**Investments 14.4**

It was several hours after revealing the depths to which we were absolutely *screwed,* that someone came to talk to me. They’d all taken it well, or at least they hadn’t outright rejected it. Panacea *had* asked to do her little ‘lie-detector’ thing, which I’d agreed to easily, so they knew that I at least *believed* what I told them. The severity of Leviathan’s attack, as bad as it was, had been another point in my favor, as I’d been worried about it for weeks beforehand, and I’d been proven right. Now I was hoping things would go well. Or, more realistically, waiting for the blowback of being too honest, if my experience was any indicator.

Even though I’d meditated the previous night, and I should be good for another day or two, I felt *tired*, but I needed to be up in case someone wanted to talk. They hadn’t had any questions, but I knew that it all was just a matter of time.

I was in the primary power testing lab, working to control a Dryad body independently of myself. It was going. . . *poorly.* I could puppet it independently easy enough, but I tended to time its movements off of my own, either working simultaneously or in tandem. It was subtle, but it was still a tell that I was controlling it, and it needed to be removed. However, no matter what I did, I couldn’t make her move to a completely different beat than myself, at least not without staying still on my end, which was really just the same thing.

As such the distraction was welcome when I heard the door slide open. It wasn’t Karen or Taylor though, like I’d expected, but Amelia. “Uh, Hi?” I greeted her a little awkwardly, not really sure what to say. I was sure she wouldn’t want to speak to me until later, and didn’t have anything planned to talk to her about.

She stopped in the doorway, in jeans and a t-shirt, looking just as unsure as I was. “Oh. Should I go? I can-“

“No,” I cut her off, moving Dryad to stand against the wall. “I’m just trying to get differential timing with the construct, so it isn’t obvious I’m controlling her. No luck, but I’ve only been at it for a few hours.”

“You can’t tell,” she reassured me, walking fully in. “It’s a little freaky, actually.” She fell silent, and I couldn’t think of something to say on the spot. “About what you said, are you sure? About Scion?”

I nodded. “Yeah. Goldenrod’s an alien, a projection of one actually, and he’s eventually going to try to kill us all, like he and his mate originally planned. We’ve got time, but that’s what we, and Cauldron, are both working to stop.” I grimaced, “And not the way you did originally.”

“’You did’? You know how. . .” she trailed off. “That bad?”

“You want to know?” I asked her honestly, shifting myself back to my civilian clothes, sans shades. If someone else came in, I’d put them back on, but I’d spent almost every day looking at the world through some kind of medium, and maybe that’d been doing something to me. My powers protected me from Master effects, or at least created an indication that they were being used, but *normal* psychologically effecting things might still be affecting me.

“It’s not something I’d be willing to be a part of,” I stated, “but everyone was desperate, everyone’s plans had failed, and everyone was turning on each other, hoping that Scion would kill their enemies and leave them alone, not knowing, or willing to believe, that the endgame was to blow up *every Earth* *in existence*.”

Amelia hesitated, asking instead, “Did it, was I part of it?” I nodded. “Was it bad?” I nodded again. “And you’re trying to stop it?” I nodded a third time. “No. No I don’t. If, if it isn’t going to happen, I don’t want to know.”

Looking at her, I was surprised. I would’ve wanted to know, if only to find out what I was working so hard to avoid, but I was quickly learning that *Amelia wasn’t me.* “Okay then. Do you want to work on anything?” I asked shifting to a safer topic. “I’ve got some ideas if you do.”

She didn’t say anything for a long moment, obviously arguing with herself, before finally giving a curt nod. “Fine. But nothing that messes with people. I want to stay me.”

I blinked at her, wondering what in the nine hells she was talking about. “Um. . . deal? Why did you think I was going to suggest that?”

“You’re already doing that with Vicky,” she reposted. “And then there’s your arm.”

I held up my left arm, only for her to go, “No, the other one.” Lifting up my right, pulling back my costume to reveal the interweaving tendrils that made up the prosthetic limb made from Hookwolf’s power, she nodded. “I’m not doing that.”

I tried to parse what she was saying, but very little of it made sense, and none of it fit into a cohesive paradigm. “Okay, with your sister I’m just giving her the same kind of tune-up my own power’s giving me, just like I did with Lady Bug and Mouse Protector, nothing more. As for this?” I said, waving my metallic arm, “Can you please tell me what you mean by ‘I’m not doing that’, and I’m not being stupid. Or, I guess I am,” I admitted. I’d told them the secrets I’d been hiding, of what was coming, and pretending to be more competent than I really was wasn’t going to help anyone anymore. “But I *really* don’t know what you’re talking about. Unless you have a power I don’t know about, you literally *can’t* do this.”

