And you taught me not
To take for granted
The time that we have
To show that we care
Speak into their hearts and their minds
while they are here
**-Things Left Unsaid by Disciple**

“You have Stage IV cancer. I’m sorry.” The words echoed in her mind. No matter how she willed them to change, they wouldn’t go away. She had... cancer? She couldn’t have it. She was the Black Widow and she had faced all sorts of villains in the past. The thing that would be the end of her couldn’t be cancer, could it? Natasha’s fingers laced through her hair as her breathing escalated.

Facing a gun was easy, it was something she could say she was used to. But this was something totally different. The thought of her dying was so far off on a mission, but now all the statistics rolled through her mind. Lung cancer, lung cancer. About 6 out of 10 people with lung cancer die within 1 year of being diagnosed with the disease. Between 7 and 8 will die within 2 years. Lung cancer kills more people than breast, colon, and prostate cancer combined every. The expected 5-year survival rate for all patients in whom lung cancer is diagnosed is less than 15 percent.

She didn’t want to die! She felt a hand on her shoulder, but she was too absorbed in her own thoughts to care. How could she care when her death seemed so inevitable? She had less than a 15% chance of living through the next five years. Heck, she only had a 40% chance of surviving the year. She and Clint had often joked about the fact that they always beat impossible odds. Suddenly the impossible odds seemed to turn against her and they were mocking her.

She shook her head back and forth as small tears began to prick at her eyes. It wasn’t even just the lung cancer. She had pelvic cancer as well and it was already a nasty thing. Would this take away her chances of ever having kids? She had never thought about it before, but now it was so real and she regretted never thinking about her future. She had always put it off because she knew that ‘she would live’. But now she didn’t know that she would live beyond the next month. She was Stage IV. It was the final stage where most people died from. They had caught it so late.

Would they even be able to operate on her? What if they thought it was ‘too late’ not just ‘late’? Would they tell her just to sit there and die? She couldn’t just let herself die! There was too much life left to live! Natasha let the tears drip down her face and sobs wrack her chest. “Shhh, it will be alright.” The doctor tried to soothe. How would it be alright? Was that a joke? If so she wasn’t laughing. He had just proclaimed her death sentence and now he was telling her that it would be alright?

She didn’t push away his hand though. She needed some sort of comfort. She needed Clint. Natasha choked on her breath as the thought struck her mind. Oh, how was she going to tell Clint? How was she going to tell any of them? She tried to calm her breathing down, but her mind was still racing. Would they treat her differently if they knew? Would it become awkward because she was practically a time bomb? She had to tell Fury, but did she really have to tell the others?

She bit her lip tightly as she thought. She had been guilty of staring at people in wheelchairs and crutches. What would it be like to actually be that person? She didn’t want to know, but it seemed so real right now. She didn’t think she would be able to face any of them if they gave her that look of utter pity. Pity. She had always hated the word. It was the word that communicated how sorry a person was. Ha! They were only happy that their lives were so much better. If any of the avengers were to look like that when they looked at her, Natasha wasn’t sure if she could bear it.

She couldn’t tell them not. Not yet. “Are you feeling better, Ms.Romanoff?” The doctor asked gently. Natasha looked up towards Wane with a forlorn look on her face. She nodded her head up and down towards the gray haired man before leaning back into her chair. She was feeling better, but she wasn’t feeling good. She doubted she would ever feel good now.

“I’m glad. It’s a lot to take in and I’m sorry that I have to be the one to break it to you.” The old man said kindly. Natasha was glad that Wane was her doctor. He had been helping her for so long with all of her various injuries. This was an ailment that neither of them had been expecting and that was what made it all the more painful. It had been an unexpected find as well.

At first she thought it was a syst. A few weeks later, it was still there. That was when she began to worry. She had a biopsy and here she was with very possibly the worst news in her entire life. It was worse than when she heard that her husband died. There was always the selfish part of her that was glad that she was still alive even in that situation. But now it wasn’t someone else’s life on the line. It was her life that could be lost. It wasn’t a fast paced game that the outcome would be revealed in a few minutes. It was the game of days and months.

Play the cards right and you could extend your life a few months. Play the cards wrong and you wouldn’t live to see your next checkup. It was a dangerous game, far more dangerous than anything she had done before. There was no training, no mentors, no backup. There was only your choices versus the cancer. There was no way to manipulate the cancer into moving slow, no way to convince it to leave peacefully. It was here and it was here to kill.

“It’s alright, Wane.” Natasha said with a sigh. She ran a hand through her hair before grasping her arm tightly. “What do I have to do?”

Wane rolled his chair over to the computer stationed in the room and grabbed the mouse. He scrolled over the pages upon pages of information before pulling Natasha’s file up onto the screen. “Your cancer is called Alveolar Soft Part Sarcoma. Luckily for you, it’s a slow growing type. It’ll buy you more time than if it was one of the faster ones.” Natasha didn’t feel lucky, but it was a small mercy she supposed.

“If it was a faster growing one we would have already been too late.” Natasha swallowed nervously at that. She hadn’t even known it was around until only a few minutes ago. For some it already would have been too late? Fear welled up in her chest. The cancer moved too quickly and took people too easily. Would she become one of the numbers on the wall with the red letters ‘deceased’ printed neatly next to it?

“Unfortunately, this means it is also harder to treat. It’s rare, Ms.Romanoff. I don’t know how else to say it, but companies don’t always produce drugs for cancer types this rare. There aren’t many people who have taken these drugs before either. You’ll be going into a field with pretty much no advance notice of what could happen to your cancer. It’s something we have to deal with when it comes to sarcomas. In fact, less than a hundred are diagnosed with this type yearly. Not all of those diagnosed last the year so there are even less to test from.” Natasha flinched unconsciously. To test from. She was a lab rat now. She was a rare breed and people would be trying to get her to take their medical concoctions. Heavens only knew if they would work or not, but she couldn’t afford for it not to work! It had to work!

“Sarcomas are normally treated via the surgical route. I do know that your primary will probably have to be removed. The sooner, the better. Would you like me to schedule an appointment for you?” Wane asked lightly. Natasha squirmed in her chair. She always had to make decisions quickly when she was on the field, but something like this was something to think over. However, if she waited, one day would be all that was needed to be the end of her.

“Yes... Please.” She replied softly. She didn’t like the idea of a surgery at all, but if it had to be done then she would do it. She absolutely had to survive.

“Alright, Ms.Romanoff.” Wane gave her a soft smile and stood up from his chair. “You have my email and I have yours. If I need to contact you with any further information I will. Feel free to ask me anything you wish though. You’re a strong woman, Ms.Romanoff and I know you can pull through this.”

Natasha looked up at Wane sadly and said, “I only wish that I had your faith.”