation room. A German guard explained to Schmidt that they were found snooping around. Dugan's face fell as he saw them get pushed forward.

"Shit," He only shook his head, "Not you two as well."

"Sorry, Dum Dum." Bucky apologized, wondering if this was going to be the last few minutes alive. The man only shrugged and promised it was alright, giving him a sympathetic look. He didn't look pissed or scared to die. All three of them knew it was a very real possibility.

Schmidt only chuckled as he saw the three of them, "Now, this is interesting." Even his voice was sinister. Everything about him oozed evil. He moved like a snake, fluid and light. "What an odd gang of misfits this is," He particularly looked at Lucy, stopping to stare down at her.

She remained tall, her chin jutting out and her posture rigid. She wouldn't allow him to know how scared she was.

"I must say Dr. Heinrich, your beauty precedes you. All the stories, for once, seem to be true." Bucky didn't miss the way he glanced down at her breasts. He wanted to tell the man to back off looking at his future wife, but instead he only scowled in anger.

"How do you know me?" She was surprised, wondering how he could have possibly recognized her from her face alone.
"I've been following your work for some time. You may recall I even attempted to recruit your fiancé, Dr. Rehal, to do some work for me. Pity he refused. I'm sure that something could have been arranged before he made the trip to Auschwitz." He lifted her silver Star of David pendant out from between her breasts. Bucky wanted nothing more than to punch him directly in the jaw.

Lucy only scowled and then sneered, "He would have rather died than work for scum like you!"

The man only smirked, "You have spirit. I will give you that." He walked away smugly, his hands clasped behind him. "And I must admit that without you," His hands gestured out he motioned to the entirety of the room, "None of this would have been possible."

Lucy frowned, her eyes darting to the man who was looking curiously down from where he was strapped to the table. She was confused and obviously more than perplexed, wondering how exactly she directly played a role in all this.

"I think all your crazy is going to your brain. Because I've never done anything like this." She scoffed and Bucky looked at the wheels turning in her head.

"Really? Are you so sure?" The man smiled evilly and gestured to a glass box. It stood in front of everything and to Bucky it looked like a weird vase with a dog head attached to it.

Lucy seemed to know what it was. He had never seen her so mad before, and all she could do while keeping her eyes glued to the artifact was growl.

"That's my goddamn canopic jar."

It had been the same one she had stolen in Egypt. The one she was trying to keep out of the hands of the Nazi's. Apparently, she risked her life and was shot for no reason. Since they ended up getting it anyway after she had secured it. That meant they either had a spy in the army who procured it for them, or they ambushed the transportation that was intended to take the jar and scrolls back to London.

"Very, very good." Schmidt did a slow, mocking clap. He watched as Lucy slowly began to piece it all together. Her eyes fell to the ancient scrolls she helped procure while on that trip. Her gaze flashed to the man who was strapped to the table and her mouth fell open.

"You son of a bitch," Was all she hissed once she realized what was happening.

He began to cackle as Dugan and Bucky looked around confused, still wondering what was going on long after Lucy had figured it out.

"Dr. Heinrich your brilliant comrades are looking a little lost. Perhaps you wish to educate them on what is happening? That way before they die they can at least have some clarity. But please make it fast, we have to get a move on so we can finally show all our generous donors upstairs what their money has bought."

At his words, Lucy realized what she had done. None of this would have happened if it weren't for her digging up that stupid jar. She looked to Bucky with tears welling in her eyes. A single one fell down her cheek and his heart broke. "I'm so sorry," Was all she could muster to him.

Bucky wasn't held back by any of the soldier's so he moved toward her on instinct. He took her face in his hands despite yelling at them to keep away. He kissed her forehead, pressing his lips against her skin as her eyes fluttered at the contact. His thumb brushed her tear away as he comforted her, "S'alright, sweetheart. It's not your fault." He wanted to tell her more. To comfort her, to admit his feelings. But he couldn't.
Bucky was suddenly yanked away from her and Lucy choked out a sob. Bucky swallowed a lump in his throat as he looked at her, hoping to God that the last image he saw of Lucy didn't involve her in tears.

"Touching." Was all Schmidt cackled. He moved forward to Bucky and peered at him with harsh eyes. It was almost as though he was trying to see into his soul. "But useless. You're all going to die because of her."

"I'm so sorry," Lucy whispered again, closing her eyes to keep herself from crying more.

"Someone has five seconds to explain why a man is strapped to a table." Dugan snarled, "And what the hell that weird dog vase has to do with it."

Schmidt looked to Lucy and smiled at her, gesturing with his hand, "Would you like to do the honours, Doctor? Or shall I?"

"It's called a canopic jar. I found it in Egypt while I was over there. It belonged to the death priests of Anubis. They thought it had supernatural powers to immortalize someone's soul and give them inhuman powers." She explained simply, not wanting to waste her breath even more.

"Ahhh, and all because of you and your brilliant work I found a way to make it all happen! Using an energy source that we found here in Norway, I have discovered a way to transfer over a human soul into another realm and replace it. Because of you, we may have just found a way to make man God."

"Don't do this," She pleaded, closing her eyes and shaking her head, "You have no idea what you're doing."

"I know exactly what I'm doing. And one the transformation is complete, there will be a sacrifice. Something from each of you for the host body… Eyes, heart, brain… Any organ necessary."

"Wait, hold up," Dugan looked confused and held up his hands. His expression was more than perplexed and he was having a hard time keeping up. "So, you're telling me that this guy is going to be taking body parts from each of us for himself?"

No one answered. But Dugan seemed to catch on, and Bucky swallowed nervously as he thought about his eyes getting plucked out of his sockets.

"Holy crap," Dugan whispered, shocked. He looked to Bucky and Lucy, and lastly at his own hands and then the man who would inherit all their features, "He'll be gorgeous."

Schmidt only smirked, his evil sideways grin growing. His black HYDRA uniform made him look even more sinister and Lucy suddenly was trying to figure out a way to get out alive.

"May I just say something?" Dugan smirked as he looked between him and Bucky, "I don't know exactly what exact organs you're going to be taking. But on the topic of manhood, I would say that out of mine and Buck's here, you'd do much better to have his. It's HUGE." He faked, not wanting to have his member removed after his death.

"Hey!" Bucky yelled at Dugan and covered his groin area with his hands to protect it, "What the hell? No, it's not! It's so small, you're much better off taking his!"

Lucy snorted at their bickering. Bucky continued to defend himself and Dugan insisted on not it begin large as Bucky argued. However, after he insisted how small it was Bucky turned to Lucy who looked at him with a cocked eyebrow. Her eyes glanced to the front of his uniform slacks, trying to figure out for herself if he was being serious. Bucky turned to Lucy and with a reassuring
shake of his head, assured her he was only lying to protect himself. She barked out a small chuckle
and she blushed as she thought about it. Despite the tension in the room, she still found it appropriate
to laugh at a penis joke.

"Enough!" Shmidt yelled clearly fed up. "I'll have him take both of yours as long as it gets you to
shut up!"

"Wow, now he's going to be even more gorgeous! Great! Looking like the three of us with two
massive schlongs? You're just trying to create the perfect specimen, aren't you?" Dugan was clearly
trying to distract him and buy time. He was being funny because it was his last few moments of
likely being alive.

Schmidt groaned and rolled his eyes, "Dear God, American's are so annoying," He was getting fed
up with all that was happening, and clearly caught on that they were only bickering to buy a few
more minutes, "I'm afraid we'll have to cut the rest of our interaction short." The man said as he
suddenly nodded at one of the scientists who began to hit switches on a board and begin hitting
buttons. "So sorry we have to part ways like this, Doctor."

A translator began to read the scroll that Lucy had found, translating the guttural ancient language.
She and Bucky began to look for a way to get out. They searched everywhere, trying to figure out
how to escape with their lives.

As the energy source began to build, the man started screaming as the canopic jar suddenly had black
material come out of it in its glass case it was in, tube attached to it going into the man's body.

Things were going too fast, and Shmidt looked on his creation in satisfaction as Lucy looked at it in
horror. She never believed people would be able to accomplish anything like this, and now she saw
how wrong she was. She should have destroyed it when she had the chance. She was a fool for
thinking that she could ever stop the artifacts from getting into the wrong hands.

Suddenly the power in the entire lab went out and there was darkness. It took only a few moments of
yelling and confusion to get the lights back on. German yelling was sounded throughout the room,
and when the light came back on Lucy gasped when she saw the man on the table.

His eyes were completely black voids and weeping what only can be described as a tar-like
substance. He was writing in pain and Schmidt looked at his creation in wonder and awe.

"Behold," He gestured to the man and said with a raspy, gratified tone, "Immortality!" He was a
complete madman, anyone with two eyes could see it.

Dugan only cocked his head as he looked at the scene in front of him, "Huh," He said, almost
amused. "Woulda look at that."

Lucy wished there had only been silence. Because she was still struggling to process everything that
was happening.

"Your sacrifices," Schmidt said with a little too much happiness. No doubt that this was only a test
run, and he himself would take on immortality as well. "The ritual is almost complete. Now claim
your victims."

With an inhuman voice, which sounded deep and guttural as though it had come from the depths of
hell, "Is this intended to be an insult?"

He broke out of his restraints as though they were made of paper. He stepped down from the table
and looked at his offerings as though they were nothing more than scum. "They reek of the sins they
have committed."

"That's uncalled for," Bucky only retorted, not thinking that any of them really smelled that badly.

"I can feel their sadness, their heart ache, their lies and treachery. I can feel the selfishness and and the self absorbed notions. Their stench of rotting souls is disgusting. The blood on their hands is revolting, and you think that these are the most suitable for me? You bring me the world's greatest sinners instead of one who is pure of soul?"

"They're not perfect but are you sure they won't do?" Schmidt was taken back.

"They are so human that their very essence burns me! This one!" He points to Lucy accusingly. "Is so unbearably human it brings me disgust. The need for validation is almost sickly. The constant fear of not being good enough is almost too painful. And the sadness and heartbreak that courses through makes for weakness."

"And you!" The man turns to Bucky and he almost recoils back in fear. "So much death surrounds you. No doubt, the bodies will only pile up. And I can smell the way your blood boils for the female. The way your pheromones suggest you wish to mate with her causes more than disgust to well inside me."

Bucky only huffed as he looked down in defeated frustrations and blushed. Lucy looked over curiously at him after hearing how he wished to 'mate' with her. He only shook his head before looking over at the monster in disbelief. "Come on, pal." He gestured, confused. "Really?" Was it necessary to call him out like that?

"And the last one," He sneered. He looked Dugan up down but the man only smiled, not even looking scared for a moment. He only looked at him in revolt and then scoffed, not even bothering to reveal his biggest and darkest secret.

"Wait, none of me? Well, that's not fair!" Dugan complained, "I was hoping you'd point out all my daddy issues!" He joked.

Schmidt looked confused at the fact that he wanted none of his tributes. "Would someone better suit you? A child, perhaps?" He asked.

"Possibly. One who hasn't been tainted by the sad existence of being human. One more pure." Was all he replied and Lucy winced as he suggested how sad and pathetic they all were. Even if it was true, he didn't have to say it that way.

"Very well. We shall have these ones shot then," Was all Shmidt said before nodding at one of the soldiers who pulled a gun off their shoulder and readied it. The man aimed it at Bucky and immediately he put his hands up.

"Wait, hold up fellas let's talk about this." He insisted nervously.

"Any last words?" Schmidt granted them the final moments of their lives.

Bucky put his hands down in that moment and turned to Lucy. She was already looking at him with tears in her eyes once again. Bucky swallowed a lump in his throat as he stared at her for the final time.

He was so in love with her that it pained it. He wished that they only had more time together. He would never ask for anything again if he was given one last chance to hold her.
He looked at the beautiful woman he held so much affection for. It hurt to think that they would never have a family together and their story was once again over before it even started.

"Lucy," Bucky licked his lips as he said her name, he knew it was the last time he would ever say it. Bucky's heart raced. He wanted to picture her exactly how she was. If he was going to die, he was glad his last moments were with her. With her bloodshot, red eyes from crying. She was looking at him the same way he was looking at her. She had a small smile on her face, suggesting she was glad she was there with him. Bucky knew he wouldn't have changed the last few days they had for the world.

And as he was in his final moments he didn't think of anything. Not his home, or his family. His mom, dad, or sisters. Not of Steve. Not of any of his past lover's or their faces whom he couldn't even remember if he tried.

There was only her. Lucy Heinrich. She was a fire of a woman. A spark. A light in the darkness for him, and the love he had for her burned so brightly that it hurt. He took her in in her entirety. Wanting his last thing he saw to be her. He didn't care that he was going to die. There was only her…

"I love you." Was all he said; his final words.

Lucy's mouth dropped in that moment and she breathed out, confused, "What?"

It was then Bucky slammed his foot into one of the tubes. Hot steam came out of it rapidly, creating enough of a distraction for them to take cover as suddenly they were being shot at.

Bullets pinged off of the equipment behind them as all three of them scattered. Bucky had been hoping for a much better reaction than 'what?' from her but it would have to do for now.

Schmidt screamed at his men to stop shooting, worried they would destroy all the expensive equipment. Lucy, Bucky, and Dugan took it as an opportunity to run towards an exit.

Immediately Lucy dropped her shoes and was running barefoot through a corridor. The guys were hot on her trail, but she didn't check to see if they were still behind her completely. Her heart was pounding so hard in her chest she was sure it would jump out.

"You love me?!!" Lucy yelled behind her, her voice carrying as she called back to Bucky. The shock was evident in her tone, confusion dripping from her words.

"I thought we were going to die, alright! Unless—?" Bucky remained hopeful. He knew it was a long shot she loved him back, but he could dream. Lucy cut him off before he could finish his sentence.

"We'll see!" She smirked as she kept running. Not bothering to look back in case it slowed her down.

"Can you two stop it! We're getting fucking shot at!" Dugan was forever the voice of reason.

Breathlessly, she went forward and tried not to dwell too much further on Bucky's admittance of being in love with her. There was no possible way he could have actually been, right? He barely knew her, and it took Lucy forever to finally admit that she was in love with Daniel.

But perhaps after some time she could reciprocate his feelings back? Lucy wanted to, more than anything. There was no doubt that she was falling for him, but she just wasn't there yet. But what she did know was that if she could wake up with him beside her every day for the rest of her life she
would be happy. All she needed was him, and that was good enough for her.

Her happy thoughts were quickly interrupted by more pressing matters at hand. Like the fact that they were being shot at by Nazis. Lucy continued running, not worrying about either Dugan and Bucky because she knew they could handle themselves. The fact she was in an evening gown didn't slow her down, and she continued on regardless.

It wasn't until she crashed into a large, muscular body and was sent flying back that she finally stopped. Her head hit the ground and she felt dizzy.

The man had also toppled over under the impact of her slamming into him at breakneck speed. She brought her hand to her head to keep it from pounding as both she and the large, intimidating, solid mass of man shuffled to get to their feet.

The man's hand was suddenly on his hip holster, getting ready to grab his gun to shoot her. When suddenly Lucy heard a maddening yell and Bucky came out of nowhere and tackled the man to the ground. The two men went flying, hitting the floor roughly.

"That's my girlfriend, you Nazi bastard!" Bucky yelled as he got to his feet and kicked him hard in the face. Blood poured from the man's nose as he yelled in pain under the impact.

Lucy looked at Bucky in shock, yet again with an open mouth. She would never understand why men believed women to be the complicated ones.

"I mean," Bucky looked at her, his chest heaving with his heavy breath and he shrugged, "Unless you don't want to? I did just tell you I loved you so—,"

"Yes! Okay! We can discuss this later! Let's just go!" She landed another kick to the man on the ground. That time to his groin where he then howled in pain. The man was on the floor writhing and Bucky watched Lucy in admiration, but also a little bit of fear.

"You're my dream girl," Was all Bucky said as he stared at her in awe after she landed a kick hard enough that the man's grandchildren would feel it.

"Really?" Her expression softened and she cooed, her insides melting just a little bit at his sweet confessions. She only wished they had enough time to revel in them.

"For fuck's sake you two!" Dugan yelled frustratedly before gunfire once again rang out. Lucy ducked as bullets ricocheted off the cement walls. She ran to the hall on the left, not realizing until too late that she had lost both Dugan and Bucky in the confusion and panic.

She had no choice but to keep running. Her feet barely touching the ground each time they hit it. She rolled her eyes, realizing the familiarity of the situation. It was almost exactly like Egypt. The chase, the gun shots, the keeping artifacts out of the hands on Nazis. And now, she had separated from Bucky and Dugan much like she did with Charles when they had been perused.

Exactly like Egypt, was all she thought. Piece of cake.
Oh boy, that was intense. I hope you all enjoyed reading that chapter. It was fun to write for sure. I absolutely adore writing Dugan. He's just the comic relief needed lol. And how much do you hate me for Bucky admitting he loved Lucy like that? Never fear though! There will be a much fluffier, less suspenseful scene later on!

And, you'll never guess what I did! I finally wrote their kissing scene! And ugh it is *chefs kiss* perfection! I gotta say it's some of my strongest writing. When it will be posted I will never tell you, but it's very, very close ;) Sorry about the slow burn. The wait is worth it, I promise.

Please review, if I get enough I might think to throw in a shirtless Bucky in the next chapter. I know you all love it. Also, I count on them to boost my ego and this is narcissism at its peak.

Follow and favourite for the next update!

I love you all dearly,

-A
Chapter XXVII

Chapter Notes

Happy Friday, friends! Thank you so much for your kind words on the last chapter. I don't think you guys know what it means to me that you're loving this story so much.

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy, lovelies! :))

Trigger Warning: There are some adult themes in this chapter near the end. This chapter is rated 18+/M. There's also some violence and graphic scenes.

Also, majorly badass Lucy and shirtless Bucky up ahead. I am not responsible for any cheering/heart attacks/swooning. Don't say I didn't warn you. ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter XXVII

Bucky didn't know how much he was panicking until he lost Lucy. She must have gotten separated from him during the confusion after he had tackled the Nazi she had run into. Things had moved much too fast and he wasn't even sure what all happened. Everything was a blur, and Bucky was still in disbelief from watching a man become possessed by some ancient spirit.

In a fit of adrenaline, he accidentally called Lucy his girlfriend. However, she didn't necessarily say no to it. Instead, she very hastily said yes and said they would discuss the matter later. If he was being honest with himself, he didn't even know he was saying it until it was far too late. But he really didn't mind.

She was the dame he wanted to spend the rest of his life with. What did it matter if he accidentally let it slip out that he thought of her as his girlfriend? She didn't seem as freaked out by it as he would have thought. Bucky considered that a win in his books. And if she ended up changing her mind after the moment was up, he would continue to try to win her over no matter what. After all, he had just tackled a very, very large man in order to protect her. There wasn't much he wouldn't do for Lucy at that point.

Worry coursed through him as he wondered if she was safe. He knew she could hold her own in a fight, but they were also in a secret Nazi lair and were remarkably outgunned. But if anyone could get out of there alive, it was Lucy Heinrich. She was smart, strong, and resourceful. Plus, he knew that she could throw a half-decent punch if she needed to. And if she got her hands on a gun he knew she was capable of shooting it. He was, of course, was the one who had taught her how. And she was pretty damn good at it.

Since meeting her, Bucky had done things he never expected he would ever do in his life. He joined the army— Of course, he was drafted, something he would never tell Steve or Lucy. He became a Sergeant, lead his own team, went on his first plane, jumped out of the said plane, impersonated a Nazi, fell in love, and saw some type of supernatural voodoo stuff.
He came a long way from having no future back in Brooklyn. Just working at the Lee's Steel Mill and doing the everyday mundane tasks would not have been enough for him. Sure, he would have had a nice cushy life. A regular apartment, decent pay, and there wouldn't have been anyone shooting at him; which was a bonus. He would have found a nice gal, settled down, and had a family.

But now things were different, and Bucky didn't want that. He knew he was intended to be a soldier all along, just like his dad. And he didn't want to go back to Brooklyn anymore and just settle for ordinary. Because Lucy's life was anything but that. She wasn't just a 'nice gal'. She was the gal. She was a doctor, for fuck's sake! She traveled the world and taught at prestigious universities. She wasn't a housewife or someone that Bucky could keep on a leash. And he didn't want that anymore. He'd go and do whatever she wanted. He didn't want to settle, he wanted her. And wherever life took her after the war, Bucky wanted to be there.

She was, in every sort of way, more remarkable than him. She was a dame that came around as often as Hailey's Comet. And he was positive he would never find anyone like her ever again. He just hoped they would all make it out of there alive. Because if he was being honest with himself, their odds weren't that great.

Bucky continued running through the corridors, wondering how exactly they got into the secret lair to begin with, and where the exit was. He wished that the layout was a little more simple to navigate, but it wasn't like they would just have maps all over the place saying how to escape.

Bucky made a quick turn down a hall that looked familiar. He immediately regretted it after something slammed into him. He fell to the ground, coughing madly from the impact that hit his chest. The wind was completely knocked out of him after feeling as though he was hit by a tank.

On the ground and struggling to breathe, he looked up to see the terrifying sight of the man who had been previously strapped to the table. After the experiment, he seemed to gain some form of inhuman strength and Bucky knew his chest would have a nasty bruise afterward.

"Fuck," Was all he muttered as he stumbled to his feet.

The man sneered at Bucky, an evil expression on his face. His dark eyes stared down unnerving at him. Bucky sighed as he realized the man was in a stance suggesting they were going to fight. He had been in multiple fights during his life, mostly due to Steve not able to control his sassy mouth. But never before had he fought a man that intimidating and that large.

Bucky rolled up his sleeves, readying himself as the man only chuckled. Dugan arrived behind him and stopped in his tracks as he watched Bucky about to take on the behemoth of a man.

"You gonna help?" Bucky looked at the red-headed man in wonder, hoping for some backup.

"Hell no, I like my face as it is," Dugan looked scared, knowing it would only take a few hits for it to be fatal.

Bucky sighed as he raised his fists in defense. The man only sneered yet again, stating in his demonic, low voice, "Pathetic," He practically spat out.

Bucky knew he stood no chance. There was no way he was going to win. Dugan readied himself but was a little more hesitant to get pummeled.

"Come on," Bucky urged through gritted teeth. He knew this was going to sting.

Yet again, his foe chuckled before taking a slow swing at Bucky. His fist collided with the wall...
behind him and the cement broke off, shattering into little tiny pieces.

Bucky looked up with fear, realizing he made a massive mistake. He should have just run while he had the chance. "Holy shit," He whispered with wide eyes full of worry.

It was too late now. There was no other choice he had. Bucky swung with all his might and his fist hit that man directly in the face. Usually, it would have been enough to at least knock someone down. But the man didn't even flinch and Bucky yet again was shocked and terrified.

A low chuckle was heard once more. The man swung a little faster than before. He hit Bucky hard in the ribs and he was positive he heard a crack. Bucky groaned in pain and once again had a hard time breathing. He felt as if all the air was knocked out of his lungs, and he couldn't take in oxygen even if he tried. Gasping for breath and hunched over, the man slammed his elbow into Bucky's back and immediately he fell to the ground on his knees.

His breath came out in crackles, and he was positive there was likely some internal damage going on. Dugan let out a maddening yell as he swung, missing and then getting hit in the face. He fell back, dazed and likely seeing small birds chirping around his head.

"Humans," The man only scoffed, looking down as though they were insects, "So easily broken. So easily crushed like insects."

Bucky got up once more. Breathing heavily, he almost fell over from the pain. But he was taught to always get back up. If a scrawny kid from Brooklyn could take a beating and continue fighting, he could too.

Clenching his jaw together and trying to stand upright, his fists raised again. He breathed heavily, trying to control the pain that was flooding his body. He was seeing double, and he was positive he would fall over if he continued to stand for too much longer.

"I'm going to enjoy putting you out of your miserable existence," The evil man sneered, looking like a dog ready to attack.

"I can do this all damn day." God, he sounded exactly like Steve. He even gestured at the man to come forward, ready to take another hit. Dugan tried to get up again but struggled even more than Bucky did after taking a hard blow to the face.

Just as the man came forward with a sneer that could rival the devil's, he grabbed Bucky by the collar of the shirt. He couldn't break the iron-like hold, and a fist was slammed down with all his might.

Pain exploded in Bucky and he almost saw stars. He would have almost collapsed to the ground if his enemy hadn't been holding him upright. Bucky prepared for another devastating blow, not even sure if he could take it when a feminine voice rang out.

"Hey asshole!" Lucy got his attention, and both of them turned. She stood there in her red evening gown, looking ethereal. But what caught Bucky's attention was the raised shotgun in her hand. The noise of it being pumped filled the air; the metallic sound of a cha-chink.

She blew the man's head right off his shoulders.

Blood exploded in Bucky's face. He pushed the body with the caved-in cavern for a head off of him, seeing how red painted the wall behind them. Bucky tried his best to wipe the blood off his face, hoping he didn't get any in his mouth.

The man may have had supernatural powers, but apparently, a bullet to the head would do the trick.
Bucky tried not to be sick at the warmth of the red liquid spattered all over his skin. He cringed as the body fell to the floor, an empty spot where his head once was.

"Oh, thank god!" Dugan struggled to stand as did Bucky, "I thought we were toast!"

Bucky looked at Lucy and let out a breath of relief. She was breathing heavily from the rush of adrenaline and looking at him with a fairly concerned expression. "Thanks, doll." He wasn't sure what would have happened if she hadn't been there with a weapon. How she got her hands on a gun was a mystery to him. But he was glad she did.

"Don't mention it," Was all she replied with a then passed him the gun, knowing he had better aim with it.

"Where'd you find this thing anyway?" Bucky asked curiously. They couldn't have just had it lying around.

"They just had it lying around." Oh. It appeared he was wrong. He shot her a look of confusion and Lucy chuckled. "I found the armory and knocked out a guard to get it." She corrected herself and then gestured for them to come as Lucy looked nervously down one of the halls were lots of commotion was coming from. It was evident that they had been found, "Come on, I know how to get out of here!"

The voices of their pursuers only grew as they approached closer. The three of them took off again in a run. Bucky quickly realized that they were going the same way that they had come in. "Wait, wait, wait!" He slowed as something dawned on him.

Lucy gave him a pressing look, urging him to continue. "We have to destroy that thing that you found!" He reasoned, knowing that if they left Lucy's artifact behind it would only be used to make more superhuman people. "That stupid dog jar!" He couldn't remember what she had called it, but he knew it was important to destroy.

"Oh, I wouldn't worry about that," She convinced him as they kept moving, "I doubled back after the armory and planted a bomb. It'll go off in about a minute and a half so I suggest we get as far away from here as possible."

"I second that idea," Dugan agreed, not wanting to be too close when the explosions went off.

It didn't take long for them to emerge out of the caverns and return to the grand room in which they found the secret entrance in. The fact that Lucy had found the exit so quickly, as well as the armoury, showed Bucky that she was much more skilled than she let on. No doubt her sense of direction had gotten so good due to a large amount of cave spelunking she did while trying to find artifacts. She never failed to impress him. He was constantly in awe of her.

Lucy was stopped as soon as she rounded the corner to get to the main room. Bullets shot out, nearly hitting her as the wall beside her exploded from the bullets hitting it. Lucy was suddenly back and taking cover. She was breathing heavily and immediately Bucky was searching her body for any sign she was hit. Fear coursed through him, but miraculously, she was unharmed.

"Hold on," He knew his turn was up. He dropped to his knee and raised his gun as he was far enough from the corner to fire safely while still taking cover. His one eye remained closed as he aimed carefully. Luckily, he was known for being an incredible marksman. Bucky fired at the first person he saw with a raised gun.

