Slings and Arrows of Outrageous Fortune

by Ellabee15

Summary

Clint Barton gets tired of being compared to the Arrow and decides to set the record straight once and for all. The last thing he wanted was to get involved in the Arrow's mess. Felicity's struggling with Oliver's willingness to overlook Malcolm's past in order to defeat the League of Assassins. The last thing she needs is another stubborn archer in her life.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes
“Your doppleganger’s back.”

Clint looked up and glared at the news report Natasha was watching. The Arrow was standing on top of a van talking to a group of news reporters, while the police held Danny Brickwell at his feet.

“You didn’t fail this city.”

“Urgh a catchphrase.” Clint rolled his eyes.

“You’re just jealous because you didn’t think of coming up with a catchphrase for yourself first.” Natasha smirked. “If you make one now it’ll look like you’re copying him.”

“I’m copying HIM?” Clint was outraged. “I’m the OG archer. I saved the world from an alien invasion and then 3 months later this Robin Hood fetishist is running around Starling? Talk about unoriginal.”

Steve and Tony walked into the TV room. Catching sight of Clint’s face they looked at the TV. “Let me guess.” Tony sighed. “Barton’s ranting about the Arrow…again.”

“Watch it, Tin man.” Clint glared. “I know 30 ways to incapacitate your armor and that’s without my bow.”

“At least he’s stopped killing.” Steve frowned at the screen. “His body count was way too high for a man fighting urban crime.”

“Yeah but Starling is basically a warzone.” Natasha said. “He’s had to counteract 2 terrorist threats in the last 2 years. 3 if you count this one.”

“Are you taking his side?” Clint said incredulously. “Et tu Nat? Besides this doesn’t count; he showed up when the fight was basically over.”

“He’s got some serious help in the Tech department.” Tony said. “I’ve been tracing the web activity of his hacker and whoever they are, they’re really good. And I’m saying that. I’m getting some popcorn.” He left the room.

“No. no no no. NO.” Clint got off the couch and glared. “You guys are my team. MINE. It’s bad enough he’s stolen my signature weapon, but he doesn’t get you too.”


“Look Nat. Just because you like mean and green, doesn’t – ” he never got to finish his sentence. Natasha twisted his arm behind his back and slammed him face down on the coffee table.

“Natasha?” Steve said. “What’s he talking about?”

“Banner.” Tony said, coming back in. “And no murder in my TV room.”

“You knew?” Nat looked at him in surprise.

“Genius beats superspy every time.” Tony threw himself down on the couch. “And Barton might actually need his fingers, so don’t do too much damage.”
Natasha let go, reluctantly.

“I think Hawkass is afraid of a little competition.” Tony said.

“Puhlease.” Clint rolled his eyes as he rubbed his shoulder. “I can take Queen. Anytime, any day. Any place.”

“Then prove it.” Tony smirked.

“I will.”

“Good.” Tony drained his glass and began flipping through the channels.

“I’m going now.” Clint said as he left the room.

Steve watched as he exited the room. “This can’t end well.”

“Maybe we’ll finally get some peace and quiet around here.” Natasha said.

Tony raised an eyebrow. “So….you and Bruce.”

“One word and I’ll have JARVIS release the video of you at Karaoke night to all the major news networks.” Natasha said.

“Noted.”
Chapter 2

Clint set up his equipment. He’d used JARVIS to hack into the city’s mainframe. His plan was to use him to monitor any strange activity which could be linked to the vigilante. He was waiting for an opportunity to infiltrate the vigilante’s computer setup. Clint knew who the Arrow was, but he wasn’t 100% sure of his base of operation.

“Agent Barton.” JARVIS said “I am experiencing difficulty locating the source of the Vigilante’s computer system.”

“Queen was stranded playing Gilligan for 5 years.” Clint grumbled. “There’s no way he’s this good with tech.”

“Mr. Stark suggested that he may have some help.” JARVIS.

“The mystery hacker.” Clint rolled his eyes. “Keep trying.”

It was quiet for a few minutes as JARVIS continued his work. Clint glared at the scrolling code on his laptop. “This is really boring.” He said as he leaned back on his chair so it was balanced on two legs.

“Agent Barton I believe I have caught the computer technician’s attention. My protocols are being- “

“Who are you?” an electronically modified voice demanded. Clint fell and broke the chair.

“Who are you?” he retorted as he picked himself off the floor.

“I asked first. You’re trying to get into my systems. Why?”

“I was trying to find the Arrow, Oh Scary Voice.” Clint said as he looked down at the broken chair. “Is he there?”

“He’s not. And I am NOT his secretary so I won’t be taking a message.”

“I just want to set up a meeting with him.” Clint said.

“Not going to happen. The next time you come anywhere near my systems, I’ll do a lot worse than this.”

“Worse than wha – SHIT” Clint ducked as the laptop exploded

“What the hell?” he growled.

It appears the Arrow’s partner has created a virus which can cause any technology it is sent to, to explode.” JARVIS explained from Clint’s tablet.

“JARVIS! You’re alive.”

“I am an artificial intelligence. I do not live; therefore I cannot die.”

“Thanks Data, please tell me you found his lair.”

“I back traced the signal of the virus to a night club called Verdant.”
Clint sat back on the floor. “You’ve got to be kidding me. His lair is underneath his club which is literally called green? For someone who seems to be so fixated on keeping his identity a secret, he’s practically begging for someone to discover it.” He grabbed the tablet and began making his way to the club. “Oh and JARVIS? It may be best if Tony didn’t find out about this exploding virus just yet.”

“Agreed.”

Felicity glared at the screen in front of her. Because of that stupid hacker she was going to have to waste a perfectly good Saturday in the lair adding extra security.

“I don’t like people messing with my stuff.” She grumbled “How did you get in here?” she was concentrating so hard, she didn’t notice the intruder who slipped inside the lair and began climbing the crossbeams and pipes attached to the ceiling.

“This was my damn day off. I’m not even supposed to be here. But of course Mr. Queen decides that I need to run a security sweep. I bet he had someone set up that hack just to mess with me. He’s probably nice and cozy playing house with his sister and her psycho father, while I’m stuck in a basement talking to a computer.”

“Maybe it would work better if you tried using your scary voice.”

Felicity let out a loud squeak as she looked up to see Clint Barton swinging his legs while perched on the salmon ladder.

“You’re Hawkeye.” She said.

“The one and only.” Clint grinned. “Often imitated. Never duplicated…except for that one time when I broke something in Tony’s lab…that was an out of body experience. And you are?”

Felicity opened her mouth, but nothing came out.

Hawkeye smirked. “I guess I could make up a name for you then. How about…Squeaky?”

“How did you get in?” Felicity glared.

“JARVIS.” Clint shrugged. “He’s an AI. He back traced the signal you sent the virus from.”

“I have some suggestions as to how you may avoid a similar situation in the future.” A voice chimed in. Felicity stared at the tablet in Clint’s hand. Clint swung down with the skill of an acrobat and landed in front of the desk. He handed Felicity the tablet. She took it nervously.

“How?”

“How?”

“Hello. I am JARVIS.”

“Felicity Smoak.”

“Indeed. I am gratified to make the acquaintance of someone so skilled.”

“Unbelievable. She introduces herself to a circuit board, but not me.” Clint muttered.
“A circuit board?” Felicity hissed. “This is one…no THE most advanced piece of tech I have ever talked to.”

“And you talk to a lot of tech?” Clint smirked as she flushed. “Relax Squeaky. I meant it as a compliment. JARVIS, tell her.”

“Agent Barton’s brand of affection is…unique.” JARVIS agreed.

“Not to sound rude, but what are you doing here?” Felicity crossed her arms.

“I want to challenge Queen to a duel.” Clint said. Felicity gave him a blank look. “Yeah, I’ve definitely been hanging around Thor too much. Look I just want to see if the Arrow’s skills are as good as people claim they are. And I know he’s Oliver Queen so there’s no point in denying it. Call me petty, but I don’t like competition.”

“Not petty.” Felicity frowned. “Nosy, self-centered, obnoxious.”

“You’re a vicious little thing aren’t you?”

“I like a woman with bite.” Clint smirked as he began examining the equipment. “Romanov would like you.”

“Romanov, as in Natasha Romanov; the black widow?” Felicity’s eyes widened, then she shook her head. “Don’t try to distract me with backhanded compliments and flirting.”

“Backhanded compliments and flirting.” Clint smirked. “Might as well be the title of my autobiography. Believe me, Squeaky; if I was flirting, you’d be powerless to resist.” He smiled. “I’m that good.”

Felicity snorted. “Yeah right.”

“Not a terrible set up.” Clint walked around and began inspecting the glass case where Oliver kept his suit. “A little dark and gloomy, but functional.” He looked curiously at the fern. “That’s different.” He turned to look at Felicity. “I’m guessing this was your addition?”

Felicity turned to look at the screens. “It was stupid.”

“Nothing wrong with wanting to brighten this place up.” Clint looked around. “Though from the looks of things you’re fighting a losing battle. But these plants thrive under low light, and it works with the green theme.”

There was a noise from the top of the stairs. Then Oliver entered the lair, followed by Thea. They were in the middle of a conversation.

“I need you to know this, because the league is dangerous and I can’t have my secrets keeping us apart.” Oliver was saying. “So here.”

“You know Hawkeye?” Thea had caught sight of Clint and her eyes went wide with excitement.

“No I…What?” Oliver turned in surprise to see Clint standing in the middle of the room with his arms crossed, looking smug.

“Clint Barton.” Clint smiled as he held out his hand.
“How the hell did he get down here?” Oliver growled at Felicity. She held her hands up.

“Don’t look at me. I just found him here.”

“Be nice to Squeaky, she and I are becoming besties.” Clint winked at Felicity. “I just came here to challenge the Arrow to an Archery competition. I need to see how good you are.”

Thea had gotten over her shock at meeting an Avenger, because she turned to Oliver in surprise. “Wait, you’re the Arrow?”

“That’s what I was trying to tell you.” Oliver said through gritted teeth.

“We’ll leave you two alone.” Felicity grabbed her bag and dragged Clint out of the lair.

“See you around, Katniss.” Clint said as he left. Looking down at Felicity he smirked “If you wanted to be alone with me darlin’, all you needed to do was ask.”

Felicity rolled her eyes. “Not a chance.” She said through gritted teeth.

“I’ll be seeing you again soon, Squeaky.” He winked and left. Felicity watched him go. He was attractive and she couldn’t help but notice how strong he was when she’d grabbed his bicep to get him away from Oliver. Do not go there, Smoak. She told herself. He’s nothing but trouble and the last thing you need is more trouble.

Clint called Natasha as soon as he went back to the hotel.

“Did you win?” She asked

“Didn’t even get the chance to compete.” He said. “I need you to look into any potential League of Assassins activity in and around Starling.” He knew Natasha was glaring at him through the phone and he was grateful she was in New York.

“Why?” she said, finally.

“Something Queen said. It’s probably nothing, but better safe than sorry.” Clint muttered as he contemplated the ruined laptop. “I’ll investigate on my end. Also tell Stark to send me a new laptop.”

“What happened to yours?”

“I…spilled coffee on it.”

“That’s what I’ll tell Stark.” Natasha said. Clint knew she understood that whatever happened to the laptop, he wasn’t comfortable sharing over the phone. “Clint if the League is in Starling…”

“No worries. I’ll stay out of it. I remember Budapest.” Clint frowned as he hung up. He needed more intel. Fortunately he knew just where to get it.

“JARVIS I’m going to need Felicity’s address and the name of her favorite take out place.”
Chapter 3

“What was Hawkeye doing in my lair?” Oliver pulled Felicity aside when she came back into the lair later that night.

“He wanted to challenge you to a duel.”

“A duel.” Oliver said slowly.

“His words not mine.” Felicity crossed her arms in irritation. Laurel came down the stairs and, seeing their confrontation, went to stand next to Felicity.

“I hear we had a visitor.” She smirked. Oliver glared at her, then turned back to Felicity. “Him challenging me to a duel doesn’t explain how he got in.”

“He’s a superspy.” Felicity could feel her irritation rising. “I didn’t let him in, if that’s what you’re implying.” Oliver sighed.

“No I…I just don’t like the idea of anyone just waltzing in here without permission.”

“Oliver we need to talk.” Malcolm Merlyn was making his way down the stairs.

“Yeah.” Felicity huffed sarcastically. “Imagine if just anyone could walk in without being invited.” She and Laurel gave Merlyn anger filled glares as they walked over to Felicity’s desk.

“I do not like him being down here.” Laurel growled. Felicity nodded her agreement. Whatever Oliver and Malcolm were talking about it was clearly making Oliver tense. After a few minutes Merlyn left and Oliver walked back over to them.

“Thea and I are going to be out of town for a few days.” He explained.

“Road trip with daddy dearest?” Felicity turned her chair so her back was to him.

“Merlyn’s not coming with us.” Oliver sighed in irritation. “He says we need to hone our skills.”

“Sure, let’s listen to the psycho murderer.” Felicity muttered. “There’s no way that could possibly go wrong.” Laurel snorted.

“We are working with Malcolm.” Oliver growled. “I would appreciate less sarcastic commentary from you; especially since you seem to be playing Avengers tour guide in the lair.”

Felicity turned and was about to retort when Laurel said quietly. “He’s the reason Tommy’s dead… or have you forgotten that?” Felicity closed her mouth and bit back her anger. Laurel still had no idea of Malcolm’s involvement in Sara’s death. She turned to glare at her computer screens while Oliver responded.

“The league is coming after us. The only hope I have of defeating Ra’s is to train with someone he trained.” Felicity had had enough.

“Are you planning on suiting up tonight?”

“No I – ‘

“Then you don’t need me here.” She got up and left, ignoring him calling her name behind him.
Oliver groaned in frustration. Laurel shook her head.

“What?” he said, irritated.

“That girl is the best thing that’s ever happened to you.” Laurel murmured. “And you just keep giving her reasons to walk out that door permanently.” She made her way over to the door. “You better hope brooding archers aren’t her type, because otherwise Hawkeye might be winning more than a simple archery competition.”

Felicity made her back to her apartment, cursing Oliver. He’d told her he loved her, died, then pushed her away…again. He only opened up when it was life or death stakes and he was ready to throw himself back at the mercy of the league. He’d barely made it against Ra’s the first time, if the league came back he’d be done for. She didn’t want to watch him die, she didn’t want to lose him, but the treacherous part of her brain pointed out that technically she’d never really had him. She pushed open her apartment door, intent on collapsing on her couch and drowning her sorrows in red wine…except someone was already sitting on it.

“Hey Squeaky.” Clint grinned at her. He was lounging with his feet on her coffee table.

“What the hell are you doing in my apartment?”

“I brought food.” He held up a bag of Big Belly Burger. “Truce?”

“Bringing food does not excuse breaking and entering.” Felicity grabbed the bag and glared at his legs. “and get your feet off the table. Were you raised in a barn?”

“The circus, actually.” Clint said, but he put his feet down.

“Why are you here?” Felicity crossed her arms. Clint motioned to the seat next to him, but she stubbornly continued to stand. Shrugging he leaned back and crossed his arms behind his head. This motion made his upper arm muscles stretch and Felicity was momentarily distracted. Seeing this, the archer smirked.

“I was just in the neighborhood and thought I’d drop by and ask what you know about the league of assassins.”

Felicity, whose attention had been focused on his arms, looked at him in alarm. “The what?”

Clint grimaced. “Don’t bother lying to me Squeaky; I’m trained to detect it and frankly you’re not very good. Never play poker.” He got up and, opening the bag, pulled out a fry and popped it into his mouth.

“I could call the police.”

“I’d be gone before they got here.”

“I could call Oliver.”

“I’d stick around and kick his ass.” Clint grinned down at her, then his expression darkened. “It’s not that I want to pry, it’s just that if your team has gotten on the wrong side of the League of Assassins, then you’re in completely over your heads.”
Felicity rolled her eyes. “Let me guess, you want to help.”

“Hell no.” Clint shook his head. “The league and I have an uneasy understanding. Me being associated with someone on their bad list is not in my best interest.”

“Uneasy understanding?” Clint observed her with a pitying look. “You seem to be a curious person. That’s dangerous Squeaky, especially considering your night job.”

“I don’t like mysteries.” Felicity took a step back and looked away from his intense gaze. “And stop calling me that.”

“Well believe me when I tell you that this falls under; I’d tell you but then I’d have to kill you.”

Felicity’s eyebrows went up. Clint laughed. “I can practically hear you thinking of trying to hack and find the information; don’t bother.”

“I think you underestimate what I’m capable of.”

“Oh no.” Clint smirked. “If there were any electronic trace, I’m sure you would find it, but the league operates in shadows and archaic technology. They don’t tend to Instagram their operations.” He frowned. “The only thing you’ll accomplish is getting on the radar of some exceptionally dangerous people.” He walked over to her Robin Hood poster. “Did you have this before you started working for Queen?”

“I’d tell you, but then I’d have to kill you.” Felicity got out her phone and sent Laurel a quick text. She needed to alert someone, but didn’t want to involve Oliver.

“That’s a yes.” Clint smirked. “Got a thing for archers?” he winked at her suggestively. “I’ll have you know I never miss my mark.”

“Neither does Oliver.”

“Urgh.” Clint rolled his eyes. “Please tell me that the two of you aren’t together. You deserve so much better.”

“And I suppose you think you’re the ‘better’ that I deserve.” Felicity scoffed.

“No.” Clint’s swift response was blunt and detached. He turned and went to the door. “Some advice Squeaky; if the league is coming after Queen, I’d skip town. They tend to view collateral damage as necessary motivational tactics. They’ll have no problem destroying everything and everyone around him.” He looked at her. “And you getting stuck in the crosshairs would be a crying shame.” He left the apartment.

Felicity sat heavily on the couch staring blankly at the Robin Hood poster. She hadn’t moved when Laurel burst in a few minutes later.

Talk to me, Tasha.” Clint said when she called.

“I’ve got some information, but you’re not going to like it.”

“What did you find?”

“The league is definitely in play.” Natasha said. “They were present during the Slade Wilson incident and the first canary was one of them.”
Clint cursed.

“It gets worse.” Natasha continued. “Right before the Arrow disappeared, Queen boarded a plane which took him awfully close to the weeping mountain.”

Clint froze. The weeping mountain was the nickname SHIELD agents gave to the mountain where the League used to hold trials by combat; so named because of the weeping family members who would wait at the bottom for their loved ones to be killed. “Queen couldn’t have been stupid enough to challenge the Demon’s head.”

“The question isn’t whether or not he challenged him, but rather how he’s still living.” Natasha said.

Clint closed his eyes. “The prophecy. Urgh this just became the worst vacation ever.”

“Barton, you need to get out of Starling.” Natasha said. “If the league catches you around Queen...”

“I know, I’ll be on the first flight out.” Clint began packing his stuff when an arrow shattered the window of his hotel room. Ducking for cover, Clint surveyed the roof tops, trying to pin point the arrow’s origin point. There was a note tied to the arrow. He pulled it out and read:

Your presence in Starling has been noted. Any further interference will be interpreted as a dissolution of all agreements.

There was a picture of him and Felicity standing in the alley way behind Verdant. Clint recognized the handwriting.

“Trickshot.” He growled.
Chapter 4

Clint paced his hotel room going over the situation in his mind. On the one hand getting involved in Queen’s mess was a terrible idea. His own past with the league would definitely cause whatever was happening to worsen. On the other hand, Queen was by no means ready to face the league. Then there was the question of what he’d been doing at the weeping mountain. If he’d walked away from a battle with Ra’s, then it meant either Ra’s was dead (unlikely) or that he’d managed to survive (Also unlikely but more believable than Ra’s being defeated) and the second option spelled danger. Getting involved was a death sentence, but if he didn’t help it was very probable that a lot of innocent people would die.

He glared at his reflection in the mirror. “You’re not a hero. You only joined SHIELD to make up for all the crap you did earlier and it turns out that the entire time you were working for Hydra.” He said. A voice in the back of his head, which he supposed was his conscience pointed out that this might be a way to redeem himself. What kind of an Avenger would turn back from a fight like this?

“Queen probably doesn’t even want my help.” He muttered. “Though he’s an idiot so I guess his opinion doesn’t really matter.” He sighed. He knew he was just trying to find excuses to talk himself out of it; he’d made the decision the second he knew Trickshot was involved, and that he’d threatened Felicity. To come after him was bad, but to come after an innocent was inexcusable. He was an Avenger, and it was his job to protect others.

“Damn you Rogers.” He grumbled. “This newfound conscience is entirely your fault.”

“I thought you were skipping town?” Felicity said the next morning when she found Clint sitting behind her desk at Palmer Technologies.

“I had a change of heart. Disappointed?” he smirked as Felicity blushed. “I need to know if Queen challenged the Demon’s Head to a trial by combat.”

“Why?” Felicity’s brow furrowed.

“Just…answer my questions and I promise I’ll answer any you might have.”

Felicity raised an eyebrow. “Any questions?”

“Within reason.” Clint conceded. “There are certain things I can’t or won’t tell you, it’s too dangerous.”

“You hero types are all the same.” She sighed. “It’s always ‘too dangerous’ to tell me things.”

“Meet Captain America and I guarantee you’ll be singing a different tune. He singlehandedly balances out the rest of us. So did Queen challenge Ra’s al Ghul to a trial by combat?”

“Yes.” Felicity sighed “And I would really appreciate having my seat back.” Clint got up and held her chair out for her. Then he perched himself on the desk.

“Question number 2; did Queen get stabbed by Ra’s sword?”
“Why is this important?”

“Just answer the question, Squeaky.”

He earned himself a glare. Then Felicity’s expression grew more distant.

“He was stabbed. We all thought he was dead…” she shivered “The only thing we could find was that sword…covered in his blood and…” she broke off.

Clint studied her carefully. Clearly she had deep feelings for Queen and from what he could piece together, Queen didn’t seem to be the type to act on any type of emotions he might have. He shifted uncomfortably. He pulled out a tissue.

“You need this darlin’?”

She shook her head. “Why did you need to know the answers to those questions?”

Clint considered lying to her. He considered giving her a snarky response and walking out of the office. He desperately wanted to shield her from the pain his information would bring, but he knew that the best weapon against what was coming was the truth. In the long run she’d be involved and it was better for her to know now rather than later.

“There’s a prophecy.” He sighed “He who does not fall by the Demon’s sword will become the next Ra’s al Ghul.”

“A prophecy?” Felicity gave him a look of exasperation. “You can’t be serious.”

“You and I are smart enough not to believe in that sort of crap, Squeaky. But Ra’s isn’t; he lives for the mystical and prophetic. If…when he finds out that Queen is still alive he’s going to see it as the realization of the prophecy and make him a job offer he can’t refuse.”

“Oliver will say no” Felicity insisted, Clint grimaced.

“You’re assuming that Ra’s is a rational person. Irrational people don’t take no for an answer. Trust me darlin’; I live with Tony Stark.”

“So if he says no…” Felicity began

“Ra’s will take horrible, terrible revenge.” Clint finished. “He will raze Starling to the ground to prove a point.”

“So why are you here?” Felicity frowned

“I’m an Avenger. I can hardly stand by and let the league destroy an entire city. It makes for awkward explanations at the annual superhero barbeque.”

Felicity cracked a small smile. “There’s a super hero barbeque?”

“I’m always looking for a plus one.” Clint winked suggestively.

“Eh hem.” They turned to see Ray Palmer standing in the doorway “Am I interrupting something?”

“Ray this is…um.”

“Clint Barton.” He stood and walked over to Palmer. “Also known as Hawkeye. I’m here to kick ass, save lives and maybe steal the girl.” he winked at Felicity.
“O-kay?” Ray said slowly, giving Felicity a confused look while shaking Clint’s hand.

“I just met him three days ago.” She said.

“Awwww Squeaky.” Clint gave her a pout. “You’re hurting my feelings.”

“Why are you talking to my VP?” Ray crossed his arms.

“I confess.” Clint gave a fake look of guilt. “I need to play a prank on Tony Stark and she’s the only one with the brains to pull it off. I promise it won’t interfere with her work.”

“You mean more than it already has?” Ray raised an eyebrow. Clint assessed his opponent. Ray was tall and clearly thought he was smarter than Clint, this was going to be good.

“You seem like a smart guy, Mr. Palmer.”

“Well people do say that…occasionally.” Ray said, smugly.

“So I guess you’d jump at the opportunity to have THE Tony Stark make a few design suggestions on that piece of plagiarism you call an ATOM suit.” He felt a wave of satisfaction as Ray sputtered. He turned to Felicity. “Tall, dark and handsome here has been building a super exoskeleton. What? I can hack.”

Felicity raised her eyebrows. Clint sighed.

“Alright, Tasha found it. But I’m capable of my fair share of cyberdamage when I want to.”


“He seems nice.” Clint said dryly. “A bit standoffish, but apparently that’s a requirement for the heroes and wannabes around here.” He looked at Felicity’s surprised expression. “Did you seriously not know?”

“No, he told me before Oliver left to fight…” she broke off and put her forehead in her hands. “My boss wants to be Iron Man, my best friend is the chosen one and Hawkeye is in my office and –”

“Is here to help you make sure no one gets hurt.” Clint said, surprising himself with the earnest and assured tone of his words. “Hey.” He lifted her chin so she looked into his eyes. “I know a thing or two about the league and I’ll try to do anything I can to stop them.”

Felicity’s eyes widened. “Wouldn’t that violate your…uneasy understanding with them?”

Clint bit his lip. “My being here already has, so whether I like it or not: I’m involved. Plus there’s a damsel in distress; it’s kinda my expertise.”

Felicity glared. “Smooth Barton.”

“there’s the look of naked exasperation I’ve come to know so well.” Clint smirked at Felicity’s slight twitch at the use of the word ‘naked’. “I was actually talking about Queen seeing as he’s the one in desperate need of saving, but I have no problem sweeping you off your feet. Actually I prefer it; he’s not really my type.”

Felicity blushed and shook her head. “I have work to do so no sweeping.”

“Pity.” Clint sighed. “Is Queen going to be at the lair tonight?”
“No he uh….he’s going to be away for a few days.”

Clint narrowed his eyes. “The League of Assassins is breathing down his neck and he decides it’s time for spring break?”

Felicity’s face was impassive and Clint knew there was something she was holding back. “You’re holding out on me Squeaky.”

“Work. That’s what I need to be doing, not you… I mean –” She said quickly as Clint gave her a triumphant look. “Just…just go.”

“See, I’m growing on you.” He grinned “I’ll see you tonight. And you can take that to mean whatever you want.”

As he left the building he pulled out his phone.

“Hey Tasha, so just an update; it’s a lovely sunny day in Starling and I’m going to take down the League of Assassins to impress this girl I just met.”
“He’s an idiot.” Natasha said as she stormed into the lab. Bruce didn’t look up from experiment.

“I’m sure you’re right.” He said.

“I did not save his life all those times so he could throw it away to show off for some girl.”

“Sounds great.” Bruce said. Natasha raised an eyebrow, then gave him an affectionate smile.

“You are too deep in science land to listen to anything I’m saying.” She chuckled.

“I agree.” Bruce’s eyes were glued to the work station. Natasha walked up behind him and whispered in his ear.

“Clint’s planning on taking on the league of Assassins.”

“What?” Bruce looked up in alarm.

“Apparently there’s a girl.” Natasha sat down on one of the lab stools. “Clint and the League have a history. He’s setting himself up to be killed and without SHIELD to back him up he’s basically got nowhere to run.”

“He’s got the Avengers.” Bruce pointed out.

Natasha sighed. “This girl must be pretty damn amazing for him to do something so incredibly stupid.”

“What girl?” Tony had walked into the room. Natasha gave him an expressionless look. Bruce turned away from him to look at his experiment. “Oh come on.” Tony huffed. “Romanov’s not going to crack, but you,” he walked over to Bruce and stood behind him. “Are more easily persuaded.”

“All I wanted was a quiet day in the lab.” Bruce muttered.

“Come on Brucie; it’s science bros before…” Tony caught the expression on Natasha’s face. “Um your wonderful amazing girlfriend who you should side with in every argument, please don’t kill me.”

“Barton’s planning on taking on the league of assassins.” Steve said as he walked into the room. “I overheard your conversation.” He added as Natasha gave him a look of irritation. “I have super hearing and it wasn’t as if you were trying to hide it. He said he’s trying to impress a girl.”

“Really?” Tony looked interested. “Does this girl happen to have a name?”

“He didn’t give me one, but she’s connected with the Arrow.” Natasha sighed.

“Well then I say we go to Starling to investigate.” Tony said cheerfully. “We can meet this girl and save everyone from the League, plus Romanov can beat up Barton for being a moron. Everybody wins.”

“Why is the league interested in Starling?” Bruce frowned.

“Ra’s al Ghul is interested in Oliver Queen.” Natasha sighed. Steve frowned.
“I thought I heard that, but that can’t be right.”

Natasha looked at him curiously. “What?”

“I met Ra’s al Ghul during the war. His daughter Nyssa’s mother was trapped in a concentration camp. She led a raid to attempt to free her and got herself killed. I met him when he came to collect the body. He apparently hadn’t wanted to help save those people so Nyssa was forced to act on her own.” Steve clenched his knuckles. “He said, ‘maybe next time she will be more malleable.’ But it can’t be the same man; that was over 70 years ago.”

