the playful conversation starts, counter all your quick remarks

by phae

Summary

Clint's not really a huge fan of weddings, but what Bobbi wants, Bobbi gets. And thus, Clint finds himself not only attending another wedding, but actually participating as a member of the wedding party. At least the booze is free and the company is cute.

Notes

Title is from T-Swift's Enchanted.

Originally prompted by littlelostgirlexplores on tumblr, who asked for C/C either two miserable people meeting at a wedding AU, masquerade ball AU, or going through a divorce AU. She also wanted a holiday present, so I decided to expand the original idea I had, and, instead of choosing just one, I threw all three together. :)

Clint looks fucking ridiculous in this goddamn monkey suit, but at least it's purple. And the mask hides his face. So even though, technically, pretty much everyone present knows it's him, they can't get a visual confirmation, and he can at least pretend.
His part of the wedding photos is finally done, so he slinks out into the hotel's reception hall where all the guests are milling about—waiting for the ballroom doors to be opened so they can finally sit their asses down, no doubt, bringing them one step closer to getting to eat. Honestly, Clint's only sticking around because he was promised super-fancy steak. And there's that whole toast thing he was strong-armed into, but really, that's just a chance to get even with Bobbi, who should know better by now not to invite him to speak at a public event.

Smoothly pivoting on his heel to avoid crossing paths with Jess, because the guest list is practically a who's-who of Clint's torrid list of exes, he heads straight for the nearest bar station. The bartender doesn't appear swamped, most people grabbing a pre-made cocktail and sauntering back to their socializing circles, but there is one man loitering, elbows resting on the counter as he nurses what looks like a scotch on the rocks, currently looking just about as miserable as Clint feels. His suit is finely cut, and it outlines his trim build quite nicely, but there's a distinctive slouch to his shoulders that says he'd probably rather be anywhere else right about now.

Sidling up to the man, Clint leans with one arm on the counter, and when the man looks over to him, tips his head down at the tumbler. "I didn't think scotch had made it onto the official menu."

"I made a friend." The man's lips tick up in a small but amused smile. Like Clint, he's wearing a mask that spreads over the majority of his face, leaving only his mouth and eyes visible. Clint is pleased to note that both attributes are fairly attractive all on their own. The man turns and salutes the bartender with his glass. "Trip was kind enough to sneak in a bottle from the hotel bar."

In keeping with the overall theme of the evening, Trip the Awesome Bartender is sporting a mask as well, though it only covers a few inches from nose to brow. He grins over at Clint, wide and friendly, and pours him a tumbler of the pilfered Johnny Walker without being prompted. Clint fishes down deep in his trouser pockets for the crumpled ten that he'd stashed there in hopes of finagling some real booze out of a bartender, as he'd been privy to the exchange where Hunter jokingly suggested they just serve Miller Lites all around and Bobbi had quickly put an instant veto on any of his further drink suggestions.

Tossing the crumpled bill into the glass tip jar, Clint slumps against the bar with his body angled toward his new drinking buddy. "I'm Clint," he introduces as he slides his tumbler in across the counter surface.

"Phil," the man replies succinctly.

"So what’s got you so down and drowning your sorrows already, Phil? The event or the company?"

"Can it not be both?" Phil asks, but his tone isn't surly or dismissive, in fact it sounds faintly teasing.

Clint smirks down at his tumbler and nods in understanding. "Yeah, that's pretty much weddings in general, man." He pauses to let out a lengthy sigh before continuing, "The only thing worse--"

"--Is a themed wedding?"

"No truer words, mi amigo." Clint catches the edge of his mask with his fingernail and pushes it away from his face just far enough to let some air reach his sweat-sticky skin. "Though, I gotta admit, at least this way I can get away with hiding my face and no one looks at me funny."

Phil tips his glass back a smidgen too far and an amber drop slowly rolls down from the corner of his mouth before he catches it with a swipe of his hand. "Sorry?"

Grinning self-deprecatingly, Clint continues, "My original plan when I got the invite was to just wear
a paper bag over my head, but that just draws more attention, you know?"

"Why hide your face in the first place?"

"Soon as most people from this crowd spot me, I either get the pity-look or the disgusted-look," Clint admits with a shrug.

Phil's head is tilted at a curious angle. "I...see?"

Clint stops to think long enough to realize how weird that all sounds, and he quickly backtracks. "No--it's not, like, anything weird. Or, well. Bobbi, the bride? She's my ex-wife."

