Room for More

by robocryptid

Summary

It would have been dramatic to say that no one was allowed to leave during the investigation. In theory, they could all do as they pleased. Sombra could go, if she chose — and if she wanted Akande’s mistrust to turn to outright hostility. There was playing her own games, and then there was stupidly making enemies out of her current allies for no good reason. So she stayed.

In the meantime, her room was undergoing repairs along with the rest of the south wing. It was inconvenient, but she’d lived through worse than getting displaced to another plush room. No, those things were fine. What got her wondering whether Akande was punishing her for something was this: she had a roommate.

Notes

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I just really needed some "and they were roommates!" flavored Spiderbyte.
Akande had to be getting back at her for something. Like sure, he sent a small army of omnics to help move her things, but there was no other explanation for this.

There was fighting in the streets, an omnic insurrection. It was the kind of thing they would live for, if only they had been the ones behind the unrest. As it was, Akande had all hands on deck to work out whether they could turn it in their favor. Whether the damage to the building was deliberate or only collateral.

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In the meantime, her room was undergoing repairs along with the rest of the south wing. It was inconvenient, but she’d lived through worse than getting displaced to another plush room. No, those things were fine. What got her wondering whether Akande was punishing her for something was this: she had a roommate.

Someone had crammed a second bed into a room clearly designed with only one in mind. Widowmaker sat on the end of the one farthest from the window, having claimed it as her own already. Her flat eyes stared back at Sombra.

“You’re here,” Widow said dully.

“There must be a mistake.”

“Non,” she said, like Sombra needed reminding that she was French. “No mistake. You are with me.”

There was no good reason to make a fuss. She was trying to keep her head down after Russia, because Akande had been acting like he might suspect something. On her best behavior until that blew over. Still... “I thought I’d at least get my own room.”

“I heard no one gets their own room right now. If you have a problem with my company, I’m sure you could find someone to trade.”

Sombra thought about it. She could stay with Gabe, who would probably poke through her things thinking she wouldn’t notice. He’d definitely do his growly asshole act whenever he got cranky, which was often. That was tiresome enough in small doses. Her other options got exponentially worse after that. Widow didn’t seem so bad by comparison. “This is fine.”

“Are you certain? I am sure there is still space in Moira’s room.”

On the outside, Sombra only rolled her eyes, but internally, she took notes; she hadn’t thought Widow did jokes. “Did you take the good bed?”

“Why wouldn’t I? I got here first.”
Living with Widowmaker was both more and less weird than Sombra thought it would be. She was a *morning person*, a crime only balanced by how creepily quiet she was, so it wasn’t like she really disturbed Sombra’s sleep. She was just *there* in her trophy wife yoga pants, way too alert to deal with first thing on waking. Her ass was cute in those pants though, and she kept a private drip coffee maker in the room, so Sombra considered it a net win.

It was less cute to find out how much hair she shed, and that she left the strands stuck to the shower wall so that Sombra got to find them later, hanging there like some macabre fiber arts project. Talon paid plenty of people to keep the place spotless, but their hours clearly didn’t include the space between Widowmaker’s morning shower and Sombra’s. Neither did they appear to include addressing the smell of Widow’s favorite cheeses, which wafted potently every time she opened the miniature refrigerator.

Most of Widowmaker’s habits were forgivable enough — Sombra had lived with others enough times in her life to develop a high tolerance for bullshit — but the lack of privacy proved problematic. It was difficult enough to keep her extracurriculars off Akande’s radar when she had a room to herself. It felt impossible now; Widow might walk in at any time, and Sombra’s skin regularly crawled with the sense that she was being monitored. Which, sure, she probably deserved, but she did not have to enjoy it.

Sombra sat on the bed cross-legged, working her way through the online trail of a potential recruit. Even this, a task which she had been assigned by Akande himself, left her with a writhing, creeping sensation on her skin every time Widow looked her way. Her eyes were flat, expressionless, but she was not subtle about watching Sombra. She probably didn’t care enough to aim for subtlety in the first place. Sombra put up with it for as long as she could before she finally asked, “Don’t you have something better to do?”

Widow blinked. “Better than what?”

