

He Wore Peace, She Wore Purpose

● *War Never Changes*

Chapter 1

“Genji—!”

The scream tore itself from her throat like something alive, raw and burning. But the world around her didn't care. It swallowed the sound whole—drowned it in the roar of collapsing steel and the screaming wind of firestorms.

Angela ran.

Her breath was ragged, each inhale scraping against the thick smoke invading her lungs. The Overwatch tower—once proud and defiant—was disintegrating piece by piece, its bones breaking under the weight of betrayal and fire. Sirens wailed from deep inside the compound, echoing through the shattered halls like cries of the dying.

The sky above was choked with ash.

Her boots skidded over broken tile, her wings sputtering behind her—one flaring erratically, the other barely responding. She clutched her pulse staff like it might ground her, like it could stop this nightmare if she held on tight enough.

She had to find him.

She had to find him.

“Genji, do you copy?” she shouted into her comm, though she knew the line was dead. It had been since the first blast ripped through the communications wing. But she kept trying. “Genji, come in. Please—answer me.”

No response. Just static.

She rounded the corner to the operations deck and froze.

Bodies.

Not all dead—but too many unmoving. Talon agents scattered like broken puppets among her own, the white and blue of Overwatch uniforms stained with blood and soot. Smoke curled up from a shattered console, and sparks jumped from the exposed wiring, painting everything in flickering orange and blue.

She pressed a trembling hand to her mouth, willing her stomach to hold.

A green glow pulsed through the haze.

Her heart jumped.

There—in the distance. Swift, fluid movement. The familiar flicker of a blade, the arc of a leap. A blur of steel and light—him. It had to be him.

“Genji!”

Angela stumbled forward, nearly tripping over a fallen operative. Her wings dragged, heavy and uneven behind her. She dodged falling debris, eyes locked on the figure ahead.

He was fighting. Silent. Efficient. Each movement precise. She could see his silhouette now—half-shrouded by smoke, hoodie torn, the glow of his visor faint through the chaos.

Her relief cracked something in her chest.

But then—he staggered.

Just for a second. A hesitation. A flare of red from his side. A wound?

She tried to run faster.

She didn't see the second blast coming.

It slammed into the wall beside her, throwing her sideways. The world turned upside down, her vision filled with sparks and concrete and flame. Her back hit the ground, and her head cracked against something hard. A sharp, metallic taste filled her mouth. Her staff skittered across the floor out of reach.

She tried to get up. Her limbs wouldn't respond.

Above her, flames licked at the ceiling. The sounds of battle were muffled now, as though someone had closed a door between her and the rest of the world.

She blinked.

Smoke blurred the edges of her vision.

And then—

Silence.

The fire gave way to quiet. The smoke thinned into mist, curling around her like breath on glass. And she was standing—not lying, not broken—on the balcony of a Shambali temple, long before everything burned.

Soft wind stirred the silk curtains at her sides. The sky was twilight-purple. Below, cherry blossoms drifted through the garden like snow. Peace. For the first time in what felt like hours—or maybe years—there was peace.

She turned.

And he was there.

Not the blur of steel and fury she'd seen in battle. Not the Genji who carved through enemies with glowing blades. No—this was him. Hoodie drawn over his head, hands tucked into his pockets, leaning against the balcony rail like he belonged there. Like the world hadn't ended yet.

His visor was off.

She could see his eyes.

“Angela,” he said, softly—like he hadn't spoken her name in years, and it tasted strange on his tongue.

She stepped toward him. “You're hurt,” she murmured, instinctively reaching for him, but there was no blood. No wounds. Just the frayed edge of his sleeve, the soft look in his eyes.

“I'm always hurt,” he replied, a bitter smile playing on his lips. “But not the way you think.”

The words twisted something in her.

He looked out across the trees. “You told me once I wasn't a machine. That I was more than the pieces they left behind.”

“You are,” she whispered, fiercely. “You are.”

He turned his gaze back to her. “Then why did you let me go?”

The question struck like a blade.

Before she could answer—before she could even breathe—his form blurred, dissolving into ash. The balcony split apart, fracturing into a thousand pieces as the sky screamed open above her, and the world burned again.

She fell.

Back into the fire.

Back into the broken tower, where Genji's voice shouted her name through the static, just before—

Back into the fire. Back into the crumbling wreckage of Overwatch.

The smoke thickened again, suffocating, searing her lungs with each breath. Her knees hit the scorched ground as she landed hard, pain lancing up her spine. Something was wrong—something new. The world felt slower. Heavier. As if time itself grieved around her.

