SHIELD's Little Surprise - Part 5 - School Daze

by SHIELDAgentMD

Summary

This is a fanfic based upon the incredible television series, Marvel’s Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. This is the fourth in a series of stories that takes place not long after the Season 2 finale. These stories are meant to be fun, sweet, thought-provoking and heart-warming. Kudos and reviews are very much appreciated! :) 

Skye’s education takes a different spin and the team realizes a need to officially make the child one of the ‘family’.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Marvel’s Agents of SHIELD

SHIELD’s Little Surprise

Part 5 - School Daze

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the fifth in a series of stories that takes place not long after the Season 2 finale. These stories are meant to be fun, sweet, thought-provoking and heart-warming. They *may* or may not contain scenes of corporal discipline (spanking), possibly of a minor child. This is *not* a ‘condonement’ of spanking children in any way, and any such scene will be depicted in a very loving, non-abusive manner. If this may still be a trigger for you, I encourage you not to read this series.

Every character referred to is directly from the show/Marvel Universe, and I hold NO claim to the characters or the plotlines of the show that many of my stories are based on. I *highly* recommend watching the first two seasons of episodes before reading these stories, as many references to events in the episodes will be made, and therefore, better understood. **WARNING: These stories will contain spoilers from the show, up until the Season 2 finale.** (Minus what happened to Jemma Simmons there, because I refused to accept that! ;)) Enjoy!

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Part 5 – School Daze

About a week after being back home with the team, Skye is taken to the park. On this trip, her guardians have to deal with a rather unwelcome, rather serious interruption from a stranger.

“Excuse me,” says a male voice behind Bobbi, who had been happily watching Hunter help Skye build a sand castle.

Morse jumps, disturbed by the fact that someone had appeared behind her bench without her notice. She turns quickly and sees a man… no, not just a man… a police officer, looking down at her. "Oh… yes?" she asks hesitantly.

The cop nods toward Hunter and Skye. "Is that little girl here with you?"

Bobbi blinks and feels her hackles start to rise, indicating danger. Why would the officer be asking this? "Yes, she is."

The officer looks over Skye and Hunter again. "She looks to be school-age. This is a Tuesday. Is there some reason that she’s not at school?"

Morse thinks fast, and decides to go with the truth… or a version of it anyway. "Oh, she is home-schooled.” She smiles casually, and turns back to watch the child.

“Oh, I see, okay,” the cop says slowly. “So, what curriculum do you use?”

Bobbi blinks… “excuse me?”

Suspicion shows in the man’s features. "What is the name of your homeschooling curriculum?” he asks, with a touch of impatience.

Morse calls upon her elite spy training to think fast, and not give off any tells. "Oh, well, I’m just her aunt. We would have to ask her parents that.”

“I see. How about you give them a call for me,” suggests the infuriatingly sharp officer.
By this time, Hunter is looking curiously over at Bobbi. She gives him a slightly wide-eyed look as she digs in her bag for her cell phone. Hunter takes the hint that Bobbi may be in trouble and quickly says to Skye, “hey cutie. It’s time to get back home now. Let’s see just how fast you can run, all the way into those trees, okay? Ready, set, go!”

Excited enough by the challenge not to protest having to leave the park, the little girl giggles as she hops up, and takes off running.

As soon as she is on her way, Hunter heads over to Bobbi and the cop, the latter of which is watching the child sprint away with yet more suspicion. Without a moment’s hesitation, Hunter pulls an Icer out of his back pocket, takes quick aim, and shoots the man in the chest.

“Let’s go,” he murmurs to Bobbi, who looks stunned.

“Hunter!” she hisses, rising quickly and jogging in the direction Skye had run. “Don’t you think we could have gotten out of that without icing him??”

Hunter shrugs, glancing over his shoulder to ensure that they aren’t being followed. “You probably could have, babe. But you looked like you needed help, and that’s what I came up with.”

Morse scoffs and speeds up. “Well… I guess we won’t be bringing Skye here again,” she mutters regretfully. “I like this park.”

The two catch up with Skye, who is blissfully oblivious to what had happened behind her.

“How fast was that??” the little girl asks happily, breathing hard.

“So fast!” Hunter exclaims, doubled over and panting for breath. His ribs are still healing from his encounter with Ward. He gives Skye a high-five. “You were like a little blur flying by.”

Skye giggles happily and slips her hands into Hunter and Bobbi’s. “Like Iron Man, huh?” she asks, proudly.

“Definitely,” Bobbi agrees with a smile. “Let’s get back and tell everyone all about it,” she encourages, eager to place as much distance between them and the knocked-out cop as possible…

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While Skye takes her nap that afternoon, Bobbi and Hunter share what had happened with Coulson and the rest of the team. The Director is highly displeased with Hunter’s choice of action, but moves past it with a sigh.

“I’m actually not sure what else we could have done,” Bobbi admits. “I was going to call you and ask, and hope that someone here would have the sense to quickly look up the name of some random curriculum to tell him,” she admits with a shrug. “But other than that, neither of us have any kind of identification indicating that we have a connection to Skye, or that we are legal guardians,” she points out seriously. “Because in the eyes of the law, we’re not.”

Coulson nods. “I’ve been giving that some thought, too. I think that it may be time to do… well, something official,” he says carefully.
Jemma sits up a bit straighter, looking at her Director hopefully. “Sir... do you mean... adoption? That we may formally adopt her?”

“Well,” Coulson begins, then throws caution to the wind. “Yes. That’s exactly what I mean.”

Jemma bites her lip and squeals happily. The rest of the team grins as well, knowing that this will be a dream come true for little Skye.

“Fantastic,” Bobbi states, glowing. “So... how will this work?”

Coulson stands and retrieves his phone from his pocket. “Well, we will need to choose who will officially be listed as her parents…”

“Is there any question to that?” Fitz asks suddenly. Several others smile slightly in agreement.

