There's a man who waits for the tests to
See if the cancer had spread yet
And now he asks so why did I wait to live 'til it was time to die
**-We Live by SuperChick**

She wasn't sure that she could look at them straight in the eye. That was why she kept on circling around and around the block. Every time she looked up at the mansion she thought about what she would have to say, but no words came to mind. Her brain was already hardly computing and telling anyone else was sure to go badly. There were some people she would be forced to tell like Commander Fury, but everyone else was optional.

She didn't want them to act differently towards her, but they would ask questions when she didn't go out on missions. The thought had struck her on the drive back that she probably wouldn't be able to take missions for a long long time. She hadn't taken any medicine yet, but Wane had sent her a message saying that he was going to prescribe her a drug called Sutent. It was then she figured out that the list of side effects was almost endless.

Rashes, fatigue, fever, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, upset stomach, mouth pain, taste changes, loss of appetite, yellowing skin, whitening hair, pain or swelling in arms and legs, coughs, shortness of breath, and even brain bleeding. Switch that around. How on earth was she supposed to hide all these side effects? She could overdose on Benadryl to stop some things, but she couldn't just run out of the room every fifteen minutes because she was ill! Oh goodness, what had she gotten herself into?

She pulled the car to a stop in front of the Mansion before hopping out of the SUV. She slammed the door behind her and locked the car as she headed through the door. Natasha blatantly ignored JARVIS as he welcomed her back into the tower. Instead she meandered off towards the elevator in the center of the building. She looked up the glass plated elevator and noticed that there were two figures in the tower.

Only the Avengers had taken residence in the Stark Tower shoot-off. This meant two of them had to be coming down. Natasha's hands clenched into fists. She closed her eyes tightly before opening them with fierce determination. She had to act like nothing was wrong. She couldn't let them worry, not yet. Her tumultuous thoughts betrayed her as the doors opened.

"Hello, Romanoff," Steve said cheerily as he stepped out of the elevator. He slipped out of the elevator and stood off to the side as Clint followed on his way out. "Where have you been? I don't think I saw you all this morning."

Natasha swallowed tightly. That's right. She hadn't even told them that she had visited the doctors to have a biopsy. "I had to check up at headquarters." It was a white lie. The hospital was under the jurisdiction of SHIELD so technically she was in SHIELD, just not headquarters. And it was a checkup, so she wasn't *really* lying.

"Ahh, I see," Steve said with a kind nod. Natasha felt almost bad about fudging up the truth because she was sure that Steve would have been the first to empathize with her. He was too believing, too trusting. She didn't feel as if she could tell anyone now though. She could hardly tell herself the truth. Here she was, the Black Widow, wanting to cry into someone's shoulder. Here she was, the Black Widow, too afraid to afford herself that single luxury.

"Well I'll see you later then?" Natasha nodded in return before walking towards the elevator. A hand snagged her by the arm and she turned to look at Clint. The archer had a small frown on his face as he looked at Natasha.

"Nat, are you ok? You don't look well." Clint asked with concern layered in his voice. Natasha flinched under his scrutinizing eyes and pulled her arm away and nodded. It was too hard to fake it in front of Clint. She'd just have to mime her way out. "Nat, if something is wrong you know you can tell me, right?" She nodded again. She knew she could tell him, but how would she know how he would react? Rejection would be worse than anything in the world.

Because even if people said that it was just shock that caused them to react that way, those few moments were true feelings. People could always go back and fake later, but those few moments were when the real feelings of a person were shown. Maybe she could tell them eventually; she would have to tell them, but not now.

Clint sighed and rested his head on her forehead for a moment. "We'll always be here to back you up." Guilt wormed around in her stomach as he leaned against her.

She hugged him tightly before pulling away and giving him a small smile. "I know." She didn't. "It has just been a bad day. It'll be better soon." Anything would be better than what she was feeling now, but they didn't need to know that now did they?

Clint smiled back at her and patted her on the shoulder before turning back to Steve. Natasha watched as the two of them left the building before releasing the breath she didn't remember that she had held. "I'm sorry, Clint, Steve. I can't do it yet."