Quickly he cocked the gun again, the bullet audibly released from the chamber. He fired again, and
again, and again until bodies were littered on the floor. He stood up once the coast was clear and
looked back at Dugan and then Lucy.

"We're good," Was all he said breathlessly, the adrenaline coursing through his veins.

They took off again, running as quickly as they could for the doors. As soon as they reached the top
of the stairs of the entrance, the explosion went off. The impact hit Bucky hard in the chest. A loud
boom echoed in his ears as tons of the stone foundation of the castle was being thrown. The next
thing he knew Bucky was falling down the stairs.

He tumbled down, hitting the marble steps along with Lucy and Dugan. By the time they had finally
reached the bottom, Bucky's eyes were fuzzy and he attempted to stand up. Seeing double, he tried
to aim his gun at men who were taking cover. However, he couldn't make a shot to save his life and
he knew he had a limited amount of bullets remaining.

He stood to his feet as he saw Lucy still on the ground. Her hair had completely fallen out of the
sophisticated and elegant updo it had previously been in. She was attempting to get herself up,
struggling to get on her hands and knees. She had hit her head pretty badly on the way down.

She stood up, staggering side to side as she looked around and wiped some blood off her face with
the back of her hand. Bullets began hitting the ground beside them and they immediately were trying
to take cover yet again. They raced around the castle to the side, knowing they were going to have to
find a vehicle or something that could get them out of there fast if they wanted to live.

Lucy spotted three motorcycles and could believe her luck. "Look, over there!" She yelled over the
insistent firing going on behind them.

Bucky and Dugan followed her. They were running as fast as they could, but Lucy being faster than
them both of them reached the motorcycles first. She hopped on, swinging her leg over the seat, her
red dress now torn and dirty. "Get in!" She yelled at Bucky as he realized there was a sidecar
attached to her motorcycle. Her foot slammed down on the pedal and the engine roared to life.

Bucky looked at the sidecar, "Ohhh, no! I'm not gettin' in that thing like I'm some sort of sidekick!"
He looked at the vehicle as if it personally offended him.

Lucy groaned in annoyance, "We don't have time for this! Just get in!" Her eyes rolled at his fragile
masculinity.

"Fine!" Bucky snapped back, swinging his gun off his shoulder. He pointed an accusing finger at
her, "But I am not a sidekick!"

"Stop being a baby! You're a better shot than me and you can't drive and fire at the same time!" She
scolded harshly, looking at him like it was the most obvious thing in the world.

Bucky climbed in and Lucy took off. The sidecar was intended for someone much smaller than him,
and he felt his legs cramped up. But it didn't stop him from focusing on his targets who were gaining
on them.

Lucy seemed shockingly good at driving a motorcycle. He wondered when she would have driven
one before, and in between shots he paused to ask her where she learned to drive like that. She could
barely hear him over the wind whipping past her face and the growl of the engine.

"I watched someone drive one once and figured it would be easy!" She yelled back, seeming
confident that's all it took to commandeer a Nazi motorcycle.
Where the hell did the army find this woman? Bucky was positive if they had more people like her, the war would have already been won.

Bucky shot again, just missing one of their perusers. He cursed under his breath and the sound of his bullet being released echoed. It hit their enemy directly in the chest and he was thrown from his motorcycle. The empty vehicle crashed into a tree behind them and exploded into flames.

Bucky chuckled as he sat back down into the sidecar as the flames kept those who were attempting to follow them at bay. He was relieved to find Dugan unharmed right behind them. His adrenaline was pumping so hard he felt his hands shaking. He couldn't believe that they had gotten out of there alive. And if he was being honest, a large part of it was because of Lucy. Without her, the mission not only would have been a failure but they would have been dead. Of course, they never ended up getting the Tesseract. But at least they stopped another potentially devastating disaster.

They kept driving until they were well beyond the reach of any enemies. Lucy came to a stop at the next clearing they found. Bucky looked at her as she shook from holding the steering handles too tightly. He had to pry her hands off the handles, coaxing her gently to let go.

"I can't," Was all she said as she shook. She had given absolutely no indication before that she had been scared. Bucky himself had been terrified, but he knew he couldn't show it just like she knew also.

"I got you, sweetheart." Was all Bucky said as he took her hands, prying each finger off. He kissed them after he freed them from the harsh grasp she had.

"Doctor, I gotta tell you." Dugan said with a half-smile as he stopped beside them, "That really was somethin'."

She chuckled, shaking her head, "It was nothing." A blush appeared on her face from the compliment.

"You saved our asses, definitely not nothing." Dugan clicked, "You're the craziest dame I've ever met. And now because of you, Colonel Phillips won't be having to write any letters home for us."

"Yeah well," Lucy shrugged, "I just kept thinking of my sisters getting one of those letters or my adoptive parents. Couldn't let anyone's family go through that pain." She knew how much it hurt to get the news that a loved one was dead.

Bucky looked at her and realized she was the reason why his mom wouldn't be getting one of those letters either. He couldn't wait to tell her about the woman who would be her daughter-in-law, and how she saved his ass more than once. Bucky couldn't help but be in awe of Lucy. He looked at her and saw as she got off the motorcycle to stretch. She was still trying to catch her breath from the intensity of the adrenaline rush.

Noticing she had a snag in her dress, Lucy looked down and grabbed the fabric. She ripped it right above the knee. The tearing of the material got Bucky's attention and Lucy's leg was exposed to the cold air.

He couldn't help but be drawn in by her soft white thighs. He wanted them wrapped around him so desperately. Or to be placed over his shoulders as he spent so long between her legs that he could hardly breathe by the end of it all.

The sight of Lucy's exposed skin caught him a little off guard. But he quickly got himself together and then stood up to stretch. He hadn't noticed that his hands had been shaking as well. He put the
gun down and looked on at his team. They were all pretty shaken up. They were alive though, and they had Lucy to thank for that. Undoubtedly, they would have never even made it to Tonsberg in the first place if it wasn't for her.

She looked at Bucky and then sighed. She should have been happy that even though they couldn't find the Tesseract they had destroyed the canopic jar.

"You okay, pige?" Was all Bucky could ask.

She met his gaze before lowly saying, "I just want to get out of here. Go home. Or anywhere, back to Italy even."

He touched her shoulder gently, gripping it before pursuing his lips and saying "Me too."

But of course, there was still the issue of how exactly they were going to get to Italy. After all, they hadn't planned that far. And now they were in a bit of a predicament. But they would find a way. He was sure of that much. There was no way they were getting stuck there. He looked over to Lucy, who seemed disheartened by the fact that even though they succeeded in destroying the canopic jar she hadn't found the Tesseract.

As they got back on the motorcycles, she didn't even protest when Bucky sat on the actual one instead of the sidecar.

"Hey," He said softly, getting her attention. Lucy looked up at him with wide eyes that looked defeated. "We did our best."

"Our best wasn't good enough," Was all she replied with. She looked down at her hands, which she picked at a bloody hangnail. She was tearing at the skin nervously, and then spoke up quietly, "What if people die because I failed?"

"You didn't fail. You were the one who made us go to the castle. You found the lair. You killed that hybrid monster-man. You did not fail. If anything, we failed you for not getting you to the Tesseract on time."

"No, you didn't," She shook her head, "I didn't even find out the location in time. I wasn't smart enough. And now people are going to die."

Bucky gripped her hand tightly. He gave it a reassuring squeeze and then told her, "We'll cross that bridge when we get to it. But you didn't fail, Doc. We'll figure it out together."

She looked at him, pursed her lips in a small smile and then nodded.

When they arrived at the rendezvous point for their team they were slightly shocked to see all three of them alive. They had placed bets on who would get out of there. And of course, Gilbert Whitney thought Lucy would be the first one to go.

When Bucky heard that, he clenched his jaw and tried to keep his voice even as he explained the only reason they were both still alive was because of her.

Lucy was still in disbelief that he loved her. She was positive it was infatuation at best. After all, they were still practically strangers. But she was willing to try a relationship in secret for a little while at least. Although, they still had to discuss it a little more.

They had avoided talking about it. As Gabe Jones told them of an abandoned farmhouse they had
been camping out at, Lucy and Bucky didn't speak to each other the entire time.

Although, they did exchange a couple looks. She didn't know where they stood, and she was confused. Each time their eyes met her heart raced a little more.

All she wanted to do was take his hand in hers and walk alongside him. Just like they had the other night after laying in the field. But she knew she couldn't. She also didn't know if his feelings were the result of him thinking he was going to die. Did he actually love her? Or was he only saying that?

Either way, it would be a conversation for later.

When they arrived at the farmhouse that her team had secured, Lucy noticed how quaint it was. It was in an abandoned town. No one seemed to be nearby for miles due to the war. And when they broke into the house, it looked as if no one had been there for weeks.

Everyone had their guns raised but Lucy. She knew judging by the dust that the place was completely empty. There was a sadness about the place, and as she looked at the family portraits on the wall she wondered if any of the people who used to live there were still alive.

Suddenly, she heard a large explosion off to the distance. It rattled the wall hangings and knocked down some of the China kept in a cabinet off to the side. The pitter-patter of bullets could be heard ever so slightly and Lucy raised her eyebrows.

"We think they're insurgents, but we can't be sure," Gabe explained to her. She nodded but didn't say anything, she just kept looking around as then men were busy rifling through the family's items they left behind.

As Lucy opened the door to the basement, she realized it was a cellar. She headed down the stairs by herself, not caring about what awaited her in the dark. To her pleasant surprise, she nearly laughed as she saw all the wine bottles in wooden boxes stacked up on top of each other. Lucy grabbed a bottle and opened it as quickly as she could.

She took a swig and almost winced at the bitter taste of it on her tongue. After a few more sips, she got used to the taste and found herself enjoying it.

She grabbed as many bottles in her hands as she could and brought them up to share with her men.

"What treasures do you have there?" Dugan looked on at the dark bottles with a hungry stare.

"Here," She passed him his own with a smile, "You deserve this."

"After the shit day we've had," He sighed and nodded, "I couldn't agree more with ya, Doc."

She took another swig from the bottle as he did the same. He also winced at the bitterness, probably from it being homemade. "Not a bourbon but it'll do," He said and then gestured with his chin to the upstairs, "There's a single bedroom for you. Figured since you're the only lady you should have it,"

"Thank you," Was all she could say. The thought of sleeping in an actual bed was an appealing one. Although Lucy had been sleeping on the ground and cots for months. She didn't think she even remembered what it was like to sleep in a bed.

"I uhhh, took the liberty to check the room first." He continued, pausing to take another drink, "There's a couple pretty dresses hanging in the closet up there. Thought you might wanna wear one instead of a uniform for once. Or to even get out of those tattered rags," He looked at the evening gown she was still wearing and chuckled.
"Thank you again, Dugan." She said with a sigh and tried to offer him the best smile she could muster. "I appreciate it."

She appreciated it. After all, besides the dress, she was currently wearing she hadn't had one on in months. She hadn't felt womanly in so long, and she was beginning to miss it. She missed feeling beautiful. She wanted Bucky to look at her and get that hungry look in his eye because of how she looked. She wanted him to notice her not only as a woman he had feelings for but also because he was attracted to her. Which, of course, she knew he was. But she struggled often with feeling beautiful while with the army. It's not like she had the time or patience to doll herself up, after all.

When the rest of the men came down from scouting the place out they noticed all the wine bottles Lucy had brought up.

"Where'd you find this?" Lee Miller smiled largely as he asked.

"Cellar downstairs." Was all Lucy answered before drinking more. She hadn't had alcohol in so long that she was feeling a slight buzz from it.

"I say we make a toast," Dugan said and Lucy almost cringed. There was nothing to be happy or grateful for.

"To what?" Gabe Jones asked. Lucy made eye contact with Bucky across the room.

He took his own bottle, and then raised it, "To Dr. Heinrich, for getting us out of there alive." She felt a ping of pride swell up in her chest.

The men agreed even though Whitney was a little reluctant to. They all took a drink.

All the while, Lucy and Bucky never broke eye contact.

As she took a swig, he did also, their eyes meeting. A fire burned deep in her stomach, a fiery need coursed through her veins.

It didn't take long for Lucy to start feeling the effects of the wine. Especially since she hadn't had anything to eat but breakfast earlier that day. For a while, and the men sat around the wooden kitchen table and chatted. They talked about what happened at the castle, and also what they saw. It lead to more stories, and eventually laughter.

Finally when the sun started to set Lucy excused herself. Bucky's eyes followed her as she left. She felt herself shiver under his gaze.

She stumbled up the stairs to the room Dugan had told her she could stay in. Her head was spinning ever so slightly and she felt dizzy the longer she stood up. The stairs creaked under her feet. The house was an old farmhouse and had clearly been there for many years.

The room was modest, much like the rest of the house. As a child in Queens, she had grown up with less than what these people had. She remembered often going to school with holes in her shoes and having to wear dresses too small until her mother could make her a new one.

After she lived with the Lee's she had more room and space than she knew what to do with. Her entire suite was larger than the house she was currently in. Lucy wondered how she ever lived so comfortably. After all, the fact that she now had a bed to sleep in was a luxury she hadn't known for some time.

She walked to the closet, and opened it up to see what awaited her. There were only three dresses
hanging. Two everyday ones, which she figured would fit but likely would be a little snug. And
lastly, her jaw nearly dropped as she saw the cream coloured, long, silk slip nightgown. It looked like
something a bride would wear on her wedding night and Lucy’s jaw hit the floor in disbelief.

It was so gorgeous that she wanted to cry. She ran her fingers over it and felt it against her skin. It
must have been given to the woman as a gift since it was far too luxurious to match the rest of the
wardrobe.

Lucy took it down and immediately blushed upon looking at it. She had never seen anything so
scandalous and elegant at the same time. She thought back to what it would be like to wear
something like that on her wedding night. She had never even picked out a dress for her and Daniel’s
wedding. She wanted to wait until she got to New York so Mrs. Lee could take her bridal shopping.
But Lucy never got the chance after the war broke out. Deep down, she probably always had known
she would never get married.

She went into the washroom and was surprised to see a tub in the center of it. Her mouth dropped
open yet again and she looked up to the ceiling and said a quick thank you to God.

She hadn't had a proper bath in so long. The thought of scrubbing herself clean was too appealing.
She wanted nothing more than to hop in immediately and soak until she was all wrinkled.

Lucy said a quick prayer, hoping the water would turn on. To her amazement it did. Although it was
a little discoloured at the start and had a little bit of an odd smell but Lucy let it run until it appeared
normal.

The temperature was chillier than she would have liked but she didn’t even mind. All she could think
about was finally getting clean.

Looking at herself in the mirror she undid the zipper of her dress and stripped herself down. She
hadn't seen her naked reflection in so long she almost forgot what she looked like. She frowned a
little as she saw her stretch marks on her upper thighs. She held her breasts in her hands and cocked
her head as her body almost looked like a stranger. At least she still had her hourglass figure and her
arms didn’t seem to be in the worst shape. She had caught Bucky several times looking her up and
down, and Lucy didn’t understand why. Her body was nothing to marvel at, but apparently, he
thought differently.

Unable to look at her foreign body any longer and feeling nervousness and insecurity for her
appearance, Lucy grabbed the warm robe that was hanging on the back of the door to cover herself
up.

It was so soft against her skin that Lucy never wanted to take it off. She looked through a cabinet and
found a little bit of soap which she was thankful for. Unfortunately, there was no shampoo but Lucy
would make do.

It wasn't until she heard a ruckus outside that she went to the window. She frowned from the loud
noises and voices, wondering what was going on.

She opened the window to peer down at the sight. The men had taken buckets of water to wash
themselves. She was suddenly thankful to have the tub for herself. Pouring cold water down herself
seemed almost less than appealing.

She leaned against the window seal and tried not to stare too long at the scene below her. Each man
had stripped off their shirt. Bucky was no longer in his dark grey Nazi uniform and instead had
switched to his regular clothing.
He poured a bucket of water over his head and cringed at the cold temperature. Lucy almost had a heart attack as she saw the way the water was dripping down the toned skin of his chest. His upper half was completely bare except for the silver dog tags around his neck. She noticed how his facial hair had grown in more over the last couple of days and she wondered how it would feel against her delicate skin.

He was gorgeous; a god amongst men. And as Lucy looked down she felt a tightening in her stomach. Desire coursed through her veins as the image of his shirtless burned into her brain. She hadn't even meant to stare but she couldn't help herself. The sight of the water droplets running down his bare skin was a sight she never wanted to forget.

Bucky looked up after shaking out his hair and he noticed her standing in the window. His eyes met hers and he gave her a smug grin. "Enjoying the view?" Bucky teased her with a smirk.

Lucy scoffed, "What view?" Her cheeks turned a dark pink and she felt her neck grow hot.

"What view? What do you mean what view?" He winked at her playfully and Lucy blushed even more. "This view!"

She shrugged as a smirk played on her lips. Her eyes raked down him once more, taking in every little detail. She then winked back "I've seen better," It was a complete lie, of course. She was positive that perhaps the only body to rival his would have been a Greek god's. He smiled at her and her heart nearly stopped in her chest. Lucy didn't let him come up with another smug remark. She left the window before he could say anything, chuckling as she did so. She disrobed and allowed it to drop to the floor as she walked to the tub.

Her heart was still beating quickly in her chest from the sight she had just witnessed. Of all the art that she had seen throughout her life. Of all the David's and Hercules' and other muses, he was the most impressive.

Lucy tentatively got into the tub. It was colder than she was expecting but she didn't even care. Her blood ran hot from what she witnessed. She felt ashamed of how aroused she was from simply just looking at him, but she found herself barely caring.

She sunk deep into the water and allowed it to wash over her. It felt so good as she reveled in it. She audibly let out a sigh as she went herself go deeper in. Lucy ducked her head under the water. She held her breath until her lungs burned. As she was down there, the water washing over her, she allowed her thoughts to drift more.

She thought of only Bucky. Never before had a man held such an impact over her. She thought of his laugh and his deep low voice that caused shivers to run down her spine. She thought of how it sounded to have him whispering things in her ear. She wanted nothing more than for him to tell her exactly what he wanted to do to her in a seductive tone.

She thought of his collar bones and how she wanted to press sweet kisses to them. She thought of his chest and how it looked as water dripped down it. And then his abs and how she wanted to taste the skin of his stomach and continue trailing her mouth downwards. Lucy thought of his thick thighs and how it would feel to straddle them.

She arose from the water breathless. She gasped for air as the water trickled down her naked skin. If the water hadn't been so cold she would have lowered the temperature, knowing she needed to cool down from her sinful, lusting thoughts.

She grabbed the bar of soap and began rubbing the skin of her arms. She rubbed to hard until she
washed away all the grime and the skin was raw from how hard she scrubbed. Yet however clean she made herself, it didn't rid her brain of the dirty thoughts.

Closing her eyes and enjoying the water once she had washed her entire body and hair, Lucy let her mind wander even further. She thought of the night Bucky had almost kissed her in the field. The way he had flipped them so he was hovering above her made her gasp from how much she wanted him.

She pictured how he would look hovering above her like he did that night. How he would look naked, pressing kisses to her neck and feeling her body against his own. Lucy's heart raced from the mental images of him. A knot formed deep in the pit of her belly, and as she trailed her hands over her breasts she wondered how it would feel for him to take them in his mouth.

She wanted to hear him moan for her. And to feel his warm body intertwined with hers. She had long ago lost her innocence to Daniel. Even before they were engaged he had taken her to his bed. Of course, they were both regretful that it happened before marriage. But that didn't stop them from continuing afterward.

He had been the only man she had been with. But since she developed feelings for Bucky, she wondered just what it would be like to be with him also. She wanted him in every way humanly possible. Intimately and emotionally; she just wanted him.

She wanted nothing more than to be joined as one with him. To have him thrusting into her and making her moan with a burning need. As she thought about it, Lucy felt her hands continued to wander.

They reached between her legs, where she dipped them in between her thighs. She nearly gasped from how sensitive she was. She closed her eyes, and thought about him more as she continued on. The image of them getting intimate becoming her favourite fantasy, replaying several scenarios and various ways he could take her. She almost moaned for him, and she wanted her fingers to be his own. She wondered how he would feel against her, having his body completely molded with her. Lucy wanted to be filled with him, her body giving him pleasure. She wanted his hands leaving bruising grip on her hips, showing she was his. She wanked to rake her nails down his bare back as he bit her neck.

Every moment that passed and Lucy's thoughts became dirtier she wished he was there with her; that it was his fingers inside of her instead. She closed her eyes tightly and tried to control the need for him that grew with every passing moment. But it was completely useless. She wanted Bucky to claim her, to ravage her. She wanted to be his entirely, in every way humanly possible. She just wanted him, and only him.

Lucy would be damned if she let another night pass by without knowing what being with him was like. She decided that if he didn't come up to her that night than she would take matters into her own hands. She would push him up against the closest surface and capture his mouth with hers. She would show him just how much she wanted him, and how much she needed him and craved him.

Perhaps the reason she felt like that was due to nearly dying that day. Or maybe, it was an entirely different reason? When she thought of him, Lucy felt something well up in her chest that she thought maybe, just maybe, it felt a little bit like love. She smiled as she dwelled on the idea, sinking into the bath even deeper, her mind drifted to pleasant thoughts of only him.
Hmm...Some brief spiciness. Lucy's getting into trouble. But honestly, who could blame her? I'm pretty sure no mortal woman could withstand that sight of Bucky though. Regardless, that girl better get a move on! Because even I am getting frustrated by their lack of smooching. But I've got something cooking up that I'm both excited and nervous to share. ;)

If you love me and want faster updates with some more smexy stuff ahead lemme know! Follow and favourite as well, please!

Thanks for reading! As always, you guys are the best!

-A
Chapter XXVIII

Chapter Notes

Well, my lovelies here we are at 200,000 words! Wow, I never expected this story to get so far. I told myself I wouldn't get too invested and I wouldn't let this story go past 30 chapters and draw it out, but too late. Last night I finally decided on how I wanted this story to go and how I want it to end and it is far, far from over yet. I have decided to throw some stuff in the story which I think all Lucky fans will be rather happy about.

Without further ado…Here's the next chapter. We finally reached the prologue scene! Enjoy :)

Trigger warning: This chapter is rated '18+/M for some adult themes. It's very, very graphic and extremely descriptive so if you feel the need, it's from the second half of the chapter until the end if anyone would like to skip :) I won't be offended lol. Reader discretion is advised.

Chapter XXVIII

Bucky wanted to be with Lucy. Not with the men as they laughed and got more and drunker. Of course, he was getting more intoxicated too. But not so much that his judgment was askew. If anything, it was just giving him the liquid courage he needed.

Usually, when it came between a dame and his friends he always chose to be with his friends. But not with Lucy. Especially after they almost died earlier that day.

He had been so impressed by everything that she did. Lucy had completely blown him away, and he still was positive they wouldn't have gotten out of there alive if it weren't for her.

He found himself unable to enjoy the company of those around him. He only laughed at half of the jokes, and his mind was constantly drifting to the woman upstairs. They continued drinking long after the sun went down, and the more they had the rowdier his comrades were.

Sitting there and almost sulking, Dugan noticed Bucky's sour mood and how much he didn't want to be there. As the men went down to get more bottles, he was left alone with the Boston native.

"What are you doing?" Dum Dum asked him.

Bucky frowned, his brows furrowing together, "What do you mean?"

"I mean, what the hell are you doing down here when your woman's upstairs?"

Bucky looked down at the matches he was playing within his hands. He sighed, "She probably wants to be alone." He didn't know whether or not to go to her. After all, they had a rough day. And it had been so long since she probably had gotten any privacy and she likely wanted to have a few moments to herself.
"She probably wants to be alone with you," Dugan stated as though it were obvious, causing Bucky's eyes to shoot up. "The dame is crazy about you. You're crazy about her. Stop being noble and go up to her."

Bucky shook his head, he leaned back in his seat, "I'm not so sure about that." He was losing his confidence. After all, he had made himself look like a fool multiple times earlier that day.

Dugan was getting sick of the two of them denying their feelings. It was obvious to everyone how they felt. After everything that had happened, he still couldn't believe that they were dead set on not trying to work things out. "Buck, we're in the middle of a goddamn war," Dugan said harshly, "And that woman up there," He pointed at the ceiling above him, "Is crazy for you. She's probably thinking about you the same as you're thinking about her. You two could die tomorrow. So you go up there, you grab her, and you kiss her silly until she can't even remember her own name."

Bucky stood up, nodding. His nerves were shaky but the alcohol seemed to help him build more confidence. Dugan was right, who knew how much time they would have left? If he never knew what really kissing her felt like he would never forgive himself.

"Thanks, Dugan," Bucky said genuinely, happy for the push. Had he not been there to convince him to go see her, he might not have ever worked up the courage to do so. He patted the man on the shoulder as he began to walk up.

"And Barnes?" Dugan stopped him before he left, "You better make love to that woman all damn night. Because if you don't, I have half a mind to go up there instead." Dugan teased, chuckling lowly. Bucky smirked and rolled his eyes, although his stomach flipped nervously at the thought of it.

He swallowed thickly as he looked up the stairs that lead to her room. He took a deep breath and tried to settle himself. He didn't think there was ever a time he was that nervous to lay a move on a dame. But this time was different because it was Lucy.

Bucky took another deep breath and then ascended up the stairs. Each step felt as though it were a lifetime, and his heart pounded in his chest. It raced so fast he was positive it was going to burrow itself through his skin and jump out. His palms were suddenly sweaty, and he tried to convince himself he could do this.

As he went up, he saw how her door was open a crack. He wondered if she was hoping he would come up and if she would allow him to enter her room. He wished for more than anything that she wanted him as badly as he wanted her.

Bucky's heart raced all the more as he passed by the door. The floorboards creaked under his weight, alerting her that he was standing there. He opened the door ever so slightly, figuring he didn't have to knock if it was open a crack. The sight inside almost stopped his fast-beating heart completely.

Lucy sat at the vanity, brushing her long, brown, curly hair. Her hand stilled as she froze while under his gaze and Lucy's breath hitched as he leaned himself against the doorframe after he had opened the door wide enough to see her.

His hands were casually placed in his pockets, and a small smile rested on his face as he watched her curiously. Their eyes met in her reflection of the mirror. Watching her do something as casual as brushing her hair even enchanted him. There was nothing that that woman couldn't do that he wasn't enthralled with. The fact she could do something as regular and mundane and still capture him like a
spider in a web proved how much he loved her.

And as he watched her, he knew he would love her until the day he died. She was everything he could ever want and more. And not because she was perfect, but because she was perfect for him. His heart raced at a pace twice as fast as it usually did. His palms became sweaty as her piercing gaze met his.

Her hands stilled and then put the heavy brush down onto the vanity as their gaze remained locked. She placed the brush carefully down and then turned around from the mirror to look directly at him. With a flirtatious grin, she asked accusingly, "Didn't your mother ever teach you it's rude to stare at a lady?" As she teased him her tiny smile caused a jolt to go straight to his stomach. He couldn't help but stare at her though, despite it being rude. She was that damn gorgeous.

A large smile formed on his lips as a blush rose to his cheeks, he smirked as he looked down with embarrassment. Dames has never made him nervous before. At least not like she did. Whenever he was around her he almost completely changed personalities. He went from cool and collected to a stuttering, bumbling, fool. He blushed more as he wondered what kind of spell that woman had placed on him. What type of sorcery did she possess? The love he felt her feel inhuman and otherworldly, there was no other explanation as to why she was constantly on his mind.