Coulson, seemingly oblivious, blinks and looks at him. “Well, of course there is. Everyone here is capable... is anyone here unwilling?”

Crickets… as the agents look around at each other in mild disbelief.

“All right then,” Coulson continues, looking down at his phone. “I’ll put in a call to Agent Hill. Hopefully she can help us get access to Tony Stark’s ‘army of lawyers’, and we can begin the process.”

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One week later…

“So munchkin... what do you do when you have a question for the teacher?”

Skye raises her hand happily.

“That’s right, good girl! And when the teacher is talking, do you get to talk, too?”

The youngster shakes her head seriously.

Agent Bobbi Morse grins, and nods. “That’s right, very good.”

“Except... but... if her calls on me, right? Then I can talk!”

Bobbi chuckles at the cute, butchered English. “Right. If *she* calls on you, then you can respond, munchkin.” Bobbi shows Skye the items that are being put in her backpack. “So, here are your pencils, erasers, your crayons, your folder... and your lunch box. I think you’re just about ready!”

Skye watches Bobbi zip up the new ‘Frozen’-themed backpack, then turns around so it can be put on her. The little girl peers back at the fun agent and asks seriously, “but you’re coming, too, right?”

Morse smiles patiently, having answered this question at least a dozen times already. “Yes, cutie, I’m coming with you today. I’ll be there in your classroom to help out... but you need to pay attention to the teacher, and to your new friends, all right?”

Skye nods happily, “okay!” With that, she runs out of the room.
Knowing that Skye needs interaction with other children, Director Coulson has found what is probably the most ideal arrangement possible for the SHIELD team and their lifestyle. By offering up a generous donation, he has reserved a slot for Skye in a prestigious charter school relatively close to the base. The agreement is that Skye will attend the school regularly when the team is ‘home’, and will carry on the team’s schooling when traveling. Also, to both sweeten the deal and ensure Skye’s safety, an agent will volunteer in the classroom each day that Skye attends. On this, her very first day of school, Bobbi will be assisting in her class.

A moment later little Skye returns, hugging Trip tightly to her.

Bobbi blinks. “Um… munchkin? I don’t really think that Trip is supposed to come with you to school,” she states carefully, knowing that this may be a very sensitive matter with the little girl.

Sure enough, Skye stares at Bobbi in disbelief, and hugs Trip even tighter. The child has rarely been without her beloved stuffed monkey for more than 10 minutes since she received him on her ‘birthday’ about two months ago. Her eyes start to well up with moisture, and Bobbi cringes slightly.

“No… no, he has to come with. Or, I’m not going!”, exclaims the stubborn youngster.

Morse sighs and glances down at her watch. Deciding to pick her battles in an effort to save time, she kneels down and places a gentle hand on Skye’s little shoulder. “Okay munchkin, listen up. You can bring him along… but if your teacher says that he needs to stay in your backpack, then that’s what’s going to happen. Understand?”

Skye looks down and bites her lip, then nods slowly. Bobbi lifts the little girl’s chin with her hand and looks pointedly into her eyes. “Yes, ma’am,” Skye says softly, fidgeting nervously.

Bobbi nods approvingly. “Good girl.”

At that moment, several people walk into the hallway to join them. Jemma Simmons, looking both excited and like she wants to cry at the same time, hurries forward with a small bag of strawberries. “Darling, here… I forgot to pack these for you,” she says breathlessly, diving into Skye’s backpack to add them to her lunch box.

Fitz approaches too, with a proud grin. “Hey, lil one. What’s four plus three?”

Skye grins and happily announces, “seven!”

Fitz nods and quickly adds, “show me.”

As quickly as she can, Skye holds up seven fingers.

“Yes! Now, in Mandarin!”

“七 (qī)!”

Fitz chuckles and nods. “Excellent. You’re going to be the smartest kid in that class.” He gives her a wink, then walks off.

Jemma now kneels in front of Skye with a loving smile and unnecessarily straightens her shirt. “Look at you, darling… you look so cute, and so grown-up.” She had gotten up early with the little girl, and dressed her in one of her more stylish outfits… a jean skirt with black leggings and a red shirt with a sparkly Minnie Mouse on it. The look was of course only complete with Skye’s favorite little black suede boots. Bobbi had even joined them in getting ready, and added some soft curls to
Skye’s long hair.

Simmons sighs quietly, wishing that she was the one accompanying Skye today, but she has a mountain of careful research to do on some terrigen-contaminated fish oil capsules that Coulson had recently managed to acquire. She strokes Skye’s cheek with a gentle smile, and whispers, “have fun at school, darling. I’ll be right here waiting for you, after. All right?”

Skye nods and leans in for a warm hug and a kiss.

As Jemma steps aside, May enters the room and looks down at the youngster. She is so proud of her little ward, whom she feels more and more affection for every day. She kneels in front of Skye and looks into her eyes. “Okay, bǎo bèi. You be good, and listen to your teacher,” she instructs her quietly. “Remember, Director Coulson and I won’t be here tonight, but we will see you tomorrow, after school… all right? You will spend tonight with Jemma.”

Skye nods sadly. May had explained to her last night before bed that she and Coulson have to take a quick trip. The little girl looks up and stares hard into May’s eyes, as she often does, before stepping closer, wrapping her arms around May’s neck and kissing her cheek.

Melinda closes her eyes and sighs contentedly. Filled with an immense warmth, she returns the hug and kiss. Grateful that they are only going to be away for one day, she then rises and heads out, before she makes the child late.

“Oh, munchkin… let’s go!” Bobbi says enthusiastically, but only makes it another three steps with the child when Coulson appears. Morse sighs, then smiles appreciatively when he manages a quick, yet heartfelt ‘have fun at school, sweetie. See you tomorrow night.’ Before they can be stopped again, Bobbi quickly ushers Skye out to the SUV and drives her to school.