And then she saw him.

Not standing.

Not fighting.

Lying still.

“Genji?” her voice cracked, raw as ash.

She crawled toward him, dragging herself over rubble and broken glass, hands trembling as they reached for his armored shoulder. The green lines of his body flickered dimly—once, then faded. His visor was shattered, one half of his face exposed, smeared with soot and blood. His hoodie was scorched along the edges, clinging to him like a final layer of comfort. His chest didn't rise.

He wasn't moving.

“No, no, no—” she whispered, gripping his arm. “Come on, Genji, wake up. This isn't—this can't be—”

Her pulse staff sparked beside her, inert. Useless. She pressed her hands to his chest anyway, searching for life, for anything, her voice rising with every breath.

“Don't do this to me,” she begged. “Don't you dare—don't leave me here!”

Her wings flared instinctively, trying to charge, trying to summon anything that might bring him back. But her healing stream wouldn't engage. Her tech was broken. Her heart was breaking.

“Please... I wasn't finished... I wasn't ready to lose you—”

And then—

A flicker.

Faint.

His hand twitched.

Angela froze, breath caught in her throat.

“Genji?” she whispered again, barely daring to hope.

His head shifted just enough for one eye to meet hers—cracked, flickering, but unmistakably his.

“Angela...” he rasped, the voice more thought than sound. “You let me go...”

Her lips parted, heart dropping.

“I didn't,” she whispered. “I tried—I tried to hold on—”

But his hand slipped from hers, his eye dimmed, and his body fell still again.

“No—!” Her scream ripped from her chest, louder than the fire, louder than the crumbling sky—

● *Reality*

Chapter 2

Angela bolted upright with a gasp.

The lab was too bright, too quiet, the kind of silence that made her skin crawl. Her pulse thundered in her ears. Each breath felt like dragging air through fire, the memory of smoke still clinging to her lungs. Her hands shot out, clutching the edge of her desk like it might anchor her to reality.

Tears blurred her vision.

They slipped down her cheeks without permission, born from a dream that felt too real—too close. She could still feel the weight of Genji's limp body in her arms. Still see the flicker of light dying in his eye. Still hear his voice, accusing her... aching.

“You let me go.”

Her throat clenched.

Slowly, her shaking hand reached for the desk drawer—one she rarely opened. The metal handle felt ice-cold against her fingers. She pulled it open with a soft creak and stared inside.

There it was.

A small, hand-made Genji plushie, tucked away beneath old schematics and datachips. Its stitching was uneven, the fabric frayed in places, and the visor was sewn slightly crooked. The hoodie was too big for its tiny frame, clearly a rushed addition. Crude. Imperfect.

But it was his.

Her fingers curled around it gently, lifting it like it was made of glass. She held it close, pressing it to her chest, eyes fluttering shut.

It wasn't much.

But it was enough.

Enough to remind her that somewhere out there, Genji was alive. That the fire hadn't taken him. That the guilt, the fear, the dreams—were just echoes.

He was still out there.

And maybe, just maybe...

he still thought of her too

The small plush stayed cradled in her hand as she slowly stood, her legs unsteady beneath her.

Her wing harness, half-assembled, lay untouched on the table beside her—a reminder of the work she'd fallen asleep doing. She set the plush gently atop a clean data pad and wiped at her eyes with the sleeve of her coat, breath still catching now and then.

It was just a dream.

Angela walked to the large window at the far end of the lab. She pressed her palm to the glass, letting the coolness soak into her skin.

Below, Watchpoint Gibraltar stood still beneath a hazy morning light.

There were no fires. No collapsing towers. No explosions.

Just silence. The good kind.

The rest of the Overwatch team had deployed hours ago—something small, a routine reconnaissance in Paris. She'd stayed behind to continue analyzing new potential upgrades to Genji's armor. Improvements that might help better regulate his neural interface, give him more comfort, more autonomy. Not because he asked for it—he never did. But because she couldn't help herself.

She needed to keep him close, even from afar.

Her eyes scanned the base from her window view. The command deck was dark. The mess hall empty. The training ring powered down.

Safe.

Angela closed her eyes and breathed out slowly, pressing her forehead to the glass.

Overwatch is still here.

He's still here.

And I'm still trying.

● *The Theft of cloth*

Chapter 3

Angela turned from the window, the soft ache in her chest slowly ebbing into something more manageable—more familiar. She returned to the desk, lifting the small Genji plushie once more in her hands. Her thumb brushed across the uneven stitching of the visor, and for a moment, her heart softened.