“Ra’s is a title, not a name Cap. It’s probably not the same guy.” Tony said. “Everyone pack, wheels up in 30. New York’s been extremely boring since we set up shop. There hasn’t been so much as a murder in weeks.”

“Don’t sound so disappointed.” Steve muttered.

“I’m piloting.” Natasha began moving towards the door.

“SHOTGUN.” Tony rushed after her. “Too bad Thor’s on Asgard; he’s going to miss all the fun. But he’d probably hog all the good bad guys anyway.”

Bruce sighed. As he watched them go.

“Why do I get the feeling that surviving that plane ride is going to be more dangerous than anything we encounter in Starling?”

Steve looked lost in his memories. “Let’s hope you’re right.”
“Intruder.” Roy said.

Team Arrow had entered the lair only to find Clint lounging in Felicity’s chair.

“Cool it, red; I’m a friend of Squeaky’s.” Clint looked behind Roy to where Felicity was walking in with Digg and Laurel. “Isn’t that right darlin’?”

“This is Clint Barton.” Felicity rolled her eyes. “And he’s a chair thief.”

“It’s hardly my fault you have such excellent taste in seats.” Clint sighed and leaned back. “It’s like heaven for my butt and lower back.”

“Not to be rude.” Digg frowned. “But what are you doing down here?”

“Squeaky didn’t tell you?” Clint looked at Felicity.

“I didn’t think you’d show up.” Felicity admitted.

“That hurts.” Clint pouted. “You’ve hit me right here.” He put his hand to his chest. “Want to feel my wound?” he wagged his eyebrows suggestively.

Digg cleared his throat.

“Sergeant John Diggle” Clint gave him a salute. “Former special forces, which I guess means you have a very special set of skills that you plan to threaten me with.” Clint paused. “Anyone find it funny that the Robin Hood wannabe’s best friend is a man named John? Nope, just me. Okay.” He turned to Laurel. “Dinah Laurel Lance, codename: Black Canary, works in the district attorney’s office and packs a serious punch both in and out of the court room.” He tipped an imaginary hat. “Milady.” Then he turned to Roy. “Roy Harper, Codename; Arsenal. Good ninja acrobatics and a decent aim with a bow. Which, considering the lack of a proper teacher, is impressive in and of itself…” he paused. “Wait why doesn’t the Sgt get a codename and suit?”

“I don’t go in for leather.” Digg deadpanned.

“I get it. I’m more of a Kevlar and whatever super fiber Tony’s just created kinda guy. Although…” He gave Felicity a wink. “Leather is good in certain circumstances.”

Felicity leaned forward and grabbing the armrests, she turned the chair so Clint was facing her. “Out of the chair.”

“As you wish,” Clint got up and walked so he was standing in front of the display of arrows. “Well long story short; I’m Hawkeye and I’m here to help with your assassin problem.”

“They’ve already have help.” Everyone turned to see Malcolm Merlyn walking down the stairs.

“Really?” Clint looked at the thinly veiled looks of dislike on the team’s face. “Because they don’t seem to be so enthused with that….” Then he got a good look at Merlyn’s face. “Aren’t you supposed to be dead?”

Merlyn sneered; a look which quickly vanished when Clint grabbed Oliver’s bow and shot him in the shoulder; pinning him to the wall.
“What the hell is Queen’s arch nemesis doing waltzing in here like it’s happy hour?”
Clint turned to Team Arrow as he reloaded the bow and pointed it back at Merlyn. “Someone had better start talking.”

“He’s…training Oliver to fight Ra’s.” Felicity finally admitted. “Oliver believes that the only way to face him is to be trained by someone he trained.”

“So the Demon’s head can kick his ass twice as fast?” Clint looked at Merlyn in disgust. “Training under someone who Ra’s trained only guarantees that he’ll be able to anticipate Oliver’s every move and use it against him. Add to that the fact that this man is a known psychopathic murderer…” Clint glared at Merlyn. “This is a suicide pact. Why the hell does Queen trust him?”

“He doesn’t” Felicity said quickly.

“So what; does Merlyn have some kind of leverage on him?” Clint asked.

“I’m Thea Queen’s father.” Merlyn said.

Clint turned back to him. “Something I learned a long time ago; just because you’re the sperm donor, doesn’t make you a father.” He turned back to the team. “He’s going to lead you down the path to certain death.”

“None of us like working with him.” Felicity said. “In fact I’ve been hacking his bank accounts and donating money to rebuild the glades foundations.”

“That was you!” Merlyn growled, wrenching the arrow out of his shoulder and was about to launch himself at Felicity when Clint stepped in front of her with the bow up.

“You have exactly 10 seconds to walk out of here with all your limbs.” Clint growled. “You’re former league” He added in Arabic. “You know what I’m capable of.”

Merlyn actually looked…afraid. Felicity looked at Clint and while she couldn’t understand the Arabic words, she understood the tone. This was a completely different person than the man who flirted with her and stole her chairs.

Merlyn gave Team Arrow one last glare before leaving. Clint turned back to the team.

“I’m willing to help train and assist when the League shows up.”

“Why do you care?” Roy asked.

“Because I’m an Avenger.” Clint flashed him a smile, but Roy clearly wasn’t buying it. Clint sighed. “Because I happen to know what it means to be on the wrong side of the League.”

“And why is that exactly?” Laurel asked skeptically.

“Story time’s going to have to wait.” Clint smiled. “I called Tasha about 5 hours ago and by my count.” He looked down at his watch. “She should be bursting in here to call me an idiot right…about…now.”

The door to the lair crashed open and Natasha Romanov rushed in and, gripping Clint by the throat, slammed him against the wall.

“Clint Barton you absolute moron.”

“Well, I was half right.” Clint managed to gasp out. Team Arrow looked at each other.
“Should we…do something?” Roy asked quietly.

“It’s best to let them work this out.” Bruce Banner said as he walked in, followed by Tony Stark and Captain America.

“Which one is she?” Tony asked looking at Felicity and Laurel. “Is she the tall one or the sexy librarian?”

“The tall one,” Laurel said, “is fully capable of beating your ass while the sexy librarian hacks into your company’s servers and liquidates your assets.”

“And we’ll look stunning while doing it.” Felicity added.

Tony sputtered, Steve chuckled.


Natasha glared, but loosened her grip.

“Sorry about this.” Bruce apologized to team arrow. “Natasha sometimes gets enthusiastic.”

“The league already knows I’m involved.” Clint said, rubbing his neck. He reached into his pocket and handed her a note and photo. Natasha took them and glared at him.

“Sometimes I wonder why I even bother to keep saving you.”

“Because my shoulder rubs are legendary? Not…” He added quickly seeing Bruce’s raised eyebrow. “That I’ve gone lower than her shoulders.”

“Not to break up this very weird family reunion…” Laurel said. “But this is still our lair.”

“This one’s too brave for her own good.” Tony tilted his head. “She’s like a better looking version of you, Cap.” He walked over to Felicity’s computers and gave a low whistle. “Not bad; not great, but not everyone can be me. These will need to be upgraded. The costume cases are a nice touch, but they’re going to need to be moved to fit the extra equipment. Also those exposed pipes might be good for the whole tortured soul image Mr. Green Queen wants, but they are definitely a health hazard.”

“And you’re going Martha Stewart on our lair because…” Roy asked.

“The Avengers are moving in to help you fight the league.” Tony asked. “Now I’m assuming as superheroes we’re going to have complete access to the bar upstairs.”
Chapter 7

The arrangement of training parameters and team organization took the better part of 3 hours. Digg and Roy loosened up considerably with the presence of Steve. Laurel remained reticent, but Natasha won her cooperation when she offered to train her.

Felicity was walking to her car when she was grabbed and pulled into a nearby alley.

“Don’t even think of screaming.” Merlyn hissed in her ear as he covered her mouth. “I know you hate me, but you need to listen. You think you have problems with the league now? It’s nothing compared to what will happen once Ra’s finds out you’ve thrown in with Hawkeye. Clint Barton isn’t the moral Avenger everyone thinks he is. If you don’t believe me, ask him about Budapest.”

“Attacking when the Avengers are 2 blocks over; you’re even crazier than I thought.” Clint was standing at the entrance to the alley. Felicity used Merlyn’s momentary distraction to elbow him hard in the injured shoulder. He hissed and loosened his grip. Felicity turned and kicked him in the groin. Then she ran forward. Clint whistled in appreciation.

“Nice moves Squeaky, remind me to stay on your good side.” He praised.

“Then stop stealing my chairs.” Felicity said as she came to stand next to him. He chuckled, then turned back to Merlyn, but he was gone.

“That disappearing trick is real old.” He shouted. Shaking his head, he turned to Felicity. “You shouldn’t be walking alone, where’s your car?”

Felicity pointed. They began walking.

“What did Merlyn want, anyways?” Clint asked, “a maiden sacrifice for his magician experiments?”

“Well he was looking in the wrong place; no maidens here.” Felicity said, eliciting a laugh from Clint. She looked at him carefully, watching for his reaction when she said; “he told me to ask you about Budapest.”

Clint looked up and began scanning the rooftops around him.

“Clint, what happened in Budapest?”

“Not here.” He said, he held up the keys he had pickpocketed from her purse. “Get in, I’m driving.” He unlocked her car. Felicity opened the driver’s side and got in. Clint sighed and got into the passenger side before handing her the keys.

“So, Budapest.”

“It was a few years back. I got in a scrape. The league was there and we had a party. Tasha showed up and saved the day. End of story.” Clint said.

“There’s more to the story than that.” Felicity insisted.

“Eyes on the road, Squeaky. And no offense, but I’m not ready to share that particular part of my tragic origin story.” Clint raked a hand through his hair. His eyes had a similar haunted look to the one Oliver had when he was thinking about the island. Except Clint’s expression was the one of a man with much darker and more dangerous demons.
Felicity turned to concentrate on driving, just in time to avoid hitting a man who’d appeared out of nowhere. Slamming on the brakes the car skidded to a stop.

“Get down.” Clint growled. He was glaring at the man.

“But –“

“Felicity, please.” His use of her actual name, instead of a nickname convinced her. Whoever this man was, Clint was clearly concerned. She ducked down as Clint got out of the car. “What the hell are you doing here?”

“I could ask you the same thing.” The man said. “I warned you to leave Starling.”

“It’s a lovely city this time of year. The constant rain and gloomy overcast really brings out my naturally sunny disposition.” Clint’s flippant words had an edge to them.

There was a low chuckle. “You always did have a mouth on you. You never learned to control it.” Clint flinched. “It’s gotten me out of trouble more than once.” He hissed.

“Not nearly as much trouble as it’s gotten you into. What did dad used to say?”

“Don’t bring him into this.” Clint said.

“What? You afraid of what the pretty piece you’ve got hiding in the car is going to think when she knows who you are?” I wouldn’t worry about that; she’s too busy pining over Oliver Queen to pay attention to a screw up like you.”

“You shouldn’t be mentoring people about being screw ups. Is this your master plan? Almost get hit by a car, then make fun of me for being single? Clint shot back. “The league must be really desperate for recruits if the best they have to offer is you.”

“I warned you what would happen if you interfered again.” The mystery man growled.

“Who’s interfering? Like you said; I’m just a moron who’s hitting on a girl who he’s got no chance with.” Clint said. The man responded with the same menacing chuckle.

“You could never lie to me. You can lie to your so called friends; the Avengers. You can lie to that Red Room bitch, Romanov. You can lie to Queen’s deluded followers. You can even lie to that pretty young thing you’ve got in that car. But in the end everyone will see you for what you really are; weak, sniveling and pathetic. When the League comes for Queen, I’m coming for you.”

Clint lunged forward, there was a bang. Felicity heard a few muffled curses then Clint came back into the car. “He’s gone.” He growled.

“Who?”

“Trickshot.”

“What?”

“Member of the league. Don’t ask anymore.” Clint said. “Tony’s making all of us stay in a shared penthouse suite at a hotel and that’s where you’ll be staying too.”

“What?”
“No arguments.” Clint sighed.

Felicity fell silent. Then she said quietly, “He’s your brother isn’t he?”

“Tony? While the wealth is tempting I don’t think the crazy balances out the mountains of riches.”

“Trickshot.” Felicity said, quietly. “He mentioned your father and –”

Clint’s expression turned stony. “Just drive.”

Felicity turned on the engine. “I’m not staying at the hotel.” She said. “And if you have a problem with that, you’re going to have to use every single move in your assassin arsenal to try to make me.”

Clint looked at her in shock. Then he burst out laughing. “You do realize.” He said “that I know about 30 ways to do exactly that.”

“But you won’t.” Felicity said.

“And you know that because…?”

“Because you aren’t the type to throw a woman over his shoulder when she disobeys him.”

“Touché.” Clint muttered. “Though some women find the caveman routine…” he paused and shook his head. “Why do I even bother?”

Silence fell in the car. Felicity bit her lip. There were many thoughts swirling around in her head. She processed the information. Clint’s brother was a member of the league, which meant she had a place to start looking for information which could be useful.

“Don’t even think about it.” Clint grumbled. “And don’t give me those big doe eyes, pretending that you don’t know what I’m talking about. You want to investigate Trickshot. Don’t do it. You’re asking for a world of pain. The league usually kills quick and clean. But Trickshot…he turns death into an art.” Clint looked disgusted. Felicity decided to change the subject.

“Natasha seemed to be convinced that you only got involved in this mess to impress a girl.” She said. “In fact, she and the other Avengers all seemed more interested in the identity of this girl then actually taking on the league.”

“Well I don’t usually need to take down an entire criminal organization, but something tells me you’re a difficult girl to impress.” Clint muttered. “Though judging from the fact that you’re in love with Queen I have some doubts about your taste in men.”

“What?”

“Eyes on the road, Squeaky.” Clint said, “though if you see Trickshot feel free to run him down.”

“Why do you think I’m in love with Oliver?” she said.

“It is actually written on your face.” Clint sighed. “How anyone in this city keeps a secret is beyond me.”

“So if you think I’m in love with someone else why do you keep flirting with me?” Felicity said.

“Because I’m a sucker for punishment.” Clint sighed. “You can drop me off at that corner. I’m going to patrol, then call it a night. You won’t need to worry about Trickshot. I’ll make sure he doesn’t come near you.”
“Clinton Francis Barton.” Natasha threw open the curtains letting in the morning sun.

“Tasha…why?” Clint whined.

“When were you planning on telling me that you ran into Trickshot last night?”

“Right around…never?” Clint muttered as he rolled over and covered his eyes. “I wish I had my old hotel room back. This whole sharing a suite thing sucks.”

“Start talking.” Natasha said.

“How did you even know?” Clint asked as he sat up.

“Felicity texted Roy and Digg, who both texted Cap, who told me.” Natasha said. “Clint.”

“Fine…he was there last night and he basically confirmed that the league is in town and he told me he was going to kill me. Typical Barton family reunion.” Clint stretched.

“And you stayed out last night to make sure he didn’t show up and try to hurt her.” Natasha said.

“And I only got back around 2 hours ago. So, night night” Clint yawned.

Natasha put a hand to her forehead. “Why are you really doing this and don’t tell me it’s to impress Felicity. You know as well as I do that that’s only part of it.”

“Tasha have you seen her?” Clint tried flashing her a flirty grin, but he yawned in the middle, ruining the effect. “So what’s your theory since you seem to know everything. What’s your expert diagnosis, Dr. Romanov?”

“Suicide by proxy.” Natasha said bluntly.

“You don’t sugar coat it, you just go right for the jugular.” Clint looked around. “Did you bring any food?”

Natasha grabbed a plate of waffles from the night stand. “You still feel guilty over what Loki made you do and you’ve decided that the best way to handle that guilt is to challenge the league to a game of chicken.” Natasha sat on the bed deliberately holding the plate away from Clint. “Add to that your interest in Felicity Smoak, a woman who you know is head over heels for someone else, and you’ve got a cocktail of misery of your own creation.” Natasha closed her eyes. “You’re trying to punish yourself for what you think you’re responsible for.”

“Waffles?” Clint held out his hand. Natasha glared, but handed him the plate.

“If you survive this, I’m going to kill you.”

“ Wouldn’t expect any less,” Clint said. “Can I get some coffee with these?”

“On second thought that death may come sooner than you think.” Natasha muttered as she left. She made her way to the common room of the suite where the others were having breakfast. Tony had his head on the table and was reaching for a cup of coffee which had been placed in front of him. There were two already empty mugs next to him and Bruce was lining up two full ones for after he finished the one he was attempting to reach. Natasha was used to the morning Stark caffeinating
routine so she walked over, gave Bruce a smile and grabbed the mug of coffee just before Tony could get a proper hold on it.

“We need to come up with a strategy.” She said taking a sip. Tony looked up in confusion.

“What?” he whimpered as Bruce pushed a new cup in front of him. Steve, who was reading a newspaper nodded.

“I agree. The league is no joke. I stayed up all night reviewing the SHIELD files JARVIS could access on them and we may have bitten off more than we can chew.” He said.

“You stayed up all night and you look like that?” Tony slurred. “Forget Ironsuits, I’m goin find me some superserum sureum serum.”

“I was talking about Barton.” Natasha said as Steve shot Tony a worried look. “This Smoak girl could be good for him. I’m going to make sure it happens.”

“Queen.” Tony groaned as he grabbed another cup of coffee. Bruce, who understood under caffeinated Tony, translated.

“Didn’t you say she was in love with Oliver Queen?”

“Minor detail.” Natasha said dismissively. “Queen literally came back from the dead and still hasn’t made a move. He lost his chance.”

Steve put down his paper. “Don’t you think there are more important things we should- “

“I’m with Romanov.” Tony said. He’d downed his 4th cup and was finally alert. “I met Queen pre-island and he was a dick…and there’s a problem if I’m saying that.”

“Maybe the island changed him.” Steve said.

“Doubtful.” Tony said. “I went through hell when I was captured by those terrorists and I’m still the same asshole…I just have cooler suits and I don’t make weapons anymore.”

“That was a few months. This is years we’re talking about.” Steve countered. “Have you seen him since the island?”

“No. Moira Queen was a snob of the highest order. She came from old political money which made her believe that she was better than me because my father built his fortune up from nothing. Meaning I didn’t get an invite to her son’s resurrection party.” Tony said. “Plus I may have tipped her off to the kind of cheating scum that her husband was…and tried to use it as a play to sleep with her a few years back.” There was a collective groan from the 3 others. “It was pre-Pepper. Moira may have been manipulative and evil, but you can’t blame a guy for trying. She was probably already sleeping with Merlyn at the time…psychos of a feather.” He said shuddering.

“Merlyn’s alive.” Clint said as he walked in. “He’s also Thea Queen’s father and a member of the league. Queen wanted to use him as a means of defeating the demon.”

“Where is the elusive Robin Hood anyway?” Tony asked. “Playing bandit in Sherwood forest?”

“He and his sister left Starling 2 days ago.” Natasha said. “They haven’t been heard from since.”

“Do you think they’ve left permanently?” Bruce asked.

“No, Queen’s too territorial. He’s a complete alpha. He’d never stand for anyone else being in his
space for too long. When he comes back…well let’s just say things are going to get interesting.”

Clint looked around. “No coffee?”

“Anyone else being in his space or being in his girl?” Tony smirked. Steve shot him a disapproving look. “Don’t look at me like that Rogers: you know you were thinking it too.”

“People don’t belong to other people.” Clint grumbled. “and I haven’t been in anyone recently.”

“Clearly you’re not trying hard enough.” Tony sighed. “My young Hawkeye, I have much to teach you in the way of women.”

“Don’t take any of his advice.” Steve and Natasha said simultaneously. Tony looked at them, outraged. Then he turned to Bruce.

“I’m with them,” Bruce murmured.

“Et tu Bruce?” Tony sighed. “After all I’ve done for all of you. Clothed you, fed you, gave you a place to stay. I’m not mad…just disappointed.”

“Alright Mama Stark.” Clint said. “You can send us to bed without dinner.” He grabbed Natasha’s cup of coffee which was 3 quarters full. “If you’ll excuse me I have an assassin’s murder to plot.” He walked out. Natasha waited until the door was closed before turning to the assembled Avengers.

“We’re fixing the two of them up. That’s final.”

Steve was about to protest when Bruce put a hand on his shoulder. “Don’t bother. There’s no use fighting her, because ultimately she’ll probably be right.”
Over the next 2 days, The Avengers and Team Arrow fell into training patterns. Bruce, Tony and Felicity formed a Science Alliance (Tony came up with the name) and spent their time updating Felicity’s systems and giving everyone else migraines with their tech babble. They had a blast updating the gadgets and arrows…literally. By the end of the first day Steve and Digg had laid down a ban on explosions in the lair. Steve and Natasha were in charge of hand to hand combat, while Clint supervised Roy’s archery training.

“What is that?” Tony’s voice interrupted a break between training. The teams turned to see that he was pointing at the salmon ladder.

“That is…a test to my productivity and concentration.” Felicity tilted her head and subconsciously licked her lips. Roy snorted.

“It’s called a salmon ladder.” Clint said, “They’re super fun; want me to demonstrate?”

“You don’t have to…” Felicity said. Natasha elbowed Tony.

“I think you should.” Tony smirked. “For science, I’m very curious to see how it works.” He gave Natasha a wink.

“Well I can’t stand against science.” Clint walked towards the ladder.

“Barton.” Natasha called, “That exercise tends to work better if you don’t have anything constraining your upper arms and shoulders.” Tony nodded his approval while Steve shook his head.

“That is quite true, Tasha.” Clint grinned. “Plus, I wouldn’t want to get this shirt all sweaty.” He pulled his shirt off and went over and grabbed the bar. Though he had his back to her, he heard Felicity’s sharp intake of breath. Smirking, he began making his way up the ladder.

Oliver and Thea had just returned from their disastrous training session on Lian Yu. Not only was Thea now aware of her role in Sara’s death, but the run in with Slade had been nothing short of horrible. He could hear Slade in his mind; taunting him and threatening Felicity. As Thea confronted Merlyn about his insane role in the mess which was the last few days, Oliver wanted nothing better than to get to the lair and maybe spar with Digg while Felicity pretended not to watch. He needed something familiar, safe.

“Why did you tell her?” Merlyn hissed as Thea left the room.

“I didn’t want to, but I can’t keep lying to her.” Oliver said. “She was going to find out sooner or later.”

Merlyn’s eye twitched. “I wonder how high and mighty you’re going to feel once you realize what’s happening in your own lair.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Just that you might want to stop in and get to know your new teammates.” Merlyn’s cryptic tone set off alarm bells in Oliver’s head.
He got on his bike and raced to the lair as fast as he could. He burst in only to find his lair overrun with Avengers. No one had seen him enter; they were all focused on Clint Barton, shirtless on the salmon ladder.

“What the hell is going on?” Oliver asked. Everyone turned slowly to face him.

“Well,” Tony said looking around at everyone’s surprised faces. “This is awkward.”

Oliver dragged team Arrow upstairs to the empty club.

“I’m only gone for 4 days.” He said “4 days and somehow all the Avengers seem to know my secret.”

“Not all. Thor’s not here.” Roy said.

“Secret conversations?” Tony said as he followed them. “Um, rude. If you’ve got something to say, say it to our extremely attractive faces.”

“And to be fair.” Clint added, when the rest of the Avengers had followed him. “We already knew your secret.” He pointed to himself “Superspy”, then to Bruce, “Genius”, Tony “Genius”, Natasha “Superspy”, Steve “Property of the Smithsonian”.

“Hilarious.” Steve muttered.

“We’re here to help you fight the league of assassins.” Clint continued. “There are things about this fight you don’t understand.”

“I think I understand better than you.” Oliver growled. The two of them circled each other, getting in each other’s faces.

“I get that you don’t like me.” Clint sighed. “My unparalleled bow skills coupled with my dashing good looks and wit must really –”

“Barton.” Natasha warned.

“Whatever your insecurities in response to my awesome there are things I know about the league that you don’t. Not to mention that we’re offering the full backing of the Avengers.”

“Earth’s Mightiest Heroes.” Tony interjected.

“So basically you’d have to be certifiably insane to turn us down.” Clint finished.

Oliver glared. A silence fell over the group. Everyone watched as the two archers stared each other down.

“Oh for crying out loud,” Felicity stepped in between the tow and pushed them apart. “Both of you are being absolutely ridiculous.”

“Both of us?” Clint looked down at Felicity. “I’m offering him the solution to all his problems. I have literally handed him the opportunity to save himself and everyone around him without resorting to having a known mass murderer be involved.” Then he looked deliberately down at her hand which was still on his bare chest. He gave Oliver a smug look as Felicity pulled her hand away blushing fiercely. She cleared her throat and turned back to Oliver.
“He is right.”

“Are you siding with him?” Oliver hissed.

“I’m siding with the option which makes the most sense both logically and morally. We need their help. If you weren’t so blinded by your ego you’d see that.”

“My ego?” Oliver sputtered. “I’m trying to protect everyone from the league.”

“You have to admit that this is the best option. You just don’t want to share your turf and you don’t like the fact that we made this decision without consulting you. The league showing up in Starling affects all of us; we should have some say in how we prepare for it.”

“You have say.” Oliver said.

“No we don’t,” Laurel said. “You refused to train me. You wouldn’t let me out into the field. You decided to work with Merlyn without giving us a say even though we’d all voted not to do that.”

“Wait.” Steve stepped forward. “He refused to train you?” He looked angry.

“I didn’t want her involved in this life.” Oliver growled.

“Shouldn’t that be her decision?” Steve countered.

“Uh oh.” Tony chuckled. “You just disappointed Captain America.”

“Oliver.” Felicity said softly, turning his attention back to her. “This is the best option to protect Thea. They have knowledge and they have resources we don’t have access to. There’s strength in numbers.”

“And the league has tons of numbers.” Clint said. “Our Green Machine, super suit, super spies and super grandpa can even those odds considerably. In fact I’d say they give us the advantage. An advantage we’re going to need.”

Oliver snorted. Clint glared. “Do you even know why Ra’s is coming after you?”

“Because I’m still alive and he wants to finish what he started.”

“Wrong.” Clint said. “There’s a prophecy, that Ra’s believes, that the one who doesn’t die by his sword is destined to be the next Ra’s al Ghul. If he wanted you dead, you’d be dead already. He wants you to replace him.”

“That’s insane.” Oliver said.

“So is expecting sanity from a man who’s the head of an organization called the League of Assassins.” Clint retorted.

“And if I tell him I don’t want to?” Oliver asked. Clint facepalmed.

“Oh you are so lucky you’re pretty.” He muttered. “Take it from someone who knows; Ra’s isn’t a reasonable person. If you refuse him he’s going to think he needs to convince you. And the league’s idea of convincing involves knives and swords and stabbing.”

“I can handle being stabbed.” Oliver shot back.

“He won’t be stabbing you.” Clint hissed. “He’ll go after those close to you.” Clint watched as
Oliver’s eyes flicked momentarily to Felicity. The green archer’s pose was defensive, but after a few moments, his shoulders slumped slightly in defeat. He crossed his arms.

“Say I agree to your help, the Avengers aren’t exactly covert. I operate in secrecy…” He began.

Tony snorted

“I need assurances,” Oliver continued through gritted teeth, “that my identity won’t be compromised and that those I care about will be protected.”

“I’ve got that first part covered.” Tony stepped forward. “This lair is…gross and has a way too public location. I’ve just recently purchased what promises to be a much stealthier home base. It’s out of the way and is rat free.” He gave Oliver a sly smile. “You’ll feel right at home, Mr. Queen.”
“He bought my house.” Oliver growled. Digg sighed in frustration. The two of them were sitting with Laurel and Roy in the van as they drove towards the Queen mansion.

“Oliver you have to admit that it’s a better tactical location than the Arrow cave.” Digg said. “The lair.” He corrected when Oliver gave him another glare. “Being out of the city makes for less collateral damage if the league decides to attack.

“Is that your opinion or Barton’s” Oliver grumbled.

“Cap’s actually. But I agree with him.” Digg said.

Oliver sat back and glared. “I still don’t understand why Felicity couldn’t come with us, there’s plenty of room in the van.”

“Have you tried saying no to Tony Stark?” Roy asked. They had decided to go to the Queen mansion so Tony could survey the property. The Avengers were in a limo driven by Stark’s chauffeur Happy, while team Arrow took the van. Tony had offered them room in the limo, but Oliver had insisted on a separate van. Tony had then grabbed Felicity shouting “SCIENCE ALLAINCE ABDUCTION” and urged her into the limo. She, Stark and Dr. Banner had left doing tech talk, using words so complex they made Oliver’s head spin.

“Are we sure she’s not his long lost daughter or something?” Roy asked earning himself a dark look from Oliver.

“We’re here.” Digg said, pulling up in front of the mansion. He stopped the van. Oliver got out and looked around.

“Where the hell are they?”

“This is the best junk food I’ve ever had.” Tony declared.

“Told you.” Felicity grinned. They’d made a stop at Big Belly Burger to settle a bet.

“I’m going to need to borrow Steve’s super metabolism to digest this.” Tony said. “But it’s worth it…do you think they make shwarma?”