She stepped into the elevator and tapped the button for her floor. The doors closed behind her as she was slowly brought up into the glassy tube. Her face reflected in the glass and Natasha reached out a hand to touch it.

Was that really the face of a woman whose time was ticking away? Could it possibly be true that she would be dead in only a few years? No, could she only have months? The thought was chilling and she loathed it.

She slammed a fist against the glass and watched as her arm shook weakly. It was disgustingly weak. Was she getting weaker and she just hadn't noticed it? She had been feeling fine. She had only gone in because she thought it could be something, but she hadn't been feeling ill or anything. Could they have just switched her scans or something? Sick people were supposed to be strapped to hospital beds with IVs coming out of them. She wasn't like that so why was she supposed to be like this?

Most lung cancer patients die within a year or two? That would mean that they had felt really sick or something, right? She didn't feel like that so why had they pronounced her death sentence? The voice of one of the doctors in the hall echoed in her ears, "*Do you not think that we should hook her up with a team? She might only have a few months so it would be good to let her know.*" One of the teams. Ha. She had taken the time to look it up in the car to confirm her thoughts, but it was almost even more depressing.

They wanted to sign her up with a death preparation team. She wasn't dying dangit! She felt just fine! She was still running a few miles without feeling too winded and she could steal beat up Clint whenever her annoyed her. So why had they said she was dying?

As the elevator began sliding through the darkness of the building, Natasha let a few tears roll down her face. She couldn't be dying. No, no, no! She shook her head violently as she punched the elevator again. Thank goodness Stark had layered it in film to prevent it from cracking. She laughed weakly at that. He'd probably throw a fit if he had known what she was doing in there.

Natasha held her hands to her face as tears began to drip down to the ground. Had she done something to cause all of this? Was this because of all the red? Was it karma for killing so many people? She almost regretted it all now, but she knew that her regret would do nothing. What was she supposed to do like this? Write a dumb will? She looked down at the glassy flooring with uncontrollable envy. The blasted thing would be around longer than she was. It wasn't fair!

Why would the buildings last longer than she would? Everything would last longer than her and it was just because of something that no one could control.

The elevator stopped and opened its doors to have Natasha storm out into the hallway. At the end of the hall, she threw open the door and slammed it shut behind her. First thing she did was grab the lamp by the doorway and throw it across the room. But that wasn't enough. Everything would last longer than she would anyways.

She grabbed the front table and kicked it over as she went on her rampage. She hated, hated, hated it! Why was she chosen to die while everything else would just keep ticking on? She stepped over the broken lamp and stared out the windows of the mansion. Life just kept moving on. No one knew what she was feeling and no one really cared. They just went around doing their work as if nothing was wrong, but everything was wrong!

She knew it was wrong to feel like this, but she couldn't help feeling angry at everyone. She wished that she could just forget everything that had happened in the past few hours. To forget that she had cancer and to forget that she probably wouldn't live out the next few years. How was someone supposed to deal with news like that? Was she supposed to resign herself to her fate of dying? She couldn't just wait and let time tick away, but what was she supposed to do?

It was the waiting game. Wait to see if you live and if you don't then you don't see the end of the game. She dropped herself down onto a burgundy couch and leaned back while she huffed in frustration. She had never been patient. When someone was in danger, she would go save them. When a bomb was about to go off, she'd run to disarm it. Sitting around in her room just waiting for the cancer to grow or to shrink was absolutely maddening. She didn't want to play this game, but it looked like she had no choice.

She looked over to the coffee table where the book "On Death and Dying" by Kübler-Ross sat innocently. Natasha reached out and grabbed the book and clenched it in her hand. She had been reading it just a few days ago. She gritted her teeth angrily before hurling the book across the room. "Stop pretending as if you know!"

Because no one would ever know. They could research how she felt, but they would never feel it. The Five Stages of Grief, her foot. They were the five stages of ultimate suffering. She shook as she stared at the crumpled book by the wall.

She couldn't tell anyone. She definitely wouldn't tell anyone about this. She wouldn't tell because she hated them. They had the single thing that she wouldn't have: they had the chance to live. She? She had the chance to die.