She indeed gave me a ‘how can you be this dumb’ look, before sighing, muttering something under her breath, and pinching the bridge of her nose. Looking back up at me, she said slowly, “I don’t care how useful having an arm like that is, I’m not going to try to make a biological version of that on anyone.”

That. . . *wasn’t really what I asked her to explain,* but it had enough details I could start to chisel away at the assumptions she seemed to be working under. “What do you mean, ‘useful’? I know, I’m being an idiot, but bear with me, please.”

“How is that not useful?” she asked in turn. “You could make it into tentacles, and grab a bunch of different things at once, and-”

“And those are all things I could do with *this* arm,” I finished for her, extending metallic tendrils from my left. “Having this,” I waved my fake right arm, “Just makes it harder to feel, means I can’t use most touch-based powers, and is something I’m, honestly, trying not to think too hard about. I mean, *I lost an* ***arm****, Amelia.”*

It was something that I’d not really tried to deal with, just moving myself forward, but what did I do to make her think this was what I *wanted?* “Yeah I lost it punching out Leviathan, and if it meant losing the other to save your life I’d do it in a fucking heartbeat, but I also was rather attached to the limb I lost. On multiple levels.”

“Why didn’t you just heal it then,” she scoffed.

This time it was my turn to sigh, pinching the bridge of my nose with my fake hand, ignore her offended ‘What?’ of protest. “*How?”*

“What do you mean, ‘*How?*’” she replied, annoyed. “You grow it back.”

“Ah, *obviously,*” I agreed with mock seriousness. “I’ll just use that ‘limb-regrowing’ power that I *don’t have*. You *know* the powers I currently have, Amelia. The only other one I picked up was Mouse Protector’s, with her express permission. I currently have. . .” I took a second to focus inward, “Four open slots, and the next one’s, I don’t know, like a fifth of the way there? Maybe a fourth? The rate they’re unlocking is slowing down quickly, but I don’t know *how* quickly, so I haven’t slotted any more in.”

“But you have that power that heals yourself,” Amy argued, starting to get angry. “Use that.”

“One,” I started, “that power’s *passive.* I have absolutely no control over it, and only use it to heal by channeling it through *yours, somehow.* Two,” I retracted the tendrils, just leaving the stump, “If it’s been doing *anything,* I sure as hell *haven’t been able to tell*. I have exactly *one* healing power, *yours,* and it *doesn’t work on myself.* The only real self-healing power I know of is Browbeat’s-”

“Who?” she asked.

“The newest Ward,” I said, waving my one remaining arm dismissively. “New recruit, but lacking *his* power, that’s not gonna happen. Apparently whatever I did fucked myself past the point of your power to heal, so I’m not sure if his will either, as it just seems to be the inverse of yours, but it’s one of those ‘go for it when I have time’ things. Didn’t expect to lose the arm when I pushed myself to a statistically relevant fraction of fucking *c*, but, again, *worth it to save your life.* I’d rather be whole than not, thank you very much, but it’s a trade I’d make again, if it meant you survived. Though I’d prefer a leg next time.”

I’d said something wrong, apparently, because Amelia went completely still. “How are you sure my power wouldn’t work?” she inquired, her tone queer.

I looked her in the eye, and, without breaking my gaze, waved towards my stump. “Because I *don’t have an arm*. I know your capabilities, Panacea. *Intimately.* If you haven’t healed me, it’s obviously because you *can’t.* I don’t hold it against you. There was so much shit going on across that battlefield, and what I did was so fucking *weird,* that it isn’t your fault if something happened that you can’t fix. Again, *worth it.”*

“However, that means I need a prosthetic,” I shrugged, “and Hookwolf’s power at least gives me *some* sense of touch, so it’s better than Stormtiger’s, but I’m eventually going to ask Æonic to see if one of his Tinkers, the one who specializes in Cybernetics, can build me something better. I don’t really care if it turns into a plasma cannon or something ridiculous, I’d just like to be able to fully feel with that arm again.”

“Oh,” was the entirety of her response, as she looked down, body language stiff. “So, what if I *could* heal you?” she finally questioned, not looking back up. “Hypothetically speaking.”