"I'll see you soon," she whispered.

She leaned down and pressed a kiss to its fabric head, a ghost of a smile flickering across her lips. Then, carefully, she set it back in the drawer, nestled it against the edge of an old blueprint, and slid it shut with a quiet click.

The silence of the lab pressed in again.

Too much silence.

Angela stepped away from her desk and pulled her coat tighter around her. The air felt too heavy, her thoughts too loud. She needed to move—breathe. Maybe walking the halls would help, even if only to remind her that this place wasn't haunted by her memories. Not completely.

The corridors were dim but calm, lined with soft-blue lights that pulsed gently along the floors. The hum of the base's systems was the only sound—steady and low, a soft rhythm beneath her thoughts. She passed the empty medbay, nodded absently at the quiet war room, and turned down the hall leading to the living quarters.

Then her steps slowed.

There it was.

His room.

Unassuming. Simple. The door was closed, as always, bearing no name. Just a smooth surface, silent and untouched since he left on mission. Her heart beat a little harder.

She moved past it.

Then stopped.

Her feet hesitated—one, two steps beyond—before she bit her bottom lip and slowly backed up, her eyes drifting toward the doorway again. She paused, standing still for a long moment, then took one cautious step back. And another. Just enough to lean her head toward the threshold.

She peeked inside.

The door had been left slightly ajar, just enough to allow a sliver of light to spill into the room. It smelled faintly of cedar and metal—a soft, lived-in scent that caught her off guard. Familiar. Reassuring. Like him.

Genji's quarters were modest, almost minimalist, but deeply personal in their own way. A small meditation mat was rolled neatly near the window, untouched. Along the far wall, a few belongings rested on low shelves: a tattered Shambali prayer scroll, a faded photo of the team—pre-incident—and a small incense holder, empty, but lovingly placed.

And then she saw it.

On the edge of the bed, folded with care, was his hoodie.

The one he always wore during downtime, the one that softened the lines of his mechanical frame. Grey, with sleeves just a bit too long—frayed around the cuffs from wear. She could see the faint crease in the fabric where he'd last folded it, the spot where the hood fell gently forward, as though waiting to be pulled over his head once more.

Her eyes settled on it, and everything inside her stilled.

That simple piece of cloth held more comfort than any armor she'd ever designed. It wasn't just what he wore—it was who he became when he wore it. Calmer. Softer. Closer.

Angela didn't step inside.

She stood there, barely breathing, one hand resting lightly on the doorframe.

The memory of her dream flickered at the edges of her thoughts, sharp and cruel. But the sight of that hoodie—untouched, undisturbed—was something else.

Proof he was real.

Proof he was still coming back.

Angela lingered in the doorway a moment longer, eyes still fixed on the hoodie folded on the bed. Her fingers brushed the frame unconsciously, as if drawn to step further in—but instead, she let out a soft breath and slowly turned away.

Then paused.

Her hand hovered near her chest, thumb pressing lightly into her coat.

“He wouldn't mind if...”

The thought slipped in uninvited, and she didn't finish it. Her lips parted, but no words followed. Her mind was already ahead of her, painting the image faster than she could stop it.

She turned her head slightly, glancing toward the wall mirror just inside the room.

From where she stood, she could just see herself—framed in silver light, the curve of her neck, the faint flush still warming her cheeks. Her gaze flicked back to the hoodie.

What would she look like in it?

The fabric draped over her shoulders, the hood pulled up, sleeves swallowing her hands... She imagined tugging it down over bare legs, her hair slightly tousled, standing in front of him with that half-shy, half-playful look she never let anyone else see.

A faint smirk curled at the edge of her lips before she could stop it.

“Genji-san~” she whispered, almost involuntarily, the word drawn out in a tone just a little softer... a little needier... than she meant to use.

Her cheeks flared with heat the moment the sound left her mouth. She blinked, quickly shaking herself from the thought, pulling her coat tighter as if to ground herself again.

What are you doing, she scolded herself silently, backing away from the door, eyes wide as if someone might've heard her.

But the corridor was still empty.

And his room stayed quiet.

She looked once more at the hoodie.

Then turned and walked away—faster this time—her thoughts now louder than her footsteps.

As she turned the corner and left his door behind, her heart wouldn't calm. The air in her lungs felt tight, her cheeks still tingling with heat from the sound of her own voice.

She stopped mid-step, gripped by something far more persistent than reason.

Her eyes shut tight as she whispered, "Um Himmels willen..." For God's sake.