Every passing moment his thoughts were flooded with her. About her laugh, her smile, her small smirk she did when she teased him. He even fixated on the way her eyebrows rose up ever so slightly in a cocky manner as she had her know-it-all attitude. The way she bit her lip caused a feeling to well in him he hadn't known for some time. Her body movement was like watching a dance he couldn't tear his gaze from. Everything about her absolutely captured him, and he wasn't sure he ever wanted to stop feeling that way.

Bucky cleared his throat and then crossed his arms across his broad chest and looked up at her bashfully, "Sorry, I uhh—" He scratched the back of his neck uncomfortably as he stepped forward into the room, "I didn't mean to spy. It's just that umm, I walked by and I uh, I saw you…" God, he could not keep it together. Whatever man he was in Brooklyn no longer existed. Perhaps the reason as to why he was so nervous around her compared to all the other girls was because she was so different.

She was unlike any other person he had ever met. Smart, funny, strong-willed and beautiful, she was a goddess among women. Every other girl had meant nothing to him before her. She was the one, the one he would always love until his heart had stopped beating and he was laid into the ground. And even then, he was sure he'd never love another in the life following this one. If there was an afterlife he didn't want to be there without her. Because she was heaven herself, nothing else would ever compare.

Lucy placed her brush down as he stopped talking. She stood up from the chair she had been sitting at. She rose slowly as she got up to face him and his heart nearly stopped in his chest.

He had never seen anything so damn beautiful.

They were in the midst of the worst hell humanly possible, the middle of a war. And there she was looking like an angel and ethereal being of radiance and light. Bucky knew nothing of art and beauty. He had always thought that perhaps the most beautiful thing he would ever see was the ocean waves as a passing sunset fell beyond the horizon. He was wrong. It was her, and it would always be her. Nothing, not a single another sight in the world could ever compare to her at that moment. The image of it would burn into his brain and he would remember it until the last of his days.
Lucy's pale skin was in contrast with the off white cream colour of the silk nightgown. Her dark hair rested down, covering the more revealing parts of the bodice. He could see the way her nipples were hardened from the cold air, pebbling under the briskness. A jolt when deep into his belly, and he stirred with desire.

Lucy blushed at how exposed she currently was, and noticed just exactly how sultry her attire was in those moments. Although the nightdress fell to just above her calves, it clung to her curves tightly. He thought of the way a bride would likely wear something like that on her wedding night, He couldn't help but fantasize that perhaps one day she would wear another version of a dress like that after they agreed to spend the rest of their lives together. But that wouldn't be for some time in the future. Right now, at that moment was all the time they had. And if he was going to die tomorrow, he'd want to live with her as much as he could tonight.

Bucky's eyes fell upon her, and he couldn't help but drink her in as he said quietly, "Holy shit, you're so goddamn beautiful," it was so quiet she could barely hear. He wanted to get drunk off the sight of her, having it affect his very biology in the deepest and most intimate of ways. His body felt on fire as he stood there, his blood boiling hot and coursing through his veins faster and faster with each moment.

Bucky cleared his throat again and crossed his arms, trying to smile as he teased, "Christ, you trying to break my heart or something by wearing that dress? I mean you're killin' me here, sweetheart." He didn't think a woman would ever leave him speechless before, but with her standing there in that dress he could hardly think.

Lucy found herself smiling as she stood there, laughing slightly at his nervousness. She licked her lips and his eyes were drawn to them. He needed more than anything to feel those gorgeous lips against his own.

"Yeah, something like that," she smirked before shrugging, a smug expression on her face. He only chuckled at her flirtations and then shook his head. He couldn't believe how composed she was while he was a bumbling fool for her. Once again, it just proved that she couldn't have been from this world.

She smiled at him ever so slightly. His heart raced a little more, her expression suddenly made him regain his confidence and he strode across the room. It was his turn to make her nervous, to give her a taste of her own medicine. He almost smirked as he saw her composure change the moment he stepped into the room. She trembled under his piercing gaze and at that moment Bucky knew she felt the same as he did. She was too collected, too composed regularly. But every time he came near her she shivered or became flustered. He loved that he had that effect on her.

He felt Lucy's eyes drilling holes into his back as he walked across the room. A small turntable rested in the corner, and she watched curiously as Bucky went forward towards it. She cocked her head, watching him intensely.

The cold wind had settled through the room now that the door was open, and Lucy found herself crossing her arms across her chest in embarrassment as she realized just revealing the nightdress truly was. Her nipples pebbled even more and Bucky had to force himself to not think about it as he flipped through the records the previous homeowners left behind.

Lucy watched him, almost as though she was studying him. Bucky figured she was likely trying to figure out what to do next. After all, she rarely did anything without first running different scenarios in her head first.

Bucky found what he was looking for, and put the vinyl into the turntable, and placed the needle
onto it. Lucy's heart dropped when she heard the song, and the memory of a warm summer night a few years prior came racing back to her.

Bucky smiled ever so slightly as the voice of Margaret Whiting filled the air. She looked touched that he had picked it out, the memories of that magically night hitting both of them like a bullet.

"You remembered?"

"Of course I remember. That was the night I met you." It was the most incredible night of his life.

She smiled ever so slightly. The noise of trumpets filled the room, echoing in her ears as he walked forward. His heart raced even more and he watched as she swallowed a lump forming in her throat. Her chest rose and fell a little faster, something he noticed from the revealing state of her nightdress. He made her nervous, that much was clear.

"Dance with me?" He asked her in a soft whisper as his hands gently settled on her waist. The palms of his hands touched the silk fabric of her nightgown as he pulled her into him.

Lucy closed her eyes and inhaled deeply as she moved forward, silently saying yes. He saw as her cheeks began to turn pink as he drew her in and flushed to his body. There was no space between them, and she wrapped her arms around his neck and exhaled with a feeling of relief. She felt safe with him.

"That night was something else," She whispered to Bucky as they swayed with the music.

"It was. I thought about it constantly." She had flooded his thoughts so long after that. He closed his eyes and he could see her. Every moment was agony knowing she would never be his. But there they were now, dancing and holding one another.

She smiled lightly and then sighed, "I wonder what would have happened if I wasn't engaged the night we met. Would things have been different?" After a moment they had become more comfortable and started swaying softly to the music. Her chin rested on his shoulder, and intimately drew her lips to on his neck, almost tasting him. Bucky's eyes closed from the intimate brushing out her mouth and he had to force himself to keep from groaning.

"It doesn't matter," He whispered back to her, brushing her hair out her face even more, "We're here together now. You drive me absolutely crazy, Lucy Heinrich." He admitted.

Bucky pulled her even closer, inhaling sharply in a hiss as he did so while shivering at the small grazing of her lips. Nostalgia from the one night they had spent together came flooding back yet again. They were more intimate this time around though. Closer, and far more inappropriate than before. Bucky's hands went lower on her waist and he wondered for a moment if she minded. Lucy gave no indication she wanted him to move his hand back up.

He pulled away from her just slightly enough to look down at her dark hazel eyes. Their gaze was fixated on one another. Once again, it had felt like they were the only two people in the world. Bucky brushed a small piece of hair out of her face, his thumb gently trailing her cheek in the process. It was only them, nothing else mattered. There was no war, or death, or anything; only the two of them.

Their mouths were so close that he could practically taste her. Instead of their lips touching, their foreheads met instead. They rested against one another, swaying intently to the music. Not a single second went by where Bucky felt as though what they were doing was inherently wrong. On the contrary, it felt so, so right. As though a driving force of nature was pulling them together. Like two
waves colliding, like the sun and the moon, like lightning and thunder, like a heartbeat pumping blood through a body, they belonged together.

The eerie sound of trumpets played, and they held each other closer. In the distance, they could hear bombs going off in another village not far from where they were. Another fight was going on, and gunfire echoed. But none of that mattered at that moment. All that mattered was each other.

She was a hurricane, a force to be reckoned with. She was a light in the darkness guiding him into safety. She was his home, and he knew at that moment he would never need anything else but her. Just her, and only her for the rest of his damn life.

Lucy felt as though she had died and gone to heaven. A heaven that was entirely made of him. That was something she could get used to. To spend an eternity wrapped in his arms seemed like the most perfect form of happily ever after.

Everything in that moment felt as though pieces were falling together. Everything was so right, and perfect and pure. He was the most incredible man she had ever met, and she couldn't believe that she had ever for a moment thought about spending the rest of her life with someone else.

A feeling like the one she had was so rare that she figured she may be the only person in the entire world to feel it. How could anything match what she was feeling at that moment? Everything was perfect in their own shared world.

She needed him in a way she's never needed anyone. Her entire life Lucy had felt like she didn't belong anywhere. She felt as though a piece of herself was missing. But with Bucky, she never felt that way. He made her complete, and Lucy knew she would never have to pretend to be anyone else around him.

She pulled away from his shoulder to look at him. He was so beautiful it hurt. His dark hair seemed black in the fading light of the lantern in the corner. Explosions a ways off reflected yellow through the windows. For a minute, Lucy could forget all about them and pretend they were fireworks. The reds and oranges shadowed his face and made him look all the more serious.

Her hands touched his stumbled cheeks. He had more facial hair than what she was used to but she didn't mind for a single moment. His dimpled chin made her weak, and his cheekbones were prominent and angled. She smiled ever so slightly as she saw how he looked at her. He looked at her almost as though she were his whole world.

Lucy looked in his pale blue eyes and could see a future. She saw inside them everything he felt for her. It was what love looked like. In its most pure and raw form, exposed and vulnerable. Her heart pounded in her chest as they looked at one another in those passing moments it felt like a lifetime. Lucy wanted to take that moment and never forget the way he looked at her.

Bucky took her face in his hands and his thumb gently brushed her cheek so softly she barely felt it. She held onto his shoulders like her life depended on it. She was sure if something wasn't keeping her upright her knees would buckle and she would have fallen from the look he was giving her. When the music had stopped and it was just the two of them, looking at one another as though they had the universe in each other's eyes, Bucky finally spoke up.

"I'm going to kiss you now," Was all he simply said, his voice low and causing a jolt of electricity to hit her stomach. Her heart nearly stopped in her chest at his words.
"Fucking finally," Was all Lucy breathlessly said, unable to wait a single second longer before grabbing him by the back of the head and slamming her mouth against his.

And everything was right in the world at that moment. Their kiss was not sweet, or gentle. It was burning hot passion. It was the sun's colliding and world's molding. It was fire coursing through them, a need so heavy it almost drove her insane.

Bucky's hands grabbed at her waist and pulled her in roughly. Her hands tangled in his hair as she tried to pull him down to meet her even more. Their mouths crashed into one another as though they were each other's life force. It was like she had been waiting for this for years. Three years, to be exact. And it was everything she had ever hoped for.

His soft lips molded with hers and his hungry hands grasped her firmly. Lucy could barely feel her heart trying to cave its way out of her chest. She had never felt more alive in the few moments of kissing Bucky.

"I've been waiting for this for so long, pige," Bucky admitted to her during their passionate frenzy. Lucy could say nothing, so instead, she opted with kissing him more. Her hands went to his neck and he gripped his hips, his one hand going down to grab her behind. She gasped slightly at his boldness, his confidence making her all the more turned on by him.

"This okay?" He asked her breathlessly, making sure she was alright with everything.

She only responded by pushing on his chest harshly so he was against the wall. Bucky was shocked by how she responded but he wasn't surprised. She had a fiery need in her eye which was the result of wanting this exact thing for weeks.

"I'm gonna take that as a yes," Was all he said and Lucy slammed her mouth against his again.

"Less talking more kissing," She commanded him, desperate for more. She needed him like she needed oxygen. Like she needed blood flowing through her veins and like a driving force that kept her alive.

"Ma'am yes, Ma'am," Bucky responded lowly and caused an iron hot rod to be drilled into Lucy's stomach. Her need and desperation for him continued to build more with each passing moment.

She could feel the slickness between her legs gathering between her thighs. She remembered she wasn't wearing any panties under her slip and she shivered at the thought.

She pulled him down to continue meeting her lips. His hands roamed all over her body, grasping at it and feeling every little alcove and dip.

Her own hand settled on his chest, the one hanging around his neck. She needed to be closer to him, to be consumed by him. His tongue slid into her mouth after he licked her teeth and she opened up to him. The velvet feeling of it made her want to go mad. As they explored each other more, Lucy felt unable to control her next actions.

Not even separating from their kiss, she gripped his shirt collar tightly and drug him to the other side of the room. Their mouths didn't leave each other for a single second. Their tongues wrestled, aggressively attempting to establish who was the winner. They continued kissing as though they had been starved for it. Nothing before had ever felt so right and so wrong.

Lucy had never been kissed like this, until she was breathless, fumbling mess. Not until her arousal evidently dripped down the soft skin of her thighs. She wanted him so, so unbelievably badly to fill her up and make every inch of her his own. She wanted him inside her and feeling him lose control,
His tongue made its way into her mouth again and Lucy couldn't help but let out a tiny gasp at the feeling. She licked his teeth before biting his bottom lip and pulling it teasingly. He groaned, making her even more aroused. His hands gripped her hips harder, squeezing her ever so slightly.

Lucy pushed him roughly into a chair which he fell on slightly clumsily. He watched her with a flustered, needy expression he ran a hand through his hair while she hiked up her nightgown to her thighs. Bucky immediately felt himself harden at the sight of her milky white skin, she climbed on top of him and straddled him. She could feel the hardness of his member pushing against her heat, making her all the more maddened for him.

"Oh my god," He whispered, "Take it easy doll, I don't want to break you." The way he spoke caused her stomach to flip and wanton desire to course through her even more. She ground her pelvis into his and Bucky shivered. Her mouth began trailing down his neck, sucking on the skin. Her lips tasted him, wanting more and more.

"I want you to break me." She whispered, her hungry, sultry, voice was drawn out. She must have sounded like a whore, but Lucy couldn't have cared less. At that moment she was just a woman, being driven mad by the agonizing need of a man.

Bucky groaned as his head was tossed back. "Oh, yeah?" She continued pressing her kisses to the alcove of his throat. Her tongue darted out to taste him more. Her fingers began to wander mindlessly on their own, undoing the top buttons of his shirt.

Her mouth captured his again, causing their teeth to clash roughly, "Mhmm" She hummed through their kiss, "Make me yours." She begged him desperately.

"I'll make you mine all damn night, darlin'." His arms wrapped around her waist and he pulled her in tighter to him so there was so space separating their bodies.

"Promise?" Lucy asked Bucky before kissing his neck again, trailing down lower and lower. He groaned as she sucked on the skin, marking him as her own.

"Fuck, the things you can do with that gorgeous mouth." Bucky groaned, his hand going to her ass and grabbing it harshly.

She had never figured he would be so bold, especially when he landed a hard slap to her tender skin of her backside. The sound of it echoed through the room and Lucy squealed, never having been spanked before and shocked and pleasantly surprised all the same at his dominating nature. Lucy was perfectly fine with allowing him to take charge. After all, she was more dominating outside of the bedroom and was eager to see the other more aggressive side of him.

"You haven't seen anything yet," She said seductively, wanting nothing more than to take him in her mouth and pleasure him until he became completely unhinged.

She could feel him harden under her. His member was pressed against her through the front of his trousers. Lucy ground her hips and he emitted another small groan. She knew that likely she was making a mess at the front of his pants. After all, she wasn't wearing any panties and she was painting him with her arousal. It seemed to turn him on even more that he could feel her heat pressing against him at the front of his trousers.

He grabbed her by the back of the neck and slammed his mouth against hers. His other hand wandered to her ass again, squeezing and grabbing. Lucy couldn't help but hiss in pleasure, the
feeling of him against her better than she ever imagined. The sensation of his hard manhood pressed between her more intimate areas almost drove her insane. She couldn't believe that she turned this god of a man on as much as she did.

Suddenly, Bucky pulled away from his bruising kiss, "Wait, wait, wait," He stopped and pulled her off. "We shouldn't do this. This is wrong."

"What?" Lucy's facial expression dropped. The sadness was evident in her voice. "What do you mean? Of course this is right."

"No, it's not. It's—."

"Don't you want me?" She cut him off, feeling hurt and wounded from his words.

"Lucy," he whispered and took her face in his hands and looked down at her, "I want you more than anything in my entire life. But we can't do it, not like this."

"But I need you, Bucky. Please." She begged him almost, "I can't go a single moment longer without being yours." She wasn't above having to grovel for it. She needed him so desperately, the thought of them waiting longer nearly broke her heart, "Please." She whispered. If she had to wait until they were married she'd take him to the nearest church that night and pledge herself to him right then and there.

"You are mine, doll. You're my everything. My goddamn beginning and end. But I'm not going to fuck you. Not like this."

Lucy couldn't hide her disappointment, she was notably crushed. Her spirits dropped and she was about to argue against it when he spoke up again.

"You deserve to be made love to." He said softly, rubbing her cheek with his thumb and making her meet his gaze.

Filled with boldness Lucy requested only one thing, "Then make love to me, Bucky Barnes."

"Lucy Heinrich," He whispered before pressing a gentle kiss to her mouth, "It would be my genuine pleasure,"

He lifted her by holding onto her thighs as he carried her. Lucy wrapped her arms around his shoulders so he wouldn't drop her. Their mouths met again, this time how it should have been the first time.

With herself still wrapped around him, Bucky placed her on the ground to where they had been standing while they were dancing. She was surprised he didn't take her straight to the bed. But she assumed it was because he wanted to do it right.

His hands went to her waist as he kissed her sweetly after she was set down in her feet. Lucy gave out a little mewl as he kissed her with tenderness and affection that was unprecedented. His hands, still having a dirty mind of their own went to her backside again. She couldn't help but smile during the kiss that they shared. He was so gentle as he kissed her. Lucy's hands wandered and continued taking off his shirt. Her fingers shook with anticipation as she undid his buttons. She needed to get him naked so badly, to see him in his entirety.

She helped him shrug off his shirt, his chest bare for her. Her breath hitched as she saw his broad muscles and chiseled chest. She had never seen a man that looked quite like him before. Almost as though he was crafted out of marble, made by the hands of Michelangelo himself. Her eyes raked
over him in amazement and suddenly she couldn't stop herself from kissing him hungrily again.

"Easy, easy, sweetheart." Bucky chuckled through their kiss as she got a little too rough again. She couldn't help it though, she just wanted to pounce on him. His hands ran through her hair as their mouths joined in unison.

She could hear Bucky trying to slip off his boots by stepping on the heels of them. He shuffled clumsily for a little bit, making her giggle. When he couldn't get it he huffed frustratedly and then focused on her yet again.

She took his hands and placed them on her breasts. Bucky moaned into their kiss as he fondled her chest. His thumb brushed past her hardening nipples and he began kissing at her neck. Lucy nearly dropped to her knees at that moment from the sheer pleasure. Her mouth began trailing down her throat, to her collar bones, to finally the swells of her breasts. He sucked on the tops of them, leaving dark and angry marks.

Lucy's hands couldn't help but trail over his abs and his chest. She felt him shiver under her touch, and she continued trailing down until she reached his belt. Undoing it and tossing it across the room, Lucy didn't even care as she heard something fall to the ground and shatter.

All that mattered was his delicious mouth on her skin, going further and further down. Lucy nearly cried when his lips separated from her and he dropped to his knees. He began undoing the ties of his boots as quickly as he could, peppering small kisses on her thighs.

When he finally got them off he stayed where he was kneeling on the ground. He grabbed her by the behind and brought her closer to him. He looked up at her with wide eyes, wondering if his next action would be okay as he grabbed the back of her legs. He placed one over his shoulder, looking for permission and Lucy shivered. Her hands tangled in his messy hair as he placed kisses on her belly and leading downwards. Lucy gasped and could help but quiver in anticipation, throwing her head back as Bucky rested her leg over his shoulder and trailed his kisses up the inside of her thigh.

"I've been wanting to taste you for so long," He whispered against her skin as his soft hands bundled her silk slip up past her legs so it rested on her hips.

Lucy blushed, her cheeks turning red as she realized what he was implying. She had always been much too shy to ever let Daniel attempt to go down there. It seemed to add sin into the already sinful act they were partaking in.

But with Bucky, it felt so damn right. The scratchiness of his facial hair against her soft skin made Lucy want to pull her hair out. His fingers gently touched where she wanted him the most and she nearly lost it at the first contact. Her chest rose and fell with anticipation and her heart was beating so hard she thought it would leap right out of her chest.

Bucky's mouth gently met with her soft folds and Lucy couldn't help but whine in pleasure. His tongue flicked her as Lucy struggled to stay upright from the sensations. Electricity coursed through her veins and her breathing became much more sporadic. She had never felt anything like that before. Bucky's tongue was on the most intimate part of herself and she couldn't help but call out for him. Her back arched and her head was thrown back from the pleasure. He continued nuzzling into her, eagerly lapping her up.

She couldn't believe that this was happening. She had always heard of the type of man to do things like that to a woman, but she never expected Bucky to be the type. It was taboo in most wrongful ways, but Lucy didn't care. All she could focus on was his tongue fucked her. She had to bite her lip to keep from calling out his name.
"Jesus Christ, you taste so fucking good, sweetheart." He paused for a moment to tell her in a low voice, coming up from his knees to kiss her sweetly after he noticed she wouldn't be able to stand like that for much longer.

"Where—where did you learn how to do that?" She asked in wonder, dazed and unable to form an intelligent thought. She could hardly remember her own name at that moment.

Bucky chuckled, "Just been wanting to do that to you for some time." The thought of him thinking about burying his head between her legs drive Lucy nearly insane. She couldn't believe that was something men fantasized about.

"Have you done that to other women?" She wasn't asking to pry. Lucy was simply curious, and she wouldn't be upset if he said yes.

Bucky stilled for a moment, wondering how he shouldn't answer "Some. But none of them had anything on you."

"I'm not mad, just curious." Lucy whispered, and laughed as she blushed, "I just want to know how you learned to be so good with your tongue."

"I was with an older woman for a while. Not romantically, just sexually. She taught me some things," Bucky admitted to her. Kissing her mouth lightly, "I just wanna make you feel good."

"Bucky, you have no idea how amazing you made me feel," She trembled as she spoke, needing him more. She was in awe of the man before her.

"You haven't seen anything yet," He lifted her again and held her close to him. Their mouths met once more and Lucy was positive she loved nothing as much as the feeling of him kissing her. His tongue slipped into her mouth again and Lucy let out a small whimper as he carried her to the bed.

He tossed her on it a little harshly, making her gasp. Immediately he was crawling on top of her and Lucy grasped his face before kissing him harshly again.

Bucky separated to ask, "Have you ever had an orgasm before?" He asked her. Lucy blushed at his brazenness. She had to clear her throat before she answered, nervously trembling as she did so.

"I-I don't know. I don't think so. But I couldn't say," She had known that most women couldn't have one from penetration alone. She didn't mind though, sex was still as enjoyable without one.

"Trust me," He nuzzled her neck as he crawled on top of her, "You'd know if you did." Lucy ran her hands through his hair as he kissed her passionately. He poured every ounce of love that he had into the kiss, nudging her legs open so he could rest between them.

His hands rested on the softness of her thighs, trailing up and down slowly. Each time he went higher up Lucy's breath hitched and she hoped he would touch between her legs again and give her some form of release.

He bit her bottom lip, causing Lucy to emit a small hiss. She whined again for him and tried to grind her hips to his pelvis, attempting to get some friction.

"So needy," He whispered before nipping at her neck and trailing down. She gasped as he sucked on her sensitive skin.

Bucky was by far much more of a vocal lover than Daniel. Perhaps it was because he was American and bolder? Or more experienced? Either way, it drove Lucy wild, causing her to become more and
more soaked with each passing second.

Bucky continued pressing his mouth to her skin, sucking on the dip of her throat. His tongue tasting it and creating a bruising mark. She loved the fact he was marking her, showing the world she was his and his only.

She moved her hips against and Bucky groaned and pushed himself harder into her heat, making her gasp. His mouth went to her breasts again and attached itself. She inhaled sharply at the contact, not even noticing that he had pulled down her straps and the top of her slip to fully expose her.

He took her in his mouth and swirled his tongue around her most sensitive part. She immediately called out as his hand found her other breast and gently fondled it. He bit her lightly enough for her to hiss in a mixture of both pain and pleasure. His mouth worked to arouse her even more, sucking and pulling and leaving dark, bruising marks.

He reattached his mouth to her other breast, trying to give it as much attention as was possible. He took her nipple in his hungry mouth and she felt it harden under his administrations. His hands trailed up her thighs, taking her dress as they went.

He was pulling it off of her, and finally, she was free of it. He looked down at her as she was gasping mess, bare and desperate for him. Lucy suddenly felt bashful under his gaze and she covered her chest with her arms.

"God," He exhaled in disbelief, "You look like an angel." He pulled her hands away from her chest, "You don't have to be shy, doll. You're so gorgeous." Lucy nodded, blushing and trying not to focus on the fact she was completely bare. She closed her eyes and tried to get over her insecurities. She didn't need to be shy around Bucky, he thought she was beautiful.

But he was only the second man to ever see her like that. And with Daniel, it took awhile for her to get truly comfortable. When they first began getting intimate she struggled with her nudity. She could only do it with the lights off or with her nightdress on. But Bucky made her feel comfortable, he made her feel beautiful and desirable.

Lucy captured his mouth again and her hands desperately went to his pants to undo them. She slid the zipper down and undid the button. He shimmied out of them, trying to move them over his erection. Lucy felt him harden, pressing between her thighs again after he got his trousers off and discarded them. He was left in only a pair of simple boxers and his silver dog tags.

As they kissed harshly, Lucy brushed her hand against his tented erection and Bucky groaned. Her hands went to the waistband of his boxers and she inched them down, slowly enough for him to pop out, aching for her desperately.

Lucy gripped him in her fist after lubricating it with some of her saliva. Although she didn't need it, his leaking pre-cum was making him wet enough. She pumped him up and down as hit bit into her shoulder and moaned again. She tried not to look directly at his member but she couldn't help it. An ache developed more in her belly as she realized how desperately she wanted his thick length to fill her up. He was largely well endowed, which she had suspected after feeling it pressed against her.

The head of his manhood head wept for her as she continued pumping him in her hand and he began thrusting his hips. His breathing became more labored and Lucy felt pride well in her stomach at the thought of pleasing him.

She pushed him gently off of her, flipping them so he was on his back. Lucy hovered above him for a little while, pressing kisses to his mouth and down his chin to his neck. Bucky was a mess,
breathing heavily and trying his best to contain himself.

"I want to try something," She whispered in his ear before biting his earlobe and gently pulling. He groaned as squeezed her ass again tightly, feeling his lower body twitch at the sensation and his hips pushed up to try to create fiction with her body.

Bucky noticed what she was doing as Lucy began to kiss down his chest, paying extra attention to the bruised he got from getting punched, and down his abs. The flat of her tongue licked against his skin and groaned lowly, throwing back his head and trying his hardest to control himself.

As she kissed along the line from his belly button leading down to his pelvis Bucky spoke up, "Baby, you don't have to." He had never been with a woman, or at least a respectable woman like Lucy, who volunteered to do that.

"I want to." She whispered before spreading her hand over him, feeling how his blood rushed to himself, "Let me repay the favour." She was nervous, never having done anything like it before. But she wanted to try it with him. She wanted to hear him moan and call her name and lose control. She wanted to taste him and feel him against her tongue until he couldn't stand it.

Bucky only nodded, not having it in him to protest. His chest rose and fell sporadically, falling harder with each heavy breath. He gathered Lucy's hair out of her face like a gentleman as she began placing kisses to his member.

Her lips went to his skin and already he felt as though he were on fire. She kissed up his entire length and finally took him in her mouth. Her tongue ran along the underside of him and she continued moving her mouth up and down. If she was being honest with herself, Lucy had no idea what she was doing. But she loved the sounds he was making and wanted nothing more than to hear him continue making them.