“Then I’d ask you to, and ask why you haven’t before?” I responded. “But you can’t do tha-”

“Would you be mad?” she interrupted. “If I could?”

“More annoyed and confused, than anything,” I replied honestly. “Not like I was at your sister for almost making me hurt her. *That* made me mad, for a whole bunch of reasons. Can you?” She nodded jerkily, still with her head down. “Okaaaay. Why haven’t you?”

“Because you keep getting hurt!” she exclaimed, looking up at me, anger and fear warring for dominance across her features, her restraint giving way to a torrent of emotion that seemed to come out of *nowhere*. “Even more than Vicky, you get hurt, and then *I* have to put you back together! You were Soup, Lee. *Soup!* And then suddenly I have more power than I’ve *ever had*, and then you’re *okay*, and then your *back out there* getting hurt *all over again!* And you don’t even think *twice* about it! I figured if you had to actually *deal* with your injuries instead of running to me then maybe you’d be more careful! There’s things I can’t heal, Lee, and if your own power wasn’t keeping you alive you would’ve been *brain-dead* by the time Herb brought you to me! *I can’t heal that!*”

She raised a hand, breathing hard and pointing at me. “You talk about hurting yourself to save me like it’s *no big deal*, just because I can heal you. Only, turns out that wasn’t it all, and you just have a fucking *death wish,* and I’m a fucking moron, and-”

I closed the distance between us, propriety be damned, and hugged the poor girl, who’d been hurting and I hadn’t noticed. She stiffened, in a way that I was *far* too familiar with, but made no other movements. “I don’t have a death wish,” I told her kindly. “I’d just risk my life to save those who deserve being saved, and happily trade getting hurt if it means that you don’t *die*. We both get ideas and we tend to just run with them, and we talk past each other. Lady Bug said she talked with you?”

“Yeah,” Amelia agreed, not moving away from me, which would’ve been quite easy as I was only able to give her a half-hug in my current state. “She said you were a moron.”

Digesting that statement, I replied, going for honesty over all. We seemed to be not understanding each other, so I needed to be clear, “I’m pretty sure she said more than that, but in some ways she’s not wrong. I hyper-focus, and tend to take things differently than most people. Generally useful, definitely for coming up with new ways for doing things, but I can’t tell you the number of times I got in trouble, not for breaking the law or rules, but because I did something that others didn’t expect. Didn’t matter that I hadn’t done anything wrong, I was weird, and that was enough to be punished. So, yeah, in some ways I’m practically a genius, and in others I’m an absolute moron. It’s just who I am. Sorry. Doesn’t mean I’m gonna stop trying to keep you safe.”

Panacea pushed against me, and I let my arm drop, stepping back. “But why?” she asked hotly, eyes bright and intense. “And don’t give me that ‘you deserve it’ crap, because I don’t!”

Biting back my first response of ‘yes you do’, I considered the mindset that would lead to that statement. The complete and bone-deep idea that *she wasn’t worth saving.* It didn’t take much, because, in my darker moments, when life had kicked me down, when everyone that should’ve helped had refused to, when they’d gotten angry when I even asked for help, when I’d tried to make sense of a seemingly senseless world, I’d felt the *exact same way*. If no one helped you, and the only common factor was yourself, then obviously it was because you weren’t worth it. *Everyone* couldn’t be wrong, after all. The only difference was I’d never had anyone try to help.

Not until I was already out of my teens, at least, and I met Herb, which was likely why I put up with so much of his *complete bullshit*. At least until Dinah, though we’d moved past that. If something like that happened again, however, I’d consider that relationship dead, and mourn its loss. But this wasn’t about me, nor did I have time for a pity-party. I’d hoped I’d been able to help her past this point, but I’d obviously failed to do so. That meant I needed to try harder, even if it wasn’t exactly comfortable for me to do so. She deserved it. That meant I had to tell her why I thought she was worth helping, in a way that someone with that mind-set would accept.

“Because I’m a moron,” I shrugged. Caring wouldn’t help her here, as she’d just believe it was faked, as would I have. As it *had* *been* the few times someone else had seemed to care, only to reveal themselves to just be using me, when I dared to hope. I felt for her, but I needed to tamp that emotion down, and approach this with cold, objective, unassailable logic. Presenting my own emotions as an argument in of themselves wouldn’t work, because those could be faked. Logic couldn’t. “Because, given the same data set that makes people go right, I sometimes go left, or straight, or just stay where I am. Because I deeply believe that you are deserving of help, and I’m such an idiot that I refuse to believe otherwise without new data, something other than what I’ve seen, to the contrary. You’re free to try to convince me, but know, just like others have learned, I’m very likely not to change my mind just because you think I should.”