Her hands curled into fists at her sides.

A second passed. Then two.

She turned around.

Her footsteps were quieter this time—careful, measured, but undeniably drawn forward by something she could no longer suppress. The door creaked softly as she nudged it open just enough to slip through, and then closed it behind her with a gentle click.

Her breath hitched in her throat as she looked at the hoodie again.

It felt ridiculous.

It felt dangerous.

But it also felt... right.

Angela moved toward the bed, her fingers hovering over the worn fabric for just a second longer before she let them sink into it. It was softer than she expected. A little warm, even now. Her lips parted as she lifted it gently in her arms.

Her thoughts screamed no—but her body didn't listen.

She slipped her coat off and set it aside, standing in just her tank and leggings. Then slowly, she pulled the hoodie over her head.

It didn't go on easily—his frame was broader, taller, and the fabric clung for a moment around her arms. She wiggled her hips and shoulders playfully, a breathless laugh slipping past her lips as she shimmied it down over her body.

The sleeves dangled past her hands. The hem brushed the tops of her thighs. She looked up, caught her reflection in the mirror—and blushed all over again.

She looked... cute.

More than that—she looked like his.

Angela brought the collar of the hoodie up to her nose, pressing it close, and inhaled.

The scent hit her immediately—faint metal, clean fabric, and something unmistakably Genji. It was subtle, but it sent a warmth through her chest that no medical stim ever could.

Her eyes fluttered shut as she held the fabric closer, arms wrapping around herself like she could conjure him there, in that room, beside her.

Just for a minute.

Just to pretend.

● *Return*

Chapter 4

Angela stood still in the quiet, wrapped in Genji's hoodie, eyes closed, heart soft. The warmth of his scent still lingered in her nose, and for a fleeting second, she allowed herself the fantasy—his arms around her, his voice low, calling her name not from the battlefield, but from behind, in peace.

Then—

A distant, mechanical hum broke the silence.

Her eyes snapped open.

The sound grew louder—closer—thrusters whining as they descended onto the pad outside Watchpoint Gibraltar. The unmistakable pulse of the dropship landing gear slamming against metal. Her heart jumped straight into her throat.

They were back.

Angela stiffened, her breath caught in her chest. She looked down at herself—drowning in the hoodie, bare-legged, the sleeves bundled over her hands. A sigh.

Panic twisted in her stomach.

“Scheiße—!”

Her pulse thundered in her ears as she rushed to the mirror, tugging the hood down over her hair and pressing her palms to her cheeks, trying to cool the color from her face. It didn't work. She still looked flushed. Guilty. Adorable—and completely busted.

Footsteps echoed down the corridor now. Someone was coming.

Her body froze, instincts torn between throwing the hoodie off or pretending she'd just—casually borrowed it for warmth. Neither excuse felt convincing. Not with how she looked. Not with how she felt.

Then—

A voice echoed distantly down the hall.

Low. Familiar.

Genji.

He was back.

Her heart pounded louder than the ship's thrusters had.

And she was still wearing his hoodie.

● *Invisible*

Chapter 5

Angela let out a tiny, involuntary “Eep!” as Genji’s voice carried down the corridor.

Her eyes darted frantically around the room. Nowhere to go. Nowhere to hide. The hoodie still clung to her like a second skin, and there was no time to get out of it.

“Think, think, think—!”

Her gaze landed on the closet.

With a strangled whimper of desperation, she bolted across the room, yanked the door open, and all but shoved herself inside. She barely managed to pull the door closed before her back hit the wall, heart hammering like a war drum in her chest.

Darkness swallowed her.

The scent of Genji was stronger in here. She was standing between his backup gear, spare hoodies, and a half-packed travel case. It wrapped around her like a memory, soft and suffocating all at once. She squeezed her eyes shut and tried not to breathe too loudly.

Outside the closet, the door to his room creaked.

Her heart stopped.

Footsteps.

Familiar. Steady.

She bit her lip hard to keep from making a sound, her whole body trembling—not from fear, but from the impossible mix of emotions coursing through her. Why was she hiding? Why did she put on his hoodie like some lovesick idiot?

And yet...

Her fingers curled into the oversized sleeves as she pressed her back tighter to the wall, whispering to herself under her breath.

“Please don’t open the door... Please don’t open the door...”

The footsteps grew closer

Angela pressed herself deeper into the shadows of the closet, breath caught somewhere between her ribs and throat. The soft hiss of the door sliding open made her flinch, but no footsteps followed. Just silence.