"Shit, that's so good, darlin'." Bucky cursed and then ran a hand through his hair, muttering "Fuck," under his breath. Lucy never expected him to have such a filthy mouth but she didn't mind it. It aroused her even more.

He didn't even see to mind when her bottom teeth accident grazed him. He hissed in pain and she quickly apologized but he just told her to keep going. She felt a little bashful about how inexperienced she was with these things but yet again, Bucky didn't seem to mind for a single second.

The taste of him on her tongue drove her to near insanity. The saltiness mixed with the feeling of him hitting the back of her throat was a sensation she had never previously felt. Yet again, Lucy didn't know how much she liked it, but she certainly liked his reaction. Bucky began moving his hips up to meet her as she sucked on the head when he did so she began to choke but quickly regained her breath.

Saliva was trailing down her lips and soaking him. The parts which she couldn't reach with her mouth she took care of with her hands. He seemed to enjoy that just as much, muttering swear words and moaning as she continued. She choked a few more times but carried on, wanting to taste his release on her tongue.

When she felt him tighten and begin to thrust more into the softness of her mouth she knew he was close. "Oh, fuck," He breathed again. Lucy loved hearing him swear. It made pride well in her belly and satisfaction course through her knowing that she, only she was the woman he was making those noises for.
Bucky suddenly pulled her up from his cock and kissed her madly. He grabbed her face with his hands and held her tightly, kissing her as though she were his life force.

"Was that good?" She asked timidly when they separated, a little scared he didn't enjoy it as much as he let on. He wiped the excess saliva off her chin with his thumb.

"So, so, good. You did amazing." He pressed his lips to her cheeks, and then placed a gentle one to her mouth. He flipped them so she was in her back again. She squealed in surprise and he maneuvered his mouth down her body, "Now let me take care of you."

His mouth went to her nipples again and Lucy arched her back and squealed as he bit her lightly. He continued going down, his mouth dragging along her skin until he reached between her legs.

Lucy almost wept in anticipation. If it felt anything like it did before she needed to have him between her legs again. Bucky nipped at her clit before placing her legs over his shoulders. His fingers reached out to touch her, gently moving them in a way that Lucy hadn't even experienced by herself.

"You're so wet for me," He whispered dirtily before entering his index finger into her. With the penetration, Lucy gasped and had to cover her mouth from moaning too loudly. Her hands gripped the sheets as Bucky's lips attacked her.

She was rolling her hips into him so much, trying to create more friction that he had to put an arm over her to pin her down. He added another finger as his tongue focused on her clit. Lucy was positive she was so soaked that if she were to get up from the bed there would be a noticeable stain on the bed sheets.

"Oh my God, Bucky!" Lucy gasped his name and said it like a prayer. She loved the way it tasted as it left her lips.

Her hands tangled in his hair and pushed him further into her. She could feel him chuckle against her. He was like a starved man who was being given his last meal. His tongue did things that she never even imagined, all while his fingers continued thrusting in and out of her.

Lucy couldn't keep her noises of pleasure to herself. She was gasping, crying out, and moaning. To him, those noises sounded like heaven. Nothing sounded better than her exasperated calls of his name. She gripped the sheets harder and pulled at them as Bucky continued. She had no idea that a man could make her feel this way.

He looked so beautiful with his head between her legs. Lucy tried to sit up on her elbows to watch him but collapsed on her back as soon as he began doing something that caused an ache to build deep in Lucy's core. She gasped again and called out for him, her hands going tighter into his hair.

Lucy could hardly contain herself as she felt something building and building inside of her. A massive pressure began to wash over her entire body as Bucky administered his assault. Lucy could feel herself right in the edge, pleasure about to course through her very essence.

When she finally released she had to bite her tongue to keep from screaming. Tremors shocked through her and she was left a trembling mess. Bucky finally finished after feeling her body's reaction. Lucy hastily greeted him, her mouth attacking his with desperation. He merged her eagerly, his tongue still having her arousal upon it.

When they separated, Lucy had to catch her breath, "Oh my god, I don't even— what? Jesus, Bucky." She gasped as she settled on the bed, a sweaty and breathless mess. Her forehead had a light sheen of perspiration on it where her hair stuck to her wet skin, "That was..." She chuckled, unable
to form an intelligent thought, "You made me forget my own name."

"Told you I would," He gently pressed his mouth to her forehead in a tender gesture of affection.

Lucy only hummed in happiness and wrapped her arms around his shoulders as they molded together once more. She felt him still hardened against her leg and once again she quivered with a need for him. She needed him inside her, to finally he joined together and moving as one.

She took his cock in her hand and pressed it against her waiting heat. He groaned as his head came in contact with the slickness of her folds.

"Lucy, I don't know if we should umm," He paused to clear his throat. He scratched the back of his neck before admitting, "I don't have a rubber." Saying that was one of the hardest things he ever had to admit. He wanted Lucy more than he had ever wanted anything.

Lucy was happy for the fact he didn't have a rubber on hand, because it meant he likely wasn't going to brothels in the passing towns with the other men on base. But it also was unfortunate at that moment for the two of them.

Lucy felt her stomach drop for only a second until she shook her head and kissed him fully on the mouth. She poured all her affection into it, showing him for desperately she wanted him.

"That's okay," She whispered.

"But what if you get—?"

"We'll figure it out," Lucy promised and he nodded.

"Yeah," Bucky nodded and repeated after her, "We'll figure it out." Together. He wanted to say but he kept quiet. He also didn't tell her that he wanted a baby. Not at that moment, of course. But eventually, at some point, he knew he wanted Lucy to be the mother of his child.

Their lips met in a fit of passion. Bucky took himself in his hand as he hovered above her and stroked himself a few times to ready himself. The feeling alone of being against her womanhood was too much for him. He bit his cheek as he ran himself through her again, hoping to coat himself in her arousal so he wouldn't hurt her.

"Are you sure?" He asked her once more, making sure she fully consented. It was important to him to know what she fully wanted this. It wasn't just a spur of the moment decision but it meant just as much to her as it did to him.

"Yes, yes! I'm sure! I need you so much," Her voice faltered at the end of her sentence. She could hardly stand waiting a moment longer.

Bucky nodded before burying his head in the crook of her neck. He placed tender pecks up her skin which made her shiver in anticipation. Lucy spread her legs wider for him so he could settle comfortably between her hips.

At first, when she felt the tip of him enter her Lucy almost shuttered. He inched in further, waiting for her to take him all in. Lucy stretched around him and shifted uncomfortably at the foreign sensation she hadn't felt in years. His cock bottomed out finally when it seemed like a lifetime of her trying to adjust.

When he was fully sheathed inside her he let out a groan. Lucy stiffened slightly from taking his entire length in all its fullness. She hadn't felt so full in so long, and even though it was moderately
uncomfortable, Lucy felt herself relaxing with each passing moment.

"Are you alright?" Bucky asked her, concern dripping from his voice.

Lucy's heart welled from his sweetness of making sure she was okay. She nodded breathlessly, unable to find the words. She had never felt this way before, as though everything in the universe was aligning. In those few moments of him tucked inside her everything was perfect.

"I'm fine, I think." She said back softly. "I think you can start moving,"

"Oh thank God, I don't think I could take you just gripping me like this for too much longer." He breathed out a sigh of relief, emitting a small chuckle.

His lips captured hers as he started moving. Suddenly Lucy's entire body felt on fire. The man above her was like a god, who could manipulate and use her body like no other.

She had never experienced anything quite so sensual and raw and animalistic as making love with him. Their bodies clashed against one another as Bucky moved his hips to meet her. His hands tangled with hers as he held her pinned to the bed.

Their sweaty bodies collided in sync. Lucy felt herself trying to take him in even more than what was humanly possible with each strong thrust he made her take.

Her thighs wrapped around his hips and his greedy hands tried to pull her closer. Their lips were molded as no space between their bodies existed. They were one together, inseparable, joined in the most natural and pure form of love.

Her hands clawed at his back as he picked up his pace, "You're so tight. Fuck, you feel so good wrapped around me." He groaned in her ear, making her shutter. Each dirty word he whispered to her made her all the more aroused.

They're bodies rocked together and each slam of his hips collided with her pelvis. He was beginning to slip in and out of her at a much easier rate. He picked up his pace just a little bit, not being too rough but not as gentle as he was at first.

Lucy moaned under the sensation. Each nerve in her body was screaming at the feeling in him inside of her. Although she had pictured what being with him intimately would feel like, Lucy never imagined it would be quite like this.

Lucy was surprised when he pulled out of her suddenly. She wanted to cry at the feeling of emptiness. She needed him back inside her and moving with her once again. They were like two magnets, craving to be joined.

To her shock, Bucky aggressively flipped them so she was resting on top of him. Nervousness filled her as she realized what he wanted her to do.

Not only was she not confident with her body, but this position seemed much racier than him being on top. "Buck, I don't know. I'm not sure if I'm comfort—,"

"Hey," He sat up and took her face in his hands. His lips tenderly met hers in a chaste and gentle affirmation of his feelings, "S'okay, sweetheart. I'm right here, you'll be fine." He comforted her and then laid back down.

Lucy nodded, knowing that nothing was wrong with what they were doing. This was just something new and scary, but she wanted to please him. He would never make her do anything she wasn't
comfortable with, and Lucy knew she was capable of trying things more adventurous.

Taking him in her hand she slid down him slowly. It entered her far easier than the last time since she had become used to him. Lucy's breath hitched after he had become fully inside her. He was much deeper in this position and she felt an odd feeling which she hadn't ever had. Moving up and down slowly Bucky let out a pleased groan. His hands went to her hips, coaxing her to move on top of him at the pace he wanted.

Her hands went to his chest as she felt him hit something internally. She began to get breathless again, feeling the overwhelming build-up she had experienced earlier. Bucky watched her move on top of him with wide eyes. He drank in the sight of her hovering above him, bare and skin slick with sweat and peppered with the love bites he had left.

He moved his legs up behind her and began meeting her thrusts. They moved together at a more frantic pace and Lucy called out as he let out a pleasurable cry with her. He felt her tightening around him more with each buck of his hips.

"That's it. Ride me just like that," His hoarse voice filled her ear and Lucy blushed. All the previous shyness she had felt melted away. She grabbed his hands and made him clutch at her breasts. The deeper he entered her, the more her climax built with each roll of her hips.

His hand dropped to where their bodies were joined he gently attempted to bring her closer to her release. When she finally exploded around him again she saw stars. She tried to last as long as she could, continuing joining their bodies as she rode through the pleasurable waves. When she couldn't take it any longer, Lucy fell into his chest and trying to catch a breath, Shs felt Bucky's hands tangled in her hair as he kissed her sweetly.

She was so out of it she didn't even realize she was on her back again and he was on top much like how they started. Scratching at his tender skin, Lucy dug her nails into his back. Her legs wrapped around his hips, holding him against her.

He was thrusting into her with such force that the bed slammed into the wall each time he rocked his hips into hers. The headboard clashed each time and made a creaking noise which would have been apparent to the men downstairs what was going on. But Lucy didn't care, all that mattered at that moment was him.

The mattresses squeaked each time he moved her body with his own. His pelvis was grinding into hers, creating bruising each time moved his hips forward. He was going harder than before, and she could see by his stiffening muscles and his sloppy thrusts that he was close. His thrusts became sloppy and uneven, he tried to keep moving through until he was finished.

With another curse word and a satisfied moan, Lucy could feel him pulsing inside her, twitching to release. She felt a warmth explode inside her as he came, releasing himself in her womanhood.

"I'm sorry," He whispered out of breath, not having it been his previous intention to finish inside of her.

"It's fine," It was different for Lucy to feel his warmth still enveloped inside her. She shook her head and held him tightly, not ready to separate from him just yet.

He stilled finally and gently laid on top of her. Lucy brushed some sweaty hair off his forehead and looked in his eyes. Her thumb brushed his stubbled cheek. Bucky pulled out and Lucy felt an emptiness where he used to be. They were both panting and out of breath, Lucy could feel the remnants of him thickly spilling out down between her legs.
He captured her in a bruising kiss once more. His hands that held her hips traveled to her face. Bucky fell off of her with a stifled groan and laid on his back, facing the ceiling. Both their chests rose and fell heavily as they tried to collect themselves. Every nerve was on fire, each bone turned to dust. Their blood was still running hot and their hearts were pounding inside their chests.

In the most simple of gestures, Bucky took Lucy's hand and brought it to his lips. He laid a gentle kiss on her skin and only said, "You were incredible."

"Yeah?" Lucy let out a half-laugh, trying to turn in her side to look at them. They had made a complete mess of the bed, the sheets tangled and wet. "So were you."

He pressed his forehead against hers and chuckled at her compliment. He looked in her eyes and Lucy could see just how much he cared for her. Every ounce of affection was in that stare, he brushed some hair out of her face. Lucy fell into his touch more, never wanting to be separated from him again. She saw how he looked at her and Lucy had to ask something. She had to know exactly how he felt.

"You really love me, don't you?" She asked. Lucy was almost scared of what he would say. But from the look he was giving her, she knew it was the truth. You don't look at someone like that unless it was the truest form of love.

"With all my heart." Was all he whispered back.

Chapter End Notes

Well ... That was saucy. Saucy indeed. I'm no stranger to writing a little bit of smut but I can confidently say I've never written one quite like that. In some ways, I'm massively embarrassed but also proud? It's strange, for sure. I wanted to capture the aspect that they established a physical relationship not because they're just two horny youngsters, but because they love one another (even if Lucy doesn't fully know it yet). I hope I established all the emotions and made it as tasteful and as beautiful as I possibly could. Hopefully, y'all enjoyed it, if you didn't, I'm sorry. And if you did, well… There's more where that came from ;)

Thank you so much,

-A

Oh, please don't forget to review! I always get super nervous after these types of chapters and second doubt myself. So if you love me, or want me to continue writing some smut lmk.

Follow and favourite, there's some cute ass after-sex fluff up ahead.
Thank you SO MUCH for the lovely reviews! They were amazing to read and very encouraging. I'm glad I was able to make the sexy stuff tasteful. There will be some more of that later on, so never fear. For now though, just some fluff :)

I give myself a little shout out half-way through the chapter lol. Also please forgive the spelling and grammatical errors. I was too lazy to do a through check today.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter XXIX

Lucy stayed on the bed, grabbing the sheets to her chest as Bucky got up to get her a towel. She smirked as she saw his backside as he walked away, she leaned on her elbow to admire the view.

"Stop staring," He chuckled as he caught her gaze drawn to him. He could feel her eyes on him from across the room, watching intently.

"Well, can you blame me?" She teased him, a blush going to her cheeks, turning them pink.

"You're being rude," He teased her back, returning back to the bed. She smirked as she realized his front side was just as nice as the back.

"Well maybe if your ass wasn't sure damn cute I wouldn't keep staring at it,"

"Oh, I see," His voice got lower as he returned her, "You think because we had sex you can be all cheeky and confident now?" He placed a tender kiss on her lips as he crawled back on top of her.

"That's exactly what I think, Barnes." She would never get used to the feeling of him kissing her. Every time it would cause the same excitement as it did when he first grabbed her and threw her out of the plane.

"Last names again? Tsk tsk, doll." He flirted back, giving her a wink. Bucky had the cloth in his hand and Lucy's eyes caught on it.

"What's that for?" She asked curiously as he pulled the sheets away from her.

"Clean up. You don't want to spend the rest of the night with the remnants of me between your legs, do you?" He gently moved the cloth between her legs sweetly, gathering the rest of her arousal and his semen that was still leaking down.

"Mhmm, I suppose not." She agreed, knowing she'd probably regret it the next morning once it had all dried. Once he helped her he threw the rag across the room. He opened his arms to her and Lucy rested her head on his chest. He kissed her forehead gently and held her close.

"Will you stay here with me tonight?" She asked him, looking up with every bit of affection she had
for him. She was worried he would say no. The thought of sleeping alone after the events that just happened made Lucy want to die.

"I don't know," He sighed, Lucy's heart dropped, "You know I do more than anything. But it's not fair to sleep up here in this cozy bed with you while everyone else sleep downstairs."

Lucy nodded, "I understand." She supposed that he was right and it wasn't fair. She didn't want him to be thought of any less either because of it. Although it pained her, Lucy knew he wouldn't be able to stay with her for long.

"Dugan is going to give us so much shit in the morning," Bucky chuckled as he thought about it, "I think he's been wanting this to happen for a while."

"You think? The man would have done anything to see this happen. He's been playing matchmaker, trying to get us together. My friend Elsa convinced him to help, I guess."

"Elsa?" Bucky frowned, not quite remembering who she was, "She the nurse?"

"Yeah, we're tent mates. She and I call you Sergeant Handsome."

"You think I'm handsome?" Bucky asked smugly, he had a troublesome smirk on his face which could have rivelled the devil himself.

"Stop it, you know you are. You don't need me to confirm it for you," Lucy hit his shoulder. He knew full on how gorgeous he was. His smug attitude alone proved it. She had always suspected him to be a ladies man. After all, with a face and a body like that what girl of sound mind wouldn't be attracted to him?

Bucky rubbed his shoulder which she hit, hurt expression on his face, "Ow! Take it easy, slugger!"

"That didn't hurt, you big baby!" Lucy giggled.

"It did, and now you have to kiss it better." He insisted, an even more self-satisfied grin on his face.

With a defeated sigh she leaned down and pressed her lips to his shoulder, "Does anywhere else hurt, your majesty?"

"Your majesty? Oh, I like the sound of that. And yeah, now that you mention it, my cock is a little sore—,"

"No!" Lucy hastily cut him off, knowing exactly where he was going with it. She rolled her eyes at him and huffed in frustration, a smile underneath her irritated tone.

Bucky laughed at her reaction, rubbing her shoulders gently. She revelled under his touch, shivering slightly.

"I'm only playing with you, darlin'." She was too fun to tease. It was nice seeing a more playful side to her. Especially since she was usually all business and no games.

"I know, that's why I'm going along. And because I love kissing you so damn much." She revealed, perhaps giving him a little too much power over her. But she didn't mind; after all, they had just spent the earlier half of the night having one another.

"That's a strange coincidence because I love kissing you too." Bucky smiled before leaning down to capture her lips. Lucy eagerly returned his kiss, smiling halfway through. Kissing him was addicting,
and she was sure she would never be able to get enough of it.

Her hand graced his cheek as his thumb brushed over her bare shoulder. He bit at her playfully, causing Lucy to giggle ever so slightly. She pulled away to see his satisfied grin. Happiness looked so good on him, she wished they would never have to leave the room they were in to return back to the real world.

"I wish we would never have to leave this bed," She whispered softly, gently trailing her finger up and down his chest, playing lightly with the dark hair that covered his skin.

"Me too," He let out a frustrated sigh, "I wish we were anywhere but in the middle of this goddamn war. Anywhere in the world would be better than this,"

Lucy nodded, then looked to him, "As long as you were there I'd want to be there too."

He eyes met hers and he leaned down only to attached his lips to hers once more. She couldn't believe that they had gone so long without kissing. The idea of waiting as long as they did baffled her. Now, she was afraid to go ten minutes without getting the chance again.

"When this is all finished let's go somewhere. Just you and me,"

Lucy frowned at first, but then her lips turned up in a grin as she realized what he was implying, "Like a romantic getaway?"

"Exactly," He nodded, thinking about it just being the two of them without any interruptions, "Wherever you'd want."

Lucy thought about it and bit her lip. There were so many places she had always wanted to go but never got the chance. As the cold air hit her bare skin she was happy to have him for warmth. A shiver ran down her spine as she snuggled closer to him before saying, "Somewhere warm, with a beach."

Bucky grinned happily before saying, "What about Hawaii? I've always wanted to see the Pacific Ocean. See a real beach and actually go swimming in it, not like the ones on Long Island."

"Hawaii it is then," Lucy fantasized about the warmth of the sand and soaking up the sun. It had been so long she got a tan and looked better than her usually paleness. She thought of them just relaxing together and laying on the beach. She chuckled, "I'm just trying to picture vacation Bucky Barnes," She laughed, "Wearing a Hawaiian shirt and swimming trunks with sunglasses on and everything," Lucy giggled the more she thought about it.

"Oh, I would look damn good in a Hawaiian shirt, alright." He hummed as he thought about it longer before saying in a low voice, "You in a pretty sundress, your skin sun-kissed and tanned,"

"It's a nice thought," Lucy admitted, "Drinking pina coladas by the water. Luau's with a pig roast, taking sunset strolls in the evening."

"Mmmm," Bucky gave a low hum of approval, "Making love to you on the beach."

Lucy blushed at his statement. Never before had she ever discussed such dirty manners, let alone entertained the idea of it, "It's public!" She exclaimed, completely scandalized.

"We'd go somewhere more private. And besides, getting caught is part of the thrill," She couldn't believe the lewd things that came out of his mouth sometimes. The thought of it, however erotic it was, caused her cheeks to turn deep red. She couldn't imagine someone catching them with him
inside of her. The thought alone of just the men downstairs knowing what they were up to was embarrassing enough.

"James Barnes, I never knew you were such an absolutely filthy man. I don't know your mother but I know that she didn't raise you like that."

"You love the idea of it, don't lie." He knew her too well. "C'mon, just picture it. Me on top of you, our bodies half way in the water. The thrill of anyone wandering by and catching us,"

Lucy shook her head, although it was appealing in possibly the slightest naughty way, "Absolutely not."

Bucky's fingers went between her legs to touch her arousal, with the first contact of him her breath hitched. She was wet from picturing it in her head and she couldn't hide it from him. Bucky whispered lowly in her ear, "Liar," He nipped at her.

Lucy rolled her eyes, her stomach flipped as she watched him bring his fingers to his mouth to lick them clean. The sight of that alone was enough to almost make her jump him again. The thought of him inside her once more almost drove her mad.

"You're a very bad man," Was all she said with a chuckle. Where on earth did he get this boldness from? She had never met a man as erotic as him before.

"Just for you, darlin." He winked flirtatiously. He gripped her hip tightly in his hand, giving it a squeeze.

Lucy bit her lip, trying to figure out just how far she could push him, "Now you're the liar. No one can be that good at love making without having dozens of women."

Bucky wasn't expecting her to retort with something like that. He looked a little flustered, "There's been a few. But what about you? You can't be that good at sucking me off and have never done it before."

"Actually," Lucy licked her lips before admitting, "I haven't done it before. This was my first time."

Bucky blinked a couple times and his mouth opened and closed. He looked at her and frowned and tried to figure out if she was telling the truth, "You—what? No, there's no way. How did you...?"

"I just did whatever felt right," She shrugged, "I don't know. I've been wanting to do it to you for awhile,"

"You think about things like that? Takin' my cock in your mouth like that?" He whispered dirtily in her ear, making her shiver. He bit her ever so slightly and Lucy ran her hand over his chest. "Now who's dirty?"

"Still you," Lucy gasped as he took her earlobe in his mouth and bit it again, "With a filthy mouth like that you're going to need to go to confessions."

Bucky shrugged and then hummed, "Can't confess something you don't feel guilty about." Her stomach flipped, hearing how he didn't regret it for even a second.

"All I know," Lucy huffed, "Is that I'll be spending a lot of time on my knees after tonight." She hated time think of all the prayers she would have to say to wipe her slate clean.

"Eager to get back down there already?" Bucky teased and Lucy realized how what she said had
sounded, "I mean if you're volunteering, I won't protest."

"Stop it, you!" She scolded him and rolled her eyes and blushed hitting his chest again, "You are such a pervert, James Barnes! An absolute filthy-minded, dirty-mouthed scoundrel! Can you not think of anything but sex?"

"You love it! Don't deny it!" He kissed up and down her neck, causing Lucy's breath to hitch again. She did love it, more than anything, but she would never tell him.

"My lips are sealed," Lucy would never give him the satisfaction of letting him know just how his words affected her. Although her body would betray her, her mouth would at least would stay loyal.

"Yeah, yeah," Bucky rolled her eyes at her stubbornness, "I know the truth. You're not foolin' anyone, pige."

"An absolute scoundrel, James Barnes." She shook her head again and repeated. As she heard the words that came out of her mouth she frowned, "How did the nickname Bucky come about?"

Bucky gave a low chuckle, "My middle name is Buchanan. It's a family name. Bucky just eventually was something people called me when I was a kid. I had these bucked teeth that I didn't grow into until I was a teenager."

Lucy smiled as she thought about it. She wished she had been able to see him when he was young, to know what he was like. "You know James Buchanan was a president, right?"

"So I've been told," He chuckled and then looked at her, "What about you? What's your middle name?"

"Ooohhh no," Lucy protested firmly, "I'm never telling you! Not a single soul knows my middle name but my parents—who have taken it to their graves, and my older sister." Even Daniel didn't know her middle name. He had tried to guess it multiple times but Lucy never revealed what it was.

"Is it German?" He asked her, his fingers playing with her bare skin. Lucy laid further on his chest and looked at him. Her fingers trailed up and down in patterned, gently tickling him.

"It is." She confirmed, smirking, "It's very German."

"Okay, give me a couple and don't say which one it is."

"No!" Lucy laughed, "Because then you'll be able to figure it out!"

"I won't even ask which one it is, just list off five!" He protested with a chuckle, trying his best to get it out of her.

Lucy looked at him and then sighed. She then gave in, unable to resist those big blue puppy dog eyes, "Okay, okay. Umm.. let's see. Helga, Griselda, Hedwig, Wilhelmine, or Walburga."

"Wow," Bucky nodded in disbelief, "Yeah, your parents definitely hated you."

Lucy giggled, "Believe it or not, but four out of five of those are middle names belong to my sisters and I. My parents clearly wanted us to struggle."

"You have three sisters?" Bucky asked curiously.

"Well, two now. Beatrix and Adeline. My youngest sister Kathleen died at four years old when I was sixteen." She always struggled about talking about her dead family members. After all, it wasn't
an easy topic, but she found herself wanting to share it with him.

"I'm sorry," Bucky kissed her head, "That must have been hard. I only have one sister, Rebecca. She's uhh, something that's for sure. I think you two would get along. She had a regular middle name though, so she can't relate to you on that."

Lucy smiled, she was about to say something when Bucky cut her off, still in disbelief.

"I am so sorry about those middle names though. God, those are awful! When we have babies we'll for sure name them something normal. Like... Anna, or Matthew or Benjamin or something."

"When we have babies?" Lucy looked at him skeptically. She rose an eyebrow to look at him with a pressing look, "You tellin' me something I don't know, Barnes? Maybe we shouldn't be talking about babies after you just, gee-I don't know, ejaculated inside me?"

"Well, we'll have them one day. Once we're married, of course!" He teased, also cringing as he heard the way she accused him of finishing inside her.

"Married?!" Lucy demanded with a laugh, she fell back as she shook her head, "You need to slow down there, tiger!"

"Are you really that surprised to hear that? I told you I loved you earlier today!" Bucky chuckled, knowing he was showing her all his cards but he didn't even care.

"No," Lucy sighed and then shook her head, "I suppose I'm not." She had just never thought about it that much if she was being honest. "I never figured you were the marriage type of guy,"

"When I first saw you in that bar in Brooklyn," Bucky's voice dropped. He became more genuine and serious before licking his lips and smiling her so slightly, "I turned to Steve and I actually said 'See that girl? I'm gonna marry her.'"

"Wow, that's presumptuous of you." Lucy laughed as she gently touched his chin, feeling the stubble that grew there and having it scratch against her delicate skin. "Assuming you're gonna marry a complete stranger."