Skye chatters excitedly to Trip on the way, while Bobbi listens, stifling a grin. She glances into the rearview mirror at the little girl, thinking of how beautiful her innocence is. While all of the agents can’t help but worry about Skye being somehow ‘recognized’ or associated with them, and the danger that could present, Skye is so sweetly, blissfully unaware. The youngster clearly believes that the world is an interesting, exciting place. She also seems to think that she is perfectly safe, as long as she’s with an agent. Bobbi hopes that that remains true forever.

Morse puts on sunglasses and a baseball cap as she parks the car and smiles back at the little girl. “Okay, cutie… you ready?”

“Yeah!” Skye nods happily, swinging her feet back and forth as she waits impatiently to be let out of the car…

Skye wears a rather satisfied smile as she watches all the kids in the parking lot saying good-bye to their parents. She grips Bobbi’s hand tight and smiles up at her, infinitely grateful that she doesn’t have to say good-bye. She also thinks briefly that Bobbi is much prettier, and definitely taller, than all the moms around. Even if Bobbi isn’t her mom, she’s the luckiest girl at this school.

Morse checks in at the office and gets a visitor’s badge, then follows the secretary to what will be Skye’s classroom. They are introduced to the teacher, Ms. Harrison, who welcomes them warmly. Too intrigued by the contents of the room to stay still, Skye soon moves off to explore.

Bobbi takes the opportunity to quietly say, “so… I tried to encourage her to leave her stuffed animal… ‘Trip’ is his name… at home, but she got pretty upset. She adores that monkey, brings him everywhere she goes. I hope that it won’t be a problem? I’ll keep working on getting her to leave him…“
Ms. Harrison smiles. “This is a common issue for our little ones, especially during their first days. The rule will be the same for her as for all the students… if it becomes too much of a distraction, then it has to be left in their backpack until the end of the day.”

Morse nods, thinking that that sounds fair.

Ms. Harrison, or Julie, as she insists to Bobbi, reviews with the agent what Skye has been working on during home schooling. The teacher is quite impressed with their curriculum, and shares that Skye should be just fine there in 1st grade, but that if it proves not to be challenging enough for the bright child, that they could always consider moving her up a year. Bobbi smiles proudly, and turns her focus back to the little girl examining a shelf of books, completely missing the teacher’s next question.

“Oh… I’m sorry?”

“I was just asking, as it wasn’t exactly clear in our documents, what is your relationship to Skye?”

Bobbi glances over at Skye, hoping that the child isn’t listening. She doesn’t want to confuse the youngster, who doesn’t know that the team is looking into adopting her. The agents haven’t even figured out what their ‘specific roles’ will be yet. On top of this, Bobbi also doesn’t want the little girl to hear her lie, and be a bad example in that way.

Noting gratefully that Skye isn’t paying attention, she turns back to the teacher with a smile and says quietly, “I’m her aunt. Her father is my brother.”

Julie nods and smiles, then glances up at the clock as a soft, pleasant bell rings. “All right, it’s time to wrangle the troops in from morning recess,” she quips. “Thank you again for coming… we can use all the help we can get.”

Morse nods with a smile and watches the woman leave. With that she lets out a sigh and looks around the room.

On the dry erase board on the side wall she spots a list of subjects and calls Skye over. “Hey munchkin, come here. I think this is your class schedule.”

Together they read through it:

- **Calendar**
- **Language Arts**
- **Writing/Reading Centers**
  - Recess
  - Snack
  - Math
- **Math Centers**
- **Lunch/Recess**
- **Science**
“Well,” Bobbi states, kneeling down and wrapping her arms around Skye from behind. “This looks like a fun day, right? Are you excited?”

Before Skye can answer the door opens and kids begin filing in. Morse plants a quick kiss on Skye’s cheek and whispers, “be good, munchkin!”

Skye nods, and happily goes to join the group, where she follows the teacher’s directions in unpacking her backpack and putting it away.

Bobbi notices lots of staring coming from the other kids… first at Skye, then at Bobbi herself, as the kids of course don’t know either of them. Then the youngsters turn their attention to Trip and move in to pet the stuffed monkey’s soft fur. Murmurs of, “aww, he’s so cute!”, and “I like his eyes,” and “what’s his name?” are heard as Skye proudly holds him up for everyone to see. Bobbi worries that he’s already becoming an issue.

“Okay, boys and girls, come on over to the carpet,” Ms. Harrison calls, pressing a button on a screen in the front. The screen turns on, revealing about 16 little cartoon characters each with a student’s name next to it. “If you are here, you’re all unpacked, and you’re ready to learn, come give yourself an on-task Dojo!”

The kids excitedly line up and approach the board. Skye stands still, not knowing what to do.

Ms. Harrison approaches Skye. “Okay Skye… in this class, you can earn something called Dojo points. You get points for things like following directions, being on-task, answering questions correctly and doing nice things for others,” she explains gently. “See? Watch.”

She leads Skye up to the front and they watch as a little girl named Bailey steps up to the board, touches her little avatar, then touches the picture of a checkmark that says “+1, on task”. A soft ‘ding’ is heard throughout the class, and Bailey sits down on the carpet, looking pleased with herself.

“But you need to know,” Ms. Harrison continues, “that points can also be taken away. If a student is disruptive, or doesn’t do their work, or isn’t being very nice, then they may lose points. We make it a goal to earn 10 points every day. If you can do that, you can win prizes!”

Fascinated by this, and by the ‘Smart Board’ being used, Bobbi just shakes her head in wonder at how far technology has come since she was last in school…

Skye nods and gazes at the board, then suddenly hops up and down and points at it. “There I am! I’m up there, look!” She tugs on Bobbi’s sleeve, then points to a cute little purple creature with the name ‘Skye’ next to it. “And I’m purple!” she shouts gleefully.