"Sorry, but--aren't you a member of the wedding party?" He leans in toward Clint, and his eyes quickly flick over Clint's flamboyantly colored suit as he asks, "That was you standing up there next to her, wasn't it?"


"That sounds--complicated."

"In a nutshell. It's really not, though. We were great as friends. Like, really great. And we're both attractive people, we thought why not try for more?"

Phil hums in sympathy, his fingers slowly twisting his glass back and forth. "I take it things didn't end too horribly if you're still willing to attend her wedding to another man?"

"Oh, no. There were literal flames involved," Clint divulges with a pleased grin. He's happy to say that it's been long enough that everyone else is finally starting to admit the humor in the situation that Clint spotted right away. "But that's all in the past now. We got sick of all the dramatics and realized we let the married life get in the way of our friendship, and once we stopped being friends, well--that's when we got miserable. So now we're back to being best buddies, and Bobbi's conned a new schmuck into hitching his wagon on to hers."

Raising his arm to rest an elbow on the counter and then his head on his hand, Phil asks, "Do you not approve of Lance?"

"What?" For a befuddled moment, Clint just sits there blinking, wide-eyed. "Oh, shit, that came out kind of offensive, huh? Nah, man. Hunter's awesome. Love that guy. I'm seriously hoping that they can make this one stick. Mainly 'cause if shit hits the fan, I'm gonna be trying to comfort both injured parties instead of just being one of 'em myself."

"How do you figure that?"

Clint finishes off his scotch, the ice cubes jostling together as he tilts the glass far back to catch the last bit. "Me and Hunter, we go way back, man," he explains, waving to Trip for a refill. "Worked together off and on for ages. That's how those two met in the first place."

"So how come you ended up standing up on her side instead of with the groomsmen?" Phil asks, crossing his arms on the bar and rocking his weight forward.

"They rock-paper-scissored for it," Clint says with a wistful sigh. "Hunter lost, and took my dignity with him."

"I don't know," Phil teases, his lips stretching into an appreciative smirk. "I think the purple really
"suits you."

"With a sharp bark of laughter, Clint leers, "Flattery will get you everywhere."

"It will, huh?"

"Nah, not everywhere. But into my pants? Most definitely."

Phil snorts into his drink and raises an expectant eyebrow. "Are you always this forward?"

"Nope. I'm usually a bumbling mess of nerves." Clint is nothing if not aware of his many social failings. "Must be all the love in the air getting to me."

"So you think this is going pretty well, then?" Phil inquires, his mouth smoothed out but his eyes still holding that teasing glint.

"By my usual standards? Absolutely. Granted, I did start the evening off by giving you the low-down on my ex, which is much more my usual level of first date fuck-up."

Chuckling, Phil shakes his head. "I don't really mind. I think it's better to get the baggage out of the way right at the start."

"Yeah? What's your story then?" Clint asks, more than a little curious.

Phil drains the last of his scotch and sets the tumbler down with a light thunk. "Well, the last time I was actually in bed with a partner, she tied me up." Clint's in the process of wiggling his eyebrows suggestively when Phil continues, "Then she tried to kill me. Things took a decidedly less sexy turn at that point."

"Understandably," Clint agrees with a wince. The moment starts to drag out, a hint of Clint's usual awkward seeping into the crack in conversation, so he blurts out, "Just, you know, FYI? If I ever got the opportunity to tie you to my bed, it would only ever be with the sexiest of intentions." Which is probably not a solution to the awkward.

"Good to know," Phil murmurs, his voice dropping to a low register. And just like that, Clint's luck, the tricky mistress that she is, takes a turn for the optimistic.

"Yeah?" Clint asks, just to clarify that he's reading the situation right, because he has been known to read it very, very wrong. Phil's reply is interrupted by the sudden opening of the ballroom doors, the crowd quieting momentarily as they start to move. Clint spots Mack at one of the side doors, motioning for Clint to rejoin the wedding party.

Clint should've known. Lady Luck is fickle and not his friend.

"Ah, that's my cue," Clint mutters, pushing away from the bar reluctantly. Phil just nods in understanding, and Clint ducks his head as he turns to shuffle away.

"Clint," Phil calls when he's a few steps away. Clint's careful to control the speed of his turn because he is not desperate and he is not pathetic. "Save me a dance?" Phil requests, that quiet smile from before reappearing.

Clint grins. "I happen to know that Hunter managed to sneak the Macarena onto the DJ's set list."

Laughing, Phil agrees, "It's a date."
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!