"I don't care, I just don't want you to think I have the wrong intentions," Bucky told her. "I'm in it for the long haul."

"Maybe one day." She sighed wistfully. She couldn't think of marriage and babies and anything beyond the war. She had already lost one love of her life, to lose another would be too painful. "Is that really what you thought when you first saw me?"

"That," He nodded and then smirked like the devil, a look of mischief in his eye, "And 'would you check out the ass on her.'"

"That's it!" Lucy called out, her mouth dropping as he laughed at her reaction. She began pushing and shoving him off the bed, "Out of the bed! You've misbehaved for the last time this evening!" She shoved him with her feet enough to propel him off, causing him to laugh even more. "You are such a pain in the ass!"

"Right back atcha, sweetheart." Bucky let out a low chuckle as he gathered his clothes that she threw across the room as they had undressed earlier. Lucy noticed how he put in his boxers. He came over to her and lifted her chin to place a chaste kiss on her mouth, "Been a pain in my ass since the day I met you." Lucy had to agree he was right. She had thought he was a pain when they met, and she thought he was one ever since.
She watched as he began putting his clothes on and Lucy's face dropped, realizing he was leaving, "Wait, no, come back. I didn't mean it!"

Bucky grinned while trying to button up his shirt, "I know baby, but I have to go down with the fellas. But trust me when I saw that it's the hardest thing I've ever had to do," He did up his belt and looked down at her in the bed. She was completely bare except the small sheet that covered her from the waist down. Bucky let out a pained exhale out of frustration, "Definitely the hardest thing I've ever had to do."

"Don't go," Lucy's voice broke as she held onto his hand as she flipped over. Bucky's swallowed a lump in his throat as he saw how badly she wanted him to stay with her.

"Don't break my heart, pige." He begged her, looking at her hurt expression. He leaned down and kissed her once more, "I'll try to sneak in here with you in the morning before you wake up."

"Promise?" She whispered, not knowing how she was supposed to sleep alone after everything that had happened.

"I promise. Good night, Lucy Griselda Heinrich," He pressed his lips to her hand that held him back. She finally released her grip on him, a smirk on her face as Bucky looked on with her in curiosity.

"Nope," She popped the 'p' at the end of her sentence as she grinned,

"Damn it!" Bucky cussed as he grabbed his boots and began heading out the door. Lucy sat up on her elbows to watch him as he left, "Is it Hedwig?"

Lucy said nothing but pursed her lips together, not giving him a yes or a no. His face dropped as he let out a shocked gasp and smirked, "It is! It's Hedwig!"

"Alright, get out of here! Now I'm not upset you're leaving me! Sleep alone for all I care, James Buchanan!"

"Good night, sweet Lucy Hedwig Heinrich! Dream of me!"

"Oh, you wish you bastard!" Lucy only threw a pillow across the room at him as he quickly closed closed the door. "And that's still Doctor Lucy Hedwig Heinrich to you!" He could hear her muffled yell through the wooden door. Bucky striffled a chuckle as he stood outside and quickly put his boots on, thinking of their interaction. It was impossible for the smile he had to leave his face.

When Bucky arrived downstairs he was surprised to see the men still around the table and drinking. Given the smell of booze, as well as their boisterous laughter and red faces, they had been drinking for quite some time and was well past the state of drunkenness.

As soon as he entered the room, there was silence. The men looked over to him and Bucky suddenly felt uncomfortable. His hands were in his pockets and he wanted nothing more than to hide since it was obvious they all knew what had just happened.

"Don't let the party stop just because I showed up," Bucky stated, wondering when the teasing was about to start. They were uncharacteristically quiet.

Everyone was silent until Gabe Jones finally smirked and then only began making a squeaking and rocking sound, " Eee Er Ee Er Ee Err!" implying the bed was creaking. Every burst out laughing at his joke and Bucky rolled his eyes.
"Alright, alright, I know. Knock it off now!"

Dugan laughed loudest before finally reaching his hands up in victory and making fists, " Fucking finally!" He chuckled as he stood up and clapped Bucky on the back before shoving a bottle of wine in his hand. Bucky gracefully accepted it and drank a couple large swigs, knowing he was going to need it if the teasing continued, " You're a man now, son! God, if this were a book you two wouldn't have gotten together until almost the thirtieth chapter." Dugan laughed and then rolled his eyes, " And who would ever wanna read a piece of garbage like that?"

"So uhh, Sarg?" Lee Miller looked over at him smugly, " How's it feel to finally pop your cherry?"

" You guys are hilarious," Bucky rolled his eyes as he took a seat. He looked at Lee before playfully punching him, " And it feels pretty good, Miller. Not that you would know since you still haven't popped yours yet."

"Aaaah! Ahh! Ah! Oooh!" Gabe Jones moaned in a girlish, high-pitch, tone. " Uhh, yeah!"

He paused before saying, " For the record, that's what you sounded like, not her!"

" You couldn't last a bit longer and put on a better show? I was just getting turned on." Whitney said with a dastardly smirk before sipping more wine from his own bottle. Bucky's jaw clenched as he looked at the man. He had an evil twinkle in his eye before adding, " And I gotta admit, Sarg. I'm impressed. Never thought that frigid broad could be tamed but it sounded like you really showed her who was boss," He raised his bottle high to him, gesturing a saluting cheers.

" Oh, Whitney," Bucky chuckled before taking a sip of his wine, his face turned red with anger and he gripped the bottle maybe a little too harshly, " One of these days I'm gonna kick your fuckin' ass when you talk about her like that." The room fell silent. This was the first time Bucky had ever threatened Whitney with violence. But there was nothing he wanted to do more than to punch him right in the face.

" Talk about her like that?" Whitney chuckled back and then cocked his head, " You mean calling her a frigid broad? Those aren't my words, they're yours. You goddamn hypocrite." He slammed his bottle down on the table a little too loudly, everyone keeping their eyes on him, " What? You think now because you fucked the bitch—"

" She's not a bitch, and if you say it one more time you and I are going to take this outside." Bucky threatened.

" Just using your own goddamn words," He clicked his teeth, a devilish smirk on his lips. He knew exactly how to push Bucky's buttons. " But if you wanna take this outside, by all means! I just would hate for your lady to see your ass getting handed to ya," Whitney stood up, staggering slightly. He eyed the door, looking at Bucky as though they were heading out there.

Bucky clenched his jaw even tighter. There was nothing he wanted to do more than to take him out there and kick his ass. But there was no glory in beating a drunk. And Bucky definitely didn't want Lucy to see him do something so undignified. He was a Sergeant, and it wasn't becoming of him to beat one of the men in his charge, no matter how big of a prick he was.

" Are we going or not?" Whitney questioned, hiccuping from the amount of liquor he had.

Bucky only sat there and glared. The men watched him intently, wondering what he was going to do. It took all that Bucky had not to go outside and teach him a lesson. Bucky's teeth gritted from how frustrated he was, but he made no move.
Whitney, sensing Bucky wasn't going to get up, only sneered before letting out a chuckle, "That's what I thought." He sat back down with a heavy huff, "Who would have known that fucking pussy would turn you into one,"

Bucky got to his feet so quickly his chair fell to the ground beside him. He was ready to take Whitney by the collar of his shirt and throw him outside to dole out the beating of his life when suddenly Dugan stood up, "Buck, it's not worth it." He put his hand on his shoulder to keep him from going after Whitney.

"One of these days," Bucky only said and shook his head, looking at Whitney, "One of these days," He only repeated again. The thought of kicking his ass some time in the future was all too sweet. Bucky swallowed a couple large gulps of wine, his eyes still focused on Whitney. The man only smirked, making Bucky all the more irritated.

"Alright, well now that you two drama queens have had a cool down. I wanna keep talking about the erm, events that just happened upstairs. The only actions I'm getting right now is living vicariously through you, Sarg. So you better spill all the details." Lee Miller changed the subject, yet again fixating on the topic of Lucy and Bucky.

"I don't kiss and tell, boys." Bucky only stated. Already he felt he put Lucy in a compromising position by the fact the men had heard what happened. He didn't want to disrespect her anymore than he already had.

"Was it terrifying? I imagine sleeping with her would be slightly terrifying. Does she like bossing people around in bed as much as she does in real life?"

"Like I said, I don't kiss and tell." Bucky only spoke again.

"Alright, alright, that's enough out of all of you!" Dugan exclaimed, "You talk all you want about your whores in the brothels but don't go on disrespecting Dr. Heinrich. And under no circumstances, bring this up tomorrow morning to the good Doctor. Lest we want to be skinned alive," The man snickered just talking about it.

"Alright, alright, one more question!" Gabe Jones laughed, "Are her cans actually as big as they look?"

"Ha ha! Really funny, Jones." Bucky smirked as he stood up. He knew he was only teasing him but Bucky needed a smoke after the conversation they just had. He grabbed his bottle on the way out, knowing he'd want to drink a little later as he nursed a cigarette. Dugan stood up with him and decided to follow Bucky and join him.

When Bucky got outside he shivered. It was much warmer in the house and he noticed how cold it was beginning to get, "Sorry about them, they can be perverted little pricks sometimes." Dugan only said with a shake of his head. His words all though harsh were said fondly.

"S'alright." Bucky placed a cigarette in his teeth as he looked for his lighter, "I get it. I don't want them talking too much more about it but it's not bad for morale to have some teasing." It was the only reason why he was letting them speak so crudely. He knew they didn't mean any of it and it was all done in good fun.

"Still," Dugan shook his head, "I wouldn't like it if someone was talking about my woman like that,"

"Lucy's tough. She can handle it," Bucky replied and although he didn't like it either, there wasn't much he could do about it. He lit the tip of his cigarette and inhaled the smoke into his lungs deeply. He shivered in the autumn air, wondering when it would begin to snow. He figured there was at least
another month until Winter hit them and he wasn't looking forward to it.

"Yes she is, toughest broad I know." Dugan lit his own smoke and inhaled the chemicals as soon as the fire caught on the end. "Which is why is hate to see her have to leave if anyone outside this group caught wind of your little relationship."

Bucky hadn't thought about what would happen if they got together. He had been so caught up in the moment he hadn't even thought that getting together would mean the army would likely keep them apart.

Bucky let out a shaky exhale, worried he would lose her as soon as he finally got her, "What do I do?"

"Well," Dugan sighed, "I'm assuming everyone has enough discretion to not say anything just yet. Though I can't say the same about that fucking a-hole, Whitney. I'd try to make nice with him the best I could."

Bucky scowled at the suggestion. But he knew he would have to suck up his pride if he wanted to keep Lucy around. He nodded in understanding, knowing it was the thing he wanted to do the least in the world but knew he had no other option. "You're right."

He took an extra long drag of his cigarette as soon as he admitted he would have to try to get in Whitney's good side. At least the nicotine relaxed him a little more.

"Jesus, didn't think you'd be so eager to agree. Thought you'd fight it at least a little bit," Dugan was surprised, the shock evident in his voice.

"I don't wanna lose her," Was all Bucky replied with.

Dugan pursed his lips together in a soft smile, "You really love her? You weren't just sayin' that earlier because you thought we were doing to die?"

Bucky exhaled, blowing his smoke into the nighttime air, "I love her more than I love life itself." He said genuinely, he smiled as he thought of her in bed. The fact she wanted him up there with her made his heart lurch, "She's... She's everything."

"Yup, you got it bad alright." Dugan nodded, a low bark of laughter emitted from his lips as he saw how love struck Bucky was.

Bucky smiled and only scratched the back of his neck, "I'm gonna propose to her. I don't know when, but umm... I'm hoping before New Years."

Dugan laughed and only said with his hands up, "I called it! I called it, didn't I? I said you'll be engaged by New Years." He shook his head, realizing the two of them were crazy, "You don't think it's moving a little fast?"

"She's the one, I just know it. I don't know how long this damn war is going to go on for. But all I know is that I want to spend the rest of my life with her. If today showed us anything it's that we can die at any moment. And I don't want to die without at least spending a little bit of time having her completely. She's..." Bucky only huffed and ran a hand through his hair as he thought about Lucy, "She's really something else."

"Yeah, ain't that the truth. A dame like that is rare." He nodded then smirked, "But like I said, don't knock her up just yet. I don't want to have to lose the best Lieutenant we've got and a good friend."
"I'll do my best," Bucky chuckled and continued smoking until it was almost out.

"Also," Dugan looked at Bucky like he was crazy, "Why the hell you down here with us lot and not with your lady upstairs?"

Bucky breathed out frustratedly, almost rolling his eyes. Of course he wanted to be with Lucy. More than anything he wanted that.

"Didn't think it would be fair to sleep in the bed with her while you all are down here," He only shrugged, hating that he couldn't be with her.

"Are you fucking kidding me?" Dugan asked, clearly annoyed, "You get your ass back up in that bed with her. Jesus Christ, Barnes! You don't let a lady sleep on her own after you bedded her! Didn't your mother ever teach you anything!?" Bucky wanted to answer saying there's no way his very Catholic mother would have ever discussed anything like that with him, but he didn't bother.

Instead he only barked out a nervous laugh, "I can't abandon my men for my girl! It makes me look like a shitty Sergeant."

"Those fellas in there give a shit. They're gonna keep drinking themselves silly and not even remember a thing in the morning. So you march your ass back up there and be with your lady. Else I'm gonna take the bed! And I don't care if I'm gonna have to sleep next to your girl! I'll do it as long as I get a bed! You know how long it's been since I've slept in a bed? Way too long, my friend."

Bucky only shook his head and Dum Dum's words and then said genuinely after putting out his cigarette with his shoe, "Thanks, Dugan."

"Don't mention it," he chuckled lowly.

"Seriously, if it wasn't for you Lucy and I might have still been at each other's throats." After all, it was Dugan who first told them to give each other a chance. Had he never talked some sense into them, they might not have been where they were.

"Oh yeah, no doubt. And then if it wasn't for me, you wouldn't be gettin' your dick wet.

So really you owe me massively. I expect lots of goodies in the future as a thanks," He teased.

Bucky rolled his eyes before heading back inside. He noticed Gilbert Whitney passed out at the table, drooling on his arm as he slept. Gabe Jones was setting up his blankets on the floor to prepare for bed. Lee Miller was still drinking slowly as he wrote a letter home.

Bucky walked past them to head up the stairs. With a smile on his face, he pushed open the door and saw Lucy on the bed as she slept. Her silhouette was draped in the silk nightgown she wore earlier.

Bucky stripped, wanting to have as little clothes as possible separating them. When he was finally in his boxers, he lifted the covers and finally got into the bed. Lucy must have felt the bed dip under his weight.

She sleepily opened one eye and let out a little "Hmm?" Bucky wrapped his arms around her center and placed his body directly next to hers.

"Shhh," Bucky shushed her, "Just me, baby. Go back to sleep."

"Mmhmm," She hummed as he snuggled closer to her, his mouth kissing up her neck gently, "I'm
gad you're here, Buck." She turned to him and through heavy, hooded sleep eyes, rubbed his cheek affectionately. "So glad," She whispered as he kissed her.

"Me too, doll. Gonna sleep a helluva lot better with you wrapped in my arms." He kissed her cheek as she came in closer so she could sleep on his chest.

"Mm," she hummed again sleepily, "I love it when you hold me like this. Don't ever stop." He wasn't sure if she was fully awake, it sounded like she always almost half asleep but was talking anyway. As she spoke Bucky couldn't help but smile.

"I won't. I'm gonna be here for a long while. It'll end up annoying you I'm sure," He chuckled, "You're never going to have to sleep alone again,"

"Good," She whispered, her voice fading from the tiredness. With a soft sigh, she said lightly, "Because I don't want to."

Bucky smiled into darkened room at her words. His heart expanded with all the love he had for her. He kissed her softly on the head once more, noticing how her breathing changed.

He brushed a small piece of hair out of her face so he could watch her as she slept peacefully. His heart raced as he saw how at peace she was while sleeping on top of him. He was so desperately in love with her that it actually hurt. And as he watched as her chest rose and fell with each deep breath she took Bucky knew there was one thing he absolutely sure of more than anything else in his life.

He was definitely going to marry her.

Chapter End Notes

The calm before the storm. I love that chapter. I'm so, so glad they're finally together. Was the wait not worth it? The end sentence too! Even I was like 'damn I am good' when I wrote that. *wistful sighs* Ah, romance.

I hope you all enjoyed that little fluffy chapter. You all deserve it for being so patient.

Thanks for reading,

-A

Please don't forget to review! I rely on them for my life source as well as creative inspiration. And follow and favourite as well!
Chapter XXX

Chapter Notes

Thank you, thank you, thank you to all my lovelies. You guys are truly the best readers ever. I never thought I'd keep up with his story past chapter 15, and now its reached 30! Just crazy. Really I wouldn't have kept with it if it weren't for all your support and kind words. Thanks again, and I'm glad you all are enjoying all the fluff in the last couple chapters.

Trigger Warning: Another 'M' rated adult chapter near the middle section. ;) Also, so sorry again for the bad editing. I've been remarkably lazy recently.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter XXX

Lucy awoke with soft kisses being pressed to the back of her neck. She was so unused to the sensation that for a moment she thought she was back in France in her and Daniel's home.

But as she felt the scruffiness of the man who was leaving said kisses Lucy smiled. She groaned in protest of waking up, hating the idea of having to leave the warm bed and the man beside her.

"Ten more minutes," She sighed sleepily with closed eyes. She had never been much of a morning person. One of life's greatest pleasures was sleeping in, and on a day off Lucy would happily stay asleep well past noon. However, since joining the army, sleeping in was a luxury that rarely took place. If she wasn't awake from the massive amount of work she had to get done, then it was noisiness of the base camp that usually woke her up.

She preferred being awoken by the man sleeping beside her though. Although she was tired, nothing made her happier than feeling his soft kisses trailing up her skin.

"Rise and shine, pigeon." Bucky chuckled, touching her hip lightly, "We gotta get a move on today."

"No," Lucy protested and turned on her side, taking the blankets with her. "Ten more minutes,"

"You sure I can't convince you somehow to wake up?"

"Shhhhh." Lucy shushed him with her eyes still closed. She wasn't ready to face the day yet. Yesterday had been exhausting and she could use the extra few minutes of rest.

Between her legs she could feel the next day soreness after being thoroughly fucked. Lucy smiled in her sleep again as she thought about what trouble she and Bucky had gotten up to the night before.

"Up and at it, sweetheart." Bucky tapped her hip again, trying to wake her up.

"James Barnes, I'm crazy about you. But if you try to wake me up again before ten minutes are up, I'm going to rip off that beautiful penis of yours."
"But then what would have for breakfast?" He nuzzled her neck, a light chuckle leaving his lips.

That woke Lucy up, her eyes shot open and she frowned, creasing her brow and looking at him with an annoyed scowl. She glared at him and Bucky quickly made a face that acknowledged he misspoke and he held up his hands in surrender, "Doll, I'm only teasing!" He said hastily, noticing her ferocity.

Lucy huffed and then snuggled back under the blankets, closing her eyes, "Better be, we don't joke about breakfast."

"No, never again. I am so sorry," He laughed as he kissed her cheek, "God, you are terrifying."

"Mmhm," Lucy hummed again and yawned sleepily, "And don't you forget it."

Bucky kissed her jawline and his hands went up and down her sides, he sighed as he admitted carefully, "Honestly darlin', you scare the hell out of me." His hands wandered until they reached between her legs. Lucy's eyes shot open again as her dress was suddenly around her hips, leaving her exposed to him. His kisses went further down to her neck where he sucked on her delicate skin, "But it turns me on so damn much," He admitted.

Lucy chuckled lowly, "Oh yeah?"

"Mmm," Bucky hummed as he finally kissed her, his hand in her jaw holding her face still, his other hand running through her folds and teasing her, "I love when you boss me around." He rolled her over so she was on his back and he crawled over top of her.

Their mouths clashed hungrily as their lips finally met. Lucy greedily took him in, contentedness and happiness settling in her stomach. She never knew she could feel quite like this. Their teeth scraped along each other, a desperate filling the both of them as their tongues met. Lucy sighed through the blissful kiss, feeling as Bucky ran his fingers through her arousal.

Her hands tangled in his messy hair as he rested on top of her, her legs opening up to cradle his hips between them.

"Bucky," She whispered as he kissed down her narrow throat, his hand still placed between their two bodies, coaxing more arousal to drip from her. "Fuck, I need you so much."

"I love when you beg for me like this," He whispered before attacking her neck again. Lucy arched her back as two of his fingers slipped inside of her, causing pleasure to well deep within her core.

"Please," She pleaded quietly as she attempted to get his boxers down his hips. She needed him inside her yet again, to be completely joined and moving with one another.

"Gotta take care of my best girl first," He said lowly, creating a deep ache to form in Lucy's lower stomach. He captured her lips once more harshly, their teeth clashing yet again before trailing his mouth down. He made sure to administer gentle kisses to her breasts as he pulled the top of her dress down to expose her to the cold air.

He didn't spend much time there though like he did the night before. Instead, he continued downwards to between her thighs. Lucy felt a deep blush settle in her cheeks again at the thought of him spending more time down there. She still wasn't totally comfortable with the idea, but the prospect of once again being brought to climax as she did the night before was not something she could ignore.

Bucky placed both her thighs over his shoulder as his tongue gently met with her womanhood. Lucy
had to cover her mouth to keep from moaning too loudly. Her hips began to have a mind of their own, desperate to take him in further. He placed a strong arm over her hips to hold her steady, lightly chuckling at her desperation.

"This is heaven," Lucy sighed with a little mewl as Bucky continued to move his tongue around her clit. Suddenly she was ripped out of her euphoria as a loud voice rang out.

"Hey, love birds! Ride and shine, we're burnin' daylight!" Dugan quickly knocked on the door, his voice irritating Lucy to her very essence as he interrupted them. Her cheeks turned the deepest shade of red there ever was from embarrassment and frustration.

"Oh god," She whispered in horror as Bucky's head separated from her she nearly cried, "It's hell."

Bucky arose from between her legs and she wanted to cry even more than she already did. She pushed his head back down, begging for more and Bucky chuckled, "Sorry, sweetheart." He gave between her legs a soft kiss, teasing her once more and making her whine before he emerged, "I promise I'll take care of you later."

Lucy huffed in frustration, knowing his promise was empty since they would have to move out soon and there was nothing to be done then.

"No, now." She whined, making Bucky chuckle.

"Who woulda ever known Dr. Lucy Heinrich was so needy?"

"You tell anyone and I'll kill you," She said as he came up and kissed her hard on the mouth.

"I don't doubt it, baby." Bucky said lowly with a chuckle before capturing her mouth again. He couldn't stop kissing her if he even tried. He was addicted to it at that point, needing it in order to function.

As he came up to meet Lucy he stayed there and just looked at her. He never noticed how she had tiny freckles below her eyes. Lucy's eyes met his and she gave Bucky a small smile. Her hand went to his cheek where she gently with her thumb rubbed his skin.

"You need a shave," He was almost growing a light full beard at that point.

"I haven't exactly found time in the last couple days," Bucky rubbed his face, noticing that she was right. But he didn't mind it, and she didn't seem to mind either.

Lucy looked at him and the longer she did she nearly lost her breath. "You're beautiful," Was all she could say.

"That's my line." Bucky said with a half smile.

She only rubbed his cheek again with her thumb. Her soft skin brushing over the scratchiness of his facial hair. She leaned forward to place a small kiss on his lips. Now that they had finally kissed after it had taken them so long to do so, Lucy didn't think she could ever stop.

"Up and at 'em, doll." Bucky tapped her hip and Lucy groaned and threw her head back in complaint, "None of that!" He chuckled and pressed his mouth to her cheek sweetly, "We have a job to do."

"I suppose you're right." Lucy huffed in frustration. She hated he was right.
"One more smooch for the road?" Bucky asked with a cocked eyebrow.

Lucy intended it to be sweet and chaste, but Bucky had another idea. He slid his tongue in her mouth once she opened up just enough to let him in. He grabbed the back of her head and kept her there so she couldn't move even if she had wanted to. Which, obviously, she did not want to.

Lucy grabbed his shoulders and pulled him into her, their tongues colliding with one another.

She placed her knee between his legs and felt him harden. Bucky stiffened at the pressure and then pulled away, looking at her smug face.

"No, no. Don't think I don't know what you're trying to do, you minx." He kissed her neck gently.

"Ugh fine, it was worth the shot." She huffed with a sigh and rolled her eyes. Bucky got off of her and stood up, stretching ever so slightly.

Lucy got up out of the bed and walked to the closet where there were two dresses in there still hanging.

As Bucky dressed he watched her as she strode across the room. His eyes were drawn to her figure that was still clad in the nightdress she was wearing before. He put his pants back on and as he did up his belt Lucy caught his gaze. She rose and eyebrow at him after having caught him staring.

"The sight of you in silk," Bucky looked up and down at her with a hungry stare. "A goddamn masterpiece." He couldn't tear his gaze from her form. He felt himself just getting turned on by the sight of her and he knew he should look away but he couldn't.

Lucy only smiled and looked down at the silk dress, "I missed wearing pretty things like this. Too bad it's not practical to wear it all the time."

"It's not practical," Bucky came up behind her after putting on his shirt. He rubbed her shoulders up and down as Lucy looked at the dresses in the closet and bit her lip. He attached his lips to her neck and trailed them down, "Because if I saw you struttin' around in that thing I'd be on top of you in an instant."

"Well," Lucy clicked her tongue and turned around to press her lips to his softly, Bucky tried to make the kiss last longer but Lucy pulled away. He almost groaned in annoyance, suddenly wishing he could take her back to bed. "Can't have that, can we?" She asked with a smug face.

"No we can't." Was all Bucky said in agreement before forcing himself to tear away from her and gather his socks and boots and put them on. He looked at her once more before finally saying, "One day when this is finally over I'm gonna get you as many silk dresses as you want."

She looked over at him with a smirk and then with a suggestively raised eyebrow ask, "So you can just jump me whenever you want?"

"Exactly," Bucky said with a wink before leaving her to get some privacy. Lucy only rolled her eyes, but couldn't stop herself from smiling.

Lucy had a nervous pit in her stomach after she got dressed. She had put on the long sleeved simple dress that was hanging in the closet. She had unfortunately had to leave her own uniform behind in the castle, and would have to wait to try to find something more practical to wear.

What she was nervous about though, was seeing the men. It was obvious what had happened the
night before between her and Bucky, and she was prepared to have them say some awful things.

However, it didn't make it any easier to deal with. And not to mention, they would likely respect her even less than they already did.

As Lucy walked down the stairs, she felt all eyes in her as she descended down. However, she refused to let them know how uncomfortable she was. Instead, she put on a brave, unemotional face. She felt as though they all had something on their mind, given the fact they were all looking at her.

"Anyone have anything they want to say to me?" Lucy demanded, her face stoic and her tone serious.

"You're looking good this morning Doc, well rested and such," Dugan said with a smirk as he sipped his coffee.

"Yes well, I had a wonderful sleep." She said with the smallest trace of a smirk, her eyes flashed to Bucky before saying, "I had quite a rigorous workout last night."

"Geez!" Gabe Jones choked on his coffee as he laughed at her implication, shock evident in his voice from what she said. Even though she could tease about it to try to fit in, she hoped no one would take it too far.

"Good morning," Bucky said as Lucy came up to him at the counter and he passed her a tin cup filled with coffee. He realized he never got the chance to actually say it to her.

"Good morning indeed," She smiled smugly. She couldn't keep herself from being in a good mood, already that morning as was practically glowing from how happy she was.

Bucky gave her a look that made her nearly go crazy. Their hands brushed as he gave her the coffee cup. "You look beautiful," Lucy took a sip and then reached down to pinch his ass before she left. She figured no one had seen and she could be slightly affectionate. How Lucy lasted so long without kissing or touching him was a mystery.