“This is so unhealthy.” Bruce said.

“Aww come on Brucie, live a little.” Tony waved a bag of fries underneath his nose. Bruce pulled back and rolled his eyes. Steve frowned.

“I don’t think we should keep Mr. Queen waiting.”

“Ah, let him stew.” Tony dismissively flicked his wrist. Felicity bit her lip.

“I think Captain Rogers is right, Oliver’s not going to be happy.” She said.

Clint raised an eyebrow. “Call him Steve, Squeaky. He gets nervous with too much formality. And we’re only going to be about 10 minutes behind them.” He gave her shoulder a squeeze. “Maybe he’ll have calmed down by the time we get there.”
“Doubtful.” Tony said. “I think we can all be thankful that Queen’s not smart enough to have created a Hulk producing lab accident.”

“Tony.” Bruce sighed.

“Forgive him.” Natasha said to Felicity. “Stark’s still learning how to communicate with people. Manners aren’t his strong suit.”

Tony pouted. Then the car hit a pothole. Felicity was thrown onto Clint’s lap.

“That’s the third time that happened.” She muttered as she sat up. “I’m sorry I keep throwing myself at you.”

“No worries darlin’.” Clint said. “Fall on me anytime.” He shot a questioning look over her head at Natasha who just winked at him.

“We’re here.” Steve said. “And so is the welcoming committee.”

Outside the Queen mansion, Oliver was standing with his arms crossed. Digg was standing next to him with Laurel and Roy behind them. Clint jumped out of the limo first and held out his hand.

Felicity rolled her eyes and got out of the car, ignoring his outstretched hand.

“Why thank you Barton.” Tony grabbed Clint’s hand in his. “I appreciate your chivalry because I do understand manners.” He threw a glare over his shoulder at Natasha.

Felicity grinned at Clint’s look of irritation. “I like him.”

“You like him now.” Clint corrected. “Give it a week, darlin’, and I guarantee you’ll be eating those words.”

“Awww, give us a kiss.” Tony leaned forward, lips puckered. Clint ducked and Tony burst out laughing.

“Harassment.” Clint shouted.

“Earth’s Mightiest Heroes, ladies and gentlemen.” Steve rolled his eyes as he saw the wide-eyed looks on team Arrow’s faces.

“So,” Tony clapped his hands together and turned to the mansion. “Seeing as you lived here, Queen, would you mind giving us a tour?”

Oliver nodded stiffly and led them into the mansion. Though Felicity had been inside before, it was strange seeing it empty. They went from room to empty room. Tony knocking on walls and muttering to himself about what changes needed to be made in order to create his ideal base.

“Yeah, this will definitely have to go.” He declared as they entered the ballroom.

“What?” Laurel looked surprised.

“This is a superhero base, not the Von Trapp family house. We don’t need a ballroom, what we need is a training area.” He pointed to the corner. “I’m thinking punching bags over there, sparring area in the middle and a nest up in that corner for Hawkeye.”

Oliver and Laurel shared a look of irritation. Both had seemed upset about Tony’s proposed changes to the tower, but they seemed especially upset about this one. Felicity understood that it must be
difficult for Oliver to have to see his family home changed. Fortunately Steve interrupted his angry brooding with a question.

“The Von Trapp family?”

“Everyone drop everything.” Clint said. “This man has never seen the Sound of Music.”

“It takes place during WWII, genius.” Tony rolled his eyes. “Add it to the list.”

Felicity grinned at Clint. “You like the Sound of Music?”

“Of course. I’m a hardcore assassin, superspy and all around badass; not a monster.” Clint shot her an offended look.

Felicity giggled. Clint smirked at Oliver’s tightlipped look of irritation.

“Movie nights at the tower are the stuff of legend.” Tony said. “Pop in anytime.”

Clint wandered into the middle of the ballroom. “We could always keep it this way…turn it into a dance studio. We can put in some ballet bars.” He shared a look of understanding with Natasha.

“Ballet?” Tony snorted. “You can’t be serious.”

“Dance improves physical agility.” Bruce said. “It’s actually recommended for athletes.”

Tony huffed. “You just want to see Romanov in a leotard.”

“I think we should all take ballet.” Steve said before Natasha could retaliate. “It’ll be an excellent team building exercise, and Bruce is right about physical benefits. Most of the USO girls I worked with took ballet and they could kick Tony’s ass any day of the week.”

“That’s not saying much.” Clint said dryly, “anyone in this room could take Tony.”

“Oh really?” Tony looked around and his eyes fell on Felicity.

“Especially her.” Clint said “She beat Malcolm Merlyn few days back. Squeaky’s got moves.”

“She WHAT?!” Digg and Oliver looked at each other in shock. Digg’s expression was one of concern mixed with pride. Oliver just looked angry.

“You went after Merlyn? Have you lost your mind?” Oliver growled.

“Merlyn came after me, I was defending myself.” Felicity said.

“He apparently didn’t like the new additions to the team.” Clint said. “So he tried to take it out on Squeaky. She kicked him right in the male ego.” Clint grinned.

“I’ve been meaning to ask.” Tony’s fake innocent tone made everyone look at him warily. “What’s the origin of that nickname?”

“I don’t kiss and tell.” Clint smirked.

“Especially since there was no kissing.” Felicity muttered. She let out a surprised squeak as Clint grabbed her, twirled her and round and dipped her.

“Say the word, darlin’ and there could be,” he whispered. Then he pulled her back up and began
walking around the ballroom nonchalantly as though nothing had happened. Felicity looked at him; dazed. “Now;” Clint asked as he spied a door at the far end of the room. “What’s down here?”

“That used to house the art gallery.” Laurel said.

“Art…gallery?” Clint gave Oliver a disparaging look. “Stark I’d like to apologize for every time I call you out on ridiculous displays of wealth. You’re clearly not the worst.”

“He’s poor now.” Tony pointed out. Natasha elbowed him in the ribs.

“Do you think we could get a dog?” Clint asked as he walked over to the large windows which overlooked the back lawn. “The tower isn’t ideal because of the noise and exploding science experiments and crazy Asgardian drinking games. But here, there’s a nice yard and – “ He paused as he took in everyone’s bemused expressions. “I happen to like dogs.”

Tony laughed. “I’m just picturing the look on Moira’s face. If she had known there’d be a dog here.”

“Tony” Steve groaned.

“Oh right.” Tony turned to Oliver. “I am deeply sorry for your loss. Even if she did drop an entire city on a bunch of people’s heads. I understand how it feels to lose a parent. Hell, Steve’s boyfriend killed my parents.”

“Stark, you might want to stop.” Natasha said. Steve had turned away, a painful storm brewing in his eyes.

“Boyfriend?” Roy asked.

“That’s a minimum 3rd drink after a shared near death experience conversation.” Clint said. “Though Cap can’t really get drunk.”

“Okay.” Tony clapped his hands. “Let’s talk security. I’m thinking laser grids and we booby trap the lawn.”

“You can’t do that.” Clint looked horrified. “That’s where Lucky’s going to play.”

“We’re not getting a dog Barton.” Tony said

“He could always learn to dodge.” Natasha suggested.

Oliver’s phone rang. Excusing himself, he went aside and took the call. Whatever the other person was saying clearly agitated him. He walked back to the main group.

“That was Merlyn. The league kidnapped Thea. They want me to go to Nanda Parbat”

“How long ago?” Clint said.

“5 minutes.”

“So they haven’t left the city. Squeaky, hack all the security feeds by the docks and see if there are any unauthorized aircraft there.” Clint said. Felicity pulled out her tablet.

“There is one. Southeast dock near warehouse 13”

“That’s where they’re taking her.” Clint said walking outside.
“How can you be sure?’ Oliver hissed as he followed.

“I tracked the league for years,” Clint said. “I know how they operate.”

“This is my sister’s life we’re talking about.” Oliver said

“Well I don’t see you offering any ideas.” Clint shot back. He opened the trunk of the limo and pulled out his bow and quiver.

“How can you even get to the docks on time to stop them?” Digg asked as he and the others came out of the house.


Tony pulled out his briefcase and began assembling his ironsuit. “Don’t get used to this Barton.” He grumbled. “You could stand to lay off the pizza.” He grabbed Clint around the waist. “To infinity and beyond.” And took off.

“Idiots.” Natasha said. “They won’t last 3 seconds without me.” She turned to Bruce. “Alright big guy, you’re up and make sure to grab Queen while you’re at it.”

Bruce sighed. “I just got this shirt.”

“You could always take it off before you transform.” Steve pointed out as Bruce transformed. “Or do you like tearing out of your shirt in front of the ladies present?”

Hulk roared.

“Show off.” Natasha said fondly. Then she climbed up onto his shoulder. Hulk grinned at her then grabbed Oliver and tossed him on his other shoulder.

“Hold on tight.” Natasha suggested.

“SAVE LITTLE QUEEN.” Hulk shouted then began running after Iron man.

“That was…new.” Digg said.
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Clint and Tony made it to the helicopter first. The league hadn’t arrived yet, so Clint knocked out the pilot and began sabotaging the engines.

“So, Felicity seemed very happy today.” Tony said nonchalantly. “That dog line was great. Chicks love dogs. Excellent play”

“That wasn’t a play, Tony.” Clint grumbled as he jumped out of the helicopter and climbed on to a shipping crate. “I actually want a dog.”

“Really?” Tony said.

“She’s in love with Queen.” Clint sighed as he sat on the crate and began looking for any incoming assassins. “And don’t think I don’t know what you and Tasha are plotting. Happy’s never hit a pothole in his life, and Manhattan streets are basically made of Swiss cheese.”

“Methinks the lady doth protest too much.” Tony said. “Admit that you wouldn’t mind sticking it to Queen.”

“Felicity deserves better than that and she definitely deserves better than me.” Clint mumbled. “I’m lucky enough that she’s even paying attention.”

“Don’t sell yourself short.” Tony said. “Sure you didn’t have a great childhood and your brother’s a member of a group of shadowy psycho killers and the organization you worked for turned out to be a front for the most hated hate group in the history of humanity and-“

“I’m starting to see why you’re my drinking buddy and not my pep talk buddy.” Clint said.

“I’m trying to say –“

“In coming assassins with an unconscious girl,” Clint stood, “and I think I see Hulk and Tasha and Queen about a minute behind them.

“Let the girl go and no one gets smashed.” Tony said to the assassins as they stopped in front of the chopper.

“We will gladly let her go.” Nyssa al Ghul stepped to the front of the group. “In exchange for Oliver Queen. My father has no business with her. No doubt he wishes to kill Queen properly this time.”

Clint snorted. “Oh Nyssa, honey you are so wrong about that.”

Nyssa’s head snapped in the direction of Clint’s perch.

“Clinton Barton, I had not thought you so foolish.” She said. “I did not believe your brother when he informed me of your involvement.”

“Believe it.” Clint said. “And believe it fast, by my count you have about 10 seconds before Mr. Mean and green gets here…and the Hulk will be with him too.”

Nyssa stiffened as the Hulk roared in the distance.
“Let the girl go and tell daddy demon to back off.” Clint said. “Queen isn’t the right man for the job.”

“What?” Nyssa’s apprehension turned to confusion.

“The prophecy.” Clint said. “Don’t you and Ra’sle dazzle talk about these things over Friday night dinners?”

“Prophecies are for fools and children.” Nyssa hissed.

“That’s no way to talk about your father.” Tony admonished. “I mean I do, but I’m rude to everyone.”

Hulk roared again. He was getting much closer.

“Time’s up.” Clint said just as the Hulk arrived.

Natasha jumped down and Oliver plopped down next to her. He seemed to have more of a problem getting used to the Hulk as a mode of transportation and he was a bit dizzy.

“Widow.” Nyssa hissed.

“I don’t think we’ve met.” Natasha smirked, “but I guess my reputation precedes me.” She motioned behind her. “This is the Hulk and I suppose you’ve heard of Tony Stark. Give us the girl and everyone walks away.”

Nyssa had her assassins release Thea.

“This isn’t over.” She hissed.

“I wouldn’t bother with the chopper.” Clint said, Nyssa shot him a look of irritation. Oliver rushed forward and grabbed Thea, hugging her and checking her over for injuries. She was still unconscious. Tony walked over to him.

“I can fly her back.” He offered. Oliver glared at him. “Unless of course you’d prefer the Hulk take her back.”

Hulk roared. Oliver paled and handed Thea over to Tony who took off.

“Got room for an extra passenger?” Clint asked as he jumped off the shipping crate.

“Ms. Queen is safe and Tony just brought her back to her apartment.” Steve said, hanging up his phone. “The others are on their way back with Hulk.” He turned to Roy. “You should go. Happy can drive you there.”

Laurel and Roy got into the limo. Steve went in and grabbed a duffle bag. “For Dr. Banner.” He explained. “He needs the extra clothes.”

“I’ll stay back.” Digg said. “Someone’s going to need to drive the van when Oliver and the others get back.” Steve nodded and turned to Felicity.

“Ma’am?”

“Please don’t call me that.” She smiled “I’ll stay with Digg.”
“Yes Ma…Ms. Smoak.”

The limo pulled away leaving Steve, Digg, and Felicity standing outside the mansion.

“Did Natasha say whether or not anyone was hurt?” Felicity asked.

“No, but knowing Clint he probably managed to get himself hurt anyways.” Steve said dryly. “The man practically collects band aids.

Sure enough, when the others arrived 30 minutes later Clint had a giant cut on his forearm.

“I rest my case.” Steve said.

“Hulk dropped me.” Clint whined.

“You deserved it.” Natasha retorted.

“No…well yeah.” Clint sighed. “You make one joke about a guy’s sex life and suddenly… bam.” He looked at his arm. “T’is but a scratch.” Then he caught sight of Felicity. “I mean it’s extremely painful and I need immediate medical attention…and a sponge bath.”

Felicity tossed him the first aid kit from the back of the van. “Maybe you should start wearing shirts with sleeves.”

“And deprive every one of the gun show?” Clint smirked. “There’d be rioting in the streets.”

Oliver cleared his throat.

“My sister’s just been kidnapped. I’d appreciate being able to see if she’s okay.”

“Of course, Mr. Queen.” Clint gave him a mock salute and walked over to the passenger door of the van. Helping Felicity up, he said. “I’d avert your eyes unless you want to get fully acquainted with Bruce.”

Bruce was transforming back. Steve stood in front of him and tossed him the duffle bag.

“Need some help?” Natasha offered.

“I’m good.” Bruce grinned.

“No peeking, Squeaky.” Clint winked at Felicity who rolled her eyes. He shut the door and made his way to the back where the others were piling in.

When they got to Thea’s apartment, Digg offered to drive Felicity home while the Avengers took the limo back to their hotel. Clint was about to go say goodnight to Felicity when Oliver blocked his path.

“Oh I get it.” Clint said. “This is the part where you thank me for my invaluable help and quick thinking, without which your sister would surely have been lost.”

“I don’t know what your game is, Barton. But I don’t trust you.” Oliver said. Then he walked away. Natasha came to stand next to Clint.

“Was that meant to be insulting?” Clint asked

“Probably.” Natasha said
“I know what you and Stark are doing.” Clint said.

“You’re welcome.” Natasha said before getting into the limo.

Nanda Parbat:

“It appears our efforts to get Oliver Queen to come to us were unsuccessful.” Ra’s said.

“The man I knew was resilient.” The man formerly known as Maseo replied. They were making their way to the catacombs.

“There is another problem.” The two men turned to face the man who had spoken. “My brother told your lordship’s daughter of your intentions for Oliver Queen.”

“Clint Barton.” Ra’s sighed. “Him joining us would have been glorious indeed.” He paused. “It is no matter. I will teach Nyssa her proper place.” He turned back to Trickshot. “You will need assistance in eradicating this threat.” Turning to a cell, he smiled cruelly at its two quivering occupants. “Fortunately I happen to have just what you require to face the Avengers.”

Chapter End Notes

So just an update; I swear I am working on the last chapter to "Always be my Thunder." I just have a little writer's block.

Thanks so much for all the amazing feed back on this story, you guys are the best.

Any one want to hazard a guess as to who Ra's is keeping in the cell??????
Chapter 12

“Rise and shine.” Clint said. Felicity bolted out of bed. “How the hell did you get in here?” Clint raised an eyebrow. She sighed, “right, stupid question.” She began groping the bedside table.

“Looking for these?” Clint waved her glasses. He was sitting in a chair in the corner of the room.

“You know what?” Felicity grumbled, as she squinted at him. “I can’t even look at you in focus.”

“I could really get used to the sight of you in the morning.” Clint murmured.

“Why are you here?” Felicity glared.

“Well…um.” Clint said. Felicity rolled her eyes and walked towards the door. Clint jumped up and threw himself in front “You might not want to go out there. I’m here to warn you.”

Felicity narrowed her eyes. “I need coffee…what do you mean warn me?”

“Firstly; you’re out of coffee.” Clint said.

“That’s impossible I bought some yesterday.” Felicity said, then her eyes narrowed. “…what did you do?”

“You have no idea how much you are channeling your inner Tasha right now.” Clint muttered. “It’s not what I did.” He said, stepping aside. “It’s what he did. Don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

Felicity opened the door ready to deliver some sarcastic retort when she froze. Tony Stark had taken over her entire living room and kitchen area. He was muttering to JARVIS while making notes on his holographic computer screens. There were empty cups of coffee everywhere.

“I found him here.” Clint explained. “Um he brought the cups himself, but he stole all your coffee. I…wouldn’t try talking to him.” he grabbed Felicity’s arm before she could confront Tony. “Or alert him of your presence. He’s running on caffeine and crazy. He might think you’re trying to attack him and throw something at you.”

“Why is he in my living room?” Felicity asked.

“We don’t question why Tony does anything. We mostly hand him a cup of coffee and take cover when things explode…not” He said quickly when he saw Felicity’s look of alarm. “That I think he’ll blow anything up in your living room…at least I hope not.”

Felicity shook her head and walked forward. “Tony, what are you doing?”

“Sabotage.” Tony said.

“Sabotage what exactly?” Felicity prompted.

“Don’t expect coherent answers from him.” Clint sighed. “He loses the ability to form full sentences around cup 13. Just switch him to decaff and we should have him using correct grammar in no time.”

“Is that?” Felicity looked at Tony’s screens. “Those are the designs for Ray’s suit. Are you planning on SABOTAGING him?”
“Won’t work.” Tony said.

“What Mr. Stark is endeavoring to say is that Mr. Palmer’s design is nonfunctional.” JARVIS explained. “Incidentally, I did warn him against breaking and entering.”

“Thanks JARVIS.” Felicity said. “But that doesn’t explain the sabotage.”

“Mr. Stark believes that while his design is flawed, Palmer’s ideas could eventually lead him to discoveries that might rival technology at Stark Industries. He came to ask for your help ensuring that it doesn’t happen…but got distracted.”

Felicity turned to Clint. “Do something.

“Why me?” Clint asked

“You live with him.”

“Yeah, but I leave the Tony wrangling to Pepper and Bruce.” Clint shot Tony an angry look. Felicity had her back to Tony so she couldn’t see the wink he gave to Clint before he turned back to his screens. Clint put his face in his hands. “Why me?” he groaned again.

“I have work in an hour; I can’t just leave him here.” Felicity turned back to Tony. “There are sharp objects and flammable things.”

Clint gave her a thoughtful look. “I’ll call Tasha. You go, get ready and go to work. I promise she’ll have him out by lunch time.”

20 minutes later Felicity was ready to leave. Tony was mumbling over the kitchen counters while Clint sat on the couch flipping through channels.

“Feet off the table.” She said.

Clint looked up and gave a low whistle. “You’re wearing that to work?” He got up and circled. “and there’s a cut off back. Pink’s not usually my color, but this I can work with.”

“I have to get to work…” Felicity blushed.

“Good. I’m driving.” Clint said.

“What?”

“With the league out there you’re…”

“Are you trying to insinuate that I’m incapable of protecting myself?” Felicity hissed.

“Yes…no.” Clint said quickly. “Actually yes. The league will apply pressure where Oliver is most vulnerable. They know torturing him won’t do any good which is why they went after Thea. Their next target might be you and while you can do some serious damage with a computer, you don’t have the fighting skills to take on the league. So I’m tagging along. Plus…” He waved Tony’s car keys in front of her face. “We can take the Audi. It’ll be fun, we’ll call it ‘take your spy to work day.’”

Felicity rolled her eyes. “Ground rules. 1 no mocking Ray or any of the company executives. 2 no stealing break room food. 3 no using my office supplies to make small weapons. 4 don’t touch my computers. And finally no using your spy skills to scare any interns.”
Clint bit his lip. “Agreed.” He sighed and walked out towards Tony’s car, opening the passenger door for her.

“You said yes to that way too quickly.” Felicity said skeptically as she got in.

Clint chuckled. “You are smart.” He grinned as he got into the driver’s seat. “Superspy training 101; there’s always a loophole. You set ground rules. You said nothing about the airvents.”

Clint actually behaved himself remarkably well. His presence made doing paperwork more interesting. Ray came in just before lunchtime.

“Palmer.” Clint grinned from his spot on the office couch he’d appropriated. “How you doin?”

“Felicity?” Ray turned to her. She shook her head.

“Against my will I’ve been made the head of some kind of Avengers day care service. Tony Stark is currently tearing apart my apartment.” Felicity explained

“Actually Tasha got him out about an hour ago.” Clint said. “When’s lunch? I’m starved…Thai food?”

Felicity gave him an exasperated smile. Ray cleared his throat.

“Um, did you say Tony Stark?”

“He knows about the suit.” Clint said. Ray glared at him. “What?” Clint put up his hands. “I didn’t tell him. Will you be joining us for lunch? Because otherwise you don’t really have an excuse to be here until Felicity’s 4 o’clock meeting.”

“And your excuse is?” Ray shot back.

“Personal body guard.” Clint said. “I’m protecting the lady from danger and annoying coworkers.” Ray huffed and left.

“You might want to upgrade your firewalls.” Clint shouted after him. “But seriously.” He turned to Felicity. “Update your firewalls. Tony probably hacked in because he was bored and I refuse to accept that he might be smarter than you. Show him who’s boss.”

Felicity leaned back in her chair. “What did I say about mocking Ray?”

“That is was dashing and manly?” Clint suggested.

“Except the word I used was don’t” Felicity said.

“It was barely mocking.” Clint said.

“How did you know about my 4 o’clock meeting?”

“I may have peeked at your schedule when I found Tony at your apartment.” Clint admitted. “So is that a no on the Thai food?”

Felicity looked at him incredulously. “What am I going to do with you?” She muttered.
“I have a few ideas.” Clint grinned. “Though most of them currently revolve around food; a hungry spy is a cranky spy. And when I get cranky…I get flirty.

“That makes no logical sense.” Felicity said.

Clint stood and walked over to her desk. Turning her chair so she faced him, he leaned in. Brushing her ear with his lips, he whispered.

“Pizza or sushi?”

“That was way sexier than it had any right to be.”

Clint was grinning as he watched Felicity’s face flush.

“I didn’t say that out loud right?”

“Of course not Squeaky.” Clint sat on the desk. “But the question remains; pizza or sushi?”

“Sushi. I’ve been eating way too much junk food lately and I guess it counts as sort of healthy.”

Half an hour later they were sitting on the floor eating. Clint was clumsily attempting to use chopsticks while Felicity handled them like a pro.

“I believe I have found your weakness.” Felicity grinned.

“Oh no.” Clint said. “You must never speak of this to anyone; the fate of the world hangs in the balance.” Felicity snorted. “I’m serious.” Clint said. “I once almost caused a diplomatic incident on a SHIELD mission because I broke the Ambassador’s wedding chopsticks. She’d gotten 5 pairs of ivory chopsticks as a present. I couldn’t use them properly so I decided to stab the food instead… which went about as well as you can imagine.”

“You broke ivory chopsticks.” Felicity laughed.

“I may have used a ridiculous amount of force.” Clint grimaced. “Sometimes I just don’t know my own strength. SHIELD pulled me off all future diplomatic missions and stuck me in my ‘Hawk’s nest’.”

“You don’t seem the diplomatic type.” Felicity said dryly.

“Oh I can be plenty charming. There was this one time in Bulgaria where I…and didn’t seduce the prime minister’s daughter to help ingratiate her dad to pass a deal in SHIELD’s favor.” He coughed, embarrassed. “I’m just really bad at sucking up to people I don’t like. Life’s too short.” He glared down at the chopsticks. “And it’s going to be even shorter if I can’t get anything to eat. Did they give us any forks?”

“Here.” Felicity said, taking his hand. “Let me help, I’m good with my fingers.”

“I’ll bet you are.” Clint smirked.

“Watch it Hawkeye. I’m no prime minister’s daughter.” Felicity mumbled.

“And thank goodness for that. She tried to have me beheaded.” Clint shuddered.

“You probably deserved it.” Felicity said, positioning his chopsticks properly in his hands. “Now the
It took 10 minutes of clumsy attempts before Felicity declared him unteachable. Clint retorted that she should just feed him and be done with it. Their interaction was being observed from roof top across from Palmer Technologies. Trickshot smiled as he watched the two finish their lunch. He’d known the blonde was important to Queen and now he was certain of his brother’s feelings for her. He’d found his next target. Unseen by Clint or Felicity he slipped away to rejoin the two assets that Ra’s had placed under his command. He would strike soon, and unlike the daughter of the demon, he would not fail Ra’s al Ghul.
“Tony. Do you have anything you’d like to say to Felicity?” Natasha had her arms cross and she did not look happy. Tony looked at the floor of the lair, ashamed.

“I’m sorry.” He said.

“For?” Natasha prompted

“Drinking all your coffee.”

“And?”

“Making a mess of your apartment.” Tony added

“And.” Natasha said.

“Breaking into your apartment to try to get you to turn against your boss.” Tony sighed.

“Um.” Felicity gave him a small smile. “Thanks Tony.”

Tony nodded and shuffled away. Felicity turned to Natasha. “Teach me your ways.”

Natasha grinned. “Tony wrangling? Piece of cake. The secret is –”

“Do you have any updates on that drug shipment?” Oliver said as he entered the lair, interrupting Natasha.

“I’m running multiple searches, but everything’s quiet.” Felicity pointed to her computer screens where she was scanning security cams, the darknet and the movements of all known drug dealers.

“I’ve got JARVIS on it too.” Tony added.

“You’re in time out.” Natasha said.

Then Clint strolled into the lair. “Good evening friends…and Oliver.”

“Um, Clint?” Felicity said.

“Yes, Squeaky?” Clint flashed her a flirty grin.

“Are you….missing anything?” She flushed a furious shade of red and turned away.

“Missing anything?” Clint tried to look thoughtful. “Why no, I don’t believe so.”

“Not even a shirt?” Felicity suggested.

Clint looked down at himself and gave a fake gasp. “Well what do you know? It appears I am.” He looked up at the salmon ladder. “I thought I’d warn up before sparring tonight.”

“Felicity doesn’t need the distraction.” Oliver growled as he stepped in front of Clint.

“You mean you don’t want her distracted by me.” Clint said. “Because something tells me that you have no problem when it’s you doing the distracting.”
“Warm up doing something else.” Oliver said in a low voice.

“I have no problem with Clint doing the salmon ladder.” Felicity interjected. “I mean I’m actually kind of used to seeing people going up and….” She trailed off as Oliver’s eyebrows rose. Tony began cackling.

“She said you were boring, Queen.”

“Stark.” Natasha warned.

“Time out, I know.”

The lair door opened and the rest of the team, including Thea walked in. Oliver walked over to his sister.

“Is something wrong?” he asked.

“Ollie, I’m training with the rest of you.” Thea said. “The league kidnapping me showed that I clearly need more practice if I want to defend myself and I don’t want to ask Malcolm.”

Oliver froze, his jaw tightened. Then he nodded.

“Oliver can’t help you train properly.” Natasha said. “You’re small and you need someone who can show you how to use that to your advantage.” She turned to Felicity. “There’s a bag under your chair with work out clothes. Get changed.”

Oliver turned to face Natasha. “Wait, why is Felicity getting changed?”

“Don’t worry. Tony can monitor the searches while she trains.” Natasha said, her impassive expression putting an end to whatever protests Oliver was about to voice.

5 minutes later, Natasha was standing in the middle of the mats. Felicity, Thea, and Laurel stood off to one side while Steve, Oliver, Roy, Digg, and Clint stood on the other. Tony and Bruce were by Felicity’s computers. Tony had procured a bag of popcorn and appeared ready for a very entertaining show.

“I need a volunteer.” Natasha said.

Steve sighed and stepped forward. Natasha gave him a sly smile.

“Any last words Cap?” Tony smirked.

“Lesson 1: What to do when your opponent is significantly stronger than you.” Natasha said. She turned back to Steve. “Attack anytime, Rogers.”

And attack he did. He moved so fast that Felicity barely had time to register it. Natasha had anticipated his move and sidestepped his attack, grasping his arm and trapping it behind his back. Steve pivoted and used Natasha’s hold on his arm to attempt to pull her close and trap her in a head lock, but she let go and slipped out of his grasp. Steve turned again, but Natasha evaded him.