Stifling a laugh at the little girl’s simple joy, Bobbi nods quickly. “Okay munchkin, yes, I see it! Shhh,” she says quietly.

Skye is the last to give herself a ‘Dojo point’, and giggles as the happy ‘ding’ goes off.
“Okay, everybody take a seat, and we’ll get started on our calendar for today.”

Skye looks around at the rug the children are sitting on. It is covered in dots of different colors, and each child is seated on one of the dots. Skye steps to a purple dot and sits down happily.

The teacher guides the kids through the days of the week, then the date. Using that information, she shows them on a calendar that today is a Monday, then discusses what yesterday and tomorrow are. When that is done, Ms. Harrison clicks on a box labeled ‘Weather’, and up pops a sentence reading, ‘Today the weather is ________’.

“Okay, who wants to check the weather for us today?”

Most of the class raises their hand eagerly, and Skye follows suit after looking around at her classmates.

“Okay, Skye,” the teacher chooses, raising her eyebrows at Bobbi, impressed at how the youngster is jumping right in. “Go ahead to the window and tell us what you see outside.”

Skye glances at Bobbi, who nods encouragingly, then stands up and moves to the window. “Um… I see cars, and trees and… “

Ms. Harrison chuckles. “Oh, no dear, I meant, what is the weather like today?”

Skye looks up at the grey sky and remembers how it felt outside. “Umm… cold.”

“Cold… okay. And… I remember it being pretty windy outside too, right?” Julie prompts.

Skye nods.

“Very good. Okay, thank you. Come on back to the carpet. That’s another Dojo point for you!”

Skye beams when she hears the ‘ding’ of another point and jogs back to the carpet. As she watches the teacher click on the ‘windy’ button, words suddenly come spilling out of her. “Did you know the Earf turns ’round the sun?” she asks excitedly. “And the closest planet to the sun is Mercury!” Skye adds, very eager to share what’s learned from Jemma.

Bobbi stifles a grin and shrugs slightly at the teacher.

Ms. Harrison raises her eyebrows. “Wow, Skye, that’s exactly right. Clever girl!”

Feeling encouraged by this response, Skye goes on, “and there’s a planet called Saturn that has rings, and lotsa stars in a Milky Way, and…”

“Okay, dear,” the teacher interrupts with a quiet chuckle. “Okay, I see that you know an awful lot about the solar system. Maybe you can look at some books about the planets during reading centers, okay? But right now, we’re going to move on to Language Arts.”

Skye nods but looks slightly disappointed. She turns to look back at Bobbi who gives her a soft smile while pressing a finger to her lips.

The youngsterquiets down and listens with the rest of the kids to a lesson on ‘digraphs’… two-letter sounds such as ‘sh-, ch-, -ck and ph-’, etc. The teacher then writes their list of 10 spelling words for the week on the board, all of which include digraphs. Once this is done, the class breaks into small groups, and Bobbi and Skye get to learn what ‘centers’ are.

During centers, the class is split into four small groups, each of which sits at a different table and
does a different task. Ms. Harrison works with one group, practicing that day’s lesson. Another
group gets to play a word game independently on tablets. Another group practices writing the
week’s spelling words, while the last group sits in the reading corner and gets to quietly read books.
After 10 minutes, each of the groups rotate.

The kids are reminded that centers are for independent work, and thus is ‘quiet’ time. Bobbi is asked
to sit at the spelling words table to assist the kids if they need help. Skye’s first center is at the
teacher’s table, and she does well for the most part, though Bobbi notes that they really need to work
on hand-raising and not calling out during lessons back at base.

Ms. Harrison keeps an eye on the rest of the class while she works with her group. After repeated
reminders to a little boy named Trevor that his reading center is ‘quiet time’, he becomes the first, that
Skye witnesses, to lose a Dojo point. The subsequent unhappy sound through the classroom’s
speakers makes the little girl jump slightly and look sadly over at the boy. She silently hopes that that
won’t ever happen to her.

The rest of this round of centers goes well. Bobbi smiles warmly at Skye when the youngster’s
group comes to join her at the spelling center. Within only one minute, a little girl named Hannah
whispers to Bobbi, “are you Skye’s mommy?”

Having heard this, Skye looks up somewhat anxiously at Bobbi. The agent knew that this question
would be asked, and decides that her earlier answer wasn’t much of a lie, after all. Plenty of kids had
‘aunts’ and ‘uncles’ who weren’t necessarily blood-related. She smiles softly and whispers back,
“no, not her mommy. I’m her auntie.”

Skye glances around nervously at this, but only sees her classmates nodding in acceptance. She even
 hears one whisper to another, “she’s so pretty!” Skye bites her lip and gives Morse the biggest,
happiest grin. She gets up and comes over to sit in Bobbi’s lap, bringing her paper along to keep
working. Morse gives the happy little girl a squeeze, then corrects one of her spelling words before
sending her back to her seat to finish.

All goes well for the rest of the morning until math centers just before lunch, (though Bobbi did have
to remind Skye during recess that she needed to go play with friends, rather than stick with her, as
the child seemed inclined to do.) During one of the math centers, Skye’s small group of four gets to
pair up and take turns asking each other ‘math facts’ using flash cards. These consist of simple
addition equations that Skye has gotten quite good at with Fitz.

Bobbi was sitting on the floor near the group, as the tall agent finds the tiny kids' chairs to be harder
on her knee than just sitting on the carpet. All was well and Skye was quite proud of her addition
knowledge, until a little girl from the other pair working nearby happily moves over to Bobbi and sits
herself in the agent’s lap. Bobbi blinks with surprise, and pats the child’s back as she thinks of how
to gently encourage her to sit back on her own, but Skye frowns deeply and stands up at once.