"Jesus, you two," Whitney only rolled his eyes, nursing a hangover, "It's too early to be showing public displays of affection," He burped ever so slightly, looking a little green, "I'm already feeling like I'm about to vomit without watching you hump each other."

Lucy only pursed her lips together, "Well Whitney, if you hadn't drunk yourself into a stupor last night perhaps your wouldn't be feeling - and looking - like such shit. I'm sorry I have no sympathy for you."

"You're the reason I drink, darlin." He held up his coffee in a salute to her.

"It's Doctor," She glared at him.

"Sarg calls you pet names." Whitney cocked his eyebrow, challenging hers

"'Sarg'," Lucy mimicked him, "Can call me whatever he wants,"

"Favourites." Whitney nodded as if he understood, "I see how it is. You sleep with a guy once and suddenly everything has changed. I wonder if that was me up there instead of him if you'd be letting me do whatever I wanted too."

"Whitney, why are you such a fucking prick?" Lucy ended up crossing her arms and glaring at him. She saw from the corner of her eye how Bucky had tensed up from Whitney's words. However he
didn't intervene, he let Lucy fight her own battles. "Did your mom and dad not love you enough as a child or something?"

"No, but I'm assuming yours didn't." Lucy paled at his words. He gave her a sinister smile, "That's right, I heard about what happened to you. How your dad used to beat you around and how he ended up killing mommy. Probably wanted to kill you too if you were as irritating back then as you are today."

"That's enough, Whitney." Bucky scowled and his fists tightened.

"Why are you just a dick all the time? I mean it's so early in the morning." Dugan asked in shock and shook his head. "Is there ever a time of day where you're not a total twat?"

Lucy glared only more and refused to humour him by talking about the topic he just introduced. He wanted to push Lucy over the edge and she wouldn't let it happen. "I had a friend who was a psychologist back when I used to teach at a university back in France. She had a theory that men who belittled and bullied women were often insecure in their own life, and lashed out at successful women and blamed them for their failures. She also believed that they were usually overcompensating for something," Lucy gestured down with her eyes to the front of his pants and then rose a cocky eyebrow, "She was right nine times out of ten."

Whitney was red in the face from his anger. He hated that Lucy remained so calm and gave him nothing when all he wanted was for her to react. But Lucy had been dealing with men like him her entire life. He didn't phase her, she knew how to handle him.

"Children, children," Dugan sighed and shook his head and Lucy opened up her rations for breakfast, "Can we not get along for one morning, please? The constant bickering is driving me up the wall."

"You're right, we don't have time for childish disagreements," Lucy flashed an accusing look at Whitney once more but he looked unphased. She dug into her breakfast, not realizing how hungry she was. Between bites and chewing, Lucy began to highlight the plan for the day, "We need to find a way to get back to base. We won't be able to get air support until we're out of Nazi territory. So we're gonna have to find a way to get back to base. We won't be able to get air support until we're out of Nazi territory. So we're gonna have to find a way to get out of here."

"That's gonna be a lot of walking," Gabe Jones said in an unexcited tone. Lucy dreaded the journey as well, knowing it would take forever to get back to base if they didn't die first. There was also the issue at hand of running out of rations.

"I say we try to find supplies here before we leave," Bucky sat beside Lucy at the table. She thought of how perhaps in another life they would be doing the same thing as just the two of them. After a night of love making and being tangled up in each other, they would wake up with one another and start their day, eating breakfast in the kitchen that they shared. Lucy realized she started to picture a future with him and her stomach flipped.

He sat next to her and his hand reached down to grab her thigh lightly in an affectionate gesture under the table. Lucy had to stop herself from smiling, her heart racing from the tiny sign of affection he gave her.

Bucky looked over to her and gave her a small smile as he chewed his food. Her heart pounded again and all she wanted to do was crawl in his lap in that moment and kiss the hell out of him.

She wished they would never leave that house. That they could spend an eternity together with one another. Lucy knew she would be happy with it just being the two of them.
"I second that idea," Miller said, although he was also looking a little green in the face.

Lucy was brought back to reality when she thought of the task at hand. They had to get out of there, and she had no idea how to do that.

"We need to find another vehicle." Lucy figured that was the only solution. There were too many of them to travel any other way. With the car it would have been perfect, especially since they stole two motorcycles. But they weren't able to get back to the car back at the castle and they had to leave it there.

"Planning on seducing any more Nazi's? Or do you only seduce our own now?" Whitney shot back but Lucy ignore him.

Instead she just kept chewing and pretended like his words didn't bother her. No one paid him any attention either, they were beginning to realize he was just a bitter prick.

"After breakfast I say we split up and try to gather anything we can find," Lucy answered.

Bucky nodded in agreement, "Lucy and I will search the barn after this."

He gave her a look and Lucy's stomach flipped. She hoped no one would volunteer to go with them and help and they would have some more time alone together.

"Just uhhh, no getting up for any trouble in there." Dugan cocked an eyebrow, looking between them accusingly.

"C'mon, Dugan," Bucky scoffed and looked at Lucy, "Who do you think we are? We're professionals."

"Alright, alright, I'm just sayin' that's all!" The man said with his hands up in defence, "Historically you two tend to get a little distracted around one another."

"Dugan," Lucy looked to him again and said firmly, convincing both him and herself, "We're professionals."

Lucy couldn't help but bite her lip down as she tried not to scream. Bucky's mouth was attached to her neck, sucking hard on her skin. Her hands held onto the wooden boards behind her as her bare backside scratched against the stall door.

Her legs were wrapped around Bucky's waist and she was gasping for him as he thrust into her. His hands gripped her hips so roughly that Lucy knew they would leave marks.

His mouth hungrily captured hers as he slammed his pelvis into her even more. He held her tightly against him, her dress around her waist as the top half was pulled down and exposing her breasts. His mouth had been all over them a few seconds ago, sucking on the skin.

"Oh fuck, Bucky!" She couldn't help but cuss as he continued, feeling closer to her climax.

"Say my name again," He ordered breathlessly as he took her lips in bruising kiss. The moment they had gotten alone they were jumping on another, desperate for a repeat of the night before. "God, I love hearing it come from your lips."

Lucy gently mewled his name desperately the moment she freed herself from his desperate kidd. She said it gently like a prayer, over and over.
Unlike the night before, they didn't take their time with one another. This was fast and desperate, knowing they only had a few minutes to be wrapped around each other again.

"I'm so close. Just a little harder," Lucy begged him, her voice muffled by him grabbing her by the back of her neck and forcing her into a harsh kiss. Her arms wrapped around his neck and his shoulders as she held on for dear life. She had never, ever, been been made love to quite like this.

They were absolutely desperate for one another, not sure when the next time they would get the chance to be intimate. Lucy felt at home when he was inside of her, as though she was completely at peace and comfortable. She kissed him harder as though her life depended on it. Their teeth clashed roughly and Lucy let out a whimper as his thrusts got sharper.

"C'mon baby," Bucky whispered dirtily in her ear, "Cum all over me." That did it. Never before had she ever heard such a dirty and depraved thing. She still wasn't sure if she was comfortable with it, but her body certainly liked it.

Immediately from his filthy words and the bite he left of her shoulder, as well as his lower body slamming into her pushed her over the edge. His hips slammed into her with such a force that Lucy knew she would be walking a little funny afterwards. They were fucking like their lives depended on it, and she couldn't believe it had only taken a couple minutes of being in the barn and searching for supplies for them to jump one another.

It had started with Bucky getting any opportunity he could touch her, his hand grazing the small of her back as he moved past her. The light brushing of shoulders they had, and finally a tender kiss. But the kiss turned into something else, the next thing Lucy knew she was struggling to stay on task. As she searched she felt him come behind her and grip her waist hard. Kissing down her neck didn't help in any way of her resisting.

It took only minutes for the two of them to be undressing, desperate to have their bodies as one again.

And that was how she ended up pressed against the barn wall. She was breathing heavily with her head thrown back, positive she had never experienced pleasure like this. Lucy had never been intimate with anyone beyond in a bed, and the thrill of it drove her insane.

Lucy's legs were hooked so tightly around his waist that he was able to remove his hands. He grabbed her by the face with his one hand and forced her to kiss him hard. They kissed until they couldn't breathe, an all consuming need coursed through them.

Lucy never knew this amount of passion was possible. He was everything she had ever wanted and she hadn't even noticed it. The fact they had such a complicated history and went from hating one another to friends, to finally lovers, made Lucy feel like she had known him her entire life.

She held onto his shoulders and tightly with her arm hooked around him, trying to stay connected to the kiss as much as she could.

Bucky's other hand reached down between her legs to push her just enough so she reached the edge. She gasped his name into his lips and nearly saw stars. He continued meeting her hips as she released and finally he reached his edge from how far she was gripping around him.

With a groan Bucky finally released into her, his lips meeting hers as sweetly as he could. He nearly shivered at the feeling of his orgasm hit him and he thrust slowly into her hips more until he could no longer continue.
They stayed pressed against one another for awhile, just breathing heavily and trying to come down from both of their nearly cried when he set her down on shaky legs and he fell out of her. Bucky’s first concern was holding her upright and kissing the side of her face sweetly.

Lucy touched his cheek as he did so, her eyes fluttering close and still trying to keep upright. Next he placed himself back in his boxers and began with helping fix Lucy up. She put her panties back on and he helped straighten out her dress. Bucky didn't want anyone to see her in a compromising position, so he made sure she was decent before finally pulling his pants back up.

Lucy finished doing up the buttons of her dress when she gave Bucky a teasing look, "We promised Dum Dum we wouldn't get distracted,"

"Sorry, pige," Bucky winked, doing up his belt, "Just seein' you bent over like that just made my blood grown hot," He kissed her head as he pulled her in. Lucy looked up with him in a soft smile, her heart full and happy. She didn't know how in the middle of the worst hell she felt utter joy unlike she ever felt before. She almost felt guilty from being so happy, but everything about him made her want to smile. "Down south," Bucky smirked with his implication.

Lucy rolled her eyes and pushed him away from her, trying to fix her hair in the updo she had done that morning.

"You are the biggest type of trouble, Bucky Barnes." Lucy adjusted her dress a little more. Bucky noticed how she had a little bit of lipstick smudged in her face from him kissing her. He reached into his pocket and took out of handkerchief to help get the pigment off of her skin.

The light berry red contrasted with the white of the cloth, Lucy mumbled a quick thank you to him and Bucky placed it back in his pocket.

"You love that I'm trouble," He smiled as he did the buttons up on his uniform shirt. He tucked his silver dog tags in his shirt, and gave her a smile as she into rolled her eyes. As he was fixing up his dog tags he suddenly realized something, "Luce, why don't you wear dog tags?" He frowned as he realized he never saw them on. She had only ever worn her Star of David.

"I usually do. Especially on missions but I wasn't able to wear them with the red dress I had to wear at the castle. I thought to take off Daniel's necklace too, but I couldn't and it fit well enough it wouldn't have been seen."

Bucky looked at her and sighed, he tried to give her a soft smile, "Listen, I know I'm not him. And I know you'll always love him. And I know this is new and that must be hard for you. So if we're going too fast, let me know. But I just wanna make you happy, and if I can make you half as happy as he did then I'll count it as a win."

"Bucky," Lucy said with a frown and looked at him with wide eyes, wondering why he thought he came second place to Daniel. "We haven't been together very long, but already you've made me happier in a week than he had our entire relationship."

He looked at her in shock and blinked a couple times, looking dumbfounded.

"Daniel and I fought constantly." Lucy tried to laugh through her sad tone, "And I loved him, I always will. I loved him so, so deeply. But I don't think we were ever going to work out. For a few years, probably. But there was an affair and trust issues. He wasn't willing to move to America to be with me. He kept making excuses because all he wanted a way to stay in the familiar. And then he would have expected me to give up my career to have a family. He would have wanted me to stay home and raise a baby and put mine on hold so his could prosper. And I would eventually resent him
for it, and we would be happy for maybe quite a few years until we weren't. I don't know, there were just so many things."

Bucky looked at her and then asked, "You don't want a family?"

"No," She shook her head, "I can't give up what I've worked so hard for. If it were possible to have it all then I would, but I can't just leave it all to stay home."

"What if I did?" Bucky asked her with a shrug.

Lucy looked at him with a confused face, wondering what he was asking. Surely he would want her to stay home with their children too.

"I mean, I'd still have to find work somewhere. But we could get my mom to look after the kids on those days. And then the rest of the week I take care of them while you're busy."

Lucy looked at him in shock, almost dumbstruck, "You would do that?"

"I'd do anything for you." Was all Bucky said simply, making Lucy's heart melt.

"Have you thought this out?" Lucy asked, her eyebrows raised curiously, wondering when he had time to think about.

"Might of crossed my mind " Bucky shrugged with a smile, he leaned in and kissed he chastely on the lips."But don't worry doll, we won't be having kids any time soon."

"Yeah, we'll see about that," Lucy rolled her eyes, still feeling the stickiness of his release between her legs. Bucky only cringed and then quickly answered with an apology. Lucy said it was fine and as she began searching for things they can use one question notched in the back of her mind.

"So you really want to get married and have kids?"

"One day," Bucky nodded and looked at her as they both began searching for anything that could be useful, "Like I said before, I'm in it for the long haul."

"You just don't seem like the type of guy who'd be interested in that," Lucy said candidly, not expecting him to be that invested.

"You know I love you?" He asked her and Lucy gave a soft smile. She nodded and Bucky smiled.

"Good, because I do." Was all he said.

"I know you want me to say it back but—,"

"You don't have to." Buck defended her choice, he went through a tool box that had been in the tack room of the barn and looked for anything they could possibly use. "I know I just sprung it on you. You don't have to say it back."

"Okay." Lucy nodded and moved a piece of hair out of her face as she found a spare box of bullets which she smiled at it and added it to the pile of things they had found that could be useful.

Bucky went behind the barn to take a look around it to see if they were missing anything. Lucy continued searching inside but was getting frustrated by their lack of finds. She was left alone for a little while until Bucky called out loudly for her.

"Hey, Luce?" He called out and Lucy exited the barn to follow him to the back. The grass was long
and hadn't been taken care of for some time. Lucy worried that it would rip her stockings she had one but she didn't care.

When she rounded the back of the barn she smiled at what Bucky had found. It was a large truck, big enough for them all to fit inside with some in the back. There had been a cover over it that laid on the ground that Bucky had pulled off of it.

"Good eye," Lucy smiled widely and chuckled.

Bucky smirked back and then only replied "Woulda found it sooner if my lady wasn't so distracting."

"You were the one that started it, Mister." Lucy chuckled as she got into the truck and noticed there were no keys inside like she had hoped.

"Think you can get it to run?" She asked Bucky and he shook his head.

"I can't start it up, but Jones can. We'll call him once we figure out if we can even get this bad boy running. It looks like it's been sitting here for awhile so I'm gonna take a look under the hood."

Bucky popped the top of it open and looked down as Lucy came around to see what he was doing. Unfortunately, even when she did see what he was doing Lucy had no idea what was going on.

"I don't know anything about vehicles," Lucy said with a scowl, her arms crossed and looking annoyed by it.

Bucky smirked and said with a happy chuckle, "Well," He licked his lips before a smug grin appeared on his face, "Finally something I know more about than Dr. Lucy Heinrich."

"It's not gonna become a habit," Lucy said a little bitterly. She scowled ever so slightly but tried not to look too sore over it.

"Still, finally something you're not just unbearably good at," He looked at her with his hands on his hips before he gestured her over, "Come on, it's my turn to shine."

Lucy huffed but couldn't help but hide the grin on her face. Bucky was so proud he finally bested her at something, it was hard not for her to be happy for him. She would give him the small victory, since it's often not easy for men to accept their partners were more successful than them.

"So what's this?" Bucky asked after he popped the hood. Lucy looked down at the black thing he was gesturing at and shrugged.

"Umm, I don't know."

"It's the engine, sweetheart." Bucky said before kissed her forehead. Lucy rolled her eyes but she still couldn't keep the corners of her mouth from becoming upright. "Wow, you really are bad at this."

"Shut up, no comments from you." 

"What? Are you gonna make me If I don't?" Bucky fiddled around with things Lucy didn't recognize. He had a devilish smirk on his face as he teased her.

Lucy only smirked back, she went behind him and began kissing up and down his neck. She went up just below his ear and gently bit the ear lobe, pulling a little and making him groan, "I just might," She whispered back at him. The fact they were ready to go again as she still had the remnants of their last love making dripping down her thighs was erotic for her. "I can think of better uses for that
mouth than just saying smart ass comments."

"Hmm, I think you're right. How about after this we get in the back of the truck and I take those panties off and spend some time between those gorgeous legs of yours?"

Lucy smiled as she continued kissing down his neck, nipping at him. "As much as I'd love that I think we've already had enough distractions today."

"You and your logic taking the fun out of everything." Bucky shook his head and continued tinkering with the engine and fixing it up.

Lucy chuckled and smacked his ass as she walked away, emitting a little surprised yell from him. She turned around and looked at him with a smug smirk as he watched her walk away.

Lucy continued searching around the barn as he tried to fix the truck. She looked back at him as she continued walking and saw how focused he was. He had his eyebrows creased together as he peered down.

She smiled as she watched him, wondering what they would be doing if they weren't in the middle of a war and we're back in New York. She wondered what would become of them if they survived this whole thing and returned back to their regular lives. She thought about waking up in his small apartment with him and spending most of their day off in bed.

She thought about all the Christmases they could spend together, drinking hot chocolate and sitting in front of a fire wrapped up in one another.

Lucy thought about getting into bed with him after a long day and feeling him take her into his arms. At first Lucy wondered if perhaps they were too different to make it work. But now she realized that they actually weren't, and she would do whatever it took in order to be with him.

Lucy went back into the barn to grab the casing of bullets she found and the other little finds that they thought might be useful. She was about to bring it to the house when she decided to check up on Bucky again.

She was surprised to find him not under the hood of the car, but a little further off, holding something in his arms.

"Bucky?" Lucy frowned, wondering what he had.

"Look what I found," Bucky smiled as he turned around and Lucy was a white kitten in his arms. The animal was purring loudly as Bucky rubbed between its ears. It almost looked like it was about to go to sleep from how relaxed it was.

"Where was it?" Lucy frowned in confusion, not remembering seeing a cat.

"I could hear it making noises in those bushes," Bucky chuckled and gently held up so he could see it, "Shit, you're cute." He chuckled lowly as he looked at the cat.

Lucy smiled as she saw how he interacted with the cat. She never expected him to have such a soft spot when it came to small animals but Lucy was happily surprised.

"Look at him! Oh my god, Lucy look at his tiny little face!" Bucky almost cooed at the small animal and Lucy was surprised to see him act like that. She laughed ever so slightly at him fawning over the tiny creature.
"Put him back, we're not keeping him."

"Why not?" Bucky asked as he flipped the cat so he was holding it in his arms like one would hold an infant, "He can be our baby!"

Lucy wrinkled her nose in distaste, "I'm more of a dog person."

Bucky held the cat up and looked him in the eye, it's slinky body hanging down and looking uncomfortable, "Your mother didn't mean that;"

She went up to Bucky and looked at the cat. Her nose crinkled again and she sneezed ever so slightly, "Your dad is crazy," She kissed his cheek.

"I'll name you Snow because of your fur. Or wait, no. Avalanche? Nah. Alpine? No, that's dumb." Bucky spoke to the cat like he was crazy and Lucy just watched with amusement.

She had never been a big animal person except for liking dogs. She was also terribly allergic to cats, but she would never tell Bucky that.

"Don't name it, you'll get attached to it." Lucy felt like she was lecturing a child. She never thought she'd have to explain to a grown man why they couldn't keep the animal they had just found.

"He could come with us until we had to go back to base?"

"No," Lucy said firmly, looking at the cat and realizing perhaps it is cute. "Put it back," She looked at its small face and supposed it was rather cute. She stared at it and felt her cold heart melt a little bit. As she got closer Lucy sneezed again, feeling her eyes water as she did so.

"Are you allergic?" Bucky frowned as he continued petting the cat.

"Possibly." Lucy couldn't get near the thing without sneezing but she couldn't tell him that.

"Ah," Bucky nodded and then looked at the cat and gave it a soft kiss on the head, making Lucy's heart melt ever more. He set the cat down on the grass and gently said, "Off you get, your mom is allergic."

Lucy smiled and said goodbye to the little creature. "Maybe we can find a hypoallergenic one?" She suggested.

"Maybe." Bucky said with a smile, thinking of the life they could have together. He realized she was the one who suggested it, meaning she had been thinking about the future too. "So if you wanna get a cat with me what does that mean?"

"It means you'll be the one taking care of it because I'm not all that fond of them." She didn't think Bucky would ever go for a dog either. She had always wanted a cocker spaniel but never found the perfect time to get one.

"No, I mean that this must mean you want us to be together after all this is over."

Lucy's eyes softened as she watched him tighten a latch (or something, she really had no knowledge of cars) on the engine.

"Of course I want us to be together after all this is over!" She said a little surprised, "If I didn't there would be no way I'd ever sleep with a subordinate."

"Hey, none of that throwing rank now." He smirked ever so slightly after briefly looking at her from
under the hood.

"Sorry, sorry." She chuckled and then turned serious again, "But I do want this. I think we can be really good together."

"I think so too." Bucky nodded in agreement, "I think we have a good dynamic going."

"Mmhmm, and so much history."

"That we definitely do have." He chuckled softly. He thought back to when they first met, and then when they met the second time and how much conflict there was. "So, we're in a relationship now or what?"

"I already thought we were. After all, the whole 'That's my girlfriend you Nazi bastard' thing really cemented it."

Bucky laughed and blushed a little bit, he scratched the back of his neck awkwardly, "Yeah, I was hoping you didn't hear that."

"Honey, the whole compound heard it." Lucy laughed as his dumbness. He was like a shy school boy with a crush, unable to communicate what he was feeling.

"Alright, alright not my smoothest moment I'll give you that." He slammed the hood of the truck down and then nodded at his work, he wiped his hands on his pants. Lucy smirked and then teased him.

"And to think you're supposed to be a ladies man."

"Who told you that?" Bucky asked with a frown as he took her in his arms and peered down at her suspiciously, he felt her arms wrap around him as they embraced one another as they continued walking.

Lucy shrugged, "Just a guess. You have a type of attitude and swagger that would suggest it."

"Swagger?" Bucky rose a curious eyebrow and wondered what she was getting at. "I didn't do too badly for myself with the ladies before you."

"And I'm sure you'll do alright with them again after me." Lucy assured him.

"After you?" Bucky frowned and separated from her, wondering what she was getting at, "Pigeon, have you not heard a single word I said? There is no 'after you'. This is it."

"We've known each other longer than my parents did when my dad asked my mom to marry him. They only went on three dates." Lucy was surprised to hear that. But then again, she had never really heard any successful story of people getting married in her life without it ending in someone dying. She supposed the only successful relationships she knew if so far was the Lee's, who may not have been in love but were fond of each other, and Beatrix and her husband Jonathan.

"Only three?" Lucy asked with a frown, "How did they know they were right for each other?"

Bucky shrugged, put his hands in his pockets as he realized he never thought about it much. "Don't know. Guess they just had a feeling and went with it. They were happy though until my dad died. It
seemed to have worked out for them before then though."

"My parents never got along. I think maybe once they were in love but I don't know." Lucy frowned as she thought about it, her heart sinking. "Children always want their parents to be in love, but it never happened that way for me."

Bucky pursed his lips together and kissed her forehead as he took her under his arm as they walked to the house where the rest of the team was.

"It'll happen that way for our children." He assured her softly. "Or for our hypoallergenic cat, at least.

Lucy rolled her and tried her hardest not to smile at his words. "Easy there," She tried to tell him, "Haven't even told I love you just yet."

"You'll get there." He said with a smug smile and winked at her. His cockiness was unyielding and Lucy couldn't help but laugh.

"Hmm, is that so? And how do you expect to win me over?"

"Oh, that's easy. Lots of orgasms." He teased and then chuckled, "They all come around eventually after that."

"Bastard," Lucy rolled her eyes again and pushed him softly as they approached the farm house. She had expected to see her team to be up and searching the yard for anything useful but she supposed they were more hungover than they appeared.

As they walked in the house through the back door Lucy called out that they had found a truck in the back of the barn they could probably use. It was uncharacteristically quiet in the house, considering the men were always boisterous and loud.

"Fellas?" Lucy asked with a frown, "What's with the silence? Did Miller get mad for you interrupting his nap again?"

As she founded the corner to the kitchen with Bucky on her tail Lucy came to a stop as soon as she saw what awaited her there. Her heart fell in her chest, and she immediately made eye contact with Dugan.

"Ah, and I suspect that is everybody." The Nazi who must have in charge smirked sinisterly at Bucky and Lucy as they came in. "Almost too easy I think." He gestured to Lucy and Bucky to one of his men, "Grab then." He commanded.

Lucy didn't know what to do. She had onto a second to react, and had no options. All she knew was that she wasn't about to be taken alive.

She noticed their ammunition chest was off to the side. As they approached her she kicked the top of it open as they raised their guns and prepared to fire. She grabbed the first thing she could find. Although it wasn't a gun, it was much smaller but all the more deadly.
"Oh, I really wouldn't if I were you!" She yelled back, showing what she had quickly managed to grab in her hand.

All then men paled when they realized it was a grenade. She pulled the pin out of it in that moment, causing them all the gasp.

She held it tightly in her hand as she grasped it, keeping the pressure she had on it. Upon realizing what she did, Lucy looked to Bucky with fear in her eyes.

"Fuck." Was all Bucky said in slight terror as he looked at the grenade without a pin that was in the love of his life's hand.

Chapter End Notes

Oopsies. That's a cliffhanger if I've ever seen one. Sorry about that, but I had to! I hope you all enjoyed the smut/fluffiness in this chapter. It's about to get a lot more intense but I wanted our mains to get some happiness first.

I've also decided to take the month of December off of updating. I want to focus on writing and getting further ahead of the story. I'm afraid this is usually the point a little bit of writer's block comes in, so I think it would be best to just write what I can without any pressure. I'll try to update at least once more this month so that way I don't leave you all hanging.

Thanks for reading,

-A

Please let me know if you enjoyed this story. I really do rely on the validation to get the creative juices flowing lol. Don't forget to add to your favourites/follows to get notified when I next update!
Chapter XXXI

Chapter Notes

Hello again my loves! I know I said I would be going on hiatus, but I couldn't leave you all with a cliffhanger like that. THANK YOU for your support. It truly does warm my heart and give me so, so much inspiration to know how many people love this story. I literally barely edited this one at all because I was too choked up.

Trigger Warning: Minor violence and gore. Also, I cried in this chapter. You might too. I am so sorry in advance.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter XXXI

"Fuck umm, Bucky what do I do?" Lucy panicked upon realizing what she had done. "Fuck, fuck fuck!" She looked at him in wide, scared eyes and her hand began to shake. It might have been the only time Bucky had seen her not entirely composed, and it was for a good reason.

"Okay, okay, just don't panic! And whatever you do, do not release any pressure on that." He said softly, not wanting her accidentally let it go off.

The Nazi in charge chuckled as he watched the two of them; although he looked slightly unnerved there was an active grenade in the mix of their situation. "I don't think you thought very far ahead."

"Oh, I thought enough to know that if you shoot any one of us I'm going to let this thing blow us all to shit." Lucy threatened, her eyes dangerously reflecting her anger. Her hands were shaking as it gripped the grenade but she tried to remain as calm as possible.