Then—

Click.

A match struck.

Through the thin seam in the closet door, a warm glow bloomed in the room. The scent of sandalwood followed, soft and grounding. Angela recognized it instantly. Genji always lit that same candle after every mission—a personal ritual, a quiet return to self.

She heard the rustle of fabric, the gentle clink of metal, and then the soft flutter of something being placed on the floor.

A feather.

He always used a feather.

From his travels—an offering, a symbol of something weightless in contrast to the weight he carried. One for every mission. She'd never seen him collect them, only ever noticed them in the aftermath, like breadcrumbs to his thoughts.

She dared not move, barely breathing as his presence filled the room.

Then, another sound. A soft slide of metal, a compartment opening. He moved slowly, almost reverently, fingers brushing over something before he lifted it free.

Paper.

A photo.

She recognized the subtle sound of the worn edge against his palm—he'd pulled it out many times before.

And then she heard his voice.

Quiet. Raw. Like something sacred.

“I'm sorry I was gone for so long.”

Her heart clenched.

“You don’t even know how much I missed you.”

He exhaled, shallow and slow, as though forcing himself to let go of something that had rooted itself in his chest.

“It’s easier to face the enemy than it is to face you... because when I look at you, I remember everything I don’t deserve.”

Angela’s hand flew to her mouth to stifle the sound that wanted to rise from her throat.

She could see it in her mind—Genji, sitting on his knees, the candlelight flickering over the lines of his face, the picture of her in his hand. His eyes closed. Shoulders low. That quiet tension in his breathing.

Not the soldier.

Not the ghost.

Just the man.

And she was standing ten feet away from him, wrapped in his hoodie, hiding like a thief in the dark.

Her heart pounded so hard she was sure he could hear it.

But Genji didn’t move. He remained still, as if afraid that even the smallest shift might break the moment. His fingers brushed the corner of the photo. Another breath.

Then silence again.

Not empty silence—full silence. The kind that held everything unsaid between two people who didn’t know how to speak it out loud.

And Angela... still couldn’t look away.

The candle flickered.

For a long moment, Genji didn’t move. His breathing remained steady, shallow, as if each inhale came from the deepest part of him. Angela could feel it—his presence, the weight of what he carried, the words he hadn’t spoken to anyone but a photo. But then... he stirred.

Slowly, Genji opened his eyes.

He gently set the picture down on the folded edge of his meditation mat, fingers lingering there like he wasn't ready to part with it. The flame of the candle caught the corner of the photograph, illuminating her face in soft, golden light.

He looked at it one last time.

Then, with quiet grace, he rose.

Not like a soldier. Not even like a monk. But like someone who had just laid down a piece of his soul and didn't know how to carry it again.

He bowed—deep and low—toward the candle, the feather, the photo. A silent prayer of thanks. Of grief. Of longing.

Then he turned.

His footsteps were light, barely audible as he crossed the room. Angela's breath hitched the moment she heard the soft hiss of the door opening. She instinctively pressed herself deeper into the closet, one hand over her mouth, the other gripping the inside of the hoodie's sleeve like a lifeline.

And then—

Silence.

He was gone.

Only the flicker of the candle remained.

The door clicked softly shut behind him.

Angela slowly exhaled, her heart still racing, the echo of his voice still ringing in her mind.

"You don't even know how much I missed you."

● *Freedom*

Chapter 6

As soon as the soft click of the door confirmed Genji had left, Angela moved.

She stumbled out of the closet in a rush of tangled limbs and fabric, her body stiff from staying frozen in place for so long. Her hands scrambled at the hem of the hoodie, dragging it upward with fumbling urgency.

“Scheiße, scheiße—!” she hissed under her breath, yanking one sleeve halfway off before nearly tripping over her own feet.

Her hair clung to her face, cheeks flushed with heat—not just from the lingering warmth of his hoodie, but from the sheer mortification of what she’d just witnessed. What she’d done.

She nearly fell trying to get her other arm out of the sleeve, cursing softly as the fabric resisted, clinging to her like it knew.

“Why—why did I even—ugh!” she muttered, half-laughing, half-panicking.

The scent of him still lingered. In her hair. On her skin. In the air around her.

Angela’s fingers hooked under the edge of the hoodie, but the damn thing clung to her like it knew she was panicking.

She tugged.

It didn’t budge.

She yanked it again, harder this time—only for the thick fabric to twist halfway over her head, blinding her in a cocoon of Genji-scented cotton. One arm was halfway out, the other stuck somewhere in the sleeve, elbow caught in a twist of stitched lining.