“Hey, you can’t sit with her. She’s *mine* auntie,” the jealous little girl states, taking the girl’s hand
and tugging.

“Skye,” Bobbi admonishes quietly. “Be nice.” She pats the little girl, Marlee’s, back again and says
gently, “you do need to go sit with your partner, hon.”

When Marlee pouts and doesn’t move right away, Skye stomps her foot, frowning deeply and shouts, “move!”

“Oh, Skye… it sure doesn’t sound like you are working on math facts, nor that you are being very
nice,” Ms. Harrison states, pausing from working with her group. “That’s not how we earn Dojos.”
Upon hearing the unhappy sound that marks the loss of a Dojo point, and the fact that Marlee still hasn’t moved, Skye gives a frustrated little growl. She follows this up with a not-so-gentle nudge with her foot, almost like a kick at Marlee.

“Skye!” Bobbi hisses quietly, frowning at the naughty child. She checks to make sure that Marlee is okay, then gently lifts the girl out of her lap and sets her back down on the carpet. The upset agent then stands and takes Skye’s hand. “Excuse us a moment,” she mutters to Ms. Harrison, then leads Skye out of the class and into the hallway.

As soon as the classroom door shuts behind them, Bobbi kneels onto her good knee and shakes a finger at Skye. “Young lady… you do not kick at people. That was not nice, and I am very disappointed in you.” With that, she turns her ward gently and lands three firm swats on the back of her skirt.

Although Bobbi knows that the swats couldn’t have hurt over a jean skirt and leggings, Skye yelps and turns back with tears welling up in her eyes. Morse sighs and shakes her head. “Skye, I explained to you that I am here to help everyone in your class… not just you. You’re going to have to share us with your friends.”

But Skye still shakes her head stubbornly. “No… I won’t!”

With a sad sigh, Bobbi shakes her head as well, and carefully leans Skye over her knee. “I’m awfully sad that you’re being so naughty, little one.” With that, the little girl receives three more firm swats to her bottom, causing her to squirm and cry.

“Nooo,” Skye whines. “It’s not fair!”

Simply unwilling to spank the youngster anymore, Agent Morse gently helps her up and cups her little face in her hands. “What’s not fair, Skye?”

A few tears slip down the child’s cheeks. “I *always* has to share! They don’t!” she exclaims, pointing back toward the classroom. “They has their own!”

With that the frustrated little girl sits down on the floor and hugs her knees to her chest. She curls up in a little ball and starts to cry harder.

Bobbi tries to make sense of this, sitting down next to her ward. She thinks she understands. “Do you mean… that they have their own mommies and daddies… and they haven’t shared with you?” she asks, gently.

Skye nods almost imperceptibly, with a sad sob.

Morse considers this, trying to see it from the 6 year-old’s perspective. Skye had likely never owned anything that was just hers, but had to share with every other child around her… probably an experience that most of her new classmates have indeed not had to deal with. She doubts very much that Skye ever got much attention at the orphanage, either. She sighs softly as she gently pulls the
little girl into her lap. “Munchkin… I know that you haven’t had us there with you since birth. But you have us now. Most of those kids in there, they have a mommy and a daddy. Some of them might only have one or the other. But you? You have *seven* grown-ups to look after you, who love you so much. You are so, so lucky! And people who are lucky… they really should share the good things they have with others,” she tries to explain, cuddling the youngster close.

Bobbi thinks for another moment, then says quietly, “I bet it was hard, wasn’t it… going to new people’s houses and living with kids who didn’t want to share their toys or their parents with you?”

Morse hears a sniffle in her ear as Skye nuzzles into her neck, and feels a small nod.

“I know, honey,” Bobbi whispers. “So, do you see why it’s not very nice for you not to share?”

Skye hiccoughs and nods, but then adds, “but I still don’t want to.”

Morse stifles a grin at the little girl’s honesty. “I understand, munchkin. And I want you to know that even if I help someone else, or I talk to them or they sit near me… I am, and always will be, ‘yours’. All right?” she asks softly, kissing Skye’s wet little cheek.

Although the child doesn’t respond, Bobbi feels Skye cling a bit tighter to her. She takes this as a reminder that she and the other agents need to keep in mind how insecure Skye still feels sometimes. She reminisces briefly about the grown-up Skye… how she had been so self-confident and independent. While the girl’s stubbornness seems to have been a trait since childhood, Morse hopes that the confidence will still develop over time, despite her now changed circumstances.

Bobbi pulls back slightly, wipes Skye’s tears away and kisses her forehead. She grins, and in an effort to get the youngster to smile she says, “you know… not everyone gets to have an auntie who is as smart, tough and pretty as yours!” She adds a gentle tickle to the girl’s sides.

This does indeed work. Skye cheers up right away, giggling at the tickles. “Auntie,” she repeats happily, gazing up at Bobbi.

“That’s right,” Morse confirms softly, planting a playful kiss on the girl’s nose. “Okay munchkin, we better get back in there and finish centers. And… apologize to a certain little girl that you weren’t very nice to. Let’s see if you can get your Dojo point back.”

Skye looks a bit more subdued at this, but stands up when prompted, and even attempts to help Bobbi get up, tugging on her hand. The agent chuckles softly. “Thank you, little one.”

Morse leads Skye back into class, holding her hand. She spots Skye’s group sitting at the teacher’s table and leads her over toward Marlee. With an air of wanting to get it over with, Skye fidgets as she mutters, “I’m sorry I wasn’t very nice, Marlee.”

Without thinking about it, Skye rubs her bottom, prompting Marlee to ask quietly, “did you get a spankin’?”