“Sometimes the best defense is avoidance.” Natasha explained. “Not all super-powered people have super endurance like Steve.” (Tony cracked up.) “The best thing to do is evade them for as long as possible. Small victories are your friends. Get in as many hits as you can without letting them get close to you. Under no circumstances let them get a hold on you. Wait for an opening….then go for the kill.” She jumped on Steve’s back and, wrapping one leg around his, she forced his leg out from
under him. Steve went down, attempting to twist so she would land under him, but Natasha had already jumped off. Standing over him she held out her hand.

“Weapons are your friends.” Steve added as he grabbed Natasha’s hand and stood. “Any surrounding object can help you; just grab an object and start swinging.”

“The SHIELD handbook called that the Peggy Carter method.” Clint said.

“You were holding back.” Natasha frowned at Steve. He shrugged.

“This is lesson one. I’ll step up my game in direct proportion to their progress.” He smiled at the women then took his place back on the sidelines.

“Next volunteer?” Natasha asked.

Clint stepped forward. “Come on Tasha. Hit me with your best shot.”

Natasha tilted her head thoughtfully. “Lesson 2: how to throw a much larger opponent. I’m going to need…” She turned to look back at the women, “Felicity for this one.”

Felicity stepped cautiously onto the mat. Clint gave Natasha a small frown, then gave Felicity a reassuring smile. Natasha positioned Clint so he was standing behind Felicity with one arm across her chest.

“Men carry their center of gravity in their shoulders while women carry it in their hips. This gives you a distinct advantage if your opponent is male. Get him off balance and use his own weight against him to pull him down.” Natasha explained. “Felicity you’re going to go limp. Then, when Clint stoops down to accommodate your weight, grab the arm that’s across your chest and pull as hard as you can.”

“You got that Squeaky?” Clint murmured. “Don’t be afraid of hurting me. I can take whatever you dish out.”

“Uh huh.” Felicity licked her lips and concentrated on not paying attention to the fact that Clint was still very shirtless and that she was going to grab his very muscular arm.

Tony began choking on his popcorn. Oliver glared while Roy and Digg shared looks of amusement.

“Just so you know.” Clint said. “You didn’t say that out loud.”

“Shut up.” Felicity hissed and did as Natasha instructed. She managed to pull him partially over her shoulder. Then he fell sideways and she toppled down on top of him.

“You should have let go once he began going down.” Natasha said.

“You might have mentioned that.” Felicity said, trying to push herself up…by placing her hands on Clint’s chest. She quickly scrambled off of him and rushed to stand between Laurel and Thea, her cheeks completely flushed.

“You can get up now.” Natasha said to Clint who was still lying on the mat.

“Nah. I think I’ll stay here and contemplate the meaning of life, look at the stains on the ceiling…hey that one looks like a dog…..OUCH.”

Natasha had kicked him in the side.
“Get up or the next demonstration is going to take place on top of you.”

“Oh really?” Clint looked over at Felicity. “And just who will be taking part in this demonstration?”

“Me.” Oliver growled.

“I’m up.” Clint got to his feet and went to stand next to Steve.

Natasha continued the demonstrations. Oliver found himself pinned to the mat in 26 seconds. Digg got trapped in a chokehold after 30 seconds. Roy got tossed to the mat face down with Natasha sitting on his back in 17 seconds. Tony was grinning from ear to ear while Bruce beamed with pride.

“I feel like you only did those demonstrations to pull our egos down to size.” Digg muttered.

“No.” Clint said. “That doesn’t sound like Tasha at all.”

“Watch where you aim that sarcasm, Barton.” Tony said. “Widow went easy on you. The others got their asses kicked while you got to cuddle with one third of the Science Alliance.”

Natasha ignored Tony. “We’re going to have each of the women pair off with a partner. Steve, I’m going to need to observe and give pointers. Digg take Laurel. Thea you’re with Oliver. Clint you have Felicity and Roy is with me.”

Laurel and Digg moved without comment. Roy appeared extremely nervous; looking from Bruce to Natasha, trying to figure out which was the most dangerous. Oliver glared as Clint strutted over to where Felicity was standing, but before he could protest the lair door burst open and Nyssa al Ghul entered the lair.
“Put your weapons down.” Nyssa said as Natasha and Clint drew knives from their pockets. “I am not here to fight.” She tossed her swords, bow and quiver on the mats.

“You tried to kidnap my sister.” Oliver growled.

“I was ordered to do so by my father. Had I known the reason behind it, I would never have complied. In addition no harm was meant to befall her.” Nyssa looked at Thea apologetically. “Sara would not have wanted you hurt.”

Thea looked away in shame.

“I think that’s assassin speak for sorry.” Tony said.

“What are you doing here?” Oliver gritted his teeth.

“I have broken with my father.” Nyssa said. “He – “ she stopped, catching sight of Steve. “Have we…met before?”

Steve was frozen in shock. His eyes were widened in shock and he looked as though he seen a ghost. “You died.” He croaked.

“What do you mean?” Nyssa looked at him in confusion.

“You tried to free your mother from that concentration camp…I saw you die.” Steve said

“My mother died in childbirth.” Nyssa crossed her arms. “I never knew her…yet I could swear that I know you.”

“Maybe it’s the granddaughter of the Nyssa you knew.” Tony suggested. “I mean it’s not like Ra’s has some secret voodoo magic that can bring back the dead.”

Nyssa’s face darkened. Tony quirked an eyebrow. “Wait… does he?”

“That’s not important right now.” Oliver said.

“There might be a cure for death and you think it’s not important?” Tony looked at Oliver as though he’d grown an extra head. “You are definitely not the brains of this operation.”

“My father intends to make you the next Demon’s head.” Nyssa said. “In doing so any enemy to that claim must be eradicated.”

“You’re the heir to the demon.” Felicity said “He wouldn’t kill his own daughter.”

“I ceased to be that when my father decided to offer the positon to Oliver.” Nyssa said. “I confronted him…it did not go well.” She stiffened. “My father banished me to wait until the one he has chosen to succeed him hunts me down and kills me.” She turned to Clint. “He is sending your brother in addition to two unknown assets to carry out my father’s orders.”

“Who?” Natasha asked.

“I do not know.” Nyssa admitted. “I have not been permitted to enter the catacombs recently and I was much too preoccupied with my beloved’s death to defy my father’s orders. I offer you my sword
and my assistance. I have lost my beloved and now my title.” Her eyes burned with anger. “I do not intend to go down without some resistance. I refuse to bend to my father’s will.”

Steve regarded her thoughtfully. “We accept your sword.”

“Um, no we don’t.” Tony looked alarmed. “Just because you got cozy with her great grandmother back in the good ole’ days doesn’t justify having an assassin join our team.”

“He hem.” Clint cleared his throat as he and Natasha shot Tony identical glares.

“Having an assassin we don’t know join our team.” Tony clarified.

“Sara trusted her.” Laurel said. “That’s enough for me.”

Oliver glared. “She kidnapped Thea.”

“Under my father’s command.” Nyssa interjected.

“Are you seriously going to use the ‘I was just following orders’ excuse?” Tony said.

“We’ve all done things we regret under someone else’s control.” Natasha said. “I’m with Cap.”

“I’m all about second chances.” Clint said.

“She’s the demon’s daughter.” Tony said.

“Exactly” Clint shot back. “She was raised within the league to be an assassin so she didn’t know anything else. Just like you were raised to be a rich jackass.”

“This isn’t a discussion of nature vs. nurture.” Tony said. “At some point you have to make your own choices and own up to your mistakes.” Everyone turned to give him identical looks of disbelief.

“That’s what she’s doing right now.” Digg said. “Sara was a member of the league and we trusted her. Oliver, you killed people as well. Not to mention you were willing to trust Merlyn; why not Nyssa?”

“So that’s me, Tasha, Laurel, Digg and Captain Freakin’ America on the yes side vs Oliver and Tony with Little Red, Thea, Dr. B and Squeaky undecided.” Clint said.


“There’s something you need to know.” Thea said.

“Thea—” Oliver said in a warning tone.

“Thea she needs to know if she wants to work with us. And Laurel deserves to know as well.” Thea took a deep breath. “I killed Sara. Merlyn used some type of mind control plant and I didn’t know what I was doing, but…it was me. I shot the arrows which killed her.”

Nyssa stared at her unmovingly. Laurel’s eyes widened. Then she hugged Thea.

“This is not your fault.” She said “It was all Merlyn.”

“I agree.” Nyssa murmured. “Merlyn will face justice for his crimes.”

“You knew?” Clint looked at Oliver in horror. “You knew Merlyn forced Thea to kill the Canary
and you wanted to work with him anyways? What the hell is wrong with you?"

“I thought you were all for second chances.” Oliver hissed as he stepped menacingly stepped towards Clint. Clint didn’t back down, instead he got closer.

“He killed over 500 innocent people, then had your sister kill your friend. I’d say that’s a pretty good indication that you shouldn’t trust him with your life and the lives of your team members.” Clint said.

“Not this again.” Felicity groaned, pushing in between them. “Either make out or beat each other up. But stop with this ridiculous alpha male routine.”

“Which side are you on?” Oliver glared.

“I think we should give Nyssa a chance.” Felicity said. Oliver’s expression darkened.

“You’re taking his side. Again.” He said.

“She’s in danger, we can’t just let her face the league alone. Sara wouldn’t have wanted that.” Felicity looked away from him. “Stop making this about sides, Oliver.”

“There is something else you should know.” Nyssa said. “Every Demon’s head must eradicate all of their ties to their former life.” She picked up one of her swords. Oliver grabbed Thea and pulled her behind him. Nyssa rolled her eyes and twisted the handle. It opened; revealing a vial. Oliver’s eyes popped out of his head.

“Where did you get that?” he asked.

“You know what it is?” Felicity said.

“It’s probably something he isn’t going to tell us about for our own protection.” Laurel frowned.

Oliver let out an exasperated groaned, “It’s called the alpha omega virus.”

“My father intends to have you unleash it on the city before you ascend to his throne.” Nyssa said.

Bruce walked over. “May I see that?” he frowned and took it over to a microscope. “This is similar to a virus which killed a large number of people in Hong Kong about 5 years ago.”

Tony glared at Oliver. “Let me guess; you don’t know anything about that either.”

Bruce looked over at Nyssa. “There never any explanation for the outbreak and a cure was never found. You may have just saved us all.” He smiled, “you have my vote.”

Everyone turned to Oliver and Tony.

“I still think it’s a bad idea.” Tony sighed. “But I won’t go against the science alliance.” He glared at Steve. “Though I think you’re just practicing for when you find your brainwashed hydra boyfriend.”

“Oliver?” Felicity asked while Steve shot Tony a disgusted look.

“You’ve already made your decision.” He grumbled. He turned to Nyssa. “We do this my way.”

“You’re wrong, Mr. Queen.” Nyssa smiled, looking at the rest of the team. “I believe we are doing this their way.”
The next couple of days were spent at the mansion setting up the new base. Bruce had locked himself in a makeshift lab and had begun synthesizing a cure to the Alpha Omega virus. He’d barred anyone from entering. While the gamma radiation in his system protected him from the virus, he refused to have anyone be exposed to it.

Natasha, now aided by Nyssa, continued the women’s training.

“Looking good ladies.” Clint said when he entered the ballroom/training area one evening. “Looking really good.”

Natasha tilted her head thoughtfully, “First one to take down Barton gets a free pass on the next 2 days of training.” Natasha’s sly smile made Clint grow pale.

“She says reasonable.” He said, holding out his hands as Laurel, Thea, and Felicity began advancing on him. “I don’t want to have to hurt anyone. Tasha, call them off.” The he bolted for the door. Felicity, who was closest to the door, made it there first. Clint had just made it outside when she jumped on his back.

“Et tu, Squeaky?” Clint said as he crossed his arms.

“This didn’t go the way I’d planned.” She mumbled getting off. “I thought my weight would be enough to knock you off balance.”

“What weight?” Clint laughed. “I liked your method, though I would have preferred a more frontal attack.” He looked behind her. “I don’t see Laurel or Thea so I guess you win by default.”

“Thank goodness. Natasha’s making us do laps around the property. Do you have any idea how big these grounds are?” Felicity grumbled. “Aren’t you supposed to be in the lab with Steve, Oliver, and Roy doing weapons updates with Tony?”

“Well…yes, but Steve and Tony got into it again. The usual; Steve says you can’t rely on tech alone. Tony took it personally and threatened to freeze him again, followed by a few badly placed comments about the Winter Soldier. It snowballed from there. I volunteered to get Nyssa and Laurel to get their new Starked out weapons. I figured it was best to get out of dodge before a civil war broke out.”

“You should get back.” Felicity prompted.

“Tasha’s probably marshalled the troops into attack formation, ready to ambush me the second I step over the doorway.” Clint shook his head. “She and Nyssa are training the three of you into their mini assassin protégées. I am much safer out ….PUPPY!” His eyes widened as he spotted a small dog limping on the edge of the property. He walked over slowly as to not scare him away. “Hey buddy, where did you come from?” he held out his hand. Felicity followed. The dog began backing up slowly. Clint knelt on the ground. “I won’t hurt you. I know Squeaky’s terrifying, but she’s mostly harmless.”

Felicity laughed. At the sound of her voice, the dog began wagging his tail. He tentatively sniffed Clint’s hand. Then he padded over to Felicity. She bent down to scratch his ears.
“He looks half starved.” She murmured. Clint picked him up. Inspecting his paw he grimaced.

“I think it’s broken. It’s okay little buddy. I know a doctor. Then we can give you food and a bath… maybe the bath can come first.” He added.

“Tony’s going to kill you.” Felicity snorted.

“He’s too busy yelling at Cap.” Clint said. “Plus, who could say no to this face?” Clint held up the puppy in front of his face. “Please Felicity.” He said in a high pitched voice. “Take me home and love me.”

“After he gets a bath.” Felicity said.

“Bruce’ll be up in a second.” Clint said as he walked into one of the bathrooms of the mansion, holding a box of pizza. “He said to be careful not to put pressure on the leg.”

Felicity had just finished cleaning the dog. Now that he’d been properly soaked and scrubbed, they could see that he was extremely skinny.

“I think he’s a golden retriever, he’s adorable.” Felicity looked up at Clint and frowned. “What are you doing with that pizza?”

“He’s hungry and there’s no other food.” Clint explained, as he grabbed the showerhead to rinse the puppy off. After he was soap free, Clint picked him up and wrapped him in a towel.

“I don’t think pizza is healthy for a puppy.” Felicity said as Clint opened the box and grabbed a slice. The puppy sniffed the air in excitement and wolfed down the slice.

“He likes it.” Clint insisted. “We can go to a pet store and buy healthy, well balanced dog food tomorrow.”

There was a knock at the door. Bruce stuck in his head. “I hear I have a patient.”

“His name’s Pizza Dog.” Clint said

“No it’s not.” Felicity said. “I cleaned him, I get to name him.”

The dog licked Clint’s fingers and squirmed, pointing his nose in Felicity’s direction. Bruce came in and began examining him.

“The good news is. It’s not broken, it’s sprained. I’ll have to set it. If he’s still limping in a few days we’ll take some X-rays to have a better look at the damage.” Bruce eyed the pizza box. “Please tell me you aren’t feeding him that.”

Felicity shot Clint an “I told you so” look.

“Don’t look at me like that.” Clint said. “It has cheese, which is a dairy product, which means calcium to strengthen his bones. Plus Pizza Dog likes it.”

“Weren’t you planning on naming him Lucky?” Bruce asked as he got up to leave, holding the dog. Clint grinned.

“Lead the way Doc. We’re going to introduce Lucky Barton to the rest of the team.”
“I think you mean Lucky Smoak.” Felicity corrected.

“Smoak-Barton?” Clint compromised. The two of them bickered on their way to the med lab. Bruce followed, holding Lucky.

“I warned Steve not to doubt Nat.” He murmured. “Your parents seem to be getting along just fine.”

Steve left the mansion in a huff. His motorcycle was waiting for him in front and he walked over to it.

“Stark does seem to know just how to irritate those around him.” Nyssa’s soft, yet powerful voice made him pause. He gave a jerky nod.

“I’ve been considering what you said the other night.” Nyssa continued. “You said you knew me. I initially dismissed it as folly, but…I must admit it would explain…My father has control over waters of extraordinary power which can grant immortality. They are capable of healing and restoring life where there is no longer any.”

Steve looked at her curiously.

“Would you mind taking a ride with me?” He asked “I wanted to clear my head with a ride. We can talk.”

Nyssa nodded. “There is a place I wish to visit, if you wouldn’t mind taking me there.”

Following Nyssa’s directions, Steve drove them to the Starling City cemetery.

“Who are you visiting?” he asked as he shut off the bike.

“My beloved.” Nyssa said as she stepped off and made her way to the entrance. Steve hung back. She turned to him. “Are you not coming?”

“No.” Steve said. “No matter what Tony seems to believe, I’m actually quite open-minded. Love is love…I can see that her loss was exceptionally hard on you. I know how you feel. I lost…” He broke off, looking away. They continued through the cemetery.

“I believe it is possible that my father may have used the Lazarus pit to revive me. The waters are regenerative. If left long enough I might have reverted back to childhood, even infancy.” Nyssa said.

“When Ra’s al Ghul came to collect Nyssa’s…your body. He said that next time you might be more malleable the next time.” Steve said. “You led a fearless attack on a concentration camp to free your mother even though he had forbidden it. I…I arrived too late to save you.”

“I forgive you.” Nyssa smiled. Steve blushed. “Would you mind telling me what Stark said to vex you so?”

“He keeps mentioning an old friend of mine.” Steve looked away. “Bucky Barnes…He’s been kept
alive all the years I was frozen by Hydra as a brainwashed assassin known as the Winter Soldier.”

Nyssa’s lips tightened. “I have heard this name before. My father often spoke of the Winter Soldier in favorable tones.” She glared at a passing gravestone then examined Steve’s face. “He was your beloved.” It wasn’t a question, but Steve felt compelled to answer anyways.

“Back then…things weren’t as easy for people like us as they are now. Buck and I…we never admitted anything out loud. My greatest regret is that we never said anything before…before I lost him.”

Nyssa froze. Steve stopped. “What’s wrong?”

Nyssa pointed at a grave in front of them. The tombstone said Sara Lance and while the date of death said 2007, the grave appeared fresh. In fact it looked as though it had been recently robbed.

“Someone has defiled my beloved’s grave.”

Chapter End Notes

Clint Barton actually has a dog named Lucky who eats pizza and is occasionally called Pizza Dog. I thought it was too adorable to not include.
Chapter 16

“Why would someone rob a grave?” Felicity asked. It was the next evening. She and Clint had been dog proofing her apartment and bickering over a custody arrangement when Digg had called.

“There are some crazy people in this world, darlin’.” Clint sighed. “Trust me; you are better off not knowing.” He gave her shoulder a squeeze, meaning to be comforting, but it had the opposite effect. Felicity shivered and sat on the kitchen floor.

“It’s so unfair. Sara suffered so much during her life. And now she can’t even find peace in death.” Tears were forming in her eyes. Clint sat next to her.

“Hey,” he said. “We’ll find whoever did this” They sat in silence for a few moments until it was broken by a retching noise. “Don’t get mad, but Lucky may have just thrown up on your carpet.”

“You need to stop feeding him pizza.” Felicity grumbled. She walked into the living room to find the puppy looking at the ground with his tail tucked between his legs, the evidence of his crime under a pillow he’d pulled off the couch.

“He likes it.” Clint insisted.

“If we’re going to be dog parents I can’t always be the bad cop.” Felicity huffed. “He’s never going to want to eat any actual dog food here if you gorge him on pizza when he’s staying with you.” She crossed her arms as Lucky whimpered in shame and went to hide behind Clint. “You’re cleaning this up.”

“Cleaning supplies?” Clint asked. Felicity pointed to one of her kitchen cabinets. “Don’t worry bud.” He stage whispered to Lucky. “She’ll forgive you if you use the puppy eyes.”

Felicity was shaking her head when she saw something move out of the corner of her eye. She turned, but there was nothing there: just the slightly opened door to her bedroom. “Clint? Did you open this?”

Clint stuck his head out of the kitchen. “No. Why?” he smirked. “Are you inviting me in?”

“I could have sworn I closed this.” Felicity muttered. Clint’s smirk slipped off his face. He began moving towards her when a high pitched sonic noise rang out. Clint dropped to the ground in pain, screaming. Felicity put her hands over her ears and dropped to her knees. Lucky howled. The bedroom door opened and two figures entered; one in black, the other in white. The women in white opened her mouth and another high pitched noise sounded out. Clint convulsed on the ground as blood began trickling out of his ears. Though the noise was painful to Felicity, it seemed to be having an amplified effect on Clint. She kicked out, trying to throw the woman in white, hoping to throw her off balance or distract her to get her to stop that noise…then the woman looked down at her… and Felicity saw her face.

“Sara.” She gasped. The woman gave no indication that she had heard her. Instead she picked Felicity off the ground and threw her across the room. Striding over, the white canary gripped her by the throat and tossed her down on the ground. The man in black was attacking Clint. Felicity could hear the grunts and strikes as Clint attempted to defend himself.

“Felicity RUN.” Clint shouted. Grabbing a knife he’d hidden in his boot, he stabbed the man in black in his shoulder. The knife stayed there. The man in black looked at it and pulled it out. The knife was clean, with no traces of blood and there was a flash of silver underneath the torn sleeve.
“Barnes.” Clint said.

Sara had grabbed Felicity’s hair and was twisting her towards her, mouth open to let out another cry. There was a growl and Lucky launched himself at the White Canary, biting her arm. Sara let go of her. Felicity began crawling for her phone. She could hear Clint fighting off the man in black and Lucky’s howls. Then the door was blasted off its hinges.

“Well what do we have here?” The voice belonged to the man who’d threatened Clint. Trickshot glared down at her. Stamping on her wrist he ground his heel until Felicity dropped her phone; shrieking in pain. Then he walked over to where Clint was struggling against the man in black’s chokehold. “Hello brother.” He said. “Oh how thoughtless of me.” He tutted as he took Clint’s face in his hands and turned it from side to side so he could inspect the damage to his ears. “The canary cry must have completely destroyed your implants so you can’t hear a word I’m saying. You must be in so much pain.”

Clint spat blood in Trickshot’s face.

“He’s deaf.” Trickshot said to Felicity. “But he probably didn’t tell you that. He probably didn’t tell you anything of substance about himself.” He turned back to Clint grinning. “I’m going to enunciate my words so you can read my lips and understand; I’m going to kill her. Then I’m going to kill you. When Queen finds her body he’s going to have to take the Demon’s deal to save her.” He dropped Clint to the ground and began using sign language. “She won’t mourn you afterwards. No one will. After all; no one truly knows anything about you.” He pulled out his sword and turned back to Felicity. “Don’t worry sweetheart.” He said, “your death will be quick…I can’t say the same about his.”

There was a swishing noise and Trickshot dropped his sword. Steve stepped in and caught his shield as it came back to him. Natasha, Nyssa, and Oliver were behind him.

“Stand down.” He ordered then he caught sight of the man who was restraining Clint. “Bucky?” He stared at him in horror.

“Sara.” Nyssa said, looking at the White Canary.

Sara opened her mouth and another earsplitting noise came out. She, Trickshot, and the Winter Soldier used the distraction to make their escape out the back through Felicity’s bedroom window.

“Nyssa and I will follow.” Steve said. “You stay here and get these two to the hospital.” They took off running. Natasha grabbed her phone and called 911. Oliver knelt by Felicity inspecting the damage.

“Felicity.” He said.

“Head…hurts” She looked around. “Lucky…Clint.” Her vision was blurring. The pounding in her head was getting worse. Her head rolled and she thought she heard someone say “Squeaky” just before she passed out.

“The ambulance is on its way.” Natasha said. “Arrow you need to leave before the police get here.” Oliver was staring stone-faced at the wreck that was Felicity’s apartment. Clint had pulled Felicity’s unconscious form into his arms and was cradling her gently. Oliver jumped as Natasha put her hand on his arm. “Go. I’ll watch over them.” Oliver gave a jerky nod.

Tony landed and walked in as Oliver left. “What the hell happened here?”
“League.” Clint croaked.

Tony walked over to him and inspected his ears. “I’ve been working on new implants for you…this is probably the worst possible scenario to give them a test run.”

Lucky limped over to where Clint and Felicity were sitting. He was covered in cuts and one of his eyes was slashed. Tony picked him up.

“I’ll take the mutt to a vet on my way to pick up the implants.” He said. “Then I’ll probably give him a steak; he’s earned it.” He walked to the door only to come face to face with Captain Lance who had just arrived with the ambulance and two detectives.

“Wha-“ Lance was speechless. “…Can someone…explain what happened here?”

“Home invasion.” Tony said flippantly.

“You can’t be serious.” Lance looked over at Felicity. “Is she…is she alright?”

“She will be once the two of you move so the damn EMTs can get here.” Clint shouted as he lip read their conversation. “I may not be able to hear anything, but I’m still the second most dangerous person in this room.” Natasha gave him a small smile.

“There’s no need to shout, Barton we aren’t dea-” Tony caught the look on Natasha’s face and let out an embarrassed cough.

Clint got up and, carrying Felicity, pushed past the two men at the door to get her to the ambulance. “I’m sorry.” He murmured, as she was loaded on to a stretcher. “I’m so sorry.”
Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

So I'm toying with Clint's origin story a bit. I know that the MCU has a completely revamped version that was presented in Age of Ultron, but I'm ignoring certain details from it...obviously (Those of you who've seen the movie know what I'm talking about). Thanks so much for all the positive feedback!!! Enjoy this chapter (Just a warning, like most Marvel heroes, Clint's origin is a bit messed up.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Hold still.” Tony grumbled as Clint squirmed. They were in the hospital putting in his new implants.

“He can’t hear you Tony.” Natasha rolled her eyes.

“I need to see Felicity.” Clint said.

“She’s unconscious.” Tony muttered. “It’s not like there’s anything you can actually do. And maybe you should be unconscious in order to get these implants in.”

Clint gave Natasha a questioning look.

“He’s telling you to stop moving or else.” Natasha signed. Clint snorted.

“What’s he going to do? He can’t talk me to death, I can’t hear him.”

“You know.” Tony mused. “It’s nice talking to someone who’s incapable of complaining.” Clint glared at a mirror.

“Wow.” He muttered “even his lip movements are annoying.”

Tony pulled out a remote. There was a jolt and suddenly Clint could hear again.

“And then the lord said; LET THERE BE SOUND. And so there was.” Tony grinned. Clint put his head in his hands.

“I changed my mind, take them out, I miss the silence.”

“You’re welcome.” Tony huffed. Clint turned and looked at him.

“I’m not hugging you.”

“Fist bump?” Tony suggested. Natasha shook her head.

“Boys.” She muttered.

Bruce came into the hospital room. “There’s someone here who wants to see you.” He held up Lucky. “The vet couldn’t save his eye and he’s going to need rest, but he’ll be fine.”

“How did you manage to get a dog into a hospital?” Natasha said.
“Um, that would be me.” Tony held up a hand. “I offered to pay for some new medical equipment if they looked the other way. Also I’m still waiting to hear a thank you for that amazing security system I set up in Felicity’s apartment. Without it, we wouldn’t have known you guys were in trouble.”

Clint picked up Lucky. “Hey buddy.” The dog wagged his tail and licked Clint’s face. “Let’s go see your mom.”

When Clint opened the door to Felicity’s room, he found Oliver already sitting there. Clint gave him a quick nod.

“Can you?” Oliver pointed to his ear.

“Yeah, the first sound I heard was the melodious tones of Tony Stark…I don’t recommend it.” Clint fidgeted.

“This is my fault.” Oliver said.

“Not entirely.” Clint said. “Trickshot…was after me and decided that the best way to hurt me was to kill her. The league knows she’s important to both of us.”

“But what good would killing her bring them?” Oliver said. “Why would having her die make me want to join the group who killed her?”

“Maybe because they wanted to make it so you had nothing to live for.” Clint murmured. “The people who join the league are broken. They don’t have anything left so they become ghosts…shadows, passing judgement on those who have what they’ve lost.” Lucky was squirming in his arms. Clint walked over to the bed and gently put him down. The puppy wiggled his way into the crook of Felicity’s arm and snuggled against her.

“He’s the real hero here.” Clint murmured. “He attacked the White Canary giving Felicity a chance to escape. If he hadn’t…” He couldn’t even bring himself to utter the words.

Oliver’s jaw tightened. “I still can’t believe…Sara, she…she would never have done something like this to Felicity.”

“The league has ways of messing with your mind.” Clint said.

“She was dead.” Oliver said forcefully. “I saw her body. I…buried her.”

“The whole resurrection thing seems to be going around.” Clint said. “Maybe you should talk to Cap and Nyssa.”

“And you?” Oliver glared. “Why was Trickshot so set on making you suffer?”

“I need to tell her first.” Clint said. “I owe her the story, then I’ll tell the others…I never intended for this to happen.”

Oliver looked at the hospital bed. “She’s better off without us.” He said.

“Is she?” Clint asked.

“The consequences of this life are too much.”

“And yet she chose to be a part of it.” Clint retorted. “Keeping her close keeps her safe. Thor and
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Tony are both extremely high profile, yet they still have Jane and Pepper.”