“Better than watching me?”

“Oh.” Widow looked like she actually had to think about it. “No,” she said with a shrug.

At least she was straightforward about it, Sombra supposed. She also wondered briefly if all the brain tinkering had rendered her a bit simple. But no, she had seen Widow improvise strategy plenty of times. She knew what she was doing, and she was clever in the field. This was something else.

That didn’t make it less uncomfortable. “Well, don’t. It’s weird.”

“Okay.” Widow rearranged herself on her own bed, propped up on a few pillows, then opened her tablet. She seemed to become absorbed in it immediately, and in the glow, her cheeks looked like they almost had some color in them.
gone now. Gabe probably counted as a “friend,” sort of, the kind she had in lots of places. She liked him better than most other people here — most of the time — and he was more bark than bite, at least with her. He was also useful to have around.

Widowmaker was probably useful. Talon certainly had plenty of uses for an unfeeling assassin, but Sombra had yet to find a use she could capitalize on. Otherwise they had only ever circled one another. No outright animosity, but never friendly either. She hadn’t been convinced Widowmaker had friends until Sombra caught her chatting with Gabe. She even smiled at Akande once; he smiled back.

Akande liked Widow. He wouldn’t stick her with someone she hated. Sombra made some mental revisions to her assumptions about her room assignment.

“Is this what you do?” Widowmaker asked. Sombra looked up from her tablet, but she only raised an expectant eyebrow. “You watch screens all day, and then…?”

“And then what?” Sombra asked shortly. She probably could have been nicer. Widow’s voice made her seem so disdainful, but now that Sombra had learned to listen, there were distinct notes in there. She sounded genuinely curious.

“That is what I’m asking.” Okay, maybe that one held a bit of disdain. Impatience, like she assumed Sombra should know things right away.

“You know what I’m paid to do. Surveillance, blackmail, hacking. I’m a one-woman dystopian nightmare.”

Widow laughed in a way Sombra had never heard before. Really, she wasn’t sure she’d heard Widow laugh at all, but this one was almost cute. It was high and musical and gone in an instant.

“Don’t you have to be a government for it to be dystopian, not just a person?”

“We work for terrorists. Is that not enough for you?”

She did it again. The laugh. The first was a shock. Two in a row, and so quickly, made Sombra’s brain make a weird whirring sound, like she was an omnic beginning to overheat.

“What are you working on now?” Widow asked. How bored could she be that she was so nosy?

“Stuff.”

No laugh this time. She looked unimpressed instead. “What kind of stuff?”

Sombra would blame the whirring in her head and that stupid laugh and her sudden desire to hear it again for what she did next: she told the truth. “I’m snooping on designers’ Fashion Week lineups.”

“Milan?”

Sombra felt her brow tic in surprise, without her consent. “Yes.”

“Can I see?”
“They don’t usually do athleisure wear,” Sombra warned, but Widow didn’t seem to hear it. She settled onto Sombra’s bed right beside her, peering over her shoulder. And Sombra could have told her to go away — it would have been perfectly easy to enlarge the holo screens for her to see from her own bed — but every time she considered saying it aloud, Widow’s weight shifted behind her and a different part of her body pressed against Sombra’s back or shoulder, and who really needed personal space?

So she dug through all she could find: photographs and designs saved to personal clouds and unsecured networks, and in one case, several videos of an in-progress dress so the designer could see how it moved.

“Hideous,” Widow said beside her. It was hard to say, but she sounded very amused by it. Which was fair, since the thing was comprised entirely of oversized, glittering seafoam ruffles from neck to ankle, and swished in such a manner that the poor model appeared to be waddling. “Are there more like this one?”

She pressed in closely again in order to enlarge the video, seemingly unaware that her breasts were smashed against Sombra’s arm. Not that they were especially large, so maybe she just didn’t notice these things, but Sombra noticed, and just because they were small didn’t mean they weren’t nice — “Actually, I think I’m tired. Should call it an early night.”

“Oh.” Widow was still too close, blinking in confusion. Sombra could swear she had put her “pretty and vacant” days behind her, so it was very stupid that Widow could remain so attractive while looking so bewildered. Not that Widowmaker was actually vacant. She was just… weird. She was so weird.