I flipped a small chip of wood down, growing a chair out of it, and took a seat, putting us closer to even height, with her slightly above me. “So convince me you aren’t worth protecting, worth saving, worth caring about. I know that others haven’t, either because they didn’t know you were in trouble, no matter how obvious it was to you, or because they were bad people, even if you wished they weren’t. You aren’t the only one with. . . less than stellar parents, Amy. I’ve been there. Not to your level, but enough to understand in a way that’s more than intellectual. But, if you really believe that you aren’t worth it, convince me. If you can you’ll still have a place here, your powers and my own word having secured that, but I care about you, and want you to be happy, and you think that I shouldn’t. So tell me why I shouldn’t care about you, because I’m such a moron that I can’t really understand, but I’m always willing to learn.”

Amelia just stared at me in shock. “What?”

“I care about you, and want you to be safe and happy. You believe that you don’t deserve that. I don’t understand your reasoning, but am willing to hear why, as I’m aware that I’m weird and a bit of an idiot when it comes to social things, and want to learn what I’ve obviously missed,” I summarized, leaning back in my chair, my hands in my lap, expression one of polite curiosity.

“You, you want me to convince you I’m not worth it?” she asked, incredulity and offense peeking through her nonplussed demeanor. “You’re, you’re messing with me. It’s obvious!”

I shrugged again. “To most people, probably,” I agreed. “But, I’m *really* bad at this entire ‘everybody knows X’ thing. Have been for as long as I can remember. Apparently I wasn’t when I was very young, but I don’t remember that far back. I need it explained, explicitly, which, *yes*, upsets people as they think I’m being a dick. I’m *really not.* I just don’t get it. Maybe I’m autistic, though I don’t hit *any* of the indicators for that, so probably not. Wish I would, as at least *then* I’d have an explanation. Maybe some part of me is just broken,” I commented blandly, tamping down *hard* on the sense of loss that blossomed when I stated it out loud. The sense I *always* felt every time I said so, which likely, *unfortunately*, meant it was probably true. It’d been over a year since I’d had to, but for her, I would.

Taking a second to make sure my voice would be even, I finished, “So I apologize, as I’m sure it will be hard to do so, but I just don’t see it, and need it explained. If you’d like a seat I can create one, though I’ve found that such things are better done standing. That said, I am odd, so would you like one?”

“Um, sure?” she asked more than said. I grew a branch from my own chair, snapping it off with a sharp snap that made her jump, tossing it to the side and quickly growing it into a chair identical to my own.

“I’m still working on cushions, so it’ll be a bit stiff,” I apologized.

She picked up the chair, setting it a few feet away, and took a seat. “It’s okay,” she murmured, staring at me, her previous anger gone, only curiosity remaining. “You. . . you really don’t know?”

“Panacea. *Amelia,*” I said, looking at her seriously, keeping an iron grip over my emotions. The only way this was going to work was if I approached it calmly and logically. “I know how much it can hurt to say such things out loud. *Trust me,”* I told her, my control slipping for a moment, memories of trying to explain things, hoping to *understand*, only be called a liar over, and over, and over again, flashing by. Reasserting my control, I continued, *“*As I have stated, I do care about you and don’t want you hurt. Emotionally hurt, counts. I know you feel like I shouldn’t care about you, I likely know *why* you feel that way, but I believe that those feelings aren’t based in reality. I’m sure they feel real, but they’re sourced in supposition. In those terrible ‘this must be the way things work’ that we build and believe in, because the reality is much, *much* worse. As such, please tell me why I shouldn’t care, because I really don’t see it, and I can’t tell if you’re right, or I am. Though, of course, I’d prefer to be right. I am only human, after all.”

The girl I looked at, my expression schooled to one of polite interest, didn’t say anything, and just stared back at me. “Really?” she finally asked, to which I nodded in agreement. I *really* hoped that I was right here, but I’d been wrong before. While she had some negative traits, they were more than made up by her positive ones, her sins venial, and her mindset understandable.

When she spoke again, it wasn’t to explain why I shouldn’t care, but to ask, more to herself than to me, “You really are broken, aren’t you?” Despite my best attempts, I flinched. “Sorry,” she apologized quickly.