Skye looks down and nods slightly, but Ms. Harrison quietly scolds, “Marlee… that is a private matter between Skye and her auntie. Focus on your work, please.” That said, she gestures toward an empty seat for Skye and smiles softly at her. “I’m proud of you for apologizing, Skye… that is a nice thing to do.” With that she leans back and taps the board behind her, first tapping on Skye’s avatar, then touching the ‘+1, good manners’ box. Skye bites her lip and smiles at the Dojo sound, and glances back at Bobbi. The agent winks and gives her a thumbs-up.

All goes well again until the end of science, around 1:00. The children were sitting on the carpet again, watching a short video on the life cycle of a butterfly. Despite Skye’s obvious interest, the
little girl is clearly nodding off by the end. Morse pats her back gently each time this happens, but that only succeeds in waking her for about 10 seconds, when her eyes would droop and she’d nod off again.

The little girl finally ends up swaying right over into Riley, who was seated next to her. Bobbi stifles a grin and scoops Skye up, muttering an apology to Riley. She cuddles the youngster close as she approaches Ms. Harrison’s desk.

“I’m sorry. She does usually take a nap at home every day around this time,” she explains.

Julie smiles and nods. “Again, this is a common occurrence with such a young population. The kids are going to Art next, that’s their Special for today. If she needs to nap we can borrow a cot from Mr. Collins’ kindergarten class. They’ll have cots set out for nap time.”

Bobbi smiles gratefully and sits down with Skye snuggled in her lap on a small couch in the reading area. Skye remains fast asleep in her arms even as the short video ends and the kids noisily move to line up to go to Art.

A little girl named Ayla approaches Bobbi shyly and asks, “is she okay?”

Morse smiles and nods. “Yep. She’s just sleepy.”

The Art teacher comes to pick up the kids, then Ms. Harrison goes next door and returns with a small cot and a light blanket. Skye naps all the way until it’s time for dismissal, when Bobbi packs her backpack for her, then carries the sleepy girl, and Trip, out to the car.

Skye really only begins to wake up when Bobbi buckles her in to her booster seat. She whines sleepily, rubs her eyes and hugs Trip to her. “All done?” she mumbles.

Tightening the seatbelt securely, Morse smiles softly and strokes the little girl’s cheek. “Yep. School is all done. And guess what, munchkin?” Skye blinks quizzically at her. “You got all 10 of your Dojo points today!”

“Yay,” Skye cheers, though more subdued than normal in her sleepy state.

“Everyone is going to be so proud of you, honey, when they hear how well you did at school.”

And everyone is. By the time they arrive back at base Skye is wide awake again, and happily regales Hunter, Jemma, Mack and Fitz with seemingly every detail of her day. Bobbi does note however that the little girl conveniently leaves out her spot of trouble with Marlee… and Morse fills them in on that later.

Meanwhile…

Coulson and May stand outside the dreary looking building, looking solemnly at their surroundings.

“This is it?” Coulson asks coldly, unimpressed.

May nods and points to a small plaque on a side wall reading 'Saint Agnes Orphanage'.
Coulson sighs and shakes his head, then knocks on the wooden front door.

A young nun in a grey habit appears a moment later. “Yes… may I help you?”

“Good afternoon,” Coulson says. “We’re here to meet with Sister Mary Augustine.”

“Oh, well,” the nun smiles. “She is no longer a sister, but our Mother Superior now. Please come in…”

Coulson nods and forces a smile. “Thanks.”

He and May look around as they enter. The place seems relatively clean, but run-down and terribly barren. The wood flooring is scratched up, paint is peeling in places and the only decorations on the vast walls are simple crucifixes. The two top-level agents exchange a look.

The young nun returns a moment later with an austere-looking, elderly woman in a black habit. “Good day,” she says, inclining her head briefly toward them. “What can I do for you?”

Coulson removes his sunglasses and quickly flashes a realistic-looking, though completely fake, badge. “We are with the FBI, and we’re seeking background information on a woman who grew up here. She aged out about nine years ago… went by the name of Skye.” The Director holds up a picture of the adult Skye.

The Mother Superior adjusts her glasses and peers down at the picture. “Ah yes… little Mary Sue. She did indeed insist on being called Skye.” She glances back up at Coulson and May. “FBI… has she done something wrong?”

“Not at all,” May speaks up. “It turns out that she is quite talented with computers, and we are interested in bringing her on board to work in our technical division.”

“In order to do that however, we must of course run a very thorough background check,” Coulson adds. “We know that you were a sister here the entire time that Skye was growing up. We hoped that you could tell us about her. Especially her early history.” Coulson adds this last part in an offhand, casual way to avoid suspicion.

The woman looks between May and Coulson, then nods. “Very well. Come into my office.” She leads the way, pausing only to make a request of a young nun in passing.

She proceeds to tell the agents mostly inconsequential details about Skye’s early childhood: how she was dropped off in the dead of night when she was only an infant, how the orphanage sought but could never find any relatives, how she was taken in by several foster families but was always given back, despite a lack of reports of bad behavior. “For the most part, she was a good girl,” she states. “Kind, helpful, good with other children… maybe a bit too spirited at times. We never understood why she didn’t last long in any homes.”

“It was sad, too,” the Mother Superior remembers with a sigh. “She could be awfully hard on herself, even as a very small child. Anytime she was brought back here she was withdrawn and miserable for days. Poor child. She had some trouble in her teenage years, but well… you probably know all about that. Sneaking into computer labs at libraries after hours, at schools, college campuses… even a government building once. We believed that she was just trying to do some research, to find information on her family, as so many orphans try to do.