"And kill your comrades in the mix? I don't think so." The man called her bluff.

"I don't know about that. I think I can say we'd all rather be dead than a prisoner of war." She said fairly confidently, knowing which one she would prefer.

"Speak for yourself," Whitney shifted uncomfortably. None of the men no longer had guns pointed at them. Instead, they were all focused on Lucy.

"You wouldn't." The man only chuckled again, thinking he knew what Lucy would do.

"Don't tempt her!" Whitney insisted fearfully, "She definitely will, the broad is bat shit crazy!"

Lucy looked at Whitney with a huff and then faced Bucky again, the look she gave him proved she had no idea what she was doing. She looked at him with a panic and then Bucky did something that he never would have done if he weren't absolutely in love with her.

"Give it to me," He insisted, holding his hand out after he noticed her shaking.

"No, no, I'm not letting you take it." There was no way she would let him put himself in danger over
her. Her voice shook at the mere thought of him having it.

"Just trust me," Bucky said softly and held his hand out. "Trust me, pigeon."

"No," Lucy shook her head again and blinked tears back from her eyes. He was the last person she wanted to hold it, "I can't. I won't let you do this."

"Lucy," Bucky said softly once more and licked his lips, "Trust me, just give me the grenade."

After what seemed like an eternity, Lucy nodded and then placed the grenade in his hand without loosening her grip for even a second. Bucky looked at the Nazis and said harshly, "None of you wise guys get any smart ideas now." He warned.

Bucky took the same amount of pressure she had and allowed her to slip her hand out. Immediately, he held it and pushed her aside so if it were to go off she would be further away.

Bucky turned to the Nazi's and said with a false sense of confidence, "So here's what's going to happen. You're going to let us all go or I'm going to drop this thing."

"No, you won't." The man insisted, thinking he was still in control of the situation. "Because what I'm going to do is have my men leave this house one by one, and then you'll be left with the grenade in your hand. When we shoot you from a safe distance, and then the entire house goes up and kills you all with it."

"Alright, your idea is better than mine. I'll give you that," Bucky nodded and tried to think of anything he could do. His mind raced a million miles per minute as Lucy could see the gears turning in his head. All Bucky knew was that he had to get Lucy out of there safely, he didn't care what happened to him in the process.

"And your brilliant idea was?" The man said with a curious cocked eyebrow, his evil smirk still playing on his face as though he had already won.

Bucky shrugged cockily, and with pursed lips only smirked back before saying, "I dunno. But I was thinking I might drop it and see how it plays out."

It was then he released it from his hand and threw it over to the man in charge. Everyone yelled and there was chaos, Dugan called him a crazy bastard but Bucky didn't care.

Everyone scattered and Bucky yanked Lucy into the other room. Holding onto her arm, they tumbled over the upholstered couch just as the explosion went off.

The sound was deafening, and flames licked his skin as he pulled himself on top of Lucy. The pressure hit them in the chest and there was nothing but ringing in Bucky's ears for a few moments. Furniture was blown away and walls collapsed in on themselves but at least they hadn't been shot. He had no idea what happened to the rest of his men, but he hoped they had enough sense to scatter after he had thrown the grenade.

He groaned as he rolled off of Lucy, his eyesight faded in and out of black. He vaguely could hear Lucy screaming at him, "Are you crazy?!" She demanded as he thought he was about to lose consciousness. He wanted to laugh, since she was the one that grabbed the grenade in the first place. "Oh-OH my God!" Lucy gasped as she quickly grabbed a throw pillow and began to hit Bucky's lower leg with it.

"Ow, what the hell?" He demanded, finally getting some sense as she continued hitting him frantically. He was slightly aware of how men were beginning to scramble up after the initial shock.
He could hear someone yelling in pain and he prayed to God it wasn't any of his men.

"Your leg was on fire!" Was all Lucy yelled and Bucky looked at his scorched trousers but barely felt any pain from the burn. He figured he'd likely feel it a little bit later though when the adrenaline wore off.

Bucky sat up as Lucy struggled to stand. She helped him with a brief stagger, her dress ripped and her hair falling out of its updo. She had black smudges on her face and Bucky assumed he looked even more dishevelled than she did.

"Dugan?" Bucky coughed as he struggled to stand with Lucy helping him up, "Jones?" He was desperate to get any sign they were still alive.

He went over to the corner to see if they were alright when shots rang out. Bucky took cover but was able to grab a gun before any of the bullets hit him. He made sure to was loaded and took the safety off before firing back at the shooter.

"We're alright! Just get outta here!" He could hear Dugan coughing through the fire that had caught the house. More people were struggling to get up, finding it hard to stand on their feet. Whitney had thrown himself out of a window and was trying his very hardest to get upright through what looked to be a nasty concussion.

That's all it took for Bucky to grab onto to Lucy and pull her to the back door. Shots began ringing out behind them and he held onto her wrist with an iron grip.

They ran out the door and didn't have time to check if anyone was behind them. Bullets began hitting the ground behind them, missing them by mere inches with each stride they ran. Out of the corner of his eyes Bucky could see Dugan, Miller, And Jones all running as well. Whitney was in his own, as was Green. But he figured they would be fine.

Bucky heard the agonizing screams of someone getting hit. He paled when he realized it was one of his own. When he made sure Lucy was in the cover of the forest, Bucky turned around and fired back at the Nazi's who were slowly struggling to get out of the house and shoot at them.

He could see Gabe attempting to carry Lee Miller on his shoulders, blood pouring down him from where he was shot. Bucky didn't have the heart to tell him it was likely a lost case, given the fact his insides were hanging out of him.

He continued firing until the Nazi's began gaining on them. Lucy was still struggling to run a little bit from having the wind knocked out of her from the grenade. Bucky could feel blood dripping down his ears from the explosion, knowing he likely had a head injury.

He didn't care though, all he was able to do was urge Lucy on forward, seeing Dugan off to the side. At that point, Gabe had realized Lee had died and he had placed his body down with a heartbroken apology, agony on his face.

Bucky didn't have time to react. How the hell did they even find them? They must have sent out word that they had escaped and for people to be on the lookout. Clearly, they had pissed off some important people at Hydra.

Bucky heard bullets hitting tree bark behind him, the wood exploding into tiny pieces. He grabbed Lucy and threw her behind a log, forcing them both to take cover.

Bucky was breathing heavily as he fired back. Lucy stayed there wondering what the hell she could do. After all, she had no weapon and wasn't able to do anything. She was frustrated by her sense of
helplessness. Never before had she felt so out of control over a situation.

"How did they find us?" Lucy shook her head as she wondered. She was shaking ever so slightly and her chest was rising and falling heavily.

"I don't know, but they were likely looking for the motorcycles." Bucky had been so relieved to finally get away from the castle that he and Dugan had done a poor job hiding them.

"What do we do?" Lucy asked with worry in her eyes, looking up at him with a panic. This was the first time she was actually fearful of what would happen. Because this time, she actually had something she could lose.

"We'll figure it out," Bucky promised her as his eyes were sharp on trying to spot any movement through the trees.

Lucy only nodded breathlessly, still looking worried with fear in her eyes. She didn't like what their odds were in that moment.

"We'll be okay." Bucky promised her and with chaste kiss on her lips, he gripped her by the back of the head so she would look at him, "I love you, okay? I love you so much. Don't ever think that I don't."

"Okay," Lucy nodded with tears in her eyes. It couldn't help but sound like he was saying goodbye. She felt her heart break ever so slightly. "But tell me again after we get through this?"

"I will, doll." He said with a quick squeeze to her hand, "I promise."

Their conversation was cut short by Bucky firing at their enemies after they had finally caught up to them.

"I—..." Lucy cut herself short, unable to say the words she needed to tell him. She wanted to tell him anything. That she loved him, that she would see him soon, that she wanted to spend the rest of her life with him. Because that's all she wanted. Lucy loved him so much that it hurt.

But the words caught in Lucy's throat as she tried to choke them out. She had a million things to say to him but not enough time to say a single one.

She could have told him she loved him. She should of, but she couldn't stand the fact that she wouldn't have the time to tell him properly.

Bucky only nodded at her shortly cut words. She looked at him and with an understanding after seeing her desperate, heartbroken, expression he only said, "I know, pige."

"Okay," Lucy blinked a couple times, she pressed a kiss on his lips in a hurried fashion, needing to taste him, to feel the warmth of his lips again. "Please, please be safe." She touched his cheek gently, unable to bear parting from him.

"Go, please. I'll hold them off." He told her desperately.

Lucy looked at him once more, unknowing if she should leave. There must have been something, anything she could do. She shouldn't have left him with a single gun against seven others, but Lucy didn't know what help she could be.

"Go!" He yelled a little harshly, emphasizing the importance that she left.
Lucy didn't waste any more time. She took off in a run even though she didn't know where she was going. She felt the cold wind whipping across her face and prickling her cheeks.

The sound of gun firing behind her either meant she was getting shot at or Bucky was firing back.

Either way, Lucy kept going through the trees, the branches hitting her face and her feet crunching the dead leaves as she ran further and further away.

She hated that she was running. But there was nothing she could do. She had no weapons and couldn't do very much without one. Her heart pounded hard in her chest with every stride she took.

The further she ran the more her heart hurt. She forced herself not to look back. She should have stayed with Bucky, at least then she would have known if anything happened to him.

More shots rang out in her ears and each time she cringed. Lucy wasn't very religious in her adult years. Her mother used to be very Catholic, and Lucy had often gone to church with her on Sundays. She still kept up with the practice a little while after, since Mrs. Lee was also Catholic.

But when she was with Daniel she stopped. After all, with two conflicting religions they didn't talk much on the subject. Lucy had hardly spent anytime including the matter since moving from New York, but now she found herself praying they would get out of there alive.

The reddened body of Lee Miller burned in her brain. Gabe Jones has tried his best to carry the man over his shoulder, dousing himself in his blood. He hadn't even noticed it was too late, Lucy felt herself knowing she was responsible. And now, even though this was her fault, she was running instead of staying and fighting somehow. As she continued running, she felt a hand grab her and pull her behind a tree.

She nearly screamed but a hand covered her mouth as she was thrown to the ground. She looked up in a panic into the eyes of Gilbert Whitney who had placed a finger over his mouth to shush her.

Lucy stopped struggling as he let her up from her position on the ground. He got to his feet, and Lucy watched what he was doing curiously.

He hid behind the tree he had pulled her behind and quickly grabbed a knife from his boot. Lucy continued watching and saw how he had spotted a lone German looking for them. He held his gun up in preparation, finger on the trigger and ready to fire. Gilbert, being as calm as Lucy had ever seen him, raised his knife and threw it directly at the man.

He hit him dead in the chest, blood pooling around the uniform and the man grunting in pain as his face grew lifeless. Instinctively, he let out a couple shots in no particular direction, the noise ringing in Lucy's ears as she watched the body fall to the forest floor.

"Stay here!" Whitney commanded harshly, leaving Lucy behind to go forward carefully to grab the man's gun.

He crouched down, not wanting to be spotted. He took the dead man's weapons and stopped to get his knife before returning back to Lucy.

"Does anyone else have a gun?" Whitney asked her as he checked the ammunition to see how many bullets were left.

"Bucky does," Lucy answered quickly, her breath catching as she said his name. She prayed again silently that nothing would happen to him.
"Good, your boyfriend is one of the best shots I've ever seen," It was possibly one of the only nice things Lucy had ever heard come out of Whitney's mouth. He looked over to her and continued, "If anyone has a gun I'm glad Barnes does. We might have a chance to get out of here alive."

She said nothing, only silently hoping to herself that Whitney was right. He looked at her as he readied himself to go help the rest of the team, "Was anyone hit?"

"Miller was. I don't know about anyone else."

The man only looked down and shook his head as he stood up and readied himself to go, "Shit," He said quietly and Lucy through the tone of voice he had might have even reflected sadness. But there was no time to dwell on what had happened.

"What should I do?" Lucy asked as she realized she had no idea what to do, as she was completely helpless in this situation.

"Just stay here, try not to be seen." Was all Whitney said before running off. Lucy wanted to beg him to not leave her alone.

She was looking out at the surroundings around her, panicked as she was left defenseless. For once in her life, Lucy had no idea what to do.

There was no back up plan, nowhere to run without being caught. She leaned back against the tree and closed her eyes for a moment as she tried to think of anything she could do in order to help. She had been in worse situations before, but for some reason this felt different. They had gotten too comfortable and were unprepared and now they were paying for it.

She could hear the rushing water of a river nearby. She focused on the sound and hoped it would clear her mind and give her an idea. Any idea at all would work, it didn't have to be a good one. It only had to be effective.

More gunshots rang out and Lucy felt herself cringe at the sound. If anything happened to Bucky, Lucy wouldn't know what to do with herself. She had finally just got him, and the thought of losing him was more painful than anything.

She couldn't help herself but to look around the tree to try to see anything. Any sign of life at all would have been good. She knew Bucky was a good shot, but he was against seven others who had more weapons. The odds weren't good and Lucy felt herself regretting leaving him.

She wanted nothing more than to go back, just find out if he was safe. But she knew she couldn't, and Lucy rolled her eyes at herself when she realized this was the exact reason why the army prohibited relationships.

Lucy crept out from behind the tree, walking on the balls of her feet to avoid making any noise. The leaves under her crunched despite her best attempts to be silent.

She looked down at the dress she was wearing and realized it wasn't practical at all. She missed her uniform and wearing men's clothes. After all, she might have been able to run a little faster is she wasn't held back by the stupid skirts of her dress. The moment she found something more practical to wear she was getting out of the ridiculous thing.

Lucy didn't know where to go. After all, she had run quite far and wasn't familiar with the territory. She found herself walking to the river, in hopes she would be able to find a member of her team. That was, of course, if there were any of them still alive. She tried not to think about that though. Especially as he thought went dark when her mind drifted to Bucky. Her heart clenched as he
worried something had happened to him.

She couldn't believe she had been a big enough of a fool to fall for him. It had only taken one night together for her to realize how deep her affections were, and if she were to lose him Lucy didn't think she would ever recover.

She thought about putting in a request for a transfer if they made it through this. Lucy couldn't take seeing if anything happened to him. It would be better for her to be far removed from the situation. But the thought of leaving him was equally as painful.

As Lucy crept alongside the hill edging on the river banks as she remained alert as possible. Every noise made her jump and her heart pounded deeply in her chest with each step she took.

The loud bang of three more gunshots filled the air and Lucy shut her eyes tightly. She leaned against a tree and gripped it for support, fearing the worst possible outcome. She had never felt so hopeless in her entire life. It drove her insane to know that there was nothing she could do.

She tried to stay as covered as possible by crouching alongside shrubs and large trees. However she didn't see another soul, and Lucy figured she may have been safe for the moment.

The roar of the violent river echoed in her ear as she walked along it's raised bank still concealed by the flora surrounding it. She had no idea how her team would find each other again, but she knew she would cross that bridge when she got to it.

There was nothing to do but carry on. Adrenaline was rushing through her veins, her heart pumping heavily. Each small noise seemed to grasp her attention as worry settled over her.

If it was one of the German's there would be nothing Lucy could do to protect herself. She hated knowing there was nothing she could do. It made her feel small and helpless like a scared child. Nothing before this had ever made Lucy feel so powerless.

A branch snapped off to the side and suddenly it held Lucy's attention. She was like a deer caught in the headlights, frozen and unable to move. Her chest rose and fell quickly with each pounding of her heart.

She tried her best to stay hidden amongst the bushes, but with fall in full swing and the leaves no longer on the trees the cover it provided wasn't ideal.

The rustling of the bushes approached and Lucy held her breath for a moment. Much to her relief, only a squirrel popped out and she looked at it with a heavy sigh. Lucy stood up straight and rolled her eyes at the tiny creature. She let out a breathy exhale as she looked at it with a slight scoff as she realized she had been scared of a squirrel.

It only took a second of her letting her guard down to know she made a mistake. Something with a hard impact slammed into her body, knocking the wind out of her. Lucy felt like she couldn't breathe as she hit the forest floor. A man had slammed into her and they went toppling over on the ground.

Rolling form the hard impact, Lucy didn't realize she was falling under her body was rolling down the hill. Rocks hit against her skull, her bones aching as they slammed against the hard impact of the cold grown.

She could hear the soldier beside her grunting with every tumble, and finally it stopped. The impact of them rolling created enough momentum to throw them into the rage of the of the river's waters.

Lucy thought the impact of falling down the hard earth of the hill hurt, but it was nothing compared
to the icy frigidness of the water.

The cold water pricked her skin like thousands of knives. As she inhaled and tried to capture air in her lungs, it burned as they only filled with water instead. Lucy scrambled to try to get air, trying to twist her body under the currents to get the oxygen her body screamed for.

When her head finally emerged, she gasped so hard she swore she had never breathed air as fresh as that. But immediately her relief was ended, her body crashed from under the current again, being yanked by the tide.

Lucy did her best to kick off the bottom of the river, her boots scraping along the stones. She fought with all her might to get above, knowing if the pressure of the waves kept beating down on her she would drown.

The water was far more violent than it had looked from where she stood at the hill. Her body felt as though it were a rag doll being torn apart by the undertow. She scrambled to break free, trying everything she could as she screamed and let water fill more of her lungs.

Lucy felt her back smash against a rock, feeling as though her bones had been breaking from the impact. She felt her vision fade out but forced herself to stay awake, fighting harder and harder to emerge out of the icy depths.

Lucy broke free for only a moment, a strangled scream emitting from her throat as she tried to swim in any direction to shore.

She couldn't see the German who had tackled her; the waves were too rough and too high. Survival was the only thing on her mind, knowing that if she made it that far only to drown she would be pissed.

Lucy managed to let out one last hoarse scream before the river claimed her again. It drug her body down, down, and down deeper. She felt completely weightless, and her bones felt like jelly. Her eyes pricked from the icy coolness of temperature. Her body was numb from the pain, and she could see black forming in her eyes. It threatened to swallow her whole when she finally caught on something.

She had smacked into another large, solid rock. Lucy anchored herself to it, clutching for her life. Water poured over her in what seemed like sheer tons. The weight of it alone felt like it could crush her bones, but Lucy held onto it anyway.

She closed her eyes and tried to take in as many large inhales as she could. Her body couldn't seem to get enough oxygen know that she had it. She felt her muscles ache from how tightly she clutched at the rock, but Lucy didn't care. All that mattered was that she could finally breathe.

Every inch of her was sopping, her body frigid and blue. She felt on death's doorstep, never having been so cold and so sore in her life. Every inch of her body hurt from the heavy waves that had bruised her again and again as they toppled over her.

Over the rushing water, Lucy could hear the strangled cries of the German who had sent both of them flailing into the currents. He was drowning, much like she had. Having as much of a struggle, barely keeping his head above the water. He kept sinking down and arising, a panic obvious from his screams.

He was close enough for her to grab him. Lucy, for one moment, thought to let him go, the malice in her heart spreading.
But she couldn't stop herself. She grabbed onto his shoulder, hanging on to her rock with her other arm with all her might. The man was still submerged, clutching on her and trying to pull himself up.

Finally, he took a breath in, trying to look at what we had grabbed hold of. To his surprise, he saw Lucy, her hair falling out of its style and hanging soaked down her face. Water droplets fell down her skin as she shivered madly, her hand unable to release him from how cold she was.

He looked at her with gratitude, not believing she would do such a thing and save him. The gratefulness reflected in his large, scared eyes.

Lucy opened her mouth, struggling to talk from how hard she was concentrating and how much she shivered, "I got——," you.

But she didn't finish her sentence. A heavy fallen branch swept over the rock Lucy had found refuge on and slashed her across the face, sending her back into the water.

For another moment, Lucy thought she broke her jaw. Shock once again invaded her body as she was again fully submerged. The man was right behind her, his own body tumbling and being thrown about as the river got more violent with each passing second.

They were picking up speed, being dragged even harder amongst the undertow.

Lucy gasped for air every chance she got. She tried grabbing onto anything she could find but all her attempts were futile and pointless.

The picking up of speed wasn't a good sign, and as each second passed it got faster and faster. The pull of the current made it hard for her to manipulate her movements at all, feeling as though she was not in control of her own body.

Lucy knew what was coming, and she gasped for air a few more times, hoping for just a few more moments to think of one single thing. She wanted Bucky's face to be the last thing she thought of, his steel blue eyes looking at her as though it would bore a hole right through her soul.

Lucy couldn't believe that after being shot, having shrapnel impaled in her body, surviving and explosion, a supernatural encounter, as well as fleeing from an entire castle flooded with Nozi's, that the thing that was going to kill her would be a fucking waterfall.

She could hear its roar even under the water, feeling it echo deep in her ears. It's pull launched her forward, and just when she felt the edge, the strangest thing of all happened...

She was flying.

No, not flying. She was suspended, frozen in mid-air, clutching to a broken log that had been caught between rocks over the edge of the waterfall.

Lucy could hear the German's muffled screams as he toppled over the edge. Her body hung limply in the air as she felt as though she were not in control of her instincts. She hadn't even known a log was there, she had only reached and grabbed and whatever she could find in one last final effort.

The wind whipped at her already frozen body, and Lucy tried not to look down, only seeing mist rise above and unable to see the bottom. She let out a pained yell as she clutched tighter at the cracking, fragile, wooden frame of the log.

There was no damn way she was going down without a fight.
Bucky has fired his last shot at the fifth Nazi he had encountered. He had figured that had been the last one, not knowing for sure if the other ones had died in the explosion or what had happened to them.

He was about to smile in victory when he heard yelling. His ears picked up, discovering it was in English. It was one of his own, and before he knew it he was racing to where he heard it.

There was no bullets left in his gun, but there had to have been something he could do if there was trouble. He wasn't about to let any other members of his team die, at least not today.

To Bucky's surprise, the yelling was coming from Gilbert Whitney, and he was running like a madman a little ways away.

Bucky looked to him but couldn't figure out what he was running from, seeing no pursuers on his tail. He frowned, trying to figure out what he was saying beyond a roar of a river that had to be over the hill Whitney was running on.

Whitney had spotted Bucky a ways up and looked at him with wide eyes. He yelled, "Lucy's in the river!"

Bucky's heart stopped in his chest. Fear engulfed him, and before he knew it, he had taken off running faster than he ever had in his life.

He wasn't worried that Lucy couldn't swim or wasn't strong enough to hold her own. She had been able to swim ashore partially dragged down by half a parachute.

But the rushing of the river alone in his ears told him there was a strong current. He raced up the hill as fast as he could, wondering how long she had been in there and if she had already drowned.

He somehow surpassed Whitney, still running as though his life depended on it. He would have rather that his life did depend on it. Anything would have been better than Lucy in danger. Fear clutched every inch of him as his eyes tried to see any trace of a body in the water.

The roar of the river and the mist above it a little ways down made his heart stop. There was a waterfall. Bucky has never felt his stomach sink more than in that moment. He wanted to yell at the top of his lungs or scream for her, desperate to find any trace of her still alive.

Bucky kept running until his lungs burned, his eyes desperately searching for her. He had never been so scared in his life, knowing that she could have drowned and there was nothing he could do.

He should have never sent her away, but the thought of her getting shot in front of him terrified him to his core. He couldn't stand to see her bloodied and lying on the ground again, much like when she had been hit with the shrapnel.

Bucky called out for her, frantically searching for any sign she was still alive. Tears pricked in his ears as dread filled his very soul.

Over the coursing river he heard a pained yell and his ears immediately picked up. He could recognize her voice anywhere, and Bucky continued running in the direction of which he heard it.

He kept going, his legs pumping faster and faster as adrenaline cours ed through his veins. He had never been so scared in that moment, knowing the only thing he needed was to keep her safe. He called out her name desperately, trying to see any sign she was still alive. He heard another pained yell and the sound of her struggling. His mouth fell open ever so slightly as he realized where it was coming from.
He ran to the edge of the waterfall, barely taking a second to gather his thoughts.

His heart stopped in fear when he finally saw her. Lucy was dangling hundreds of feet above the air, only hanging onto the fragile branches of a suspended log.

Bucky didn't hesitate for even a single second before jumping onto the log and crawling over to her. The height alone was enough to make his stomach queasy. He refused to look down, not wanting to see Lucy dangling over the edge and about to be engulfed by the mist below.

"Just hold on, baby!" Bucky called out as he tried his hardest to make his way over to her. The log groaned under his weight, and he wasn't sure if it would support both of them. "I'm coming!" He yelled for her as he saw her struggling to hold on. "I'm coming," He said again, this time to himself.

He was terrified of heights; he always had been. But the thought of losing Lucy scared him more than anything else, and despite his fear Bucky still crawled along the log to reach her.

"I can't hold on much longer!" Lucy yelled above the roaring noise of the water. The branch she was hanging on to was beginning to crack and terror hit Bucky like a bullet to the heart.

"I got you, just reach for my hand!" He had to go on his stomach to reach her. But even still he wasn't able to grab her without her reaching for him. "C'mon baby, just reach for my hand. You can do it!" He urged her, seeing how the branch that was holding her weight was cracking.

"I can't!" She was holding on with a grip so tight her knuckles were beginning to turn white. "I can't reach!"

"Yes, you can! Just grab my hand with your other one."

Lucy shook her head, her eyes large and reflecting how scared she was, "I'm not going to be able to hold on."

"Lucy-Lucy look at me!" Bucky demanded, his voice was still shaking. For as long as he lived he would never forget how she dangled above the edge, the branch breaking and cracking more with every second. "Reach for my hand! You can do this! You're stronger than you know!"

Lucy shut her eyes tightly and with a pained yell reached as far as she could. Bucky grasped her hand the moment he was able to grab her and the branch she had been holding fell away at the very moment he captured her hand in his.

He smiled and hollered in victory, knowing that if they had waited a single second longer she would have fallen. They smiled at each other in relief, their happiness lasting for only a single second.

The log under him groaned with the extra weight and he felt it crack. Bucky was almost launched forward, and he had to grab onto a knot within the bark to keep himself from falling.

Lucy looked up at him, her hazel eyes fearful. She gasped as she realized what was happening and Bucky struggled to hang onto her hand.

"I'm going to pull you up!" He yelled through gritted teeth. She was heavier than she looked and pulling her without any leverage would be difficult, it also didn't help that the log they were on was deteriorating with each second. It groaned, the noise of it echoing in his ears.

Bucky hadn't noticed how wet he was. The cold had settled in his body and gathered on his skin, but his muscles were too tense to shiver. Once again, the straining log screamed under their weight and Lucy saw how it was beginning to crack. She looked up at him again, a defeated and saddened
expression in her eyes.

Already, Bucky knew what she was going to suggest. "No." Was all he could say, shaking his head. "No, no! Don't you even say it!" His voice cracked from the fear, dread dripping from his tone.

"Bucky, the log is going to fall and take both of us!" Lucy yelled, she was so scared that it was causing her voice to shake, "It can't take both of our weight!"

"It can, it can. I promise it can." He tried to convince himself, his tone was frantic with worry and it was faltering. He felt himself quivering in fear, unable to stand what exactly she was suggesting. "It can hold both of us."

"It's going to fall! I can't let you die because of me!" She was beginning to loosen her grip which caused Bucky to only clutch at her harder.

"I'm not letting you go!" It was something he wouldn't even consider. He would rather let the log fall and take both of them before dropping her.

"Bucky, you have to!" She tried to reason with him. The log suddenly cracked in half and Bucky's upper body was also hanging off the edge. He had nearly dropped Lucy, but he felt he couldn't let her go even if he tried.

She looked up in worry, her breath becoming sporadic. Lucy has a desperate look in her eye, like an animal in a cage that was about to chew off its own leg to get out of its restrain.