I smiled, though it was a bit crooked. “Don’t apologize for the truth.”

“I. . . I’m still sorry,” she argued, and obviously meant it. Part of me wanted to point out that for that alone, she was likely worth protecting, but I stayed silent. “I, I’m not a good person.”

“The facts on the ground seem to indicate the opposite, but, again, not good at this. Why aren’t you a good person?” I prompted when she didn’t say anything more.

“I’m just not,” she insisted. “I could help more, I’m a bitch, and I’m a horrible person.”

Glad to have something I could work with, it was easy to respond. “Literally everyone could do more than they currently are, but you do more than most. Bitch suggests a maliciousness that I haven’t seen. I’d agree you’re abrasive, but I understand why. As to being a horrible person. . . do you think I’m a horrible person?”

“What?” she asked. “No. I mean, you could’ve helped me heal, but you were hurt. And I didn’t ask. And I-”

“So what makes you horrible, but me not?” I interrupted. “I’m older, so I should be held to a harsher standard, if anything. I have *more* power than you do, so again, harsher standard. I’m sorry, but I’m really not seeing it.”

“It doesn’t work that way!” she snapped. “You can’t just add up traits to get a ‘good person score’ or something! I just am!”

I sighed, a flash of anger at the old, *completely fucking stupid*, baseless arguments coming up once more. Some foolish part of me hoped that I’d get that missing insight here. As usual, I was wrong. “Then how, pray tell, am I supposed to determine if you’re a good person or not? Good traits can be outweighed by bad traits, and vice versa. Say you’re a bit of an asshole, saying the wrong thing at the wrong time and not really caring about it. But say you also are a loyal friend, and help those in need, and are understanding of other’s situations, even if you’re a bit insulting about it. Don’t those even out, or more than make up for each other?”

“If not, then is *any* negative trait damning?” I asked, opening my hands wide. I’d tried to talk about this before, but I never got a response I could work with. It was always ‘you’re wrong’, or ‘that’s not how it works’, or ‘how can you not get this’ and never a single word as to *why. “*There are some things that irrevocably stain the soul, like torturing innocents, or rape, but what if you just don’t have the best hygiene? Or, I don’t know, *snore?*”

I took a deep breath, re-centering myself. “That’s how I view people, the only way I can. I’ve been told there’s no black or white, only shades of grey. I say those people can’t focus down far enough. Also, almost every single person advocating for that kind of nonjudgmental, no one’s good or bad, who are you to say anything outlook? *Not a good person,* though it isn’t an absolute rule. I see your traits, or at least what I believe to be your traits, and, while you’re no saint, you’re certainly in the green, nowhere close to crossing the line into even *neutral.*”

I looked at her, and it was obvious she wanted to argue, but was thankfully letting me say my piece. “You’re abrasive, you’re arrogant, you jump to conclusions at the drop of a hat, and you tend to think poorly of people. However, you’ve never used the power you have to make people do what you want them to, and let’s be clear, you *very easily could.* You go out of your way, whatever the reason, to help people by healing them whenever you could. You love and support your sister, even when she *wasn’t* mind controlling you into doing so, and forgave her for when she was. You want to help people, and you care about them, even if you don’t want to admit it. Do you peg the scale? God no. Neither do I. But your positives far outweigh your negatives, far more than my own, so, unless you can provide me with more data, I will still believe you’re a good person. Please, prove me wrong. If you actually are a bad person, I’d like to know, because then I’d be able to figure out what I *keep doing wrong*.”

“You aren’t a bad person,” she argued instead, completely dodging my point.

“Compared to you, I’m pretty sure I am,” I countered simply. “I could’ve helped a *lot* more people than I have, I seem to hurt *everyone* I do try to help, and if you’re abrasive, not a bitch, and you *are* abrasive, then what the fuck am *I*?”

“You helped me,” she insisted.

“And, apparently, by your own words, I shouldn’t have done that,” I pointed out, looking down, not really seeing her anymore, “for reasons that I don’t understand and you haven’t explained. I try, and I try, and I try, but it *never works.* Try to save a bunch of misguided teenagers? ABB attacks are a level of *Magnitude* worse than they should’ve been. Try to fight Leviathan, more losses then the last several years *combined.* The city is *condemned,* Amelia. That’s *my fault.* I’m planning on rebuilding it, but I’m sure I’ll mess *that* up too. You help people, *actually* help people, and I tried to help you, because I believe you deserve it, but you’re insisting I’m wrong and I *don’t know why.* I *never know why.*”

I flinched when I felt her take my hand, trying not to stiffen, not having even noticed her move, so wrapped up in my own bullshit. “I’m sorry,” I told her. “I’m trying to help you, and I made it about me. Fucked that up too. I do care about you, but I don’t know how to help.”