“Are you encouraging me to be with her?” Oliver raised an eyebrow. “Wouldn’t that ruin your master plan of kicking ass and stealing the girl?”

“She deserves better than me.” Clint said. “And whatever your demons are, I’m pretty sure they’re not as dark as mine.”

Oliver looked at him thoughtfully. “I was wrong about you, Barton.”

“Please don’t get emotional.” Clint said. “It’s really unsettling.”

“This doesn’t mean that I like you.” Oliver grumbled.

“Of course not,” Clint said. “I don’t expect us to braid each other’s hair and make flower crowns together. But maybe we can try to not argue as much.” He looked at Felicity. “There are more important things in life than the fact that I’m a better archer than you.”

Oliver rolled his eyes and looked down at his phone. “Rogers and Nyssa just got back to the mansion.” He said. “I’m going to go see if they have any news.”

“Tony’s planning on having her moved there as soon as the doctor gives the all clear.” Clint said. “Bruce can monitor her and she’ll be much safer.”

Oliver nodded. Getting up, he walked over to Felicity’s bedside and gave her forehead a small kiss, then left. Silence fell. The only noises were the beeping of the machines and the occasional snuffle from Lucky. 2 hours passed before Felicity gave a small cough. Clint, who’d been flipping through the channels on the TV, sat up. Felicity’s eye twitched then she opened them and looked around. Lucky barked in excitement.

“Hey hun.” She murmured to the puppy.

“He saved your life.” Clint said. “He’s now a fully-fledged Avenger.”

A look of relief came across Felicity’s features. “You’re okay and you can hear. I’m so happy. At least I think you can hear. Can you hear? Because otherwise this babble is completely ridiculous. Though if you can’t hear me than I might be making less of a fool of myself.”

Clint laughed. “Good to see there’s no permanent damage.”

“How bad is it?” Felicity asked.

“You’ve got a concussion, 4 cracked ribs, a broken wrist and a broken Ulna and Radius. Did you know your arm bones are called the Ulna and Radius?”

Felicity groaned. “This is definitely worse than getting shot.”

Clint raised an eyebrow. “That sounds like an interesting story.”

“It is. I got a cool scar and everything.” Felicity said. “I took a bullet to save…” She stopped. “To save…Sara.” She looked down at Lucky and cleared her throat. “How are your ears?”

“Tony gave me these sweet new implants.” Clint tapped his ear. “I still have this ringing noise though.” He looked down. “This…is my fault and I’m sorry.”

“Clint.”
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“No. Trickshot only got involved because of me.” Clint bit his lip “You already know that he’s my brother, so I guess that’s where I’ll start. My…childhood. In all its fucked up glory.” He sat on Felicity’s bed. Bracing himself as if he were about to be hit, he took a deep breath and began.

“My father was an alcoholic…and an angry one. Life wasn’t great for us. I’ll skim over the specifics, but he got himself and my mom killed in a drunk driving accident. I was 7, Barney was 13. We got put into the foster care system. They…the family was one of those who took on as many kids as possible to get the government money, but didn’t care what happened to them. About 5 months after we were placed there child protective services raided the place. We found out we were going to be placed in different homes… so we did what every kid dreams of; we ran away to join the circus.” He gave a bitter laugh.

“It’s where I learned how to shoot. We had this double act. Hawkeye and Trickshot. They can hit any target.” He closed his eyes. “Those were some of the best days of my life. We were together and we were free. No one could hurt us. But of course, since this is my life we’re talking about, good things never last. The circus wasn’t the safe haven it was cracked up to be. I started realizing that every time we’d go to a town, mysterious thefts happened. It was small scale stuff. Sometimes we’d have been gone for weeks and the bank would be hit. Sometimes it would happen before we showed up. It started out small; liquor stores, 7/11’s. Then it got worse. Barney brushed it off as coincidence…then someone was killed, a store clerk who got in the way. And I…I just knew they had to be stopped, but I didn’t know how, I was only 11 at the time. Then Coulson found me. Agent Philip Coulson of the Strategic Homeland Intervention Enforcement and Logistics Division.”


“They’d been monitoring the circus. Fury had wanted everyone taken down, but Coulson made a different call. He…saw something special in me. Coulson had a way of seeing things in people that they couldn’t see in themselves. He offered me a deal; the circus for a permanent foster family and automatic entrance into the SHIELD academy. He’d even arranged for one for Barney…but it was too late. Barney he was one of them…and he was the one who’d killed the store clerk. When he found out about the deal I’d made with SHIELD he lost it. He accused me of stabbing him in the back. He…I don’t know what would have happened if Coulson hadn’t intervened and taken down the circus. I still have the scars. Barney managed to escape, killing 2 SHIELD agents in the process. He went underground and it wasn’t until my third year at the academy that I heard he’d joined the league of assassins.” He stood and walked over to the window. It was raining outside and he listened for a few minutes. Felicity knew better than to push him, he’d finish when he was ready.

“You know it’s funny.” He finally said. “People always assumed that Tasha owed me because I decided to give her a second chance instead of killing her. The truth is that that decision was my saving grace. She owes me nothing; I owe her. I’d been tracking Trickshot for years. It became my obsession. Every time I’d get back from a mission I’d switch right into search mode. I screwed up relationships and wasted years because I wanted to bring my brother back.” He shook his head. “I was still that stupid deluded kick who saw the best in his big brother.” He said bitterly. “I wanted to save him…and I finally caught up with him in Budapest.” He turned back to Felicity. Walking over slowly he sat and looked her straight in the eyes. “What I’m about to tell you was previously so classified that, outside of the people who were there only Phil Coulson and Director Fury knew. It’s…it’s going to be difficult so I need you to promise me that if it gets too much you’ll tell me.”

Felicity nodded. Lucky seemed to sense Clint’s distress and walked over to him, putting his head on his lap. Clint began absent mindedly stroking the dog.

“I was on a SHIELD opp. There were some out of place murders and…I was sure it was league related, but Fury disagreed. He’d pulled out our assets; I was alone, which is what Trickshot wanted.
He’d known I wanted to rescue him from the league and he decided to prove to me that he didn’t need rescuing.” Clint’s face went blank and his voice became monotone. He was lost in the horror of his memories. “There was…an alley. I was on a rooftop surveying the area, trying to find some piece of evidence to prove Fury wrong. He stumbled into the alley…covered in blood. I rushed down to help him…but the blood didn’t belong to him. He’d slaughtered an entire tact team of SHIELD agents. I found out that little detail when the league descended on the alley and threw their dead bodies at my feet. I…I managed to take out some of them, but they kept coming and my quiver ran out. I would have died if Tasha hadn’t ignored Fury’s order to go to the extraction point and doubled back to surveil me. She…she saved my life. We’d almost managed to fight our way out of the alley when we came face to face with Ra’s al Ghul. All the remaining league members set down their weapons. Barney…Trickshot was standing behind him.” Clint closed his eyes. “I can still hear Ra’s telling me that no one had ever killed as many of their number before. He didn’t even seem angry, he sounded…impressed.” Clint spat out the word in disgust. “He offered me the chance to join them and become ‘the great man I was destined to be.’ If Tasha hadn’t been smart enough to contact Coulson before going to that alley we’d have been done for. Coulson’s quinjets appeared. Tasha offered Ra’s an ultimatum; either kill us and face the wrath of SHIELD or let us walk away with no retaliation from either side. Ra’s couldn’t risk the entirety of SHIELD coming after him. He and his assassins left, but not before telling me that next time, it would be join the league or lose my life. Trickshot made it abundantly clear that he would be more than happy to carry out option b.”

“But he was your brother.” Felicity murmured. Clint shook his head.

“My brother died years ago. I talked to Nyssa and apparently after the circus was taken down he got on the wrong side of some very powerful people. He dragged himself, bleeding and broken to Nanda Parbat. Apparently Ra’s saw something in him so he put him in the Lazarus pit and molded him into his own twisted image.”

Clint stopped. Closing his eyes, he seemed to brace himself for whatever Felicity’s reaction might be. He shivered as he felt her shift, then she put her arms around him. Putting her head on his back in between his shoulder blades.

“I’m…not a good man Felicity.” Clint said quietly, finding it difficult to breathe.

“You’re wrong about that.” Felicity murmured. “And I’m pretty sure I just cracked my last intact ribs giving you this hug so you’re going to sit here and accept it and stop blaming yourself for things you had absolutely no control over.”

Clint looked back at her in surprise. “Has anyone ever told you that you’re amazing? …Possibly delusional, but amazing.”

“Accept the hug, Clint.”

Clint closed his eyes and slowly began to relax. “Yes boss. You should get some rest. Digg will kill me if I you look like you haven’t gotten enough sleep.”

Felicity leaned back on her pillows. “Don’t tell me you’re afraid of Digg.”

“I’m not stupid.” Clint smiled down at Lucky who was snoozing in his lap.

“Eh.” Felicity said. “Not all of the time.”

Clint shook his head. “I should warn you that Tony made sure that the doctors gave you the good painkillers so you’re going to be sleepy and your brain to mouth filter might be affected…which should be immensely entertaining.”
“Screw you, Barton.”

“Not with cracked ribs.” Clint smiled then he looked down at Lucky who’d just put his head up. “And watch your language,” he covered the dog’s ears. “Don’t listen to her, Mommy’s on the silly meds.”

Felicity yawned.

“Go to sleep Squeaky. No one can hurt you here. Lucky’s on the case.”

Felicity reached out and took Clint’s hand. “I feel safer already.” She whispered as she fell asleep.

Chapter End Notes

I thought it would be best to note that the abusive alcoholic father is more drawn from Bruce Banner’s origin story. The death of Clint’s parents in a car accident is canon as is him joining the circus. However in the comics Clint participates in the criminal aspect of the circus.
Chapter 18

Felicity had been discharged to Avengers Mansion by the next afternoon. Tony had everyone, including Lyla and baby Sara in the living room. Felicity had been forced into a wheel chair, by Tony and Bruce who refused to have any more harm come to her accidentally. Clint dubbed himself the official wheelman and pushed her around the mansion…and had Steve carry the chair when stairs were involved.

“Due to yesterday’s attack, I’m offering use of Avengers Tower for all those who don’t want to stay in Starling…or those who shouldn’t stay in Starling due to health concerns.” Tony said. “And by health concerns I meant Steve. I can’t be accused of elder abuse. It’s bad PR.”

Oliver looked hopefully over at Thea, but she shook her head.

“No thanks Tony.”

Tony nodded and turned to Digg and Lyla.

“How about you two?”

Lyla looked up at Digg, then nodded. Tony tilted his head and looked at baby Sara.

“I’m actually rethinking this offer; the baby might give Pepper ideas.”

“TONY” Bruce looked outraged.

“Kidding…sort of. I mean look at that beautiful face. Even I’m feeling strangely paternal.” Tony sighed as everyone glared at him. “Tough crowd. Ok, so that’s little Digg and Agent L.” He turned to Felicity. “Science bud?”

Felicity looked down at herself. “I guess I’m going too.”

An hour later they were all in the yard watching Tony’s private jet landing.

“Rhodey baby.” Tony grinned as his friend came out of the jet. “Everyone, this is colonel James Rhodes AKA my best friend…also he’s War Machine.”

Rhodey rolled his eyes and saluted Steve. “Captain.”

“Colonel.” Steve smiled. Rhodey turned to Digg.

“You must be Sergeant John Diggle. It’s an honor to meet you.” Then he turned to Lyla. “And you as well Agent Michaels. Once this is over, I’d enjoy getting to know you better.”

Digg nodded. Rhodey looked down at Baby Sara. Flashing her a wide smile, he cooed, “hello, beautiful. Pepper’s going to love you.”

“Which is why you’re going to be in charge of keeping them as far away from each other as possible.” Tony grumbled.

“I don’t know, Tony.” Rhodey smirked. “Fatherhood might do you some good.”
Tony glared. Then his expression changed into one of consideration. “Hmm. Little me’s. Now there’s an intriguing idea.”

Everyone groaned.

“Rhodey, this is why we can’t have nice things.” Clint grumbled.

Oliver cleared his throat.

“Right.” Tony said. “My future minion army aside, time to say your goodbyes.” He clapped Oliver on the shoulder. “Feel free to really let it out.”

Oliver glared.

Digg kissed Sara and held Lyla against his chest.

“Once this is over, I’m marrying you.” Lyla said.

“Yes Ma’am.” Digg chuckled.

Oliver stood awkwardly in front of Felicity’s wheel chair. He opened his mouth to say something, then shook his head. “Take care of yourself in New York.” He finally managed.

Felicity nodded. Clint walked over holding Lucky.

“So I brought you a friend to go to New York with you.” He said putting Lucky in Felicity’s lap. “And I fully expect you to have locked Tony out of all the Tower’s security systems by the time we get back.” Kneeling so he was eye level with her, he gave her a pained smile. “Don’t…um…don’t touch anything in Tony’s lab and…” He seemed at a loss as to what to say. Felicity put her hand on his.

“Be careful.” She said. Clint closed his eyes; taking a deep breath he gave her a small smile.

“Don’t worry about me, Squeaky; I’m always careful.” Giving her palm a kiss he seemed more at ease. “I told JARVIS to give you clearance to access my floor in the tower. The guest floors can be impersonal. Plus it’s the most secure place in the Tower. If you need a quiet place to clear your thoughts, feel free to raid my fridge or my movie collection.”

Everyone said their goodbyes. Then Rhodey wheeled her on to the plane. She looked out the window and waved at the Team. Lyla sat next to her.

“We’ll be in New York in about 3 hours.” She smiled at her daughter. “Stark’s toys sure move fast.”

“How does Waller feel about you taking an indefinite vacation?” Felicity asked.

“Captain Rogers cleared it with her.” Lyla said. “Though it might have helped that the Black Widow threatened to dump all of ARGUS’s secrets onto the internet, like she did with SHIELD.”

“No says no to Nat.” Felicity yawned, in agreement. Rhodey sat down across from her.

“So you’re the hacker Tony’s been raving about.” He grinned.

“Stark talks about me?” Felicity looked at Rhodey in surprise.

“I’m pretty sure he researched if it was legal to adopt you.” Rhody laughed. “The Avengers seem to adore you…especially Hawkeye.”
“What makes you say that?”

“I’ve known Clint Barton for about 3 years now and I have never seen anyone, besides Romanov, get clearance to his floor.” Rhodey reached out and gave Lucky a pat on the head. “You should get some sleep. Dr. Banner mentioned that your meds would make you drowsy. When we get to Stark Tower we can start thinking up ways to prank Tony.”

“Okay team.” Tony said. “We are going to need to address the bionic undead elephant in the room because the sooner we win, the sooner I can get back to Pepper.”

“I’m sorry this is negatively affecting your sex life.” Clint rolled his eyes.

“Apology accepted.” Tony smirked. “Capsicle, you’re up first.”

Steve, Nyssa and Clint were standing in front of the team. Steve gave Tony a nod then turned his attention to a screen behind him.

“Here’s all the insight we can give you on the attackers.” He pulled up a picture of the Winter Soldier. “This is the Winter Soldier. He’s a brainwashed Hydra Assassin who’s been kept frozen since WWII and only thawed out when Hydra needed him. It’s believed that he’s responsible for a majority of the major political coups and assassinations in the last 60 years.” Steve paused as he stared at the haunted, gaunt face on Hydra’s winter soldier file. “His real name is…James Buchanan Barnes.”

“Wait. BUCKY BARNES?” Digg and Roy shared looks of amazement.

“Bucky Barnes is the Winter Soldier.” Laurel asked.

“That’s what he just said.” Clint muttered.

“But that makes no sense.” Laurel insisted.

“Neither does playing beer pong with a Norse god and yet I’ve done it.” Clint said. “And I won.”

“He was captured after he fell.” Steve continued. “A Hydra scientist named Zola experimented on him; enhancing him and completely reprogramming his mind. The programming was breaking down when I fought him last year. He…remembered me. Which means he can be reached.”

Nyssa touched him gently on the shoulder, before changing the picture to one of Sara in her Canary uniform. “This is Sara Lance. She’s a former member of the league and Team Arrow.”

“Former?” Tony raised an eyebrow. “I didn’t know the league had a retirement plan.”

“She died a few months ago.” Nyssa murmured. “My father must have resurrected her using the Lazarus Pit.”

“Lazarus Pit?” Tony’s eyes popped out of his head. “I though Barnes was the only walking dead in this operation. I have...so many questions.”

“The Lazarus Pit.” Nyssa continued, “is an ineffective means of resurrection. Sometimes it works, but other times...it can have disastrous physical and mental effects.”

“Hold on.” Tony was practically bouncing with excitement. “You ARE the Nyssa Cap met in WWII. Ra’s resurrected you.”
“He did worse than that.” Nyssa said. “He placed me in the pit for so long that I reverted back to infancy. My own father robbed me of an entire life time simply to teach me obedience.”

Tony’s face fell. He cleared his throat awkwardly and looked away. Steve put a hand on her shoulder. Nyssa placed hers over his, then stared down the team. “This woman is probably not the Sara we remember. She may have lost much in the pit. There is no telling what she remembers…or what she is capable of.”

Laurel shifted uncomfortably, but said nothing

“Then there’s the Canary Cry to consider.” Clint tapped one of his ears. “Before she and the Winter Soldier attacked, she let out this…scream. It was high pitched and it completely destroyed my implants.”

“It must have been one of her sonic devices.” Laurel said dismissively.

“No.” Clint insisted. “The sound came from her. She wasn’t carrying any devices.”

“That’s insane.” Laurel looked around at the rest of the team as if waiting for them to back her up. Everyone else stayed silent. When she realized no one was agreeing with her, she turned back to Clint in anger. “Well maybe you missed something. You were too busy getting your ass kicked; how can you be sure what you saw?”

“How about you try fighting Hydra’s top asset after having two small explosions in your ears?” Clint growled. “Let’s see how much better you can do.”

“All I’m saying,” Laurel hissed. “Is that your observation skills might not have been working.”

“They don’t call me Hawkeye for nothing.” Clint retorted. “I may have been getting my ‘ass kicked’, but that doesn’t mean I don’t know what I saw. Which was your sister screaming like a banshee before throwing Felicity across a room.”

“Stand down Barton.” Steve said.

“Sara would never hurt Felicity.” Laurel raised her voice.

“Oh really?” Clint’s expression turned to one of mock relief. “Good news people. I must have imagined my eardrums exploding. And I guess Felicity’s cracked ribs, broken wrist and arm, and concussion are all figments of a mass hallucination.” He’d taken an angry step forward. Laurel, who appeared to have realized her mistake in provoking him, began backing away. “That woman; the White Canary, isn’t your sister anymore. She’s not coming back and the sooner you realize that –”

“BARTON.” Natasha said gripping his arm. “Outside, now.” dragging him out, she pulled him into a nearby empty room.

“If you’re going to give me a speech about playing nice with others…” Clint grumbled.

“Sara Lance is not Trickshot.” Natasha whispered.

“Well, duh.”

“What happened to you and your brother is not the same as what happened to Sara and Laurel, whatever parallels you might see.” Natasha continued.

“She’s deluding herself into thinking that her sister is some sort of saint.” Clint said. “Someone needs
to give her a reality check.”

“She won’t believe it from anyone else.” Natasha said. “It’s something she needs to find out for herself. Just like you refused to believe anything bad about Barney… until Budapest.”

“And look how many people had to die before I came to that realization.” Clint growled. “How many innocents are going to have to suffer simply because Laurel Lance has decided that she knows better than everyone else? I’m doing her a favor. The blood of all the people Barney killed is on my hands.”

“It wasn’t your fault.” Natasha said. “What happened to those people and Felicity wasn’t your fault.”

“He’s only involved because of me.” Clint said. “If I wasn’t here Ra’s would have sent someone else. And he knew hurting her would hurt me… he was going to kill her.”

“He was going to kill her anyway because of her connection to Queen.” Natasha glared. “You need to stop this pity party and focus on the mission.”

Clint tightened his jaw. “I’m not apologizing to Laurel.”

“She’s unstable.” Natasha said. “You should have known better than to retaliate.”

Clint gave a grunt and squared his shoulders. Walking back to the briefing room he took his place next to Steve and Nyssa. Laurel gave him a haughty glare, but he ignored her.

“This is Trickshot.” He said pulling up a picture of Barney. “His real name is Barnabas Barton.”

There was a tense silence. The Avengers already knew about Clint’s family history, but Team Arrow was clearly shocked.

“Trickshot is a ruthless killer.” Clint continued. “He’s the most dangerous the league has to offer, besides maybe Ra’s himself. He lacks a moral code.”

“The man who masterminded this attack… is your brother.” Laurel looked viciously triumphant. “Why the hell should we trust you? And how dare you yell at me when it’s your brother who’s been behind this.”

“I am not my brother.” Clint growled. He was about to say more when he met Natasha’s eyes. She shook her head.

“Does Felicity know about this?” Laurel said. “I bet she’s not so lovey dovey when she finds out that your brother tried to kill her.”

“She’s known from the beginning that he was my brother.” Clint said quietly. “Barney Barton has been dead for years. That monster has nothing to do with me. And after everything he’s done, I will have absolutely no problem taking him out.”

“Felicity knew?” Oliver asked.

Clint nodded. “We ran into Trickshot the night Merlyn attacked her.”

There was a tense silence as everyone glared at each other. Oliver and Digg looked at each other. Digg appeared angrier than Oliver, but said nothing.

“Well.” Tony said. “Now that we know who we’re dealing with, we need to start figuring out how. Suggestions?”
Chapter 19

The next four days at Avengers Tower were fun for Felicity. The second day she was there, Sam Wilson turned up needing an upgrade for his Falcon wings. Felicity spent a lot of time in the lab, making design suggestions and laughing at Sam’s jokes. He claimed to be the only man alive who could outrun Captain America and while she was sure that laughing so often wasn’t good for her ribs, Felicity didn’t care.

It was the fourth night that she had her first nightmare. She’d been slowly lessening the dosage of her meds, hoping to clear a bit of the fog in her head. The meds had helped her have relatively dreamless nights, but that night she knew something was different even before she fell asleep.

It was dark except for a figure dressed completely in white. They had their back to Felicity and were looking at the ground, but she recognized the hair.

“Sara?” She whispered

At the sound, Sara’s head snapped around and her features twisted into a cruel smile. Then she opened her mouth and a loud cry came out. Felicity fell to the ground. There was a thud and someone landed next to her. She turned to see Clint, blood coming out of his ears, his eyes wide open and empty, two arrows sticking out of his chest.

“Felicity RUN.” Clint’s voice seemed to come from all directions except for the lifeless corpse next to her. She got up and ran, smashing into someone. Falling to the ground she looked up to see Trickshot, standing above her. He leaned down and pet her hair.

“Hello pretty girl.” he said into her ear.

She woke up screaming.

Lucky, who’d been sleeping on the edge of the bed rushed to her side. Felicity held him and cried.

“Ms. Smoak.” JARVIS said. “Would you like me to contact Agent Michaels or Ms. Potts?”

“No, don’t bother them.” She said. “Could you call someone for me?”

Clint picked up on the second ring.

“Hey Squeaky, isn’t it the middle of the night over there? Wait…is this a booty call?”

At the sound of his voice Felicity let out a sob of relief. Clint waited for her to calm down before asking “Do you want to talk about it?”

“I don’t know.” She said. “Is there…anyway to prevent them?”

Clint exhaled slowly. “I wish I could tell you there’s a magic cure, but the truth is time is the only way to get over nightmares. Was this the first time you had one?”

“Yes and no.” She said. “I’ve had them before, but they’ve never been this…vivid.”

“Well talking helps.” Clint said. “Cap says Falcon’s at the tower. He runs a VA support group for soldiers with PTSD.” He hesitated. “If you’re not comfortable with that there’s always me.”

“I called you didn’t I?” Felicity sniffed. “Why do you always put yourself down?”
“Maybe because it doesn’t help to talk to the guy whose fault it is you’re having the nightmare in the first place.” Clint said softly, “what was your dream about?”

“Sara…at least at first.” Felicity said. “She…” Felicity paused, unable to find the words to describe what she’d seen. “I…couldn’t…she…”

“She looked at you.” Clint murmured. “The face was the same, but the eyes were wrong. They were dead, there was no recognition. No indication of the person you knew and cared about.”

“Yes.” Felicity coughed as fresh tears fell from her eyes.

Clint waited for a while. When it seemed clear that she couldn’t elaborate he said. “After Budapest… I saw the same thing.”

“There was more.” Felicity said, sniffing quietly. “I saw you…except you were dead. And then Trickshot.” She shuddered. “He’d killed you and he was going to…” she broke off. “It was so gross.”

She heard some heavy breathing from Clint’s end. “Darlin’ I need you to do me a favor. If anything manages to breach the tower’s security measures, I need you to promise me to go to my floor.”

“Ok.”

“Promise me Squeaky.” Clint insisted.

“I promise.” She said quietly. Then she asked the question which had been on her mind ever since she’d seen Sara in her apartment. “Do you think there’s any chance that Sara’s still…Sara?”

“I don’t know.” Clint said. “The Lazarus pit…Nyssa doesn’t seem to be very hopeful, but Laurel believes…” He snorted in irritation.

“You don’t sound convinced.” Felicity said.

“I wish I could be more optimistic” He said quietly.

Felicity nodded. “She can’t be completely gone. She’s a fighter. I...there has to be a way to help her.” She insisted.

“We’ll do whatever we can.” Clint said. “We have to find them first.”

“He’s still out there.” Felicity said. “I…that dream was just so real.” She started shuddering again.

“You’re safe now.”

“You were dead.” Felicity sobbed. “There was so much blood. And there were arrows sticking out of your chest.”

“That’s an…ironic death.” Clint said, unsure of how to be comforting.

“I just really wanted to make sure you were alive.” Felicity said.

“I’m not going down that easy.” Clint said. “Wanna hear a secret?”

“What?” Felicity asked.

“Fighting Barnes in your apartment was one of the scariest things that ever happened to me.” Clint
admitted. “Not because I thought I would die, I’d come to terms with that possibility. I…I couldn’t take the thought of you going down with me. So no matter what happens to me Squeaky, you keep yourself alive.”

Felicity sniffed. “Do you hero types have any happy stories?”

Clint sighed. “Well, when I lived with the circus there was this elephant named Tansy. She was extra nice to me because I snuck her peanuts when no one was watching.” Clint spent the next half hour rambling about the old circus elephant. Felicity felt herself gradually let go of the fear and managed to smile again.

“What happened to her?” Felicity asked. “After the circus…was shut down.”

“She was sent to a zoo.” Clint said. “They couldn’t release her into the wild; she’d lived in captivity too long. I visited her until she died. She remembered me every time. And I always brought her peanuts.”

Felicity yawned. Lucky had already dropped off to sleep, comforted by Clint’s voice.

“Tired?” Clint asked.

“I don’t want to go back to sleep. I’m afraid of what I might see.” Felicity admitted.

“You’re going to have to sleep eventually.” Clint said.

“Says who?” Felicity said stubbornly.

“Science.” Clint retorted. “And don’t tell me you’re going against science. You’ll break Tony’s heart.”

Felicity giggled.

“She laughs!” Clint said.

“Tony’s a big boy he can take it.” Felicity insisted.

“Until about 2 years ago the man had pieces of shrapnel embedded in his heart, forgive me if I worry about his cardiac health. And you’ll make Bruce sad, then Tasha’s going to blame me.”

Felicity laughed, then began coughing.

“Oh shit, your ribs.” Clint said. “I shouldn’t be making you laugh.”

“It’s fine. Sam practically made me crack one earlier today.” Felicity said.

“Did he?” Clint growled.

Felicity grinned. “Jealous Barton?”

“Just concerned. I’m going to need to have a conversation with Rogers about the company he keeps. It might hurt the Captain America image if word got out that he hangs out with men who crack lady’s ribs.” Clint said dryly.

Felicity gave a tired chuckle. “Clint, thanks for listening.”

“Anytime Squeaky.” Clint said. “Go to sleep, no one’s going to hurt you. I’ll be right here until you
Clint waited for a while until he could hear Felicity’s steady breathing. Then JARVIS came over the intercom. “She is asleep Agent Barton.”

“Thanks J.” Clint said. “Keep me updated if anything changes.”

“Will do sir.”

Clint got up and walked around his room at the mansion. He was happy he’d gotten the call tonight when he wasn’t on patrol. The Avengers and Team Arrow had been split into groups for patrol, and this was his group’s night to hold down the mansion. Team Alpha (Natasha, Nyssa, Laurel, and Steve) was on patrol. The members of Team Beta (Clint, Oliver, Roy, and Digg) were in the mansion somewhere. Tony and Bruce were probably in the lab and Thea had been banned from patrol by Oliver, though Clint had the suspicion that Steve and Nyssa had snuck her out on patrol with them.

“Admit it Barton.” He muttered. “You’d have dropped everything even if she called in the middle of a bank robbery.”

Knowing he wasn’t going to get any more sleep that night, he made his way to the kitchen to get a snack. He could hear angry voices from inside. Pausing by the door, he listened in.

“I don’t like this Oliver.” Digg said.

“Oh now you don’t like this?” Oliver said sarcastically.

“He didn’t tell us valuable information.” Digg huffed. “And it put Felicity in danger.”