“Oh come on—!” she hissed, stumbling backward as the hoodie refused to surrender. “Why are you like this?!”

She could still smell him—warm metal, incense, and the faintest trace of something him. It only made everything worse.

Her heart was pounding, her cheeks flushed, and she was getting dangerously close to collapsing in a frustrated, flustered pile on his floor.

“Stupid, beautiful, infuriating—” she muttered, teeth gritted as she tried to shimmy out of it with one shoulder rolling and her hips twisting like she was in the middle of a one-woman wrestling match.

The hoodie bunched around her face as she yanked one last time.

And then—finally—pop.

Her head emerged, hair tousled and cheeks flushed red as she stared wide-eyed at the door, panting like she'd just outrun a dropship.

It was off.

She held it in her hands like it had betrayed her.

And for a second—just a second—she looked at it with something like regret.

Then the panic returned, slamming into her like a second wind.

“Okay, go—go!”

Angela tossed the hoodie onto the bed—messily this time—and darted for the door, still fixing her shirt, trying to smooth her hair and act like she hadn't just been hiding in the closet of a man she hadn't seen in weeks... wearing his clothes.

Her fingers grazed the edge of the picture on the mat as she passed it again—but she didn't dare look back.

Not yet.

She had to get out of there.

Before he realized what she'd done.

● *Caught*

Chapter 7

Angela barely had time to reach the door.

Fingers outstretched, breath still catching in her throat, she grabbed the handle and yanked it open with the full intention of bolting down the hall and pretending none of this had ever happened—

—only to slam face-first into a solid, unmoving wall of—

Metal.

Her breath whooshed from her lungs as she stumbled back a step, arms flailing for balance, her wide eyes snapping up.

Straight into Genji's glowing visor.

He blinked.

She froze.

His chest was bare save for the plating of his armor, still scuffed from the mission. Steam curled faintly off the vents at his shoulders. His head tilted slightly, unreadable as always behind the mask.

Angela's heart dropped into her shoes.

"G-Genji!" she squeaked, voice several pitches higher than intended. "Hi! I mean—hello. I wasn't—this isn't what it looks like!"

There was a long pause.

He looked down. At her.

Then past her. Into the room.

Then back at her again.

The silence was deafening.

Angela's face turned scarlet. She felt it crawl from her chest to the tips of her ears. Her hands instinctively tried to flatten her hair, tug down her top—anything to make her look less like someone who had just face-planted into a closet panic spiral while wearing his hoodie.

Genji tilted his head again, voice low, curious.

"...What does it look like, Angela?"

Her soul nearly left her body.

Angela's mouth opened. Then closed.

She tried to speak—anything—but her brain had fully disconnected from her tongue. All she could do was blink up at him, still flushed, still breathless, and very much still vibrating from the emotional rollercoaster of the past ten minutes.

"...I—I was just..." she stammered, waving her hands vaguely in front of her. "I came by to check on your room—I mean, on your gear—your upgrades! Yes! The... neural sync patterns!"

Genji stared, completely still.

She swallowed hard.

“And then I—um—I must’ve... slipped and fell into the closet, and I—” Her voice cracked. “Oh my God.”

He tilted his head slightly. Or at least, she imagined he did—behind the visor, it felt like it.

Angela dragged both hands down her face with a groan, spinning in a small, mortified circle. “This is fine,” she muttered under her breath. “This is totally fine. I didn’t put on your hoodie and sniff it like some lovesick lunatic or anything—oh God, I said that out loud.”

Genji’s shoulders lifted slightly. A small breath. If she didn’t know him, she might’ve missed it.

But she did.

He was laughing.

Softly.

She peeked through her fingers, eyes wide. “You’re laughing at me.”

“No,” Genji said evenly.

Then, after a beat—

“Yes.”

Angela let out a strangled noise that might’ve been a whimper or a laugh—or both—as she turned her back to him, hiding her face in her hands.

“Please,” she said. “Just delete me from existence.”

There was a pause.

And then, gently—

“I liked seeing you in it.”

Her breath caught.

She turned, slowly, the heat on her cheeks blooming again—but for a very different reason.

He wasn't teasing now.

He wasn't smirking.

His visor tilted, softer. His voice lowered.

"I missed you too."

Angela stared at him, frozen, the weight of his words still echoing in her chest.

"I missed you too."

Her mouth opened again—but nothing came out.

Then finally, in the softest, smallest voice, she whispered,

"Oh God..."