“You really believe that Leviathan was your fault?” she asked, and I didn’t look up to meet her eyes.

“Without me, losses would’ve been about the same as any given Endbringer attack, maybe a little worse, maybe a little better, I never got the hard numbers. Brockton Bay would be damaged, but would be rebuilt, and not have the fucked up horrors all throughout it that it currently does,” I admitted. “Which I need to clear out.”

“But Dean would’ve died?” she asked, and I nodded. “Who else?”

“I don’t know everyone, but Shielder and Manpower would’ve. Flashbang would’ve suffered brain damage, but Brandish, Lady Photon, and Laserdream would’ve been okay,” I rattled off.

Amelia said nothing, but didn’t let go of my hand. I knew I was vulnerable here, that she could do whatever she wanted to me, but I was firm in my belief that she *was* a good person. And if she decided to do something, then I probably deserved it.

“Thank you.”

“What?” I asked, confused, looking up at her.

“Thank you. For everything you’ve done,” she told me, with an earnesty that was completely unexpected, and completely undeserved.

I didn’t really know how to respond to that. “Um. . . you’re welcome? I could’ve done more, though. I could’ve-”

“You saved my family,” she interrupted. “Eric, and Uncle Neil, and my dad. My adopted dad,” she corrected. “And if Dean died. . . I’m not sure what Vicky would do.”

“She took it badly, originally, but I could’ve-“

“Will you *shut up and let me thank you?*” she demanded, squeezing my hand. “What do you have against me thanking you?”

“I don’t know. It’s weird?” I replied, suddenly out of my depth. “I’m, I’m not used to it, I guess? Besides, I don’t deserve it. I could’ve don-”

“If you say you could’ve done more I’m going to pump you so full of serotonin, dopamine, and endorphins that you’ll be high as a kite,” she promised. *“Let me fucking thank you.*”

“Aren’t those all feel-good hormones?” I asked, obviously having missed something in the conversation.

“Your immune to poisons, *those aren’t,”* she informed me, with far more menace than the situation seemed to warrant. *“*But do you *really* want me to do that?”

“Are you *literally* threatening me with a good time?” I couldn’t help but ask, *severely* uncomfortable with the situation. I could likely pry her hand off of mine, but likely not fast enough to stop her from doing just that, at least not without hurting her, which, despite the sudden turn this conversation had just taken, I *really* didn’t want to do.

She snorted, “Yes. Because I’m *thanking you.* You *moron.*”

“I’m good,” I rebuffed, “You don’t need to. And, um, you’re welcome?”

Amelia let go of my hand with something between a sigh and a growl, dragged her chair over so that she was sitting *uncomfortably* close, and took my hand again, staring me directly in the eye. “Here’s what’s going to happen,” she informed me, expression set and determined. “You’re going to bring some bugs over. I’m going to heal your arm. Then you’re going to talk to me about whatever idea you had for me. Knowing you it’s either going to be completely retarded, or so obvious *I’m* going to feel completely retarded. Maybe both. Probably both. Then I’m going to help *you* with whatever the fuck you need help doing. Then I’m going to *thank you for saving the lives of my family*, and you’re going to *fucking accept it.* And then, I’m going to go have a talk with Taylor about how ‘kind of bad with people’ was a *massive fucking understatement.* ***Okay?***”

“Um,” I started to say.

“That was *rhetorical*,” she announced. “Now get me some biomatter, so I can do what I should’ve done *days* ago, but didn’t because I thought you were a fucking *normal person.* Normal people don’t punch *Endbringers* so hard they end up in *comas* and *lose their fucking arms.*”

“It was going to *kill you*,” I started to point out. “I wasn’t-”

“I heard you the first *five times.”* Amelia interrupted. “I think you’re an idiot, but that seems to make *two of us.* Now let me heal you or, I swear to god, I *will* see how long it takes your biochemistry to unfuck itself from being set to a permanent state of post-exercise *euphoria!”*

Not really sure how we ended up here, but glad it somehow seemed to work itself out, *for once,* I decided that discretion was the better part of valor and kept my mouth shut as I woke up the hibernating swarms in range, directing them towards us.