“Anyway, I’m afraid that we haven’t heard anything about her since she aged out. I’m glad to know that she is all right, and so successful with technology. I’m also impressed that you would overlook her previous misdeeds with computers and seek to hire her.”
Everyone looks up as the young nun enters the office. “Ah, here we are. Yes, thank you Sister Mary Claire,” says the Mother Superior, accepting a file from her. She addresses May and Coulson again as she removes a rubber band from around it. “You see… we make a small collection of works from our children during their time with us… mainly progress reports from school, writing samples and other special projects. We generally keep them in storage for up to 10 years after a child ages out, just in case they choose to come reclaim them. Mary Sue never has. You’re welcome to look through it if you’d like… and if you do hire her, maybe you can return this to her,” she suggests.

Coulson accepts the file and opens it. Inside are indeed several children’s drawings, a small stack of progress reports, some school papers that may be book reports or other projects. At the back of the file there is a small book that seems to be a personal journal, and behind that are some pictures. Coulson swallows hard as he finds a picture of Skye that looks like it could have been taken this morning. He can’t help but smile.

Phil shows the picture to May, who blinks and nods slowly. Then he holds it up and asks, “do you have any idea how old she might have been in this picture?”

The elderly nun peers closely at the picture, then takes it from Coulson and checks the back. “Ah, 1993. Well, we never knew her exact age, but I suppose that she should have been about four or five then. Though, I remember,” the woman chuckles, “that that child was determined to be six. She was so sure that something special would happen when she turned six. It was her favorite number.”

Phil and May exchange a little look, then Coulson gives a stiff smile and nods. “Well, this has been illuminating. Thank you for your time.” He and May rise, but a bulletin board full of photos behind the nun’s desk catches May’s eye. She steps over to it and looks through them. Each pictures a child smiling brightly next to one or two happy-looking adults.

“Are these adoption photos?” she asks curiously.

Mother Superior smiles and nods. “Oh yes. We had hundreds of successful adoptions over the years.”

May looks closer and notices a common feature in every photo. “What’s with the stuffed animals?”

“Oh,” the woman chuckles. “It’s more symbolic than anything, really. Whenever new adoptive parents come to pick up their child, they always bring them a stuffed animal. The children here learned to associate receiving a stuffed toy with being adopted.”

May blinks again, thinking of Trip and of Skye’s reaction to receiving him, and of how the child now clings to him almost 24/7. Now she understands. All she says to Coulson as they leave the dreary building is, “we need to get her adoption finalized, Phil. Now.”

Coulson stops and looks at her, then smiles, showing her that he already has his cell phone out. “I’m on it.”

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During the entirety of the flight home the next morning, Coulson studies Skye’s file carefully.

“Wow… listen to this note on a report card from 7th grade: ‘Skye did well in school overall this
quarter… but her lower grade in English is mainly due to her failing to turn in an important report regarding her family’. Phil scoffs. “Who exactly was she supposed to write about?? What morons.”

May shakes her head in equal disbelief, then sets the quinjet’s autopilot and moves to sit next to Phil. She picks up several of the children’s drawings and looks through them. Some of them are quite normal… a clumsy picture of a dog, another of an ocean full of fish. All of them are uncoordinated and messy, evidence of Skye's challenges from always having to use her non-dominant hand. Melinda’s heart breaks at the next drawing she looks at. It shows a big heart with a family of a mom and dad, a little boy and girl in the center… then another little girl off to the side, looking sadly in. It was labeled, ‘the Brody’s’.

Melinda picks up the last drawing… and it immediately makes the hairs on the back of her neck stand up. It is a picture of a street, on which were placed cute little houses with grass and flowers and toys… except for a large portion of the middle, which was dedicated to a big black, ugly building. The coloring of this building appeared to have been done in anger. The lines were thick and jagged as if they had been scribbled using excessive force. The windows of the building had unhappy faces peering out of them, which actually gave May the creeps.

Perhaps worst of all, she turned the drawing over and saw that the sloppy printing of the name Skye had been crossed out, and an adult had written ‘Mary Sue’ underneath it.

Agent May kicks the side wall of the plane in anger and frustration for a young girl she never knew. This makes Coulson jump.

“Hey… what’s wrong?” he asks curiously, looking up from a school paper.

Melinda doesn’t respond, just hands him the drawing. She lets him look at it, watching his eyebrows furrow, then flips it over and points at the corrected name.

“I do not understand, not for one minute, why Skye, whether grown-up or our little six year-old, did not become a bitter, hateful person. She was miserable, and clearly had plenty of anger and fear… and no wonder. She already had zero control over her life, where she lived, who she was stuck with… on top of that, they couldn’t even allow her her chosen name. Did anyone give a damn about her feelings? About who she was??”

The Director of SHIELD sighs and nods. “I know… I was just thinking the same thing.” He hands over what he had been looking at. “Skye apparently wrote this when she was about nine.”

May snatches it up and begins to read.

‘My Very Own Superpower’ by Skye

We’re supposed to write about a superpower we wish we had, but I actually have a superpower! It’s the power of invisibility. If I don’t want to be seen, I can make it so that no matter where I am, no one will notice me. Even if I do want to be seen, my superpower is so strong that people don’t see me anyway. It’s okay though. People don’t bother me. Some kids in my class gets teased about their glasses or how they look or how they talk. I used to get teased about my clothes and not having a family, but my superpower has grown so much that they don’t really do that anymore.

My superpower is espeshally strong at the orphanage. I used to make friends with the other kids who live there, but they kept getting adopted and moving away, so I don’t try now. Last week, I
went three whole days without talking to anyone. I was completely invizible! I didn’t get notised until I tried to skip mass and stay in my room. But Sister Mary Magdalene found me and spanked me with her ruler. I guess my superpower doesn’t work when I’m in trouble. I’ll try to be better, espeshally because only heroes are supposed to get superpowers, not bad guys…'

May can’t even read anymore. She flips the paper over, hoping to stem her own desire to cry, but when she glances at the oblivious teacher’s feedback to Skye, she feels even worse.