“Knowing that he was Barton’s brother wouldn’t have changed anything.” Oliver sighed. “Ra’s target is me. Which means Felicity was already in danger.”

“Doesn’t change the fact that he should have told us.” Digg said. “I don’t approve of him with her.”

“Felicity knew.” Oliver said. “And she trusted him anyways…” he sighed.

“You can’t tell me that you like the idea of them together.” Digg said.

“Oh of course I don’t.” Oliver growled. “I don’t want her hurt. Barton’s convinced that just because Stark and Thor have girlfriends that he can be an Avenger and have one too. What he fails to realize is that he’s just a guy with a bow and arrow. The world’s just too dangerous for him to protect her. Thor’s a god and Tony’s got more explosives than the US military. I can’t be the Arrow and be with her. He’s got to realize that he can’t be Hawkeye and have her either.”

“Unbelievable, man.” Digg grumbled. “You really think THAT’s the issue here? She wants to be with you. She’s settling for Barton because he’s showing interest in her.”

Clint flinched; everything that Digg and Oliver were saying played right into his own insecurities. He took a deep breath, then, plastering a fake smile on his face, he walked into the kitchen.

“Evening gents.” He said as Oliver and Digg broke off their conversation. “I’m making Tasha a post mission snack, want one?” He walked over to the fridge and pretended to look at its contents. He
could feel Digg and Oliver staring at his back. “Right about now, you’re asking yourselves ‘how
much did he hear’ and ‘is there a polite way to bring it up?’” Clint grabbed an apple, closed the
refrigerator door and leaned against it. “I’m a spy, so yes. Though honestly, a deaf person could have
heard you.” He paused. “Get it? Because…” he pointed to his ears. Sighing at Oliver and Digg’s
stony expressions he rolled his eyes and took a bite. “So, anything you want to say to me?”

“Just that if Felicity gets hurt again, whether physically or emotionally because of you; I’m going to
make sure you pay for it.” Digg said.

“Noted.” Clint said. “Anything else? Maybe about what a no good, dishonest person I am?” he
suggested. He turned to Oliver. “How about how naïve and idealistic I am. Let me tell the two of
you something. You think you know how bad the world is because you stranded on an island or
were in the military or did a stretch with Waller? I got news for you. I’ve worked for the organization
Waller’s bosses reported to. Because of SHIELD I’ve seen the darkest holes this world’s had to
offer. I know the dangers and I’ve been dealing with them a lot longer than you. So don’t patronize
me by saying that you know better.”

“How do we know you’re going to take out Trickshot when the time comes?” Digg asked quietly. A
knife whistled through the air and hit the wall right next to Oliver’s head.

“I never miss my target.” Clint said. “And believe me, if Felicity gets hurt again, I’ll be first in line to
kick my own ass.” He took another bite of his apple. “Are we good?”

Digg and Oliver shared a look before both nodding stiffly. Digg left the kitchen.

“You’re not actually making a snack for Romanov.” Oliver said.

“Correct.” Clint sat on the counter.

Oliver looked at the counter. “I’m sorry about…”

“Sorry about what you said or that I heard?” Clint narrowed his eyes. “I get where Digg’s coming
from. He sees Felicity as his sister and he doesn’t approve of me. No offense taken. So what’s your
excuse for being up so late?”

“Thea snuck out.” Oliver grumbled. Clint snorted.

“Well God bless America.”

“Rogers was behind this?” Oliver said incredulously.

“Fun fact: Steve Rogers never turned back from a fight, not even when he was a stick with every
single illness in a 1940’s medical textbook. He loves to encourage people with the same heroic
insanity as him.” Clint said. “Don’t worry. He’ll make sure she doesn’t get seriously injured.”

Oliver raised his eyebrows. “Thanks…I think. What’s your excuse for being up so late?”

Clint went to grab a soda can. “Reviewing everything I have on Trickshot.” He put the can on the
table and sat, pushing it around with his hands. “And I had to help a friend with some personal
problems.”

Oliver looked down at the table. “She called you, didn’t she?”

“I’m not sure that’s the type of question I should answer without a lawyer present.” Clint said.
“Speaking of lawyers; what’s the deal with you and BC. Because Steve’s buddy Falcon is single and
“Is she sleeping okay?” Oliver asked. Clint knew he wasn’t talking about Laurel.

“If she didn’t call you…” Clint paused. He didn’t want to betray Felicity’s confidence by spilling the content of their conversation. “Archer-patient confidentiality and all that jazz.” He opened the soda and it promptly spilled all over his hands and the table. “Awww Soda, why?”

Oliver shook his head. “She called you?”

“I’ll have you know I’m an excellent listener.” Clint huffed.

“Just…make sure she’s okay.” Oliver said.

“I will.” Clint said.

Oliver nodded and left.

“What? No kiss good night?” Clint shouted after them.

He could have sworn he heard a chuckle from Oliver, but he may have imagined it.
“Things are too quiet.” Felicity grumbled. She was having breakfast with Pepper, Lyla, and Maria Hill in Pepper’s living room in the Tower. “I can’t shake this feeling that all hell’s about to break loose.”

“You might be right.” Maria sipped her coffee. “I’ve been reviewing Barton’s old mission logs on the League. It’s not like them to back down for so long after a fight.”

Pepper, who had baby Sara on her lap, frowned at Maria. “I don’t think we should be talking about the league in front of the baby.”

Lyla chuckled.

“Maybe I’m just being paranoid.” Felicity sighed. “Living with vigilantes has really warped my sense of reality.”

Pepper tilted her head thoughtfully. Handing Sara back to Lyla, she stood. “Felicity would you mind helping me with a computer thing in my office?”

Felicity nodded and got to her feet slowly. She’d decided to not use the wheelchair that morning and was regretting the decision. She shuffled into Pepper’s office. Pepper quickly indicated a chair. Felicity sank into it gratefully.

“You don’t actually need help with a computer.” Felicity said. Pepper sat behind her desk and smiled.

“This is Stark Tower. Computer glitches don’t happen. Tony doesn’t allow it. I needed to talk to you alone.” Pepper leaned back into her chair. “You look tired this morning.”

“I…I had trouble sleeping.” Felicity admitted.

“Do you want to talk about it?” Pepper asked. Felicity bit her lip. Pepper nodded and turned so she was looking out at the view of New York from her window. “After…the battle, Tony wasn’t doing well. He couldn’t sleep, he was erratic…He even gave his home address to a terrorist. He needed serious help, but he didn’t want to admit it.” she turned back to Felicity. “I’m telling you this because you need to know that being strong doesn’t mean keeping in your emotions. You need someone to talk to.”

“I used to tell Oliver the same thing.” Felicity shook her head. “I never thought I’d see the day where I’d have to take my own advice.”

“Maybe you should talk to him.” Pepper suggested. “Or…maybe you should talk to Barton?”

Felicity flushed. “I…um, I already called him, right after I woke up.” She picked at her cast. “Is everyone playing matchmaker?”

Pepper grinned. “I warned Tony and Natasha that you were too smart to not realize what they were plotting.”

“Tony’s not exactly subtle.” Felicity muttered. Then her eyes widened. “Not that that’s a bad thing.”

Pepper laughed. “Believe me I know.” She gave Felicity a reassuring smile. “Barton’s a good man.
A little immature, but it’s an act he puts on to mask the burdens he carries.”

“I feel guilty.” Felicity said. “There was something between Oliver and me. I closed that door after he came back from fighting Ra’s, but…there’s a part of me that’s still hoping he’ll turn around and change his mind about us. It’s…unfair to Clint for me to want to start something with him when I still care about Oliver.”

“Feelings don’t just go away.” Pepper agreed. “But you shouldn’t let your life revolve around what Oliver believes is best for you.” She leaned back and squared her shoulders. Felicity watched as her expression became impassive; this was Pepper’s CEO face. “I think we need to discuss the other reason I asked you in here. Tony’s decided not to destroy Palmer, instead he wants to make a deal. He’s proposed a merger.”

“A merger?” Felicity looked skeptical. “I guess that sounds better than a hostile takeover.”

Pepper smiled. “Palmer would maintain the title of CEO, but Stark Industries would have final say on all special projects.” She continued.

“So this is an agree to this or else kind of deal.” Felicity said.

Pepper’s grin grew. “You don’t miss a beat, which is why I’m going to be completely honest with you. Palmer’s leadership is not enough to help keep your company afloat. You’ve gone through 5 different CEOs in the last 3 years, 2 of which were confirmed mass murderers, 1 of whom was completely incompetent. The only reason Isabel Rochev was able to become CEO is because of weak leadership. If you don’t agree to this there’s a very good chance of there being an actual hostile takeover. Believe me, Stark Industries is a more preferable option than Hammer Tech or Lex Corps.”

Felicity closed her eyes and considered her options. “I’ll talk to Ray.” She sighed, “but he’s not going to be happy about this.”

Pepper nodded. “If this doesn’t work out, there’s always a place for you at Stark Industries. We could use more women in power to keep the boys in line.”

“The New York winters are a hard sell.” Felicity smirked.

Pepper laughed. “You sound like Barton. He threatens to defect to the villain’s side about once a month because they all have their bases on private islands.”

“I’m unarmed.” Merlyn held up his hands up as he entered the warehouse.

“That was unwise.” Trickshot said.

“Only if I’m telling the truth.” Merlyn said.

Trickshot stepped forward. “That would be even more stupid. Why did you call this meeting?”

“Because I have a proposal for you.” Merlyn said.

Trickshot laughed. “What could you possibly have to offer me?”

“If you really believed that you wouldn’t be here and I would probably be on the first flight to Nanda Parbat…or dead.”
Trickshot grunted. “This is true.”

“Ra’s won’t help you get your revenge.” Merlyn said. “He’s only allowed it this far because it aligns with his personal interests. The second it stops being true, he’ll order you to abandon it.”

Trickshot’s jaw tightened. Merlyn saw and knew he had gotten through.

“I’m offering my services to help you destroy your brother and throw off the influence of Ra’s al Ghul.”

“What’s in it for you?”

“I want to be free of Ra’s persecution.” Merlyn said. “Ra’s is weak. The Lazarus Pits begin to fail him. His time is passing, which fuels his desperation for an heir. Queen is not fit to become Ra’s. Under him, the League will fracture. The time to strike is now. I’m offering my help. I know Nanda Parbat better than anyone except maybe Ra’s himself.”

“What about the Avengers?” Trickshot hissed.

“Simple, deal with Ra’s first. As for the Avengers.” Merlyn grinned. “You have the very best leverage.” He looked up at the rafters. “Tell your associates they can show themselves.”

Trickshot frowned. Then he raised one of his hands and brought it down. The Winter Soldier and The White Canary came down to stand silently behind him.

“The White Canary, also known as Sara Lance, beloved of Nyssa al Ghul. The Winter Soldier, the fist of Hydra, formerly James Buchanan Barnes. Best friend of one Steve Rogers.” He sneered. “The Avengers will never harm the two who Rogers and Nyssa love most and if someone tries it will fracture the team. All we need is one more element to drive a permanent wedge into the Team Arrow/Avengers alliance.”

Trickshot grinned. “Felicity Smoak.”

“Queen and Barton’s détente is shaky at best.” Merlyn said. “Using her will put them even more at odds. They already don’t trust each other. We just need to play on that.”

Trickshot grinned and licked his lips. “She’s a pretty thing. My brother always did have good taste; I’m going to enjoy playing with her.”

“After,” Merlyn said. “First we have a demon to hunt.”

Four days later a package had been left on the doorstep of Avengers Mansion. Laurel was the unlucky person who found it and opened it. Her screams brought the rest of the team as a severed head rolled out. Oliver knelt and looked the head over. Turning to the rest of the team, he looked at them grimly.

“It’s Ra’s.”
“So, this is the Demon’s head?” Tony snickered as he examined it in the lab. Steve and Natasha shared looks of exasperation.

“Barton already beat you to the punch, Tony.” Bruce sighed.

“Just because he got to it first…” Tony muttered. “Comedy is all about timing.”

“Can we please take this seriously?” Digg said angrily.

Laurel, who’d been sitting off to the side with Thea, spoke up. “With…Ra’s gone…does it mean we can bring the others back?” She was still shaken and couldn’t look directly at the head.

“No.” Nyssa walked forward. Staring down at her father’s head, she paused, then turned to face the rest of the group. “Whoever kills the Demon’s head, becomes the next Demon.”

“Cut off one head and another grows in its place.” Steve murmured. “Like Hydra.”

Nyssa nodded. “Whoever did this sent us the head as a declaration of their superiority…and as a challenge. I am the rightful heir to the Demon and Oliver…” She grimaced as if the words were difficult to say. “Oliver is the heir he chose. The new Demon’s Head will still want to eliminate any competition.” She looked back down at her father’s head. “I wished him dead a thousand times, but all those times it was me who drove the sword through his heart.” Anger flashed in her eyes. “Perhaps I’ll get that chance with the new Ra’s.”

“Any ideas as to who that might be, V for Vendetta?” Tony asked.

“Trickshot.” Clint said, just as Oliver said. “Merlyn.”

“Merlyn?” Clint looked at Oliver incredulously. “He doesn’t have the ability or the means.”

“What reason would Trickshot have to turn against Ra’s?” Oliver retorted.

“Maybe he finally grew a pair and decided to be his own master for a change.” Clint said.

“Merlyn has reasons to want Ra’s dead. The price the league put on his head coupled with the fact that Ra’s wanting me puts Thea in danger are very good reasons for Merlyn to want Ra’s out of the way. In his own twisted way he cares about Thea and wants her safe.”

Thea glared at Ra’s head. “I wish he’d care about me a little less. He turned me into a monster, like him.”

“No one blames you for Sara’s death.” Nyssa said quietly. “As to whose work this is.” She turned the head over (Bruce paled while Tony let out a strangled exclamation of “gloves”) “This blade has very distinctive markings. It belongs to Merlyn.”

Oliver shot Clint a smug look.

“However,” Nyssa rolled her eyes as she continued. “He did not make the kill.”

“How do you know that?” Tony asked. “Does the league offer complementary training in forensics?”
“This mark right here.” Nyssa pointed to the base of Ra’s neck where the front of his throat was split. “If we had the rest of the body, this cut would extend from his stomach to what you see here. There is only one member of the league who kills in this way.”

“Trickshot.” Clint said triumphantly. “Whoop there it is.”

“But Merlyn is involved.” Oliver insisted. “He cut off the head.”

“Doesn’t count.” Clint retorted. “Trickshot did the actual kill.”

Thea shook her head. “Am I the only one who finds it disturbing that they’re bonding over this?”

Steve gave her a look of relief. “I thought I was the only one.”

“Well I for one,” Tony glared at Nyssa, “Am extremely disturbed by the lack of adherence to proper lab safety protocols.”

Bruce took off his glasses and rubbed his eyes in irritation. “Tony, you’ve literally made coffee in the middle of volatile experiments.”

“Yeah, but never with dead things.” Tony shot a look of disgust at Ra’s head.

“Working with you does bad things for my nerves.” Bruce sat heavily in the chair next to Natasha. Tony ignored him and walked up to Ra’s head, scrutinizing it.

“What’s going on?” Roy asked.

“There’s something in here.” Tony muttered as he grabbed a pair of gloves and attempted to open the mouth. “Rigor mortis has set in, so it’s stuck. Which means we do this the old fashion way.” He held out his hand to Bruce. “Drill, please.”

Steve grabbed a pair of gloves and pushed Tony out of the way. “It’s a good thing I have a strong stomach.” He muttered as he pried the mouth open. “This what you were looking for?” He pulled out a small flashdrive. Tony took and shot Nyssa a look.

“You’ll notice that he used gloves.”

“Don’t provoke the assassin Tony.” Bruce closed his eyes.

“I’m going to need your laptop, Cap.” Tony continued. “This drive might have a virus and it’s not like you actually use it anyways.”

Steve gave him a stony expression. Tony turned and walked over to one of the main computers. “Fine.” He said. “But don’t blame me if it goes boom.”

There was only a video file on the drive. It was taken from a security camera. A man, who looked like Trickshot was standing in front of –

“Is that Stark Tower?” Oliver asked.

Trickshot turned and grinned at the camera. Clint glared at the screen.

“We need to go, NOW.”
“Rushing into a decision like this is a bad idea.” Steve said. “We need a plan.”

Clint ignored him and, grabbing a bag with his gear, began making his way to the Avenge-jet. Oliver did the same.

“If Trickshot’s targeting the Tower, then Pepper’s in danger.” Tony said. “I’m calling in Rhodey and the Falcon to make sure they’re safe until we get there.”

“I thought you said the Tower was secure.” Digg said as he followed them.

“It is.” Tony grumbled. “Unfortunately, Barton’s brother seems to defy all odds to be a major murderous pain in the ass. I’m not taking any chances.”

“Shouldn’t someone stay in Starling?” Thea asked as she and Steve came out of the mansion.

“If my father is dead, it means Oliver is of no more interest to the League.” Nyssa said. “If they plan to attack Avengers Tower, it is possible that Sara might be there.” She looked at Steve. “And Sgt Barnes as well.”

“We can strategize on the plane.” Clint said. “All those who’re staying here, stay. Everyone else, wheels up in 3. And if you plan on trying to stop me, I’ll toss you out a side door while we’re flying over the great lakes.”

The teams all looked at each other, then got onto the plane. Natasha took her seat next to Clint in the cockpit.

“You’re spiraling.” She said softly as Clint began his preflight checks.

“No I’m focused.” Clint retorted. “I have a target and I never miss my target.”

“Melodramatic declarations won’t change the fact that this is exactly what Trickshot wants you to do.” Natasha said. “He’s playing you.”

“So what do you suggest?” Clint hissed. “Let him attack the Tower while I twiddle my thumbs here? He doesn’t need Felicity as leverage to hurt Oliver anymore. He wants her to hurt me. And using her against me…he won’t kill her; that would be too easy, too merciful.” Clint began shaking. “He’ll…Tasha I don’t even want to imagine what he’d be capable of doing.” He gripped the controls until his knuckles turned white. Natasha put her hand on his shoulder. Clint closed his eyes and took a deep breath. “I’m going to the Tower, Tasha.”

“So you can hole up in your floor with Felicity and play caveman, clubbing away any threat to your mate?” Natasha asked.

The corner of Clint’s mouth ticked upward. Shaking his head, he opened his eyes and glared out the cockpit window. “Skipping over the obligatory comment on how fantastic I’d look in a loincloth, I’m doing this. Trickshot wants me and he’s going to have no problem murdering, maiming, and torturing anyone he thinks stands in his way. Ra’s being dead actually gives him more freedom to…” Clint stopped. Leaning forward he crossed his arms and put them on the flight controls. Then he buried his face in his forearms. Natasha got up and shut the cockpit door. Coming to stand behind Clint, she put her hand on his shoulder. Clint flinched, then looked up at her, his eyes wide and afraid.
“Tasha, I have honestly no idea what else I’m supposed to do.”

“Rely on your team.” Natasha said firmly. “We have him out matched. He’s playing mind games because he knows it’s the only advantage he has. You’re not that scared little boy anymore, Clint. You’re an Avenger, a skilled fighter, a shrewd tactician and one of the best marksmen in the world. It’s him who should be afraid of you….and he probably is.”

“Thanks Tasha.” Clint said.

“Just don’t tell anyone.” Natasha smirked as she made her way to the cockpit door. “I spent a long time cultivating a reputation as someone who doesn’t give pep talks.”

“Wait.” Clint turned his chair and glared at her. “ONE of the best marksmen?”

Natasha smiled and closed the door.
Chapter 23

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The Avengejet landed on the roof of the Tower. Pepper and Maria were waiting for them on the landing pad.

“Love of my life.” Tony grinned as he came off the plane and kissed Pepper.

“Mhmmm. You came back just in time for a board meeting tonight.” Pepper smiled as Tony groaned.

“Well it’s been great catching up, but I think I hear some orphans in Wakanda who need some Avenging.” He made to go back to the jet, but Pepper grabbed his arm and tugged him towards the Tower door.

“But Pepper…orphans.”

She rolled her eyes.

“Don’t expect to see them for a few hours.” Bruce chuckled.

“Agent Hill,” Steve said. “Any updates?”

“We’ve been monitoring the surrounding blocks. The video was taken from a café down the street. There are no empty buildings or warehouses in a 3 block radius where they can set up a base, but…” the two of them went inside talking strategy.


“Napping.” Lyla came out of the Tower carrying baby Sara, and walked up to Digg. “Her new pain medication put her right to sleep.”

“I guess I’ll be going to the guest quarters.” Clint muttered as he walked into the tower.

“Actually Agent Barton, Ms. Smoak is not in her guest quarters.” JARVIS chimed in from the ceiling. Clint froze.

“Agent Barton’s personal floor.” JARVIS said. “She and Lucky went down when Mr. Stark contacted Pepper about the possible breach to Tower security.”

Clint felt a rush of relief. “Smart woman.” He murmured. “Don’t worry Queen, she’s completely safe.” He walked onto the elevator just as Tony burst out of his lab covered in shaving cream.

“Where is she? Where’s the treacherous infiltrator who turned my own lab robots against me?”

Clint laughed. “She’s gone where you can’t reach her, Stark.” The doors closed on Tony muttering plots for revenge while Digg, Bruce and Natasha looked amused.

“JARVIS, I may be falling in love with that woman.” Clint said. JARVIS wisely remained silent. The doors opened on to his floor and Lucky rushed over to him, wagging his tail.
“Hey, buddy. You grew since the last time I saw you.” Clint grinned and knelt, scratching his ears. “I got you a present.” He pulled an eyepatch from his pocket. “This used to belong to Nick Fury.” Putting the eye patch on the dog, he stood. “Where’s your mom?” Making his way further into the apartment, he caught sight of Felicity sleeping on the couch. She was squirming slightly, her face twisted in a mixture of fear and pain. She was having a nightmare. Clint grabbed a blanket and put it over her. Then he sat next to her pushing back a stray hair. She shifted closer and relaxed.

“Yep.” Clint murmured, giving her a small smile. “I am so screwed.”

Chapter End Notes

Short chapter, sorry. There will be a longer one tomorrow. I've got the next 2 and 1/2 chapters of this one written and the next 2 chapters of the Steve/Felicity story written.
“Good morning sunshine.”

Felicity groaned as she turned over. “Sleeping.” She grumbled.

“Well technically it’s the late afternoon, but good late afternoon sunshine doesn’t have the same ring to it.” The voice continued. “I made pancakes, and unless you want me to feed them to Lucky, which I’m pretty sure goes against your whole ‘he has to eat healthy’ edict –“

Felicity’s eyes snapped open. “Clint?” She said squinting in his direction.

He held out her glasses. “Need these?”

“You’re back!” She grinned as she put on her glasses. “For super secret dark reasons that Maria didn’t feel the need to brief me on.”

Clint frowned. “She didn’t tell you why we were coming back to the Tower?”

“Nope.” Felicity said. “She just said you guys were making an emergency trip here, she didn’t give specifics.”

“So you came down here in case there was trouble.”

“No, I came down here because I’m hiding from Tony.”

Clint snorted.

Felicity nudged his side. “So, are you going to tell me why you’re back? Not that I didn’t miss you, but Maria seemed worried.”

Clint bit his lip. “How about we eat first, and then I deliver the bad news.”

“Bad news?” Felicity crossed her arms. Clint flashed her a smile. She raised an eyebrow in response. He sighed.

“Food first. I slaved over these pancakes and I want some validation for my culinary prowess. Then I’ll tell you everything.” He put his hand over hers. “It’s been a rough few days. How about we pretend we’re two ordinary people, with a dog, who are going to eat a delicious pancake… I guess it’s dinnertime, so dinner, without having to worry about the usual craziness.”

Felicity gave him a small smile. “Pancakes, huh?”

“Delicious, Pancakes.” Clint corrected, tapping her on the nose. He looked around. “Where’s the wheel chair, Squeaky?”

Felicity made a face. “I’m not using that thing anymore.” She grumbled. “It wasn’t necessary to begin with. You and the others just forced me into it because you’re over protective.”

“Well excuse me for being concerned about not worsening your injuries.” Clint said and there was a flash of guilt as he looked at her cast. Felicity put her hand on his arm.

“It’s not your fault.” She whispered.
I know. I was just thinking that Cap should have a go at decorating that cast. Did you know he’s an artist? Just go up to him and give him the goo-goo eyes and be like; ‘please Steve draw me a picture.’” Clint said. Scooping her up, he carried her over to the table. Putting her down in her chair, he placed her plate in front of her.

“I precut the pancakes because I didn’t want you to strain yourself trying to do everything one handed.” He said.

“Thanks, that’s so thoughtful.” Felicity beamed.

“And if you want me to feed you, darlin’ ” he winked, “I’d be more than willing.”

Felicity tilted her head. “I guess that depends on how good the pancakes are.”

Clint grinned. “Yes! Playful Squeaky is back!” He took a bite. “So what did you do to Tony’s robots?”

Felicity shot him an innocent look as she ate. “I’m sure I have no idea what you’re talking about. These pancakes are amazing, by the way.”

“Oh really?” Clint grinned. “No idea?”

“I’m sure I heard absolutely nothing about someone reprogramming Tony’s entire music library so that when he tries to play an AC/DC song, it plays Justin Bieber instead and giving Dum-e a subroutine that allows him to respond when Tony’s mean to him.” She took another bite of her pancake. “Also I know nothing about someone switching all the coffee to decaff.”

Clint’s fork dropped out of his hand as he looked at her with awe. “You hacked into one of Tony’s creations and got it to revolt against him?” He gave a low whistle of appreciation. “That brain of yours combined with my spy skills and tactical expertise are going to terrorize this Tower.”

“Do you think he’ll forgive me?” Felicity asked nervously.

“Of course.” Clint said quickly. “Although you might want to lay low for a few days. Travel through the airvents, etc.”

“I would, but someone is insisting that I go around in a wheel chair and I’m pretty sure it doesn’t fit up there.” Felicity huffed. Clint grinned.

“Oh you’d be surprised. It’s a different world up there.” Clint looked up at the ceiling. “As for Tony…you did mess with his coffee.”

Felicity winced.

“It’s okay, darlin’.” Clint reached over and gave her hand a squeeze. “I still love you.”

She looked at him in surprise. Clint cleared his throat uncomfortably and turned to look back at his plate. They fell into an awkward silence.

“So,” Felicity said after a while. “When did you find out Trickshot is targeting the Tower?”

Clint gagged on his forkful of food.

Felicity gave him a smirk. “Genius, remember? It’s the only logical explanation for how quickly you came back here and why you brought the whole team. What I can’t figure out is why Ra’s would be okay with attacking a second city. New York is less assassin friendly than Starling. There are less
empty warehouses and dark alleys. Plus Avengers Tower isn’t an easy target. This is Tony’s arsenal. He has to know he has no chance – “

“Ra’s is dead.” Clint said softly. “Trickshot sent us a video of himself outside the Tower and…Ra’s’ head was inside the package.”

Felicity paled. “I think the pancakes are coming up for an encore.” She muttered, putting her hand on her stomach.

Clint gave her a sheepish look. “I’m realizing that insisting you eat first may not have been my brightest idea.” He moved his chair closer and turned to face her. “Trickshot’s going to try and destroy me and…he’s probably going to hurt you.”

Felicity reached out and gave his fingers a squeeze. “Let me guess. This is the part where you tell me to stay away from you for my own safety while you shut down emotionally.”

Clint raised an eyebrow. “No, this is the part where I act like a selfish bastard and beg you to not push me away because my psycho brother is trying to kill you.” He fidgeted nervously. “Um…are you going to push me away?”

Felicity smiled. “Well…” she said slowly. “It’s a tough sell, but these pancakes are so good they tipped the scales in your favor.”

Clint relaxed. “Well I guess I better keep cooking.” He frowned down at her cast. “Bruce talked to one of his friends who’s a researcher in Seoul. Her name is Dr. Helen Cho and she’s doing all sorts of cutting edge medical research. He gave her a look at your Xrays and she says there’s a doctor in her lab who’s basically making Skelogrow.”

Felicity snorted.

“What?” Clint said. “I’m not allowed to read Harry Potter?”

“I just thought you’d be more of a Lord of the Rings fan.” Felicity said innocently.

“Ha ha.” Clint said. “Anyways, Dr. Kwon’s flying in tomorrow and wants to meet with you about possible treatment options. She says she can probably fix your bones in a few days when it normally would have taken months.”

Felicity grinned. “I can wait to meet her.” She bit her lip. “How are the others reacting to getting head…I mean getting sent Ra’s’s head.”

“Nice to see you’re as single minded as always.” Clint said dryly. “Nyssa’s angry because she wasn’t the one to do the chopping. Steve’s focused on the mission. Laurel was the one who opened the box, so she’s definitely going to need extensive therapy. Although so does everyone around here. Thea’s a bit freaked out because Merlyn’s involved. Diig’s mostly worried about Lyla and little Digg. Tony’s gone into Protect Pepper mode. Bruce is zen, which I think we can all be grateful for. Tasha – “

“How about you?” Felicity cut him off.

“Me?” Clint contemplated the question. Leaning back in his chair, he exhaled. “I’m considerably less freaked out now that I’m here and can see that you’re okay.”