"You have to let me go." She tried to say with reason. Her voice caught and tears welled in her eyes. "You have to let me go, or we're both going to fall."

"Goddamn it! I'm not letting you go!" He yelled at her, tears that he hadn't even noticed falling down his face.

"You have to. You have to, my love. Please, please don't make me the reason that you die." She begged him. Lucy was trying to keep her tone as steady as possible, she didn't want him to see her crying and fearful in her last moments.

"Stop saying that!" He screamed at her, never before having been angry at her except for when they first met. But now he was furious, how could she ever suggest such a thing? "I'm not going to let you go." His voice caught at the last sentence. He swallowed a lump forming in his throat as he saw the way her looked defeated as she cried.

"Let go," She whispered. She was crying even more, and all Bucky wanted to do was wipe away the trail of tears with his thumb and kiss her face.

"No, no. You know I can't. Don't make me do this, please don't make me do this. I can't let you go." He begged her. Tears were now flowing down his face too. "I love you, don't make me do this."

"I'll be okay." She tried to convince him in a whisper. Lucy closed her eyes tightly and tried as hard as she could to hold back the tears. Her grip began to loosen on him but Bucky only clutched her harder. He refused to let her go, even if it was the last thing he did. He would not watch as the love of his life fell to her death.

"Lucy, please, please don't do this." He felt as her hand went limp. She had stopped her grip completely and she was beginning to slip, her hand no longer holding him as he clutched at her wrist with all his might. "Lucy, no!" Bucky screamed desperately, "Just hold onto me, pidge."
"Just let me go, it'll be okay." She whispered again. She kept dangling in the air and Bucky clutched her with all her strength, his face contorted in pain as he realized he wouldn't be able to hang onto her much longer.

He gasped in pain and sadness as he tried his hardest to pull her up. The log groaned again and cracked, threatening to be taken down with the current with both of them on it.

"Lucy!" Bucky yelled as she began slipping. Tears were pouring down his face, "Lucy! Fuck!" He swore as he felt her go further and further from his grasp, "Just grab onto me again. We'll be alright. I promise, we'll be alright. Please, please don't make me watch you die." He tried with all his strength to pull her up even more, gritting his teeth in the process. "Fuck!" He screamed as she began slipping.

Lucy burst out in a sob in that moment. Her face pained and heartbroken as tears spilled down her face as she looked at him. She wished nothing more that it didn't have to be him to see that, she would have rathered it was anyone else.

"Please!" Bucky begged, "I love you. Don't-don't do this. We can make it. We can. I swear to God, I'm not dropping you. I won't."

She only shook her head and shook as she cried, her eyes looking at him defeated. "James," Lucy said his first name and he caught her eye. He had never seen her so sad, so scared, and devastated. She didn't want him to have to do this, she didn't want him to have to see her fall. "Let me go."

Bucky let out another pained yell as he tried to lift her again, refusing to give up. He would fight for her until the log gave out and took them both. He wouldn't let her sacrifice herself for him.

"No, no, no!" Bucky grit his teeth, feeling the tears soak his skin and trail down. "Lucy! C'mon!"

He began to lose his grip as she began to cry more, her hand totally limp. She wasn't even fighting anymore, just letting her hand hang. The log groaned again and began to snap, her worried expression frantically looking at it as she realized he was about to fall.

"Please." Was all Bucky begged, biting his lip to keep from crying more.

Lucy only choked out last sob, and then closed her eyes before saying, "I will find you in the next life, I swear it." Her voice was muffled from her large, breathless sobs. She was so scared, but she wouldn't let him fall because of her.

"Lucy, stop talking! Fuck! Just please! Grab onto me!"

She kept crying as she was suspended over. Bucky could feel himself begin to fall with the log, losing his grip on both it and her. He refused to drop her though, knowing he couldn't let go if he tried.

"Please!" Bucky yelled with a strained, devastation in his voice. He could feel his heart breaking with each passing moment. No, he couldn't do it. He couldn't watch the love of his life, the woman he wanted to marry, the woman he wanted to mother his children, fall because he couldn't hold his grip.

The log cracked in half, with a loud snap ringing out. He was launched forward and caught himself just by the last second. But that's not what he was concerned with. He didn't care about himself and if he fell. The log broke again and he was pushed forward again, trying to clutch at anything he could. It was then he felt her slip right through his fingers.
Bucky could feel the terroring yell emit from his throat but nothing come out as she slipped from his grasp. He had no choice but to listen to her scream and watch as she fell, the mist at the bottom of the waterfall claiming her. The echo of her yell lasted longer than he could see her as the mist rising above swallowed her whole.

Then there was nothing. Bucky only looked to his empty hand which she once held and felt himself unable to move. He was unable to scream, yell, or breathe. Shock settled over he as he gasped out a sob. She had just been there, holding onto him...

And now she wasn't. There was nothing.

He felt the log begging to topple over the edge when someone grabbed his ankle and was able to yanked him back. He narrowly escaped the fall himself, although he didn't even care. He should have fallen with her.

Bucky fell to the solid ground as one of his men drug him away. Pulling him back as he yelled in agony and heartbreak. He couldn't believe it, he refused to. This was all a bad dream, a nightmare he would wake up from. Only an hour ago they had been in the barn making love. This morning he had woken up beside her and pressed tender kisses to her spine.

And now he had watched her fall. An image he would never, ever, be able to get out of his head no matter how many years have passed. He would never recover from this, watching the only woman he ever loved fall to her death.

Bucky wiped his face as he stood up hastily, all his men looking at him in shock.

"We have to get down there!" Bucky's voice cracked as he insisted. "We-we have to go down there!" His strained tone reflected every ouch of pain that he felt, "We have to go get her!"

"Buck—," Dugan came forward, seeing his pain.

"We have to go down there! We-we have—"

"Buck!" Dugan shouted as he clutched his shoulders and looked him in the eye. He saw a man heartbroken and in pain, his eyes reflecting a grief that Dugan had never before seen.

"She's gone." Was all the Boston native could mutter in a choked tone, "She's gone..."

Chapter End Notes

Well, I fucking hate myself... I honestly could barely write this chapter because my eyes kept filling up with tears. I promise I will get one last update in before I take December off. There's obviously no way I could leave you with a literal cliffhanger like this one (lol) Just some gallows humour.

This seems like an obvious (and terrible) way for or story to end. But there's at least 10-15 more chapters I still have in mind.

I love you all, although I'm sure you likely hate me at the moment. Thanks for reading.
Please review, they make me update faster and help power my little dumb brain. Also follow and favourite to get notifications of my next update.
Chapter XXXII

Before long, shock had settled in Bucky. He couldn't get the image of Lucy's scared expression out of his head, or how he had felt her hand slip out of his.

They didn't go back to the farm house. Bucky didn't think he would be able to even if he wanted to. He couldn't see a place so familiar without her being there. It would hurt too much, and only make the situation real.

He was in shock, refusing to believe what happened. There was no way she was gone. It couldn't have been the case.

Bucky was so in shock that he didn't cry, or yell, or scream and punch something until his knuckles were bloodied. Instead, he just sat there by the fire they had started in the cover of the woods.

They had taken him far away past the river, knowing that the sound of it alone would likely set him off. Jones and Dugan had gone back to retreated Miller's body, since there was actually a body to bury. There was nothing left of Lucy, nothing to solidify for him that she was gone.

Bucky sat in front of the fire that had been built with Whitney across from him. They sat in silence, not saying a single word to one another. He had a blanket wrapped around his shoulders, still feeling the chill from the way the water had soaked him earlier. Even his body was in shock, unable to process all that happened.

"It's okay to cry, y'know." Whitney said suddenly, causing Bucky to look up. For once, the man seemed to not have any animosity in his voice.

Bucky only shook his head. He couldn't cry, he couldn't feel anything, he didn't even think his heart was still beating.

"I won't say anything if you do." Was all Whitney said. He had a different look on his face than what Bucky had seen before. Perhaps it was just the eerie yellow of the fire softening his features in the dark, or maybe there was something else there? Pity maybe, or sadness?

"It doesn't feel real." Was all Bucky could say. He still thought she would walk in from the woods, smile on her face and a mischievous look in her eyes when their gazes met. She would gesture with
her head to go meet her in the woods and their lips would collide in passion and he would have her legs wrapped around his hips and push her against a tree, in the exact position they had been earlier.

But she wouldn't. He would never see that expression again, or feel the way her soft lips played on his skin, or notice the attentiveness in her eyes as he spoke.

"I know," Whitney said with a sigh, looking down to the piece of wood he was whittling in his hand. "I know how you feel."

"You have no idea how I feel." Bucky snapped, sneering at the man. How dare he try to relate to him? No one could possibly know how he was feeling in these moments.

"No, I do." Whitney said, looking up and licking his lips. For a second, his face almost looked sad, as though there was an expression in his eyes that looked pained. "I know it may not seem like it… But I loved a woman too once."

Bucky was shocked that he was even capable of feeling love. He had never struck him as the type of man to think of a woman as anything more than just an object to play with.

"Penelope was her name," Whitney spoke and a tiny smile played on his face. He reached into his breast pocket and pulled out a small picture, passing it to Bucky.

She was pretty, but not in the way Bucky had expected. She was blonde with curly hair, a short and stout figure with gentle curves. She had sweet eyes that he could tell was light colour, and rosy cheeks that showed a type of jovial happiness. She was the exact opposite of the kinda gal Bucky would have figured Whitney to be attracted to.

"We were actually engaged." Whitney expanded as Bucky passed him back the picture, "She was a school teacher. She was raised on my family's estate, her pop's was our butler. My folks didn't want us to marry because she came from a less influential family but it didn't matter to us. We were in love."

"What happened to her?" Bucky's voice was hoarse as he asked. He still couldn't get Lucy out of his head, no matter what he did.

"Fever took her a few weeks before we were supposed to get married." He said with a deep tone, sadness etched in it. He only snorted and then shook his head, "God knew she was too good for me so he took her home."

"I'm sorry," Bucky said as he swallowed a lump in his throat. His voice felt tight and strained, probably from yelling earlier for Lucy to hold on.

"I wish I could say it gets better," Whitney shook his head solemnly, looking more human than Bucky had ever seen him, "It doesn't. Just easier, day by day." He swallowed a lump on his throat as well, looking as though he was struggling to talk. He rubbed his knuckles nervously, "I can't remember what her face looks like anymore. I mean, I have pictures…But her little expressions, y'know? I don't remember those. She used to wrinkle her nose real cute like a rabbit. And she had this little crooked smile that always made her look like she was up to something… I don't remember any of that. And it damn near breaks my heart."

Bucky could only sit there in silence as he listened to Whitney speak. He didn't want to forget anything about Lucy. He hated knowing how he might not remember how she frowned when she concentrated too hard on things. He didn't want to forget how she always had a little piece of hair fall in front of her eyes, or how it looked like when she would blow it out of her way in annoyance when
she was too lazy to tuck it behind her ear.

He didn't want to forget the way it felt as she clutched him as they slept beside each other. Or how she would wake up with drool trailing down her cheek. He hated knowing he wouldn't remember how she would clutch at her Star of David necklace when she was nervous or anxious.

Bucky felt tears well up in his eyes as he thought about it. His vision became hazy and all he wanted to do was break down and sob, but he couldn't. His body wouldn't let him. It didn't want to accept she was gone and wasn't coming back.

"My father served in the Great War." Whitney continued on, recapturing Bucky's attention, "He told me before I enlisted that there were three things I should bring with me." He stood up around the fire and moved to sit beside Bucky. He reached into his jacket pocket and pulled something out, "A picture of my girl, a Bible, and flask to drink from when your closest friend dies." He passed Bucky the flask that he produced from his jacket, "And I don't have any friends here really, but you just lost your girl and your best friend. So I would say you need this more than I do."

Bucky swallowed thickly and with a hoarse voice said a quick thanks. He opened it and quickly took a large couple swigs. It burned as it went down, but it was pleasant in the way he immediately felt numb.

"Why are you being so nice to me? You hated her." Was all Bucky could ask, curious as to what Whitney thought he could gain.

"Well, yeah, I did. But you didn't hate her. And like I said, I know how bad it hurts and I wouldn't wish that type of pain on anyone."

Bucky took another swig, tasting the whiskey on his tongue and passed it over to Whitney to share. He took a brief sip but handed it back over to Bucky, who greedily accepted it.

"I'm never gonna be able to get her outta my head lookin like that. So scared and just defeated." He didn't know why he was telling Whitney this, but he couldn't help himself from speaking. He felt as if he were to keep it himself he would go insane.

"Like I said, it never gets better but it gets easier with time."

"Any other tips?" Bucky asked shakily, he felt he hand tremble each time he rose the flask to his lips.

"Whores help." Whitney only nodded, causing Bucky to want to roll his eyes. The man sighed and turned to Bucky, "I have a feeling that's not your style though."

"Not really." Was all he said, unable to even think about bedding another girl. Lucy was it. He had figured she was going to be his last of everything. His last person to kiss, his first and last love, the last person he'd ever fall asleep beside and wake up to.

Bucky had to bite his lip and push his nails into his palm to keep himself from crying. He should have never gotten involved with her. He should have continued hating her, knowing it would be easier. But no, he had to be the idiot that fell in love with her.

Bucky drank more and more despite it not helping. But it did start to make him feel a little more numb. He wanted to drink himself into a state where he didn't feel anything at all.

The more liquor be consumed though the more her face kept appearing in his brain. There was no way she was gone. She couldn't have been, he finally just got her. He wanted a life with her and a family. He wanted to see what she looked like in a wedding dress as she walked down the aisle. He
wanted to carry her across the threshold of his apartment and immediately take her to bed, making love until the sun came up.

He wanted to come home to her every night, and fall asleep with her in his arms. He wanted to wake up kissing her face, hearing her groan as she told him five more minutes.

He wanted her to mother his children, to be excited when she finally told him she was pregnant. He wished he could see her everyday grow larger and larger with the life they created together. And then, one night she would roll over beside him in bed and say it was time. He would call the midwife and his mom, and of course, Steve too. It would be a long few hours but worth it in the end to hear a new baby's cry.

He and Steve would go out and smoke cigars and have a drink afterwards in celebration after Bucky held his baby for the first time. They would have been the perfect family, and although Lucy didn't want to be a mother, Bucky was sure if she could keep her career and have the best of both worlds she'd eventually come around. But if she didn't that was also alright with him. Bucky only needed her, and together they could be their own type of little family.

None of that would happen now. They would never be together and never be a family. The pain that he felt losing her was unlike anything he had ever experienced before. Each second hurt more than the last and all he wanted to do was go home. But he was in the middle of fucking nowhere in Norway. He would not be going home any time soon, and he'd have to keep fighting. It was exhausting, and there was nothing he could do about it.

Taking in a shaky inhale, he noticed how Dugan and Gabe came out of the woods. The sun had set hours ago, and not knowing it was his team emerging he was ready to grab his gun before they called out.

They approached looking worried, their eyes on him as though he would burst out crying at any moment.

"How you holding up?" Dum Dum asked tentatively, his eyes studying him and seeing if there was any trace of emotion there. Bucky said nothing, only shrugged. If he had to answer how he was he would burst out into tears. The entire day had been a complete nightmare, an unimaginable horror he couldn't wake up from.

"Anything I can do?" Of course there wasn't. But he had to ask because there was nothing else to be done.

Bucky took another large swig of the drink Whitney had given him and then shook his head. He passed his drink back to Whitney, not feeling like he could even drink anymore or eat anything.

"I just want to be left alone."

"We uhh, buried Miller. We didn't get a chance to say anything after so we figured we'd do it here with everyone... And for Dr. Heinrich too."

"Say what you want." Bucky replied with, struggling to keep his tone in check, "The dead can't hear you." His voice caught ever so slightly. Saying she was dead brought a whole new set of feelings to him. He couldn't believe it, he didn't want to. He wanted to close his eyes and wake up back in the farm house, with her resting on his chest and wearing the silk slip she had put on earlier.

Dugan only swallowed a lump in his throat as he saw Bucky's expression. He released a breathy exhale and then spoke up after Whitney passed him the flask. "To Lee Miller, a damn good soldier
and a good friend. He made the best fucking pot of coffee around here. He'll be missed." Dugan took a swig and then passed the flask over to Gabe, who also took a drink.

"And to Dr. Lucy Heinrich, the toughest broad I've ever known. And although she could have kicked every single one of our sorry asses, she didn't. She was the smartest person I've ever met, and without her we wouldn't even be alive. She was a good friend, a good person most of the time, and was brilliant at her job." By the time Dugan had finished his speech the flask had made its way back to Bucky. What they didn't know was that she was much more than that. To him, Lucy was his everything.

He swallowed the liquor in a large gulp, hoping it would be enough to put him into a dreamless sleep that wasn't plagued by nightmares of her. "May they rest in peace." Dugan finished and Bucky gave the flask to Whitney and they stood up. He couldn't sit around the fire for a single second longer. He wanted to be alone.

Without saying anything, Bucky began to walk away to go to where he would sleep for the night. His men just watched him and then sat around the fire and said nothing, realizing he didn't want to be around them any longer.

Bucky took his pack and used it as a pillow as he laid down. He wrapped his blanket around him tightly and turned on his side so he was facing away from the fire. He recalled how he and Lucy had slept side by side a couple nights before. Their hands had wandered in the night and clutched one another. By the time he had woken up, he was still holding her hand.

He would never do that again. He would never kiss her face, or run his hands through the softness of her hair. He'd never listen to her breathing as she slept, or watch as the sun caught on her and the green in her hazel eyes would stand out more. He'd never feel her lips on his, or the way she clutched him hard enough to show she needed him. He'd never hear the pretty way she swears, or her mouth whispering dirty things in his ear.

He'd never love anyone the way he loved her. For as long as he'd live she was the one person for him. And he might get married one day, and have a family, but it would always be her who we wanted it with first.

As Bucky tried to keep his tears at bay as he thought of her, he felt something in the pocket of his trousers. Frowning, he reached inside and pulled out his handkerchief.

There was the deep shade of her berry lipstick still smudged on it from when he had wiped off her face earlier after they finished making love. Bucky almost broke down when he realized that the small stroke of colour against the white fabric was the only thing he had to remember her by. At least Whitney had a picture and likely some letters of his fiancé who passed away.

This was all Bucky had. Only the small cloth with the reminisce of where her lips had been. That alone was enough to cause him to break down and burst out in sobs. But he didn't.

Instead he could only lie there in silence and bit his lip to hard that it drew blood. He couldn't feel anything, completely numb of all pain and emotions. He wasn't sure he would ever feel any other way without her. There would only be agony as he was forced to live on an earth which she was no longer on. To Bucky, even hell would have been easier than that.

There had been darkness, and only darkness as a black void swallowed her whole. Pain was etched into her very being, like a stabbing throughout her entire body.
It was cold beyond anything she had ever imagined, and each second it felt like she was fading and fading more.

The fall should have killed her, Lucy knew that. There were rocks at the bottom and the drop alone would have broken her legs.

But for some reason she was still here. She was alive, despite pain coursing through her. She fought off the darkness that was swallowing her, and instead rose with a purpose. She had to find Bucky, she had to let him know she was alive.

Waking up with a start, Lucy gasped as he arose from where she was lying. She felt like she couldn't breathe, her chest rising and falling.

It had all been a bad dream, she thought. She couldn't have fallen and then survived, but somehow she did.

"It's okay!" A young voice with a thick accent stressed quickly as Lucy looked around where she was franticly. "It's alright!"

There was a young girl in front of her. She had long blonde curly hair and blue eyes, looking at Lucy widely like she was a scared animal.

She blinked quickly and tried to recognize where she was. She was in a dark room in a wooden cabin of some sort. Underneath her was soft blankets and a comfy bed which felt as though she was lying on a cloud.

"Where am I?" Lucy demanded, sitting up quickly and immediately calling out in pain as her hand went to her ribs.

"Don't get up!" The girl said firmly as she pushed Lucy down. She had a cloth in her hand that she put against Lucy's forehead. Lucy hadn't noticed how warm she was, but the cloth had felt nice in those moments.

"Where am I?" Lucy croaked again, her voice straining. She looked at the girl and saw her kind, beautiful eyes. She looked very concerned at Lucy, like she was patient she needed to nurse back to health. In a way, she reminded her of Elsa.

"You're in a little river village near Flam in Norway," Although her accent is thick, but Lucy could understand the girl's English. "My name is Hilda, and you're in my and my mother's home. I found you in the river four days ago, struggling to get up."

"Four days?" Lucy couldn't believe she had been out for so long. It had seemed like she had only just fallen.

"Yes, and you must be starving. You injured yourself badly, your legs and feet are all black with bruises, and you have more bruising on your chest and ribs. You might have cracked one, but I don't think there's been any break." Hilda said reassuringly and then went to a small pot cooking over a fire. Lucy noticed how there were dried flowers and herbs hanging from the rafters of the ceiling. The cottage was simple but cozy, and there was a warmth to it that Lucy hadn't felt in awhile.

Hilda came back with a small bowl of soup. When Lucy reached for it, Hilda smacked her hand out of the way. "No, you're hurt. Let me." Lucy wasn't about to fight with the girl, and she lay back on the pillow. The girl got a spoon and raised it to Lucy's lips, she didn't know how hungry she was until that moment. "You had a fever and we weren't sure you were going to make it. But my mother is a healer, like a doctor, but she relies on old magic and natural remedies. She's tried to teach me a
Lucy sipped the soup and immediately felt better. Although there wasn't much in it and this family was clearly lacking in food, they had spared enough to give to her. "What's your name?" Hilda asked her.

"I'm Lucy," Was all she said between slurps.

"Are you American? You don't speak or look like us, and you have this necklace around your neck." Hilda reached to grab Lucy's Star of David resting around her neck, but Lucy snatched it back and placed between her breasts.

"Sorry, erm, it just belonged to someone special to me." Was all she said, "And yes, I'm American."

"What are you doing here then?" Hilda asked with a frown as she continued giving Lucy food.

"I... I'm with the army. I got separated from my team when I fell from the waterfall."

"The army?" Hilda gasped, "Are you here to save us from the Germans?"

Lucy felt her expression drop as she realized how much this girl had suffered from the hands of evil people. It broke her heart to have to shake her head.

"No, we're not. It was for a mission." Was all she said and her heart sank and she watched as the girls face fell.

"Oh," She said with a heavy heart, trying to hide her disappointment. "Mama says that one day they're going to come and help us. But I guess not right now."

"Someday." Lucy tried to promise, although she knew the only way these people could be helped was if the allies won the war.

"How are you with the army if you're a woman? Are you a nurse?" She asked with a smile as she continued to feed Lucy.

Lucy tried her best to answer through the spoonfuls of soup that was being shoved in her mouth. The warmth of it was unlike anything she had ever felt, and the more food she consumed the more energy she had.

"I'm a Lieutenant. I'm a doctor of archaeology and I'm helping out with some matters." It was all she could say, Lucy couldn't give away too much information to a civilian.

"Matters like what?" She said with a smile, her innocence reflecting through the glimmer in her eyes.

"Classified," Lucy said quietly, trying to return her small smile.

"I understand." The girl nodded, then changed the subject, "I was hoping you were a nurse. Like I said, my mother is a healer. But she relies on old methods of healing. I want to do what she does, but if I had training to be a nurse I think I would be able to help more people."

"It's a noble pursuit and you seem very good at it. You managed to keep me alive for so long, clearly you have some skills."

The girl nodded and scraped the bottom of the bowl to get Lucy every last bit of soup. "You're lucky. If you fell from the waterfall you should be dead. But it doesn't always happen. Papa used to tell me before he died that our ancestors used to throw their old villagers off there once they no
longer could live a productive life. It was better than just withering in old age to get to Valhalla. Sometimes they would die immediately, other times they would survive and go live in the forest away from the village."

"How old are you?" Lucy frowned, looking at the with curiosity after she spoke.

"Fifteen. Why? How old are you?" She asked curiously, her eyebrow cocking.

Lucy only chuckled and then shook her head, "I'm twenty-seven." She always hated telling people her age because they always she an old maid for not being married yet.

"My older sister is your age. She has three children, do you have children back in America?"

"No children, but a niece and a nephew." Lucy answered, her looking at the girl with curiosity. She reminded her a little bit of Adeline when she was her age. "And a fish named Clementine." She didn't tell her Clementine the goldfish had likely passed away in her absence...

Hilda only smiled widely, "They must miss you. You must want to be home." She said as a gentle and quiet tone settling over her.

"Not home…" Lucy realized as she spoke, shaking her head despite the pain of moving brought her, "Somewhere else though, with my team." All she wanted to do was see Bucky.

Oh God, Bucky. He must have thought she was dead. She had to find him and let him know everything was okay. Lucy felt tears in her eyes well up just thinking about it. He must have been so heartbroken, not knowing she had survived. All she wanted to do was kiss his sweet face and tell him it was alright. She wanted to feel his arms wrap around her and his lips press to her forehead.

"Well, hopefully we can get you better so you can get back to them. I'm sure they're worried about you."

"Yes, probably." She hated knowing that Bucky had seen her fall and likely blamed himself. She couldn't let him believe that he was the one who had let her slip.

"Is your team all women too?" Hilda asked with a twinge of excitement in her voice. She looked at Lucy with wide eyes, she almost hated the fact she had to tell her no.

"No, I'm the only one. I wish it was women though, it would be better than men." Lucy smiled slightly as she saw how excited Hilda had been at the thought of a team made up entirely of women.

The young girl sighed, "That's alright. Men are good too, I suppose. Although it must be difficult being the only woman. Are they handsome at least?" The girl seemed a little dizzy with the thought of boys. Lucy supposed fifteen was the age she and her sisters finally began to take an interest in them, after all.

Lucy nodded, a smirk on her lips as she thought back to Bucky, "They're handsome enough. One though… He's…." Lucy couldn't find the words to describe Bucky. There were none in the English language to describe just how beautiful he was. "He's breathtaking." Was all she could say with a sigh. There was nothing in the entire world she wanted to see more than his face.

"Well, then we must get you better soon so you can see him again." Hilda said with a smile. She placed the bowl off to the side and then lifted the blankets around Lucy, "I'm just going to check the bruising around your ribs."

Lucy trusted her despite just meeting her. After all, what type of person would fish out a strange
woman from the river if they didn't have a good heart?

Hilda was just about to lift Lucy's dress to see her injuries when the door suddenly burst open. A woman with greying blonde hair looked frantic and said urgently, "Hilda, they're here!"

Hilda's face dropped in worry as she looked up at Lucy with frightened eyes, "Who's here?" Lucy demanded.

Hilda looked up in fear and quickly got Lucy to her feet, despite the fact that she nearly fell from pain. "The Germans! We have to present ourselves to them and then they decide which one of us to take." Lucy nearly squealed in pain as she tried to stand, but luckily Hilda placed her arm over her shoulder so she could put her weight on her.

"Take? Take where?" Lucy demanded, frowning deeply and fear settling in her stomach. Would they notice she wasn't from the village? Surely they would recognize the people living there if they visited often. It would look suspicious for a new face to be in the mix.

Hilda only said darkly with a worried expression on her face, "We don't know…"

Chapter End Notes

I'm so sorry I left you with another cliffhanger! I just love them so much and I have to make sure you come back to me when I start posting in January again lol. At least it's not as bad as the last one where most of you thought Lucy was dead. Of course there's nooo way I could kill her off! She's my femme fatal! My feminist queen and main gal! There's no way I could kill her off (for now at least…)

Thanks for reading,

-A

Please review and let me know what you thought about this chapter! Also feel free to drop any ideas of what you want to see happen in this story after I get back from my little break. Follow and favourite as well!

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