She took a half-step back, hands fluttering at her sides like she didn't know what to do with them. Her eyes darted toward the bed, where the hoodie still lay crumpled. Then to the closet she had just escaped. Then back to him.

This was real.

He was real.

And he heard her. Saw her. Saw everything.

Her voice cracked under her breath. "This is so much worse than dying in that closet."

But Genji didn't laugh this time. He stepped forward—not too close, just enough for her to feel his presence again. Calm. Warm. Familiar.

"I didn't mean to embarrass you," he said softly. "I just meant what I said."

Angela looked up at him, wide-eyed, lips parting slightly.

"I liked seeing you in it," he repeated. "It made me feel... like I was home again."

The silence stretched—delicate, trembling between them like a string pulled too tight.

Then Genji moved.

Angela startled, just slightly, as he stepped past her—slow, unthreatening, almost reverent in the way he brushed by without a word. She turned to follow him with her eyes, every part of her tense and buzzing with something she couldn't name.

He walked to the bed.

To the hoodie.

He picked it up carefully, almost like it was something fragile, then turned back to her.

For a heartbeat, he said nothing.

Then—gently, deliberately—he held it out.

Not with expectation.

Not with teasing.

Just... offering.

Her breath hitched.

Angela stared at the soft grey fabric in his hands, still warm from where she'd just worn it, still carrying the weight of her panic and his presence.

And he was giving it back to her.

Her heart twisted.

She didn't take it at first. She couldn't. Her hands hovered between them like she didn't know what to do with them anymore.

"...Why?" she asked, her voice barely above a whisper.

Genji tilted his head just slightly.

"Because I meant what I said," he replied. "It suits you."

The quiet that followed wasn't awkward anymore.

It was electric.

Her fingers slowly closed around the hoodie, brushing his in the exchange. The contact was brief—but it sent a shiver through her arms that she didn't dare show.

She lowered her eyes, gripping the fabric tightly.

He watched her for another breath.

Then said, even softer—

“You don’t have to hide from me.”

● *Home..*

Chapter 8

Angela stared at the hoodie in her hands for a long moment.

His words lingered in her ears—“You don’t have to hide from me.”

Her chest rose with a slow breath, the weight of her embarrassment melting beneath something far gentler. She smiled—softly, not out of nervousness this time, but something else. Something warm. Something real.

“...I know,” she whispered.

Her eyes flicked up to meet his—visor still glowing, expression hidden, but his presence unmistakably calm, waiting.

She sighed, gentle and steady, then turned without another word.

One step.

Then another.

And she walked back into his room.

Not with panic this time. No frantic scrambling, no whispered curses or clumsy exits.

Just quiet footsteps.

Like she belonged there.

Genji didn’t follow. He just watched.

She approached the bed, where the candle still flickered beside the photo of herself. The room smelled like him. Like peace. Like memory.

With slow, graceful movements, she slipped one arm through the sleeve.

Then the other.

She pulled the hoodie over her shoulders, adjusting the weight around her frame. The fabric fell perfectly, as if it had been waiting for her. The hem brushed the tops of her thighs again, and the sleeves draped over her hands. She tugged the hood up over her head and turned slightly, eyes glancing over her shoulder at him.

Still standing in the doorway.

Still watching her.

Angela gave a tiny shrug inside the hoodie, her voice low, teasing but sincere.

“...I guess it does suit me.”

Genji remained in the doorway for a beat longer, as if memorizing the sight before him.

Her, in his hoodie. Her, relaxed—no longer flustered, no longer hiding. Just Angela.

The real her.

He stepped forward, his footsteps quiet on the floor, the low hum of his cybernetics blending with the soft crackle of the candle beside them. He didn't speak until he was a few paces away, his voice barely above the gentle breath of flame.

“You really stayed here,” he murmured. “In my space.”

Angela smiled faintly, glancing down at the loose sleeves bundled at her hands.

“Apparently... and in your clothes,” she whispered, a small laugh in her throat.

He chuckled—just barely, but it was real.

She looked up at him then, the glow of the candlelight dancing in her eyes.

“I missed you too,” she said softly.

Those words—spoken without panic, without flinching—seemed to shift something between them. He took one step closer. Then another.

When he stopped, he was right in front of her.

Angela's breath caught.

Genji knelt, slowly, settling onto his knees in front of her, just as he had during his ritual moments ago. His hands rested gently on his thighs, head tilted up toward her, like she was the center of something sacred.

He didn't reach for her.

Not yet.

But his voice was quieter than ever. Reverent.