“Agent Barton.” JARVIS interrupted. “An assassin named Serab is on the roof and says he has a message for you.”
Clint rolled his eyes. “And of course that’s the moment the universe decides to throw me another curveball.”
After extracting multiple assurances from Felicity that she wouldn’t leave the apartment, Clint stormed up to the landing pad. Serab was standing in the center and appeared to be completely at ease despite the fact that Steve, Nyssa, and Natasha were all around him with weapons drawn.

Steve was the first to see Clint arrive. “He won’t talk to anyone except you.” He said.

“And Steven wasn’t willing to allow me to use my usual methods of interrogation.” Nyssa hissed.

“It probably wouldn’t have done anything, Nyssa.” Steve gave her an exasperated smile.

“No,” Nyssa said quietly looking at her sword, “but it would have been fun to try.”

“Maseo?” Oliver had come on to the landing pad and caught sight of Serab.

“Wait,” Clint looked at him in shock. “You know this guy?”

“I thought I did.” Oliver said quietly. He glared at Serab whose face remained expressionless.

“I come with a message from Ra’s al Ghul.” The assassin said.

“What is who exactly?” Clint said. “Heads have been rolling and we’re not sure who’s in charge anymore.”

Oliver shot him a glare. Clint raised an eyebrow.

“Call me picky, but I’d like to know who’s threatening me.” Clint grumbled.

“Ra’s requests that you surrender yourself and Thea Queen to him and Malcom Merlyn or he will retaliate.” Serab said.

Clint felt a chill. Merlyn as Ra’s was bad, but Trickshot as Ra’s…that was unthinkable. “Retaliate how?” he growled.

Serab looked at him emotionlessly. “He told me to inform you that the next time she will suffer worse than a few broken bones.”

Clint stepped forward and grabbed Serab by the front of his uniform. “Listen here you brainwashed, homicidal, lapdog. You tell Barney that having the ring which makes him top psycho doesn’t give him the right to threaten those I care about. If he hurts her again, I’ll make sure he ends up like his predecessor.”

Serab looked at Clint with what appeared to be amusement. “Tell me, Hawkeye; your personal quarters are on the floor 7 flights down from this one, correct?”

Clint’s face was impassive. Serab smiled.

“The White Canary and Winter Soldier are poised and waiting for my signal. Should you refuse, they will simply take Ra’s’…motivational tool.”

Clint’s expression darkened. “And what happens if I throw you over this roof right now?”
“Barton.” Oliver hissed, getting ready to lunge at Clint, but Steve held him back.

“She’s not a motivational tool.” Clint let go of Serab and stepped back. “I’m not going.”

Oliver glared at him while struggling against Steve’s grip. “He’s going to take Felicity and my sister if you don’t.”

“He can try.” Clint growled. “I’m not giving in to what Barney wants.”

Serab calmly walked over to the side of the tower and tossed a piece of red cloth over the side. There was the high pitched cry of the Canary, then the sound of shattering glass. Then silence.

Oliver made a desperate attempt to get to the inside of the Tower, but Steve only tightened his grip.

“Stand down.” He said quietly.

“Barton just condemned Felicity and Thea.” Oliver said. “How the hell are you so calm?”

“Because he knows that my floor isn’t 7 flights down.” Clint said.

There was a loud roar which made both Serab and Oliver jump in surprise.

“That is what we call a Code Green.” Clint smirked. “You tell my dear brother that the next time he comes after me he does it himself, without help from his goon squad.”

Serab jumped over the side of the building to make his getaway.

Oliver ripped his arm out of Steve’s grasp and rounded on Clint. “How could you gamble with Felicity’s safety?” he hissed.

“She was never in any danger.” Clint retorted. “Serab and co just attacked the lab. Even if they had the right floor, I added extra security on top of what Tony has.”

He turned and began making his way inside. The others followed, Oliver was still fuming.

“Widow.” Tony radioed in from the lab. “We’re going to need your help with the big guy.”

“Oh my way.” Natasha said, smirking slightly at Oliver’s apparent irritation.

“Oh and Cap.” Tony added. “It might interest you to know that while the Canary got away, Hulk managed to knock out the Winter Soldier.”

Steve’s eyes popped out of his head. “You’ve…you’ve got him?”

“We’ve got him.”

Steve turned to Nyssa. She gave him a reassuring smile. “Go.” She said.

Clint watched as they went to go down to the lab. He’d turned towards the elevator; impatient to get back Felicity when Oliver grabbed his arm.

“Don’t ever play odds with Felicity’s life in the balance.” Oliver said; his anger clearly at a breaking point.

Clint glared. “So it’s ok for you to use her as bait for a psychopath, but I’m not allowed to trick assassins into trying to kidnap the Hulk?”
“That’s not what I –“

“They had the wrong floor, she wasn’t in any danger.” Clint shouted. “I know you think I’m stupid. I know you think I’m delusional because, how did you so eloquently put it to Digg when you guys were discussing me behind my back? Oh right ‘just because Thor and Tony have girlfriends, I think I can be an Avenger and have one too. I’m just a guy with a bow and the world is too dangerous for me to protect her.”

“It’s the truth.” Oliver said, raising his voice.

“It doesn’t have to be.” Clint shouted back. “I care about her and, unlike you, I’m willing to fight for her.”

“She’s too good to be involved in this type of darkness.” Oliver growled.

Clint shook his head. “She is involved, Queen. Just because she doesn’t dress up in a costume and beat up bad guys doesn’t mean that she is any less a part of what we do. And you believing that as long as she doesn’t put on a mask she’s somehow not involved, is patronizing and insulting to her.”

He turned and went to the elevator. The doors had just opened when Oliver’s soft reply made his blood run cold.

“Digg’s right, you know. If I asked her, she’d drop you in a second. She’s settling for you.”

Clint stiffened. He contemplated turning around and attacking Queen, but knew it was stupid and wouldn’t solve anything. He turned slightly and said. “I think you’d take care to remember who you’re talking to.” Then he walked straight onto the elevator. When the doors closed he punched the wall.

“OW.” He growled. “That’s way more impressive when Cap does it.” Breathing slowly, he tried to cool down before the elevator stopped on his floor. The doors opened and he stepped out, only to be tackled by both Felicity and Lucky.

“Squeaky, you’re going to hurt your ribs.” Clint murmured, but he held her tight and pressed his cheek against her hair. He hadn’t realized how much he needed this; needed a simple hug. Even if Queen’s words, which were echoing in the back of his mind, repeated to him that he couldn’t hold on to her. That she might not want him.

“I hacked the security footage; I saw what happened.” Felicity said, pressing her face against his chest. “All of it.”

Clint looked down at her, terrified of what she might say next. She gave him a dazzling smile, then pulled his face down and kissed him.
Chapter 26

When Felicity pulled back, Clint leaned forward, pressing his forehead against hers. “Squeaky.” He whispered. “You’re making it very difficult to be considerate about your ribs.” He opened his eyes. She was grinning.

“I have a doctor’s appointment tomorrow, so…”

Clint groaned.

“He’s wrong.” She said softly.

“You don’t have to—”

“He’s wrong.” She repeated. “I’m not settling. Do I care about him? Yes. Did I think we could have something; yes. But the fact of the matter is I deserve someone who’s…” She broke off. “I just can’t believe he said that to you.” She frowned.

Clint smiled. “I like this righteous indignation.” He tugged her over to the wheel chair.

“I…appreciated what you said. About my being important even though I don’t have a mask or costume.” She said. “That means a lot to me.” She glared at the wheelchair. “It’s going to mean more to me when I take my revenge.”

“Well you can control the revenge…from your chair. You’d make the world’s most adorable evil mastermind.” Clint said. “Now, you’re going to bed and I’m setting up on the couch.”

“This is your apartment.” Felicity said.

“You’re injured.” Clint said, wheeling her into the bedroom. “And I’ve slept on worse.” He picked her up and put her on the bed.

“Not an excuse.” Felicity grumbled.

Clint snorted. “Let me tell you something, darlin’. When you’ve had to sleep on the ground in warzones with bombs going off around you, this bed seems ridiculously extravagant.” He rolled his eyes. “Tony has an inability to own anything with a thread count under 400.”

“I’m capable of tucking myself in.” Felicity said as Clint pulled back the blanket. Lucky jumped on the bed and grabbed Clint’s shirt in his teeth. He tugged until Clint sat on the bed.

“I think someone wants me to stay.” Clint looked at the dog, then looked shyly at Felicity.

“He’s not the only one.” Felicity murmured. She patted the space next to her. Clint moved so he was next to her. Lucky set himself down between them. “I’ve been meaning to ask…” Felicity said. “Where did he get the eyepatch?”

Clint smirked. “I stole that particular piece of eyewear from the one and only Nick Fury my first year at SHIELD academy. Settle in, Squeaky. I’m going to tell you a bed time story.”
“Barnes isn’t talking.” Tony grumbled, as he started off the next day’s strategy meeting. “Cap’s with him and is insisting that pressuring him for information could ‘hinder his recovery’” he rolled his eyes. Thea smacked him on the back of the head. “Ouchie” he pouted.

“Way to be understanding of others’ suffering.” Laurel muttered. “How do we move forward?”

“Well we have a major problem and that problem is New York City.” Digg said.

“That’s…one I haven’t heard before.” Bruce said.

“Starling city is less densely populated than New York.” Digg explained. “There’s more of a chance of collateral damage if we keep the fight here.”

“So we move the fight back to Starling?” Tony said slowly.

“No.” Thea said. “Malcolm knows the city just as well as we do if not better.”

“Add that to the fact that Trickshot is well aware of the Avengers’ tactics having studied them in anticipation for taking down his brother.” Nyssa added.

“Good to know he still cares.” Clint mumbled. He was sitting next to Felicity, who was still in her wheelchair. She gave his arm a reassuring squeeze. Oliver frowned at them.

“We know he’s in New York and we know he has Malcolm and …Sara.” Laurel said. “Which means he has both teams at a tactical disadvantage.”

“Well so far this meeting has been super productive and optimistic.” Natasha said.

“Which is why,” Oliver said, looking away from Felicity and Clint. “We do something none of them can anticipate.” He leaned back in his chair and looked smug. “We find their hideout…fast.”

Roy grinned. “Then we strike, like lightning.” He looked over at Oliver who gave him a pained look. “Bad joke, got it.”

The Avengers looked at each other in confusion.

“We’ve definitely missed something.” Clint said. He shot Felicity a questioning look, but she only raised her eyebrows with a smile. Leaning forward he whispered, “Darlin’ I have ways to make you talk.”

“We call in the reinforcements.” Oliver said loudly. “Stark, how fast can that jet of yours get to Central City and back?”

“Central…” Tony's eyes grew wide. “You guys know the Streak?”

“He actually goes by the Flash now.” Digg said.

“This…is…AWESOME!” Cisco stepped off the elevator, his eyes as wide as dinner plates.

“Be cool, Cisco.” Barry hissed as he, Joe, Caitlyn and Iris followed.
“Nobody tell me.” Tony said. He walked up to Team Flash. Scrutinizing each member he finally put his hand on Caitlyn’s shoulder. “This one.”

Team Arrow shook their heads.

“He’s trying to guess which one of you is the Flash.” Thea explained when she saw their bewildered expressions.

“This one?” He said, indicating Iris.

“You didn’t tell him?” Barry asked.

“This is more fun.” Digg smirked.

Barry stepped forward and held out his hand. “It’s an honor to meet you, Mr. Stark. I’m Barry Allen; the Flash.”

Tony tilted his head. “Okay, so we’ve established that, now do your parents know you’re here?” He looked over at Joe. “I’m guessing you’re chaperoning this fieldtrip since none of them are old enough to drink.”

Joe crossed his arms. “I’m Detective Joe West; this is Iris West, Cisco Ramon, and Dr. Caitlyn Snow.” Tony’s eyes popped out of his head.

“From STAR labs.” He said. “I tried to hire you,” he pouted. “You turned me down.”

“Barry.” Oliver cut in before Cisco and Caitlyn could respond. “We need you to conduct a full search of the city to find these three people.” He showed him an image of Trickshot, Sara and Merlyn. “Do not engage, do not alert them of your presence, find them and come back here.”

Barry nodded. “New York’s a bit bigger than Central…it could take a few more minutes than usual.” There was a blur as he changed into his costume. Then, with a wink he turned towards the door. “Be back in a flash.” A breeze tore through the room as he rushed out. Team Flash shared a collective look of exasperation.

“How long was he sitting on that pun?” Digg asked.

“Since we took down Captain Boomerang.” Caitlyn said. “He’d been hoping to work with you again because we got tired of it.”

“He’s also going to need to refuel when he gets back.” Cisco added. “Do you guys have food?”

“Already got it covered.” Oliver pointed to the center table where 3 pizza boxes were stacked.

“Since we’re waiting.” Tony said. “I can vet our two potential inductees to the Science Alliance.” He put his arms around Caitlyn and Cisco’s shoulders and dragged them to the elevator. “I promise they’ll miss their bedtime” he shouted over his shoulder at Joe.

Joe raised an eyebrow. “Should I be worried?” he asked as Cisco began babbling about potential upgrades to the Ironsuit.

“No.” Roy said. “Iron man just handed Cisco an open invitation to play with his toys; we should all be worried.”

“Tony’s reached his quota of explosions for the week.” Pepper said. “He’ll behave himself.” She turned to Iris. “You work at the Central City Picture News, right?”
As she and Iris began talking, Felicity wheeled over to Joe. “Where’s Dr. Wells? I was kinda hoping we’d be chair buddies since I’ve been forcibly prescribed one.”

“Dr. Kwon’s super drug takes 3 more days to be fully effective, Squeaky.” Clint smirked. “And she signed off on the chair being a good idea during your check up this morning.”

“Stop looking so smug.” She said.

“I have medical reinforcement for my protective tendencies.” Clint retorted. “I’ll be as smug as I please.”

“Wells” Joe said quickly, “…is something Barry needs to talk to you guys about.” Joe looked at the remaining Avengers uncomfortably. “Um…this is a personal matter, is there a place where I could talk to Team Arrow alone please?”

“You can stay here.” Pepper smiled. “We’ll go.” She and Maria stood.

“I should supervise what’s going on in the lab anyways.” Bruce said as he left.

Clint kissed Felicity on the forehead. “Squeak if you need me.” He whispered, then he and Natasha left.

Joe looked at Nyssa, Lyla, and Baby Sara.”

“They’re also part of the team.” Digg said.

“Does the baby go around shooting arrows into people too?” Joe said.

“Dad,” Iris said, putting a hand on his arm. “We need their help.”

“You still don’t like me.” Oliver crossed his arms.

“Barry trusts you,” Joe’s tone indicated his lack of enthusiasm.

“Harrison Wells is the Reverse Flash.” Iris said.

“The man in yellow,” Felicity said. “The one who…”

“Killed Barry’s mother.” Joe finished. “And he’s not actually Harrison Wells. We found the actual Harrison Wells’ body on the outside of Starling City.” He looked over at Laurel. “Your father was extremely helpful.”

“We need your…well the Arrow’s help in taking him down.” Iris explained.

Oliver nodded. “Throwing more bodies at him reduces how focused he’s going to be.”

“It’s a solid strategy.” Digg said.

“I’m in.” Oliver said.

“So am I.” Thea said. Oliver glared.

“No you’re not.”

“Before this argument escalates I’m going to say that I’m also willing to help.” Laurel said. “and Ollie, you need to stand down.”
“I agree.” Roy said. “On both counts.”

Oliver glared. Digg chuckled. “You’re out voted, man.”

“Mr. Queen,” JARVIS said. “Mr. Allen just contacted Dr. Snow to inform her that he will be back in…”

“Hey, the elevator wasn’t fast enough so I took the stairs.” Barry said, breezing into the room. “Food?”

Oliver pointed at the pizzas. Digg shifted uncomfortably. “I am never going to get used to that.”

Barry ate 2 pizzas in under 30 seconds and collapsed on the couch next to Lyla. “Hey Agent Michaels.” He looked down at baby Sara. “Aren’t you the cutest—“

“Barry.” Joe interrupted.

“Oh, right. There’s a bunch of assassins and a woman in white leather on Roosevelt Island.” He looked at the expression on the groups’ faces. Then he turned to Joe and Iris. “You told them about Wells.”

Joe nodded.

“As soon as we stop the League we’ll come back to Central and help you guys out.” Oliver said. Barry breathed a sigh of relief. “Thanks Oliver, I really appreciate it.” He looked around. “So…the Avengers huh?”

“Yeah.” Oliver said.

“Cool.” Barry grinned. “So do we fly in to Roosevelt Island and smash everything?”

“We’re going to have to evacuate before we issue a code Green.” Felicity said. “I’m going to send out an order to everyone who lives there. Gas leak sound feasible?”

“So we’re taking down the league.” Barry said.

“We’re not taking down the league.” Oliver looked over at Nyssa. “We’re staging a coup to establish a new leader.” He stood. “Give JARVIS the address so he can call up the blueprints. We need a battle plan…and I guess we should call the Avengers back in.”

Felicity looked at the ceiling. “Something tells me they already know…right Clint?”

Clint dropped down from one of the airvents. Brushing himself off, he sat next to Felicity. Sheepishly he smiled.

“It was Romanov’s idea.” He muttered.

“Traitor.” Natasha landed next to him.

“We didn’t hear anything….” Clint said. Felicity raised an eyebrow. He smiled. “Have I ever mentioned how radiant you are when you’re judging me?”

“JARVIS.” Oliver said closing his eyes. “You can call up the other Avengers.”
“You guys know I can just run in, tie everyone up and be across town ordering pizza in a fraction of the time it’s going to take you to beat them down.” Barry said. The joint team was getting into position around the warehouse. Felicity, Cisco, and Caitlin were running comms from the tower with Pepper and Lyla.

Oliver sighed while knocking out one of the assassins who was guarding the exterior of the warehouse. “In order to ascend to Ra’s Nyssa has to defeat Trickshot herself… though I don’t understand why Thea has to go in with her.”

“Besides, there’s no telling what we’ll encounter in there.” Tony chimed in. “They could flood the room with poison gas. We’re better working as a team. And Speedy’s going in because it’ll distract Merlyn.”

“Nyssa.” Steve said, having taken out the last of the scouts. “We’re in position, whenever you’re ready.”

Nyssa kicked open the doors and walked in with Thea and Clint behind.

“Where is the pretender to my father’s title?” She shouted. “Bring me Barnabas Barton.”

“I earned the title.” Trickshot said. The warehouse was half lit by streetlamps. The light filtered in through the dirty glass in the ceiling. Assassins were on all sides. Trickshot was in the darkest part of the warehouse, while Nyssa, Thea and Clint stood in the most illuminated part. Trickshot took a step forward. “Come to challenge me for daddy’s crown?” he taunted.

“I came to make a deal.” Nyssa growled.

“The Demon’s head doesn’t make deals.” Trickshot hissed.

“Oh really?” Clint said. “Because I seem to remember a deal Ra’s made in Budapest.”

“A bargain which was only necessary because your personal vendetta against your brother endangered the entire league.” Nyssa added.

“My brother was searching for us. He was tracking us down; it was dangerous.” Trickshot hissed.

“He only wanted you.” Nyssa hissed. “And instead of facing him yourself, you hid like a coward and let better men die in your place.” She turned and addressed her next words to the assembled assassins. “How many of our number fell that day?” She threw Trickshot a disgusted look. “Do you believe he even remembers their names?” She glared behind him to where Merlyn was crouching, looking at Thea with an expression of greed. “He chooses to align himself with this miserable traitor; a man without courage or honor. He betrayed the league and hid from our justice. Then forced his daughter to kill one of our number to save his own skin.”
There was movement up in the rafters. Nyssa looked up to see the White Canary crouching on one of the support beams. She had her head tilted sideways and was looking at Nyssa curiously. Trickshot began clapping slowly.

“That was one hell of a speech. You should have been a politician, babe.” He looked past her at Clint. “Now go play with your dolls. The adults have important things to do.”

“You have two choices.” Clint said. “Either you renounce the title and give her the ring, after which I’ll kick your ass, or you fight her for the title, which will end with her kicking your ass and me using what’s left for target practice.” He shrugged. “Your decision; I’m good either way, though I do so prefer option A.”

Trickshot gave his brother a malevolent glare. Then he smiled. “How are Felicity’s ribs? Healing well? I’m going to enjoy breaking them again.” He laughed. “I’m guessing you’ve been too noble to try anything since she’s injured.” His expression darkened. “Don’t worry. After I destroy Nyssa, I’ll keep you alive just long enough to let you watch.”

Clint’s hands balled into fists. “You might want to rethink what you’re saying.” He said quietly. “Because I can’t be held responsible for what happens if you keep talking.”

“And maybe,” Trickshot continued, ignoring Clint. “I’ll keep you alive for what I’m going to do to that Red Room – “

**CRASH**

Natasha smashed her way through the ceiling. Landing behind Trickshot, she flicked her wrists, her stun batons glowing blue with the power they contained.

“I tried to warn you.” Clint said. Looking around Trickshot, he frowned at Natasha. “I thought we agreed to wait for a signal?”

“Banner was looking a little green so I came here to see if I could defuse the situation.” She looked around at the league members. “Hey,” she pointed at one of them. “I remember you from Budapest, we should do it again some time.” Looking back at Trickshot she smiled. “Hello Barney.”

“Take them out.” Trickshot roared. None of the assassins moved.

“Our quarrel is not with you.” Nyssa told them. “Your leader would have you fight his battles for him. You know me and my skills, doubtless you’ve heard of the Widow and Hawkeye. And Speedy here has all the skill of her brother combined with my expert tutelage.”

“Not to mention that Iron Man, War Machine, Captain America, The Arrow, Arsenal, The Flash, Falcon, The Black Canary, and Mr. Diggle are outside.” Thea said.

“Mr. Diggle?” Digg hissed over the com. “Did you guys seriously just reveal my name to an entire warehouse of assassins?”

“Well I wanted your codename to be Big Daddy.” Tony said. “But apparently that’s offensive and grounds for a sexual harassment suit.”

“I’ve got you covered.” Cisco said. “How about-“

“Focus.” Oliver growled.

The assassins around the room remained silent. Then one stepped forward. “We will serve the one
who proves themselves worthy of wearing the ring of Ra’s al Ghul.”

“He’s got the ring.” Merlyn hissed. “Listen to him.”

The nameless assassin glared at him. “I do not take orders from you.”

“Thank you, League extra number 3.” Clint said.

Trickshot turned and glared at Nyssa. “You bitch.” He shouted.

The White Canary swung down from the rafters, landing between Trickshot and Nyssa she gripped her Bo staff and struck him in the stomach. Spinning around she hit him on the back of his knees, causing his legs to buckle and finally brought the staff down on his shoulder, forcing him to the ground.

“I really don’t like that word.” She said quietly.

Trickshot looked up at her, dazed, then threw something from the inside of his pocket. There was a small explosion and gas filled the room.

“Barry, get in there.” Felicity shouted over coms.

Barry burst in and created a funnel to clear out the gas. When the smoke cleared Thea was battling Merlyn and Trickshot had disappeared.

“Fucking coward.” Clint grumbled.

“Language.” Steve said as he and the rest of the team came in.

“Just give me a boost, Cap.” Clint growled. Steve held his shield flat, and when Clint jumped on it, used it to push him up wards. Clint grabbed on to one of the rafters and pulled himself up. Getting onto the roof, he found Oliver scanning the surrounding area.

“Fancy meeting you here.” Clint smirked.

“I can’t see Trickshot anywhere.” Oliver grumbled. Clint scanned the island, then pointed. “There, down by the water's edge. He’s got some kind of boat.”

Oliver pulled an arrow from his quiver. “Ready for a little target practice, Barton?”

“If you think you can keep up.” Clint said, mirroring Oliver’s actions. “We never did have that archery competition.” There was a collective groan from the rest of the team.

“Is now really the best time to settle your measuring contest?” Digg asked.

“Can’t hear you... breaking... up.” Clint said, shutting off his com. Taking aim, he said. “Boat motor.” Firing, he hit his target. “Your turn.”

“Front of the boat.” Oliver said, shutting off his com. He shot and put a hole clear through the front of the boat.

“That was a bigger target.” Clint said. “And it was vague, I’m deducting points. How about this?” He pulled out one of his trick arrows. “Electromagnetic pulse arrow, right in the navigation controls.” He fired. “Followed by a net arrow over brother dear.” He was taking aim when Oliver beat him to it.
“Too slow, Barton.” Oliver grinned. “Must be your advanced age.”

“I’m only two years older than you.” Clint said. Pulling out a paralyzer arrow he took aim and hit Trickshot. His brother stopped struggling against the net and fell limp. “Shouldn’t you be down there with your sister? Not that she needs you, but you seem to like to boss people around.”

“What are you talking about?” Oliver said.

“Thea’s fighting Merlyn. Or at least she was when I left.”

Oliver shot a zipline and zoomed down into the warehouse.

“Jackass.” Clint muttered.

“Language.” Felicity said.

“I thought I turned my comm off.” Clint said.

“You’re good, but I’m better.” Felicity grinned. “I hacked back in.”

Clint smiled. “That’s my girl. I need to take care of some family business, then I’m coming home.”

“I’ll be waiting for you.” Felicity said. “And Clint, don’t, take care of him, take care of him. You’re better than him.”

“I’ll see you soon Squeaky.” Clint took the comm out of his ear. Getting down off the rooftop he walked over to his brother. Squatting down, he took the ring off his finger. “Nyssa will be needing that.” He muttered. “Or maybe Sara seeing as she technically kicked your ass.” Sighing he looked down at Barney. Though he was paralyzed, Trickshot’s eyes glared at Clint with hatred. “I’m going to say this now, because you can’t insult me.” He paused. “…never said thank you, for all those times when we were kids and you stopped dad from… I was mouthy and I knew he didn’t like it, but I didn’t shut up anyways. And you were always the one to take the punishment. I’m sorry.” He said, tears spilling out of his eyes. “If I could go back and change it, I would. The truth is, it could have very easily been me that turned out the way you did. I’m… so sorry Barney. I…I love you.” He stopped. “But that doesn’t change the choices you made or the monster you turned into. I was ready to kill you today and the only reason you’re still alive is because of her. Even after all you did, she just asked me to spare you because she thinks I can be a better person.” Clint laughed. “I’m not going to kill you. We’re going to find the deepest darkest hole, put you in there and throw away the key. But,” He kicked Barney in the ribs and stamped on his wrist. “I needed to get you back for what you did to her.”

Stepping back he watched as two of Tony’s robots picked Barney up and flew him back to a secure holding cell in the Tower.

“Queen has a prison.” Natasha said, appearing next to him. “It’s run by ARGUS and it’s in the North China sea. It’s secure. We can put him there.”

Clint nodded. He followed her back to the jet where everyone was already on board. Handing Nyssa the ring he smiled. “Take better care of it than the previous owner.”

“Oh I intend to.” Nyssa looked back at Sara. “You will see us soon, give my love to Felicity.”

Turning to Laurel, she smiled. “Will you not join us?”

“Well… I don’t think I have what it takes to join the league.” Laurel said slowly.
“Sara will need our help if she is ever to regain her memories. Who better than her sister for that task?” Nyssa said gently.

Laurel looked at her sister, then nodded. “For however long she needs.”

“Rhodey’s overseeing the prisoners’ return to the tower. We’re putting Merlyn in a separate holding cell.” Tony said when Clint got on the jet. “And I’m going to go take a look at that super-secret prison of yours, Queen. I might make a few improvements.” He turned to the flight controls. “JARVIS, take us home.”

“This was fun.” Barry said. “In a totally serious we just took down the League way.”

“We didn’t take down the League.” Team Arrow said in unison.

“And now we get to not take down Harrison Wells.” Tony said. “For the record, I never liked the guy.”

Felicity was in the common area with Pepper and Ray Palmer when the team got back. Ray had just flown into New York to agree to a merger with Stark Industries. They had barely signed the last contract when the team walked in.

“Mr. Stark.” Ray said.

“Copy cat.” Tony said, walking over to the bar. “Drinks on me, like everything else around here. Palmer, if you’ll come down to my lab, I’ll explain in extreme detail everything that’s wrong with your suit.”

“Funny, I was under the impression that you were scared because I could potentially invent things you haven’t even dreamed of yet.” Ray smirked. Tony looked at Felicity in shock.

“Smoak, after all I’ve done for you.” He clutched his heart. “Treachery thy name is-.”

“Actually Tony,” Pepper said. “I’m the one who told him.”

Tony raised his eyebrows. “Oh, I’ll get you later.” He winked.

“Ew.” Clint said.

“Gross.” Roy agreed.

“The less we hear about your sex life the better.” Maria grumbled.

“Or accidentally see.” Bruce muttered. Everyone looked at him. “They were in the lab, it wasn’t my fault.”

“We have a whole new mansion to break in.” Tony told Pepper. “Come on Palmer, let me show you why I’m your new boss.”

“My name’s still on the Palmer tech building.” Ray grumbled.
“My name’s on the lease.” Tony retorted.

“Mine’s flashier and bigger.” Ray said

“Overcompensating much?” Tony said.

“I’m not the one who built an entire floor for a collection of sports cars.” Ray said.

“I like you.” Tony said. “It’s so good to have someone around here who can keep up.”