She did, however, leave Sombra alone after that, dutifully heading to bed and turning lights down, until all that remained were the twin glows of their tablets. Sombra didn’t spend much time feeling stupid, but right now she did, because she wasn’t the least bit tired and had no good excuses for going back on what she’d said. She sighed and settled in for a long night of browsing Wikipedia.

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Hours later, long after Widow had passed out, Sombra was still awake. She had lightly dozed here and there, but her body and mind weren’t ready to commit to sleep yet. Which meant she was awake to hear it when Widow began to mutter.

She didn’t know enough French to know what she was saying. It could have been anything. Maybe total nonsense, like most sleeping people. But it sent a chill down Sombra’s spine. The words may have been foreign, but the tone was pretty universal: she sounded afraid. And not I watched a scary movie so now I have the jitters afraid, but the kind of fear only someone with a past could recognize, the kind that burrowed into your bones and never quite let go.

She knew that fear, and she knew what it looked like in someone else. Frightened children, mostly, but sometimes grown adults temporarily returned to that frightened-child state by the depths of what they faced. There was no way she could sleep as long as she had to experience it secondhand. She needed to stop it.

She flung the covers off and crossed the short space between their beds. Unsure how Widow would react to being startled awake, she lay a hand as gently as she could on Widow’s arm. When this only produced a shudder and more mumbling, she let her touch grow firmer, and she rubbed
Widow’s arm until a hand shot out to clasp hers.

Widow’s hand was clammy and she squeezed so hard that Sombra’s fingers hurt, but neither of them let go. She didn’t even know if Widow was awake or not, but she didn’t think it mattered. Sombra climbed under the blanket with her, and she tucked her body close until Widow’s breathing grew so slow that she seemed hardly alive at all. That may have been her natural state, though.

It had never occurred to Sombra that Widowmaker could be afraid. She wondered if her nightmares were like normal people’s or if they were somehow worse. From what she knew of the reprogramming, much of Widowmaker’s emotions were supposed to be suppressed. She wondered if this was the result, a release of all the things she didn’t consciously process. Sombra had never much cared about the procedures, but maybe tomorrow she would start on those files.

A shuddering breath broke the silence. Sombra wanted to ask questions, but even she knew that this was probably a bad time. So she lay there until Widow carefully untangled their fingers and rolled to face her. “Thank you,” Widow whispered.

“We really don’t have to talk about it.”

Widow let out an amused sound, but she said nothing else. They lay facing each other in silence, the darkness so deep that Sombra could not tell if Widowmaker had fallen asleep again or not. Then the mattress whined beneath them as she shifted her weight, then a nose touched the tip of her own, then Widow’s mouth was on hers.

Sombra made a startled noise against her lips, convinced at first that this had come out of nowhere. In the following instant, nearly all of Widowmaker’s weirdness suddenly made much more sense. It was in that instant that Sombra remembered to return the kiss, and then to take it over, because Widow was probably just trying to be polite, but she was frustratingly tentative for an assassin.

In the morning, Sombra woke to coffee and the sight of Widowmaker without the usual yoga pants. Her butt was even cuter this way. The third item of interest was the email from Akande, though: Sombra’s room renovations were complete, and she was free to return at any time.

“Ah,” Widow said, face expressionless. “I will be able to eat my cheese in peace now.”

“And I can shower without seeing your hair everywhere.”

“I will not have to look at your soda can pyramids first thing in the morning.”

“Those are art!”

Widow gave her the faintest hint of a smile. “I think I will miss you.”

It was sweet, but it was too much to repeat. Sombra sighed. “I can… come back? For dinner?”

“Oh? May I borrow Arturito?”

“What for?”

“Collateral.”
Sombra laughed. “You don’t have to extort me into having dinner with you. You don’t have to ask Akande to set it up to make me spend time with you, either.”

Widow flushed as deeply as her skin would allow. “I do not know what you’re talking about.”

Sombra grinned, and she set the teddy bear down on Widowmaker’s side of the room. “Of course not. I’ll pick you up around seven.”

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