"I thought of you every day I was gone," he said. "Every mission, every breath between battles. You were the only peace I could picture."

Angela's lips parted, stunned by the softness of it.

The room was still.

Warm.

And slowly—carefully—she took a step closer and lowered herself to her knees before him.

Now they were eye level. Face to face. Breath to breath.

"...You're here now," she whispered.

He nodded once, visor locked onto her gaze.

"I am."

● *peace*

Chapter 9

As they knelt there in the stillness, the air thick with everything unspoken, a soft hiss filled the room behind them.

The door slid shut.

Angela didn't flinch this time. She didn't startle or retreat. She simply breathed in, slow and sure, her fingers gently rising to the edge of Genji's helmet.

Her eyes met his visor—locked in quiet tension, heat blooming in the space between them.

“You know this hoodie belongs to me now...” she whispered, her voice low, velvet-soft with the tiniest spark of mischief beneath it.

Her hands found the release clasps at the side of his helmet. She hesitated—just a heartbeat—searching his gaze.

He gave the smallest nod.

Permission.

Angela slowly slid the helmet free, lifting it over his head with a reverence usually reserved for something holy. The familiar click released, and the quiet sound of his breath—unfiltered—filled the space between them.

His face was as beautiful as she remembered. Scarred, yes—but human. Soft eyes, warm and exposed in the flickering candlelight. She could see everything now. No armor. No barriers.

Just him.

Genji.

He blinked once, slowly. Watching her.

Her hands lowered the helmet to her side, fingers still trembling just slightly from everything this moment meant. She kept her gaze locked on his—steady, open, without fear now.

“And,” she added softly, a teasing curve forming at the edge of her lips, “you're not getting it back.”

A breath escaped him—half a chuckle, half a sigh. His eyes softened.

“I wouldn't dream of asking.”

Her fingers brushed against Genji's cheek—light at first, like a question she wasn't sure she was allowed to ask.

He didn't pull away.

If anything, he leaned into her touch, eyes half-lidded, breath shallow, as if the warmth of her palm was something he'd dreamed of for too long.

Her other hand followed—cupping his face fully now, thumbs brushing along the edges of old scars, smooth metal, and soft skin.

The sight of him—bare, real, open—stole the words from her throat. There was nothing to say now. No clever line, no apology, no hesitation.

Only this.

Only him.

Angela leaned in.

And Genji met her halfway.

Their lips collided—not in a rush, not in desperation—but in something deeper. Slower. Earned. It was a kiss drawn from years of silence, from missions survived, from glances stolen in the quiet spaces between duty and longing.

His hands found her waist, tentative at first, then firmer as she sank into him. Her body pressed close, the soft fabric of his hoodie bunching between them. He tasted like memory and warmth and himself, and she melted into it like a truth she'd always known but never said aloud.

Her fingers slid back into his hair, the kiss deepening—needier now, like they were both suddenly terrified of losing this moment.

And for once... they didn't have to hold back.

There was no battlefield waiting for them.

No world-ending crisis outside the door.

Just two hearts, finally crashing into each other in the safety of candlelight.

When they finally pulled apart, foreheads resting together, breath mingling in the quiet, Angela whispered—

“...You came back to me.”

Genji's voice was barely a breath.

“I always will.”

Their foreheads still touched, breaths slow and uneven, the warmth of the kiss lingering on both their lips.

Angela smiled, her hands still gently cradling his face, thumbs brushing over the skin beneath his eyes. Her heartbeat hadn't slowed—it pulsed through her chest, through her fingertips, through the soft tremble of the silence between them.

And then, Genji's voice came—low, deliberate, threading softly through the air like silk.

“If that hoodie belongs to you...”

He pulled her just a little closer, hands resting at her hips, his gaze locked to hers, unflinching.

“...then you belong to me.”

Angela's breath caught.

The words struck something deep—something warm and wild and wanted.

She felt it in the curl of her toes, the flutter in her belly, the way her legs instinctively shifted closer to his, knees brushing, bodies nearly flush.

A blush bloomed across her cheeks, but she didn't look away.

Instead, her lips parted in a quiet, breathless laugh.

“Is that so?” she whispered, voice dipped in teasing softness.

Genji leaned in again, his nose brushing lightly against hers, eyes half-lidded and full of quiet fire.

“I'm only stating the obvious.”

Angela's smile widened as her hands slid down from his cheeks, tracing along the edges of his jaw before resting lightly on his shoulders.

“You better be ready to prove it,” she whispered.