They left, bickering. Team Flash walked over.

“Can we still count on you for that favor?” Caitlin asked Oliver.

“Of course.” Oliver said.

“Good!” Iris grinned. “I already talked to Pepper and she said we could borrow one of the Starkjets to fly back to Central.”

“I’m coming with.” Natasha said. “Cap?”

“Bucky needs me.” Steve said softly. “We’ve…got a long and painful road ahead of us.” He turned and left to go back to the infirmary.

Bruce looked nervously at the ground. “Do…you think this is a code green situation?”

“Yes,” Cisco said. “It is definitely a code green situation, I have some gadgets that I think you should take a look at back at STAR labs. And can I ask how you came up with the name Hulk?” Putting his arm around Bruce, he and Caitlin went with him towards the hangar. Iris, Barry, and Joe said their goodbyes and followed them. Natasha shared a look with Pepper.

“I should go oversee their preflight check.” Pepper said. “Thea, want to come with me?”

Digg had gone with Lyla to check on Sara. They weren’t leaving until the next day. Everyone slowly filed out leaving Oliver with Felicity and Clint. Clint walked over to Felicity’s wheel chair.

“I’m going to check on Lucky.” He murmured. He gave her a gentle kiss on the forehead, then went over to the elevator.

Oliver looked down at the ground. “Are you coming to Central City?” He said.

“I don’t think I’d be much help.” Felicity said. “Unless the plan is to challenge Wells to a wheelchair race.”

Oliver nodded. “I think I like the idea of you staying as far away from Wells as possible.” He looked at the ground. “How about…after?”

Felicity looked at the Manhattan skyline through the enormous windows. “Ray just signed a deal with Stark.”

“I know.” Oliver said, confused.

“It’s more than just a business deal.” Felicity continued. “Stark’s creating some type of superhero team. Each group would operate in their separate spheres, but would be in contact. The Avengers, team Arrow, Team Flash, it’s just the beginning.” She sighed. “There’s more of us out there. More people like you who don’t have powers but feel the need to fight anyways. Even in New York.
There’ve been reports of a man in a black mask delving out justice in Hell’s Kitchen. Then there are those with powers; there’s a kid in Dakota who can control electricity. More were probably created because of the particle accelerator. It’s a statistical impossibility that all the meta humans are evil. I mean—"

“Felicity.” Oliver interrupted. “What are you trying to say?”

“Things are going to change.” She said softly.

“They already have.” He said. “Are you staying with Barton?”

Felicity looked down at her hands. “He told me he loved me.” She whispered. “It was an accident, it slipped out.”

Oliver tensed.

“It was nice, you know.” She continued, “having someone saying it without life or death stakes being involved.”

“Do you love him?” Oliver said quietly.

Felicity closed her eyes.

“Do you love me?” Oliver asked.

“Would you do anything if I said I did?” Felicity asked.

“The league won’t bother us, again.” Oliver began.

“Well thank goodness, I wouldn’t want being with me to be inconvenient for you.” Felicity glared. “It wasn’t the league that caused you to push me away the first time.”

“Being with me is dangerous.” Oliver said. “Those men hurt you because you were in the same restaurant as the Arrow.”

“There’s always going to be something threatening us, I need someone who’s willing to be with me despite that. Someone who isn’t going to run at the first sight of danger. Relationships aren’t perfect; they take work. You can’t just drop everything because things are difficult.” She broke off. Oliver looked at the ground.

“And the man who can give me that, who wants to give me that, just took an elevator down to check on our dog.” Felicity said. “So to answer your earlier questions, I will always care about you. You’re my friend. And as for Clint, that’s between me and him.” She turned and stood. There was a small stab of pain in her chest, but it was considerably less than on previous days. Her ribs were definitely getting better. Making her way to the elevator she turned and said. “Good luck in Central. I hope you get Wells.”

Oliver nodded.

The doors closed. “JARVIS,” Felicity said quietly. “Take me down to Clint’s floor please.”

“Yes, Ms. Smoak.”

Closing her eyes she felt the beginning of a few tears trickling out of the corner of her eyes.

“Squeaky?”
She hadn’t realized the elevator had stopped.

“Clint.” She stepped forward and fell gratefully into Clint’s arms. He carried her over to the couch. Settling down he held her as she shook.

“Do I need to shoot somebody?” He asked.

“No.” Felicity giggled. “I’m okay, just tired is all.” She nestled into his shoulder. “How are you?”

“Awesome, as per usual.” Clint grinned.


“I’m…coping.” He said. “It’s so weird, he’s…finally gone. I’m free” His voice sounded flat. “Somehow I thought it would feel better.”

“It’s probably going to take time.” Felicity said. Lucky walked over and put his paw on Clint’s knee.

“Hey buddy.” Clint murmured, patting the spot next to him. Lucky barked then jumped up on the couch. Felicity rolled her eyes.

“He’s going to have the worst manners because of you.”

Clint and Lucky both gave her wide-eyed looks. She closed her eyes and groaned. “I’m never going to get my way with you two.”

“Nope.” Clint kissed her cheek. She smiled and began playing with one of the straps of his tactical suit.

“So, what happens now?” She whispered.

“Dinner, then shower, then sleep.” Clint said, putting his hand on hers. “And watch where you put that hand, darlin’. You might have no sense of self preservation, but I still have your ribs to worry about.” He looked around. “Where the hell is your chair?”

“I’ve made the executive decision to abandon it.” Felicity said.

“You’re vice president, Squeaky.” Clint said, then he laughed. “I just realized, Tony’s your new boss.”

“Pepper is my new boss.” Felicity corrected. “And besides, I’m pretty sure I outrank you.” She kissed his neck. “Are you sure you don’t want to talk about it now?”

“Yeah.” Clint said. “I’ll be fine, it’s nothing a few good days on the farm won’t fix.”

“You have a farm.” Felicity said.

“Yes.” Clint said defensively.

“Like a farm. As in cows and chickens and sheep and horses, old Macdonald and e-I-e-I-o?”

Clint pouted. “I don’t have any livestock. It’s just an old farm house that I bought so I’d have a place to crash when things in my mind got too dark.” He paused. “It’s silly, but I always imagined raising a family there.” He closed his eyes. “And there I go; saying stupid things that’ll send you screaming for the door.”
“Actually,” Felicity said. “It’s kind of cute. And I think you’d look adorable in flannel.”

“Adorable?” Clint said. “Cute? What am I; a baby penguin?”

“Well I don’t have a nickname for you so, yes; you can be my penguin.” Felicity said. Then she wrinkled her nose. “Eh, it’s kinda weird. I’ll find a better one.”

Clint smiled. “You’re beautiful when you have your determined face on.” He traced circles on her shoulder with his fingers. “Do you want to come to the farm with me? We could take a few days, we’ve earned it and you could get some peace and quiet to fully heal.”

Felicity smiled. “I’ll point out that I had peace and quiet here until you guys came back.”

Clint pouted. “I resent that.”

Suddenly there was a small tremor. Clint raised an eyebrow and Felicity looked up at the ceiling.

“JARVIS?” Clint asked. “Was that something we should be worried about?”

“A minor explosion in the lab, Agent Barton.” JARVIS said, Felicity was amused to note that the AI managed to sound exasperated. “Mr. Stark and Mr. Palmer were…playing.”

“Unsupervised?” Clint asked.

“Dr. Banner is on his way to Central City with Team Flash, Mr. Queen and Agent Romanov.” JARVIS said. “And you have the other portion of the Science Alliance with you.”

“GUYS!” Tony’s face appeared on the com screen that was on each floor. “You won’t believe what just happened, Palmer brought some Nano bots from Starling, which are okay in terms of tech, I mean I would have built them, but I don’t feel the need shrink everything.”

“Is Ray okay?” Felicity asked.

“Ask him yourself.” Tony grinned and held up his hand. On the Ray was standing on the palm, waving his arms.

“Hi Felicity.” He said, his voice sounded, comically, like a chipmunk.

“Wha-“ Felicity’s mouth hung open in confusion.

“I know, I sound silly. But smaller vocal cords and all that.” He grinned.

“Ray.” Felicity said covering her eyes. “Please tell me you didn’t inject the Nano bots into yourself.”

“No. I sort of tripped and stuck myself by accident.”

“So they were in a syringe.” Felicity said through gritted teeth. “Does that mean you were planning on injecting them into yourself?”

“Hey.” Tony said. “Can you only shrink or can you grow too?”

“JARVIS, cut the transmission.” Clint said, looking at Felicity with concern. “Breathe Squeaky.”

Felicity took a calming breath. “You said this farm was quiet?”

“Yes”
“Absolutely no crazy billionaires with more brains than sense?”

“None.” Clint smiled. “Stark doesn’t even know it exists. None of the team do; except Tasha.”

Felicity smiled. “JARVIS, tell Tony and Ray I’m taking a long overdue vacation.”
“This place is beautiful.” Felicity said. They’d just pulled up in front of the house. It had taken 2 days before Felicity got her cast removed and the all clear from the doctor. Then another 2 days before Tony had released them from obligations. He’d been trying to decipher where they were going for days by interrupting private conversations and playing mind games to try to get them to reveal the location. After the 2nd day Clint had snapped. Dragging Tony aside he had a long hushed conversation. Felicity had no idea what he’d said, but directly afterwards Tony had wished them a good trip and practically ran from the room.

“I built it myself.” Clint said. “Well, restored it really. It was just walls and a roof when I bought it.”

“You built this.” Felicity looked at him. “Is there anything you can’t do?...besides handle chopsticks.”

Clint smiled. Pulling up in front of the house he stopped the car and got out. He was just about to close the door when Lucky jumped out of the back seat and bolted from the car.

“CRAZY MUTT” Clint shouted after him. The dog barked and chased after a squirrel.

“Well he was trapped in a car with you for practically three hours straight.” Felicity smirked as she got out of the car. “That’s enough to drive anyone crazy.”

“It’s harder for Tony to trace a car.” Clint shrugged.

“Which one?” Felicity asked. “We switched cars four times after we left the city.”

“Are you getting cheeky with me?” Clint said. Felicity leaned against the car and smiled. Clint walked around the car and came to stand in front of her.

“Maybe. I just think you might be a little paranoid.” Felicity said.

“Darlin’.” Clint said, putting his hands on the roof of the car on either of her. “If Tony found out about this place he’d slap his name on it, gut it, and add something ridiculous like a rocket launcher.”

Felicity laughed and ducked under his arm. Walking up the porch stairs, she turned and put her hands on her hips. “So do I get a tour? Or are you planning on standing outside all day.”

Clint pulled out his keys and opened the door. Felicity stepped inside and looked around.

“Kitchen,” he pointed. “Dining room, living room, stairs to the bedrooms.” He grinned.

“You may be the world’s worst tour guide.” Felicity huffed. “I’m going exploring.”

“I’ll go unload the car.” Clint kissed her forehead before going back to the car.

Listening to Clint talking to Lucky outside, Felicity wandered around the house. From the vague descriptions Clint had been giving her for the last couple of days she’d been lead to believe it was a small house, but it was huge. 3 floors with high ceilings, 4 bedrooms, and an attic with an enormous window which took up almost an entire wall. Clint had turned that room into a makeshift reading area with books and a couch set up in front of the window. Clint found her looking out over the
fields and the surrounding woods.

“The sunsets here are amazing.” He said. Wrapping his arms around her waist he put his chin on top of her head. “There are tons of paths through the woods. We can take Lucky for a walk out there tomorrow. It’s full of deer so we might see some…” He fidgeted nervously. “Do you like it?”

“It’s amazing.” Felicity said putting her hands on his and leaning back against him. “I’m so glad you brought me here.” They both stood in silence watching Lucky dig a hole in the field.

Clint rolled his eyes. “There’s a family of groundhogs there. They’re vicious little monsters.” There was a yelp and Lucky jumped back. Growling and barking he chased after a brown shape that had darted out of the ground. Clint chuckled as Felicity stiffened.

“Don’t worry, Squeaky.” Clint kissed the top of her forehead. “He’s got all his shots and he’ll learn to stay away from them.”

“No he won’t because he’s stubborn and reckless.” Felicity turned and jabbed Clint in the stomach. “I wonder where he gets that from?”

Clint clutched his stomach in mock pain. “This is the end. Goodbye cruel world.” He pretended to stumble and collapsed on top of Felicity.

“I can’t hold you up.” Felicity giggled. She let out a small gasp as she fell. Clint pivoted so that he fell on his back with her on top of him. Felicity left out a breathless laugh. “Looks like someone isn’t too concerned about my ribs anymore,” she commented.

“Hmmmnn” Clint hummed in contentment. “Less talking, more cuddling.” He whispered as he nuzzled her neck. She kissed his forehead, and sat up so she was straddling him.

“Noooo.” Clint groaned, reaching towards here. “Come back and cuddle.”

Felicity laughed and batted his hands away. “I’ve got something for you, Agent Barton.”

Clint raised his eyebrows. “Color me intrigued.” He said. “I like presents. Especially…” he reached for the hem of her shirt, “those I get to unwrap.” Felicity pushed away his hands again. Clint pouted and crossed his arms.

Patience, Felicity signed.

“Kinda hard to be patient when…” Clint’s brow furrowed as he processed what Felicity had just done. “Wait…did you just… use sign language?”

Felicity nodded. “I’m not very good and most words I have to spell out letter for letter. I figured that in case something happened to your implants and you couldn’t hear me anymore I still wanted to be able to talk to you.” Clint gaped at her. She blushed. “Mostly to be able to tell you that you’re stubborn and reckless and completely –“

Clint sat up and kissed her. “I don’t know what to say.” He said, pulling away.

“How about you just pay attention to what I have to say?” Felicity pushed gently back on his chest. Clint lay back and looked up at her. Felicity held up her hands and taking a deep breath signed; I love you.

Clint’s smile was slow, but it grew until it was almost blinding. Taking Felicity’s hands in his, he kissed her fingers.
“I love you too.” He said. Then he flipped them over so she was pinned underneath him. Felicity hooked her leg over his waist and pulled him down for a kiss which left both of them breathless.

“How are your ribs?” Clint asked.

Felicity groaned. “Way to kill the mood, Hawkeye. The doctor cleared me, remember? You were there and you stopped me from burning that stupid chair.”

“I know what the doctor said; I want to know how you feel. Namely if you’re up for some very rigorous physical activity.” He wiggled his eyebrows causing her to giggle.

“I’m definitely up for it.” She smiled.

“Good.” Clint said, sitting up and gripping her thighs. “Because I’m finally going to give you the tour.” He stood, Felicity wrapped her legs around his waist and her arms around his shoulders.

“The tour?” She said, confused.

“Mmhm.” Clint nodded adopting a serious facial expression, moving towards the attic stairs. “Spoiler alert; it begins and ends in the bedroom.” He went down the stairs. “The tour lasts for hours and satisfaction is guaranteed.” He kept one arm around her waist as he opened his bedroom door. “In fact, and I don’t mean to brag, but expect to be satisfied many times over.” He put her down on the bed.

Felicity laughed. “Someone’s confident.”

“Well darlin’, I always hit my target.” Clint grinned. “Now, I want to see if my nickname for you applies in all situations.” He removed her shirt, and began kissing her neck. Felicity’s retort died in her throat as she let out a soft whimper. She could feel Clint’s triumphant smile against her skin. “Not quite there yet,” he growled. “But close.” Slipping her hands down his back, she began sliding them under his shirt. He shivered, closing his eyes, and moaned. As she put her head back, Felicity happened to glance out the window. Frowning, she nudged Clint’s side.

“Clint.” She said.

“Shirt off, got it” Clint sat back and pulled his shirt up over his head. Tossing it on the ground he captured her mouth for another burning kiss.

“Clint.” Felicity repeated, trying to direct his attention to the window, but Clint mistook it for her wanting to pay attention to the other side of her neck.

“CLINT” She shouted, putting both her hands on his shoulders and pushed him back. Just then an amplified voice from outside said

“GENIUS BEATS SUPERSPY EVERY TIME HAWKASS.”

“There’s an Avengejet landing on the field.” Felicity said.

Clint glared. “Tony Stark is a dead man.” Getting off the bed he stormed down the stairs. Felicity picked up his shirt, pulled it on, and followed him.

Clint planted himself in front of the house and crossed his arms. Felicity came down behind him.
Slipping her arms around his waist she put her head between his shoulders.

“Squeaky, I’m trying to look dangerous.” Clint muttered out of the corner of his mouth. Felicity kissed his shoulder. He looked back at her. “Is that my shirt?”

“Want it back?” She said. Clint bit his lip and turned to shoot Tony and Bruce, who were coming down the path with a death stare.

“Now I’m doubly more inclined to kill him.”

“Hello friends.” Tony shouted. “Nice place you’ve got here.”

“How the hell did you even find us?” Clint said.

Tony smirked. “I switched Squeaky’s tablet with a Stark Pad. I was counting that you’d ban her from using tech during the drive so she’d never notice the switch until it was too late.” He looked smugly at Clint’s bare chest and Felicity standing in his shirt. “Are we interrupting something?” He said innocently.

“Squeaky’s my nickname for her.” Clint growled. “And you’re trespassing.” He frowned at Bruce. “I expected this from him, but I thought you knew better.”

“He’s here to make sure I don’t end up in a ditch.” Tony said.

“Ditches are for amateurs.” Clint said. “When I’m done with you, they’ll never find the body.”

“We’re here to convey a message from Palmer to Felicity.” Tony said. “You’re fired.”

“What?” Felicity looked at him in alarm. “Is this because I messed with your robots?”

“The two of you are geniuses.” Clint said through gritted teeth. “So I guess you won’t have any trouble estimating how many weapons I have stashed within grabbing distance.”

“What Tony meant to say,” Bruce said. “Is that you’re being offered the option of exchanging your position at Palmer tech for one at Avengers tower.”

“We want you as official Superhero liaison.” Tony clarified. “You’re smart, know how to handle heroes and have people skills. You’re basically going to be an ambassador between the different teams and the recruitment officer for potential teammates.”

Clint laughed humorlessly. “I’m surprised you even know what having people skills looks like. Could this seriously not have waited until we got back to the tower?”

“Probably, but I was picking up Brucie from fighting the big bad Wells and I really wanted to see where you were hiding.” Tony said. “Also I wanted to bask in the warmth of my victory.” He pointed to the two of them. “You’re welcome, and you’re naming a child in my honor.” Bruce cleared his throat. Tony sighed. “An argument can be made for Natasha receiving some of the credit…the kid’s middle name can be in her honor.”

Clint was gearing up to threaten Tony again when Felicity put her hand on his shoulder. “Don’t. He thrives on confrontation. Don’t give him one and he’ll get bored and leave.” She whispered.

“So, are you going to offer us something to drink?” Tony said, moving towards the house. “This is actually a really nice place…though it might be improved by-“

Clint turned and walked towards the house.
“Where are you going?” Felicity called after him.

“To get my bow.” Clint shouted.

“We’ll see you back at the tower.” Bruce grabbed Tony’s arm and pulled him back towards the jet.

“Yeah see you…Squeaky.” Tony winked and left just as Clint came back out with his bow and quiver.

“Don’t” Felicity said.

“Just one-“ Clint said, pulling an arrow from his quiver.

“No.”

Clint pouted, then sighed in defeat. “You’re right.” He muttered. “Tasha would probably kill me if she found out.” He sat on the porch. Felicity and Lucky sat next to him.

“I’m sorry Tony found out about your special place.” Felicity said. “That…sounds a bit weird.”

Clint chuckled. Felicity leaned against his shoulder. “Nice shirt” he commented. “But you looked better without it.”

Lucky barked.

“Go chase a squirrel. Mom and dad need some alone time.” Clint shot the arrow he was holding and Lucky ran off after it.

“Well then, Agent Barton.” Felicity said standing and holding out her hand. “You had better finish that tour.”

Clint took her hand and stood. “New tour rule; shirts, not allowed.” He tugged her back inside the house. “In fact, I’m banning clothes altogether.”

Chapter End Notes

Okay. One more chapter to go. I've already got it finished, I just have to edit it so it should be up in the next couple of days.

Thanks so much for reading this story!!! Hugs for all of you wonderful people.

I'm working on "I'll be your Soldier" and as promised I'm writing the Nightwing Story. I'm not going to start posting that one until I've got at least 10 chapters written.

Hope you liked this chapter (Also keep an eye out for a new one shot in the next few days).
Chapter 29

Chapter Notes

The idea of some of the events in this chapter came from a conversation in the comments with Loretta_Mae and Lademonessa. I modified it a bit. Thanks to all the people who liked and read this story.

Enjoy!

Clint was waiting in the living room while Felicity got ready in the bedroom of their tower apartment.

“Are you sure you don’t want my help?” He said.

“Yes.” Felicity said. “Last time you ‘helped’ we didn’t leave the apartment.”

“I’m failing to see the problem.” Clint smirked. “You like my help.”

“Well, you’re the one who came up with the Superhero barbeque and you volunteered to do the grilling, it would be rude to not show up.”

“Agent Barton.” JARVIS chimed in. “I just thought I’d inform you that someone is on their way down to your floor.”

“Tell Tasha we’re on our way and that there’s no need to check if we’re ditching for sex.” Clint rolled his eyes.

“It is not Agent Romanov.”

“What do you mean it’s not-“

The elevator door opened and a blonde woman with 2 large suitcases stepped off and into the apartment. “I hope it’s okay that I just barged in, but your friend Natasha said-“ She broke off as she saw Clint “Oh, hello.” She gave him a large smile. “I’m Donna. I’m looking for Felicity.”

“Clint.” Felicity said, coming out of the room, putting her earrings in. “I must be going crazy because I could swear that I just heard-“ She broke off when she saw the woman. Donna let out a squeal and rushed over to pull her into a crushing hug. “Mom.” Felicity said, shock evident on her face.

“Lissy!” She said. “Is that your boyfriend?” She stage-whispered. “He’s so handsome, look at those arms.”

Clint gave Felicity a smug look as she glared at him over her mother’s shoulder.

“Mom, what are you doing here?” She said, trying desperately to turn her panicked look into a smile.

“Mr. Stark invited me.” Donna said. “He told me you were having a barbeque today and that he was so grateful for the reprogramming you did in his lab that he just had to surprise you by flying me over.”
Clint cleared his throat as Felicity got a dark look on her face. “I’m Clint Barton.” He said, holding out his hand. “It’s nice to meet you, Mrs. Smoak.”

“Oh, call me Donna.” She said. Looking over at Felicity she mouthed “Hawkeye?” Felicity closed her eyes and counted to ten. Clint took Donna’s hand and gave it a kiss.

“Well, Donna it’s lovely to meet you. I need to go upstairs and fire up the grill. Felicity said she didn’t need my help down here so I’ll get out of your hair and leave you to catch up.” He grinned as Felicity, who was standing behind her mother, began shaking her head. Clint made a show of walking over to Felicity and pulled her close to kiss her forehead.

“See you upstairs Squeaky.” He said. Getting on the elevator, the last thing he heard before the doors closed was Donna say:

“You’re dating an AVENGER?!?!?”

He turned his attention to the AI. “JARVIS.”

“Yes, Agent Barton.”

Clint crossed his arms. “Care to explain how my security protocols were overridden?”

“That was Agent Romanov’s request and Mr. Stark was also very insistent.” JARVIS said. “And he reminded me who programmed me.”

“You broke too easily, J.” Clint said.

“I apologize.”

“No worries. I’ll take it out on Stark.”

The doors opened onto the common floor.

“Hawkeye.” Tony was mixing drinks behind the bar. “How did Felicity enjoy my present?”

“She’s over the moon.” Clint muttered.

“Well maybe she’ll think twice about messing with my stuff.” Tony said in a self-satisfied tone.

“You do realize that this is war, right?” Clint said. Tony shrugged. “And that I’m on her side?” Clint said. Tony laughed.

“Bring it.”

“You’re doomed.” Clint said, making his way over to the table where all the food had been laid out and began loading a plate with the first round of things he was putting on the grill. “She’s going to get you and I’m going to watch.”

Natasha walked in with Thea, Oliver, Digg, and Lyla who was carrying baby Sara.

“Barton.” She said.

“Traitor.” Clint said.

“Oh, you didn’t enjoy meeting your future mother in law?”
Oliver stiffened. “Future, Mother in Law?” He growled. He and Digg gave Clint identical looks of irritation.

“Tasha’s just being silly.” Clint said. “And can I just say that attempting to murder the chef is no way to launch the annual superhero cookout.”

There was a loud clap of thunder from outside.

“Thor’s back.” Tony said, mixing another pitcher of drinks.

“FRIENDS I HAVE RETURNED!” Thor boomed as he walked into the room. Handing Tony a bottle of Asgardian ale, he smiled at Oliver and Digg. “Ah, the new brothers in arms.” He turned to Lyla. “And lady in arms as well. I have not had the pleasure of making your acquaintance.” He held out his hand.

“Oliver Queen.”

“John Diggle.”

“Lyla Michaels.”

“Queen is the Arrow.” Tony added.

“Verily?” Thor asked. Smirking he turned towards Clint. “And how does Eye of Hawk react to the competition.”

“We had a duel; I won.” Clint said.

“There’s some debate on that.” Oliver said.

“Yeah, by you.” Clint retorted.

“And who,” Thor bent down to look at baby Sara. “Is this lovely young maiden?”

“Johnny and my daughter, Sara.” Lyla said.

“She is spirited.” Thor grinned as the baby reached and grabbed Thor’s hair. “Might I hold the little warrior?”

“Um.” John said.

“Sure.” Lyla smiled.

Thor beamed. Turning to Oliver he held out his hammer. “Arrow, would you aid me by holding my hammer?”

“Sure.” Oliver said slowly, taking hold of Mjolnir. Thor let go and immediately it fell to the ground. Oliver went down with it. He tried to pull it up, but it wouldn’t budge.

“That joke was barely funny the first time.” Steve said as he walked in with Bucky.

“You’re just bitter because you couldn’t get it up.” Natasha grinned.

Thor chuckled as he held baby Sara.

“Don’t bother, Queen.” Tony sighed. “Even Cap isn’t ‘worthy’.” He glared at Thor. “One of these
days, Point Break, you’ll hand that hammer to someone and it won’t drop.”

“You may continue to dream.” Thor said

“I’m officially starting the cookout.” Clint said, walking towards the door.

The cookout was being held on the landing pad of the hangar. Tony had set up a canopy with tables and chairs. There was a large grill with a bar next to it. The group followed. Tony had roped the others into carrying his various drink concoctions. Thor was still holding Sara, playing peek a boo. Pepper, Maria, Laurel, Nyssa, and Sara were already outside waiting under the canopy.

“Sangria, for the ladies.” Tony said. “I spiked it with Asgardian hooch. Thor says it’s dangerous.”

Sara drained her glass. “It has a little kick.” She said tonelessly. Thor looked up at her in surprise.

“Kick?” He said, affronted.

Sara shrugged.

Tony walked over to Clint who was watching the fire.

“So Arsenal is joining us later with Palmer and Team Flash.” He said. “Did Felicity talk to electricity kid?”

“His name’s Vergil and he goes by Static Shock.” Clint said. “He’s coming with the others.” He smiled. “The kid’s psyched about joining our superfamily. I wish the same could be said for the devil of Hell’s Kitchen.” He rolled his eyes and said in a gravelly voice. “I need to save my city. I work alone. Angst. Darkness. Pain.”

“That doesn’t sound like anyone we know.” Sara said. Oliver turned to look at her with surprise.

“I see you fixed her sarcasm.” Digg remarked to Laurel with a smile.

Just then Felicity came into the party. Sara stiffened and looked down at the table in front of her. Felicity walked over and gave her a hug.

“I’m sorry.” Sara murmured.

“It wasn’t you.” Felicity said. She gave Sara another squeeze and walked over to Clint.

“So now I’ve officially met the mother.” Clint grinned. “I like her.”

“She’s ecstatic.” Felicity muttered. “She’s already picked out the names of her ‘grandbabies’.” She shuddered.

“Pretty sure Tony’s already laid claim to the naming of the first 3.” Clint whispered.

“FIRST 3?” Felicity hissed. “Is he going to be having them?”

Clint laughed. “Where is Donna?” He asked looking around the party.

“She’s freshening up in the common area.” Felicity said. “Lucky jumped her just before she was ready to come outside and messed up her makeup.”

“Um, Excuse me?” Everyone turned and gaped open-mouthed at Donna. “Hi, I’m Lissie’s mom and I don’t want to interrupt or embarrass her, but I just tripped over this and I think it belongs to you.”
She held Mjolnir out to Thor. He gave Sara back to Lyla and took it.

Tony and Steve grinned at each other.

“So, Donna.” Clint said. “I bet you’re just full of interesting tidbits. What’s it going to take to have you tell me every single embarrassing story you have about Squeaky?”

Donna looked at Felicity. “Squeaky?” She asked.

Clint put his arm around Felicity’s shoulder. “Pet name.” He said.

“I’m going to get you for this later.” Felicity grumbled.

Clint leaned down, “Darlin’,” He whispered. “I look forward to it.”

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End Notes

This AU starts right after Oliver comes back from the dead. The rating may change in later chapters, depending on the way this story goes.

Works inspired by this one: Where We Stand by Ellabee15

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!