‘Skye – good work, although your spelling still needs some practice. I’d like you to add the following to your spelling words this week:

Invisible/invisibility
Especially
Notice…’

Melinda growls in frustration and resists the urge to tear the paper up. Coulson sighs heavily and places a hand on her back. “I know,” he whispers. “But May… look.”

Swallowing her emotions as she is so skilled at doing, May glances over at what Phil is showing her. It’s a photograph, of Skye when she seems to be a teenager. Despite everything that they knew the young woman had been through, she is sporting a genuine smile in the photo.

“Not every parent gets to know exactly how their daughter will look ten years into the future,” Coulson states softly, squeezing May’s shoulder. “Look at how beautiful she is.”

May’s features soften considerably as she stares at the photo. Her heart aches for so, so many things, but right now the biggest ache is in missing the little girl back at their home base. Without another word, she gently hands the photo back to Coulson, then returns to the cockpit, determined to get home as soon as possible.

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Coulson and May arrive back at base that afternoon while Skye (and Bobbi) are still at school. Fitz and Simmons come to greet them and hear about how the trip went.

Coulson smiles, knowing what they really want to know. “Yes, we have started the process. Agent Hill is in contact with Pepper Potts, who is coordinating with Stark’s lawyers. Stark can’t know that I’m alive, and Ms. Potts has sworn not to share it with him. She estimates that we can have this taken care of as soon as a few weeks from now.”

Tears well up in Jemma’s eyes as she and Fitz exchange a happy look. “Oh, that’s so wonderful, sir!” she exclaims, her hands clasped together in front of her. “Thank you… for doing this.”

Fitz nods in agreement. “This really… it really… it feels right,” he adds.
“Indeed!” Jemma agrees. “In fact… because we were excited and eager, we um… decided to play around a bit and create a mock adoption certificate. You know, for fun, to get used to it, and hey, maybe even to use as an example?” There is something underlying Simmons’ tone as she says this, that sparks curiosity in both Melinda and Phil.

As if this is a cue, Mack and Hunter enter the hallway now as well, behind Coulson and May. Feeling that this is somewhat conspiratorial, Coulson gives Fitz-Simmons an odd look, and accepts the ‘certificate’ that is held out to them. He and Agent May both gaze down at it for several long seconds.

Coulson’s mouth drops open slightly, and the team hears an almost inaudible gasp from May. They all grin silently at each other as the two highest-ranked SHIELD agents digest what they are seeing:

ADOPTION CERTIFICATE

LET IT BE KNOWN THAT ON THIS DAY

Skye Daisy Mayson

HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY ADOPTED BY

PHILLIP COULSON & MELINDA MAY

Utter silence fills the room. May purses her lips in an effort to maintain control of her emotions. Phil is the first to speak.

“Skye Daisy *Mayson*,” he mutters. “Where on Earth did you get ‘Mayson’?”

Fitz blinks. “Isn’t it obvious, sir? May and Coulson… Mayson,” he replies with a grin.

Both May and Phil stare at him.

“Well,” interjects Jemma, “Skye had no family name at six years-old. And if we were to give her the last name of Johnson, wouldn’t we have to explain why? She should be named… you know, for you.”

May and Phil now exchange a look. Then Melinda finds her voice.

“Simmons… why us? Skye adores you… and Bobbi and Mack… all of you. Why should we be the ones?”

Jemma smiles softly. “May… you and Coulson… you were the closest things to parents that the grown-up Skye ever knew. And… none of us believe for a second that that has changed. Frankly, you are like parents to all of us. Besides,” she adds with a grin, “Skye apparently already thinks of Bobbi as an aunt. And I would be quite happy to be seen as a big sister-type!”

“Brother,” Fitz agrees, raising his hand briefly.

“Uncle?” Mack offers, having not really thought about such specifics yet.

Hunter just shrugs. “I dunno… older cousin, who gets to be a bad influence?” he jokes.
May swallows hard and looks again at Coulson. She nods almost imperceptibly, then suddenly turns and leaves the room.

Coulson smiles fondly after her. “Well, if everyone agrees,” he concedes, feeling touched and honored and pleased with the decision. “I’ll um… I’ll get this over to Miss Potts, to reference.”

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**Epilogue**

By unanimous vote, the team decides to keep the adoption process a secret from Skye for now, on the unlikely chance that there is a delay or issue of any kind. It’s quite difficult for many not to tell the little girl, especially when she arrives home that afternoon and positively pounces on both May and Coulson as if they had been gone for months. She insists on sitting between them during dinner and catching them up on everything she did and learned in school. Then, as neither are ready to be separated from the child, they take her to the rec room and introduce her to another film that she has never seen, ‘Aladdin’[1]. Skye loves it, and absolutely squeals at seeing the monkey, Abu, whom she tries to ‘introduce’ to her own Trip.

When the youngster falls asleep in the middle of the movie, it is with her little legs stretched out across Coulson’s and her head in May’s lap. One of Skye’s arms hugs Trip to her while the thumb of her other hand makes its way into her mouth. Neither of the normally stoic, top-level agents can bring themselves to move or disturb her… until both Jemma and Bobbi appear in the doorway and visibly melt at the sight. When Bobbi actually takes her phone out and snaps a photo, May sighs and gathers up the little girl to take her to bed.

Nobody feels that they can wait very long for the adoption to be finalized… but little do they know that they will have to wait a bit longer than they expect…

**Continued in Chapter 6...**


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**End Notes**

Update 11/29/16: Due to feedback from a very kind native Mandarin speaker, I have changed the term of endearment that May uses for Skye. ‘Qianjin’ has become the more appropriate ‘bǎo bèi’. Sorry for any confusion!

I appreciate all positive feedback on my works, and it encourages me to post more. Thank you for every 'Kudos' that you leave, and for telling me what you enjoy about my writing.
Happy Reading!

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